

April Signpost

for the GOOD RED ROAD



St. Tekakwitha

Opening prayer:

God of all nations and peoples. You have filled Your Creation with Your mighty presence. Through Your handiwork You speak to our heard words that satisfy our every desire.

You called Your servant the Mohawk maiden Saint Kateri Tekakwitha to embrace the Gospel of your Son Jesus Christ to do Your will and to serve others with the gifts You gave her.

May she who held tight to the cross of Your Son through her short life marred by sickness suffering and persecution, be our intercessor during our own trials. May her embrace of the Catholic faith and her openness to sharing Jesus with others inspire us to be new evangelizers to all cultures and peoples. May she who sought out Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament lead us

Direction

Spring

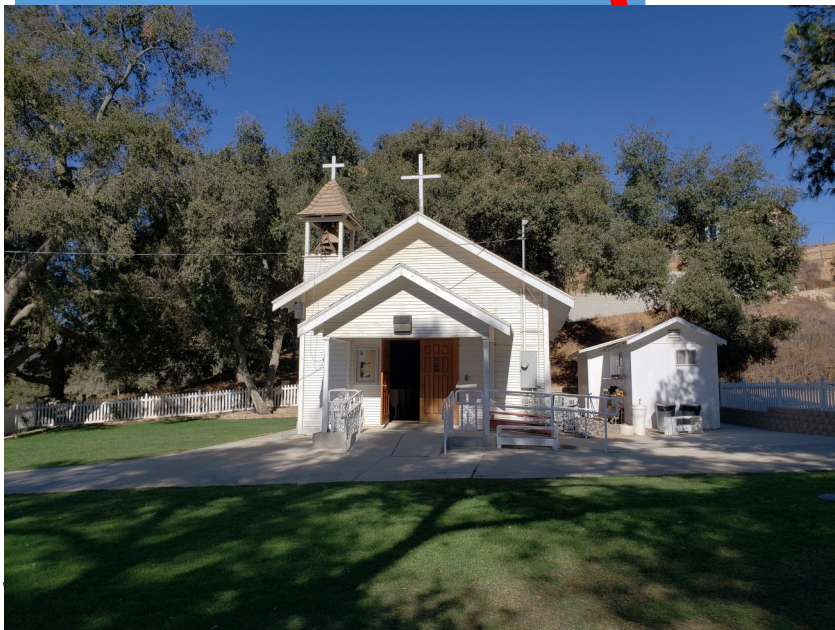
East

Yellow

Sin/ Apathy, Sloth

**Fruits of the Holy Spirit/
Faith/ Goodness /Modesty**

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit/
Understanding/ Piety**



Who do we need to bring in the circle?

Who do we need to pray for:

Family members who are sick.

Family members who have died.

Struggles that we are facing?

Let us bring our joys and sufferings
onto this circle.



Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church

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Dear Catholic Native American/ Alaskan Native Communities,

Over these last few weeks we have become a closer community through our shared ability to adapt, to respond and to pray during this stressful time. We have prayed together for an end to this epidemic, for those who are sick, for those who have died and those who are mourning.

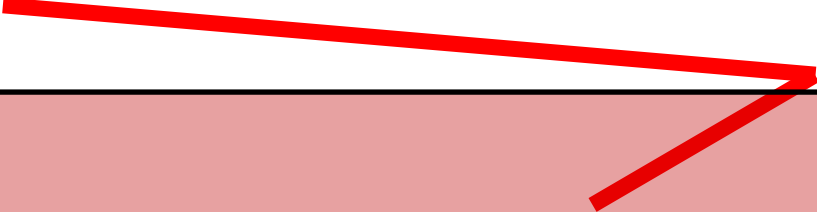
During the past few weeks I have seen people working hard to support each other, to take care of the poor and elderly. Many have experienced the reawakening of faith in their lives and in the lives of their families. The power and strengths to survive epidemics has been well known in the Native American/Alaska Native communities.

Historically, the Native American/ Alaska Natives have long suffered plagues, disease, suffering and loss. In generations of loss, the Native American/Alaska Native has always come together to support each other, to take care of elders and to face the unknown with faith.

Our most revered saint, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha faced sickness, death and loss in her own family. She is an inspiration to all Catholics that we rely upon the love of Christ through illness and the unknown.

We pray especially to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha to help us when we are afraid and feel isolated. Knowing the heartache that illness has caused in her own life, we pray that she might intercede for us to bring an end to suffering.

Rev. Michael Carson



Discussion about Prayer

Prayer is both a dialogue with God and awareness of God. Both are equally important. Different prayer forms focus in these two aspects.

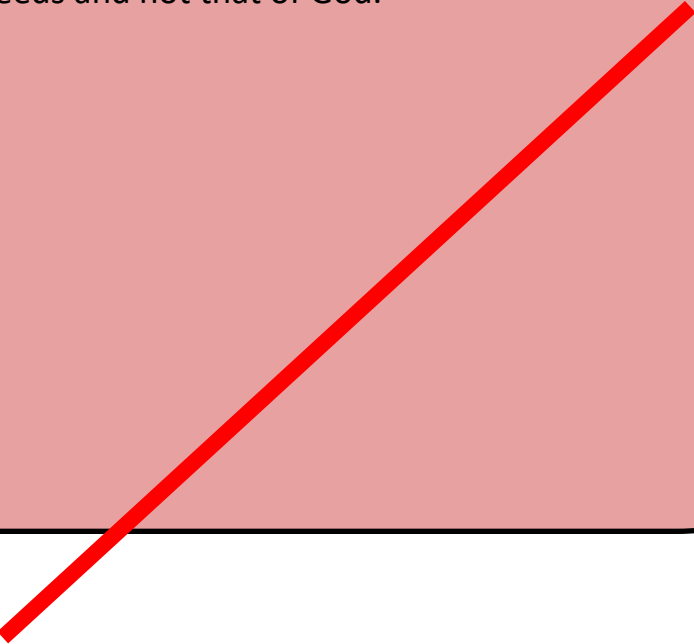
Prayers of dialogue. Dialogue with God, like any other dialogue, needs to have both talking to God and listening to what God has to say.

A. Prayer of Petition.

1. The most important dialogue prayer is asking. These are called prayers of petition. We first think about what we need and then we ask God for it. At Mass we do these prayers after the homily. Christ always answers prayers of petitions. However, it might not be the answer that you were expecting. For example, some one might ask God to win the lottery, but perhaps the prayer that was answered is that they received is a better understanding of the riches that they have.

B. Prayers of thanksgiving.

1. God does not need our thanks. But we need to thank God. We need to always understand that everything we have comes from God and is part of His divine plan. That plan is to lead everyone to salvation. If we do not thank God for what we have, we tend to think that things belong to us. Then we might misuse what we have for our own needs and not that of God.



Prayer of awareness.

A. Prayer of blessings

A prayer of blessing is a prayer to remind ourselves that we are in a right relationship with Christ. Sometimes prayers of blessing begin with, "Blessed are you, Lord our God."

Prayers of blessing come from our Hebrew ancestors. They are the Hebrew "*Barica*" prayers. The Hebrews blessed God for everything. We have picked up that tradition.

In the Mass when we bring up the bread and wine to be used at Mass we use blessing prayers.

For the Catholic Church the most common form of blessing involves the sprinkling of holy water. Holy water is water that has been blessed by the priest. It is a reminder of our own baptism into Christ. This type of blessing is used to bless a variety of objects that we use in our daily lives such as cars, houses, pets, et cetera.

B. Other prayers of awareness.

Centering Prayer is a particular monastic meditation prayer. It is a way of centering on Christ and being in the presence of the divine. Take some time to calm and relax yourself. For 15 minutes, think of one word to repeat in your mind, such as "Jesus". Say that word to yourself slowly and repeat it. Do not allow any other words or ideas to come to your mind. If they do, just go back to the word "Jesus". Breathe deeply and relax, concentrating on the one word.

The Rosary is a chant prayer with specific sayings that help us be aware of the specific saving actions of Christ's life and resurrection. This is done through a prayer to Saint Mary.

The Divine Office is a prayer book with specific prayers that are recited seven times a day. Priests and religious use the Divine Office, but it is available to everyone.

C. Prayer as Sacrament.

1. Sacraments are the most important prayer of awareness. In the Catholic Church there are seven sacraments, all dealing with a different aspect of grace. Sacraments are the way God channels grace to us. Sacraments make the invisible God visible. They are usually grouped in three categories.

There are three sacraments of initiation.

Baptism

Communion

Confirmation

There are two sacraments of healing

Reconciliation/ Penance

Anointing of the sick

There are two sacraments of sacrament of vocation

Holy orders

Priesthood/ Deaconate

Marriage

I

D. Here are some different ways to pray.

1. Reflection

Briefly replay the day. Pick out a high point in it, something good that you did, or something good that happened to you. Speak to God about it.

Replay the day again. Pick out a low point, something unfortunate that you did. Speak to Jesus about it. Ask for forgiveness.

Look forward to tomorrow to a critical point, something hard that you must do or face. Speak to God about it.

2. Scripture model.

Pick a scripture passage that applies to your life readings. Read the passage slowly. Imagine that you are one of the Bible characters. Pause occasionally during the reading to see and hear what that character saw and heard.

Think about the passage. Think about what went on in the mind of the characters in the Bible. What point is being made to the people in the Bible.

Speak to Jesus yourself. Imagine what the character might say to Jesus. Listen to Jesus. Imagine what he might say to the biblical character. Imagine what he might say to you.

End by conversing with Jesus about how the conversation might have an impact on your life.

E. The Goal of prayer.

The goal of prayer is to strengthen ones relationship to Christ. Our salvation is based on that relationship. Like any relationship, communication, dialogue and presence are key to the ways we reflect the love and compassion that Christ gives us.

IV. Some good habits of prayer

A. Find a sacred space, a prayer space.

B. Find time.

Especially when you are not interrupted. A regular time of day, each day works the best.

C. Choose a posture for prayer.

Something that makes your body conformable.

D. Creating a model for prayer.

Work toward an experience of prayer that is outside of your your every day experiences.

V. Prayer objects.

Sometimes objects are used to remind us of the divine.

In our Catholic Church all of the senses are involved, not just hearing or speaking, such as using the sense of touch when we feel the oils used in the Sacraments.

VI. The best example of a prayer life is Jesus.

We read in the Scripture that he went off to the mountains to pray. Before any major decision he talked to his Heavenly Father. He also taught his Disciples how to pray.



Social Justice Topic
Synod on the Amazon

Pope Francis has just released his commentary on the Synod on the Amazon.

Here are some of the quotes that might pertain to Natives in the U.S.

What is your response to these quotes? How do they apply to your family or Tribe?

11. “We are a region of stolen territories.”

14. “Globalization to become a new version of colonialism. “

19. (Pope Francis) “I express my shame and once more I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the Church itself, but for the crimes committed against the Native Peoples during the so-called conquest of American.”

20. “There is no room for the notion of an individual detached from the community or from the land. “

27 “Dialogue must not only favor the preferential option on behalf of the poor, the marginalized and the excluded, but also respect them as having a leading role to play.”

66.” ... The Church also needs to grow... In doing so, she contently reshapes her identity through listening and dialogue with the people , the realities and the history of the lands in which she finds herself.”

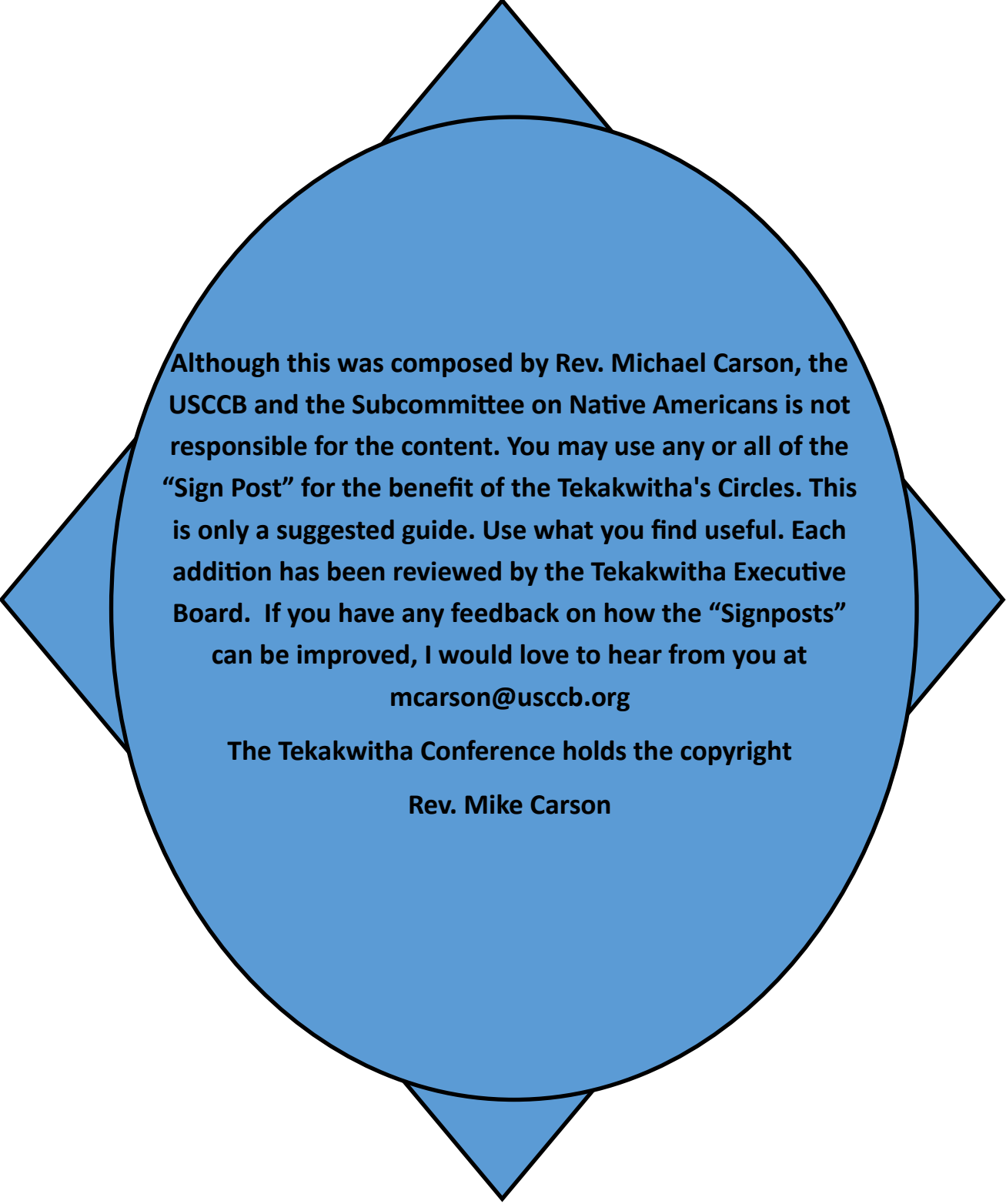


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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May she who held tight to the cross of Your Son throughout her short life marked by sickness, suffering, and persecution, be our intercessor during our own trials. May her embrace of the Catholic faith and her openness to sharing Jesus with others inspire us to be new evangelizers to all cultures and peoples. May she who sought our Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament lead up to similar reverences for the Eucharist so that, like Saint Kateri, our last words may be, "Jesus, I love You." Amen.



Although this was composed by Rev. Michael Carson, the USCCB and the Subcommittee on Native Americans is not responsible for the content. You may use any or all of the “Sign Post” for the benefit of the Tekakwitha's Circles. This is only a suggested guide. Use what you find useful. Each addition has been reviewed by the Tekakwitha Executive Board. If you have any feedback on how the “Signposts” can be improved, I would love to hear from you at mcarson@usccb.org

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Rev. Mike Carson