

January 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

Winter

North

Black

Sin/ Hopelessness- Despair

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Joy/ Gentleness/

Redemptive suffering

Gifts of the Holy Spirit/

Fortitude/ Fear of the Lord



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.

Discussion Item

What does it mean to be Roman Catholic in the Modern World?

I. I do not wear my collar on planes because there are two types of people, those who love the Catholic Church and those who hate the Catholic Church. Both types of individuals can mean hours of harassment on the plane.

When we say that we are Roman Catholic that sets up a lot of preconceived ideas in others who are not Catholic. These ideas are constructive and destructive.

III. People learn that you are Catholic. Is it all right if we not have fish on Friday? I am so sorry that the Pope died, did you know him? Are you Catholic or are you Christian? I think without the Catholic Church, stand up comics would be out of a job.

II. There is a lot of reasons why people are Catholic, some are personal, some are social, and some relate to the community of believers. Reasons are different for different people. The reason that is most important is the deep love of Christ that comes from your heart that how you share that love with others.

IV. There are some people who wear their ashes on Good Friday, to tell the world that they are Catholic. They do not attend Mass; they do not have an active role in the Church, but they want people to know that they are Catholic. Rather than a surface Catholicism, the more you are grounded in faith the more support there is for that faith. There is something to the support of the community of believers. The community of believers becomes a safe place to be different then the rest of society. There is a feeling of belonging to the family of God.

A. Acts 5:38, 39: "So in the present case, I advise you to have nothing to do with these men. Leave them alone. If their project or activity is on human origin, it will destroy itself. If on the other hand, it is from God, you will not be able to destroy it and you may indeed find yourselves fighting against God."

B. There is over a Billion Catholics with other Christians, that makes up about a fourth of the world's population. The Church has lasted from the time of Christ. The Bishop who ordained me was ordained by his bishop, then by his bishop going back to Christ. We have something here that is both world wide and put forth by Christ.

V. What it means to be a Catholic:

These are things that come to mind. First, you have to be weird and not be afraid to be weird. Christ himself says that what we have to offer, that is, our faith, not everyone will accept. We have to be comfortable with being bright stars in a black night. The second idea goes along with being weird, you can be afraid to fight for what you believe in. Faith is an action word. We do faith. That means sometimes we have to get out of our comfort zone. The third aspect of being a Catholic is to be concerned with those who are left out. It is having a compassion for the poor. Not only helping them out, but to ask the harder questions of why they are poor. When we ask that question we are in a better situation to do something about it.

VI. Here are some other aspects about what it means to be Catholic.

- 4) Being community centered.
- 5) Being Sacramentally centered- the sacraments will make an impact in your life.
- 6) Being concerned with the Church- does not mean blind obedience, But it does mean I will be informed about what the Church stands for and why it stands for it.
- 7) Our faith journey is also an internal journey. No matter what others do or say, we will walk the path to salvation that the Church has provided for us.
- 8) Christ gives everyone a mission to lead others to salvation
- 9) Universal. The same Mass, the same readings are being celebrated in New York, Iceland, Sidney, Nigeria, England and Rio.

VII. I think being a Catholic in the Modern World has its challenges. The Church goes against the culture in so many ways as in Christ's time he went against his culture. What we as Catholics possess is the power of Christ in the world to transform the world. When things work, when everything lines up, being a Catholic-Christian is not just a religion, not just a fundamental belief system, not even just a way of life, being a Catholic Christian is being joined body and soul to the only things that matters.



**Social Justice Concern
Native American Women
Disappearances.**

Native American women and girls are vanishing across the county. Just last year, the FBI reported 633 open missing persons cases for Native American women. According to statistics, they are also 10 times more likely to be murdered than non-Native Americans.

This crisis for Native American women has various causes. Police forces are understaffed in many areas. There are jurisdictional problems with investigation, and the misperception that crimes committed by Non-Natives will not be investigated by tribal police.

The major reason why this crisis is perpetuated is the lack of knowledge by not only Native Americans but wider community. Getting the word out about this problem, knowing the warning signs of human trafficking and knowing how we can protect Native American Communities is a responsibility that all of us share.

- 1) In what ways can I get the information out about this crisis?
- 2) In what ways can I help protect Native American communities, especially those most vulnerable?
- 3) In what ways can I advocate for victims and victim survivors?

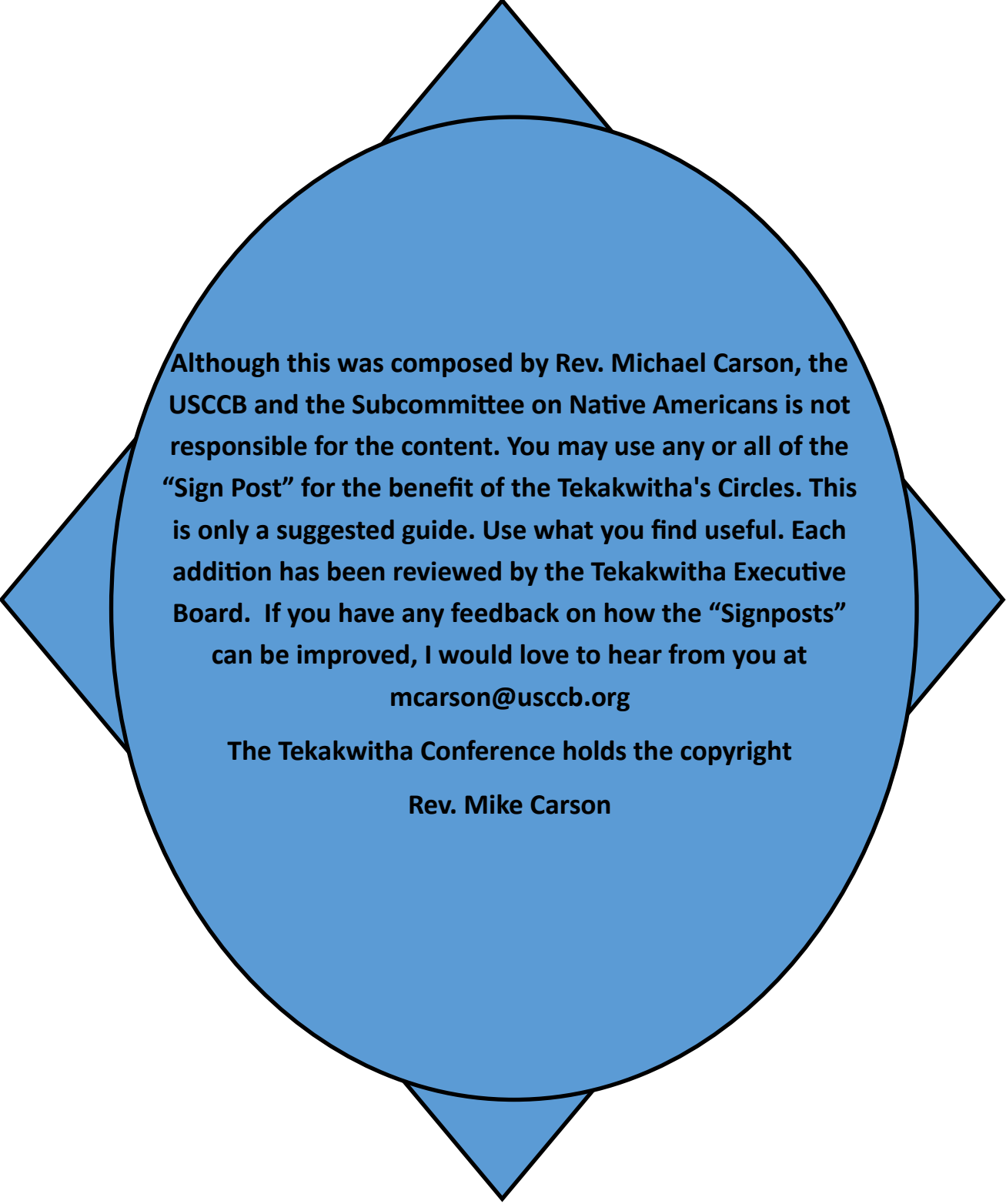


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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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