

December 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.

Direction

Winter

North

Black

Sin/ Hopelessness- Despair

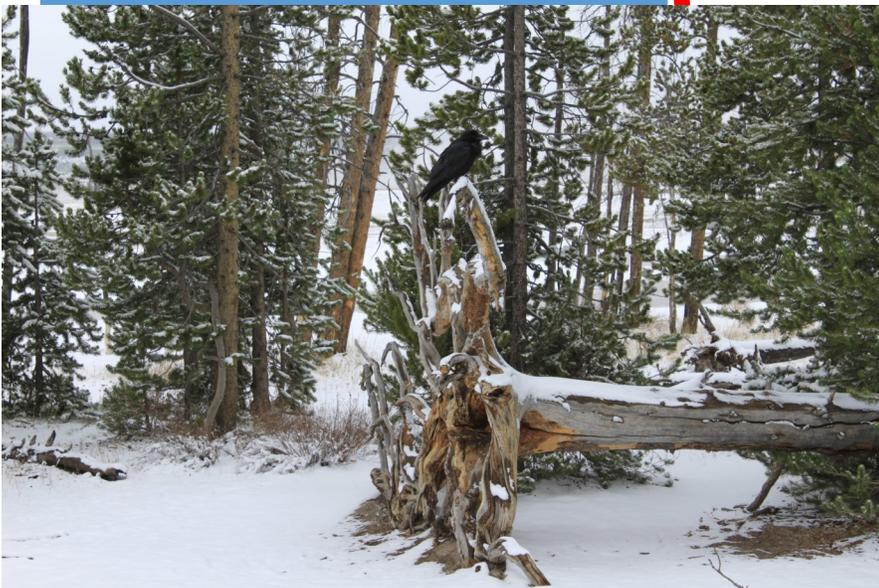
Fruits of the Holy Spirit

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.



Besides Our Lady of Guadalupe appearing to the Aztec St. Juan Diego, have there been other apparitions to Native peoples? Perhaps most notable was the White Buffalo Calf Woman to the Lakota Sioux.

For centuries the Sioux people have told the story of how they received their sacred pipe in a special way from a woman – a “Maiden” (or a wakan, a holy woman), “a heavenly, mysterious and beautiful lady” bearing what appeared to be a child, but the bundle she carried was the “Sacred Calf Pipe” to be used with seven rites given to the people. It was the beginning of a new spiritual relationship with God for the Sioux people.

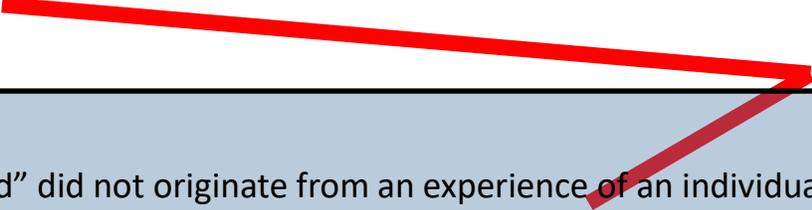
As the account goes, two scouts set out to kill buffalo. While on the top of a hill, in the distance, a woman was appearing. She was very beautiful, her long hair hanging down and she had on a beautiful buckskin coat. She said: “You shall go home and tell thy nation that I am coming. Therefore, in the center of thy nation they shall build a big teepee (a great lodge) and there I will come.” When the tribe found out, they prepared a place for her to come. All the people gathered there. She sang a song as she entered the teepee. She then presented the pipe to the chief saying: “Behold this, it is very sacred.” It was an ordinary pipe but there was a calf carved in one side and there were twelve eagle feathers tied on with a grass that never breaks. After she went out of the teepee everyone saw a white buffalo kicking up his hind legs and leaving in a hurry snorting as it went.

There is the old baseless argument that stories of historical events from ancient peoples cannot be passed on accurately – that legends are not historical facts. This was not in the far distant past. What other evidence supports its historicity?

The tradition says it was a historical event, and not a dream, vision or other such point of origin. If it was a dream, and one changes it to a historical event, it’s a grave violation of fundamental religious rules of Lakota spiritual transmission.

Lakota spiritual experiences are predominately nonphysical, except in fulfillment of healings and prophecies. It would be normal and acceptable to communicate the origin of the pipe in the same genre as the story of the origin of many Lakota ceremonies -- in individual dreams and visions. Actually, a dream is a more Wakan genre than a historic event, in the Lakota way of thinking.





Also, the “legend” did not originate from an experience of an individual but of a clan. It would be difficult to state something as a great experience of a clan without it being so.

Lastly, the legend is attached to a special material object that has been in the care of a relatively short line of keepers. Most of the accounts give descriptions of a god-woman (winyan wakan) or a woman dressed in white, coming among the Teton Sioux between 1785 and 1800. It even appears on a Sioux calendar in 1792 with the words: “They see a woman in light; they have first buffalo pipe.” Speculating on the average age of each keeper, the data points to approximately 1785.

When one studies the details of the account they are strikingly similar to other Marian apparitions such as Our Lady of Guadalupe. We are left to ponder the possibility of Our Lady appearing to a people that had not been exposed to divine Revelation, nor Christianity itself and the possibility that the work of Our Lady in leading us to Christ is far more expansive than we have yet considered. Lakota spirituality and religious practices are evidential of the character of the Lakota people, their readiness for spiritual advancement, and why Our Lady would come.

There is evidence that Our Lady appeared to the Lakota Sioux Indians in about 1785 as the “White Buffalo Calf Woman” establishing a template for Catholicism and a preparation for the arriving Jesuit missionaries. Her call for prayer and to draw closer to their Creator has since impacted Lakota Catholics.—Richard May





Government Contracts To Native Americans

Small Business Act Section 8(a) from the Business Development program is a way that Federal Government contracts are awarded to Native American/ Alaska natives communities and businesses. Native American businesses sometimes have an advantage in awarding some Federal Government contracts. When certified as an eligible 8 participant, American Indian tribes and Native American start-up businesses may contract with the federal government under terms that permit a federal agency to award a contract.

This 8(a) Business Development program has demonstrated that it brings revenue growth, employment, profits, and social investment to tribal communities. It is a way that Native American business can have non-bidding exclusive contracts.

Although this program has helped many Native American business, there are some concerns. Sometimes contracts are awarded to individuals that have dubious Native American origins. In the last few years, the Federal Government has tightened the requirements for the program. The contracts that go to those who are unqualified means that there are less contracts for those who need them.

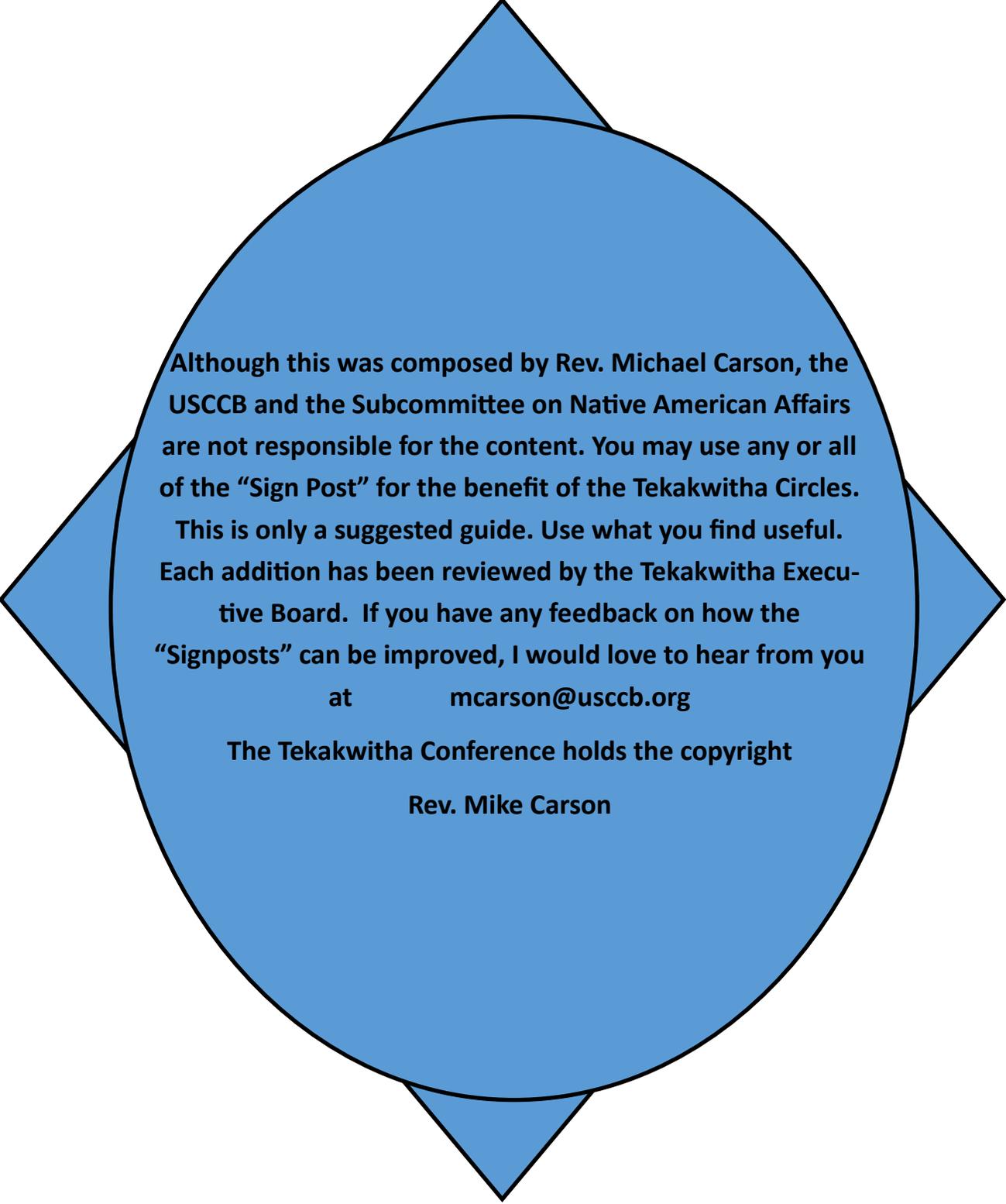


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

God of all nations and peoples. You have filled your creation with Your mighty presence. Through Your handiwork You speak to our hearts 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 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 American Affairs are not responsible for the content. You may use any or all of the “Sign Post” for the benefit of the Tekakwitha 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