

July 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

Summer

South

White

Sin:

rage/ anger/ lust

Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

Patience/ Peace/self control

Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Wisdom /Knowledge



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.



Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Feast Day,

July 14

One of the most important aspects of saints is to learn from their lives. When someone is declared a saint by the Church, the Church recognized that within their lives they have shown heroic virtue. Heroic virtue comes about because of their close and intimate connection to Christ. In St. Kateri's life there are many examples of the different paths to the divine. Most of these pathways to the Divine transcend time and cultures. These pathways to the Divine are also available for us to emulate. In this way, St. Kateri Tekakwitha becomes our inspiration. Some of these pathways are:

1) Trust in the midst of tragedy

St. Kateri Tekakwitha's life was a life constantly responding to God's call. This began very early in her life when she was faced with the death of her family. As the recent months have taught us, tragedy and suffering is part of our human condition. The most important question is not why these tragedies happen, but how we adapt to them. In my priestly ministry I have found that there are usually two outcomes of tragedies. I have encountered people who have broken off their relationship with God almost completely. Because of what happened in their life, they have become trapped in a closed circle of hopelessness. I have also been privileged to witness individuals that have survived setbacks, tragedy and family traumas. It is through them that the Crucified Christ is evident. Their faith is what binds them to hope. Their already tight relationship with Christ becomes a connection of profound intimacy. Throughout the tragedies of St. Kateri Tekakwitha's life, she continued to manifest this profound intimacy.

2) Knowing Christ's will and doing it no matter the circumstances

What makes St. Kateri Tekakwitha's actions so extraordinary is the lack of support from her family for the faith in Christ. She responded to Christ's love even though her adopted family, culture and history opposed it. She stood alone. This ability to know the truth despite everyone's contradictions is a virtue that has great value especially today.



3) Desire to know more about the faith

Although this special and close relationship with Christ is critical, it is not enough in itself. In fact, the more we discover about Christ, the deeper our relationship can be. Saint Kateri Tekakwitha was welcomed by the Jesuits and from them she learned the important aspects of the Catholic Church. This desire to learn more about Christ gave life and shape to her already bright and intense faith. Like all relationships built on love and compassion, our relationship to Christ deepens the more we understand Christ's actions in the world. Through Scripture, the Sacraments and basic understanding of theology, our love for Christ grows and becomes a dynamic strength in our lives.

4) Daily close connection to Christ

For some, Christ is something that enters their lives for an hour on Sunday, or when they hit a crisis and they seek out Christ for help. There are others that understand their relationship with Christ as both central to their life and afterlife. This centrality is reinforced through daily prayer, decisions, both small and large, and actions from those decisions. St. Kateri Tekakwitha knew the importance of the consistency between prayer, decisions and actions. St. Kateri was known to have a deep and profound awareness of penance and the ability to reconcile with God. For us, this ability of penance and reconciliation is the ability to discover and correspond to anything that is not linked to the divine.

5) Guide

Like all Saints, St. Kateri Tekakwitha has the ability to pray for us to Christ for our needs and guidance. St. Kateri Tekakwitha also guides us to the perfect union of Native cultures and the faith. She has shown the way that faith in Jesus Christ is expressed in the traditions and values of Native cultures.



**Social Justice Concern
Missing and exploited
Native Women.**

Although I have discussed this in an earlier issue, this concern still continues to be a monumental problem and concern for the USCCB and for the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs.

This is from the Federal Government's Blue Campaign (DHS):

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain labor or commercial sex. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world. This serious crime is not just a problem in other countries – it is also happening in the United States in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Human trafficking is a hidden crime as victims rarely come forward to seek help because of language barriers, fear of the traffickers, and/or fear of law enforcement. The need to increase public understanding and awareness about the prevalence of human trafficking is another factor contributing to its hidden nature.

There are different types of human trafficking:

- **Sex Trafficking**

Victims of sex trafficking are manipulated or forced to engage in sex acts for someone else's commercial gain. Sex trafficking is not prostitution. Anyone under the age of 18 engaging in commercial sex is considered to be a victim of human trafficking.

No exceptions.



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- **Forced Labor**

Victims of forced labor are compelled to work for little or no pay, often manufacturing or harvesting the products we use and consume every day.

- **Domestic Servitude**

Victims of domestic servitude are forced to work in isolation and are hidden in plain sight as nannies, housekeepers, or other domestic help.

How Can I Help?

As a faith leader, you are in a unique position to help stop human trafficking. As a moral authority and trusted messenger, your efforts to educate and engage your congregation and community will resonate. With your help, we can save lives.

Use the resources and tips in this toolkit to spread awareness of this heinous crime and help bring it out of the shadows.

Don't let it happen to you, your congregants, or your community.

What is the Difference Between Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking?

Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent of the recipient. It includes sexual acts against people who are unable to consent either due to age or lack of capacity.

Sex trafficking means recruiting, harboring, transporting, patronizing, soliciting, obtaining, or providing a person to engage in a sex act in exchange for money or something of value. A victim of sex trafficking may also be a victim of sexual assault.



Why are Native Americans/ Alaska Natives especially targeted?

- 1) There is an incorrect assumption that human traffickers will not be prosecuted by tribal police on reservations. Actually the FBI and Tribal Police have an active and vigorous enforcement of trafficking and sexual exploitation laws.
- 2) Police departments, especially tribal police departments have a larger area to cover with less funding.
- 3) Many reservations have populations that are isolated. This makes communication difficult between towns and villages.
- 4) Both men and women often times have to work away from their homes, in other states, in order to find employment. Sometimes unscrupulous middlemen prey on unsuspecting men and women as they search for jobs in places that are far away from their homes.
- 5) Employment laws that prevent exploitation are sometimes not understood or known.
- 6) Some records such as recording missing women were not kept by the Federal Government until very recently.

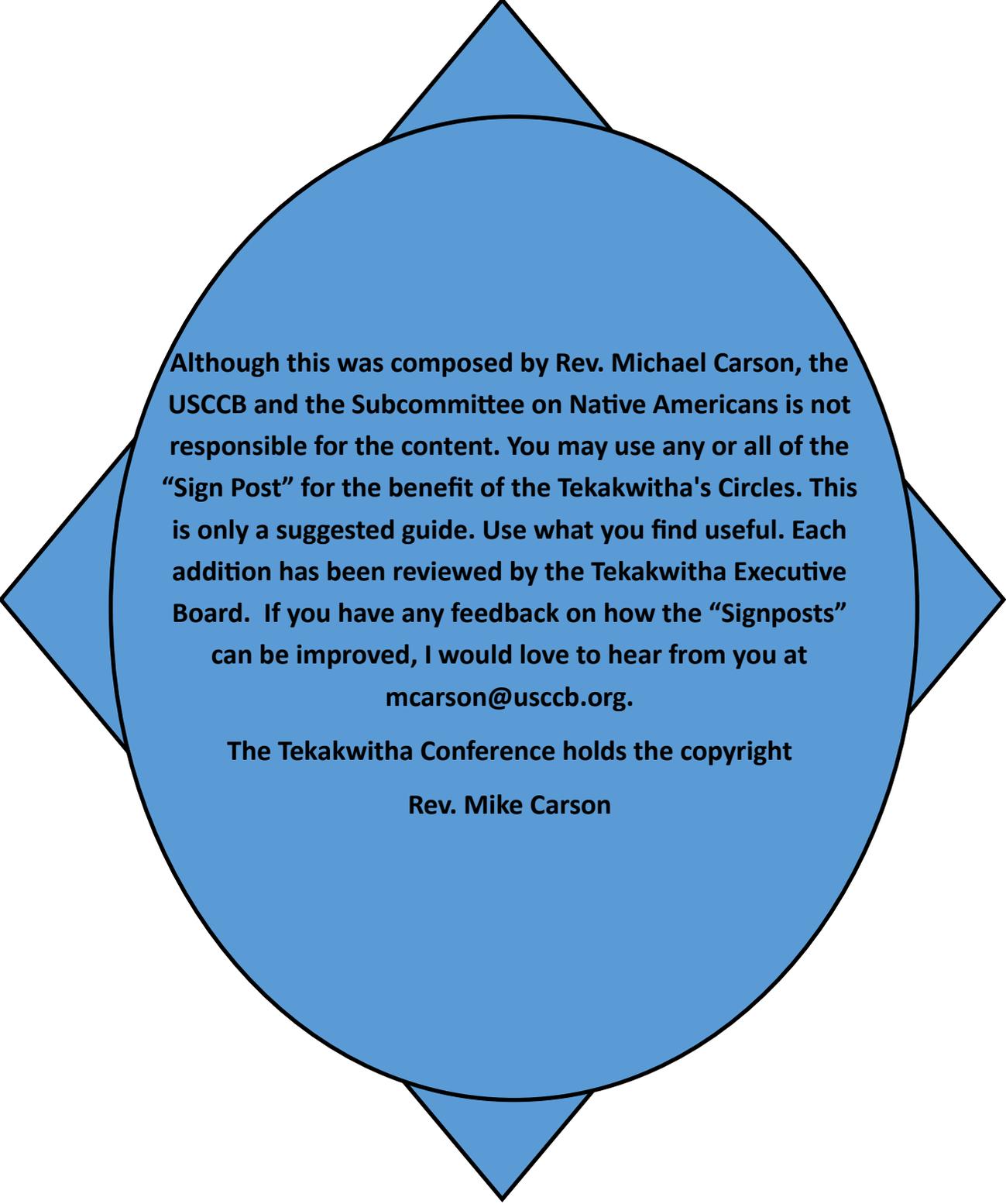


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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 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