

## June 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.



## Building on Strengths

I. In working with Native American/Alaska Native mental health and substance abuse experts over the last four years, I have become aware of the imperative to build up strengths that already exist in the Native American and Alaska Native communities. This is the best path to defend against destructive addictions and behaviors.

II. Before coming to the USCCB, I spent some time working with organizations that help train mentors for at-risk kids. The strategy that these organizations use to keep kids out of Juvenile Hall, gangs and to keep them in school is to find what makes them special. Increasing both internal virtues and community support will last longer and be more valuable than any type of coercive punishment.

III. Native American and Alaska Natives have been through incredible challenges throughout history. They have always had unique strengths that have led to their survival. As communities and individuals the key to overcoming any adversity is to know their strengths and how to build them.

### IV. Family

In my work with the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, I was impressed by how each of the families in the Parish cared for each other. If any family member was in trouble, they were there to support each other. The Catholic Church also prioritizes and cares for families as they are the core of love and compassion. It is the major way in which Christ shares his love and joy with his creation. When we talk about family, we are not just talking about a father, mother and children, we are also talking about aunts, uncles, grandfathers, grandmothers and cousins. Everyone has a great responsibility for compassion.



## V. Faith

Native Americans and Alaska Natives have always been a spiritual people. God and spirituality are very profound in every aspect of life, history and culture. Faith helps us to focus on our strengths and to know what is right and what is wrong. It is the bridge that helps us move from hopelessness to hope. The power of a community of believers is a power of healing, hope and security. By its very nature, faith in a community of believers generates compassion. In addition, faith is the origin of compassionate acts that transforms lives. That is also why the faith of the Catholic Church is essential in building strengths both in individuals and in communities. Studies have shown that a person who has a strong sense of faith is less likely to develop destructive behaviors. Christ as the divine physician, works with us to cure our destructive behaviors, but also works with us to prevent them in the first place.

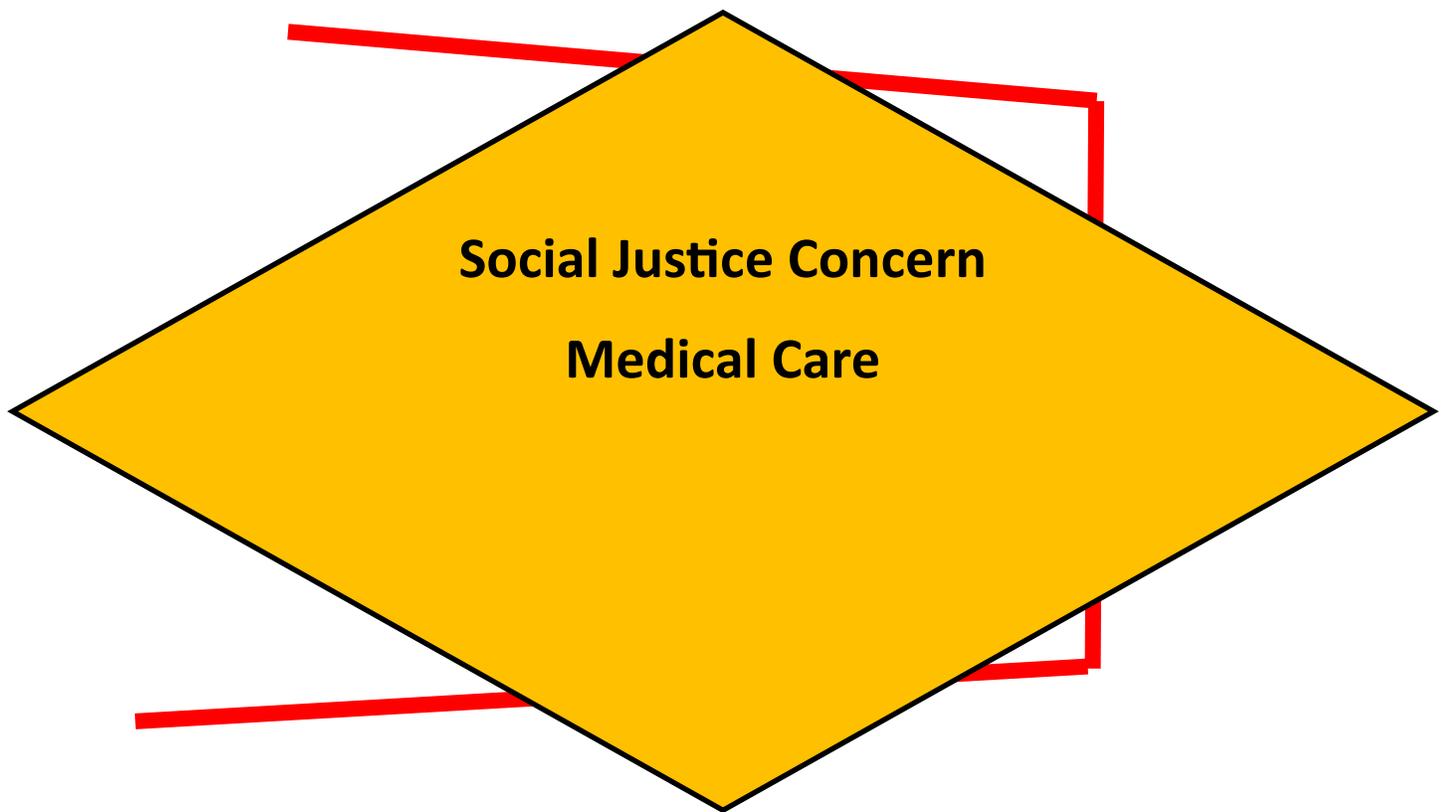
## VI. Cultures.

From scientific research, we know that children who are well versed in their culture, do better in school and life. When cultures are blended with faith, the union remains far stronger than both faith and cultures alone. Knowing that, traditions, attitudes and customs are some of the most important strengths that should be developed.

In my work in Native American ministry, one of the most important centers of compassion, wisdom and respect are the elders in the community. I have found that the elders in the community always work for the benefit of each community member, but especially for the young.

## VI. Reflection question:

How do you as a community and as individuals build up strengths that prevent destructive ways of living?



The I.H.S. (Indian Health Services) is the health agency for most Native Americans. In most treaties, the federal government has the responsibility for all medical care.

The concerns with the I.H.S include:

- 1) I.H.S does not cover all medical care so tribes have to fund the disparity.
- 2) Inadequate funding from the federal government.
- 3) They are overwhelmed by the high rates of diabetes, alcoholism, historical trauma and other medical problems.
- 4) Long lines and wait for medical services.
- 5) Most Natives live in large cities where the I.H.S. has limited presence.

In what ways can my Tekakwitha Circle advocate for better health care for Native Americans/ Alaska Natives?

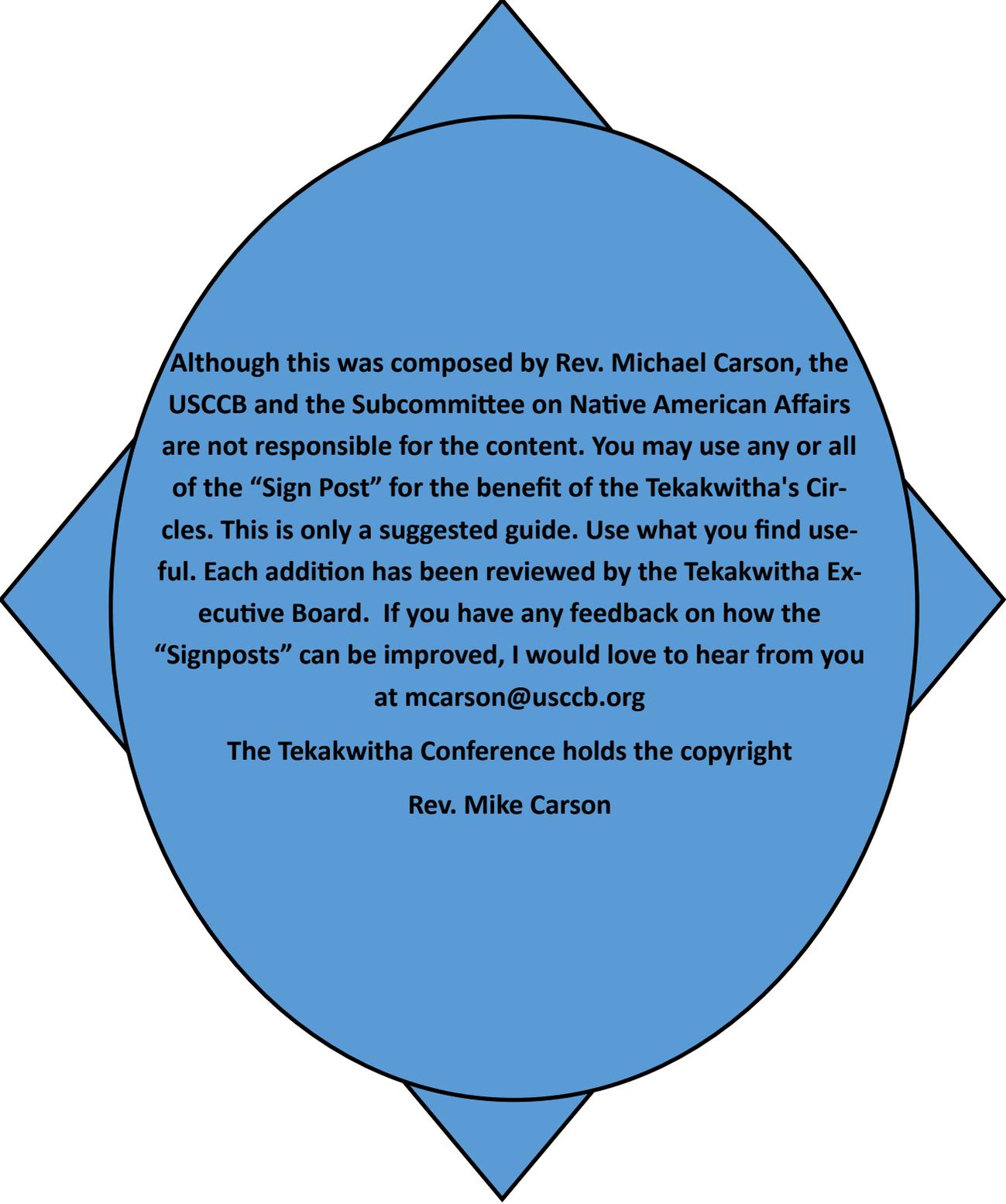


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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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 American Affairs are 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](mailto:mcarson@usccb.org)**

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**Rev. Mike Carson**