

August 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.



Native American Indian Culture and Significance of Feathers

by Charlene Patton

A feather is not just something that falls out of a bird of the sky, it means much more. The feather symbolizes trust, honor, strength, wisdom, power, freedom and more. To be given a feather is to be handpicked out of the rest of the men and women in the tribe – it is like getting a gift from a high official.

When a feather falls to the earth, Native Americans believe that the feather carries the energy of its former attachment on a bird to a living being. Feathers are perceived as gifts from the sky, the sea, and the trees. Feathers arrive unexpectedly, but not without purpose.

Native American culture, so closely tied to the natural elements, is blended with our Catholic faith. An odd pairing to some, there is much common ground: Ritual, ceremony, spirituality.

Symbolism of feathers often refers to ascension and spiritual evolution to a higher plane. Feathers were worn by Native American Chiefs to symbolize the communication with the Holy Spirit and to express their celestial wisdom. In the American Indian culture feathers represent the power of thunder, air, and wind.

In Christianity feathers represent virtue. Feathers symbolize charity, hope and faith.

Feathers mean travel or the ability to move more freely in life. White feathers indicate innocence of a fresh start in a spiritual sense.

If a Native American Indian is given Golden or Bald Eagle feathers, it is one of the most rewarding items they can ever be given. Indians believe that eagles have a special connection with the heavens since they fly so high. Many Native American Indians believe that if they are given a feather, it is a symbol from above.



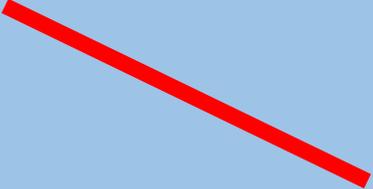


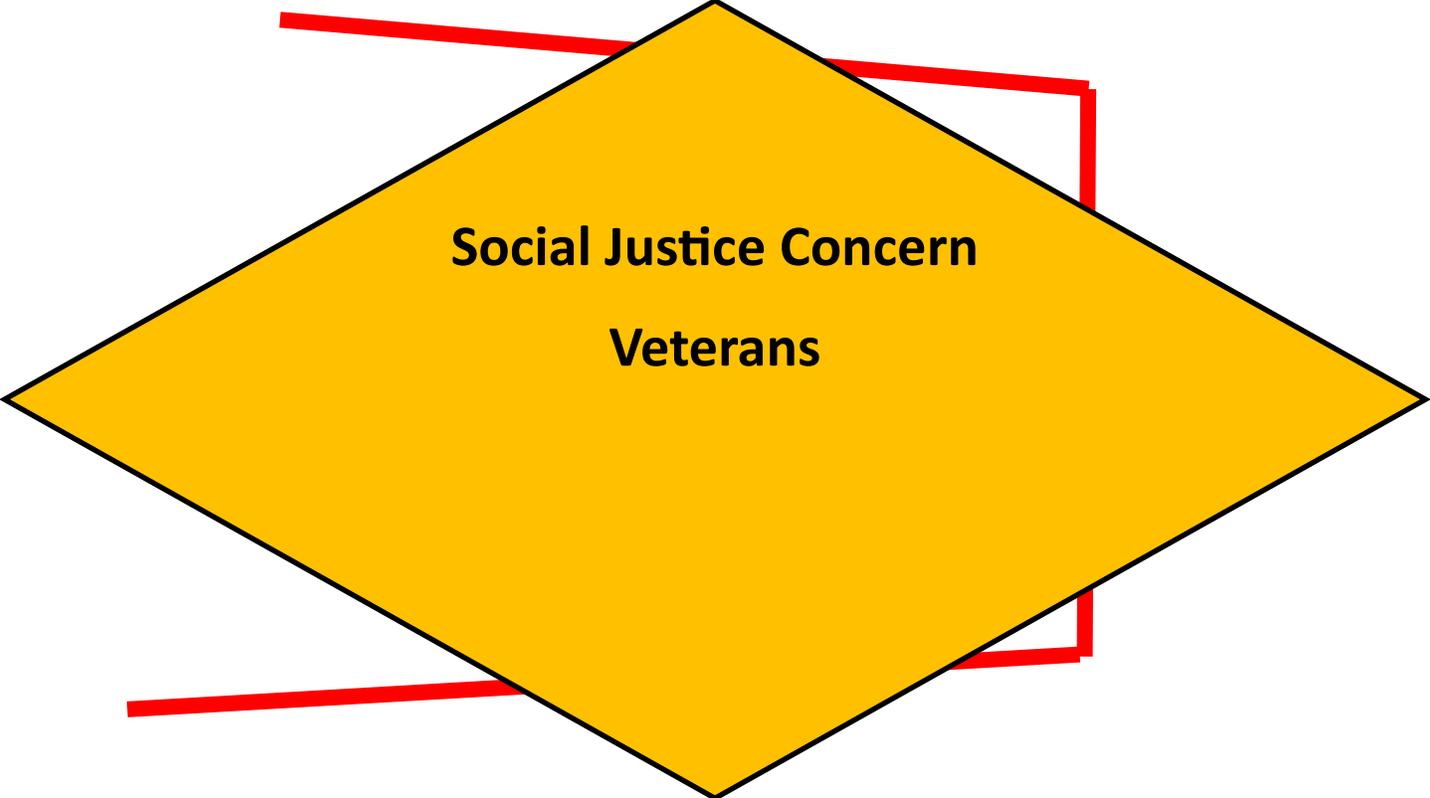
When a Native American Indian received a feather, he must take care of it, and many hang the feather up in their homes. It is disrespectful to hide it away in a drawer or a closet. A Native American Indian is given a feather to hold onto or to wear, and if they hold the feather, they must put it out for everyone to see. This will be a constant reminder of how to behave. An eagle feather is a lot like the American flag. It must be handled with care and dignity and can never be dropped on the ground. Feathers may be the ultimate angelic sign. Although feathers come in all different sized and colors, they are amazing signs because they are directly connected with the thought, prayer, or question that you have in mind. Many believe that if you find a feather, it was left by angels. Feathers are often signs of your own level of faith.

Feathers signify honor and connect the owner with our Creator and the bird that the feathers came from.

Prayer Feathers are used in healing and smudging ceremonies. Prayer Feathers are also used in cleansing and directing smoke (similarly to incense used in during the Catholic Mass), to purify and protect physical objects and spirits. Prayer Feathers carry your words, thoughts and feeling to the Great Spirit, our Lord and Creator. When looking at your Prayer Feather, your prayers are again sent on your behalf to the Great Spirit in Heaven, our Heavenly Father, our Lord and our Creator.

Written by: Charlene Patton





Social Justice Concern Veterans

Native Americans and Alaskan Natives serve at a greater rate than any other cultural family. They are also held in a high regard in the Native American and Alaska Native cultures for their commitment, bravery and self-sacrifice. They deserve our respect and support to make sure they receive all of what they were promised.

- 1) Lack of Veteran Affairs facilities and other resources on reservations.
- 2) Lack of translators for elders in Native languages, especially those who are suffering from head trauma.
- 3) There is a need for cultural competency in Native cultures at all levels of the Veterans Administration.
- 4) Lack of coordination between the Indian Health Services and the Veterans Administration.
- 5) There is a lack of information specific to Native American/Alaska Native Veterans. This cultural specific information could be used to help improve the health and lives not only of Veterans, but the rest of Native communities.

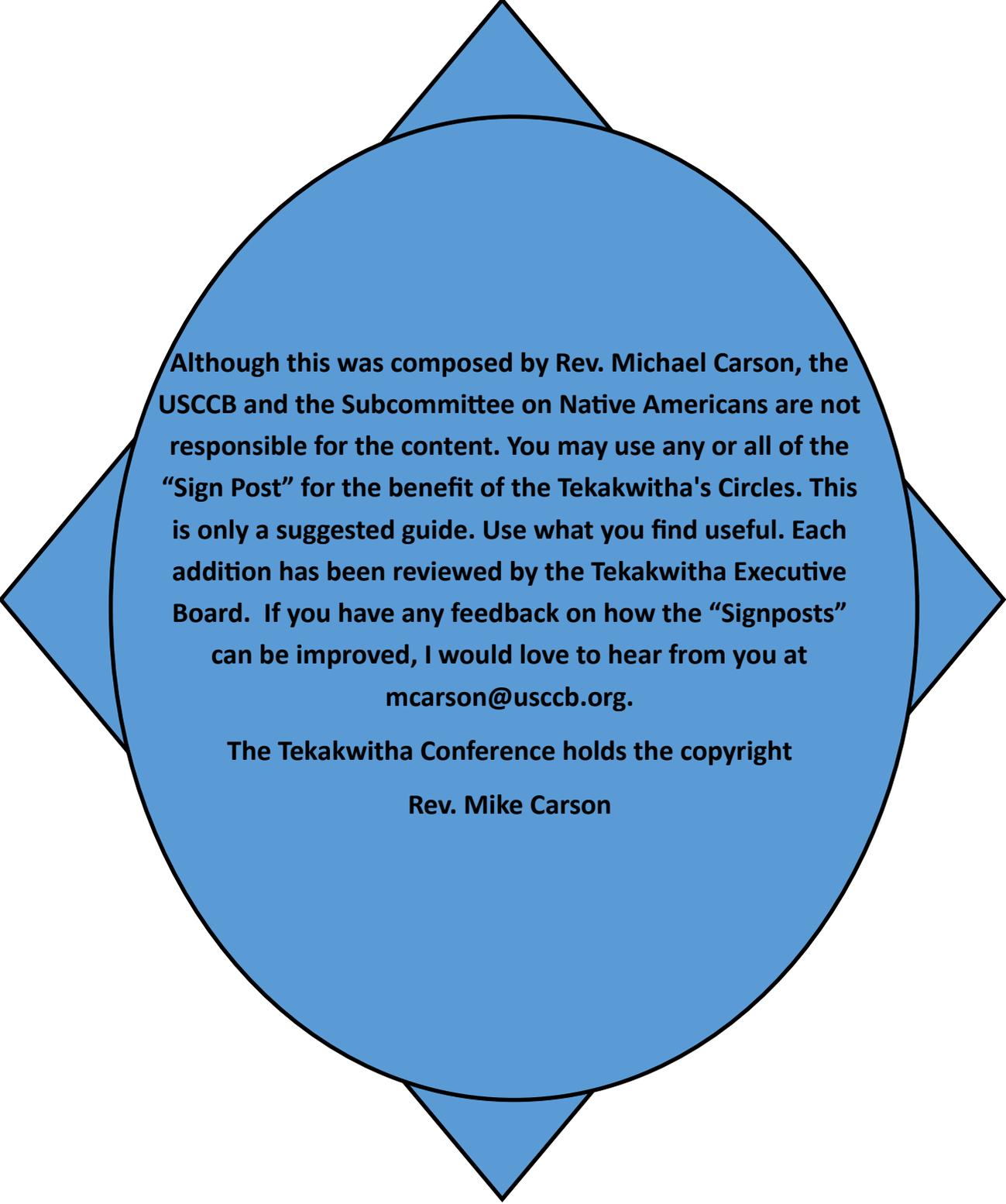


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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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 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.

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Rev. Mike Carson