

May 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

Spring

East

Yellow

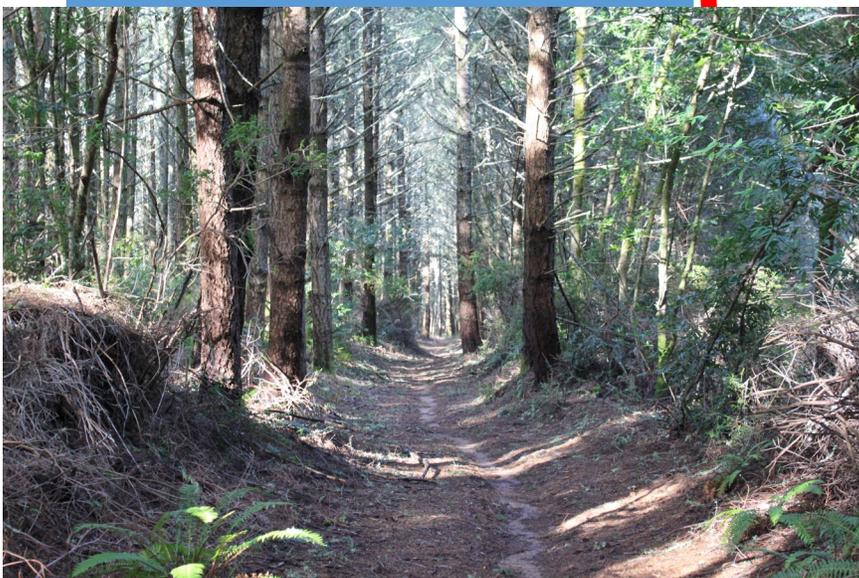
Sin/ Apathy, Sloth

Fruits of the Holy Spirit/ Faith/

Goodness /Modesty

Gifts of the Holy Spirit/

Understanding/



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.

Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk

There are three aspects of Saints that directly affect our lives. We look to them to emulate their heroic virtue, we pray to them to pray for us, and they are a visible sign of God's grace in the world.

There have been many commentaries of Servant of God Nicolas Black Elk. Many of these commentaries touch on Black Elk's faith and spiritual life. Even in his spiritual life there are many dimensions such as his historic virtue. In this article will be focusing on the historic virtue that we can learn from and imitate. There are five basic areas where Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk's virtue is demonstrated to us. In this way, we better respond to what Christ asks of us in our lives.

The joining of Native culture and Catholic Faith.

Since the time Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego, the Holy Spirit has been searching ways to unify Native faith and culture. Nicholas Black Elk, Servant of God is from the Oglala Lakota Tribe. He demonstrated that the Catholic faith can live well and conformably in a Native cultural context.

As Native Catholics witness to the Tribal and wider communities of the Catholic faith, sometimes their might be a feeling of separateness, or that the faith is less than authentic to the Native Experience. Black Elk's life proved the opposite to this feeling.

Leadership

Another aspect of Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk's life is leadership. Leadership, as lived out by Christ, is that of compassionate service. Black Elk's healing work starts with his lineage. His work of healing comes from a long line of Lakota healers. In his early life, he learned that healing is tightly linked to helping others, both physically and spiritually. Not only was his life devoted to alleviating suffering, but also pointing the way to God's love and compassion.

Adaptability

Servant of God Nicholas Back Elk lived through the most traumatic times for both the Lakota and for Natives in general. The Lakota went from a Native Nation covering five states to a people in a trustee relationship on reservations. Throughout these obstacle and tragedies, Black Elk adapted to ways that God was calling him to help others.



Love of Christ

The most important aspect of Saint Nicholas Black Elk's life was his love for Christ. It is that love that motivated him to be one of the greatest evangelizers in Native communities. The love for God did not begin with his conversation with the Jesuits. This love was shaped and transformed by the Holy Spirit throughout his life. The Jesuits aided this virtue in witnessing Black Elk's experiences and visions as they related to Christ. Through them, his healing ministry was transformed by the grace and power of Christ.

The need to evangelize

We all share the call to evangelize by our baptismal call. Christ wants all of us to take this mandate to heart. It is also a call that lasts our entire life. We are called to be missionaries wherever we find ourselves. We look to those who have taken this call enthusiastically. This is a basic virtue that allows the Body of Christ to increase and expand. This virtue also helps the plan of salvation to work to include all of creation. Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk was confronted with considerable difficulties to carry out his mission. His dedication to Christ was a witness to his fellow Lakota and all Natives. He showed us the way to be both Native and Catholic.

Questions:

What aspect of Black Elk's life responds to my life?

How can I teach about Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk in my church, school, or community?

How can I use Black Elk's virtues to improve my life, family and church?



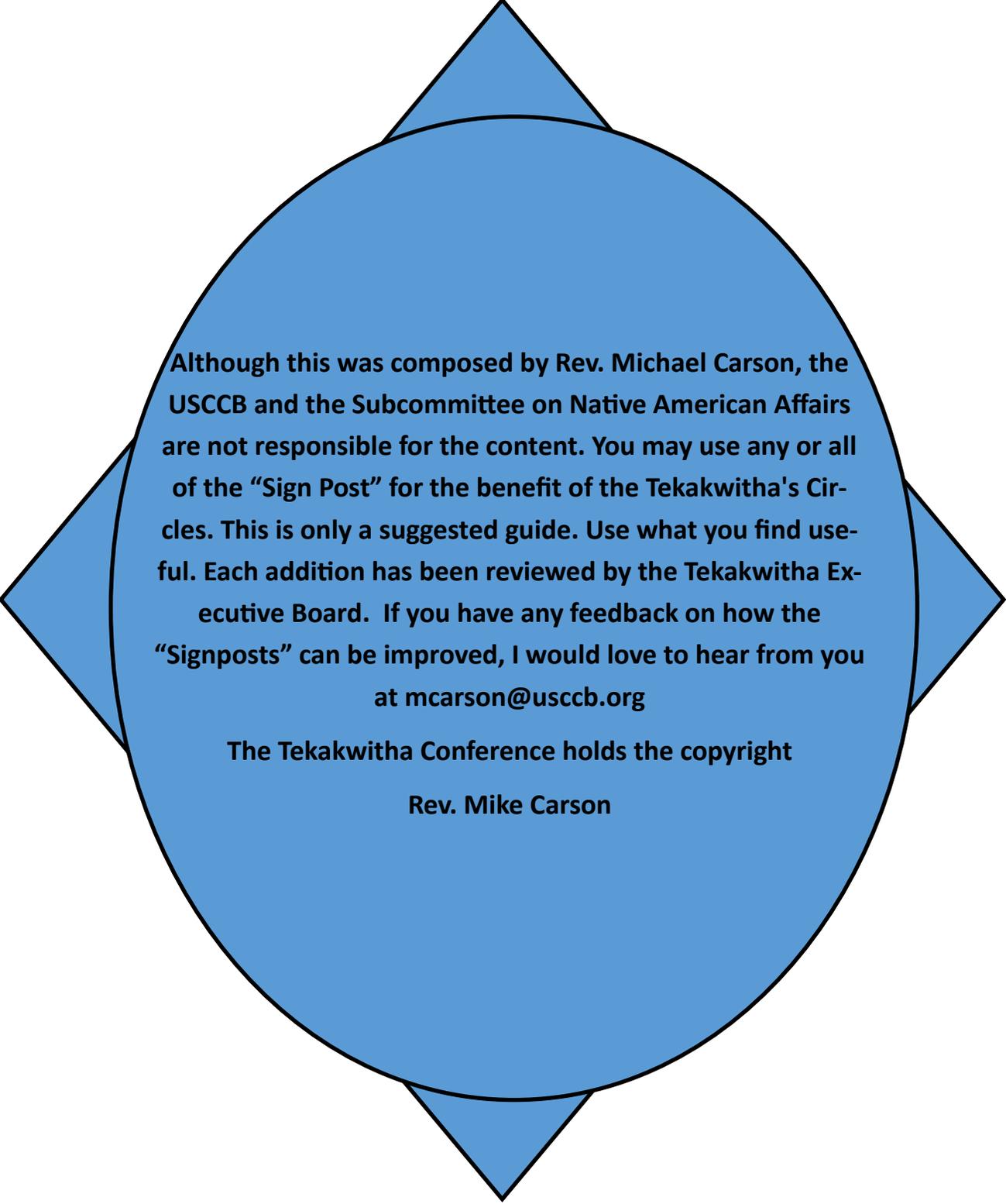


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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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'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