

February 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. May she who sought out Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament lead us

DIRECTION

Winter

North

Black

Sin/ Hopelessness- Despair

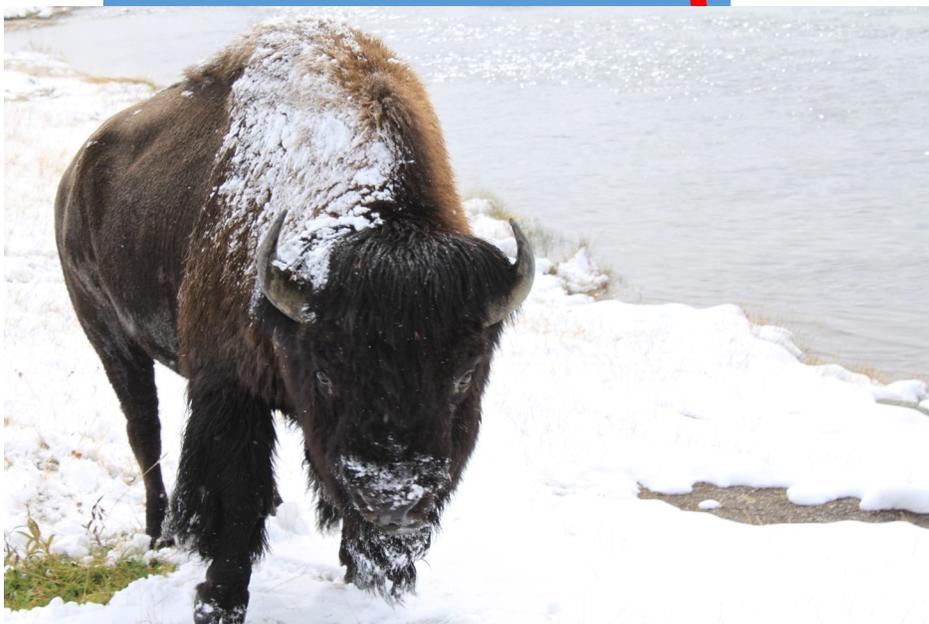
Fruits of the Holy Spirit

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.

Discussion Item

The Problem of Federal Incarceration of Juveniles in Native American Communities



For most of the country's reservations, the federal government has jurisdiction for the investigation, prosecution and incarceration of crimes involving violence, drug offense and other major offenses, including crimes involving juvenile offenders. That is the major reason why out of all the cultural groups, Native American kids are vastly overrepresented in the federal criminal justice system. Native Juvenile Offenders are more likely to be sent to prison than their non-Native counterparts. They are more likely to have longer prison sentences. They are also less likely to have after-incarceration services.

This overrepresentation of Native American juveniles has some unique challenges for those who are addressing federal juvenile incarceration.

- 1) The federal criminal justice system does not have a juvenile component. Therefore, many laws that are addressed to adults are applied to juveniles increasing incarceration time.**
- 2) The federal government does not have juvenile detention centers and must contract out juvenile incarceration to states, thereby placing juveniles a long way from home.**
- 3) The federal government does not have in-depth after incarceration care for youthful offenders.**

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- 3) The federal government does not have in-depth after incarceration care for youthful offenders.**
 - 4) Native American cultural elements are lacking with federal incarceration of Juveniles.**
 - 5) Because of jurisdictional issues, sometimes juvenile offenders become lost between tribal, state and federal authorities.**
 - 6) Although the federal government has been looking at the contract that it has with state authorities that house juvenile offenders on their behavior, treatment of Native American juveniles very wildly by what state is contracted to house the offender.**

Native American youth have great challenges more than the federal criminal justice system. Poverty, challenges to the family structure and an inadequate school. Our faith invites us to journey with the most vulnerable, especially with the young. We are also challenged by our faith to develop better ways to transform youth lives.



**Discussion Questions:
Federal Incarceration of
Native American
Youth**

- 1) What are the programs in your own tribe or community help juvenile offenders reintegrate in the community?
- 2) How are families and community effected by the federal incarceration of juveniles?
- 3) What are the causes of youth crime and how can I be part of the solutions?
- 4) What help does my faith community help those incarcerated? How can I start a program in my Catholic church?
- 5) Do my tribal, community leaders know about the problems associated with federal incarnation of Native youth? How do I inform them?

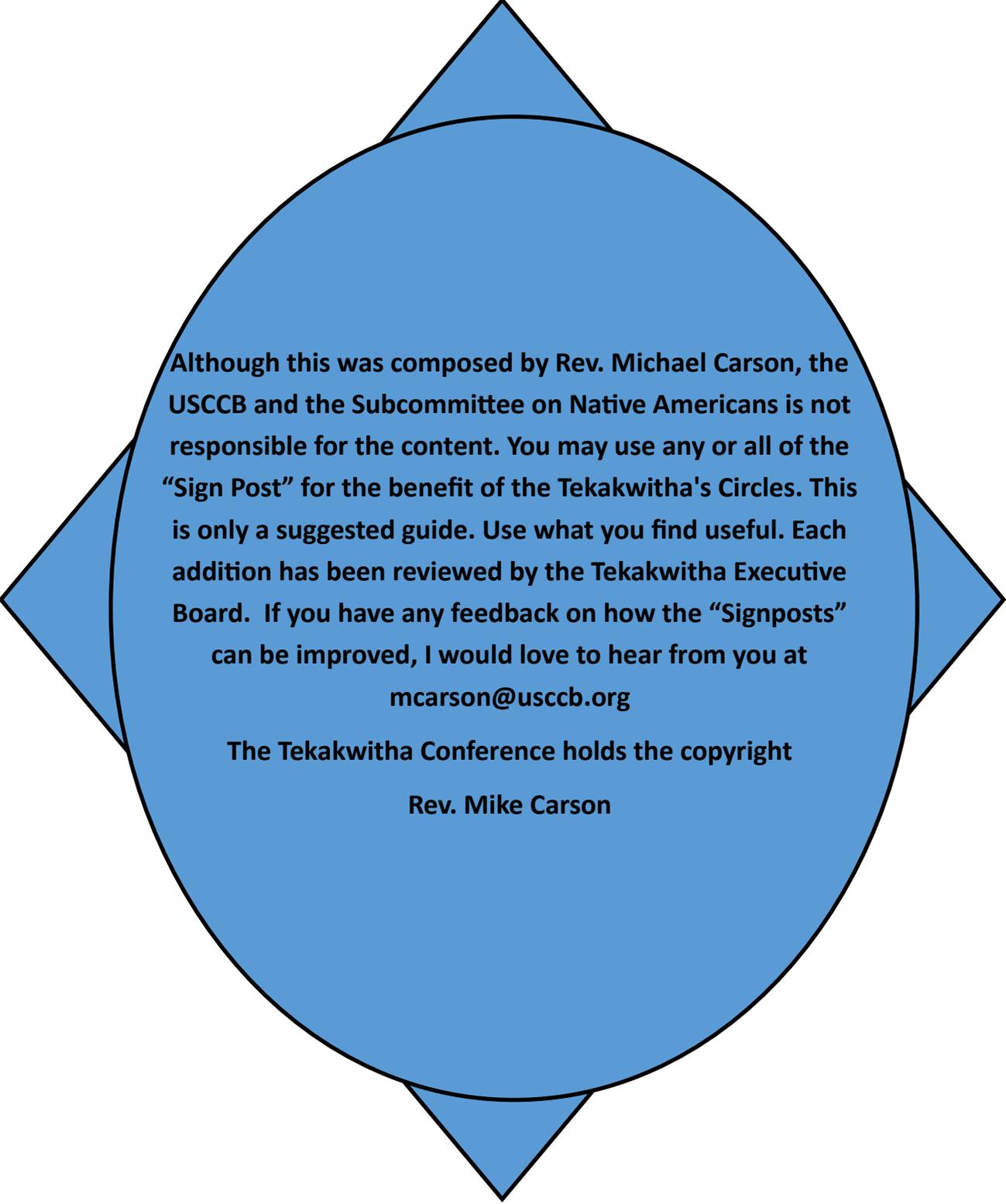


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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 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