

Signpost

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November



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.

Amen

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 into this circle.

Direction:

Fall

West

Blue

Sin - Self Centeredness/Greed/Covertness

Fruits of the Holy Spirit - Charity/Kindness/Chasity

Gifts of the Spirit - Good Counsel

Topic:

Pastoral Framework

Part Three: A Call for Reconciliation

Pastoring Native Catholics

During his Apostolic visit to the United States in 2015, Pope Francis canonized St. Junípero Serra in Washington D.C. Following the Mass of the Canonization, the Pope met with a group of California Native Americans descended from families who built each of the nine missions established by St. Junipero Serra. In a closed meeting, he listened to them, encouraged them, and assured them that he heard their concerns. In his homily that day, the Holy Father stated, “Junípero sought to defend the dignity of the native community, to protect it from those who had mistreated and abused it. Mistreatment and wrongs today still trouble us, especially because of the hurt which they cause in the lives of many people.” The Church also desires to share this concern through a trauma-informed response to the wounds Indigenous members are currently suffering.¹

In 2019, the Black and Indian Mission Office and the USCCB Subcommittee on Native American Affairs held a series of listening sessions, in which Native Catholic leaders from throughout the country spoke to a group of nine bishops about issues their communities face.²

Additionally, in 2022 the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and the USCCB’s Subcommittee on Native American Affairs published a joint report titled Catholic Native American Study.³ The study describes the issues brought forward by Indigenous leaders, centered

¹ Pope Francis, Homily, Holy Mass and Canonization of St. Junípero Serra, Washington, DC, September 23, 2015, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150923_usa-omelia-washington-dc.html.

² See, for example, Andy Orosco, “Listening Session 4: Importance of Acknowledging Past Wrongs Toward Indigenous People Associated with the California Mission System and a Better Explanation of the Canonization of St. Junípero Serra,” 44-46, in Black and Indian Mission Office and the USCCB Subcommittee on Native American Affairs, *Listening Session*, March 2019, Phoenix, AZ

on the themes of healing and reconciliation, the family, the sacraments, social issues and evangelization.

This Pastoral Framework discusses the first two themes in Part Three. Part Four covers the third theme, and Part Five discusses the last two.

Commentary:

The first part quotes Pope Francis in the need to be both watchful and willing to combat injustices against Natives. This is all our responsibility, especially the Church. This vehemence and vigilance are especially needed because of different attempts to marginalize Native and Indigenous communities.

In the recently held International Conference on Catholic Indigenous, we found that almost all the Indigenous communities in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States have the same concerns relating social justice. Among those concerns that have an effect the Indigenous are racism, poor and unsubstantial housing, little access to education and poverty levels.

The results from the listening session of the gathering of the national Catholic Native leaders in Phoenix was a pivotal moment in Native ministry. It was the first time that Catholic Native leaders with the bishops developed a path forward in ministry and cooperation. The results of the gathering are weaved throughout the Pastoral Framework. Most of the issues, concerns and action items come from this gathering. The Phoenix Summit was the seed planted that grew into a multilayered response to this very important Catholic community.

Discussion Questions for the Pastoral Framework:

- 1) What are some of the injustices that Natives face?
- 2) What are the reasons that the same social justice concerns are common in different countries?
- 3) What is the difference about what happened in Phoenix in 2017?
- 4) What are some of the concerns raised by the Native communities that the Church still has addressed and why?

Discussion Questions for the Church and Indian Country Podcast:

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.

Notice:

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Rev. Mike Carson