

**Signpost**

**Kateri Circles Vol. 7 Issue 7**

**July**



**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:**

**Summer**

**South**

**White**

**Sin-rage/ anger/ lust**

**Fruits of the Holy Spirit-Patience/Peace/ Self Control**

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit- Wisdom /Knowledge**

**Topic:**

**Pastoral Framework  
Religious Education**

Indigenous Peoples have shown a great desire for more catechetical instruction. Church leaders have various means to satisfy the right and obligation of Indigenous Peoples to a Christian education. Catholic schools continue to be an effective way to provide religious education, despite low budgets and minimal staff. A Catholic school or even just an after-school program can be successful, no matter how big or small, so long as it forms missionary disciples. This formation can be accomplished by focusing primarily on deep prayer life and on the richness of the sacraments. The Church should also reassess how we teach youth, realizing that the Western style of classroom education does not always work best for Native learning.

Indigenous Peoples have strong oral traditions, and storytelling is a traditional way for Elders to anchor the younger generation to the past as a solid foundation for the future. This highly effective, traditional method of transmitting faith and culture has been lost in many Indigenous communities. Catholic schools and religious education programs, especially among the young, should encourage and support developing and reviving oral means of transmitting the faith.

There are many Native American traditions, practices, and beliefs that complement and are parallel to Catholic doctrine and that facilitate instruction in the faith. Among these are the recognition of a single God, the Creator, the inspiration of the Spirit, water as a source of cleansing and rebirth, the sacramental nature of creation, and the continuation of life after death.

Finally, local churches in collaboration with Native leaders should offer training in cultural sensitivity toward Native Peoples for clergy, consecrated religious and those in formation, seminarians, and lay ecclesial ministers, with special emphasis on and attention to the

Indigenous communities being served by the diocese/eparchy or other local Catholic communities.

### **Commentary:**

Native Catholic education has both played a central role in historical trauma and currently plays an important role in Native success. Reconciliation is meaningless unless the lessons learned have an impact on future ways of acting. The Pastoral Framework itself makes this imperative to learn from the past to transform the future throughout the document but especially in this section. It also highlights the need for Native Catholic education. Catholic Native schools on reservations act as a major conduit for Native children to enter into higher education. The American Indian Catholic Schools Network (AICSN) has been working over the last seven years to enrich and improve those schools that are within the network.

This section also underlines the need for Catholic education outside of Catholic schools. Passing on the faith is especially important when there seems to be relentless attacks on the faith. Throughout the document, it echoes the refrain that one can be both Catholic and Native. The words imply that there will be actions and work behind them. Everyone who works within Indian country has the mission to explain and to teach that Natives can be proud of both their faith and their Native identity especially with the young.

In the end of this section the subject of vocations are explored. The bishops have talked before about the need to have Native vocations. This is central to passing on the faith to the next generation. The Church needs to have Native bishops, priest, deacons and religious talking to Natives. In this there is a need for the Church to lead by example. When we welcome and encourage Native vocations, the Church is putting a special focus on the importance of Native ministry, that Native Catholics are as central part of the Church and are not subservient to any other cultural group. Native vocations are essential for the success of any evangelization and mission work.

### **Discussion Questions for the Pastoral Framework:**

- 1) How do I help Catholic schools on reservations?
- 2) How do I help explain the faith to the Native young?
- 3) How can I help foster Native vocations?
- 4) What are the resources that could help me in these missions?

### **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