

**Signpost**

**Kateri Circles Vol. 7 Issue 3**

**March**

**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:**

**Winter**

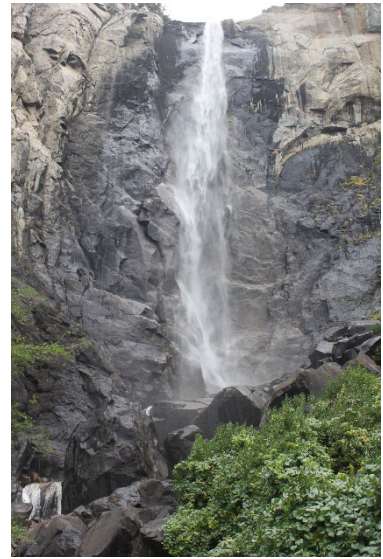
**North**

**Black**

**Sin - Hopelessness/Despair**

**Fruits of the Holy Spirit - Joy/Gentleness/Redemptive suffering**

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Fortitude/Fear of the Lord**



**Topic:**

**Pastoral Framework**  
**Sacred Music**

The liturgy should evoke both the loud voice and the whisper of God: “I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of rushing water or a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps” (Rev 14:2).

Music and singing have always played a central role in worship for Native Peoples and the Church alike. The Second Vatican Council recognized, “In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason, due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius.”<sup>1</sup> Singing is particularly appealing to Indigenous Americans, because singing recalls cultural ceremonies while moving people’s hearts toward worshipping God. For example, bells or traditional instruments like gourds, drums, and clapping sticks can be used at the moment of consecration to draw the ear to the importance of the moment. Language is central to preserving cultural identities, so when approved by the Church, Native languages can also be incorporated judiciously at Mass, such as in the preaching, and the prayers of the faithful, and in other celebrations of the Sacraments.

As the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments explained in *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*:

The adaptation or inculturation of a particular pious exercise should not present special difficulties at the level of language, musical and artistic forms, or even of adopting certain gestures. While at one level pious exercises do not concentrate on the essential elements of the sacramental life, at another, it has to be remembered, they are in many cases popular in origin and come directly from the people, and have been formulated in the language of the

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 119.

people, within the framework of the Catholic faith. ... It is especially necessary to ensure that those pious exercises undergoing adaptation or inculturation retain their identity and their essential characteristics. In this regard, particular attention must always be given to their historical origin and to the doctrinal and cultic elements by which they are constituted.<sup>2</sup>

### **Commentary:**

What makes music sacred? First we have the tradition and culture. The songs that we use at Mass should uplift the assembly and underscore what is going on at Mass. The songs chosen are culturally based. They are taken from the Native cultures to lift the heart and spirit to God. The songs chosen at Mass need to have meaning of what is important to those who participate in liturgy, not just the songs that the presider or the liturgical coordinator think might work, but the songs chosen need to be in dialogue with who the Mass serves. Second, the instruments used need to have a cultural base. Instruments that are foreign to the culture bring the people away from Christ and could be a distraction. Cultural sensitivity must be employed to make sure the instruments are appropriate and add to the liturgy. Last, the quality of music and how it is presented is another factor that either results in a spiritual encounter with Christ or could do the opposite and push people away from Church.

Studies have shown that there are three aspects of Mass that will help people come back. They are hospitality, preaching and music. Out of all of the things we do as a Church, if we do not spend time, effort and resources in those three aspects, then we will not have a vibrant and growing Church.

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

- 1) How important is authentic cultural expression through music?
- 2) From your tradition or Tribe, what are the songs that bring you to a spiritual and holy state?
- 3) What instruments are part of your cultural tradition?
- 4) What musical expression has worked in the past? What do you think will work in the future?

### **Discussion Questions for the Church and Indian Country Podcast:**

### **Closing prayer:**

From the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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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