

**Signpost**

**Kateri Circles Vol. 8 Issue 2**

**February**



**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**

### **CONCERNS OF URBAN NATIVES**

As bishops of the United States, we recognize that the majority of Indigenous Peoples in the country reside outside reservations. We want to develop ministries that reach Native communities and individuals wherever they reside.

The needs of the Native American population on reservations and our ministry to them is a pressing concern. They are often the most neglected and overlooked citizens of our nation and our Church. But we must also care for the large urban Native population. Seven of ten Native American are urban Indians, many of whom have lost all ties to the reservations but still experience the traumas of their history.

Pastorally, it is also essential to understand regional dynamics. The displacement and migration of Native Peoples due to reservations, boarding schools, and other circumstances have led to many Native People residing outside of their traditional lands. Awareness of Native Peoples' history in a given region is important to understand and is sometimes neglected in discussions. Additionally, pastoral awareness and sensitivity are needed in understanding regional dynamics as not all Native Peoples belong to a state or federally recognized Tribe or Band. In this way, the Church offers a unique place of acknowledgment to all Indigenous People. Many Indigenous Peoples have found economic and educational opportunities in urban centers and have contributed positively to regional government and are thriving. Yet many others, facing impoverished conditions in rural areas, have left for urban areas only to find deprivation there, too. In cities around the United States, church and community organizations are working for the physical and spiritual support of Native communities residing there. These programs provide food, primary health care, housing assistance, legal services, job-seeking and Native art training programs, and opportunities for members to engage in culturally meaningful community-building activities. Some also work to prevent or alleviate Native American homelessness. We advocate for programs that integrate Native languages, cultural elements, and traditions as ways to improve self-awareness, strengthen Indigenous identity, and contribute positively to healing and social transformation.

**Commentary:** As the Pastoral Framework points out, most Natives do not live on reservations, but in urban areas. In fact, at certain times in history, there was an active effort to move Natives away from reservations into big cities.

Why this is important, many Services for Natives are geared toward reservations. Even those few services in urban centers are difficult to utilize.

Another threat to Natives in urban areas is the problem of a loss of culture. Sometimes Natives in urban areas are seduced by "pan-Nativism" or seduced by the urban culture. When they return to visit their tribe, there is a disconnect about who they have become.

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

- 1) What are the dangers of adopting cultural elements that are foreign to your tribe or culture?
- 2) What are the services available to urban Natives?
- 3) How do the concerns of urban natives are the same as Natives on reservations?
- 4) How are they different?

### **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:**

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 “Signpost” 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](mailto:mcarson@usccb.org) The Tekakwitha Conference holds the copyright.

Rev. Mike Carson