

**Signpost**

**Kateri Circles Vol. 8 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**

***EVANGELIZATION***

*The Catholic Church in the United States has a rich history of Indigenous Catholics with enduring faith who have set examples of holiness for the entire community of believers. Many early Indigenous converts to Catholicism faced persecution and even martyrdom for their beliefs, either within their own communities or from others outside their communities. The Martyrs of La Florida stand as shining examples of Native Americans who willingly died before they would renounce their faith in Christ. St. Kateri Tekakwitha was ostracized from her family for her Catholicism, yet she did not let go of the hope she found in her faith. What led these men and women to hold onto their faith despite persecution?*

*These Indigenous Catholics' natural attunement to the divine and their sense of the common good led them not just to communicate the Good News of salvation to their villages and Tribal communities, but also to defend their newfound dignity as children of God, even to the point of giving up their lives. Once an individual has had a true encounter with the person of Jesus Christ through the sacraments of the Church and the proclamation of the kerygma and has received proper instruction about the mysteries of the faith (catechesis), he or she finds it very difficult to renounce the truth of God's love for all humankind. This knowledge becomes a source of true joy and life — not just for these individuals but for their entire community.*

*The Church must empower Indigenous members by providing the necessary formation and resources to carry on their mission of evangelization. The Church today can learn from the strength, love, and zeal of the great missionaries to the Indigenous populations of this continent. 56 Evangelization*

*This learning connects the Church of today with the important mission work of the past. The truth about these great figures must be shared, especially amid a culture that seeks to discredit them. The inclusion of accurate histories of missionaries and their efforts with Native American communities as a part of our religious instruction today can also help to bring attention, open discussion, and provide opportunities to strengthen relationships with Native Peoples.*

*Programs should be established to form and allow ordained and lay missionaries once again to support the mission churches that minister among Indigenous communities. This call to mission needs to be accompanied by the development of opportunities for local Native leaders to share the faith within their communities.*

*With these programs, we must take special care to ensure that Native families are fully vested in being the domestic church. In its exercise of faith development, the family, especially the community Elders, has a special place in transmitting the knowledge of Christ as a precious gift to the next generation.*

*The Church must convey the truth that its doors are wide open to Native Peoples and their families. Like a loving mother, the Church must reach out constantly and creatively to her children, especially those most in need, and remind them that no one is hidden from the Father's loving and merciful gaze. Those lacking evangelization and instruction in their Catholic faith are often challenged when they encounter non-Catholic spiritualities that seek their attention.*

*Also, among Native communities can be found a significant movement to abandon Christianity and turn to traditional Indigenous religions. Many Native Catholics have shared with us that they are feeling this tension. Finding no adequate response to the diverse threats that challenge their beliefs, they seek a beacon to guide them to calmer seas. Only the Church can provide this light, who is Jesus himself. The Church must therefore increase efforts to evangelize and instruct Native Catholics, particularly by empowering Indigenous catechists, and must use as a lamp the bright example of holy Native men and women who have preceded us in the faith. Indigenous Peoples desire to have members of their community actively involved in Catholic ministry in their dioceses. Evangelization 57*

*The most effective means of evangelization remains personal invitation. Outreach to inactive Catholics, those who are homebound or hospitalized, those who are imprisoned, and any Native Catholic who feels forgotten or abandoned is best accomplished when the Church trains Native Catholics and raises them into leadership positions in their parish community, as well as to the diaconate and the priesthood. The Church realizes that helping Native Peoples heal from the intergenerational wounds that still affect them is an important part of its ministry and a means of evangelization. Through the Word of God and the sacramental life, a welcoming and supportive Christian community can facilitate a personal encounter with Christ for those who most need the Divine Physician's healing.*

### **Commentary:**

Evangelization is the most important way lives are transformed. As the Church works with families and communities not only with actions but by example, social justice is expanded. Individuals who are grounded in both faith and culture do a lot better in life and in society. Evangelization has three major components that transformation.

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

### **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