

February Signpost

for the

GOOD RED ROAD



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.

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



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 onto this circle.



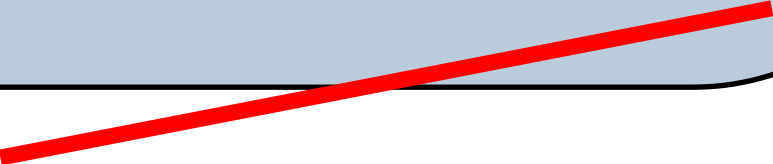
The Sacrament of Holy Orders

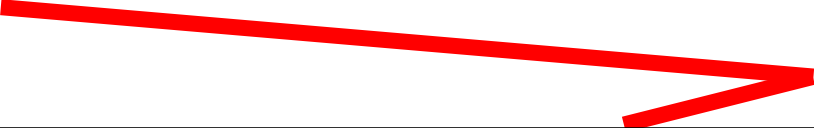
The Sacrament of Holy Orders along with the Marriage Sacrament is called a Sacrament of Vocation. A vocation is how you want to live out your life in relationship. In the marriage vocation, it is a spiritual relationship between a husband and wife. In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, it is a spiritual relationship with the people of God. In this relationship, it is Christ who does the calling forth. It is the Church's role to recognize the call and elevate the candidate to take on responsibilities in guiding the faithful.

In the early Church, the ministry of spiritual leadership depended on the Apostles or those who knew the apostles. Scriptures talk about the characteristics of the early church leaders as being charitable, preaching unity and concern for others. The year 70 marked a turning point of the Church. Those who knew Jesus were slowly dying out, leaving the Church to the second generation. Also Christianity became separate from Judaism. The Church spread into different lands and to different practices. Early Christians realized that the end times were not immediate, which meant that there would be a need for long term structures and individuals called and then trained to take on the leadership of the Church. There was also a question of authority. The early Church was concerned about who had the right and responsibility of teaching authoritatively in the name of Jesus. By the second Century bishops take on the responsibility in giving the early Church leadership and stability. Although Deacons have been around from the time of Paul, by the second century they become servants directly to the bishop. Presbyters, or elders, were the advisers to the bishop and also connected the celebration of the Mass. By the third Century, bishops attained their position through some form of election, together with a ritual of ordination that included prayer and the laying on of hands.

Under Constantine, the Church grew especially to rural areas. In order to handle this growth bishops began to send out presbyters to go out to evangelize away from the major cities. In the middle ages, the idea of a priest changed to view the ordained as not just leaders of prayers and sacraments, but as sacred persons.

Reacting to the Protestant Reformation, The Church stated that there is special authority given to priest and the time of ordination to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. More recent times, the Church has reinforced the idea that the priest is first a servant leader. His role is to celebrate the sacraments. Most importantly, he leads by example.





What does Holy Orders mean to the Native Communities?

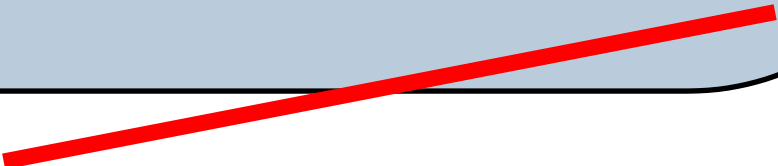
The Sacrament of Holy Orders not only is applied to the Priesthood, but also to the Diaconate as well. Unfortunately, there are very few Natives represented in the priesthood. There are many reasons for this, but it always comes down to getting the word out that Native communities are best served by Native priests. There are three ways to help Native vocations:

- 1) Present the priesthood and religious life as emerging from Catholic Native spirituality, rather than something that is different or foreign to the Native experience.
- 2) We need to encourage the few priests and religious to tell their vocation stories to inspire the young that are called.
- 3) We must make a special effort to support Native vocations in seminaries and houses of formation.

Many Native communities have a long history of leaders of the sacred and holy. From this rich tradition of spiritual leadership comes the need for Natives to minister to their own Native and Indigenous communities. From this tradition of spiritual leadership comes the seed of embracing the call of God for priesthood, the diaconate and men and women religious life. When a person from the Native communities embrace their call from God, they also embrace the centuries of their ancestors who have proclaimed the Holy Spirit.

Along with Native traditions of spiritual leadership, there are also the aspect of in a lot of Native cultures concerning sacrifice. The giving of yourself for the benefit of others is a key value that manifests in the healing especially in families. It is this healing part of leadership that is ingrained in many Native communities that make priesthood, religious life and the diaconate so important in the very life of Native ministry.

The last important aspect of vocations is to strengthen the willingness of diocesan priest already ordained to serve Native communities. This need is especially important when Religious orders are removing themselves from parishes in predominantly Native Catholic communities. The diocese has to fill those positions. Therefore so it is very important to enkindle a great desire among diocesan clergy to be fluent in Native cultures before they are assigned.





Human Trafficking

- 1) What are the signs that someone is a victim of human trafficking?
- 2) What techniques do human traffickers use to be unnoticed?
- 3) Why is human trafficking so destructive to its victims?
- 4) How are human trafficking related to missing women?
- 5) What are the reasons that human trafficking, missing and exploited women are such a problem with many reservations?
- 6) What programs are there in my tribe or diocese that work against human trafficking?
- 7) What resources are available to combat this crime?
- 8) How do I get involved?

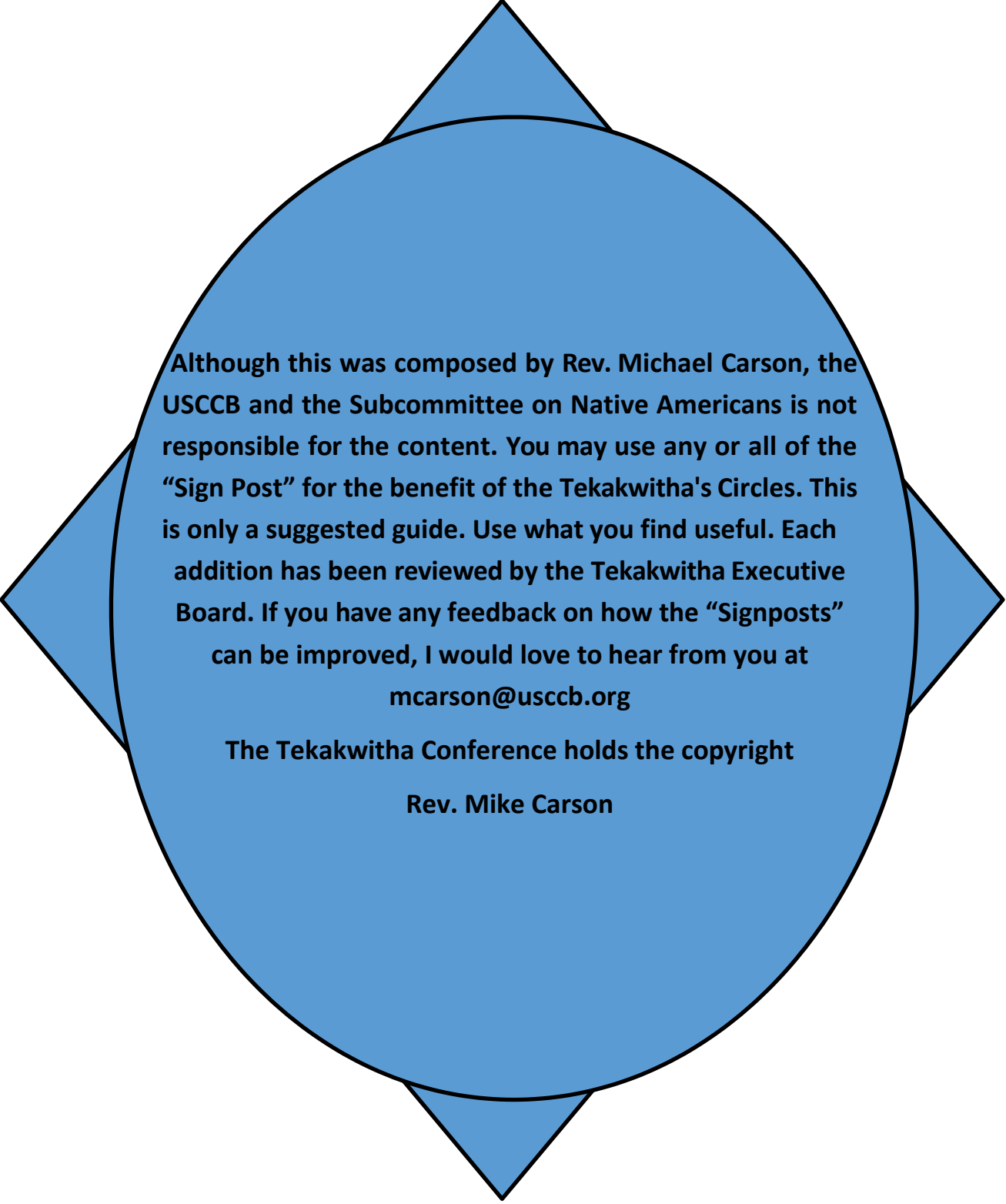


Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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.



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 “Sign Post” 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

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Rev. Mike Carson