

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. May she who sought out Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament lead us to similar reverence of the Eucharist so that, like Saint Kateri, our last word may be "Jesus, I love You."

DIRECTON

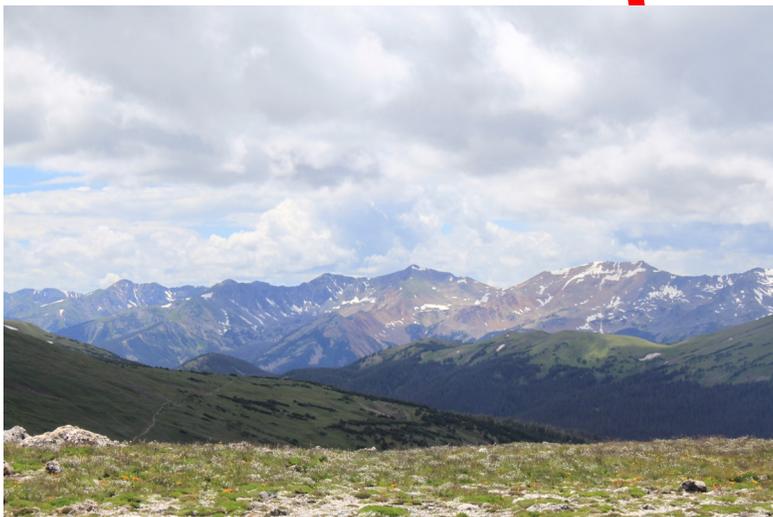
SPRING

EAST

Yellow/Blue

Virtue/ Compassion

Sin/ Greed



Who do we need to bring in the circle?

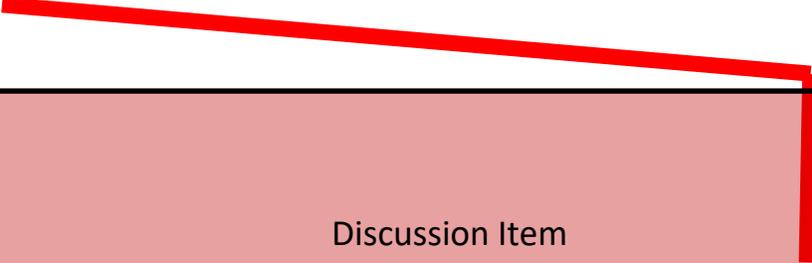
Who do we need to pray for:

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.



Discussion Item

How does cultures and faith come together in the Mass?

The source and summit of our faith is the Mass. There are a wealth of Catholic documents that explain what can be done in cultural inclusion of the Mass. From Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Pope Pius XII Encyclical *Evangelii Praecones* to Pope John XXIII *Princeps Pastorum*. Before having a dialogue about what cultural aspects to include in the Mass, it would be good to review these documents. I have included the major points of the most important document on cultural inclusions, *Varietates Legitimae*. While reading these documents keep in mind the following questions:

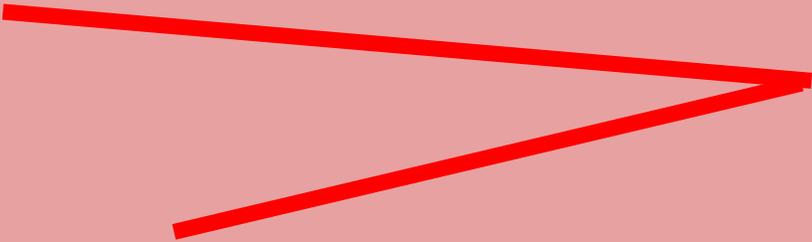
What are the goals that you want to accomplish?

How does what you want to do fit in the unity of the liturgy?

Who makes the decision to do what?

Before you approach your pastor, or bishop about including cultural items into the Mass, there are some things that you need to ask yourself. The most important is how the cultural inclusions will fit in the overall structure of the Mass, that is, how the pascal mystery is clearer, spiritual and is made manifest to the people assembled by the change that you want to make.

Make sure you have a game plan and base your arguments on Church documents.



Inculturation and Adaptation

Our Church is catholic—universal—because “she possesses the fullness of Christ’s presence and the means of salvation, and because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Glossary). The center of her life and her mission is the liturgy, “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 10). Because the Church has a mission to the entire world, she knows that the liturgy, and especially the Eucharist, must take root in different cultures, and so she must discern and welcome those cultural elements that are compatible with the truths of the Gospel as well as the signs and symbols that make up the liturgical celebration of these truths.

The Second Vatican Council began this process of discernment on inculturation in its *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, in which it formulated “norms for adapting the liturgy to the culture and traditions of people” (nn. 37-40). In 1994 these broad norms were developed in much greater detail in *Varietates Legitimae* (VL), (*The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation*), the Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution of the Liturgy (nn. 37-40). VL describes the different kinds of cultural adaptations that are permitted, who has the authority to make them, and the process of their approval. VL is divided into four major sections: I. The Process of Inculturation Throughout the History of Salvation; II. The Requirements and Preliminary Conditions for Liturgical Inculturation; III. Principles and Practical Norms for the Inculturation of the Roman Rite; IV. Areas of Adaptation in the Roman Rite. Here is a link to the complete document: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdwinclt.htm>

A key point for our discussion is that cultural adaptations must always be approved by the proper Church authority: first, the Apostolic See through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; second, within defined limits, the episcopal conference, which for us is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and third, in specific areas, the diocesan bishop (VL, no. 37).

What Adaptations Can We Make?

This brings us to a practical question. What cultural elements from Indigenous Catholics of North America can be introduced into the liturgy? I suggest we look at several areas.

Language

Currently liturgical books are only be published in Navajo, Choctaw, Pima-Papago and Lakota. However, indigenous languages can be used in other ways in the Mass, such as hymns, intercessions, the homily, and introductions, explanations, and announcements.

Music and Singing

According to the Instruction, “Musical forms, melodies and musical instruments could be used in divine worship as long as they ‘are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, and provided they are in accord with the dignity of the place of worship and truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful’” (no. 40). However, hymns and chants used in the Mass must be approved by the USCCB or the diocesan bishop (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 48).

Gestures and Posture:

The Instruction recognizes the importance of culturally meaningful and liturgically appropriate gestures and postures: “Each culture will choose whose gestures and bodily postures which express the attitude of humanity before God, giving them a Christian significance, having some relationship if possible, with the gestures and postures of the Bible” (no. 41). However, the introduction of different or additional gestures and postures not specified in the liturgical books must be approved by the USCCB and the Apostolic See.

Liturgical Art:

The Instruction also addresses the role of liturgical art. “Art in the Church, which is made up of all peoples and nations, should enjoy the freedom of expression as long as it enhances the beauty of the buildings and liturgical rites, investing them with the respect and honor which is their due. The arts should also be truly significant in the life and tradition of the people” (no. 43). Cultural adaptations regarding the construction and arrangement of churches must be approved by the diocesan bishop. Cultural adaptations regarding the materials of the altar and sacred furnishings such as the sacred vessels, and the appropriate materials, form and color for liturgical vestments must be approved by the USCCB and the Apostolic See.

Cultural Rites

Cultural elements or rites that are not part of the Roman Rite and are not included in the liturgical books should be celebrated before the Mass begins or after it concludes. Inserting them into the Mass requires the approval of the USCCB and the Apostolic See.



**Social Justice Thought for the Month:
Land Title Fractorization**

Land Title Fractorization happens when Native land can only be sold by those in the Native American family that occupied the land from the Dawes Act, or similar destructive legislation. Over time as more generations inherit the same land, the land title is divided up into smaller and smaller segments. With so many people owning the land, the land becomes worthless. There are some people who get 14 cents every year for that part of the land title that the own.

Some tribes are buying back the land that has been fractorized in this way. The difficulty can be getting all of the owners to sale their title.

Sometimes a non-profit cooperation is formed by all of the owners. Decisions are made by the elected cooperate offices and each person gets a share of the funds earned by the land.

Land Title Fractorization in one of the ways that poverty continues in and around reservations. Not only is the land not utilized, but it can not be used for collateral for loans.

Has your family been affected by Land Title Fracorization?

What can you do as a Catholic Native American Community to combat this problem?



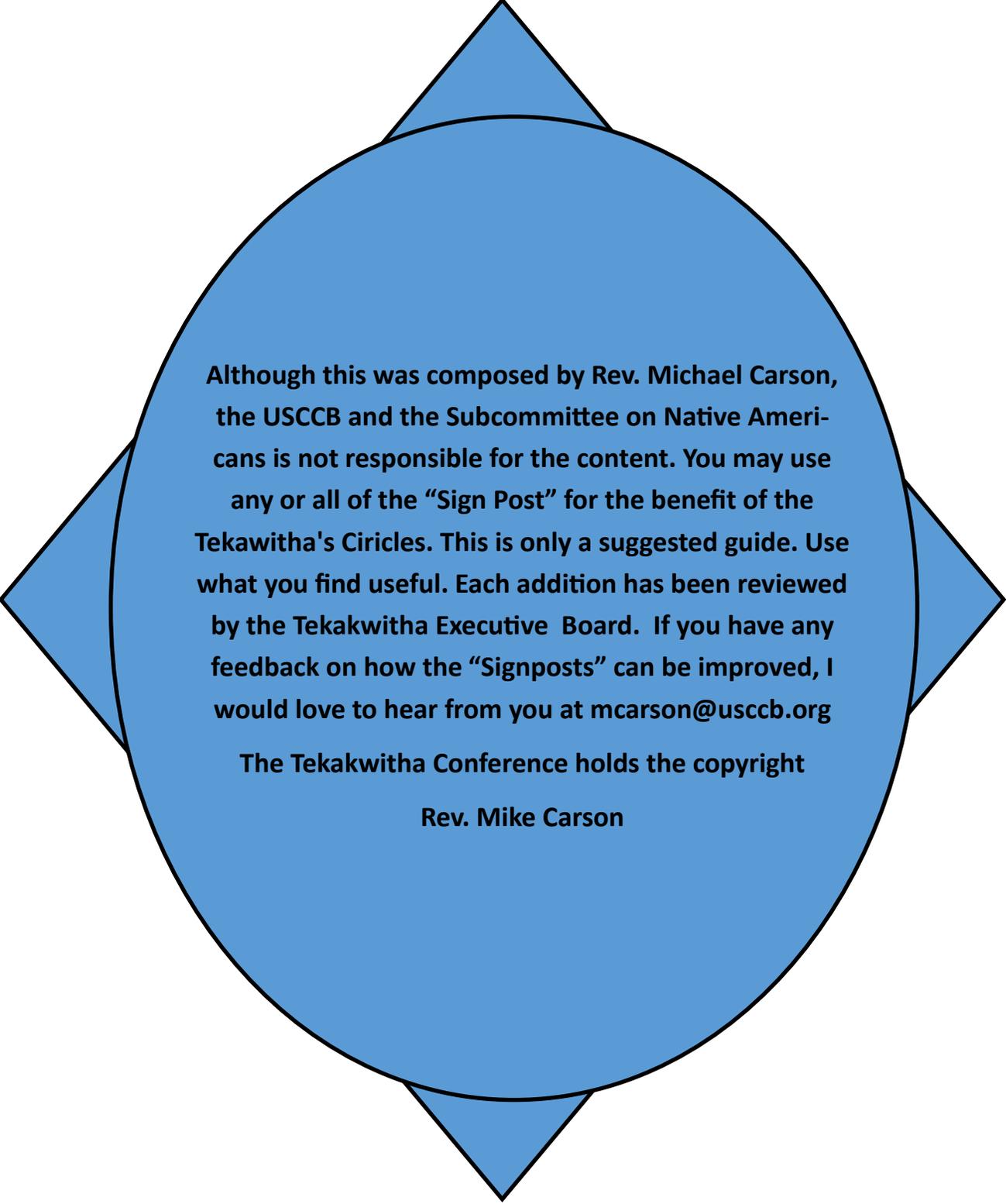
Closing prayer from the Black and Indian Mission Office:

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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 us 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 Tekawitha's Ciricles. 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