

The Sentinel

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Fall 2013

Christmas Blessings

This image of Mary, Joseph and the Child Jesus is from Saint Francis Church in Red Cliff, Wisconsin.



(BCIM photo / Patrick Finn)

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The Sentinel

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To further the interests
of the Catholic Indian Missions
in the United States.

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New Website launched



Mission Office staff in Washington worked hard all summer to reinvigorate our website at www.blackandindianmission.org. Through a new partnership with our grant recipients all over the country, the website will become the “go-to” place to see up-to-date news about what’s happening in Catholic Native and African American communities. Check it out today! While you’re at it, follow us on Twitter (@MissionsBIMO); like us on Facebook; and tell your friends to sign up for our mailing list at the website, too.

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From the Executive Director

'To be saints is not a privilege for the few but a vocation for everyone'

Dear Mission Family,

As I was reflecting in preparation for this article, I ran across this quote from Pope Francis: "To be saints is not a privilege for the few, but a vocation for everyone." Our Holy Father continues to invite all people to draw closer to Christ and to recognize our individual



dignity as persons created in God's image. The Great Spirit Grandfather speaks to each of us and offers us opportunities to reflect on our vocation in life where we can serve and be happy or at least as happy as we can be with our particular calling and circumstances in life. Our Native American communities teach us to open our hearts to God with the many, many stories that permeate the oral traditions of our indigenous brothers and sisters. Please allow yourself the joy of spending some time with me and those whose stories and traditions are shared within this publication.

With the closing of the Year of Faith, the arrival of Advent and the Christmas holidays, each of us are now invited within this issue of the Sentinel to participate in a variety of celebrations and programs across Indian Country in New Mexico, Alabama, and Alaska. Be sure to jump into a new immersion program named SPLASH, where friends and benefactors can actually visit Indian reservations, meet missionaries, converse with Native Americans and diocesan personnel to learn about the ongoing evangelization efforts of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions and our diocesan ministry offices.

Be sure to read the *Bread and Freedom, Justice and Faith* article by Father Ted Zuern, S.J. Father Zuern teaches us much about our past with Native Americans. Catch up on the latest happenings with our News Briefs *From the Field*.

If you didn't travel to Rome for the canonization of Saint Kateri in 2012, we offer "the next best thing to being there" to experience all the joy and excitement of the historical occasion. With the collaboration of many friends and Lumen Catechetical Consultants, we have released the DVD that places you in Rome at the Vatican! Be sure to order your copy today and send several copies to family and friends for Christmas gifts. It is not too late to sign up for the Saint Kateri Pilgrimage of Praise to New York and Canada, September 12-18, 2014. See details on pg. 16.

We continue to meet the challenge of ministry with our Native American communities, but it takes all of us together. Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus shares with us, "evangelization is not the work of a small number of specialists but the entire people of God under the guidance of their pastors."

As a little gift from me, I offer an excerpt of this poem entitled, *An Indian Prayer Christmas Day* by Larry Kibby. "Great Spirit Grandfather, I send these words to you, To Father Sun, Grandmother Moon, To all of my relations, To Mother Earth, And to the Four Winds The Sacred Seasons of Life. Grandfather, Today you gave The breath of Life To an Indian Child, In a most Sacred Way. Grandfather, this Indian Child Will come before A humble Nation of people, And like his relations The Eagle and the Buffalo Will be their strength In a most Sacred Way. Grandfather, This Indian Child will be strong within, His tradition, culture And religion, An intricate heritage, In a most Sacred Way..."

I wish each of our readers a blessed Advent Season and a Merry Christmas!
In His Peace and Mission,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "F. Paysse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Father Wayne Paysse
Executive Director



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(BCIM photos / Patrick Finn)

4 The new chapel at Camp Tekakwitha in Alabama. At right, Birmingham Bishop Robert Baker blesses the new chapel at Camp Tekakwitha in Alabama, made possible in part by a grant from the BCIM.

Camp Tekakwitha Chapel

BCIM support helps rebuild Alabama camp for scouts, Native Americans to gather

*Editor's note: Camp Tekakwitha was established many years as a diocesan summer camp in Alabama. Years of use took their toll on the camp property and it fell into disrepair. Birmingham Bishop Robert J. Baker and Don Schwarzhoff, diocesan Director of Youth Ministry, dreamed of the camp's re-establishment as a center for scout camping and Catholic Native American gatherings. The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions provided a special grant to help build a round chapel in a style consonant with the local Native American cultures. Here's a report and photos from **Mary Dillard** of **One Voice**, the Birmingham diocesan newspaper.*

The Lord blessed Camp Tekakwitha in Springville, Alabama with gorgeous weather for the dedication of the Saint Kateri Chapel on November 3. There was standing room only as Birmingham Bishop Robert J. Baker presided over the Mass of Dedication with Fathers Kevin Bazzel, John McDonald, Bill Lucas, Andrew Kennedy, Ray Keiser, and Wayne Paysse.

Don Schwarzhoff, director of Youth Ministry, has spearheaded the rejuvenation of the camp with

the help of countless volunteers including Scouts, Knights of Columbus, and the Cenacolo community. Father Ray Keiser, former camp director, due to his close connection to the camp, has provided helpful assistance in the phases of construction. Without the numerous corporate donations, the construction of the chapel would not have been possible.

Father Wayne Paysse, executive director of the Black and Indian Mission Office, traveled from Washington, D.C. to be present for the dedication and to present two awards. The 2012 Saint Katherine Drexel Evangelization Award was given to the Consolata Missionary Sisters of the Diocese of Birmingham by the Catholic Negro American Mission Board. The 2013 Saint Katherine Drexel Evangelization Award was given to the Office of Youth Ministry of the Diocese of Birmingham by the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions.

Except when an event or activity is in progress, camp gates are locked. To register for events or to visit the camp, please contact Don Schwarzhoff at 205-838-8301 or 205-335-2926.

Sister Dorothy honored in Alaska



Sister Dorothy poses for a photo with former Fairbanks Bishop Donald Kettler and Father Paysse. (Photo above). Bishop Kettler, Father Paysse, Sister Judith Gomila, M.S.C., and Sister Dorothy pose with some of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill following the Mass.



Receives Msgr. Ketchum Service Award

Photos and article by Sister Carole Pollock, S.S.J., courtesy of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill

With great joy and admiration we celebrated with Sister Dorothy Giloley, S.S.J. on Sunday, September 29, 2013 in the Motherhouse Chapel. Fairbanks Bishop Donald J. Kettler, now Bishop of Saint Cloud, and Reverend Wayne Paysse, the Executive Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in Washington, D.C., presided at the 10:00 a.m. Liturgy. Sister Dorothy was awarded the Monsignor William Ketchum Service Award from the Bureau. This honor is given in recognition of someone who promotes faith formation, sponsors lay leadership training, and evidences a strong personal faith. Sister Dorothy shared, “I was humbled and very much honored to receive this award. It was a total surprise for me when Father Paysse called to inform me that this year I was the recipient.”

Before Sister Dorothy began her missionary work in Alaska, she “had the privilege” to minister to the poor in inner city Philadelphia and the hollows of West Virginia. She served as Campus Minister at

Drexel University, Temple University, and Saint Peter University in New Jersey. However, for Sister Dorothy, the desire and dream to be a missionary had been planted in her heart many years before. She explains, “From the time I was very young—in grade school—I knew I wanted to be a missionary.”

Sister Dorothy began her ministry in Alaska in August 2001, as the Director of Religious Education at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Anchorage. Two years later, she was asked to work in the Fairbanks Diocese with the Franciscan Sisters in the Yupik Eskimo villages in southwest Alaska. While there she served as a catechist, developed a sacramental preparation program, assisted the native deacons and administrators in two parishes, and taught music in both schools in Kindergarten through grade 6 (including keyboard and guitar lessons after school!).

In January 2005, Sister Dorothy was appointed to her current ministry as the Director of Religious Education for the Fairbanks Diocese. In this role she oversees catechetical, sacramental, and adult

See SISTER DOROTHY, Pg. 6

Yakima Mass

Celebrates one-year anniversary of canonization

By Christine Corbett Conklin
Central Washington Catholic

With wafts of ceremonial smoke, fanned toward the congregation with an eagle's feather, and welcoming words spoken in the Nez Perce language, the first anniversary Mass marking the canonization of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha began at Saint Peter Claver Church in Wapato on October 19.

More than 150 people, including many Native Americans dressed in elements of traditional attire, attended the Mass. (Yakima) Bishop Joseph Tyson served as principal celebrant, assisted by Wapato pastor Father Juan Godina; Fathers John and Bill Shaw, both of whom have been active in Native American ministry; and Wapato Deacon John Kassinger.

With sunlight streaming through the stained glass windows of the church, the atmosphere was rushed and respectful. There was only one excited cheer by a preschooler in the back of the church, who had apparently caught the enthusiasm of the congregation who were marking the one-year anniversary of Tekakwitha becoming the first Native American, North American saint.

In his homily, Bishop Tyson recalled how, one year ago, he was in Rome, attending the canonization ceremony for seven saints including Tekakwitha. He was accompanied by other pilgrims from the Diocese, including 93-year-old Lydia Johnson, a member of the Kateri Tekakwitha Circle who had prayed for the young Indian woman's canonization for decades and was in attendance at the anniversary Mass. A huge crowd of some 100,000 pilgrims was present in Rome for the special occasion, the bishop noted.

"What are we to make of these great numbers of pilgrims? What are we to make of this immense hunger?" Tyson asked the congregation. "We want people who point us to happiness, to live a happy life. Our life is happiest when our will aligns with the will of God," he suggested.

Kateri Tekakwitha "led a simple life and remained faithful to her love of Jesus," he said. "Her greatest wish was to know and do what pleased God...Her vocation was so unusual in the culture at that time," he added, telling how the young daughter of a Mohawk father and Christian Algonquin mother was baptized at the age of 20 and went on to work in the outskirts of what is now Montréal. She died at the age of 24.

She proclaimed "the ageless gospel in a new circumstance," Tyson noted, living in the spirit of the New Evangelization which we are all called to profess. "Like Kateri and the other six saints, we

want to witness a new birth of that ageless Faith," the Bishop concluded. "We want to draw people to the beauty of that Christian pathway."

Other highlights of the celebratory Mass included the "signing" of the Our Father by children of Native American descent. A meal at the Filipino Hall followed Mass.

The day was a particularly joyful one for the members of the Kateri Tekakwitha Circle, with numerous members attending the festivities wrapped in colorful blanket shawls.

"(The canonization) is a goal we've worked on for a very long time," observed member Patty Gonzales. "It's so very special because we've been getting together for over 60 years for this to happen," agreed member Rose Hoptowit.

Sister Dorothy

Continued from Pg. 5

faith formation programs, along with serving as a resource in religious education to the 24 Yupik Eskimo parishes in southwest Alaska. Traveling is a major facet of Sister Dorothy's ministry; she visits 13 native villages in the bush, eight Athabaskan parishes in interior Alaska, four Inupiat Eskimo parishes in the northwest, a parish in Barrow on the Arctic Ocean, and nine other parishes which can be reached by car.

Sister Dorothy's residence and office are located in the Saint Therese House of Prayer in Fairbanks on the grounds of the Cathedral and the Chancery. Saint Therese, along with Our Lady of the Arctic Snows, is the patroness of the Fairbanks Diocese. This holds significant meaning for Sister Dorothy and she says, "I have great devotion to Saint Therese and I have prayed with her relic with many people who have been healed through her intercession."

It is with great pride that we congratulate Sister Dorothy for this well-deserved honor. We can only imagine the many lives which have been touched by Sister Dorothy's kind and humble presence, all that she has accomplished, and all that is yet to come.

As Sister Dorothy lives her "childhood dream," she clearly and touchingly describes what her missionary life in Alaska means to her. "I love my mission and my ministry in Alaska, the last frontier. The beauty of her wilderness, the wildness of her animals and the faith and culture of her people have deeply touched my life. Alaska will always be in my heart, for this land is truly home for me."



SPLASH

Trip promotes Native American faith, culture



BCIM photos courtesy of Lisa Directo Davis

Traditional dancers before the final Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi in Santa Fe.

*In September 2013, the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions sponsored an immersion trip to the Pueblos of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe—called “SPLASH”—for people interested in learning more about Native American culture and its inculturation with the Catholic faith. Follow the trip in four installments with **Beth Donze**, a reporter for the Archdiocese of New Orleans’ newspaper, the **Clarion Herald**. Photos courtesy of trip participant **Lisa Directo Davis**.*

Part One: Priest from Bridge City building cultural bridges

St. Paul’s commentary on the untold wonders of eternal life fortifies the priestly ministry of Father Wayne Paysse: The human eye has not seen, the human ear has not heard, and the human heart cannot even begin to fathom “what God has prepared for those who love him” (2 Cor 2:9).

“I think about how good God has been to me, how God has blessed me even in the times when I don’t deserve it – and so my hope is that one day I will see God in heaven,” said Father Paysse, a New Orleans-born priest ordained in 1987. “That Scripture passage is a way of reminding me that as I desire God, I also want others to desire God, to love God as I do.”

Helping with catechesis—Over the past six years, Father Paysse has been helping America’s Catholic bishops take God’s boundless love to their respective flocks as executive director of the National Black and Indian Mission Office. Based in Washington, D.C., Father Paysse oversees grant applications submitted by African-American and Native-American dioceses whose cash-strapped, thinly staffed parishes and schools need assistance with their evangelization efforts, primarily in the area of catechesis. “People think that missionary work is across the ocean, but we have missionary work to do in New Orleans, in Lafayette, in Mississippi, in Kansas City, in Detroit and Chicago,” said Father Paysse, who assumed his current post in 2007. “Mission is here.”

Office’s annual appeal — But most American Catholics probably know of Father Paysse’s ministry through a special collection inserted in their annual packet of offertory envelopes: The Black and Indian

Mission Collection, established by the bishops of the United States in 1884 for the sole purpose of supporting the evangelization of Native Americans and African Americans. This is the first and oldest national collection in the American Catholic Church, funds that are dispersed among dioceses who apply for grants. Father Paysse reads applications from across the nation and awards them in the form of diocesan grants with the approval of the Black and Indian Mission Office’s board of three archbishops: board president Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York; Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia; and Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore.

“For 130 years, the bishops of this country have given great, great pastoral attention to the Native American, Alaskan Native and Black Catholic Communities,” Father Paysse notes. “Those programs support schools, they support assisting missionaries on reservations and cities, they support the good work of sisters who do various types of pastoral work and the training of deacons and seminarians.”

Earlier this month, Father Paysse went to New Mexico to witness how a recent grant from his office is helping volunteer catechists at St. Augustine, a 400-year old adobe church in the Pueblo Indian village of Isleta, provide religious education to 130 children in first grade through high school. Mission Office funds helped the program purchase Bibles, textbooks and other materials geared to encouraging parents to pray with their children at home, as well as crosses for the church’s five altar servers. Adult catechesis is also taking off at St. Augustine, with 50 people slated to be confirmed as adults this November.

Yearning for formation — Some 90 percent of the Native Americans who reside in the 16 remote Pueblo villages of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe claim the Catholic faith.

“Yet some of our adults haven’t come to Mass since they were baptized,” said Shirley Zuni, St. Augustine’s DRE, addressing Father Paysse after Mass on Sept. 6. “So we teach them the richness of the Mass; we want them to have that deep desire for the Eucharist.”

Father Paysse said we promote evangelization and catechesis among the active and fledgling Catholics ⇨



SPLASH



Trip participants learned about local Native cultures at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque.

his office serves, Native Americans: last October's canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first North American Native American woman to attain sainthood. Father Paysse's office was commissioned to lead the U.S. bishops' official pilgrimage to Rome for the event, a journey that included more than 700 pilgrims from both clergy and laity.

With the blessing of his board, the office was able to disperse grants totaling more than \$100,000 so that hundreds of Native Americans could be present at the canonization of the saint known as "The Lily of the Mohawks."

"We should love St. Kateri Tekakwitha because she models for us such a great love and hope and faith in Jesus," said Father Paysse, explaining how when Jesuit missionaries brought the Catholic faith to St. Kateri's New York village, she was captivated by the Gospels and the catechism they taught. She would wait in the snow for a priest to unlock the church in order to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament.

"She had such a love for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, she had such a love for the cross. And that's why her last words were 'Jesus, I love you,'" Father Paysse said.

"When we love Jesus we truly become holy," he added. "We may not be raised to the altars of the church and have a papal proclamation (in our names) as a saint, but our love for Christ makes us holy."

Part Two: Pueblo catechists on front lines of evangelization

COCHITI PUEBLO, N.M. – Inside the mocha adobe walls of St. Bonaventure Church in northern New Mexico, Christine Suina recalled how her 7-year-old daughter, Mikayla, coaxed her into becoming a teacher of religious education three years ago.

"She said, 'Mommy, do you know who would be proud of you if you taught catechism?'" said Suina,

speaking from the sanctuary of the 17th-century church which sits on the valley floor of the Cochiti Pueblo, 22 miles southwest of Santa Fe.

Assuming the youngster was going to name any number of relatives, Suina was moved to tears when Mikayla identified the person her mother would be making the happiest: Jesus.

"She's a little evangelist," said Suina, who teaches religious education classes to children in pre-kindergarten through second grade in Cochiti, a 53,000-acre reservation wedged between the blunt-peaked Jemez Mountains and the Rio Grande. "She is really excited about helping me teach the kids about Jesus."

Suina's classes are made up of small but enthusiastic groups of two to 10 children that meet every Sunday after St. Bonaventure's sole 8 a.m. Mass. Two other volunteers round out the church's religious education staff: Suina's mother devotes most of her Sundays to teaching confirmation prep and taking Communion to shut-ins, while another parishioner prepares a handful of youngsters for First Communion. There currently is no program for middle school students, and Masses are celebrated by a traveling priest.

Such dedication to the faith, despite less-than-ideal circumstances, illustrates the kind of tenacity that garners the attention of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, established by American bishops in 1874 to assist evangelization efforts in underserved Native American communities.

Although 90 percent of the Native Americans who live on New Mexico's 19 Pueblo Indian reservations are Catholic by baptism, many do not have access to faith formation opportunities that are standard in larger, more affluent parishes. The training of current and future catechists – and providing the materials fledgling Catholics need to more actively practice their faith – requires discretionary funds that many mission churches simply do not have.

Creative catechism — "We teach with whatever (materials) we can gather. I'll say, 'Oh, crayons are on sale! Even paper can get expensive,'" said Suina, who pays for materials out of her own pocket, supplements her syllabus with ideas from the Internet and works with a local schoolteacher to access free copies of a children's bulletin. While the program does have catechism books, children are not permitted to write in them "because they must be used by next year's class," she notes.

Still, St. Bonaventure's religious education classes are rich in faith-filled content and fun, featuring Easter egg hunts, card writing for area priests, elaborate All Saints' and All Souls' Day ceremonies, and a "Birthday Party for Jesus" at Christmas.

On feast days, Suina's students convene at Cochiti's central plaza to take part in their pueblo's traditional songs and dances – expressions of prayer that fuse both Native American and Catholic traditions. For example, a dance might thank God for his blessings on the harvest, while another might seek the saints' intercession for the health of children, the elderly and the sick.

"We teach the children that their Catholicism and ⇨

their Native traditions are the same,” said Suina, who instructs her religious education students in both English and Cochiti’s native language of Keres. “We go and we help dance, we go help when someone passes away. We help (the children) understand that everything we do within the community, everything we do within our lives, also intertwines with our faith in Jesus and God and the saints.”

Because there is no parish hall, students meet in the modest adobe house where Suina’s grandmother was born, a short uphill walk from the church.

“We have so much fun with the kids!” Suina said, noting that even her youngest students are grasping important elements of their faith. A public school teacher recently shared with Suina how one of her CCD students, after drawing a cross for a test, said the figure was “just like the cross Jesus died on.” The boy followed up by drawing angels.

“I was really excited about that!” Suina said. “My students are retaining the information. It’s really exciting to see how they’re learning!”

Jammed classes in Jemez — As Cochiti’s ministerial leaders advance their case for assistance from the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, adults hungry for formation have been packing religious education classes in the Jemez Pueblo, 50 miles northwest of Albuquerque, thanks to a pair of seed grants from the bureau.

Last May, 80 adults and five high school juniors from Jemez’s San Diego Mission Church completed their preparations for confirmation – a level of interest that forced the relocation of the confirmation Mass to Santa Fe’s 1,600-seat Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

“We have a little, tiny church – there are maybe 440 registered parishioners – and we had 80 adults confirmed! Much larger parishes had maybe one or two adults (being confirmed) each,” said Margie Creel, one of San Diego’s six volunteer catechists. “Everybody was coming up to us asking, ‘How did you get that many people?’”

Creel, who has taught religious education for seven years, said she and her colleagues had to swim against a powerful tide. The closure 15 years ago of the parish’s mission school, founded by St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and overseen by Franciscan priests, has meant that there now are nearly two generations of Jemez Catholics “who don’t know Jesus” as well as their parents and grandparents did.

“Parents were coming to church saying, ‘I want to baptize this baby,’ but when the priest sat down with them, he learned that the *parents* hadn’t been confirmed; the (prospective) *godparents* hadn’t been confirmed,” Creel said.

So, in September 2012, armed with a \$3,000 grant from the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, San Diego’s catechists began offering better-equipped elementary CCD classes and accelerated sacramental preparation for adults living in Jemez and two neighboring pueblos – Zia and Santa Ana. Thirty-five men and women signed up for the initial eight-week series, the success of which snowballed into last

spring’s class of 80 adults. A \$5,000 follow-up grant from the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions is building on the momentum.

“We had such an outpouring of interest in our classes! People were knocking on our doors saying, ‘Can you do it again? Can you do it again?’” Creel said, adding that many of the recently confirmed now are sending their children and friends for catch-up sacramental instruction.

Thanks to the infusion of funds, offerings once considered to be cost-prohibitive “extras,” such as off-site retreats for teens and books for a soon-to-begin Bible study, now are within reach.

Jemez’s catechists continually remind their students to give back to the funding source that is helping to reignite their faith: the American bishops’ annual National Black and Indian Mission Collection and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. Students also pay a flat fee of \$50 for their religious instruction and have lunch together after their Sunday classes.

“(In the past) our First Communion classes had to use the same books for four years – the children couldn’t write in them because they had to be passed on,” Creel said, thrilled that her parish’s “teach-others-to-fish” approach to evangelization is bolstering the ranks of lectors, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion and catechists.

“We just confirmed all those people, so don’t you think some of them will want to come back and serve?”

Creel said. “We tell (the confirmed) all the time: ‘You’re not done!’”



Deacon Joseph Herrera, Jr., Director of Native American Ministry for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, enjoys some good home cooking!

Part Three: Native American Catholics: We believe in one God

JEMEZ PUEBLO, N.M. — The spontaneous tribute had churchgoers dabbing their eyes.

At the end of Mass, Patrick Romero rose from his pew to perform the special dance of thanksgiving Pueblo Indians use to revere the spiritual leaders in

their midst. Romero, a resident of the Jemez Pueblo of northern New Mexico, directed his movements to the three vested priests seated in the sanctuary, sweeping his arms in an arc to express his people’s gratitude to the men and praying over them in his native language of Towa.

“We pray two ways: Catholicism and our traditional way. Today that is exactly what’s happening.” ⇨



SPLASH

explained Romero after the Sept. 7 Mass at Jemez's San Diego Mission Church.

A singular honor — Romero had called on both traditions a year earlier — at the canonization Mass of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American woman from North America to attain sainthood. With the blessing of his pueblo's spiritual leaders, Romero carried a Jemez-crafted statue of the saint to the altar of St. Peter's Basilica.

"I was given the honor to go to Rome — to place her in our mother church's sacred place of preparation, (using) our way of praying," marveled Romero, 70. "I give St. (Kateri) Tekakwitha the honor that I am standing here today."

Romero was alluding to a recent accident in which he was struck by a truck while bicycling to St. Kateri's shrine and miraculously suffered no broken bones.

"I can say I was brought up by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and Franciscan priests," Romero said of his years at San Diego's now-closed Catholic school. "Yes, I have forgotten the classroom assignments, but the spiritual morals and standards that I learned are still with me," he said. ...

Weight of history still felt — "At one point the whole community all came to church — their grandfathers, their grandmas, their parents, uncles, aunts, everyone," said Christopher Toya, one of San Diego Church's two sacristans. "Nowadays, people are confused. They read about church history, of what really happened to our people when the Spanish came into the Southwest. People are saying, 'Man, they did that to our people. Why should we stick with the church?'"

"But if you really have a true love for Jesus and his mother, you have a sense of where things fit into place," Toya added. "To this day we still have the faith because we had people here in the pueblo that testified that we believed in Christ our Lord, and his mother Mary."

In the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 90 percent of the estimated 50,000 Pueblo Indians are Catholic by baptism. There are 19 Indian pueblos in New Mexico, each a tribal nation with a sovereign government and land base, and its own secular and spiritual leaders.

"Pueblos have been here for so long that they've developed a very traditional system, and that's very important to them," noted Deacon Joe Herrera Jr., director of Native American ministry for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. "The challenge is, how do we get the traditionalists to understand their Catholic roots, too? Because all of the what we call 'traditionalists' have been baptized, but some just haven't been catechized enough to understand their faith."

Deacon Herrera grew up in the Cochiti Pueblo,

southwest of Santa Fe, participating in both the Native traditions of his faith — through ceremonial dance and song — and the Catholic rituals of attending Mass and receiving the sacraments at his pueblo's St. Bonaventure Church. One of four Native American deacons in his archdiocese, Deacon Herrera said Pueblo Catholics' main concern was clear after his office surveyed them on their needs in the areas of religious education, the sacraments and pastoral guidance.

"High on the list was, 'We want our own people to minister to us,'" Deacon Herrera said. "That trust factor is really critical."

Today Herrera is assisted by two full-time Native American coordinators who work daily in the archdiocese's 16 pueblos: one who teaches adults how to conduct youth ministry; and another who heads up a "teach-others-to-fish" model of religious education.

The Native American ministry also sponsors a monthly radio show on issues of interest to Native American Catholics, and Santa Fe Archbishop Michael Sheehan celebrates an annual Native American Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Santa Fe. Last April, ministry leaders had a table at the Gathering of Nations — the largest annual gathering of Native Americans from across the country.

"We put a booth up and, boy, were we active!" Deacon Herrera said. "People were asking about the Catholic faith, some of who weren't even Catholic." He said informational booths on Catholicism at the various pueblo feast day celebrations — festivals of dance, music and food honoring the patron saint of each pueblo church — also are being planned.

Vestiges of same faith — Even once skeptical members of Deacon Herrera's own tribal council in Cochiti are warming up to the notion that traditional and Catholic modes of worship focus on the same God, Son and Holy Spirit. Deacon Herrera recalled his religious elders' initial hesitancy when he asked them for their blessings to study for the Catholic diaconate.

"They said, 'Well, we have to think about that because it's usually an either-or choice,'" Herrera recalled. "But now, in our traditional meetings, they talk about what the apostle John said, or what some of what Jesus' words were — so they're beginning to understand the links (between Native American and Catholic). The values are exactly the same, even though the rituals might be different. When they begin to see those links, they're not so afraid of it."

St. Kateri, pray for us — Deacon Herrera's outreach comes at a pivotal time in Native American Catholic history. Last October's canonization of St. Kateri, a member of the Mohawk tribe of New York, has created a tidal wave of evangelization that is bringing hundreds of nominally Catholic pueblo residents to a richer understanding of their baptismal faith. Altars to St. Kateri are common in pueblo homes, and women's groups at pueblo parishes ⇨





“SPLASHERs” enjoy some good local food in Jemez Pueblo.

are known as “Kateri Circles.” Last year, with the assistance of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, hundreds of Native American Catholics were able to journey to Rome for her canonization.

“The canonization of St. Kateri has really opened the doors to us being (in the pueblos),” said Maria Cruz Cordoba, director of religious education for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. “There’s a lot of healing with the canonization, and the bridges are being built for us to really go and make a difference and help the catechists with things that they’ve been struggling with, and that is living the Catholic faith as well as their Native traditions.”

A ‘new energy’ in the air — The fusion of faith traditions is being vigorously promoted by Archbishop Sheehan, who never misses an opportunity to say to the 310,000 Catholics in his flock that “there is no contradiction between being a faithful Catholic and a good Indian.”

“We are experiencing a new energy in the Native American ministry right now in this archdiocese,” Archbishop Sheehan said, referring to the large number of adults coming into the sacraments over the last few years. “This archdiocese is not a melting pot, where everybody gets put together and we have this big stew. What we are is a mosaic. Each of our Native American communities, our Hispanic communities, the Anglos, the African Americans, people of Asian background – each group shines, each group has its individuality, and we celebrate that individuality in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe!”

Part Four: Blessings from trip to New Mexico rich, abundant

Just before the climax of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” the residents of Whoville join hands in celebratory song, despite having been burgled of every trapping of Christmas.

The sight of their joy leads the pinch-faced thief to

have what is arguably the most famous conversion in television history: The Grinch’s pebble-sized heart grows into a pumping red organ that literally explodes out of his chest.

I hope my heart was a bit larger than the Grinch’s before I set off for New Mexico last month, but it definitely was close to bursting after five days of fellowship with Catholic Pueblo Indians in their remote reservations along the Rio Grande. Seeing the humility and devout faith of the Pueblo, who have persevered in their Catholicism despite modest means and a history of persecution, took my breath away.

How could you help but be moved when Christ was everywhere you looked – from the tender way the Pueblo treated their children and elders, to their insistence on sharing

everything they had with mere strangers?

Take the Jemez reservation, where the residents of one snug home were celebrating the late-summer harvest and preparing lunch for about a dozen visitors.

In a place where catechists struggle to afford items such as Bibles, religion workbooks and crosses for altar servers, a feast fit for 10 kings was being laid out: a dizzying spread of stews, salsas, home-baked bread, meats and fresh vegetables, much of it culled from home gardens and cooked in hornos – outdoor adobe ovens resembling beehives. In a display of unbridled hospitality, our hosts refrained from eating as their guests had their fill, hovering over the table to make sure every serving bowl remained bottomless.

When the man of the house learned one of his guests was a Catholic deacon and tribal leader in another of New Mexico’s 19 pueblos, he disappeared into a back room and returned with an expertly carved hunting bow. He said he’d been waiting for the right person to whom to give it. Tears streamed down both men’s faces as they prayed over the bow, arms entwined.

Each of us left with a piece of handmade jewelry and a prayer card with the image of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, because in our hosts’ minds, it wasn’t enough to physically feed us.

“We hope you pass on these blessings when you go back to your homes,” our hosts prayed, echoing a refrain articulated by Pueblo Catholics throughout our visit: Blessings, which are from God, must be continually shared! Don’t keep them hidden away!

Earlier, during Mass at Jemez’s San Diego Mission Church, the Body and Blood of Christ was dispensed from ceramic vessels, the weight of the chalice so much greater than its metallic counterpart that it wobbled in my hands.

Sacristan Christopher Toya told us the images carved into his church’s ceiling beams – a trail of ⇒



SPLASH

SPLASH participants pose for a photo with Santa Fe Archbishop Michael Sheehan.

bullets leading from cross to cross – depicted “the spiritual road to heaven.”

“Those bullets represent our prayers – our help in our journey to heaven, and our hope that our prayers will be answered by our Creator,” Toya said, adding that the sun, whose image is also carved into the ceiling beams, lights the way.

“(Pueblo Catholics) have great respect for the sun that gives us light and life to the plants. Our whole seasonal calendar revolves around agriculture,” Toya said. “Our prayers and our fasting are tied to the seasons.”

In the Cochiti Pueblo, located near the rocket-shaped formations known as “Tent Rocks,” a local catechist insisted that we make an unscheduled stop at the baptismal party of a baby girl named Daniella.

“That’s her English name. She has about 15 Indian names,” Daniella’s father told me, after being served a meal featuring the same stunning variety as the one prepared for us in Jemez.

Two of Daniella’s Indian names – the Keres language words for “Corn Pollen” and “Pumpkin” – conveyed, once again, locals’ gratitude for the September harvest. That same reverence is extended to the archbishop of Santa Fe whenever he celebrates Mass at Cochiti’s St. Bonaventure Church. In a centuries-old tradition, women spread blankets from the archbishop’s car to the sanctuary, creating a seamless carpet that enables their chief shepherd to get to the altar without touching the ground.

So sacred is prayer in the lives of Cochiti Catholics, no photographs may be taken of their church or ceremonial dances, which praise and petition the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Mother and the saints.

Given such rich faith traditions, I was glad for the newly baptized Daniella, who during our entire visit was being passed around in the arms of relatives and neighbors. Daniella will grow up, happy and

cared for, in a place many might find remote, barren, devoid of stimulation.

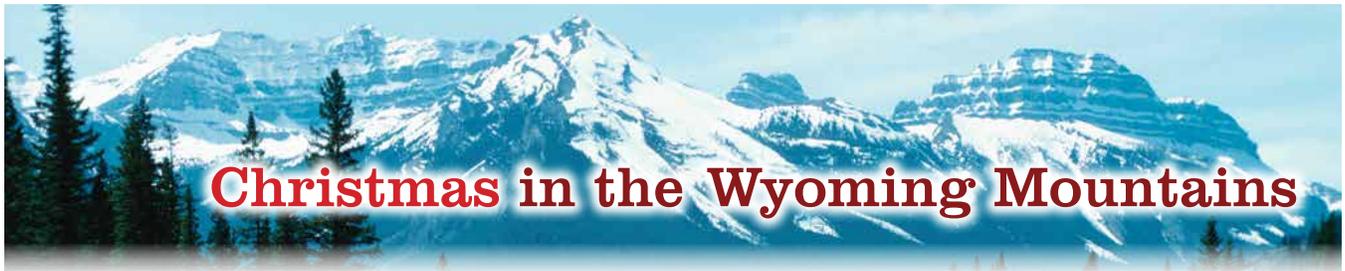
But we should envy this child. Perhaps, in a place like Cochiti, Daniella will find it easier to empty herself of the things the Grinch presumed were so important. Unfettered by trappings and guided by her gentle, close-knit faith community, she likely will grow closer and closer to Christ.

What more could a baby ask for?

Artist Spreads Art, Devotion to Kateri

Giovanna Paponetti, the artist whose paintings appear in the exciting new documentary DVD, “Saint Kateri Tekakwitha: a Pilgrimage into Her Heart,” continues to spread the Gospel through her art. Giovanna, also author and illustrator of the picture book *Kateri: Native American Saint*, says on her website, “Through my art I can express the meaning of life, the driving force of our existence. Every brushstroke brings me closer in my quest to discover old instincts and how we relate to the natural world. As I capture the spirit of my models on canvas, they bring life to me as well. It is a union of mutual respect and gives me the courage to fly.”

Check out her lovely work at www.giovannapaponetti.com.



Christmas in the Wyoming Mountains

An archived report from Blessed Sacrament Mission on the Wind River Reservation

Christmas is truly one of the big events of the year for the Arapaho Indians of this reservation. They all look forward to it with real eagerness. For them, it is a season of devotion, one of which genuine Christian joy pervades. If one of the traditional embellishments of Christmas is snow, that we always have that in good measure.

...The Arapahoes start early to make preparations for Christmas. This is especially true at my main mission, which is at Fort Washakie. Here we have an active group of Indian women who form our St. Anthony's Guild. Early in fall they make their plans for the Christmas season. They take charge of raising money to buy the candy, fruit and little presents to be distributed at the children's party on Christmas Eve. Last year, they prepared fifty stockings for the youngsters. The members of the Guild also form the nucleus of our choir. They faithfully practice special

music for Christmas High Mass, week after week, after our Thursday evening devotions.

Christmas Eve fell on Sunday. It got so cold in the afternoon that many of the children did not venture out for their party, for most of them have to walk quite a distance to get to the mission. When the hour came for midnight Mass; it must have been twenty-five below zero. Yet a large crowd of people got to church on time. They all came on foot. One would freeze in a wagon. We had high Mass and the choir sang very well. The congregation joined in the singing of Christmas hymns in English. Many received Holy Communion, and happiness glowed on the faces of all as they left the church to return to their humble homes.

Even the old said that this Christmas was a very cold day. But the weather did not deter them from getting to church and that I regarded as a good test of their eagerness. Things like this give encouragement to the missionary. — Father F.J. Coffey, S.J., *The Indian Sentinel* (December, 1945)

Ysleta del Sur Celebrates Day of the Dead



War Captain Javier Loera blessing the altar on the day of the dead and offering corn meal. (Photo above). The Day of the Dead altar set up in the Mission Church to pray and remember tribal members. (Photo below).



Former BCIM Executive Director Monsignor Paul Lenz speaks after Mass. Father Wayne Paysse is at center. BCIM Executive Assistant Theresa Nixon, Father Paysse, and retired BCIM employee Cathryn Gartmann enjoy a conversation after the Mass.

One-Year Anniversary of Canonization Celebrated at DC Mass

Over 200 people, including several who traveled from North Carolina, participated in a Mass celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Canonization of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. BCIM director Father Wayne Paysse celebrated the Mass, along with former executive director Monsignor Paul Lenz and Father Marcos Leon-Angulo from the Diocese of Raleigh. Following Mass, Monsignor Lenz blessed those assembled with the Bureau's first class relic of Saint Kateri.



Mohawk Faith-Sharing from Kahnawake to the Rockies

By BCIM Archivist Mark G. Thiel

A few years after the death of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha in 1680, with the Jesuits, Christian Mohawks founded Kahnawake (or Caughnawaga, “Place of the Rapids”) on the shore of the Saint Lawrence River by the Lachine Rapids. This is just upriver from the home of their Jesuit teachers in Montreal, Québec. By regularly navigating the Lachine’s whitewater rapids,

Kahnawake’s intrepid men acquired exceptional canoeing skills, which enabled many to be hired by the Montreal-based Hudson Bay and North West fur companies. In their employ, they became intrepid voyageurs, hunters, and trappers who traversed Canada and the adjacent areas of the United States long before Lewis and Clark ventured up the Missouri River in 1803. In so doing, they served as important evangelizers who were the

first to introduce the Gospel among many Native peoples. But Christian ethics did not always prevail.

Before 1800, a few armed Mohawks kidnapped a young Kootenai girl while she was with her tribe on their annual fall buffalo hunt on the Great Plains. Since her people did not yet own firearms, they were unable to rescue her and she was taken to Kahnawake where she was raised. She became a devout Catholic named Mary and apparently engaged in devotions to Saint Kateri, which were well established, and she married a Mohawk man and raised three children. After his death, she returned home alone with her children to her ancestral home in the Bitterroot Valley in western Montana. There her Kootenai people named her family “Big Knife” after the sabers carried by the British, who then ruled Canada.

When Mary Big Knife (1780s-1840) left Kahnawake, one man took notice. He was the catechist Louis “Old Ignace” Shonowane La Mousse (1790s-1837) who then organized and led 24 young Mohawk men to the Bitterroot Valley. There he and 12 of them married women among the Flathead Salish, close relatives of the Kootenai, where they became influential leaders. Old Ignace spoke frequently about Christian teachings and prayers and the importance of Black Robe Jesuits to teach the way to Heaven. He taught them the sign of the Cross and the Lord’s Prayer; he held morning and evening prayer meetings and Sunday observances; he baptized children; and he marked the graves of deceased Christians with a cross.

Meanwhile, the Christian message spread to nearby tribes. Thomas Main, a Gros Ventre elder from the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, retold, “Long before any White Man came to teach us, the Flatheads brought the message. They came with their teepees to the buffalo hunt and we noticed the rawhide crosses each...teepee had attached to the door, which faced the rising sun. My people would gather around to listen to them. We owe them a lot.”

Furthermore, the Flathead men and the Mohawks living among them often discussed how to obtain Jesuit missionaries. Then itinerant traders reported seeing Jesuits in Saint Louis. So Old Ignace suggested, and Chief Big Face (Tjolzhitsay) agreed, that now was the time to act. Big Face sent a delegation to Bishop Joseph Rosati in Saint Louis, which reached his residence, but the bishop was absent. So they

returned home but disappeared en route.

On learning about the missed visitors, Bishop Rosati requested, and in 1834 Pope Gregory XVI decreed, to reassign the Jesuits to Native ministry in the United States. But because they had been restored just 20 years earlier, the Jesuits were still reconstituting themselves and as yet they had no missionaries available. Meanwhile, other missionaries responded, but preferring Jesuits and seeing that they had wives and didn’t wear black robes, the Flathead declined their offers while neighboring tribes accepted them.

In 1835 and 1837, Old Ignace led two more delegations and was massacred with the entire latter one by Lakota Sioux. Then in 1841, his son, Louis “Young Ignace” La Mousse (1836-1927) successfully returned with Jesuit Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, who named his first Montana mission “Saint Mary’s” in Mary Big Knife’s honor.

In 1853, as a government road-builder, Lt. John Mullan visited Saint Mary’s in Stevensville, Montana, which three decades later, inspired him to serve as the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions’ second commissioner or government liaison. He wrote, “[The Flathead Indians]...prayed aloud. I was struck with astonishment, for I had not the least expectation of such conduct... The whole assembly knelt in the most solemn manner and with the greatest reverence adored the Lord. I asked myself, ‘Am I among Indians?’ ...I could scarcely believe my eyes. The thought that these men were penetrated with religious sentiment so profound and beautiful overwhelmed me with amazement.”



(Marquette University Archives photo/Mark Thiel)

The present-day Saint Mary's Mission church in Stevensville, Montana.



‘Looking at Life from the Perspective of Jesus’

An excerpt from
“Bread and Freedom—Justice and Faith”

By Father Ted Zuern, S.J. (1921-2007)
BCIM Newsletter, vol. 6, no. 4 (April-May 1985)

Father Zuern quotes Sheldon Katchatag from the *Native Village of Unalakleet, Alaska*, speaking of 1991 changes to governmental structures of Alaska Native villages: “A liberating faith, however, teaches us to look upon everyday life from the perspective of Jesus Christ and his preferential concern for the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed. This means we can begin to develop a new awareness of social reality by being present with the victims of injustice, listening to their stories, and sharing their experiences. I have found that, through living encounters with native

peoples, non-native peoples can develop a critical awareness of the colonial reality that pervades western society and culture.

“The interface and conflict of cultures has been one of the most painful aspects of human history. The culture self-definition of western peoples has led them in various degrees to consider themselves superior to other cultures and to dominate or even destroy them rather than to welcome their diversity and respect their uniqueness. Scripture tells us all human beings are made in the image of the one divine creator whose children we are. This truth offers a fundamental insight into our common origin and dignity as sons and daughters fashioned in the image of the God of love. We are all challenged by this truth.”



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Walk Where She Walked

Fall 2014 Pilgrimage of Praise to walk in new saint's footsteps



(BCIM photo / Father Paysse)

Statue of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha at
the National Shrine of Saint Kateri
Tekakwitha in Fonda, N.Y.

Father Wayne Paysse, Executive Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, and Sister Kateri Mitchell, S.S.A., Executive Director of the Tekakwitha Conference, invite you to join them for "A Pilgrimage of Praise" to New York state and Québec in September 2014. Pilgrimage destinations will include many places close to Saint Kateri's journey, such as Auriesville and Fonda, N.Y., and Kahnawake, Québec, where she lived out the last years of her life. Destinations will also include several of the Québécois holy sites famous for generations.

- **Friday, Sept. 12 – Albany, Auriesville, Fonda.** Depart from your gateway city for Albany, N.Y. and enjoy visits to the National Shrines in Auriesville (Kateri's birthplace) and Fonda, where the group will celebrate Mass. Dinner and overnight in Albany.

- **Saturday, Sept. 13 – Kahnawake, Notre-Dame-du-Cap, Cap-de-la-Madeleine.** Visit the final resting place of Saint Kateri in Kahnawake; celebrate Mass at the Shrine of Notre-Dame-du-Cap; and check out the Cap de la Madeleine shrine, with a Catholic history dating to 1634.

- **Sunday, Sept. 14 – Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré.** Mass and tour of the Basilica of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré. See the Statue of Miracles and museum before praying the Stations of the Cross before an enjoyable dinner. Be inspired at the evening candlelight Rosary procession. Overnight at the Basilica Inn.

- **Monday, Sept. 15 – Québec City & Montréal.** Scenic tour of Québec City and its Cathedral Basilica. Continue on to Montréal for Mass and light show. Overnight stay in Montréal.

- **Tuesday, Sept. 16 – Montréal.** Morning visit and Mass at Saint Joseph Oratory, founded by the humble Holy Cross brother, Saint André Bessette. Afternoon at leisure. Not to miss is the famous botanic garden.

- **Wednesday, Sept. 17 – Auriesville.** Return to Auriesville, N.Y. for Mass at the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs. Dinner and overnight in Albany.

- **Thursday, Sept. 18 – Flight home from Albany**

Cost for this exciting journey is \$989, not including airfare to Albany. To reserve your place, please send a check for \$50 for each person traveling, payable to **Renaissance Group, LLC**, 20897 Planetree Forest Court, Potomac Falls, VA 20165. For more information, call (800) 304-8259 or email info@rengp.com.