



Dear Friend of Las Casas:

Last year, during his trip to Bolivia, Pope Francis spoke while standing side-by-side with Bolivian President Evo Morales, the Andean Nation's first Indigenous president: "I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offense of the church herself, but also for the crimes committed against the Native peoples during the so-called conquest of America". Throughout Pope Francis' tour of South America, he spoke strongly against the environmental ravages and social injustice of climate change and urged all to defend Mother Earth.

Dominican Sisters and Friars have been working on reservations and in urban areas for many years and have responded to the issues and challenges which Native Americans face in the areas of economics, health, and housing. The disparity for Native/Indigenous People living below the poverty level varies from 38% to 63%. Approximately 40% of on-reservation housing is considered inadequate. It is not uncommon for three or more generations to live in a two-bedroom home with inadequate plumbing, kitchen facilities, and heating. The average life expectancy for Indigenous People has improved yet still trails other Americans by five years. Due to underfunding, Indian Health Services facilities are crisis driven and leave a wide gap in adequate and preventative health care. Despite these grim statistics, the presence of Dominican men and women serving with Native/Indigenous People is such a gift. Their untiring efforts to be present gives strength and hope to many.

This past May at the Annual Board meeting of Las Casas, nine awards, which included scholarships and grants, were given to Dominican Sisters and Friars who minister with Native Americans. The stories in this Newsletter represent last year's recipients and will give you a small glimpse of the ways in which your generosity helps support Dominicans who serve among Native/Indigenous People. By no means does it tell the depth of ministry by so many generous men and women who daily support Indigenous People.

Our deepest thanks for your financial, prayer, and moral support over the years.

St. Dominic Guzman and St. Kateri Tekakwitha pray for us.

Nathalie Meyer, OP

Nathalie Meyer, OP

President for the Las Casas Board



Tekakwitha Conference • A Gift of Healing

The Las Casas grant helped to sponsor five people from the St. Ignatius and Arlee Missions on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana to attend the 2018 Tekakwitha Conference.

Marcella Adolph, one of the participants, described the benefits of the conference for Native Catholics:



"I greatly appreciated the 79th Annual Tekakwitha Conference. This event took place July 18 – 22, 2018, but it is forever etched in my heart. I appreciated the grand entry, prayers, and break-out sessions that brought me closer to Saint Kateri.

My heartfelt *Lem lemp* (thank you) to our benefactors who made this possible. This gift is received with a humble heart touched by love and generosity. I struggle at times with living in two spiritual worlds. Attending the Tekakwitha Conference helped me with understanding my pain and mixed feelings.

Without this time spent with the beautiful relatives who are in love with Jesus, just as Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, I would continue to

be lost in intergenerational pain and resentment. I loved every second of this experience! This was truly a gift of healing for myself, our people, and the Church."

Tekakwitha Annual Conference

July 15– 19, 2020
Raleigh, North Carolina

Tekakwitha Conference National Office
2225 North Bolton Ave. • Alexandria, LA 71303
email: tekconf@gmail.com
www.tekconf.org • 1.844.483.3900

Basic Directions
in Native American Ministry Institute
ORINARILY JUNE OF EACH YEAR
check website to confirm dates

Sioux Spiritual Center
20100 Center Road
Howes, South Dakota 57748-7703
605.985.5906

www.rapidcitydiocese.org/basic-directions-native-ministry
www.siouxspiritualcenter.org/retreats



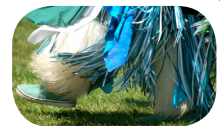
Artist©Tisket. Used with permission.

The conference held special significance for all of us as we thanked Sister Kateri Mitchell for her years of dedicated service as the Executive Director of the Tekakwitha Conference.

The Conference provided many insights. We learned that the United States Bishops have approved submitting the cause of Nicholas Black Elk to Rome for canonization as a Saint. Many young people are searching for a sense of their identity both as authentic traditional Native people and as faithful Catholics. Servant of God, Nicholas Black Elk, is a present day model of a person who exemplifies how to live authentically in both traditions. This knowledge enriches our lives and ministry.

Margaret Hillary, OP

Margaret Hillary, OP (Grand Rapids)



Annual Celebrations

Saint Kateri Tekawitha Feast Day • July 14
Native American Heritage Month • November



Two young women from the Saint Kateri Center of Chicago, ages 12 and 14, were able to participate in the Tekakwitha Conference in Tacoma

Washington in 2018 with the help of a Las Casas grant. They would like to share parts of their reports with the readers of the Las Casas newsletter.

"My name is *Pheji Hota Wiya Grace Coson* and I'm an enrolled member of the great Navajo Nation and a participant in our youth group at the St. Kateri Center of Chicago. I have been attending the Tekakwitha Conference since I was eight years old. I enjoy the conference and especially like the youth classes where we receive a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith as Native Americans. The day we went to visit and pay homage to the Lummi Nation "*Lhaq' Temish*" ~ *The People of the Sea*, was spectacular! We were welcomed by the Lummi People, food, seafood, and the traditional warrior dance performed by the youth. It was amazing! I will never forget the spiritual connection I have with the Lummi Nation and our Saint Kateri. It was good to see our religious brothers and sisters who work on the reservations and so many more friends, also."

"My name is *Jaelyn Sauseda*, I am twelve years old and my tribe is Ho-Chunk or Winnebago. My trip to Seattle was amazing and this was my first time going to the Tekakwitha Conference. This experience encouraged me to make my Confirmation in the Catholic religion. I made friends at the conference that were from Montana, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico and so many other places. When we went for our day trip to the Lummi Nation reservation, we experienced the beautiful water and the People's canoes, dances and delicious seafood. It was such an honor to go to the conference. Thank you for the opportunity."

I, too, say, "*Thank you, Las Casas.*"

JoAnn Fleischaker, OP

JoAnn Fleischaker, OP (Adrian)



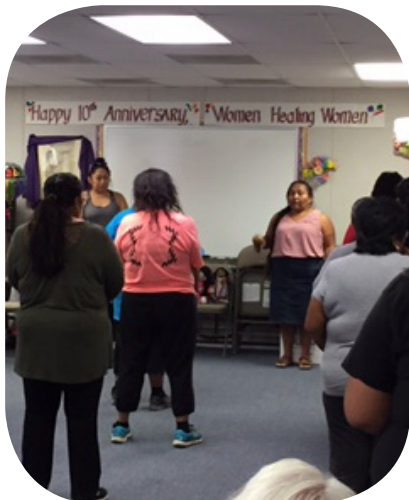
PHOTOS: 2019 Tekawitha Annual Conference in Sharonville, Ohio



Women Healing Women



The *Women Healing Women* workshop took place last year in Tucson Arizona. The gathering marked the tenth anniversary of the program. It began as a pastoral response from the San Xavier Mission Church located on the Tohono O'odham Nation San Xavier District. After the first workshop, many women began to ask, "When is the next workshop?" This began the birth of a new healing tradition among women in recovery, the San Xavier Mission pastoral staff, professional therapists and collaborative partners of the Tohono O'odham Nation. Healing happens when we can name, claim, and walk with others in the gentlest-of-ways because we are wounded healers with a gift to share and bear.



The support of Las Casas and others helped facilitate the reach throughout the whole reservation. Many women heard of the workshop by word-of-mouth or personal invitation. It is free to thirty participants who are encouraged to grow in the cultural and traditional Native ways through song, dance, art, nature, creation, emotion, and create something beautiful from within. Last year the workshop did more with equine therapy by painting on the horses who encouraged each participant to let her fingers design and tell a sacred part of their journey to freedom. We danced through the music, while laughing, we were led to new dance steps we never knew we could or could not do. Participants felt freer as feelings gave shape to works of clay vessels and others were allowed to see and guess what creations were made. The tenth anniversary was a decade's worth of slow growth that flowered with new personal self-direction and responsibility to create support groups for healthy living and hope.

Rachel Sena, OP
Rachel Sena, OP (Peace)

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
October 21, 1612

"Lily of the Mohawks"
Algonquin/Mohawk

Born: 1656, Ossernenon, NY
Died: April 17, 1680
Venerable: January 3, 1943
Beatified: June 22, 1980

Feast Day: July 14
Patron of the environment and ecology



Artwork ©Tisket. Used with permission
Tekakwitha Conference ~ www.tekconf.org

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
Pray for us!

www.domlife.org/lascasas

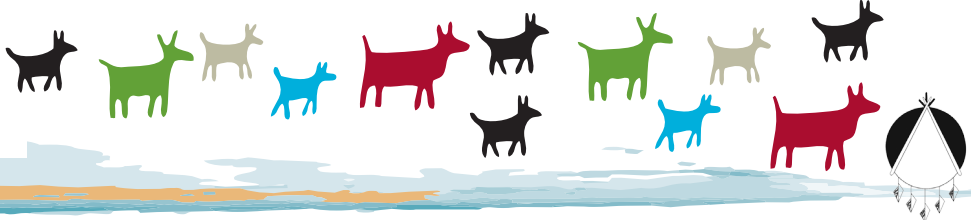
Sister Kateri Mitchell, SSA

was surprised with

**The Bartolomé de
Las Casas Lifetime
Achievement Award**

presented by the Tekakwitha Conference during the 80th Conference held in Sharonville, Ohio in July of 2019. Sr. Kateri is a member of the Las Casas Board of Directors, former Director of the Tekakwitha Conference for twenty years, a Sister of St. Anne and a member of the Mohawk Nation.

Las Casas Award





Donna Swallows, a member of the Grand Traverse Bay Tribe of Odawa and Chippewa, prepares a meal every Thursday evening for any member of the community. The gathering takes place at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish in Pshawbestown, Michigan. Many of the people who come are in need of a nourishing meal. Others come to share conversations and experience community. This dinner gives me the opportunity to relate to the broader community. Those who attend share stories of their past and the role the parish has played in their lives.

This past year, *Bishop Steven Raica* of the Diocese of Gaylord came to celebrate Holy Thursday liturgy at the parish. He joined us for Thursday dinner. While eating, I noticed that two deaf men who regularly come to the dinner were sitting in direct view of him. I remembered that the Bishop knew sign language and asked him to sign to them. The young man's face lit up with surprise and excitement as the Bishop communicated with him in this way. The young man nudged his friend, who was enjoying his supper, and once his friend realized what was happening, he was very surprised and joined in the signing.

It was wonderful to see the happiness of these two men as they enjoyed being engaged in the conversation with the Bishop. As a pastoral administrator, this is a Holy Thursday experience to remember. Thanks to Las Casas for your support for the program.

Susan Gardner, OP
Susan Gardner, OP (Adrian)

Scholarship Program

Dominicans in ministry with Native/Indigenous People, or preparing for this ministry, may apply for a scholarship (up to \$500) to be used for:

Annual Tekakwitha Conference

Basic Directions for Ministry with Native Americans Institute

Completed applications are accepted annually and must be received by March 15th.

Applications are available at:
www.domlife.org/lascasas



PHOTO: 2019 Tekawitha Annual Conference in Sharonville, Ohio



Long-time Las Casas Friend, Honorable Rick Bozarth Retires



Rick Bozarth began his legal career with Las Casas in 1977, the year Las Casas was founded. Las Casas grew out of an extensive letter writing campaign conducted by Al Broderick, OP and Regis Ryan, OP, (St. Joseph Province) to support a nine-month demonstration project of the need for legal assistance to the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of northwest Oklahoma. Rick Bozarth was interviewed by Al and Regis and served as the first attorney with LEAPCAT (Legal Assistance Project among the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes). Rick graduated from law school at the height of the oil boom in Oklahoma, a time when it was extremely advantageous to be a lawyer. We are so glad he saw the ad for LEAPCAT and got the position.

Rick graduated from Oklahoma City University School of Law and was admitted to the Oklahoma Bar Association in 1976. Rick went on to serve in private practice of law and partnered in the law firm of Ruble

and Bozarth from 1980 to 2006. He served as part-time Assistant District Attorney for Dewey County and in January 2007, he was elected the Associate District Judge of Dewey County. He served in that capacity until his retirement on January 13, 2019.

On April 30, 2004, Rick was the recipient of the "Las Casas Award." This award was granted by the Las Casas Board of Trustees for outstanding service to Native People. Some of Rick's comments at the award celebration include: "I was pleased to be involved with LEAPCAT and will cherish those memories and friends and the good karma that I created and thereafter received by my chance involvement with you Dominicans so many years ago. Your efforts to help the Cheyenne and Arapaho are evident around you. What may not be as obvious is the positive influence your efforts and presence has had on the rest of us. Best wishes on your continued endeavors." Rick went on to serve the Las Casas Board as legal counsel in numerous capacities. Since his retirement, Rick has been enjoying time and travels with his wife, Taunia. The Las Casas Board takes this opportunity to once again, thank Rick for his legal counsel and support for the work of Las Casas since its founding. We are so very grateful for your presence among us, Rick! Best wishes to you and Taunia as you enjoy retirement.

Diane Poplawski, OP

Diane Poplawski, OP
The Las Casas Board

Thank you



Thanks to LeAnn Probst, OP (Peace) who completed her term on the Las Casas Board. LeAnn has ministered on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southeastern Montana since August of 2009. She served Blessed Sacrament Parish and Christ the King Parish while residing in Lame Deer. She was a member of the Northern Cheyenne Ministerial Association and also served on the board of the *Everything Beautiful Thrift Store*. In June, LeAnn completed her ministry and returned to Kansas. While on the Las Casas board she

served on the Grant Committee. She was gifted with a Las Casas blanket during a prayer of thanksgiving at the Spring board meeting. Thanks LeAnn!

PHOTO: L-R: Marilyn Winter, LeAnn Probst, Mary Therese Johnson, Nathalie Meyer



Las Casas is grateful for the generosity of our Financial and In-Kind Donors

July 1, 2018 through June 2019
We regret any errors or omissions.
Please report discrepancies to:
lascasasop@gmail.com

Dominican Friars, St. Albert the Great Province
Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Dominican Sisters of Amityville
Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt
Dominican Sisters of Caldwell
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dominican Sister of Mission San Jose
Dominican Sisters of Oakford
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Dominican Sisters of Racine
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Dominican Sisters of Springfield
Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena
Dominican Sisters of Tacoma
Aneesah McNamee, OP (Adrian)
Joyce Roach, OP (Tacoma)
Sisters of St. Anne
Springfield Dominicans, St. Edward's, Chicago

In Honor of:

Adrian Dominican Jubilarians 2019
Marilyn Winter, OP
Grand Rapids Dominican Jubilarians 2019
Nathalie Meyer, OP
Honorable Rick Bozarth
Las Casas Board
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Springfield Dominican Jubilarians 2019
Marie Michelle Hackett, OP



Contributions to support Las Casas and Dominicans in ministry with Native/Indigenous People

☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$300 ☐ \$500
☐ Other \$ _____ ☐ Anonymous

My contribution is made [please print]

☐ In Honor of _____

☐ In Memory of _____

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Thank you!

Check payable to: Las Casas
Contributions are tax-deductible
to the extent allowed by law.

Mail donations to:

Las Casas
c/o Diane Poplawski, OP
5635 Erie St.
Racine, WI 53402-1900



Las Casas

c/o Diane Poplawski, OP
5635 Erie Street
Racine, WI 53402-1900

Las Casas Board

standing L-R:

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Diane Poplawski, OP [Racine]
Mary Therese Johnson, OP [Sinsinawa]

sitting:

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Nathalie Meyer, OP [Grand Rapids]
Kateri Mitchell, SSA [Sister of St. Anne]



visit us at: www.domlife.org/lascasas

