

**Dear Friend of Las Casas:**

After a year, which has provided glaring evidence of racial inequities, some federal funds have been designated to begin to address a more equitable treatment of the Native/Indigenous People after centuries of treaty violations by the federal government. The aid comes after a year that devastated Native/Indigenous people across the country, as poverty, multigenerational housing, and underlying health conditions contributed to the deadly spread of the pandemic.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, tribal leaders closed reservations and secured vaccines not only for their people but the areas surrounding the reservations, which are oftentimes very remote. As one tribal leader noted: "Indian tribes are fully invested in our communities, we do not move away and our investments are here to stay".

The media these days carry stories of unmarked graves of children from boarding schools that were run by various religious groups and under-funded by the federal government. As we have experienced during the recent pandemic, diseases spread rapidly in close living quarters and over the last century there have been many epidemics affecting children, which were deadly. Please pray for the Native/Indigenous families involved with these recent tragic discoveries.

Thanks to the generosity of the Dominican Sisters, Friars and other generous donors, Las Casas has sent funds in January and May 2021 to all Dominicans who minister with Native/Indigenous people. The Board has received gracious notes identifying how the funds have met a vast array of needs. As you review the responses, it will give you pause but at the same time you will note how your support of Las Casas over the years has made a difference in the lives of so many. Your generous donations have helped us serve the most vulnerable in so many ways: food boxes, hay for livestock, water, gloves, hygiene items, gas for hard-hit families, stocking items in a thrift shop, a freezer for meat given from the hunting season for those in need, funeral expenses... and the list of basics continues...

Our deepest thanks for your financial, prayerful, and moral support.

Saint Kateri and Bartolomé de Las Casas, pray for us as we continue to be there for those who suffer because of prejudices.

Nathalie Meyer, OP

Nathalie Meyer, OP
President for the Las Casas Board



Native Voices • Native Land



PHOTO: Bill Quackenbush used with permission

All of us live on Native land. In the Ecological Programming at Sinsinawa Mound, we begin our events with these words. It is important that we go beyond these simple words, however, and understand whose land we are on.

Our Indigenous-led webinars – supported by a generous Las Casas grant and featuring Ho-Chunk, Ioway, and Lakota speakers – have been important for understanding whose land we're on: that Native communities are still here, still working toward the wellness of the land and people.

Too often it is white voices who speak for Native Americans. These webinars helped to change that. After Bill Quackenbush's presentation on the Ho-Chunk (which 100+ participated in) two separate white-led, historical organizations contacted us to thank us for the program and said that they would use Bill's words to train their staff as well to teach non-Native people the proper history of Native presence in this region.

But we must not only consider Indigenous history as if Native culture is something of the past. Crucially, Lance Foster (Ioway) and Maka Black Elk (Lakota) talked about Indigenous futures – paths towards resurgence and healing. The Ioway, for example, are in the midst of creating a National Park on their reservation land in Kansas. And Maka Black Elk, along with his Lakota people, are actively creating a future of healing from the trauma of boarding schools and pointing towards what a post-colonial Indigenous Catholicism might look like.

We must continue listening to these voices for they point us out of our manifold ecological and spiritual crises. Thank you, Las Casas, for supporting this important work!

Christin Tomy, OP

Christin Tomy, OP [Sinsinawa]
Eric Anglada

Tekakwitha Annual Conference

July 20-24, 2022

Alexandria, Louisiana

Tekakwitha Conference National Office

2225 North Bolton Ave. • Alexandria, LA 71303

email: tekconf@gmail.com

www.tekconf.org • 1.844.483.3900



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HONOR NATIVE LANDS

Christin and Eric in the article: "Native Voices, Native Land" reminded us that
"All of us live on Native Land."

- Do you know what Native/Indigenous People lived on the land you now occupy?
- Do you name and honor them when you gather together?
- Some resources for consideration:
<https://usdac.us/nativeland>
<https://native-land.ca>



The presence of a sister on the Flathead Reservation in Montana is greatly appreciated by the Salish and Kootenai people and the parish where I minister. I guide scripture study. Those who gather learn from professional scripture scholars on videos purchased through a Las Casas grant. They appreciate the quality of the presentations and my presence with them. I often indicate to them that any one of them could lead the group, their reply is something like, "But you know about scriptures and we greatly appreciate your guidance." Their affirmation means a lot to me and encourages me to continue ministry with them.

A special ministry experience is preparing a child for First Communion. The family is from the Crow reservation. The mother is studying in the nursing program at the Salish and Kootenai College on the reservation. This college developed by a Salish man is designed especially for Native students. When this mother asked me to prepare her son for First Communion, we met in a room where social distancing was possible. As the classes progressed, I became more impressed with the deep faith and understanding expressed by the mother and grandmother. They told me they had received Catholic education from schools established by religious communities on their Crow reservation. For me this was an example of the rich contribution that religious communities have made over the years to Native People.

Thanks, Las Casas, for your support of this meaningful ministry.

Margaret Hillary, OP

Margaret Hillary, OP (Grand Rapids)



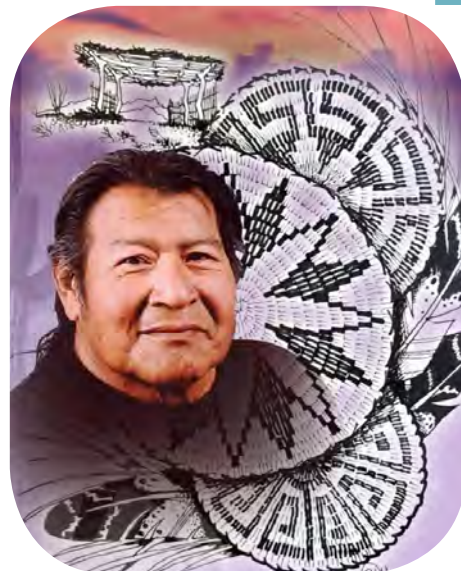
The Las Casas Board

extends sympathy to
The Family and Friends of

**Gus Antone
Tohona O'odham
September 18, 2021**

Gus was a creative Native artist who generously shared his artwork with Las Casas over the years. He created the artistic design of numerous Tekakwitha Conference materials.

May Gus rest in peace as he is welcomed home by the Great Spirit.



Thank you to the Tekakwitha Conference for permission to use the memorial picture and art of Gus.



Dominicans in Ministry with Native/Indigenous People

Ordinarily the Las Casas Board accepts applications for grants and scholarships each year from Dominicans ministering with Native/Indigenous People. However, as we all know, these are not ordinary times. Several years ago the Las Casas board members made the decision to be in direct contact with each Dominican in ministry with Native People. This has helped bridge communications, respond to immediate needs and fulfill the mission of Las Casas.

This year, the Las Casas board suspended receiving any grant requests and have been in conversation with Dominicans throughout the country. Funds were given to all in the ministry, (see letter from Nathalie Meyer, OP, president) since during these challenging times, their focus is on being present with the people and responding to critical needs amidst the numerous and ongoing challenges of the Covid pandemic.

This past year, it has been reported by numerous news agencies that Native communities have seen the highest rate of Corona Virus cases, hospitalizations and deaths of any racial or ethnic group in the U.S. They have suffered disproportionally during the Pandemic and exposed the racial divides and inequities in our country. Jonathan Nez, President of the Navajo Nation, reported that “30-40% of Navajo people don’t even have running water in the most powerful country in the world.”

Despite it all, Native/Indigenous People are resilient and Dominicans walk with them. Noted below are some of their comments amidst the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic...

“The unanticipated funds Las Casas sent us when the Pandemic began helped us purchase necessary material for the health needs of our villagers. Your generosity helps us serve the most vulnerable.”

Helena Im, OP, Francisca Quintero Osorio, OP (Mission San Jose)
Tzotzil speaking Mayas, Chiapas, Mexico

“Grateful for being in solidarity with us.”

Rachel Sena, OP (Peace), Tohono O’odham Nation, Arizona

“...your check, came at a perfect time and is enabling us to respond to numerous needs during these challenging days of Covid-19.”

Chris Ferrar, OP, Helen Durso, OP, Nora McCarthy, OP (Sparkill), Fort Belknap Reservation, Montana

Visit www.domlife.org/lascasas for 2020 article about Chris, Helen & Nora who after 40 years of faithful service returned to New York.



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

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

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



Annual Celebrations

Saint Kateri 'Tekawitha Feast Day · July 14

Indigenous Peoples' Day · 2nd Monday of October

Observed in many cities and states in the Americas on Columbus Day

Native American Heritage Month · November



Thank you for the generous help you have given to our Lady of the Sioux Church in Oglala, South Dakota. We all know the challenges we have responded to during these months of Covid. We did purchase and hand out... boxes of cleaning and personal care items to families... People were invited to stop by and pick up a box or two and pass them along to a family in need..."
Barbara Bogenschutz, OP (Springfield), Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota

"Your generosity helped us provide food boxes...assistance with utility bills, diapers, transportation, etc. What a wonderful help this is and so appreciated by the people."
Monica Dubois, OP (Roman Congregation), Navajo Reservation, Arizona

"Thanks for the wonderful financial help that Las Casas has given to the Saint Kateri Center in Chicago...This money is being used to supplement the Center's fund for scholarships for children hoping to attend Catholic schools... Our Young Native Leaders (YNL) program has really taken off...keeping the young people involved in zoom meetings, classes in Native culture, ...during the Pandemic...The YNL sponsored several drive-thru fund raisers. They decided that the money raised would go toward the Elder lunch drive-thru program."
JoAnn Fleischaker, OP (Adrian), Saint Kateri Center, Chicago, Illinois

"From Covid we are learning to appreciate those things that hold real lasting value for us... Thank you for making it possible for us to respond to persons in need."
Margaret Hillary, OP & Edith Schnell, OP (Grand Rapids), Flathead Reservation, Montana

"Your gifts have been used to supply the on-going need for gloves, clothing, hygiene items, groceries for the homeless, unemployed, and elders most in need and to help with funeral expenses for hard-hit families...we hope to continue our efforts to reach out and help those most in need...None of this would have been possible had it not been for our generosity."
Jean Glach, OP, (Peace), Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Montana

"The Tribe was hit hard by the virus...thank you for thinking of us and the generous support."
Susan Gardner, OP (Adrian), Grand Traverse Bay Chippewa & Odawa, Michigan

"The freezer you helped provide gave us the ability to keep a supply of meat during the hunting season...it is being distributed as needed...Last December, we commemorated the loss of our church...by placing lights on the trees that survived the fire on the church property...plans are underway for a new church on the same land... It is heart-warming to know that you are there for the people we serve. You have moved the mission of Las Casas forward with innovation and creativity. Thanks to all of you for your help and to those who support Las Casas."
Kathleen Kane, OP (Sparkill), Rocky Boy Reservation, Montana

"Covid has greatly impacted our ability to be present and support the Native American population at the Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility. We look forward to the day when we are able to return and offer support, hope and to gather for sacred rituals.
Lois Aceto, OP (Racine), Chuck Davis (Lakota), Racine, Wisconsin



Where Two or More are Gathered Matthew 18:20

Driving a vehicle to visit elders in their homes on roads along hillsides and up into mountainous areas can be a challenge. Finally arriving, it is a joy to knock on the door of an elder and see a big smile on the face of the person opening the door. This welcome makes the drive worthwhile.

After sharing conversation, reading of the Sunday gospel, prayer and receiving Eucharist, the person usually responds, "I feel so much better. Thank you for coming."

Mrs. Betty, one of the elders I visit, age 96, lives alone without a caretaker. Each day she drives her truck down the lane to pick up her mail, feed the horses, bring water to the calves, and care for five guinea hens. Betty talks to them and they have become her friends. When a fox lurks around, Mrs. Betty pulls out her shot gun and shoots a few rounds in the air scaring the fox from her property and secures the safety of her four and two legged friends.

After visiting elders, one could describe Indigenous women as brave, spirit-filled and resilient. They are natural caretakers of earth. As a way of life, they continually reflect on the wonders of creation, animals, water, vegetation and nurturing children. Women are deeply respected and honored. They teach the younger generation their native language, tribal traditions and cultural values. For some women in the Native community, when the end is near, they firmly believe, the mountains are calling. They respond, "I must go."

Thanks to Las Casas for your help in this ministry of presence.

Edith Schnell, OP

Edith Schnell, OP [Grand Rapids]



LAS CASAS honors

and is aware of the following Dominicans currently serving among Native/Indigenous People. They represent approximately 252 years of service among them! Please keep them & the people they walk with in your prayers during these ongoing challenging times.

Barbara Bogenschutz, OP, Springfield

Oglala Sioux

Edith Marie Schnell, OP, Grand Rapids

Confederated Salish & Kootenai

Francisca Quintero Osorio, OP

Mission San Jose

Tzotzil Speaking Mayas

Helena Im, OP, Mission San Jose

Tzotzil Speaking Mayas

Jean Glach, OP, Peace

Northern Cheyenne

JoAnn Fleischaker, OP, Adrian

Urban - Ojibwe, Lakota, Dakota, Menominee, Choctaw

Kathleen Kane, OP, Sparkill

Chippewa-Cree & Metis

Lois Aceto, OP, Racine

Ojibwe, Mohican

Margaret Hillary, OP, Grand Rapids

Confederated Salish & Kootenai

Monica Dubois, OP, Roman Congregation

Navajo

Rachel Sena, OP, Peace

Tohono O'odham

Susan Gardner, OP, Adrian

Chippewa & Odawa

If you are aware of other Dominicans serving among Native/Indigenous People please contact:

Nathalie Meyer, OP [Grand Rapids]

at: nmeyer@grdominicans.org



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

July 1, 2020 through June 2021
We regret any errors or omissions.
Please report discrepancies to:
lascasasop@gmail.com

Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Dominican Sisters of Amityville
Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt
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 Tacoma
Dominican Nuns of the Monastery
of the Blessed Sacrament
Dominican Friars, Western Province, John Morris, OP
Anonymous
Grace Augustine, OP [Blauvelt]
Katherine Broderick
Gail Himrod, OP [Adrian]
Aneesah McNamee, OP (Adrian)
Beth Murphy, OP [Springfield]
Joyce Roach, OP [Tacoma]
Sisters of St. Anne

In Honor of:

Adrian Dominican Jubilarians 2021
Marilyn Francoeur, OP
Marilyn Winter, OP
Shari Geertsens
Maryann McMahon, OP [Racine]
Las Casas Board
Grand Rapids Dominican Jubilarians 2021
Nathalie Meyer, OP
Racine Dominican Jubilarians 2021
Diane Poplawski, OP
Diane Poplawski, OP [Racine]
Siena Retreat Center
Sinsinawa Dominican Jubilarians 2021
Mary Therese Johnson, OP

In Memory of:

Chuck Leute, OP
Dominican Friars, St. Albert the Great Province
Las Casas Board
Diane Poplawski, OP
Patricia Hackett
Michael Fleischaker
Las Casas Board



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 _____

Name _____

Address _____

City State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

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

Sympathy

The Las Casas Board
extends sympathy to
The Family and Friends of

Chuck Leute, OP*
January 1, 2021
St. Albert the Great Province

Patricia Hackett
March 5, 2021
Sister of Marie Michelle Hackett, OP
Las Casas Board Member

Michael Fleischaker
July 28, 2021
Brother of JoAnn Fleischaker, OP
Las Casas Board Member

* See LC Newsletter, Fall 2020
for article on
Chuck's years of ministry
among Native Americans.
domlife.org/lascasas

May they rest in peace as they were
welcomed home by the Great Spirit.



Las Casas Board

JoAnn Fleischaker, OP
Adrian

Marie Michelle Hackett, OP
Springfield

Mary Therese Johnson, OP
Sinsinawa

Nathalie Meyer, OP
Grand Rapids

Kateri Mitchell, SSA
Sisters of St. Anne

Diane Poplawski, OP
Racine

Marilyn Winter, OP
Adrian

visit us at: www.domlife.org/lascasas