

ST. KATERI

SELF GUIDED PRAYER WALK



JULY 14TH - AUGUST 15TH

INTRODUCTION TO ST. KATERI

Early Life

St. Kateri was born in 1656 in current-day New York. She was the daughter of an Algonquin mother and a Mohawk Chief. Her birth name was “Tekakwitha” – “*she who bumps into things.*”

When she was 4 years old, a smallpox outbreak killed her parents and baby brother. She survived, but was left with severe facial scarring, damaged eyesight, and poor health throughout her life. Her aunt and uncle adopted her.

Spiritual Awakening

The beauty of nature was a core element of Tekakwitha’s spirituality.

She also shared Scripture stories with her companions, and joyfully told them about God’s love and the great dignity of each person.

Encounters with Faith

At age 10, French colonists attacked her village. Her people allowed Jesuit missionaries in to stop the fighting. Many Mohawk resisted the missionaries’ push for conversion. Tekakwitha’s uncle forbade her from speaking with them.

At age 13, another tribe attacked. Tekakwitha assisted the missionaries in caring for the wounded. Their compassion and teachings moved her deeply.

When pressured to marry, she refused, saying she felt called to dedicate her life to God.

Becoming Christian

At age 20, Tekakwitha was baptized a Christian, taking the name “Kateri” in honor of St. Catherine of Siena—despite rejection from her village. Her village subjected her to ridicule and persecution.

Life of Devotion

Eventually, Kateri took her spiritual advisor’s advice to move to a Jesuit settlement of Native converts near Montreal, where she was warmly welcomed and was able to live more openly and freely as a Christian.

Kateri’s life focused on doing God’s will in all things. She spent her time in prayer, compassionate service to the sick, and penance in thanksgiving for God’s gift of salvation. She developed a reputation for holiness and a spiritual mentor to others. God’s presence in the beauty of nature drew her to the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi.

Her Death and Legacy

In 1680, Kateri died peacefully of tuberculosis at age 24. Her last words were “Jesus, I love you.” Witnesses reported that a few minutes after she died, the smallpox scars disappeared and her face shone with a holy radiance. Many miracles were attributed to her in the years following her death.

Sainthood & Patronage

She was declared Venerable by Pope Pius XII in 1943, beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980, and canonized St. Kateri Tekakwitha by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012

St. Kateri is known as “the Lily of the Mohawks.” She is the patron saint of ecology and the environment, people in exile and Native Americans.

St. Kateri Prayer:

(Adapted from Tekakwitha Conference)

O Saint Kateri, Lily of the Mohawks,
your love for Jesus,
so strong, so steadfast,
pray that we may become like you.

Your short and painful life
showed us your strength and humility.
Pray that we may become
forever humble like you.

Like the bright and shining stars at night,
we pray that your light
may forever shine down upon us,
giving light, hope, peacefulness
and serenity in our darkest moments.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, may our hearts be filled
with your same love for Jesus.
Please pray that we may have the
strength and courage
to become one like you in Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Walk With Us

RESOURCES USED IN CREATING THIS PRAYER WALK:

**St. Kateri Tekakwitha: The First Native American Saint*, by Saul Cross

**St. Kateri Tekakwitha Novena: Life, Devotions and 9-Day Powerful Novena to St. Kateri*, by Paul Gilbert

**The Life of St. Kateri Tekakwitha: 9 Days Complete Novena*, by Mary Marcus

Catholic Relief Services – Saint Spotlight: Kateri Tekakwitha - <https://www.crs.org/saint-spotlight-kateri-tekakwitha>

Tekakwitha Conference – www.tekconf.org

Sisters of Mercy - <https://www.sistersofmercy.org/saint-kateri/>

Catholic Online - https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=154

* (A copy of each of these books is available in the parish library, located in the parish office.)

ONE FAITH



FAITH

REFLECTION:

St. Kateri's desire to consecrate her life to God faced many obstacles. But because she persisted, she was ultimately able to be baptized and move to a Christian community where she lived a life of prayer, gratitude, penance, and service to others.

Like St. Kateri, we all face setbacks, trials, and obstacles on our spiritual path. They may be external, like the obstacles placed in Kateri's path by loved ones who did not want her to convert, or they may be internal – our own individual doubts, fears, dark nights of the soul.

What can we learn from Kateri's life to help us face our own spiritual challenges?

INTERCESSION:

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks, in your short life you modeled how strong faith can turn the obstacles we face on our faith journey into opportunities to grow spiritually and hear God's call to renew our lives. We ask you to intercede for us, that inspired by your steadfast faith, we can experience the growth and renewal to which God is calling us.

PRAYER:

Lord, we know that by Your grace the shadows and doubts we experience can be dispersed by the radiant light of faith.

When we are discouraged or beset by doubt, we pray for the strength and courage to hold steadfastly to our faith, so we can be drawn into closer communion with You.

Help us to follow in the footsteps of St. Kateri, seeking Your will in all things and standing tall in love and service to You and Your people.

TWO

GRATITUDE



GRATITUDE

REFLECTION:

St. Kateri had a difficult life. As a young child, she lost her entire family to smallpox. Although she survived, she had lifelong health problems, impaired vision, and scarring. As an adolescent, she faced pressure from her village to marry rather than consecrate her life to God. After her baptism, she still faced so much persecution that she eventually left her home and relocated to a different location away from those she knew.

Yet Kateri lived a life of profound gratitude to God.

Today our lives are busy and complicated. We have job pressures; financial challenges; worries about how to raise children in a world dominated by technology, advertising and AI; concerns about living in a country divided and angry. We may be facing health issues – our own or those close to us. And there is never, ever, ever enough time for everything we need to get done.

In this hectic world, how can we continually stay mindful of God's constant blessings and cultivate gratitude?

INTERCESSION:

St. Kateri, you recognized how precious life is, even with all its problems, grief and ugliness. You understood the dignity of every life, and the gift of salvation that God offers to each child of God.

Your life was a hymn of praise to God.

Please pray that God will grant us the insight to look past the noise, annoyances, fears and tragedies of our lives, to experience beauty in small moments as well as immense gratitude for the wondrous gifts of life and salvation that our God offers us.

PRAYER:

Lord, gratitude to you was a pillar of St. Kateri's life. Amidst the everyday routines and tribulations of our lives, may we never forget to appreciate the abundant joys You provide, and pause to thank You.

God of all blessings, teach us to notice the blessings you shower on us every day, every hour, every minute – blessings of nature, family, beauty, joy, laughter, love, wisdom

Let each moment be an occasion of gratitude for the countless gifts you give us, turning our lives into a ceaseless Thanksgiving.

THREE UNITY



UNITY

REFLECTION:

During Kateri's childhood and adolescence, several groups of outsiders had a big impact on her village and ultimately on her life. French colonists, and later a neighboring tribe, attacked the village. The third group, Jesuit missionaries, came to the village for different reasons. They hoped to convert the Natives, and their desire to change Native ways engendered hostility.

But Kateri worked alongside the missionaries to care for the wounded from the attack by the neighboring tribe. What she experienced as she worked with them was an instrumental part of her journey toward becoming a Christian.

In today's world, the divisions and conflicts can seem endless and overwhelming. It is hard to know what we as individuals can do against such massive problems. What insight can we gain from St. Kateri's story?

INTERCESSION:

St. Kateri, to our 21st-century eyes, seeing wars and violence on our screens all day every day, it can seem like the world you inhabited was placid and harmonious by comparison. But the divisions you faced were real.

Working side by side with the missionaries, you came to know them and their truth at a deeper level. Please ask God to give us courage and openness to seek the deeper truth in everyone we encounter, even if it may seem we have nothing in common.

PRAYER:

O Lord, in our conflict-ridden world, please help us to be peacemakers – in our nation, in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces, in our homes.

Give us hearts to remain always and fully aware that we are all children of the same Creator, made in your image and likeness, bound by threads of a common humanity.

Please bless us with wisdom and insight to see specific steps we can take, to:

- reach across divides and see past differences
- truly appreciate the strength of diversity and the beauty in unity
- bring understanding to discord and dialogue to disputes
- build friendship, not enmity
- *make* peace rather than accept conflict

FOUR

CREATION – SPIRITUALITY



CREATION – SPIRITUALITY

REFLECTION:

Kateri lived in tune with the rhythm of the seasons and the melody of the natural world. Her people's way of life made her keenly aware of God's creation. Her spirituality was deeply rooted in her love of nature.

Today our lives are far more removed from the immediacy of God's creation. Even if we're fortunate enough to live in an area that has easy access to the natural environment, we still live most of our lives in buildings, we travel in vehicles, we buy our food at a store.

What are we missing? How could greater awareness of and connection with the natural world nurture our relationship with our God?

INTERCESSION:

St. Kateri, within your Native culture, your life was fully immersed in the natural world that God gave to humanity. Today our relationship with that natural world is distant and impoverished.

Please pray for us to find the will and the way to experience the wonders of creation as you experienced them, and to learn the lessons that nature can teach us.

PRAYER:

O God, creator of all, please help us recognize Your creation as a glorious tapestry woven from the countless wonders You made - each creature, each plant, each grain of sand a unique expression of Your infinite love and boundless imagination.

Through the cycles of nature, please teach us the lessons of patience, of change, of growth, of restoration, of death and resurrection.

May we, like St. Kateri, see You in every encounter with the natural world, and may it remind us, always, of the bounty of Your love.

FIVE CREATION - STEWARDSHIP



CREATION - STEWARDSHIP

REFLECTION:

St. Kateri lived in harmony with nature. Kateri and her people did not compete with nature or seek to dominate it; rather they saw it as a source for fulfilling their needs and those of the others in their world.

In our world today, we have learned that the resources of God's creation, though generous, are neither infinite nor inexhaustible. Yet we see that some of our fellow humans take and discard far more than they need from nature, even while others are unable to access the basics they need to survive. Meanwhile, the natural resources we're leaving to those who come after us are more diminished and tainted by the day.

What part do each of us as individuals play in this mismanagement? How can we be more faithful stewards of God's bounteous gifts?

INTERCESSION:

St. Kateri, patron saint of the environment, what do you feel when you see the waste, misallocation, and destruction of Earth's resources that is so prevalent today? And how can we do our part to heal this blight?

We ask you to fervently intercede with God to change our hearts and show us what each of us, individually, can do to ensure that our natural treasure is used as God intended.

PRAYER:

Creator God, just as the work of Your creation was an act of love for us, please help us understand that in caring for Your creation, we express our love for You.

Our natural world shows us Your heart and mind, O God. May we realize that every act of waste and negligence wounds not only the Earth but also Your divine plan.

In a world driven by consumption, teach us to live in harmony with nature, striking a balance that nurtures rather than exhausts, cherishes rather than devours.

O Lord, stir our hearts to heed the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, understanding that damage to the environment most profoundly affects those who are least able to protect themselves. Let us bear witness to their struggle, using our voices and actions to advocate for just and systemic change.

Please give us the strength to mend our ways, to bring about change in our hearts, in our homes and in our society.

SIX

PRAYER IN SIX DIRECTIONS



PRAYER IN SIX DIRECTIONS

NOTE: *This prayer uses a variety of names to address God. You are invited to face in each of the directions as you pray – optional*

EAST

We greet you, Spirit of the East.

You come to us with the power of the rising sun.

You give the gift of new life to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha and to us.

Awaken in us with each day, new hopes, new dreams;

Fill our bodies with your breath;

Be our light as we walk on the path of Mother Earth.

SOUTH

We greet you, Spirit of the South.

You bring winds of summer and breathe on us

The warmth of the sun to soothe and heal our
body, mind and spirit.

As you, Spirit of the South, give all the Earth
your refreshing winds; enfold us like your
gentle breezes, as you did with Saint Kateri Tekakwitha,
So that we may daily grow closer to you.

WEST

We greet you, Spirit of the West.

You refresh us and bring laughter to our hearts.

As you brought joy to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha,

Guide our steps and keep us from evil.

It is by your power that the sun goes down,

Give us a great sky for setting.

Fill us with your peace that we may rest

until morning calls us forth again to give you praise and thanksgiving.

NORTH

We greet you, Spirit of the North.

You are the cold wind that blows

across our land and brings the snows of winter.

It is your spirit who covers the earth for sleep.

Spirit of the North, teach us courage, patience and endurance as you did in the life of
Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.

In the solitude and darkness of winter like the sleeping earth, we wait within ourselves
in prayer and fasting for a new life in Christ.

EARTH

We greet you, Giver of all Life

We pray to you from the earth.

Help us to remember that we are small and need you.

Help us to be thankful as Saint Kateri Tekakwitha for the gift of the earth.

May we walk gently and softly on this land of the First Peoples.

Bless us with the eyes to love all that comes from Mother Earth.

HEAVENS

We greet you, Spirit of the Heavens.

Lift us up to you.

May our hearts worship you and come to you in glory.

Help us through Saint Kateri Tekakwitha to remember that you are our Creator God.

Let all that is in the Earth lift our minds, our hearts, and our lives to you,

so that we may come to you always in truth with a good mind and clean heart.