Sister Kateri Mitchell:

Thank you very much, it's a pleasure to be here with you this afternoon. And I think our workshop really timed just right. So that we can share spiritually and share who we are before our Creator.

Before we begin, I like to sing, so you'll have to. Um, if you would like to stand, please stand, if you want to remain seated, just do what you'd like to do. There's even room if you'd like to stretch out.

I will sing to the Father I will sing to the Son, I will sing to the Spirit, I will sing to everyone.
I will pray to the Father I will pray to the Son, I will pray to the Spirit, I will pray for everyone.
Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, glory be to the Spirit, glory be to everyone. In the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Spirit, in the name of everyone.
Once again. I will sing, second time I will pray, and then glory be.
I will sing to the Father I will sing to the Son, I will sing to the Spirit, I will sing to everyone. I will pray to the Father, I will pray to the Son, I will pray to the Spirit, I will pray for everyone.
Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, glory be to the Spirit, glory be to everyone. In the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Spirit, in the name of everyone.
Once more.
I will sing to the Father, I will sing to the Son, I will sing to the Spirit, I will sing to everyone. I will pray to the Father, I will pray to the Son, I will pray to the Spirit, I will pray for everyone.
Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, in the name of the Spirit in the name of everyone.
[Undetermined 030-034] I think this one. It's called Praise Him
[Undetermined 035].
[Undetermined 037] praise Him, praise Him in the morning, praise Him in the evening, praise Him, praise Him, praise and worship.

Oooh. We'll try something else. That's one way of making everybody happy (laughter). This one is. When we get to the refrain, please repeat what I say. When I say repeat and then blessed.

[Undetermined 046-053] Ready? Blessings came to all those she knew. And [Undetermined 053-061]. And she was just a simple little
did she turn away from sin. And Ready? My blessed little lily of the valley.

Blessed Kateri, as a person who always leads us to prayer. She her name from gathering, bringing together all of us today. So that we can focus in on who we are. The gift, the gifts, of God created, at one time was not too well known by our people. And at one time, as people we said, she was the gift of our people. And as, one of our great values is that of sharing. we have come to realize and better understand that is so great, that we want to share with all. So today, we no longer say, she was a gift, she is a gift of all Indian people, of all Native Americans. So we share her together. And since we share her, she has done so much in our lives. I think if each of us look back in our spiritual journey, our journey of faith, we realize this.

That she is leading us, she is walking with us. is very important. That whole idea of journey, of walking. Of being. Then if we can fully realize that, is with us at all times can be so. Even if it brings with it some suffering, some frustrations. But there realize that we are always going to have her as our and who walks with us each day. Blessed rooted in the lives of our people. Bringing so many tribes together. Making us realize, helping us to realize that is so great, that we want to share with all Indian people, of all Native Americans. So we share her together. And since we share her, she has done so much in our lives. I think if each of us look back in our spiritual journey, our journey of faith, we realize this.

That she is leading us, she is walking with us. is very important. That whole idea of journey, of walking. Of being. Then if we can fully realize that, is with us at all times can be so. Even if it brings with it some suffering, some frustrations. But there realize that we are always going to have her as our and who walks with us each day. Blessed rooted in the lives of our people. Bringing so many tribes together. Making us realize, helping us to realize that each one of us is gifted. And are gifted because we are the gift of our Creator. God lives in each one of us. As he breathed life into the first person who was created, we share that breath of life. We share that gift of God in our own lives, which we are called to share with. Blessed belonged to the Turtle Clan of the Mohawk nation. Then I feel very privileged that I too belong to the Turtle Clan. Then eternal is very significant and very symbolic in my life. And I think I've come to know and understand the life a little bit more because of the fact that we share the plan to. Then as women this is extremely important for us. As mothers, you know what it means the day you. Another life to share the breath of life that our Creator gives us. And as religious, we don't bring forth life physically, but we do also share in that life giving experience by in the people.

Therefore, we are called. With much respect and reverence for the children. The birthing process that we all experience, and men, you are also a part of the life-giving people here on earth. Because we all share in that gift that struggled so hard with the people. And managed to come to because blessed the gift that Christ gives in our lives as Christians. As. And that bringing forth the life of Christ, calling for Christ in each one of us, is what we all share as Christians. Because we know that it is through Christ, in Christ and with Christ that we have gone.

So everyone of us shares in life-giving experiences with. Because we have been able to focus in on our Creator who is the center of our lives. And when we're able to do that we reach out to peoples everywhere. All places. All faiths. all centered on our Creator. So in this day and age, where we so many obstacles. Sometimes we have breakdowns that shakes us up a bit. that shake up in our lives is very important. Then.
Then we can say that it is a gift from God because quite often we shake things up and it brings forth something new in our lives. It's almost like a blood transfusion. New blood, new life. And then that new life there is a whole attitude because we have to be able to recognize that when we have some turbulence there is. We have a lot of thunderstorms. And we do believe in and maybe that was because I couldn't take all of life's turbulence. So, the Lord let me rest in peace. But quite often, it is the worst times that we can experience who we are. Because we know that God loves us. And blessed in her journey. As we examine and meditate on what the in our lives. As native people was have the reputation of moving slowly. And eternal is very slowly. Move straight forward. But as that moves, very close to the ground. Very close to mother earth. sees all that goes on. Is able to see and observe God's creation.

So that from that tiniest little creature to the biggest, is able to see and respect. And appreciate all of creation. Because creation was where she found life. Where she found peace. And was able to experience. And we know that turtle, even though it looks like a frail thing and we can kick it around. The turtle will always just continue and have a shell, a hard shell. To me, represents that strength that the Turtle Clan today has. That determination to reach a goal. And as the turtle goes along very slowly, straightforward to reach a goal. And the goal is to be with the Creator. That through that slow movement, we can fully reach the center of our lives.

So Blessed Kateri means so much. The person, through children, can be respected by each one of us. A person we know that we are strangers in a place and we see another Indian, what do we do? Immediately we recognize one another and there is a bond. magnetic. We reach out to one another. As native people we are never strangers to one another. And I have found that no matter where I go. I feel right at home. And This is how we the earth and that strength is how we. That whole sense of community. Because we know who we are and we are God's people. And He loves us all. He gives us strength. He gives us what we need, if we give Him a change. I you move slowly like that turtle, then just. And if we can accept things, as gifts, it changes our whole lives. A joy is gotten through a gift. Just as the blessed she just awaits for the day when she can receive her first communion at the age of. Because she thought that she knew what the body of Christ meant. That she would be sharing the life of Jesus share her faith. Which makes us. It is of one body, one that we become who we are. And Blessed Kateri makes this difference. She is walking with us to help us. to get our goal.

There are so many of our Native people now gathering in various parts of the country who are having various names, but basically groups. And they have as their patrons where men, women, children gather to share faith. Sharing with they young. They pray together because of the. Quite often we hear that these circles or groups are women's things. They are. Because the women aren't alone in this world. You know that there's another half? I know that we're the better half (laughter). And it is, by bringing the two together, that's how we create community, that's how we create family. And as husband and wife in a
family, we know that it wouldn't be a family if you weren't together. And through that love, comes full [undetermined 494] with our children [undetermined 494-495] new life comes when we're all gathered together.

So at this time, maybe you would like to stand. And we'll sing, and then we'll be ready for some [undetermined 500-501].

Blessed Kateri, she loved her Jesus. And you will sing this, if you can stand [undetermined 508]. [undetermined 509-511] his name is Jesus. His name is love. [undetermined 514-516] his name is Jesus. His name is [undetermined 518]. His name is wonderful. His name is [undetermined 520]. His name is [undetermined 521-523]. His name is [undetermined 524-526]. His name is Jesus, the mighty [undetermined 527].


Thank you. (applause).

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Where? Down in my heart. Down in my heart. I've got that joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Down in my heart today. And I'm so happy, so very happy. I've got Lord Jesus in my heart. And I'm so happy, so very happy. I've got Lord Jesus in my heart. I've got that Jesus and his understanding down in my heart. Down in my heart. I've got that Jesus and his understanding down in my heart. Down in my heart to start. And I'm happy. So very happy. I've got the Lord Jesus in my heart. Yes I'm so happy, so very happy. I've got the Lord Jesus in my heart.

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**Autobiography of Sr. Genevive Cuny (Oglala Lakota), S.S.F.**

*Transcribed by Gretchen Lau, 1999*

**Sister Genevieve Cuny:**

Katherine and I were going to have a talk with Father John Hascall because we are here because he isn't here. And you know how gifted John is but I also believe that God has blessed us all in [undetermined 005]. And I think one of the gifts that Indian people have very much in common is that whenever I'm asked to speak to an Indian group I always say, well yes, even though I might now know what I'm going to talk about. Because it is such a great privilege to share with all of you from the many parts of our country.

And I'm a Lakota person from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. I was born and raised there. Attended Catholic school for twelve years. It's now called Red Cloud Indian School. But at that time it was called Holy Rosary Mission. And it was because of my association with the Franciscan sisters who taught at the school, and the Jesuit fathers who also were instructors there. Which helped me decide whether to be a Franciscan sister or not. But when I was reflecting on that, I was thinking
it was the example of my parents that really nurtured my vocation. That is where I received the gift of faith. The Jesuit missionaries came among our people one hundred years ago. And there are about six Indian women from the Pine Ridge reservation who are sisters. And you wonder why aren't there any more? But when I think what a tremendous gift or religious vocation gives. But when I look at my parents and think too what a wonderful gift marriage is also. Because if it weren't for them, you know I wouldn't have entered this vocation.

And I remember I grew up in a family of twelve. There were twelve of us. And I remember when I would get up my father would always be gone. And I would say, mom, where's papa? And she would say, well he's out in the fields. And I would say, well what's he doing out there? I was about six years old, very young. And she said that he's praying. He's asking the Creator to bless us and our family. And also our fields. And to bless all our relatives. [undetermined 030]. Not only the Indian people, she would say all of them [undetermined 031]. Because we are all related. We are all brothers and sisters in Jesus. And that was my father's influence on my life. The great spiritual [undetermined 033-034] a very spiritual man. My mother was different. She was lively. She would say, when we sat down for prayer, she would teach us. [undetermined 036] prayers. The Our Father, the Hail Mary, even before we went to school, she taught us those prayers. So when I got to school and they told us about Jesus, I knew that he was the creator because my parents would often tell us about God [undetermined 038-039].

But about Jesus I didn't hear very much because we were at this boarding school for nine months out of every year. And we only got home in the summer time. And so when I heard about Jesus I thought, that's wonderful, that God so loved us that he sent his own son Jesus. That he sent his only son to save us from our sins. Which is really the greatest enemy that we have in our relationship with God. And then right away I thought, my goodness, they are like Jesus because they always taught us to share. That was one of the great things that we learned, I learned [undetermined 047] in my life was to share. And I learned that faith was a relationship with God. It also meant learning from prayers. Learning about who God was. Basically our relationship with God. Which was to be nurtured and we do that by prayer, they do it by sharing with one another. And parents, primarily, do the same thing in the home. That children [undetermined 053] through seeing the lives of their parents and how they live them out.

So when I would hear how Jesus came to give us an example of how to live [undetermined 056]. How to earn our way or to live our way, so that we too you know, could return to the Father as Jesus did. I often thought of the example of my parents.

And in the area of sharing, I remember often that among the Lakota culture people visit one another right at meal time. And they call it [undetermined 060]. We go and visit right at meal time. Because we know that people will be there. We don't have to say we're coming. Call them up [undetermined 063] but they will, we always know that there will be someone in the home. So we would go at [undetermined 064] time or at meal time or someone would come to our house. And it was just the accepted thing. That we would always be [undetermined 065] our house first. And I remember saying to my mother, we're not going to have enough. And she said, my girl, she said, don't worry God takes care of us. And that was repeated over and over as a child. That people would come and bring us sacks of potatoes and bags of corn and sacks of flour. Because that was [undetermined 070]. Whenever we share with others it comes back double to us. [undetermined 072] I learned first in my home.
So when I thought of being a sister, and I, at first you know I was engaged to be married, I was planning on getting married. And when I would mention it to my mother, she would say, now you need to really pray about that. She said because God gives us only one life to live and it's precious. And how we spend that life is [undetermined 077-078]. So she said you make sure that this is what you want to do. Do you want to marry, or do you want to be a sister.

So I did, I went away to college at Sioux City, Iowa. And it was at that college in Iowa that a Franciscan sister who was the president. And I remember she had these glasses that were on a chain, that would dangle on her neck when she wasn't wearing them. And I would pass by her office door and she would call me every time. So I thought well I'm going to avoid that door. So I would find another way to avoid her. Because she kept saying, what are you going to do with your life? And so I would say well I'm going to get married, you know, and flash this engagement ring at her. And she too would say, are you sure? And so she too.

So she introduced me to the tertiaries of St. Francis. Which is the lay group that does apostolic work in the community. So every Saturday this group would go to the [undetermined 090-091] in Sioux City, Iowa. And we would substitute for the workers who worked there because they didn't have Saturday off. So we would get the kids up and we would take them to breakfast and we would play with them and just have a [undetermined 094-095] shower and read them stories and send them to bed.

And I did that for that whole year on Saturdays. And that was, God was working in that way. Because at the end of that year, I thought, this is what I want to do. I want to give my life to the service of our [undetermined 098-099]. I want to give my life to [undetermined 100] and share the things that were [undetermined 101]. So when this sister [undetermined 101] who was the president of Radcliff College said to me at the end of two years, she said, what are you going to do with your life? And I said, I want to be a sister. A Franciscan sister. She was Franciscan too only from Dubuque, Iowa. And she said, you are? That's wonderful. She said I have been praying for you because I [undetermined 106-107]. So when I told her it was within the Franciscans, she said, that's wonderful. She said God calls us to a particular place to [undetermined 109]. So she said you have to go.

So, I thought well that, there was a verification, confirmation of this call that I had received from God, through my parents through their example and through the schools where I had attended [undetermined 112]. St. Francis [undetermined 113] school which was called [undetermined 114] and then Briarcliff College, those two Catholic Schools really confirmed the call that God had planted in my heart. And so, and I, I thought wow, I'm going to have to tell this fiancée of mine somehow (laughter). Will he understand [undetermined 118].

So when I came home and when he would come to the house I would always run out to him, but on this occasion I didn't. I just stayed in the house. And he knew something was different. So he came in and I sat down and he said what's on your mind? He said, you're different. He noticed right away. And I said, well I have to tell you something and I don't know how to say it. And he said I know what you're thinking. And I said, oh you do? Did God talk to you? And he said oh yes. And he was a deeply spiritual man. And he said, I feel that maybe we're not going to marry. He said maybe you are called to do something else [undetermined 129]. So there was already [undetermined 130] that God provided. So I told him and he started to cry. And he said I know that this is a great struggle that you had over two years. And I know that you took time to really discern what God was calling you to. Because you didn't want to get into it right away. That you wanted two years to [undetermined 135] while I was away at school.
So I told him all of the experiences that I had. And one day [undetermined 137] about my mother and my family and just said, I understand and I want to respect how you [undetermined 138]. So I took off the ring and I was giving it back to him and he said, would you keep that as a keepsake? I said, oh no, that wouldn't be fair. That would not be fair. So, he wouldn't take it so I remember I stuffed it in his shirt. And I cried.

That man got married later and had a family but every time I return to [undetermined 143] that's where he is. He's in the congregation, there he is with his wife and his family and always comes up to me. And she knows, the wife knows the story. And she too comes up [undetermined 147] that God has called each of us to a particular way of life. And whatever way He calls us, whether it's marriage or whether it's to be a sister or to remain single or to become a priest or a brother, that is the path, that, the best way that we can use our gifts. And that is the path that God has chosen for us. And so He is very happy [undetermined 153] so I know that God does call us to a particular way of life. Although we may have thought of something different.

Then that importance of prayer in our lives to say, what does God want me to do? Not only in the area of religion, but also [undetermined 157-158] what does God want me to do? And somehow to face that fact that our greatest enemy is ourselves. That selfishness and pride often focusing on [undetermined 161] through others. So I relapsed what I learned from my parents was [undetermined 162-163] to be connected with God every day. And then that's prayer, too. And we know as native peoples, our greatest gift is our spirituality. That there is enough [undetermined 166] that we have with God. That we're open for prayer, we're open for being spiritual. That is a gift [undetermined 168] as native people that we can share with our families first of all. Share with those whose lives we touch. That's what we [undetermined 169]. Like Mother Theresa says we don't all have to go to India. We can do it right in our very back yard. Love the people who are nearest to you, love them. To show your love for them, share it with them. And that's really why Jesus came. That's the good news [undetermined 174]. He came to share the Father's love. So we as Christians, as Catholic Christians, as native Christians, that is our call also. To share God's love with one another. And begin right here. You don't have to go too far. So every person you meet each day, to be in relationship with that person. And that's another gift that we have that respect. To recognize people who are around us. [undetermined 182-183] shake their hand, introduce yourself. [undetermined 183]. Recognize the persons around us because God is there. God is with everyone. And, you might pass Him by, if you fail to recognize Him. And God dwells least of all, or most of all, in those we least expect. Maybe they're not dressed so, they don't talk so very well. Or whatever reason you might have. God dwells most in those we least expect.

So that's another [undetermined 192] that I believe my parents shared with me. And I remember as a child another gift that my family shared was, always be grateful for what we have right now. Don't be wishing about tomorrow, or what was yesterday, but be satisfied with what we have right now. And that way you'll always be happy.

And on this occasion I remember it was my sixteenth birthday. And, on our birthdays, my mom used to make us whatever kind of cake we liked. And I always liked chocolate cake so I, you know, my mother didn't have to ask me what I want. But the day came around and there was no cake. So I was moping around the house and she said, ah, what's wrong with you? And I said, you know it's my birthday. And she said, I know that. And I said, well [undetermined 204] some cake. And here she said, you know we didn't have the money to buy what we needed for the cake. She always made Jell-O instead of ice-cream and she made Jell-O with fruit in it to serve
with the cake. And she said I didn't have enough money to buy the frosting and the other things that we needed. And then all around me at this table were my brothers and sisters [undetermined 211]. And she said [undetermined 211-212]. And look at your brothers and sisters, they are the greatest gifts. And I'll never forget that.

So I always try to be satisfied with whatever happens. With whatever I have, because that's really what Jesus taught when He came. [undetermined 216] the birds in the air, and the lilies of the field [undetermined 217-218]. God takes care of all. So don't worry. The greatest thing that we [undetermined 221]. We share with whatever we have. And be satisfied. And that was my gift that my parents passed on to me. To this very day I appreciate that because of those memories. And that's what Jesus taught too. That don't worry about [undetermined 225]. Because God [undetermined 226]. He is always with us. And that was another value that I picked up from my parents.

Now this is all started before I even went to school. These gifts were being installed with my family. And that's where [undetermined 229]. That's where the, our characters are born, the values are passed on, and that is why we pass on the faith. Passing on the faith in that sense is our spirituality of spiritual [undetermined 233].

So, when the time came for me to, make this decision to become a Franciscan, I could tell my mother that this is what I had decided to be and she understood. And in those days, not many Indian girls went away to the Sisters. In fact there were only three before me.

And she said, you know the acceptable thing among our people is to get married young. Because family is very important. So she said are you willing to make this sacrifice? And I said, well, I'll try. You can always try [undetermined 242-243]. So I said I'm going to try. And she said, you go [undetermined 244-245] she always spoke for my father. She said you go with your father's blessings too.

So, when the time came it was to go to Denver, Colorado from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. And in those days you went by train. So you went by car to Alliance, Nebraska. And then you went by train to Denver. And there was another girl who joined me on the train in Alliance. And we were crying. And, ah, she would, I remember we kept clothes between us because we didn't want to, and we kept putting these clothes in front of us and crying.

And there was a [undetermined 253] priest who was down a little ways and he noticed. He thought, we must have looked like we were going to the convent (laughter). And so, he came, and he was Father [undetermined 256]. And he came over to us and he was a like a, he was a Syrian. He was, he tried to make us laugh, he was telling us all kinds of stories. And we would respond to these stories and then we'd burst into tears after we finished laughing. So he didn't know what to do. So he came and sat to us all the way to Denver. And he even escorted us out to Marycrest [undetermined 262]. But to this day when I see Carl Harris, he always says, we entered the convent together didn't we? (laughter). Now see he knows that God is faithful. God does provide.

So we came along and he helped us over that hurdle and we got to Marycrest, Denver, Colorado. And Sister Geraldine Clifford was already there. She's an Indian girl [undetermined 267-268]. And she was in the Novitiate at the same time. And then there was an Indian girl from [undetermined 270]. She was [undetermined 270-271]. I remember there were three of us, in Novitiate at the same time. And one of the girls was [undetermined 273-274]. And ah,
it was very, very strict. And when our parents were very ill, or, you know, they would, sometimes not say, no you can't go. These decisions were made for us.

But I remember [undetermined 278-279] Sister Geraldine Clifford go and share the troubles that we were having. So we would go down to the laundry room which was [undetermined 280] but we could go down there and we would say, we're talking to God.

[undetermined 282] (laughter). We're talking to God down here. We're telling him our problems. How we miss our families and tell us, is this where You want us? And we were able to ask Him is this where You want us? Because we miss our families so much. Is this what you're calling us to?

And the other sister, Gloria [undetermined 287], she didn't want to break the rule, so she said, I'm not going to go down to the laundry room with you. So Sister Geraldine and I would go down there. But do you that was my salvation? That's what pulled me through three years at Marycrest? That I could share with Sister Geraldine the problems and the lonesomeness that was there, is always there.

[undetermined 294] Indian people, as native people how important our families are. To be in touch with them. So, after the three years were up and we were asked, you know, is this what you want to do? Do you want to make these vows as a Franciscan Sister? And just like with my mother, I had said yes, this is what I want to do. When she asked me, is this what you want to do? I answered with Sister [undetermined 301], yes, this is what I want to do. I want to try, I want to try some more. So, you make your first vows. And so for three years you then can [undetermined 304] vows. And within those three years you can decide if this is for me or not.

So right away I thought I want to go my [undetermined 306] and I want to start a [undetermined 307-308]. But, that wasn't the wisest thing to do, because the principle at the [undetermined 309] Indian School told the Provincial of the Franciscans, don't send Sister Genevieve to her home town. What he told her, I didn't find that until years later. Because every year, in those days they would read off [undetermined 315] wherever you were going to go. My name would always be [undetermined 315] Nebraska. And I thought when is it ever going to be Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

Ten--nine years went by, and I was in Nebraska [undetermined 318]. Finally [undetermined 318] after I think it was nine years not ten. [undetermined 319-320]. So I went there [undetermined 321]. Then we were trained as teachers or nurses. So I went there and taught the third grade to [undetermined 323]. And that was a wonderful experience. To be [undetermined 324], the children. Then about a couple years later I went finally to Pine Ridge, South Dakota. To Red Cloud Indian School and taught in the high school. And I loved the high school girls and boys. I had them for typing and shorthand. Because I had taken a business training course, that was my field. And I remember how the high school boys, trying to learn how to type [undetermined 332].

And I remember how, one of the other gifts our Indian people have is the gift of humor. We know that. So one day I came to class and there was a sign on the board it said, no typing today. [undetermined 335] junior boys. And I came dashing in the room. There wasn't any noise [undetermined 336] and I thought what's going on? And they had written this note across the blackboard. So I said all right and tried to look real strict and I said, whoever did that you go and erase the blackboard. All ten of them got up. And they went up there and each of them had written a part of the word (laughter). So they all erased the part they wrote until it was all erased. And I couldn't help [undetermined 343-344] from laughing because it was so funny. Finally they
all burst out, when it was all over with we all ended up laughing. And then they took out the book and they got down to work. But they used to pull all kinds of things. I remember they knew I was afraid of heights, so they would, sometimes [undetermined 348] down the aisle. [gap in recording 351].

And we're paying your tuition. So that we have nine coming from the Pine Ridge and the [undetermined 003] reservation to take [undetermined 003].

Because they feel this is a way that we can grow in our faith. And give us confidence as teachers so that we can teach better within our local communities. So, that is another way that, ah, is responding to the need that we express [undetermined 007]. So this is an opportunity to respond to that [undetermined 008]. That we felt was, we felt [undetermined 009]. So that we can better ourselves, in knowledge and faith. And have opportunities to share our faith with one another.

So, those are the ways that I feel as a native person, as a Franciscan Sister, that I have been called to share my peace with the church. And I thank God every day that my parents gave me a good example of faith. Because I wouldn't be here today if it were not for the faith of my parents. That we're [undetermined 017] which nurtured my faith. And Briarcliffe College, Sioux City, Iowa, which really crystallized my vocation [undetermined 019] that's where [undetermined 020]. And it was through the prayers of my family the example.

So if I want to leave any parting words from you this afternoon it would be, treasure the faith of this [undetermined 022-023]. Share that faith with those around you. Those closest to you. And the best way to do that is to look at the good examples. So thank you for this opportunity to share my faith with you. To share who I as a Lakota person, and how my family [undetermined 027-028]. (applause).

...softball, but I couldn't keep up with them. And they nicknamed me Slow Gin. But I didn't know that was a drink until years later. (laughter) So I was [undetermined 003] Slow Gin. And it was only like fifteen years later that I find out that that was a drink. (laughter).

But those years, working with the high school, both at Holy Rosary then out at [undetermined 011]. But the greatest work that I'm involved with now, as a teacher, is the technique of conference.

As you know the technique at conference has been rejuvenated. Since the beautification of blessed [undetermined 014]. And since then, the technique of conference has mushroomed from an attendance, like in 1976, I think forty attended that meeting. And the conference used to be a support group for clergy who worked among the Indian people. And it was begun by a bishop from [undetermined 019]. And he called that [undetermined 020] to help the priests support one another. And that was in 1939 it was started as a support group. The clergy who worked for them in their home. And I guess when it first started [undetermined 023]. But as the years went on, fewer and fewer clergy attended these meetings.

So in 1976, ah, they said, let us pray and ask God, what is to become of [undetermined 026]. Are we to stop it all together? Are we to reorganize? Or what are we to do? There was an Indian man present there, Francis [undetermined 028]. Who is now [undetermined 028] he's a Lakota. And he said he was present at that meeting [undetermined 029]. He said an important decision is going to be made and we're going to pray about it. So that was made in 1976. Now in 1977, they decided that it would be revived. And how are they going to revive it? They were going to open it up to [undetermined 033]. They were going to open it up to the religious sisters. Before that it was only for the priests, not for the clergy. But now they said let us open it up to all the
all those in ministry too. So, and that was in '77. In '78 when they met in Rapid City, South Dakota those two years, they drew like two hundred people each of those times. And then it went to Rapid City, South Dakota those two years, they drew like two hundred people each of those times. And then it went to [undetermined 039] and it went up to like six hundred. And in '80 it went to Denver and it went to like eight hundred. Now this is, these are the lay people [undetermined 042]. This isn't counting for the [undetermined 042]. In the following year, there were like, every year it was like two hundred, three hundred [undetermined 043]. Last year [undetermined 043] Montana there were close to four thousand people.

Now what is accounting for this growth in the Catholic conference? I believe that the growth can be attributed to [undetermined 047] first of all. That she is now an intercessor for us in Heaven. And is really praying that the church will recognize the gifts that the Indian people have to offer the church. That is what the [undetermined 050] is doing. Claiming to our church that the Indian people have gifts to share with the church. That they have a right place in our church. That they have a right to express their faith in their Indian traditions [undetermined 055]. And that's what primarily the [undetermined 056] conference is doing. Allowing the Indian people to come forth and speak. Many of them are speakers at the conference. Speaking about their Catholic native way. How is Jesus? And who is Jesus in my life? And how am I sharing Him with others especially my family? And at these conferences, the liturgies are styled in a way that Indian people can relate to. See they allow the people to use whatever form of prayer, like the version of sweet grass or sage or tobacco. Whatever way that can express that our prayers are extending to God. The use of musical instruments. The drum. And other instruments that are, is a way of accompanying our words as we sing to God. They are allowing dances to be [undetermined 069] be performed during the mass as a way of expressing our faith and gratitude and thanksgiving to the Creator. There are many ways that the conference is allowing that. And that is ok because Vatican II, the teachings of Vatican II says that the faith is to take root in the culture of the people. And for so many years that was not allowed. But now, the church is advising all people who work among other cultures to listen to the people and what they [undetermined 079] to work. To find out what their abilities are. What are their abilities? What are their traditions? What are their ways of praying? And [undetermined 081] in the expression of the faith of the people. So now the church gives us a blessing and says ok, you go ahead. And the conference has really allowed that to happen.

So those of you that haven't experienced the technique conference, I would just tell anyone, I would really encourage you to do that. Because people from like 150 tribes came last summer to Bozeman. And it was a great gathering of our Indian people to share our faith, to share our traditions, to share one another lots of time for socializing, visiting.

And this September, as you know it's going to be at Phoenix, Arizona. September twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth. In conjunction with John Paul's visit there. John Paul's going to speak to our Indian people on the last day, September 14th. He's going to have a special audience with the native people. Speak to them an hour and a half. So those of you who can at all possible make it, I really encourage you because it will do something for your faith. Every time I come away from the conference I'm renewed in my faith [undetermined 100]. There are so many of [undetermined 102] who are [undetermined 102] yet they are missing in action.

So you talk about evangelization. Evangelization is spreading the good news of Jesus in our lives. To me the [undetermined 104] conference is one of the greatest ways, today, that evangelization is [undetermined 106] within our native culture. And we call can be [undetermined 107] and witness to who God is in our lives. Now the other, the other thing I think
that's helping our native people today become more in touch with who they are and what their gifts are. Are what they have to share with the church. With their families, and the community in which they live, is what Sister Kateri are involved in. And that's what we call the [undetermined 114].

For several years, workshops were given in Great Falls. [undetermined 117]. That means growing in our faith. Learning more about God so I can witness for, to Him in my life. They were given for several years, but last year they took a certain for that we had developed a full summer course like we had [undetermined 120] last year, here in Milwaukee at the Archbishop Cousins Center in which we are offering courses for catechists who are either teaching formally in the parish religious education program or they want to renew their own faith. Not specifically any formal education but they want to renew their own faith and understand more deeply their native experience in the expression of their faith.

So we have developed a four-summer course. And we will offer four years here in Milwaukee. Four summers in Denver. Four summers in Phoenix. And four summers in Seattle. So people go to these four places in the summertime. Offering a two-week course. And what will you teach in those two weeks? There are four of us who are the instructors. Sister Kateri, Father John Hascall, Father Michael Galvin and myself are the four. But as we begin to go to other cities we're getting more on our staff. So eventually we're going to have a staff for Denver, a staff for Phoenix, a staff for Seattle, and a staff for here. So that's not too difficult on these people to be moving around so much. And these are all Indian people. These teachers are all Indian people who are priests, and sisters now, and eventually go on to be lay people. We will empower lay people to be instructors. [undetermined 143] several years. The lay people [undetermined 144-145].

And what do they do at these summer institutes? We give courses in the sacraments. We give courses in scripture. We give courses in faith, and how we grow in faith. We give courses in the liturgy, and how we worship God. We give workshops in communication skills, how to communicate better. We give courses in church history. And there are many, many topics.

But the beautiful thing about this is it's not just these courses, but it's, they're all related within our native experience. How can I relate the sacrament of baptism to my native experience of being [undetermined 156]. You are experiencing a rebirth. How do I experience new life in my tribe? As we experience new life in the church. In the sacrament of baptism. So we relate all the sacraments within our native experience. And the same with all these other subjects. Which you can get at any place. But this is different because it's all in relation to our experience as native people. And many times it's from the experience of the one who's teaching. That makes it even better. So how do I experience this in the Lakota culture? How do we experience [undetermined 166] in the [undetermined 167] culture? So if spoken properly we experience the teachers. So that's what makes me so suspicious. Because they're taught by Indian people. They're taught within the native experience. So each summer ah, we will be coming back to Milwaukee two more summers. You know to visit with you and so [undetermined 174].

Because of working among the Lakota people in the diocese of Rapid City, as I have been there now two years, I see the greatest need among our people as I go around and visit them. I can see it and they tell me too. Do you know what our greatest need is, Sister? [undetermined 179-181] instruction. We need instruction in faith. We need to know about our God, about our church. The changes in the church. We need to [undetermined 184-185] instruction. We need to know [undetermined 186]. So their greatest cry is instruction. Just give us a class on let's say, [undetermined 188]. So that is the first one.
The second one they say [undetermined 189] opportunities for sharing our faith. Call us together and lead us in prayer, and then let us read the Bible and then let us share what the Bible means. What that passage means to me. So let me share my own personal experience of the sayings of Jesus. That is the second thing that they are saying and I don't know how that relates to you, but, I need opportunities to share my faith. And as I go around in workshops, and we do this. We try to include these.

They, in the groups that gather, they say, you know, I never thought of talking to my children about our culture. Whenever the opportunity comes up, just say, you know, like my mother did, when I said, what's my dad doing out there in the fields? She said, well he's praying. [undetermined 207] to respond to the children's questions. And to teach at that very moment when they ask, why is it [undetermined 210]. We call those teachable moments. Whenever the child is open to hear about God, that is the time to do it. When they ask their questions. Who is God? Or if they see a beautiful sunset, just say look how good God is. Look how He blesses us with all His beauty. So to take those moments of nature to teach about how wonderful God is. Those are the moments to teach about God. Instead of being, now you sit down and I'm going to tell you about God. If you do it that way with children, to teach whenever they ask questions, whenever there's an opportunity to tell how good God is.

Or like one man, remember at [undetermined 223] he said, Sister I have a hard time correcting my children. He said what can I do? And I said, well I'm not a parent, you know I'm not a mother, so I don't have that problem. But did you ever talk to your child about [undetermined 228] say, you know, I really care about you and I love you very much. And what I'm going to say to you know, probably good that you have to do because I love you. And it was because his daughter, she would stay up half the night watching t.v. and she wouldn't get up in the morning to go to school. She'd play hooky. She would go somewhere else instead of going to school. And he said how am I going to stop that? And I said, well you'll have to talk to her. [undetermined 236-237]. And he said that's true. He said I don't know her. So, he said I'm going to try that.

So, instead a couple months later I talked to him, he said, she [undetermined 240] sister. He said, when I go to tell my daughter how much I loved her and that she was hurting herself by what she was doing and that it made me very unhappy. He said she understood that and she thanked her father. Daddy why didn't you talk to me more? See so they're hungry to have [undetermined 245]. The children, what they want more is the time, I think. If he took the time to talk to his daughter.

And they say in statistics that parents on the average don't spend more than two minutes a day with their children, on the average. Where they really listen to them, wholeheartedly. [undetermined 252-253] play with them, whatever. So that is one of the, if I went around, so we go around, when I go around in this workshop and talk to the Indian people, they would share what their problems are. They said, we need to pray about what our problems are. Not only just [undetermined 259]. So to put all of this in the context of a prayer. Ok, say let's pray about our problems. And God will [undetermined 258-259].

So those are the two, in the work that I do, the two greatest needs that I found. The need for instruction and the need to give us opportunities to share our faith. To share what [undetermined 262] means to us in our daily lives. Those are the two greatest needs that I [undetermined 263] among the Lakota people.
Now the other part of the work that I do, besides going around to ah, all these communities, we go into Rapid City twice a year. Because they love to come to Rapid City because it's like a big, like Milwaukee, the big town. And we get to see and shop. So Rapid City's a good place for a convention of any kind. So we gather them in the fall for what we call [undetermined 272] congress. Where we get different speakers to talk on different subjects that Indian people would find interesting.

Like this fall we're going to talk about how the family can be the first teacher of faith. That's the topic. How the family is the first teacher of faith for the child. That's where it begins and that's where it ends. So that is a topic that's going to draw a lot of them because that means something to them. How the family is the first teacher of the faith. And, Father John Haskell will be there also at this meeting in the fall. And he will speak on healing. How all the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, is healing. And so he will speak on healing. How important we are [undetermined 289] healing in our lives. And another, the only Lakota priest we have is Collins Jordan. He's a Lakota priest, the only one we have. And he's going to be there at the ah, Sioux Congress. And I asked, we call him C.P., how, I said well you choose whatever you would like to talk about. And so whatever he comes up with I don't know. So he's going to speak on that.

But what's wonderful about this Indian Sioux Congress is that, there are about, last summer we sent out the notice we thought, well, we get thirty people would be great. Or if we get fifteen would be wonderful. The thing is you have to tell where we're having the place how many people I'll be expecting. So I told them, the sister in charge, well, we would like to have seventy-five. But probably fifty will come and maybe thirty. So I said, let's plan for seventy-five. So she did. She planned for it. And do you know that seventy-five catechists came to that [undetermined 310] conference. And four of the staff so there were seventy-five there. So that was a miracle of the first class. So they love to gather. The Indian people love to gather. Especially when they can share. When they have that [undetermined 316] some part of the ceremony. So at this [undetermined 317] congress, a person will give a talk. Then we form groups. [undetermined 319] questions to talk about. Say let's talk about [undetermined 320]. So they feel a part of what's going on. And they love that. And times for prayer and sharing.

And then in the spring we offer them an opportunity for a retreat. So we send out all the flyers again and Sister asks me again how many are coming? And I said seventy-five again. And although I knew maybe only thirty would come. I thought what if thirty came instead of seventy-five? But I still remember my mother saying, don't worry, God takes care of everything. Don't worry.

And so, when the retreat time came, and I had to call up and say how many were coming, I said well so far we are expecting four on the staff and seventy-five candidates. But I'm not sure 'till we get there. As you know we're not sure until we arrive how many were going to be. And so by the time nightfall came we opened up the doors at five o'clock. By the time eight o'clock came around there were seventy-one retreaters and four on staff. So we had seventy-five people again. To me that said that this is what the people want. This is what the people need. It's not just being busy. But it's relating to a need in their life. That they came to together for prayer [undetermined 348]. And Father John Haskell was there again [undetermined 349-350]. And the other person was [undetermined 351-353].

So those are opportunities that we are offering our people. In our local areas. But it's always, what are the people's needs? What do they need? What are theirs? And the only way that we find
out what a person needs is to listen to them. Give them time to talk. And pretty soon you will find out what their needs are. And it took two years to find out that their basic need was instruction and time to share their faith together. I remember the first, at the end of the first year, our community in Denver said, do you need any money for your work? Because we will write a grant for you. And provide funds for your [undetermined 370]. And I said I really don't know. This is our first year. I said I only [undetermined 373-374] this first year and the second year. [undetermined 375-376]. Maybe [undetermined 376-377]. What is it that they want? So now, at the end of the second year when she asks I said yes, I have [undetermined 380]. And now, our community is helping us fund the [undetermined 382] conference, because it's fifty dollars for catechists, for them to make this workshop. And some of them can't pay all the fifty. So those who can't pay it, we are helping them pay the fifty dollars. Those who come to the retreat who cannot pay the full fifty dollars, we are saying, pay what you can and we will pay the rest. [undetermined 390-391]. Our community is helping us sponsor those two gatherings [undetermined 393]. And another way that, ah, the diocese for which I work we found out that a lot of our catechists need training. Like people who respond to our courses in the summertime feel that they need training. So they said we want to go to these summer workshops like here in Milwaukee [undetermined 402] and this summer it's Milwaukee and Denver. And they said we would like to go to those workshops and take those courses. But it's expensive. It's two hundred fifty dollars tuition and two hundred fifty dollars for room and board. So we said ok, we're going to get some help so that our catechists can go to the summer courses.

So we mentioned it to Bishop Dimmerling, our bishop, and he said I will write to the extension society in Chicago which helps missions. Which helps [undetermined 416]. And we will get a grant to help your catechists go to school. And so within a couple months the extension society sent us a check.