



National Shrine of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Prayer Letter

October 2019

Dear Friend of Saint Kateri,

The unique misconception that we as humans have is that, as we develop in the sciences and arts, we have tamed nature and are now masters over the environment regarding shelter and an understanding of the natural sciences. The month of October is that unique month when we say good-bye to summer and prepare for the cold and storms of winter. Because of our advancements in housing and temperature environment in our homes, this change in the weather may be simple acts of closing windows and replacing air conditioners, and with getting the furnace going. We may believe that we are not affected by nature and its changes anymore. But deep down inside, our bodies and minds feel and adjust to these changes.

How unique that for thousands of years, the Native Americans recognized that autumn was a time to remember the deceased family and tribe members. It is the changing and the falling of leaves that reminded them of those who had died. The lives of the dead had changed, very much like the color of the leaves changes during this season. As the leaves fall, they surround the tree, trapping moisture and insulating the roots against the snow that will soon follow. So, it was, and it still is that the Native Americans sang the names of those that had passed away during that year. They sang the name to remember the memory of what was taught by this individual; to remember the accomplishments and decisions that this individual gave to the family and tribe while they were alive. They sang the name in a spirit of thankfulness and love praising the memory of a lost one. This ceremony is known as "The Falling Leaves Ceremony." The name is sung to recall, to honor, to insulate the hearts of those who had lost a loved one. And most importantly, to sing the name allowed the living tribe, as the living tree, to receive nourishment from the slowly vanishing name, leaf.

How unique that in this modern era, we Non-Native American humans still perform this unique ritual of remembrance of the dead. October prepares us for Halloween, originally known as a time to remember the dead. How unique that we Christians remember the Feasts of All Souls and All Saints when October ends. How unique that we can look to the cross of Our Savior Jesus Christ and live the grace, the nourishment of the Son of God's death. The Son of God's blood is the nourishment that insulates us from sin. For the cross truly is the Tree of Life. How unique that we remember our own loved ones during this time. We remember their accomplishments, influence, decisions, sacrifices, and lives. Their deaths nourish us with hope, just as the death of Jesus Christ nourishes our hope in God's promise of eternal life with Him in heaven.

The Shrine will be closed October 31st and will reopen May 1 of 2020. How blessed we have been this past season of grace. The presence of so many beautiful souls who come to be inspired by the life of St. Kateri. Let us continue to pray for healing in our world and nation. Let us be nourished by the memory of a loved one who has gone before us to the Father. Let us be warmed this winter by their memory and sing their name in our hearts. God Bless!

-Fr. Tim Lyons, OFM Conv., Chaplain



Dear Friars, please include the following intentions in your daily prayers:

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| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Please return prayer intentions and donations to:

Saint Kateri Shrine, PO Box 627, Fonda NY 12068-0627 • 518-853-3646

nationalkaterishrine@gmail.com • www.katerishrine.com • Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram October 2019