

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha National Shrine and Historic Site

Prayer Letter



December 2020

My dear Friends of Saint Kateri,

The winter holidays usually bring welcome changes. In the past, our busy schedules were changed to plan for meals with family and friends, time taken to shop for gifts and plan to gather with those we love. The unwelcome changes of less daylight and colder temperatures seem to fade as we plan to substitute these natural losses with changes in our own social lives. This year, change has happened because of a negative natural force. We are forced to accept the fact that there is a virus prevalent in our society that is unwelcome and handicaps our lives both physically and socially. The personal dilemma happened this year when the welcome change of dining and socializing became restricted in order to keep ourselves and others safe and healthy.

We need to especially remember why we celebrate these November and December holidays. We first give thanks, and then we celebrate the peace and joy of the Infant Jesus in our lives. The Baby Jesus is born again and again on Christmas Day each year. His birth invites us to rebirth. This rebirth reminds us that the birth in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago changed us as human beings. How unique that "a baby changes everything." Not only did the Infant Jesus begin that change for all of humanity, but each newborn infant changes in everyone in our family's lives. Schedules change as a new family member lovingly demands that we forget ourselves and care for them, for a baby reminds everyone that they need constant attention. I know that I do not have to remind parents that their love for life that is shared invites the creation of new life that causes change. When your child is born, your lives change in so many ways. These changes are not unwelcome but are eagerly sought and accepted by both moms and dads.

When looking at our present situation I think that we need to rethink how Christmas will change us this year. The greatest and most fearful change we can encounter in our own personal lives on a deeply personal level is to be afraid of celebrating these holidays differently.

HOW CAN I CHANGE MYSELF THIS CHRISTMAS TO SHOW TO MYSELF AND OTHERS THAT THE BABY JESUS HAS CHANGED ME?

This is the true message of God interrupting our lives more than two thousand years ago. I need to ask myself: in what new steps, in what new approach, in what new way of thinking can I begin to see the influence of the Infant Jesus in my life? Christmas is celebrated in a deeply personal way each year: deeply personal with showing our appreciation of family and friends with nourishment and sharing of self in a social manner.

Christmas Day in 2020 will be different. We may feel alone, isolated from others, needing to change the usual to cope with the new normal way of life. Imagine how God the Father felt, sending us His Son Jesus into our history. God the Father took the chance that we, His most dignified Creation, would accept how we humans could change from an unfulfilled way of life of selfishness to a fulfilling life of caring for self and others on the same level.

How unique that Saint Kateri lived in a social environment that did not fully accept the Christian ideals. She sought through prayer and owned a courageous spirit that was influenced by God, as He wills all of us to live. Saint Kateri saw God in her negative! She saw God's presence in her own physical handicap of smallpox. She saw Christ in others, who knew nothing of a God who is loving and merciful. She filled her isolation and loneliness with prayer and good works. She is a model for us that God will always walk with us each day if we allow Him to. Let us dedicate ourselves to God as our Father, as He so desires us to. Ask God for His continued influence in our daily lives and routines. To imitate Saint Kateri, let us daily ask God for His influence and presence in our words and actions. Ask God for us to see Him in the negative. Ask God's continued influence in our own daily lives by reminding ourselves that the Baby Jesus Christ changed everything and that we are **not** afraid of what tomorrow may bring.

Don't be disappointed by the change in the holidays this year because of the virus. Jesus was happy to be born in a stable of a poor family, so that He could be with us to teach us what God desires. Begin each day asking Saint Kateri to show you how this divine baby changed her. Allow her to influence your life as does the Infant Jesus. Care for yourself and others. Care for the Infant Jesus as did Saint Joseph and Mary. For a baby changes everything.

-Fr. Tim Lyons, OFM Conv., Chaplain and Director



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:

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