

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INCULTURATION OF  
LAKOTA CATHOLICISM**

**LAKOTA INCULTURATION TASK FORCE  
DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY**

**Our Lady of Guadalupe**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Guidelines for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.....	6
Guidelines for Funeral Rites.....	14
Guidelines for Marriage Rites.....	22
Guidelines for Infant Baptism Rites.....	27
Guidelines for Confirmation Rites.....	32
Appendix A Notes on Funeral Rites.....	36
Appendix B Other Ceremonies.....	37

## INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Lakota Inculturation Task Force, developed the following recommendations in response to many Lakota deacons and lay leaders who have used Lakota symbols and ceremonies in the Liturgy of the Church and in response to a growing desire among Catholic Lakota people to identify with their past traditions while honoring their Catholic faith. We recognized that there has been a growing sense among the Catholic Lakota people that these symbols and expressions of a common faith should become a regular part of any Liturgy celebrated in a Native community.

We realize that the inculturation of the Liturgy is a controversial issue among the Lakota people. We do not intend any disrespect to Traditional Lakota people in any of the recommendations we make. The Second Vatican Council states “ Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, also their social life and culture. (Nostra Aetate #2.) We make this statement our own. We affirm our respect and reverence for the Lakota tradition. At the same time we assert that as Catholic Lakota people we have a right to use the symbols handed down to us in both the Catholic and the Lakota traditions. As Lakota Catholics, after prayer and discernment, we choose to use these symbols to enhance our spiritual life and our relationship with God.

Missionaries of the past, being people of their time, did not approve of Lakota religious traditions and in fact forced people to abandon their traditions if they became Catholic. Today, we recognize the sincere efforts of some contemporary missionaries to come to a respectful understanding of Lakota symbols and rituals. We acknowledge and are grateful for their good work and we are determined to build on their effort. The time has come, however, for us, Lakota people, in union with the Bishop and the Church’s teaching, to advise on these matters, and to use these ceremonies where we judge appropriate.

We selected three phases for the process of inculturation. Phase one is an examination of what Lakota ritual items can be used in liturgical services and prayer services. Phase two is an examination of religious elements in Lakota life and ceremonies, which prepare the way for the reception of the Gospel and its expression in the Church. Phase three is an examination of Lakota philosophy and theology.

Part I of Phase I contains our recommendations for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These recommendations represent an initial effort to make a regular inculturated Liturgy of the Eucharist available. We will also consider the Sacraments of

Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, as well as Communion Services, and Funeral Rites in order to find more culturally appropriate ways of celebrating these rites.

This process is on-going. We recognize that the work of inculturation is never completed once for all. We realize that these recommendations will need to be refined as information is gathered from the experience of the inculturation process. We welcome any comments or suggestions that would help produce an acceptable, regularly inculturated experience of the Sacraments and Rites of the Church.

It is important to note that every Liturgy is meant to be an inculturated Liturgy. We acknowledge that any single form of inculturated Liturgy is not for everyone. Given the diversity of Native communities on and off the reservation it is essential that a variety of inculturated liturgies be available in order to reflect the diversity of cultural expressions in the contemporary Native community. Practically, this means that when the following form of inculturated Eucharistic Liturgy is celebrated another Eucharist must be made available to people who are not able to attend this Liturgy or who do not wish to do so.

We encourage the local community's advice and recommendations regarding the implementation of this inculturated Liturgy. For instance, the members of the local community must choose when it is appropriate to do the Cannumpa Yuha Wocekiye (Sacred Pipe Ceremony). Moreover, local people have to provide readers, singers, people to do the Azilya (incensing), and respected Catholics to do the Cannumpa Yuha Wocekiye. In this document we do not insist that all of the symbols recommended be used at a given Eucharistic Celebration. Rather, the members of the Task Force want to affirm that these symbols and ceremonies may be used if a local community wishes to do so.

Finally, we affirm that the religious symbols and traditions of the Lakota have been entrusted to the Lakota people alone. It is only the Catholic Lakota people who have the right to advise Church leadership on the use of these symbols. It would be inappropriate for a non-Indian priest, deacon, religious or lay person to use Lakota religious symbols or ceremonies, e.g., Sacred Pipe, Feather, or incensing. By taking this position we are not attempting to infringe on the rights or responsibility of bishops, priests or deacons to fulfill their appropriate roles in the Liturgy. We affirm that a Native bishop, priest, or deacon ought to use these symbols. We ask non-Native bishops, priests, and deacons to refrain from using these symbols for these important pastoral reasons. First, the symbols belong to people of Lakota heritage. They are an expression of their culture and are most appropriately used by them. Second, at the present time there is great resentment and anger in the Lakota community because many non-Indians have appropriated these sacred symbols for themselves and use them in inappropriate and irresponsible ways. This is insulting to all Lakota people who find it very difficult to understand how a non-Lakota person can appropriate their

religious symbols. Third, by insisting that only Native people use these symbols the Task Force wants to encourage the development of leadership, ordained and non-ordained, among the Lakota people.

We the Catholic Lakota members of the Lakota Inculturation Task Force make the following recommendations with confidence and a strong desire to pray in this manner.

**PHASE I: RITUAL**

**PART I**

**I. GUIDELINES FOR THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. CATHOLIC LAKOTA LEADERSHIP**

Lakota people in leadership roles, ordained and non-ordained, are a necessary foundation for the inculturation of the Church and the development of an inculturated Liturgy. It is important to foster Lakota leadership in every area of the Church's life--social justice, catechetical and liturgical.

### **2. LANGUAGE**

At the heart of inculturation is use of the Lakota language. It must be recognized that not everyone is able to speak or understand the language, nevertheless, it is important to use the language when it will enhance the prayer experience. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist when a Lakota speaking priest is not presiding the following could be done in the Lakota language:

1. Form C of the penitential rite.
2. The homily- given by a Lakota deacon or repeated by a Lakota speaker.
3. The prayers of the faithful.
4. The readings.
5. Lakota hymns.
6. Traditional Lakota songs--melody, drum beat.

### **3. SPACE**

A circle may be incorporated into the celebrations of the Liturgy and prayer services in the present structures where and when possible.

For the purposes of Azilya (incensing), water blessings, distributing communion, etc., ministers move in a sun-wise direction--clockwise.

#### 4. RITUAL TIME AND PRIORITIES

In Lakota ritual the focus is not on clock time, the focus is on the activity itself. It is better to think of Lakota ritual time in terms of order--doing things according to priorities. A ceremony takes precedence over all other activities. People sacrifice other activities in order to be present for the ceremony. They place themselves in a proper frame of mind and the ceremony takes as long as it takes to do it correctly. Length of clock time, short or long, is irrelevant.

In the same way the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins when the people assemble and lasts as long as it takes for the prayer. No other event takes precedence over the Eucharistic celebration. The people's first priority is to be present at the Eucharist with a good heart.

#### 5. Music

Song is at the heart of the Lakota religious way of life. It is essential that music be part of the Eucharistic Liturgy. There are two types of music which are recommended:

##### 5.1. Hymns

Lakota hymns, e.g. Jesus Chante, Jesus Jesus El Mau, are part of the Catholic tradition and should continue to be used. These songs were translated from English and Latin and use organ music. They have been used by the St. Mary and St. Joseph Societies. Translation of modern hymns into Lakota is also encouraged.

##### 5.2. Lakota Olowan (traditional music)

The use of traditional Lakota music, a drum, an eagle bone whistle and a gourd may be used in the Liturgy. The Lakota people, while observing the traditions of making new songs, are encouraged to pray for new lyrics and melodies that can be used in the Liturgy. These new songs must follow the conventions of Lakota sacred music: e.g., ceremonial songs, Inipi Ceremony songs.

These conventions are:

- 5.2.1. use few words and vocables-- e.g. repeat "Jesus iyotancila," or "Jesus Wastecilake," (Jesus, I love you).



5.2.2. use Lakota drum beat--drum roll at beginning and end.

5.2.3. use Lakota singing.

5.2.4. use Lakota lyrics.

5.2.5. use Lakota rhythm--one two beat.

5.2.6. use Lakota melody.

## **6. AZILYA (INCENSING)**

### **6.1. INTRODUCTION:**

In a Native context, incensing with sweetgrass, sage, or cedar should be a normal practice at the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The smoke represents a prayer. It is a prayer of cleansing and purifying and blessing of people and objects used in ceremonies. Sweetgrass, sage, and cedar are used for incensing. Sweetgrass is used most often.

### **6.2. PLACE IN THE ORDER OF WORSHIP:**

Incensing may be done at one or all five of the following places in the Liturgy of the Eucharist:

6.2.1. Penitential rite: the people are incensed as a sign of cleansing and Purification in preparation for participation in the Eucharist.

6.2.2. Gospel: the Book of the Gospels is incensed as a way of honoring the Icon of the Word of God.

6.2.3. Offertory: the offerings are incensed and the altar is honored as an Icon of Christ. As the smoke rises the offering prayer is carried to God.

6.2.4. After the altar is incensed the people may be incensed.

6.2.5. During the Consecration the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ may be incensed as they are elevated.

### **6.3. WHO SHOULD DO THE AZILYA:**

- 6.3.1. At the penitential rite any Catholic Native person of good reputation may incense the people.
- 6.3.2. At the Gospel it is appropriate for a Native deacon to incense the Book of the Gospels. If a Native deacon is not present then the deacon incenses the Book of the Gospels with a bowl only while a Native person (s) incenses with a bowl and an eagle feather.
- 6.3.3. At the Offertory it is appropriate for a Native Bishop or Priest to incense the offerings and the altar. If a Native Bishop or Priest is not present then the priest incenses the offerings and the altar with a bowl only while a Native person (s) incenses with a bowl and an eagle feather.
- 6.3.4. A Native person (s) incense the people.
- 6.3.5. A Native person (s) incense the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ at the elevation during the Consecration.

### **NOTE:**

Incensing is done in a clockwise direction.

### **7. TATE TOPA OLOWAN (FOUR WINDS SONG/PRAYER)**

The Four Winds Song/Prayer comes from the Inipi Ceremony.

- 7.1. This ceremony is used at the penitential rite. The prayer recognizes and announces God's great work on behalf of the people.
- 7.2. The Four Winds Song/Prayer is offered by a Catholic Native person of good reputation.
- 7.3. The Azilya of the people is done at this time.

## **8. CANNUMPA OPAGI NA CANNUMPA YUHA WOCEKIYE (THE PIPE CEREMONY)**

### **8.1. PUBLIC USE**

- 8.1.1. The Sacred Pipe is meant to be used in public.
- 8.1.2. The Sacred Pipe Ceremony should be a normal practice in the Eucharistic Liturgy.
- 8.1.3. When the Pipe Ceremony is used in the Eucharist notice must be given ahead of time so that people may decide if they wish to attend.
- 8.1.4. This form of inculturated Liturgy must be an option and not the only Eucharist available.
- 8.1.5. Rules regarding the Sacred Pipe Ceremony must be respected.

### **8. 2. WHO SHOULD DO A PIPE CEREMONY:**

Lakota Catholics who pray with the Pipe and are of good reputation may pray with the Pipe in the context of the Eucharist or other sacraments. The person should be someone who is recognized as a leader by the Catholic community-- leader in the sense that that person can bring people together.

### **8.3. PLACE OF SACRED PIPE CEREMONY IN ORDER OF WORSHIP:**

- 8.3.1. The Pipe Ceremony should be used within the order of worship of the Eucharist.
- 8.3.2. The whole Pipe Ceremony may be used--fill the Pipe while singing the Pipe Loading Song, light the Pipe, smoke the pipe, sing the song honoring the Pipe. The Pipe remains present throughout the whole Liturgy. A pipe carrier, usually a woman, carries the Pipe in procession--entrance and recessional.
  - 8.3.2.1. Communities may choose to load the Pipe before Mass. Pray with the Pipe during Mass. And smoke the Pipe after Mass.

8.3.3. The most appropriate place for the praying with the Pipe is at the Prayer of the Faithful.

8.3.3.1. the tobacco represents an offering of all things to God.

8.3.3.2. when each person smokes the pipe he or she makes a prayer of petition.

8.3.3.3. the smoke rises and brings the prayers of the assembly to God.

8.3.3.4. at each Eucharist people would be designated ahead of time to smoke the pipe--e.g., the celebrant, concelebrants and deacons, the pipe carrier, Eucharistic ministers, others.

8.3.3.5. after the pipe is smoked it is placed on a pipe rack or table beside the altar.

8.3.3.6. After Communion, when the sacred vessels are put on the side table, the pipe may be emptied, taken apart, and put back in the pipe bag.

**NOTE:**

A blessed Pipe should always be treated respectfully. It is not to be used as a decoration nor is it to be put on display. If it is taken out of the pipe-bag it must be used. If it is used in a sacramental setting, i.e., the Eucharist, it is to be present throughout the entire ceremony.

**9. CUNLI WAPAHE (TOBACCO TIES)**

Tobacco Ties may be placed in a basket at the entrance of the Church. They are brought up at the offertory procession and placed near the altar. They should be burned after the Eucharist is over.

**10. HANDSHAKE**

The traditional handshake is a sign of peace and unity. It should be a part of each Eucharistic celebration. For the present it is recommended that it remain at the time of the "Sign of Peace."

## **11. EAGLE FEATHER**

The Eagle feather is wrapped in a red cloth and can be placed on a table next to the altar.

## **12. SYMBOLS THAT MAY BE USED IN THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY:**

The following list is not meant to be exhaustive, others may be added:

- 12.1. eagle feather.
- 12.2. staff.
- 12.3. four colors.
- 12.4. flags in the four directions.
- 12.5. vestments with Lakota designs.
- 12.6. altar and churches decorated in Lakota designs.
- 12.7. sacred vessels decorated in Lakota designs.
- 12.9. the color of purificators and corporals may be red.
- 12.10. when they are being used in the Eucharistic celebration, sacred vessels should be covered with a red cloth. It is also appropriate for the reserved Eucharist to be covered in a red clothe.

**PART I**

**II. GUIDELINES FOR FUNERAL RITES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Our purpose is to provide guidelines for funeral rites. There are many customs in place and the members of the Task Force want to support what is being done while not requiring that any particular set of customs be followed. We hope to inform people about what is being done in Native communities throughout the Diocese and encourage people to use these customs as they see fit.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. LEADERSHIP**

Two types of leaders are appropriate for Wake Services, the first is an individual designated by the Tiospaye to act as the contact-person and master of ceremonies. The second is a lay leader, the Church's contact-person, who will work with the individual from the family. If necessary the lay leader could become the master of ceremonies. This trained person would be the Church's contact with the family. He or she could answer any questions the family has, could say what is appropriate and what isn't, and be a resource for the family.

Secondly, since lay men and women may be required in the absence of a priest or deacon to conduct Wake Services, we recommend that teams be developed and trained to do these services. We encourage priests and deacons, when they are presiding, to invite trained Lakota people to assist them at wakes. It is important that the members of these teams be made up of people who are respected in the community and the Church, and that they get the formation they need to do this work well.

### **2. LANGUAGE**

We recommend that the Lakota language be used as much as possible in the funeral rites. The use of the language will depend on the ability of the mourners to understand what is being said and the desire of the family to use Lakota as part of the ceremony. If people are present who are not speakers, then the leader should explain what is being said before or after and invite all mourners to join in the prayer.

We recommend that a Wake Service from the Order of Christian Funerals be translated into Lakota. The prayers may be directly translated or similar prayers may be developed. However, the prayers have to reflect a Christian Lakota

understanding. Christ's message about death and resurrection must shine through. The prayers need to be filled with Christian encouragement.

### **3. BLESSING OF BODY**

The body is blessed at the time of death and when it is received at the place of the Wake it can be blessed with cedar, sage, or puffballs. Sweetgrass is not usually used for the azilya of a body.

### **4. TRANSFER OF THE BODY**

When the body is transferred to the church or from the church to the cemetery the following can be done if desired and available:

1. Riders can accompany the body.
2. The body can be placed in a wagon.
3. A drum group can accompany the body and sing traditional songs appropriate to the occasion.
4. A riderless horse can be provided.

### **5. Wake**

5.1. We recommend that a Native leader azilya the hall before the body arrives. When the body arrives the leader can azilya the body.

5.2. When the family is willing and able they should be encouraged to be involved in the Wake Service. They can do the readings, prayers of petition, and songs. Sometimes the family won't want to do any of these things. Then the Christian community, attentive to the Lakota tradition and Church tradition, must provide these services.

5.3. If there are two nights of wake we recommend a Scripture Rosary one night and a Wake Service, in English or Lakota, from the Order of Christian Funerals the second night. (When they are available a priest or deacon should preside, with the assistance of lay ministers, at the Wake Service from the Order of Christian Funerals).

When there is only one night of wake we recommend the use of both the Rosary and a Wake Service from the Order of Christian Funerals.

5.4. If the deceased is a veteran the honor guard will have the Roll Call and read prayers.



5.5. Traditionally, wakes are a time for teaching. Talks about Lakota customs and values and talks about the Catholic faith are appropriate. This is especially true since many people who attend wakes may have been away from the Church for awhile. Talks can be given about the Church and about Lakota traditions.

Traditionally, talks at wakes are long. Too often people tend to be brief when the expectation is that a speaker will give a longer talk. It is at the wakes that people learn the tradition, Lakota and Catholic, and learn how to pass it on.

We recommend that talks at wakes be more instructional. Different members of the team could prepare a talk on different aspects of Catholic life and traditional life.

Relatives and friends may be invited to talk about the deceased during or after the Wake Service.

5.6. An eagle staff can be present at a wake. Usually this is done if the person was a veteran or a Sun Dancer.

5.7. We encourage the presence of a drum group to sing sacred songs.

5.8. Ministers of other Faiths and traditional prayer leaders may be invited to pray, offer words of encouragement and sing during the wake.

5.9. It is the custom in some places to put items in the casket. The master of ceremonies would suggest a proper time to do this. These are items that are often place in a casket:

5.9.1. clothing for the body.

5.9.2. dry food.

5.9.3. hand made items.

5.9.4. hair.

5.9.5. pictures.

5.9.6. rosary.

5.9.7. cross.

5.10. A picture of the deceased is displayed at the wake. A designated person carries it through the community during the meals at the wake and funeral. It is again carried through the community at the memorial meal.

## 6. FUNERAL

6.1. A star quilt is used as a pall.

6.2. We encourage the use of the, Guidelines for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

6.3. If family members want to give a eulogy it is done after communion and before the final commendation. It is preferable that a person be designated to do this ahead of time. However, an open microphone is not appropriate at the funeral service.

6.4. We recommend that the Tate Topa Olowan (four winds song/prayer) be sung in conjunction with the azilya during the Penitential Rite. If it is not sung then it may also be sung before the Song of Farewell.

6.5. A translation of the Song of Farewell can be used with a drum and traditional melody.

6.6. Often a close relative or friend will cut their hair and place it in the coffin. This is best done after the final commendation or before the final viewing. It could also be done at the wake.

6.6. The final viewing usually happens after the final commendation. Although it may sometimes happen before the funeral begins or at the graveside.

6.8. The Icilowanpi—the Going Away Song or traditional Farewell Song can be sung at the end of the final commendation in the Church.

6.9. During funerals for Veterans the flag is removed from the coffin during the funeral. A star quilt may be used to cover the coffin.

## 7. FINAL COMMITTAL

7.1. From the time the service at the graveside begins till the body is covered with earth there should be continued prayers and songs. The following may be done if desired:

7.1.1. prayers in the Lakota language.

7.1.2. Lakota hymns.

7.1.3. drum and singers singing sacred songs.

7.2. The ribbons worn by the pallbearers can be pinned on the star quilt before the coffin is lowered.

7.3. The Icilowanpi--the Going Away Song or traditional Farewell Song can be sung at the graveside.

7.4. If the deceased is a veteran the military honor guard will honor the veteran at the graveside. They will do the roll call (sometimes done at the wake), twenty-one gun salute, taps, and fold and present the flag.

## **8. MUSIC**

We recommend that the following be used at wakes and funerals:

- 8.1. drum.
- 8.2. Lakota hymns.
- 8.3. Traditional sacred songs.

## **9. MEMORIAL FEASTS**

9.1. There is usually a meal after each Wake Service.

9.2. In some places the coffin is closed during the meal. This depends on the custom of the community and on the desire of the family.

9.3. A designated lay leader offers the prayer before meals.

9.4. At each meal the spirits are fed. A plate of food is prepared and a prayer is offered. Then the plate is taken outside and given to the spirits. A priest, deacon or family friend may pray. This is a way of remembering those who have gone before. At this time it is appropriate, in English or Lakota, to explain the meaning of the "spirit plate."

9.5. In some places it is the custom after a death, but before the funeral, for the community to bring food to the home of the deceased. A drum and singers come to the home as well. The purpose is to comfort the mourners.

In connection with mourning there are two times for a Memorial Feast. The feast is immediately after the funeral when all the mourners are fed. This is an opportunity for the family to give something to the other members of the community. The emphasis is on sharing food. Although some families practice "wihpeyapi" which means to throw things away. Traditionally when a person died everything he or she owned was given away at his or her burial. Today, after the funeral, some people will give away all the person's possessions.

The second time for a Memorial Feast is a year after the death of a person. The family has saved up for a year to provide a thanksgiving feast for all of those who have helped them through the difficult time of mourning. Again the emphasis is on feeding the people. Giving away material things is optional.

## **10. KEEPING OF THE SPIRIT AND RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT**

The Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony is pre-Christian. It developed as a way to spread the mourning process out over time and to honor specific people in a unique way. In ancient times when someone died the relatives hurt very deeply. They would cut themselves on the chest and arms. Some would cut off fingers. They did this in order to objectify the internal hurt they felt. But the community came to understand that this was too extreme. The community developed a ceremony to keep the spirit of the deceased among the living so that the family members could grieve over time. The belief was that the soul left through the hair of the deceased. By cutting off a piece of hair the deceased remained among the living until the soul was released a year later. While the hair was present the person was still living among them.

This Ceremony testified to the belief in life after death. The Christian understanding of Communion of the Saints makes it clear that all of us have life beyond this one.

Moreover, our deceased relatives and friends do remain with us and care about us. The death and resurrection of Jesus testifies that we will live with him forever. The Lakota Christians who commit to the Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony are testifying to the fact that there is life beyond the grave. They are also honoring their relatives by entering into a suitable period of mourning. People who have suffered a great loss can be tempted to run away from the pain by doing things that will distract them. During this vulnerable time people can develop habits that are not healthy. Those families who decide to do the Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony are asked to abstain from dancing at Pow Wows and other enjoyable community activities in order to recollect themselves and honor their relative. This gives them time to process their grief without distraction.

The Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony requires that a portion of the hair of the deceased person be cut. This may be done at the wake service. If it is done at the funeral it is best done after the final commendation or before the final viewing.

At the end of the year of mourning the hair is burned as part of the releasing of the spirit.

The Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony requires a serious commitment. Not all people will want to take on this responsibility. We want to support those who do. The Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony and the Release of the Spirit Ceremony are at the discretion of the family.

## **11. WIPING OF TEARS**

The Wiping of Tears Ceremony is a public ceremony meant to console the mourners. It is related to the Releasing of the Spirit Ceremony. It may be done a few days after someone is buried or it can happen at the memorial or both--there is no set time to do it. It is done when requested by a family member or relative. Usually food is served. People comb the hair of the mourners and feed them. They give them tobacco and water to drink. Someone is appointed to encourage them. It can be a public or private ceremony. It can be done for the whole family or an individual member of the family. This Ceremony is not meant to signify the end of mourning. It is meant to bring a person back into the community.

The Wiping of Tears is done at religious gatherings e.g. Sioux Indian Congress, mini-Tekakwitha Conference, memorial feasts, and healing services. The Task Force recommends that it be offered on the following holy days: Good Friday, All Souls Day, All Saints Day and Easter.

## **12. BLESSING OF THE HEADSTONE**

The blessing of the headstone takes place when the family is ready. The headstone is usually draped with a star quilt or shawl. A priest, deacon, medicine man, or family friend will say a prayer of blessing. It is unveiled by a family member.

**PART I**

**III. GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE RITES**

## INTRODUCTION

The development of the document on an inculturated form of the Sacrament of Marriage has been more difficult than what the members first suspected. One of the problems is that culturally, especially in terms of religious ritual, the Lakota had a very different concept of marriage.

The members outline important aspects of courtship and family ties. They then recommend the following customs and rituals that have been used during Lakota wedding ceremonies. The customs and rituals are not imposed but simply recommend for use during Catholic Lakota Marriage Rites. It needs to be pointed out that many of these customs and rituals are not ancient practices among the Lakota. These customs and rituals are more recent developments that nevertheless are worthy of incorporation in the Catholic Marriage Ritual.

Traditionally courtship was hard work. It took time and perseverance. For instance, a man would see a woman he liked at a gathering. When the camp broke up he would follow the woman's family for four or five days. She remained under the watchful eye of her mother and grandmother. On the fifth or sixth day he would be invited into the camp. Another example, a man could travel many miles to visit the home of the woman he was courting. He would sing a love song to her from some high point near her home. Then he would talk to her for a while and go back to his place only to begin the process over again. This could last a long time.

A man had to get the approval of the woman's father, which was not always easy to do. The couple was always chaperoned during the courtship.

There were many different ways to acquire a spouse. When a man asked for a woman to marry him it was customary that he give gifts. For instance he may have given horses. This does not mean that he was buying the women. This, as in many other cases, was an instance of symbolic exchange where the integration of two family units was solidified by the transfer of property.

Traditionally people did not marry inside their own Tiospaye. People within the same Tiospaye were considered relatives. The Lakota maintained strict incest taboos. They still do so today.

Courtship always involved the relationship between two families. The families merged and became relatives. During the courtship, at the time of engagement, the families exchanged gifts, usually household items.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, like Lakota traditional preparation for marriage, takes time. We recommend that those who wish to marry in the Catholic

Church prepare for marriage through the process recommended by the Diocese as well as through traditional ways.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The integration of the Church Marriage Rites and the Lakota Marriage Rites depends on the people involved. It cannot be forced on anyone. The particulars of specific rituals and their use depend on the persons involved—bride, groom, and medicine person. Often the selection of rituals depends on a particular person's vision. The two families have to decide if they want to use Lakota Rites and how much of them they will use.

Some of the rites recommended below are contemporary Lakota practices and not "ancient" practices. Nevertheless they are worthy of incorporation into Catholic ritual.

### **I. LEADERSHIP**

The official witness of the exchange of vows at Catholic marriage must be a deacon or a priest. The nuptial blessing is also given by a deacon or a priest. Only Lakota deacons, priests, or lay persons may conduct Lakota rituals.

### **II. PURIFICATION RITE BEFORE MARRIAGE**

1. The Inipi Ceremony is used as the purification rite for the couple before they are married. Sometimes they attend the Inipi together sometimes separately.
2. We recommend that an Inipi Lodge be set up on church property or in close proximity to the church building. It is important that an Inipi Lodge be identified as the lodge of the people who belong to that particular church community.
3. The couple has a choice of doing the Inipi Ceremony in a social or sacred way.
4. The rings are brought into the Inipi to be purified.
5. Eagle feathers are brought into the Inipi to be purified.
6. The couple who participate in the purification rite is being prepared for a life together. The purification signifies a permanent commitment to each other. Marriage is for a lifetime.

### **III. LAKOTA MARRIAGE RITES**



The following is one way in which traditional Lakota symbols could be used in a marriage ceremony. Depending on the wishes of the families, all or parts of these rites may be used.

1. Marriage is a community event. The community is invited to the ceremony.
2. A marriage lodge (tipi) may be placed at the East entrance of the Church. It is blessed (Azilya). The groom, unassisted, dresses in the lodge. Then the bride assisted by family members, dresses in the lodge. Both then enter the lodge and come out together.
3. They are lead from the lodge to the church by singers and members of the community. Members of both families follow them.
4. They make one circle around the inside of the church and go to the altar.
5. In the procession a young lady( a virgin) is selected to carry the Sacred Pipe.
6. Before the Mass begins a Lakota leader does Mini Un Wiconi—Life-giving Water Rite: The leader blesses water from a spring with the Azilya. Then each person takes a cupful and returns to his or her place in the circle. When everyone has taken the water they all drink it together.
7. The leader then purifies the couple with the Azilya. He sings the Tate Topa Olawan (Four Winds Song/Prayer) and prays with the pipe. The Pipe is offered to the couple and then to everyone present.
8. After the homily, elders who have been married for many years are called forward to instruct the new couple about marriage. They encourage the couple to be generous. The groom must take responsibility for his wife's relatives; the bride must take responsibility for her husband's relatives e.g. if a man's brother dies he assumes the responsibility for his brother's wife and children. The elders remind the couple that married life will at times be difficult. They encourage the couple to rely on their relatives for support.
9. After the exchange of vows eagle feathers are blessed (Azilya) and a prayer is said over them. An instruction is given on the importance of the eagle feather and the importance of praying with it. The eagle feathers are presented to the couple. These feathers are called the twins because they are identical. They are found on each wing of the eagle. They are used for balancing. If one is missing the eagle cannot fly. One feather is tied on the right side of the groom and one is tied on the left side of the bride. They are told that they are now one. Just as the eagle cannot fly if one of the feathers is missing so to they will need to work together if their marriage is to last. They are instructed to pray with the eagle feather.

10. The couple is fanned with an eagle feather and then wrapped in a buffalo robe or a star quilt. This is a sign that they are now one.

11. At the end of the ceremony the couple then walks out followed by the prayer leader. An Honor Song is sung as they are walking. They greet everyone at the church entrance.

12. The couple is given a pipe in a separate ceremony. Traditionally when a couple begins their journey as a family they are given a pipe which governs their lives. They are blessed with this pipe. They accept the values of the pipe and form a covenant among each other and God. Under the pipe they claim each other's relatives who are now recognized as part of the family.

13. Food is important to the rite. The families put on a feast and give away. Food is blessed and offered to Wakan Tanka. Some food is set aside for the spirits. Then choke cherry juice and wasna are given to the couple.

#### **IV. PLACE OF MARRIAGE**

Both Lakota and Catholic traditions recognize that marriage must take place in a sacred place. A church is the sacred place for Catholic marriages.

**PART I**

**IV. GUIDELINES FOR INFANT BAPTISM**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Lakota people consider water the first medicine--spring water is especially sacred. It is a gift from the earth that sustains life and is used in many ceremonies including the sunrise prayer and the Oinikaga (purification lodge). In the Oinikaga ceremony after each round of prayer, water is passed around to drink and sometimes people pour it on themselves. This living water refreshes them. It is appropriate that spring water be used for baptism.

In the Christian tradition the waters of Baptism give life, cleanse from sin, allow us to die and rise with Christ, fill us with the abundant life of the Spirit, make us sons and daughters of God and make us members of the Body of Christ—the Christian community.

This full understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism will help people reevaluate the instruction of the past that too often dwelt on the horrible consequences that would occur if a person were not baptized. The Catholic Church believes that God desires that everyone be saved. The church teaches that children who die without baptism can enjoy the presence of God forever. It also teaches that those adults who die without baptism and who have led a good life can also see the face of God (CCC1257 &1260). Moreover, “God has bound salvation to the Sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments (CCC 1257)”. Cf. *Redemptoris Missio* #10.

Children are not admitted to baptism in order to save them from an unspeakable hell or a cold godless limbo. Baptism is an action of the church community. Through it the Risen Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, acts in members of the Church and regenerates new risen members of his living Body.

There are two important Christian revelations that are not found in traditional Lakota culture. The first is that God at the appropriate time took on flesh in the person of Jesus so that all human beings could take on divinity. What happens in baptism is that we become sons and daughters of the Father. We are given the same place in the life of the Trinity as Jesus has. As members are added to his body through baptism Christ continues to take on flesh in order to carry out his mission in the world.

The second revelation is that Christ died for us and is risen in the flesh. He desires that we be raised in the flesh as well. At the time of baptism we die the only death that really matters. We die in the baptismal water and when we rise from it we are risen with Christ. All baptized persons make up the Risen Race—the Body of Christ—the Church. We in the flesh become immortal with him.

The members of the Task Force realize that what we are proposing in the following document is a radical departure from former baptismal preparation and

celebration. At the outset we suggest that this proposal be highly recommended but remain optional.

## **I. BAPTISMAL PREPARATION IN GENERAL**

The members of the Task Force are concerned about baptismal preparation. For the most part, the present practice of preparing for baptism is inadequate. One or two sessions of instruction are offered to the parents or guardians. The child is baptized without much hope that he or she will be raised in the Catholic faith. More often than not the child and the parents are not seen again in the church community. The sense that the child is entering a community of faith, which involves ongoing participation and conversion, is not communicated and is not a reality. Too often a child is baptized to satisfy the desire of a parent, grandparent or guardian.

The Task Force members believe that it would be very helpful for baptismal preparation to reflect more closely the Lakota tradition of preparing a person to be adopted into a family. The rite of baptism makes a child the adopted son or daughter of God and a member of the community of faith. In Lakota tradition the Hunka (adoption) Ceremony takes two years of preparation. Similarly when a person is adopted into the community of faith it is important to take time for adequate preparation of the parents and godparents. It is also important that the community of faith not only be prepared for the acceptance of a new member but that they participate in the preparation and education of the parents and godparents. All the members of the community of faith need to accept responsibility for raising the child in the Catholic faith.

## **II. PREPARATION BEFORE BIRTH OF THE CHILD**

In Lakota tradition, preparation for welcoming a child begins with the announcement that a woman is *iglus'aka* (pregnant). Following this tradition Baptismal preparation could begin at this time as well. We recommend that when the announcement is made:

1. The family begins praying for a name for the child.
2. The family selects godparents early so that they may help with the preparations.
3. The community set aside six evenings a year for a Mass and educational dinner for parents who are expecting a child and the selected godparents and family members. At Mass the community would pray for the child and during dinner, formed members of the community of faith would encourage and instruct the parents and godparents and family members about baptism and the Church's

way of life. The same material would be presented in three sessions every six months—one session every two months.

### **III. PREPARATION AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD**

The Rite of Baptism would provide a framework for a six months course of instruction similar to the RCIA. We recommend that these instructions be done at a meal rather than in a classroom setting and that formed members of the community be involved with the presentations. Various parts of the Baptismal Rite could be done at different times during the six month period.

Baptisms and baptismal rites would always be done in the Church and preferably at Mass.

#### 3.1. One possible plan:

The cycle of preparation would revolve around Baptismal Sundays. Epiphany and Easter are two traditional baptismal feasts of the Church. Other suggestions would be All Saints Day and the feast of Kateri Tekakwitha.

3.2. The cycle would contain four Sundays where the different rites would be conferred.

##### 3.2.1. Candidate Sunday:

The child is brought to the church. Azilya (purify) the child and all present. The Child is given a name and accepted into the community as a candidate for baptism. The sign of the cross is made on the child's forehead and the child is presented at the altar.

##### 3.2.2. Cleansing Sunday:

The child is brought to the church. Azilya the Child and all present. The Rite of Exorcism and First Anointing is conferred. The parents and godparents may want to do the Inipi Ceremony in the Oinikaga (purification lodge) associated with the church community before the rite of exorcism.

##### 3.2.3. Communion of Saints Sunday:

The child is brought to church. Azilya the child and all present. The community prays the Prayers of Petition and Litany of Saints for the child. This connects the child to the community that has gone before and to the present community.

##### 3.2.4. Baptism Sunday:

The child is brought to the church. Azilya the child and all present. Spring water is blessed. The child is baptized. The parents and Godparents may want to do the Inipi Ceremony in the Oinikaga (purification lodge) associated with the Church before the baptism.

The Hunka song is song at this time.

3.4. The Cannumpa Opagi Na Cannumpa Yuha Wocekiye (the pipe ceremony) may be used at the child's baptism.

3.5. Other symbols that could be used:

The child may be touched with an Eagle feather.

The child may be presented with a star quilt in place of the white garment.

3.6. Dinner for the community follows the baptism.

#### **4. PREPARATION FOR PARENTS WITH SUBSEQUENT CHILDREN**

4.1 If both parents have been through baptismal preparation, the preparation would be shortened for subsequent children.

4.2 The parents and godparents would participate in all the activities listed in the section Preparation before the birth of the child. (cf II)

4.3 The parents and godparents would participate in practical planning sessions for the four-Sunday ceremonial cycle.

#### **5. DEDICATION OF THE CHILD**

5.1 If a person wants to have a child baptize but it is clear that the parents are not ready to do the preparation or that there is little hope that the child will be bought up in the Catholic faith, a ceremony dedicating the child to God could be done. The child would be announced as part of the catechumenate. When the parents are ready they can begin the preparation process.

5.2 The ceremony could follow the rite suggested for Candidate Sunday. (cf 3.2.1.)

**PART I**

**V. GUIDELINES FOR CONFIRMATION**



## I. INTRODUCTION

There are three sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Baptism is the sacrament of identity. It changes us so that we become sons and daughters of the Father, brothers and sisters of one another, and resurrected persons (Baptism we die and rise with Christ once and for all). Confirmation offers those who have been baptized as infants the opportunity to ratify their baptism and commissions them as witness to the Gospel. The Eucharist nourishes both the divine life and relationship to the Father given in Baptism and the commission given in Confirmation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the sacrament of mission. It gives the baptized person the opportunity to respond to the call of Christ, witness to the gospel and take up his or her responsibility to build up the Body of Christ, the Church. In Confirmation all the gifts necessary for a church community to take care of itself are poured out on the community. The person who was constituted a unique gift of the Spirit in baptism is now given a public commission to bring the Gospel to all the people he or she encounters by word and action. Moreover, each person is given the singular gifts that he or she needs in order to become responsible, active members of the church community. Those who are confirmed must commit themselves to regular participation in the Eucharist so that they can be strengthened to carry out their mission and can be formed into the Body of Christ they receive.

In confirmation a person is asked to be a Christ-bearer. Through his or her acceptance of the grace of confirmation Christ is able, through them, to touch, heal, forgive, encourage, and call all peoples to the Father.

In Confirmation every person is called and sent to work in the apostolate of the Church. They receive the grace to respond to the call and to do the work necessary to care for the needs of the community. Persons who do not respond are useless to themselves and to the community. (Cf. Decree on the Laity #2.)

In the Lakota tradition members of the community sought a vision. This vision quest helped people to provide for the needs of the community. Through the process of individual prayer and reflection people discovered what they were to do in the life of the community for the benefit of all. The Spirit of God led them to follow their vision so that the community could provide for its spiritual and physical needs. The person prepared for this vision quest over a period of years. When he prayed for a vision he had the support of the community. When he came down from the hill he knew what he was to do and he had the spiritual strength to follow his vision.

Catholic and Lakota rituals, while different, are sacred and both need to be honored. They are not entered into quickly or without sufficient preparation. We encourage young people to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. We

encourage them to pray each day for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and fast once a week in preparation for reception of the sacrament. They need to seek the grace of a responsible, active role in the Christian community and seek the grace to fulfill that role.

People who are confirmed commit themselves to live the Christian way of life. They agree to allow the Holy Spirit to guide them in what they do and say, so that in all things they present the risen Christ to all the people they meet.

## II. Preparation:

2.1. The members of the Task Force recommend a one-year period of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. In light of the way Lakota people prepare for a ceremony we recommend that during this time the people to be confirmed be encouraged to fast and pray. We ask them to avoid alcohol and drugs and we ask them to dedicate themselves to living a good life.

During this preparation time Lakota students should be taught the Lakota ceremonies. They need to know some Lakota history and language as part of their preparation for Confirmation. In a mixed group this would be optional for non-Lakota people.

Lakota culture provides for young people to take their place as adults in their communities through the Vision Quest for young men and the Buffalo Sing Ceremony for young women. As part of the confirmation preparation young people should be taught about these ceremonies. Some may want to take advantage of them as they prepare to take on a new relationship to the Church and to their communities.

2.2. We recommend that the persons asking for Confirmation and their sponsors participate in the Inipi Ceremony.

2.3. At confirmation the persons being confirmed should pray for a name. Names can be taken from the list of saints and from names passed on from generation to generation in a family or from outstanding members of the community living or dead.

If an individual wants to he or she could use a Lakota name for a saint. For instance the symbol for St. John is an Eagle. The person may be given a Lakota name with eagle in it. Or a person could be called "shinning eyes" this could refer to St. Lucy or "he looks for things" could refer to St. Anthony.

After the ceremony a Lakota naming ceremony could take place where the person is given a Lakota name by an elder or a medicine man.

2.4. Those to be confirmed are encouraged to make a retreat during which fasting and prayer are emphasized. During this retreat an Inipi Ceremony could be offered.

2.5. We want to educate parents to the fact that Confirmation should be a choice on the part of the young person. It is not to be forced on people. They must be free to choose. They must respond to the call from the Church to participate in this sacrament.

2.6. The Guidelines for the Liturgy of the Eucharist may be used for the Confirmation Mass.

2.7. It is important to get young people as involved in the Liturgy as possible. The focus needs to be on the young people and their movement throughout the Liturgy.

### III. Confirmation Mass

This is a suggested Confirmation Mass

3.1. The Entrance Procession is led by a drum group and dancers. Banners and streamers may be brought in during the entrance. If there are many different parishes present then each parish could make a banner for the procession.

3.2. After the young people are confirmed by the bishop a medicine man or an elder could present each person who is confirmed with an eagle feather. If non-Lakota people are being confirmed in the same confirmation ceremony they could be given a medicine wheel. If there are a large number of non-Lakota being confirmed it would be appropriate for the Lakota people to have a Mass the following week where those being confirmed could be honored with the presentation of a feather.

A woman helper would tie the plumes on the young Lakota women.

3.3. After the feathers are presented and the name is given an honoring song is offered.

3.4. The drum and a song could be offered at the Entrance Procession, at the time of Confirmation, at the Proclamation of Faith, at the Great Amen and at the Dismissal. The number of songs may vary for each occasion.

3.5. A Wopila dinner could complete the celebration.

## **APPENDIX A**

### Funeral Rites

The Task Force is working on the following:

1. Traditionally the Eagle feather is associated with life. It would not usually be put in a casket. If it is, it would normally be removed before the casket is closed. The members of the Task Force suggested that in light of the Christian understanding of death, a statement be developed to demonstrate the possible use of an eagle feather at Catholic funerals.
2. The members of the Task Force will develop a book of etiquette to be used by people who attend wakes and funerals.

## **APPENDIX B**

The Task Force recognizes that many Lakota people use the Inipi Ceremony as a means of purification and as a way to pray for forgiveness and healing. It also recognizes that the Naming Ceremony and the Tying of the Plume Ceremony have been used in the context of the Eucharist--usually after Communion and before the final blessing.

The Task Force will investigate the following ceremonies and their relationship to the Liturgies of the Sacraments and the worship of the Church.

The members of the Task Force continue to reflect on the following ceremonies:

1. naming ceremony
2. making of relatives
3. buffalo singing ceremony
4. vision quest
5. spirit keeping
6. ball throwing ceremony
7. sacred meals/feasts--including Christmas and Easter
8. wiping of tears ceremony
9. give-away.