



There is so much to teach you. What I know was given to me for men and it is true and it is beautiful.

~ Nicholas Black Elk



In January 1993 the possibility of having an all-Native Cursillo at the Sioux Spiritual Center was raised and it has since become a reality. The Cursillo format is used but is called *Canku Wakan*, meaning the “Holy Way” or “Sacred Road” in Lakota.

Believing that Wakantanka, the Great Spirit, had called him to greater service,

Black Elk became a Christian who intertwined Lakota and Catholic practices. He prayed regularly with his rosary and pipe and participated in Mass and Lakota ceremonies. On the feast of St. Nicholas in 1904 he was baptized. In 1907 the Jesuits appointed him a catechist because of his enthusiasm and excellent memory for learning Scripture and Church teachings. Like St Paul, he traveled widely preaching, telling stories and writing pastoral letters with Bible verses on good Christian living for Lakota People to read. Oftentimes he taught the faith by narrating a published picture chart called the “Two Roads Pictorial Ladder Catechism”, which featured the “Good Red Road” and the “Black Road of Difficulties”.

As a catechist he is credited with leading over 400 Native People to baptism. His books and model lifestyle continue to inspire thousands of people making their spiritual journey.

The weekend retreat is presented by Native lay spiritual leaders, Catholic priests and Native Deacons. A series of talks are utilized as well as Lakota ceremonies and rituals, and Catholic traditional practices.

Two retreats are held annually in April and September at the Sioux Spiritual Center. The retreat begins on Thursday evening and concludes Sunday early afternoon.



Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of us your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created.

To register, please contact the Office of Native Ministry:

www.rapidcitydiocese.org/native-ministry/

OFFICE OF NATIVE MINISTRY
605-343-3541 ext 2254
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Canku Wakan

The Holy Road

The lives of many have been forever transformed by this retreat through the workings of the Holy Spirit. This is a powerful Spirit-filled prayer experience!

PURPOSE

The *Canku Wakan* weekend is designed to allow our people the freedom to benefit from the best of both traditions of worship and to profit spiritually, emotionally and physically. We are able to form a new vision and awareness of our rightful place in God's tiyospaye, the Catholic Church. A renewed spirit of cooperation is formed, bonded by friendship, with trust created and fed by mutual love for each other and Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Since the *Canku Wakan* weekend is Lakota in origin, any man or woman of Native American heritage and in good standing with the Catholic Church can participate.

The high level of spirituality contained in the Lakota culture and in the Catholic Church combine to promote a spiritual and personal growth that will continue and strengthen throughout the participant's life. *Canku Wakan* has become a major vehicle by which the two traditions become one in service to God.

THE WEEKEND

Sixteen men and women meet from Thursday until Sunday with a team of two priests, one Lakota deacon, and several lay persons. Fifteen talks are given by some of the lay people, the priests, and the deacon. The activities for the three days are filled with laughter, recreation, songs, discussions, prayer, and time for silent reflection.

There will also be time allowed for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Pipe Ceremony, the Talking Circle, or the Sweat Lodge. You are free to choose the form of prayer you want.

The *Canku Wakan* weekend is a fun-filled time to become reacquainted with the basics of our Lakota and Catholic traditions by living and sharing for a short period of time as one family in Christ.

