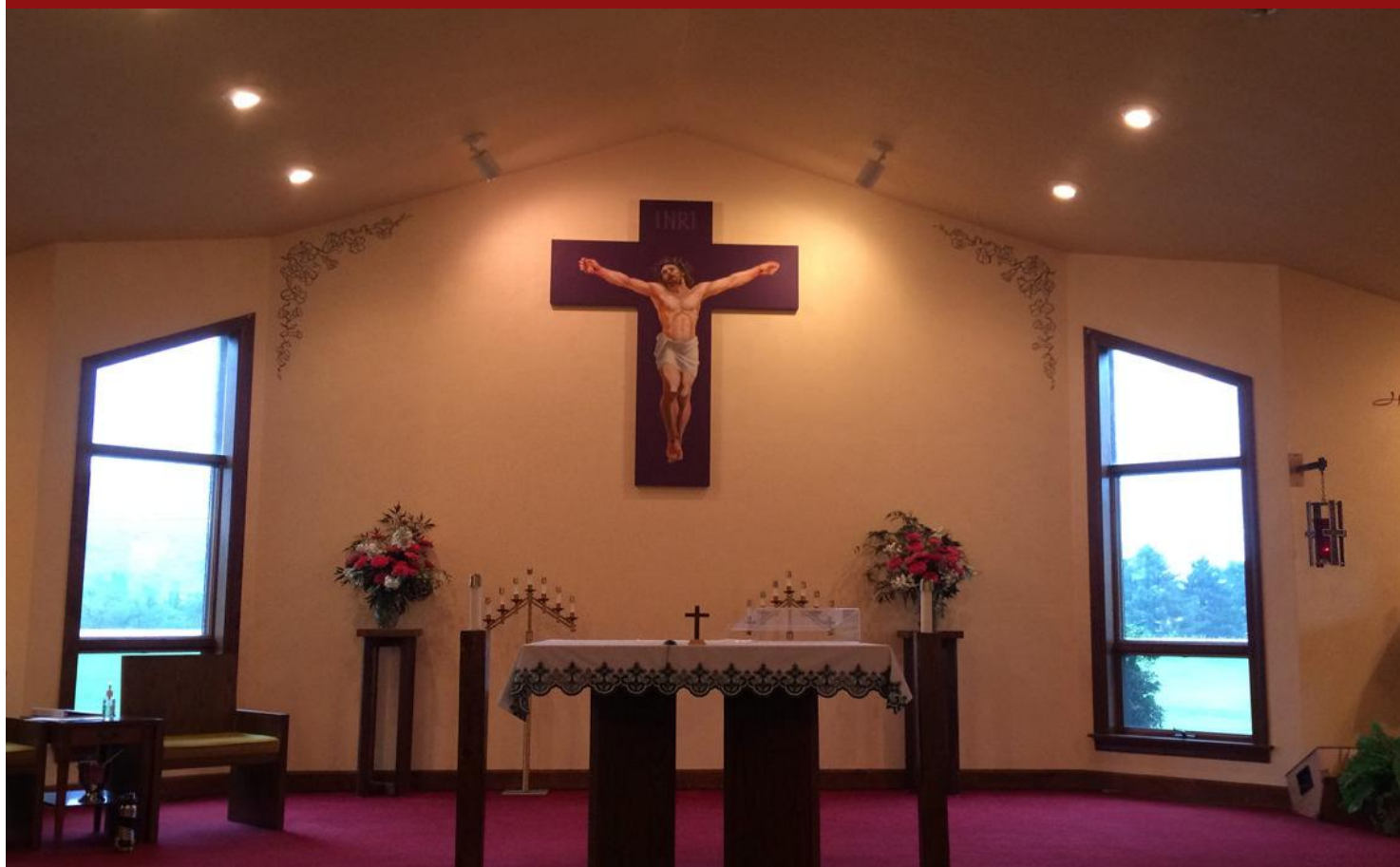


Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Catholic Parish | Spring Mills, PA



Menu

Our Parish Roots

St. Kateri Tekakwitha Church began as a mission church. "The Mission" began with fewer than 30 families and individuals interested in having weekly Catholic worship services in Penns Valley. Mass was first celebrated in the fall of 1975 at the Henry home in Centre Hall and at the fairgrounds by Msgr. Paul Lenz who was pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Bellefonte.

In the Spring of 1979 Father Cingle of Our Lady of Victory Parish in State College presided over a Eucharistic Liturgy celebrated at Patchwork Farm in east Penns Valley. Mass has been said in Penns Valley on a continuing basis since June 29, 1980 when Father Jim Crookston first celebrated the Eucharist in the "Upper Room" of the Millheim Theater. We were then called St. John's Mission in the Valley after our mother parish, St. John the Evangelist in Bellefonte. Father O'Malley, our pastor and pastor of St. John's, suggested Blessed Kateri as our patroness. Through Father O'Malley's guidance, our mutual struggles, joys and prayers and with Blessed Kateri's intercession, God has blessed us with growth and accomplishment more dramatic than any of us ever dreamed.

In 1981 Bishop Hogan purchased five acres of land from Christ Beiler, an Amish man, along Route 45 in Gregg Township. Ground was broken for the new church on June 6, 1982. On September 26, 1982 the cornerstone was laid; the first for a church in the United States to be named after Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Bishop Hogan dedicated the new church building (erected under the supervision of Phil Bosak, a mission member), on June 5, 1983-less than three years after the first weekly mass in the theater.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Known as the “Lily of the Mohawks,” Kateri was born in Auriesville, New York, in 1656 to a Christian Algonquin woman and a Mohawk chief. At the age of four, her mother, father and younger brother died of smallpox. The disease also attacked Kateri and left her disfigured and partially blind. She was adopted by her aunts and uncle.

As a teenager Kateri converted to Catholicism and was baptized at the age of twenty. She had to endure great hostility from her tribe for her Faith but she remained firm in it. Fearing for her life, she fled to a Christian Mohawk village in Quebec, Canada. She received her First Holy Communion on Christmas Day, 1677 and later professed a vow of Perpetual Virginity. Kateri lived a life dedicated to prayer, penitential practices, and caring for the sick and elderly.

On April 17, 1680 at the age of twenty-four, Kateri died. Witness reported that within minutes of her death, the scars from smallpox completely vanished and her face shone with radiant beauty. Devotion to Kateri began immediately after her death. Her body, enshrined in Caughnawaga, is visited by many pilgrims each year.

In 1980 Kateri was Beatified by Pope John Paul II and canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 21, 2012.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha is the first Native American to be declared a Saint. Her feastday is July 14. She is the patroness of the environment and ecology.

Nittany Kateri Circle

The Kateri Circle is one in 68 parishes in the United States who gather to learn more about and emulate the life of St. Kateri Tekakwitha. We exist under the auspices of the Tekakwitha Conference in Alexandria, LA and we are the only one in Pennsylvania!



Statue of St. Kateri in front of church

Prayer to St. Kateri

St. Kateri, Star of Native People and Bright Light for all!
We thank God for your heroic courage, constant perseverance and deep love of the Cross.
Pray for us that our love for Christ

The guidelines established by the Tekakwitha Conference encourage the Kateri Circle to gather to form a group for spiritual support, and encourage a community of faith for prayer, learning and outreach to the local community.

The spiritual work of the Circle include a prayer request book at the back of our church. The Circle meets the fourth Thursday of every month to pray a rosary for those intentions. We continue our Kateri spirituality in our youth with gifts at the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. The Circle also works to support the youth groups in their charitable endeavors and to find ways to be of service to the parish.

Our fundraisers allow us to participate financially in the support of St. Paul's Mission School in Hays, MT, through Sr. Christine Ferrar. This school serves approximately 100 Native American children. We also participate in local community outreach to the food bank and to specific parish request as needed.

The Kateri Circle is growing and always encourages and enjoys new members. We hope to continue to imitate St. Kateri's sacrifice of services to the community and follow in her example of prayer.

****Karen Grove**

Updated 5/20/2016

Saint Kateri Faith Study Group

Please consider joining the Saint Kateri Faith Study group. Our group explores and discusses not only scripture and what God's word means to us, but also many other aspects of our Catholic faith and how they can be both comforting and challenging.

The Google online group will be used to facilitate the organization of our meetings and the communication between group members. If you wish to join the online group, click on the hyperlink below. Come join us in Christian fellowship! As Jesus told us, "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

To Join The Saint Kateri Faith Study Group

may deepen.

And may we imitate you in following God's Will even when difficulties arise.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Saint Kateri Websites

National St. Kateri Shrine
Tekakwitha Conference
Catholic News Agency
Catholic Online
Black and Indian Mission Office

A Mission in the Valley

A Mission in the Valley tells how a small group of devout Catholics, who were concerned about a religious education for their children, planted a seed which they nurtured; and it grew into Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Church which was built in a largely Protestant area of Centre County.

A Mission in the Valley is sold online at Amazon.com . To obtain your copy, follow the link to Amazon, and type "A Mission in the Valley by Ralph Gray in Color".