

# the Quarterly

Summer 1979

Report of the Commission  
for the Catholic Missions  
Among the Colored People  
and the Indians

Dear Joe:  
This will take your mind off the lost Indians + the losing Browns! Figured it would take Tekakwitha to do it.

With the tigers + the Lions, better luck next season!

I was in Blue Ridge ("No-whave") Georgia, for my Retreat + a short vacation. Weather "loosey". Greetings + salutations to all you, O'Brien with a prayer thrown in. God's love + mine, too your "Kissin'-cuzin".  
O.B.J.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Their Eminences:

John Cardinal Krol

President

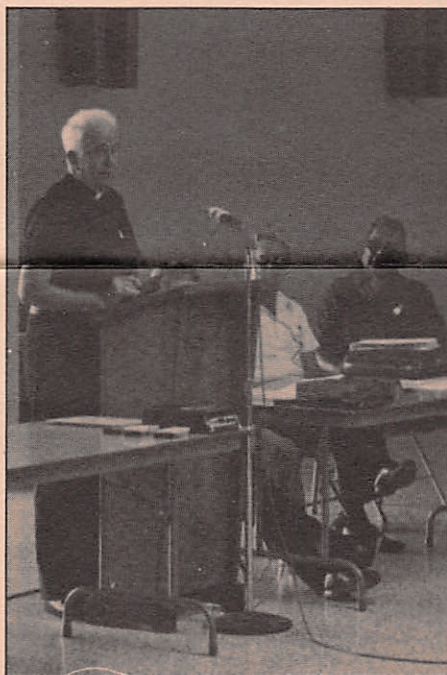
Terence Cardinal Cooke

His Excellency:

Most Rev. William Borders, D.D.

Monsignor Paul A. Lenz

Secretary



YANKTON, S.D. — "A new hope is born" for the Church's apostolate among Native Americans — on this note Bishop William Connare of Greensburg, Chairman of the Missions Committee for the N.C.C.B., began the keynote address to the 40th Annual Tekakwitha Conference, August 6-9 at Mt. Marty College, Yankton, S.D.

Bishop Connare's audience comprised some 200 people involved in Native American ministry, including religious and lay missionaries from across the United States and Canada, and Native Americans representing more than 25 tribes. Quoting from documents of Vatican II and the statements of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II, the Greensburg Bishop focused on the heightened sensitivity of the Church to the complexities of evangelizing cultures as

"A new  
hope  
is born"

well as individuals.

The theme of this year's Conference was expressed by Bishop Paul Dudley of the host Diocese of Sioux Falls, who spoke of developing "a listening heart." He and later speakers would emphasize that conference participants were there to "listen and learn," sharing their insights about the Church's ministry among Native Americans. Also urged was the need to give Native Americans themselves a strong voice in developing the proper expression of the Faith in the context of their own culture. This was more possible at this year's conference — for more than one-third of the participants were Native Americans.

Monsignor Paul A. Lenz, Executive Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, outlined the Bureau's recent efforts to

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# Tekakwitha Conference

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Purification with cedar smoke — a Native American ritual

promote the cause of Native Americans and to give them a stronger voice in the Church. Monsignor Lenz read a letter to the Conference from John Cardinal Krol, President of the Bureau's Board of Directors, in which the Cardinal compared the struggles of Native Americans to the quest in Poland for what Pope John Paul II called "life, land, and liberty."

The highlight of the Conference's first full day was the morning session with the four participating bishops. Bishop Thomas Murphy of Great Falls echoed Bishop Connare's concern that the Church listen and learn from Native Americans. In his address to the Conference, Bishop Murphy stressed the importance of "the liberating message of the Gospel" to the Church's evangelizing efforts. He used Christ's ministry as a model

for the Church's ministry among Native Americans and illustrated how Indian life and culture are fertile ground for the essentials of Christ's message, and for the growth of faith.

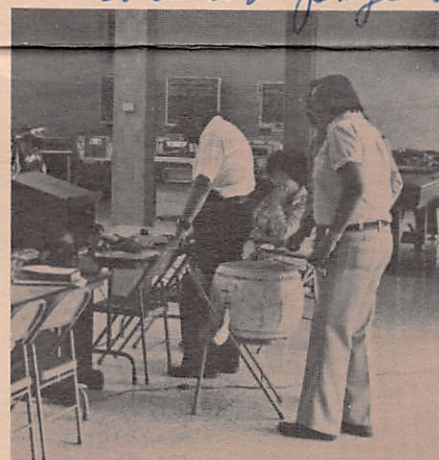
Bishop Harold Dimmerling of Rapid City spoke of the great growth of the Tekakwitha Conference, and asserted that it is becoming a powerful force for the Native American apostolate. Bishop Dimmerling challenged the Conference participants to begin fulfilling their shared vision for the future of this apostolate. He singled out the need for a liturgy using native language and rituals, and for Native American lay leaders in catechesis. He also called on the American Indians to destroy the negative image they have been given, and he urged those involved in ministry to Native Americans to persevere in their work. He

reminded the missionaries, however, that "Ours is not a ministry of control, but a ministry of service."

Bishop Dudley followed with some brief remarks, in which he asserted that all Catholics are "called to be shepherds in the name of Jesus." He expressed regret at the relatively poor results of Native American ministry, and he said that those carrying on this ministry must use their "gifts" — they must be like Elijah and bring the "dry bones" to life.

After the bishops' addresses, Conference participants were invited to speak. Many Native Americans were among those who addressed the bishops; and the common theme was the inadequacy of the national Church's response to Native American needs. There were calls for more action, and more interest shown by all bishops with Native American

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Drums were part of a morning prayer service led by Ernest Sun Rhodes.





## peace for all mankind



took about six months to do half a block. By the end of 1973, I could walk one whole block. Then I began to add one block every six months. By 1975 I could walk six blocks a day without any difficulty. I would do most of my walking right after breakfast before it got too hot. I began to do chores in the yard again, climb steps, and do volunteer work for the Office of Religious Education in the Diocese of Mobile.

In January of 1976, I was asked by my pastor if I had given up the idea of being a priest. I told him that I had not, but I was still sick and the disease was only in remission. He told me that I had not had any major trouble since 1972 and so there was no reason why I should not go to see the Bishop concerning my priestly vocation. In February of 1976, I spoke with Bishop John L. May about reentering the seminary.

I further stated that I would like to give it another try if at all possible.

The Bishop asked me how my doctor felt about this; I told him that my doctor would concur with whatever I said. In April of 1976, I was accepted by the Diocese of Mobile as a student for the priesthood. This is something I thought would never happen again. God works in mysterious ways. In June of 1978, I was ordained a deacon. On May 19, 1979, I will be ordained a priest: God has really smiled on me, and I am very grateful!

Hope lingers on, for:

*"I don't feel no way's tired  
I've come too far from  
where I started from*

*Nobody told me the road  
would be easy.*

*I don't believe he brought  
me this far*

*I don't believe he brought  
me this far*

**TO LEAVE ME!"**

### TO BE A PRIEST

I have had the desire to be a priest since the age of fifteen. Maybe at that particular time, my reasons were not so sound as they are now. In the intervening years, my reasons for wanting to be a priest have developed as I have grown and matured. I choose priesthood because I want to be a servant for God's people. I am a sensitive man who is able to let others experience the warmth and interest of my concern. When I was a counselor, I used my ability to listen to help others help themselves. I will bring to my priesthood this gift of listening, knowing that the exercise of my ministry will make me a more loving and more accepting listener. By sharing what prayer has done in my life, I will be able to bring others to see how important prayer can be in their own lives.

Although priesthood is not going to be easy, I know that for those who are called no better life is possible. It is my experience of being called by God in Diaconate that gives me the courage to ask for priestly ordination. I am satisfied and joyful because the life that I have chosen gives me meaning and purpose. The day that I will be ordained a priest will be the happiest day of my life: my dream will have been fulfilled. For nothing in life that is worthy is ever too hard to achieve.



*The Tekakwitha Conference Board:  
(l to r) Francis Hairy Chin, V.P.;  
Fr. Gilbert Hernaur, O.F.M., Cap., Pres.  
Sr. Genevieve Cuny, O.S.F., Sec.  
Msgr. Paul A. Lenz (ex officio)*



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people in their dioceses. It was decided that all the Indians in attendance would caucus and prepare a proposal for the four participating bishops. This proposal was presented Tuesday evening, and detailed the actions, attitudes and approaches favored by the Native American representatives. As their first action in response to this proposal, the four bishops drafted a letter to their fellow bishops in the Native American apostolate, stressing the importance of the Conference and urging each of them to attend next year's sessions.

Throughout the balance of the Conference, small workshops and special programs brought groups of in-

terested participants together. Workshop areas included Native American Ministry, Catechesis, Liturgy, Family Life, Urban Ministry, and Evangelical Liberation.

Among the presentations was a film on the Cause for the Sainthood of Kateri



*A workshop session, led by  
Sr. Genevieve Cuny, (2nd from left)*

Tekakwitha, the Mohawk maiden for whom the Conference is named.

At the conclusion of the Conference, there was a general feeling of accomplishment: many insights and ideas had been shared, and an appreciation of the growing strength the Conference had developed. More than ever before, those involved in Native American ministry — especially the Native Americans themselves — could see their hope of having a voice in the Church moving toward fulfillment. They look forward now to an even more successful Conference next year, as well as to concrete actions in the months and years ahead.

## *A Brief History of the Tekakwitha Conference*

Thirty-nine years ago, at the invitation of Bishop Muench of Fargo, North Dakota, a small group of missionaries met to study, discuss and advise on matters relating to the Native American apostolate. So productive was the initial meeting that Bishop Muench invited the group to meet annually with a goal of furthering the effectiveness of this ministry through the sharing of knowledge and insight.

After Bishop Muench left Fargo, the missionary group continued to hold conferences but the original purpose was eclipsed by more immediate

concerns among the missionaries. Only recently has there been a return to the concerns which prompted Bishop Muench to issue his first invitations. This return was signaled a few years ago by the extension of Conference membership to religious and lay ministry and to Catholic Native Americans as well.

At the 1977 Conference, a decision was made to revitalize the whole effort, keeping the focus on EVANGELIZATION, but encouraging missionaries and Native American representatives to explore together the

present and future directions of the Catholic Church within the various tribes. The need of Native American Catholics for their own strong and effective voice in the Church was recognized and promoted.

The success of this revitalization effort was apparent almost immediately. For Conference participation, which had averaged some 51 attendees through 1977, increased dramatically in 1978 and more than quadrupled in 1979. This greater interest and participation remains a direct reflection of our Church's decision to "listen — and to learn."



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## Overview

September 1979

Dear Fellow Priests:

*This issue features two events in which I had the pleasure to participate — two events with some significance, I think, for the American Church.*

*The Tekakwitha Conference has grown both in size and importance since 1977, the first year I attended. Together with the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, it is gaining greater recognition for the Native American apostolate — recognition that seems long overdue.*

*It is an interesting irony that, precisely because Native American culture reflects true Gospel values, the Church (coming out of a Western cultural context) has had limited success in its ministry to Native Americans.*

*Today, led by Pope Paul VI's insights on evangelizing cultures, the Church is beginning to appreciate both the need and gifts of American Indians.*

*Father Lang's special gifts are certainly well illustrated by the story of his courageous struggle to become a priest. Seeing him ordained, I was filled with the hope that his great faith might be a sign of the potential impact of the Church on all Black Americans.*

*The example of Father Lang, and the vitality of this year's Tekakwitha Conference, have truly renewed my commitment to this apostolate. I hope that you, too, will be moved to a greater appreciation of our Church's ministry to Black and Native Americans.*

Sincerely in our Lord,

*Paul A. Lenz*

Monsignor Paul A. Lenz  
Executive Secretary

### THE HOME MISSION COLLECTION

- Evangelization is central to the mission of the Church; support for evangelization is the single purpose of the home mission collection.
- While the needs of the missions are varied, most all of these needs can find support from agencies outside the Church; evangelization, alone, must be supported *totally* from within the Church.
- The home mission collection is the only collection gathered in the American Church by U.S. bishops and pastors exclusively for the use of U.S. bishops and pastors.



## Focus



## To be an instrument of

NOTE: *The Quarterly does not usually focus on the story of an individual priest — but then, the ordination of Cordell J. Lang is a most unusual story. It marks a singular triumph of will — of faith and desire. That is why we are pleased to present his story, his victory, here — in his own words — written prior to his ordination on May 19, 1979.*



NAME: Cordell J. Lang

GOAL: To be an instrument of peace for all mankind

MINISTRY: Herald of love and joy

I know that as a priest my ministry is going to be a mixture of pain and joy. I feel I can make the best of this mixture because I have experienced it in my own life. Pain and struggle and hope equals faith. This is what I have to offer to others.

In order for my priestly ministry to be successful, I must continue to grow as a man of prayer; for it is prayer

which is the vocal and physical expression of my faith and it has brought me this far. Prayer has the following effects on me:

- 1) It prepares me internally for my mission.
- 2) It gives me inner happiness.
- 3) It increases my capacity to love.
- 4) It enables me to set goals for myself.

Therefore I am able to reach out to others asking them to share with me the love and joy that I have found through prayer in Christ.

I understand myself to be a herald in the name of Christ, my king, bringing into existence the family of God. This is the essence of priesthood for me. In helping others to recognize and respond to the call of Christ, we give witness to our roles as daughters and sons of God. This is how we build the kingdom of God on earth and reflect the communal relationship that exists between God and man.

Seminary life has not been easy for me because of certain limitations of mine. However, I have attempted to make the best of them. I hope that my ordination will be an inspiration to others also to become heralds of love and joy.

In 1969, I was asked to discontinue my studies for priesthood because of my health. I have Multiple Sclerosis (M.S.), a disease of

the central nervous system for which there is no cure. I have had M.S. now for thirteen years and these years have been periods of pain, struggle, hope and prayer — not only for me, but also for my family and close friends.

After leaving the seminary, I entered graduate school at the University of South Alabama in 1970. I received my Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling in 1971. As a counselor I have always felt that I could help people to help themselves and I knew that would be one of my main goals as a priest.

In 1972 I was hospitalized for 72 days. I was told by a medical neurologist and two orthopedic surgeons that I would never walk again. However, I believed that I would walk again. I stopped working and started learning to walk all over again. I started walking from my home to the corner and it

