

Address to His Holiness Pope John Paul II, at a Special Audience granted to the Indian People of Canada and the United States on June 24, 1980 by Chief Andrew T. Delisle, Grand Chief of the Mohawks of Kahnawake.

Your Holiness, we come here in Honor and Dignity to thank you and the Church for the Honor and Dignity that you have bestowed on one of our own, namely KATERI TEKAKWITHA, the Lily of the Mohawks.

We now ask you, the Holy Father, and Kateri Tekakwitha to plead that the Creator protects our People so that our Spiritual, Cultural and Political Ideals may be taken into consideration, especially in the present, when the powers, that be, are discussing matters that will affect our future, and to make certain that we are involved in all the deliberations.

Now I will say a prayer of Thanksgiving using the same words that have been used by my People for many centuries. A prayer that precedes all meetings amongst ourselves or with people of other Nations.

NIEHWEH SAKOIATISON
(THANK YOU CREATOR)

Now we give thanks to the Creator.

Now smoke rises, it lifts our words to him.

We give thanks to our Mother Earth, from whose breast all things grow.

We thank Sakoiatison for our Leaders, our Chiefs, the advisors of our People.

We thank Sakoiatison for the little children he has placed in the arms of mothers to show that his purpose is still in progress.

Continue to listen, Sakoiatison! Breath, smoke and listen, for again we make smoke, again we speak!

Preserve our old men and women, protect our little children, guide minds of people that they remember Sakoiatison in all their thoughts and actions.

We especially give thanks to you, Sakoiatison, to you who oversee all.

May you always be remembered and considered in all of our gatherings.

With all their minds, with all their strength, the People are giving praise and thanks.

Now smoke arises; He has seen it!

Now we have spoken; He has heard it! Oneh.

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Although the text of the Pope's statement had been prepared in advance, the reaction of the Pope after the presentation gives credence to the fact that he did understand the message that was presented, for he did come down amongst us to shake our hands and chat with us for a surprisingly long time.

Also, the Holy Father did extend blessings through all the Indian People who were there to all of our People in Canada and the United States. In his appearance for the Angelus at the window of his palace on the occasion of the Beatification of Kateri, he proclaimed to the throngs who were gathered in St. Peters Square and to the world, "God bless the Indian People of Canada and the United States".

