

A Personal Story - A Special Tour with the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Missionary Interns 2023

As a something of a victory lap, I was blessed to be the director of a tour with the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Missionary Interns . We ventured up to Northern New Mexico the last week of July. It is an area rich in a Catholic presence. It is a portion of the state with ancient adobe structures. Words fall short of reality. Covered in great Catholic Hispania tradition, Northern New Mexico is complemented with the footprints of a truly great Man... Jean Baptiste Lamy. He was the first Archbishop of Santa Fe. This is Lamy country.



2023 Missionary Interns - Saint Kateri Rosary Walk

The history of Jean Baptiste Lamy and his impact upon this area were profound. It is well catalogued in the great and underrated novel, "Death Comes to the Archbishop", written by Willa Cather, a masterful storyteller. If you have not read this work, you must complete your humanity by picking it up immediately. You are in for a treat. I re-read the work before we made our mini pilgrimage. I don't know exactly why, but I found myself more emotionally ripped with each page. It is a classic in the modern sense.

Santa Fe is now called "The City Different". I guess it really truly is "A City Different", but perhaps not in the way you might expect. It was the first Capital in North America, established by the Spanish in 1610. It is a super lush area and rich in art and

architecture. It is probably as close to a European city as we have in America. Our first and perfectly fitting hosts were the fine people of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. It dates back to the mid 1700s when it was an adobe structure built a little way out of town at the time. There is a magnificent massive canvas tapestry behind the altar that was painted in Mexico about that time period. It was shipped by cart in sections, and sewn upon arrival in Santa Fe.

The weekend was filled with the aroma of Chile peppers and festive exuberance. It was the weekend of the Spanish market, and hundreds of Native Santeros. (sacred artists) The famous plaza was humming with jubilant and animated conversation. The Sangre de Christo Mountains hover in the background as they have stood for thousands of years. There was magic in the air. I think the guys were slightly overwhelmed with the sensory tsunami. It stirs the blood.

"Making the Girls Cry"...

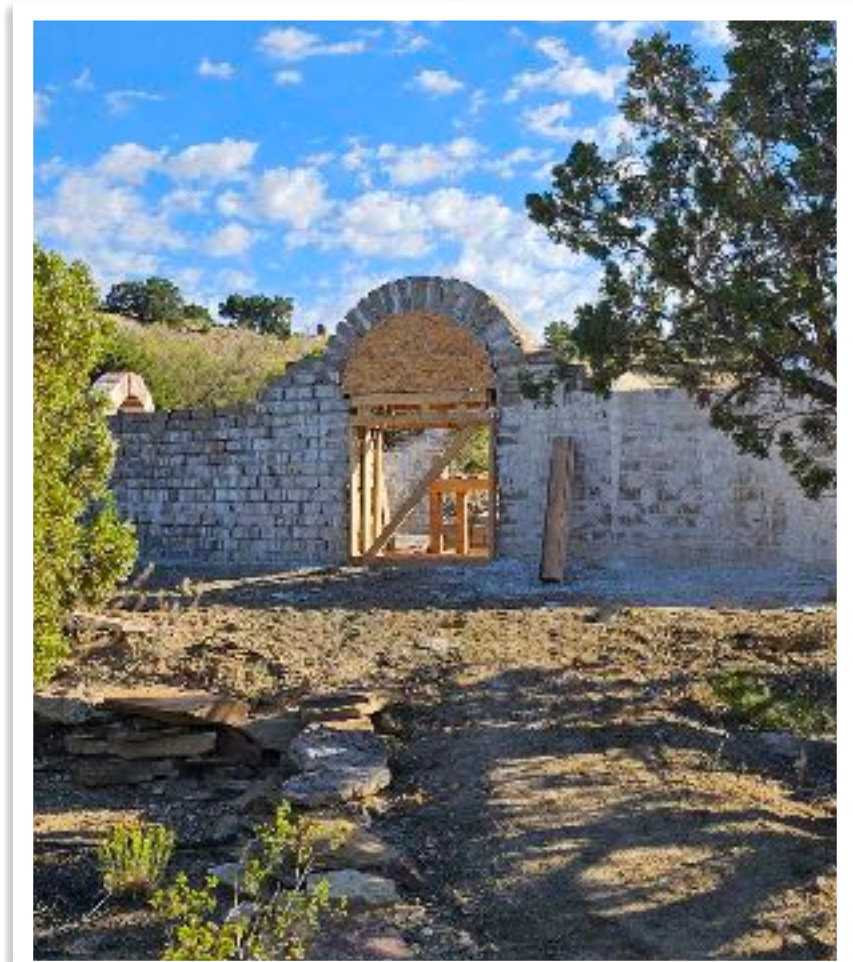
It is a tremendous grace to move the soul. Music can be a powerful means to stir emotions. Plato talks about the level of music reflecting the state of a civilization. Although there were some humorous interludes with law enforcement over performing in the Plaza, all worked itself out in the end. Robert Burns, Irish, folk, and a touch of the sacred all combined into an evening Jam, 20 melodious masculine voices in harmony and polyphony indeed made the girls cry. We actually were being followed through the streets with requests.

After Mass on Saturday Morning in the old Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and a tour with the resonant historian, we were of like a herd of turtles. We saw St. Joseph's Stairs, Lamy's (St. Francis Cathedral), and the oldest Church in North America, the San Miguel Chapel. There was an emergence in the faces of the young men...and a kind of a glow. I will not call it a halo but it was a definite manifestation of joy and grace.

There was one particular moment of a "Profound Experience" with much significance. We came across a young woman in a wheelchair. Maybe she had never been serenaded in her entire life. Before I knew it, some of the guys took one knee around her, as she became the focus of a particularly beautiful love song. A large crowd started to gather. There were tears around. It was a shining poetic moment to remember, and a foil for the cynical heart. Young Men are capable of living healthy chaste relationships. Almost unheard of in the modern world, they are simultaneously capable of gentleness and strength, tenderness and ferocity, virtue and perseverance.

We retired to the Bishop's Lodge the author Willa Cather captured so eloquently in her writings. "The Tesuque Mission is about 4 miles out of town. He found a lovely garden and orchard. He bought the tiny little hut. In the spring he set out his orchard and a few rows of acacia trees. Some years afterward he build a little adobe house, with a chapel, high up on the hillside overlooking the orchard. He used to go and rest and during different seasons with special devotion. After his retirement, he went there to live, though he always kept his study unchanged in the house of the new Archbishop".

After we visited the little Chapel and room, some of which hadn't changed much in the past 150 years, we sat on the front porch. It was an epiphany, at least for me. I told them a few Lamy stories, I told them a few stories of their other mentors. I spoke about art and poetry and how this was a powerful form of evangelization. It was the opening farewell.



Pathway to the Plaza - Saint Kateri Rosary Walk 2023

The afternoon was spent at the ancient Santuario of Chimayo (the Lourdes of the United States) where crutches, neck braces, and testimonials hang on the wall of the baptistry. A huge outside Mass was going on in the Spanish language just north of the Church in the courtyard. Families were scampering in all directions. Could this be a prefiguring of the St. Kateri Rosary Walk Shrine? We made a stop in Taos that evening on our way to Wheeler Peak. It was a Sunday evening, and the Guys were still basking in the glow of weekend, but recognizing things were winding down. We slept under the stars in the crisp high mountains.

Early the next morning, we made the 3,000 foot climb up the pristine trail to Wheeler Peak. The guys were teasing me about being able to make it to the top. I told them, "I am old but I am slow". It was a perfect day. Sunny, but not too hot, clouds building in the afternoon, but with a cool breeze. We reached the summit before noon, our path and conversations having alight and playful wistfulness. At the top, there were deep smiles al around. There was a resounding chant "Viva Christo Rey"! A perfect culmination of our little pilgrimage.



Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Interns at Wheeler Peak - 2023

I told the guys I should be making my way down the Mountain, as they sat on their perch enjoying the magnificent scene. I started down with tired legs but determined footsteps. For whatever reason Pope John Paul the Great popped into my head. I

reflected on his mountaineering and hiking adventures with young people even into his years as a Cardinal. Then my thoughts went back to the guys, and then back again to John Paul II and one of his works that I have read many years ago when I was not much older than these young Men:

In "Familiaris Consortio", John Paul I reminds us that we are all called to the Mission of the Church. It does not matter our walk or state in life, we are called to contribute to God's Work on earth, within the Mystical Body of Christ. It is not negotiable.

There is so much that can be said about this summer. I only speak from my own experience and perspective. Young men can be called to greatness. The friendships, the "Esprit de Corp" and camaraderie they lived this Summer should stay with them for the rest of their lives. They are now a part of a unique brotherhood and our Family.

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers"

Let the devil and his minions snicker. We know Who wins in the end.

Describing the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Internship Program:

I have been asked several times to describe the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Internship Program. It is so multi-faceted that it is hard to put into words. It is a kind of Catholic "special forces training", in search of the good, the true, and beautiful that focuses on the mind, body, and spirit. It is somewhat modeled on the Martyrs of Sebaste. Our formation team includes a new order of young men dedicated to the Catholic manly virtues and chivalry to the point of spilling blood for Christ and His Church. Most young men these days are not challenged physically, intellectually, nor certainly not spiritually in our milk toast society. It is sad to see so much human waste because of material decadence and hedonistic voyeurism. The Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Internship program centers around the work of building traditional adobe Nicho Chapels of the Mysteries of the Rosary, mirroring the way St. Kateri Tekakwitha walked and prayed in the woods and stacking small rock along the trails to measure her prayers. This was how she said and prayed the Rosary.

St. Kateri Rosary Walk



Saint Kateri Rosary Walk - Arch

Back in the Summer of 2018, the former Supreme Knight of Columbus, Carl Anderson visited lowly Gallup, New Mexico, the Native American capital of the World, to break ground on a totally unique and innovative expression of Catholic devotion. The concept of St. Kateri Rosary Walk had been simmering in the minds of Bishop Wall, local Clergy, and the Native Faithful for many years. This desire hit an apex with the Canonization of Saint Kateri by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. A Master Design of 23 twelve-foot “Nichos” inspired from this area of the Southwest commenced. The architectural schemas were created from renowned architect Eric Bootsma, each with a large image in tile of the Mystery of the Rosary laid out in a “trail prayer walk”. Many of the first steps of surveys, engineering, pre-construction trails and retaining walls were accomplished during the Covid pandemic on the site of the future Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Shrine.



Group Effort - Saint Kateri Rosary Walk 2023

How does one start such a project? It starts with one stone or adobe brick at a time. There has already been so much history that has accumulated regarding this project but one of the aspects of a project of this magnitude is that it can have a kind of “quiet creative evolution”. Things just kind of come together in an “adobe mixer of ideas”, or a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the Saint guiding the project in a seemingly effortless way. This is the first time in history, that there is a blending of the first Native American Saint: Saint Kateri Tekakwitha and Our Lady of Guadalupe, who came as a Native Princess who appeared to an indigenous Convert Juan Diego.

A Special Program is born...

Traditional adobe construction is very labor intensive. Many of the Pueblo Churches built in this part of the Southwest go back hundreds of years. These structures are apart

of a great and unique tradition. Mud, clay, straw, mixed and properly baked in the sun can make for some incredible structures. What if we incorporated this great tradition of Pueblo adobe construction into the St. Kateri Shrine? What if commandeered the strong backs and energy of young Catholic Men in a internship program to the benefit and accomplishment of such an admirable goal



Adobe Bricks and Nichos - Saint Kateri Rosary Walk

The daily schedule is like an “ascetically led boot camp”, with morning prayer, Daily Mass, hard physical work, special training, more prayer, technological poverty (no computers or phones), sprinkled with a lighthearted academic evening environment of reading, conversation, and music. Night prayers, and early lights out. Weekends are adventurous including a trip to the Grand Canyon. We think this is a truly unique and innovative program. [More information on the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Internship Program.](#) Embracing Ora et Labora, our young troubadours work hard, pray hard, and live a joyful Catholic life. These past 10 weeks should serve them well... no matter what vocation is in front of them. As one guardian remarked on his “Young Man” returning home recently... "He is four times more tan and three times stronger than from when he left us!"

We are now finishing the 4th year of Summer Internship Missionary work here at the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk Shrine. It always seems that we get so much more from these young men than we give to them.



Thank You to the 2023 Interns - Saint Kateri Rosary Walk

We pray God grant us the Grace to carry on for years to come.

Bill McCarthy
Southwest Indian Foundation

“Help build a special place for now and future generations”

Remember we always welcome your prayers and all donations no matter how big or how small.

saintkaterirosarywalk.org