

First Native American Catholic saint gets shrine

Written by Staff Reports

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Groundbreaking August 11

Ground has been broken on a new shrine to honor St. Kateri Tekakwitha at Sacred Heart Retreat Center, Mile Marker 167, N.M. Hwy. 602, Gallup.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha was canonized as a saint in 2012 and is the first Native American Catholic saint.

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She is the patron saint of Native American, Indigenous and First Nations peoples.

The Diocese of Gallup, Knights of Columbus, and the Southwest Indian Foundation broke ground on the shrine Aug. 11 at 2 pm.

Construction is scheduled to begin within days and completion is tentatively scheduled for August 2021. It will include a chapel, museum and 40 outdoor rosary stations. Each station will be marked by a niche, and each niche will be designed by a Catholic artist from a distinct Native American tribe.

Present at the groundbreaking event were Bishop James S. Wall, the fourth bishop of the Diocese of Gallup; Carl Anderson, the 13th supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus; and Fr. Henry Sands, a member of Ojibway, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of New York in 2005 and appointed the Director of the Black and Indian Mission Office in 2015.