

## BERNARD MIZEKI

Bernard Mizeki is one of the most beloved martyrs in South Africa. Each year on June 18, one of the largest Christian gatherings in Africa takes place as part of the celebration of his feast day.

Born in Portuguese East Africa in 1861 and educated by the Cowley Fathers, Mizeki began his working life offering hospitality in the Father's Hostel for African men. Under their tutelage and with the additional evangelical efforts of a German missionary, Mizeki was baptized in 1886. Shortly after, he left his job at the hostel and began his training as a catechist.

Mizeki's calling as a catechist and his natural gift for language made him a natural fit as a partner to missionaries working in what is now known as Zimbabwe. He and his wife provided pastoral care and formation to the people in and around the Marondera district, taking special care to explain the Christian faith in ways that used the indigenous culture to undergird the primacy of the gospel of Jesus. Mizeki understood the importance of respecting cultural integrity and had an ardent desire to preach the good news.

In a decision repeated by Martin Luther King Jr. more than fifty years later, Mizeki refused to allow death threats and intimidation from local authorities to keep him silent. Mizeki was truly a shepherd to his sheep until the end of his life. During an 1896 uprising, Mizeki was attacked outside of his hut. In an effort to staunch his wounds and give him comfort, his wife and a friend ran back into the dwelling to retrieve food and blankets. Reporting a bright flash of light and a sound like many beating wings, the two helpers were unable to find Bernard's body on returning to the spot where he had fallen. While

his final resting place remains unknown, Bernard Mizeki's faith and trust in the love and life of Jesus is unmistakable.

NANCY FRAUSTO

## COLLECT

*Almighty and everlasting God, who kindled the flame of your love in the heart of your holy martyr Bernard Mizeki: Grant to us, your humble servants, a like faith and power of love, that we who rejoice in his triumph may profit by his example; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## DAVID PENDLETON OAKERHATER

David Pendleton Oakerhater was a Cheyenne Indian of Oklahoma, a warrior who fought for Native American rights and land against an encroaching American government. He also was a U.S. Army prisoner, an artist, an Episcopal deacon, and the first Native American saint in the Church.

Born in the 1840s in what is now Oklahoma, Oakerhater was raised in the Cheyenne traditions. He joined his tribe in conflicts and was captured and imprisoned in a Florida fort.

Conditions in the prison were difficult at best, but Oakerhater persevered and emerged as a leader of his friends. Eventually, circumstances improved. While in prison, Oakerhater and his companions received an education, learning English and art techniques. His works captured the eye of Alice Key Pendleton of Cincinnati, Ohio, and she became his benefactor.

During his incarceration, Oakerhater embraced Christianity. Sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York and with financial assistance from Mrs. Pendleton, he and three other prisoners traveled north to study the faith. He was baptized and confirmed in Syracuse, New York, in 1878, and took the name David Pendleton Oakerhater in honor of the Old Testament King David and his benefactress. Soon after his ordination to the diaconate in 1881, Oakerhater returned to his homeland in Oklahoma.

Oakerhater's ministry blossomed in Oklahoma with the launching of schools and the founding of missions; this was often without the support of the Church and with resistance by the U.S. government. He was tireless in his ministry, never stopping until his death on August 31, 1931. He also continued in his art and is considered one of the founders of modern Native American art.

In 1985 Oakerhater was the first Native American to be included in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, the forerunner to *Holy Women, Holy Men*. He is honored on September 1. On that date in 1986, services at Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., were the first to honor him, with his descendants and delegations from Oklahoma invited to the celebration.

Oakerhater is depicted in many windows and churches. St. Paul's Cathedral in Oklahoma City dedicated a chapel to the saint, replacing a window that had been destroyed in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. The window has a reproduction of Oakerhater's glyph signature, which loosely translates to Oakerhater's Cheyenne name, "Making Medicine."

NEVA RAE FOX

## COLLECT

*O God of unsearchable wisdom and infinite mercy, you chose a captive warrior, David Oakerhater, to be your servant, and sent him to be a missionary to his own people, and to exercise the office of a deacon among them: Liberate us, who commemorate him today, from bondage to self, and empower us for service to you and to the neighbors you have given us; through Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*