

## **Many and Great, O God, Are Your Works by Kathy Toivanen**

Many and great, O God, are your works,  
Maker of earth and sky.  
Your hands have set the heavens with stars,  
your fingers spread the mountains and plains.  
Lo, at your word the waters were formed;  
deep seas obey your voice.

Grant us communion with you,  
O star abiding one.  
Come unto us and dwell with us,  
with you are found the gifts of life.  
Bless us with life that has no end,  
eternal life with you.

*Voices United 308 Lyrics by Joseph R. Renville.*

Renville's mother was Dakota and his father, French. An explorer, fur trader, and Congregational minister, Renville helped found the Lac qui Parle Mission in Minnesota in 1835. This song, which is also known as the “Dakota Hymn,” was sung by thirty-eight Dakota prisoners of war as they were led to execution at Mankato, Minnesota on December 26, 1862. This song was first published in the Dakota Indian Hymnal (1916). Sing! A New Creation.



*-one of the sacred sites of the Dakota, this was once a Dakota Internment Camp in Fort Snelling State Park, Minnesota.*

At the August DOTAC Gathering in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a number of DUCCs took part in the 'Sacred Sites' Tour. This was an opportunity to visit locations sacred to the Dakota and to receive the teachings of Jim Bear Jacobs and Kelly Sherman Conroy as they shared stories of the Dakota prior to and after settler contact. We were moved by these teachings and are grateful to Jim Bear and Kelly for their wisdom and their challenges to us to continue to work for healing, reconciliation and justice.



The land to the right of the asphalt was once sacred Dakota burial grounds. Currently called Pilot Knob Hill, this burial ground was desecrated by settlers who dug up the land in the 1920s. As they dug, they uncovered Dakota remains and simply collected them in a bin which they later gave them to the Minnesota Historical Society. In more recent years, developers planned to build high end condominiums on this site. Thanks to an outcry from Dakota people and settler people alike (white haired white women, we were told!), the development was cancelled. The Dakota are still waiting for the state of Minnesota to work with them to properly honour this sacred site.

- Kathy Toivanen