

*Saint Katharine's CIRCLE*

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume IV, #1

February 2017

**NEWS FROM THE SHRINE**

Contributed by Sr. Pat Downs, SBS

*"By the gift of God we have the present Moment."*

*M.M. Katharine*



Recently Pilgrims who have gifted us include Honor Students from **St. Augustine's High School, New Orleans**, who traveled the route of the "Underground Railroad" –Memphis to Ohio then into Canada and back through New York stopping in Auburn visiting the burial place of Harriet "Moses" Tubman and came to share with the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament celebrating the Eucharist with us and asking for prayers for their journey as young adults. Continuing their Pilgrimage they stopped in Philadelphia on their way back to NOLA.

High School Students from **Omaha, Nebraska** - in Washington for the **Right to Life March** - also stopped at the Shrine on their way back home. We greeted 238 students and were enriched by their faith and enthusiasm!

We also celebrated "Unity Week" in Bensalem - we hosted the Community and shared highlights of how the SBS and Saint Katharine are leaving a legacy as we look forward in the coming months to relocating to a new address. **We are grateful for gifts of the Present Moment – grateful for our past and continuing our journey into the future.**

***Saint Katharine Drexel Special Days:***

**February 12** – close of our 125<sup>th</sup> Year of Foundation

**February 22**—Novena of Saint Katharine Drexel begins. **Download the Novena Prayers from our website page** — <http://www.katharinedrexel.org/videos/>



Anne Hoppenot

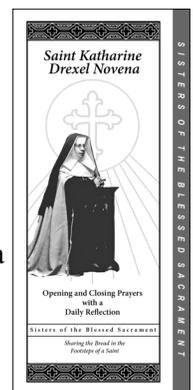
**March 3**—Feast Day of Saint Katharine Drexel

**March 5<sup>th</sup>** Public Celebration and presentation of the **National Justice Award**.

**Anne Hoppenot**, a teacher at Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart, Princeton, New Jersey is the 2017 recipient. Anne does extensive work creating a cultural exchange between students in Princeton and communities in Haiti.

***SAVE THE DATE!***

***Annual Gala Event—Sunday, Sept. 10, 2017, 3-8 pm***



Please be sure and visit our SBS website **KatharineDrexel.org**, Facebook pages of **Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament** and **National Shrine of Saint Katharine Drexel** and share the "Good News" happening in your parish and how you celebrate the life of Saint Katharine.

**Next Circle will have info about our new residence and how we continue the "Gift of the Moment".**



## *Featured Parish:* **Saint Katharine Drexel Parish - Sioux Falls, SD**

by Fr. Tschakert,  
Jennifer Hartmann Maturi

In **February 2004**, then-Bishop Robert Carlson (now Archbishop of St. Louis) announced the formation of a ninth Catholic parish in the city of Sioux Falls, SD, to be named St. Katharine Drexel Parish. Bishop Carlson chose St. Katharine Drexel as patroness of the new parish not only because she was recently canonized, but because of her connection to South Dakota and her service to the Native American people who lived there.

In 1922, Fr. Sylvester Eisenmann, a Benedictine priest, traveled to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament motherhouse in Pennsylvania to plead for assistance. Fr. Eisenmann served as pastor in Marty, SD, a small and very poor town which served as a meeting place for the Yankton Sioux tribe. Fr. Eisenmann was not seeking financial aid, however; what he needed was teachers for the small school in Marty. Upon hearing his sad story, Mother Katharine Drexel was moved to tears because she felt she could not spare any of the sisters to go and teach at the school. Fr. Eisenmann asked if he might gather the sisters and relate to them what it was like to work with the young Sioux children who were eager to learn, but had no teachers. Mother Drexel granted his request and although there were several sisters who were eager to help at the mission if they could be spared, she held fast in her refusal to allow any of the sisters to go. Fr. Eisenmann made one final plea—he asked Mother Drexel to think and pray about his request for one more day before giving him a final answer. She agreed.



When Fr. Eisenmann met with Mother Drexel the next afternoon, he was delighted to hear that she had changed her mind. She assured him that within two months' time, three Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament would arrive at the small school in Marty to teach. True to her word, Mother Drexel soon arrived at the St. Paul Mission in Marty with three of the sisters. It was a small but clean wooden house where twenty young Yankton Sioux children came to learn. Fr. Eisenmann called them his "bronzed angels." Within a few months, Fr. Eisenmann had plans for an elementary school and a high school to be built from materials he had salvaged. These were inexpensive but solid structures which housed enthusiastic students.

When Mother Drexel returned to the St. Paul Mission two years later, she was delighted to find that the school and mission had flourished. There were now 180 boarding students and more than 20 day students filling every nook and cranny of the building. She was also pleased to find that the principal of the school was a former student of St. Michael's (St. Michael's was a country home owned by the Drexel family which later became a school.)

Within a few brief years, there were more than four hundred Native American children at St. Paul's Mission. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament had provided 23 sisters to teach at the mission. Upon returning to the motherhouse after one of her visits to Marty, Mother Drexel thanked God for giving Fr. Eisenmann the opportunity to speak to the sisters and ask for their assistance. The result was one of the most productive of all missionary efforts among Native Americans and Mother Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament were proud to have played an important role in its success.

Later, Mother Drexel provided the first superior for a Diocesan Order of Religious Sisters who would be called the Oblate Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. The first sisters were drawn from Native American families. Several of these sisters still live and minister in Marty.

Mother Drexel and her ministry continue to guide our parish daily. What started as a community of 385 families worshipping in a Protestant church and a school gym for the first four years of existence has now grown to a vibrant, active parish of 885 families worshipping in a beautiful church and supporting a Catholic school of approximately 170 students in preschool-6<sup>th</sup> grade. The large rose window above the front doors of our church is centered on an image of St. Katharine Drexel. A statue of St. Katharine Drexel with two children occupies a prominent spot in our Gathering Space. Children who visit our Parish Food Pantry with their parents are often seen patting those children on the head. In fact, the glasses originally worn by the statue of St. Katharine Drexel have been replaced several times after being broken off by children who were over-eager to touch the statue.

Following the example of our patroness, our parishioners strive daily to reach out to those less fortunate in our community. We maintain a **Parish Food and Diaper Pantry**, which handed out 1,351 bags of groceries and 2,635 packages of diapers in 2016. Our **St. Vincent de Paul Conference** regularly meets with families in need to provide assistance with rent, utilities, food and other needs. Our parishioners serve supper once a month at the **St. Francis House**, an emergency shelter and transitional home in Sioux Falls for the homeless. We also serve a meal monthly at The **Banquet**, a local organization offering free meals to anybody who cannot afford to feed themselves and/or their family.

Each Advent, members of our **Social Ministries Committee** set up our Advent Angel Tree and decorate it with gift tags on which are written items needed by various charities in our community. This year, our parishioners took nearly 500 tags from the tree and purchased gifts and gift cards in support of the **Children's Inn** (a shelter for domestic abuse victims), the **Bishop Dudley Hospitality House** (a homeless shelter named for a former bishop of our Diocese), **Volunteers of America** (in support of local veterans), and the St. Francis House. Our parish also gathers a collection of paper products, diapers, laundry soap, and hygiene products for distribution by the sisters at Marty.

Each August, our parish takes its turn in supporting the **Perpetual Adoration Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament** (known as the "Red Sisters" because their habits are red) housed at St. Joseph Cathedral. We supply them with many food and toiletry items, as well as gift cards, stamps, and other sundries.

The students of our school also follow carefully in the footsteps of their school's patron saint. This past December, the students listened to and learned from a story their principal shared with them. After hearing the story of a boy who gave his own toys to another child who had nothing for Christmas, the students wanted to help others and launched a spur-of-the-moment toy drive. The students brought their very gently used toys (some new) to be donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army, and their parish outreach program for families in need. The response and effort overwhelmed the principal. The toys were packaged up and delivered to the various ministries for distribution before Christmas.



Also during Advent 2016, our school students waged a **Penny Wars** battle among the classes and raised \$1,665! The funds went towards the purchased of new toys and gift cards for the Children's Inn and Children's Home Society of Sioux Falls.

As St. Katharine Drexel followed her parents' example of service and generosity to all in need, so our parishioners seek to follow her example. As she wisely told us, "If we wish to serve God and love our neighbor well, we must manifest our joy in the service we render to Him and them."

A number of years ago, in an explanation of the Beatitudes, Pope Benedict XVI said the best interpreters of the Beatitudes are the saints. He pointed to St. Francis of Assisi as one who embodied the expression "Blessed are the poor in spirit." In St. Katharine Drexel, our parish has found in our patroness a similar embodiment of detachment from material goods for the sake of God's Kingdom. The spirit of St. Katharine Drexel often pervades our parish meetings as we consider how we might share what we have been given with those who have little.

St. Katharine Drexel's image in our rose window over the front doors of our church reminds us that she is watching over us from her place in heaven. She urges us to ever greater awareness of God's providence and our response.



*"If we wish to serve God and love our neighbor well,  
we must manifest our joy in the service we render to Him and them."*

# From the Gift Shop...



**Cookbooks** still available—a great **Feast Day Gift!** A delicious way to travel in the footsteps of this Saint. Unique keepsake for anyone connected to SKD! Only \$15 each plus S&H.

**SKD Calendar—**  
Words of  
inspiration from

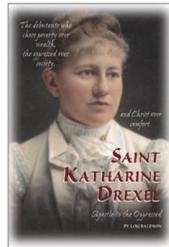
SKD for each day—use this  
calendar year to year! \$20 each  
plus S&H.



## SPECIAL OFFER!

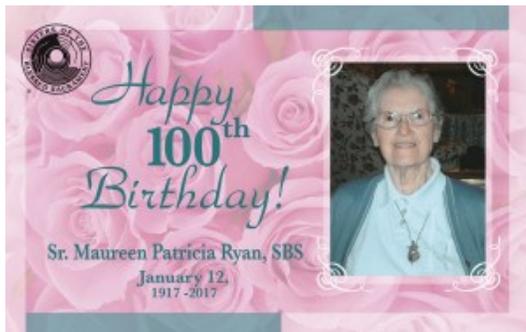
Biographies of SKD—  
one by Sr. Consuela  
Duffy, SBS, the other  
by Lou Baldwin. **Get  
both for only \$5  
plus S&H!**

Call for bulk orders.



Many more items—check online— anytime!  
Call **215-244-9900 x 324** or shop online at  
<http://www.saintkatharinedrexelgiftshop.org/>  
or email Joanne at [skdmissionshop@comcast.net](mailto:skdmissionshop@comcast.net)

## Honoring our Sisters.....



On January 12, 2017 the SBS celebrated the 100th Birthday of one of their own, **Sr. Maureen Patricia Ryan**, with a dinner in her honor at noon in St. Michael's Addition Parlor.

Sister Maureen Patricia enjoyed cake with her fellow sisters at the motherhouse and was **joined by three nephews from Ireland**, where she was born in 1917 to Thomas and Margaret Ryan. Her family had been awaiting this special occasion which was acknowledged with a **special proclamation from Ireland**. The room was a-buzz with well wishers, some media and special presentations from local Bensalem representatives. See photos at <http://tinyurl.com/100thSMP>

## Would you like to be a

## Featured Parish or School?

Please share news of your SKD Parish or SKD School with the **CIRCLE** that is nationwide.

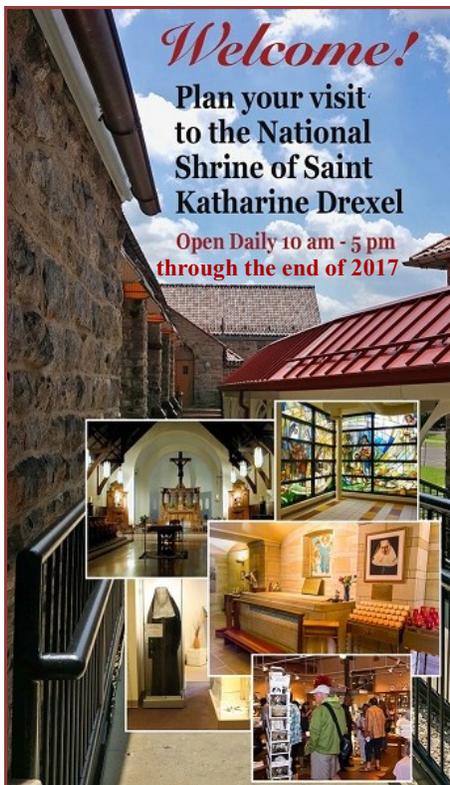
It is a terrific opportunity to let other SKDs learn about your work and mission while following in St. Katharine's footsteps. We learn and grow from each other's experiences. If you would like to be featured in the **May** OR the **August** Edition, please contact Martha Horton via the email/phone information on the last page. I look forward to hearing from you and will make the process very easy!!!

## Making a Pilgrimage

### The Shrine and Mission Center, in Bensalem, PA

is accepting reservations during 2017 for any group wanting to make a Pilgrimage to this beautiful and holy site that holds over 125 years of the history of our patroness and the religious order she founded.

There is so much to learn about Mother Katharine Drexel's early family life, her road to religious life and the founding of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. There is the chapel, several rooms with artifacts that were part of Mother Katharine's life, beautiful and peaceful grounds to walk and have time for reflection, plenty of space for a day retreat if your group would like a spiritual program and the special time to pray at her crypt.



**Welcome!**

Plan your visit  
to the National  
Shrine of Saint  
Katharine Drexel

Open Daily 10 am - 5 pm  
through the end of 2017

**This is an  
opportunity  
worth making  
happen.**

Call 215-244-9900 x380  
or email Tina at  
[skdshrine@comcast.net](mailto:skdshrine@comcast.net)

## *"Now the Work of Christmas Begins"*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with flocks,*

### *The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To visit the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music with the heart.*

*Composed by: Howard Thurman  
African-American theologian, educator and civil rights leader*

*"The extent of our love for another is measured, not so much by words  
of affection spoken, as by acts of kindness, which a loving heart prompts."  
~ St. Katharine Drexel*

**Honor Saint Katharine Drexel by living up to the Work of Christmas.  
So much of it is intertwined in her mission to uplift the forgotten and  
oppressed that we cannot honor her in any better way than to follow these  
guidelines in our everyday life. Prayer and Adoration complete her circle in  
my mind and hopefully with all of you as well.**

***Blessings on all who work with the forgotten and make a difference.***

## **Excerpts from MMK on Lent**

*In 1911, St. Katharine wrote to the Sisters at St. Catharine's, proposing that the Sisters undertake "to Fast interiorly.*

*\*To Fast from uncharitable thoughts and words,*

*\*To Fast from violations of silence*

*\*To Fast from unkind, ungentle, want of meekness in words to each other and the children*

*\*To Fast from being late at exercises*

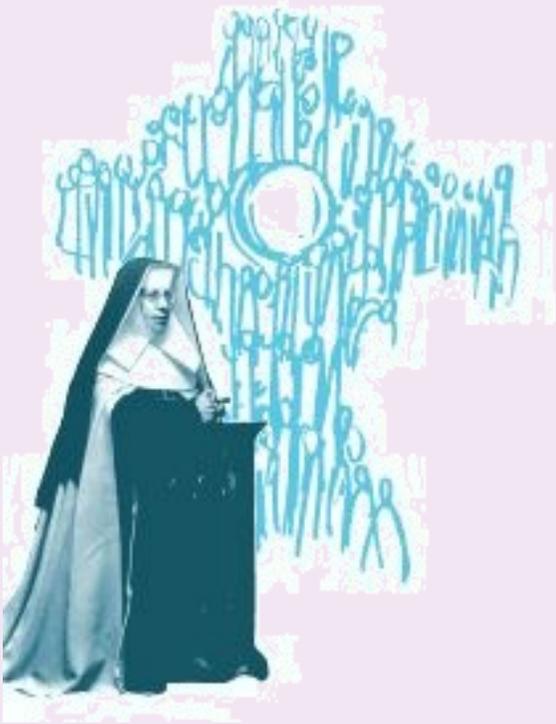
*\*To Fast from distractions at prayers or deliberate venial sin.*

*Then if there be failure in any of these to say a certain aspiration for each kind of failure in going around, or in the chapel without taking extra time, and offering these prayers for the souls in purgatory that they may aid and bless our old and new Missions. Won't you all join the Fast and penance?"*

*(WMMK #309)*

*These excerpts are taken from the **Writings of St. Katharine Drexel** found in the Archives of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, 1663 Bristol Pike, Bensalem, PA 19020*

*Compiled by Stephanie Morris, Ph.D., C.A.  
Director of Archives, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament  
June 30, 2016*



## **More Quotes:**

“O how great the thirst of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for souls.” ~ SKD

“I thank thee, My Jesus for finding time in the midst of all Thy sufferings to think of me, and to put fresh heart and Joy into me. It makes me feel ashamed I have done so little, but I will do all out of love for Thee.” ~ SKD

“Don't lose heart, try to do better each day.” ~ SKD

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