



## *Essential Evangelization*

### **St. Katherine Drexel**

It is not every day we celebrate the life and feast day of an American saint! Katharine Drexel was born in Philadelphia in 1858. She was a girl of great means and was fortunate to travel extensively. Her father was an international banker and spent a half hour in prayer each evening. And her mother opened her home to the poor 3 days a week. These were profound influences on her young life, but when Katharine nursed her stepmother through a three-year terminal illness, her life was changed forever. She saw that all the money in the world could not buy good health and relief from pain and suffering. Although she could have married, she gave her life to the Lord and also seven million dollars of her inheritance!

Katherine was always interested in the plight of the American Indians and the “colored”, and after three and a half years of training, she and her first followers founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored. She opened her first boarding school, and by 1942, Katherine had founded a system of black Catholic schools in 13 states, 23 rural schools and 50 missionary centers for the American Indian in 16 states. Her crowning achievement was the first Catholic university in the US for African Americans, Xavier University in New Orleans.

At the age of 77, Katherine suffered a heart attack, and was forced to retire and spend her remaining 22 years in a small room devoted to a life of intense prayer, “The patient and humble endurance of the cross – whatever nature it may be – is the highest work we have to do.” She died in 1955 and was canonized in 2000. Her feast day is this Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Saint Katharine Drexel Mission Center and her National Shrine are located in Bensalem, Pennsylvania.

*“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*

The words of Jesus from Today’s Gospel passage from Mark Chapter 6

*This is one of a series of articles on  
Evangelization from the  
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