Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;  
For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.  

MK 10: 43,45

walking with 
St. Katharine Drexel 
in the footsteps of Christ
Go into the whole world and tell the Good News  

*Mk 16:15*

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit.  

*Lk 10:1*

St. Katharine Drexel was much aware that the community she founded, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, was very small, the world was very large. Even limiting the fields cultivated for Christ, the Black and Indian people, the sisters were few and the harvest was great. The sisters, however, were little seeds planted in rich soil — the cultures of the two groups were imbued with spirituality.

As faith in Christ and his Church grew, Katharine foresaw new seeds sprouting up, maturing and scattering still more new seeds. She encouraged the sisters to call on their students as Christ called on his apostles and the seventy-two to go out and spread the Good News of God’s love for all people.

“It must be,” Katharine wrote, “that you depend on lay apostles to bring the Celestial Fireworks to the market. Jesus comes to ‘set fire on earth,’ and what will he but that it be enkindled? The school chapel where Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is really present becomes the immense factory to the Celestial Fireworks, and you the instruments to manufacture or develop lay apostles as living advertisements displaying … the qualities of these fireworks and as instruments distributing them and sending forth sparks to set them ablaze.”

St. Katharine herself worked with the NAACP and enlisted the help of her sister, cousins and two lawyer brothers-in-law to foster unity and justice. She encouraged the sisters to write letters to the president and to their congressmen.

This issue of MISSION celebrates the cooperative effort of the SBS and of lay persons in announcing and promoting the Good News. Associates of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament are featured. As they grow in personal holiness, they share in the mission, vision and values of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

ASBS sites are scattered through the North East, South, West and Far West. Some groups like New Orleans and Bensalem live close by Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament; others like Sugar Grove and Needles are a distance away. Each group, however, has a sister working with it. Sr. Annette Marie O’Donnell, once missioned in Sacaton, Ariz., keeps in touch with that group and two others — Needles, Calif., and Sugar Grove, Ill. Not at all afraid of modern media, Sister uses Skype, blogs and a personal internet site, as well as old fashioned telephone and mailings to keep in touch.

For Sr. Roland Lagarde, her ancestors and relatives, who early on promoted the mission of St. Katharine, were forerunners of the ASBS. Then a group of ASBS in Sugar Grove, led by the Scotts and the Fletchers managed a miracle with faith, perseverance and the help of the Holy Spirit. They got Sr. Consuela Marie’s Biography of Katharine Drexel republished!

What job does Christ want us to do? Where is he sending us?
Keeping Connected

You just can’t keep Sr. Annette Marie O’Donnell down. No longer responsible for religious education and scheduling of services for the five scattered parishes on the Gila River, Sister works for the Mission Center and is a Communications Department Assistant at the Motherhouse in Bensalem, Pa. Besides being responsible for M.C. special programs and printing brochures and fliers for different departments at the Motherhouse, she keeps up with three blogs, does workshops and directs a period of reflection on the Sunday’s liturgical readings. Doing research on St. Katharine Drexel’s writings, Sister created a small 12 page booklet, A Guided Retreat Based on the Spirituality of St. Katharine Drexel.

Using a free internet program, she developed a simple website http://faith-sharing.webs.com to advertise her offerings. “The advantage of a personal website is that adjustments can be made easily, e.g., I was able to cancel the Thursday evening class, “Women in the Bible,” by simply revising the website,” says Sr. Annette.

During her time in Sacaton, Ariz., besides being the Director of Religious Education, teaching a religious education class, training catechists, conducting occasional funerals, looking up baptismal dates from the records kept in the convent, Sister also began an Associates of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament group. Starting with four interested people, she met with them monthly teaching them about the charism of St. Katharine Drexel shared by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the charism they would embrace if they so choose.

When Father Dale Jamison, OFM, became Director of Native American Ministries in the Diocese of Phoenix, he assumed responsibility for the faith life of 11 far flung parishes. On a rotating basis a single priest would say Sunday Mass in each parish. Fr. Dale needed help.

The Phoenix area attracts a lot of retired people including priests. By recruiting them, he was able to provide Sunday Mass in each of the parishes. After Mass the generous volunteers drive back from the reservations to their homes, often quite a distance away.

Sr. Annette Marie, SBS, received permission to offer her services. When she came to live in the tiny house in Sacaton, she found the

Continued on p. 4
people to be very friendly. She recalls, “When the summer rains came down in torrents, my next door neighbor, who was Presbyterian, brought me candles. I was touched by that.”

Sister said she was impressed with the strong faith of the people in spite of receiving little assistance from the diocese. She credits the Sisters of St. Francis of Charity who run an elementary school, St. Peter’s in Bapchule, and once had a high school (closed now) for the reservations encompassed by the Phoenix diocese.

“The people they educated received a solid foundation in the faith,” claims Sister. “It is what now helps them to sustain that faith.”

When Sister left the Gila River Community to get needed medical attention, she devised a way to keep in contact with the ASBS. Through a monthly Skype meeting, the telephone and mailings, Sister keeps in touch with the Sacaton ASBS which now have 7 members.

In May 2013 Sr. Annette Marie traveled to Arizona to conduct the annual retreat preceding the ASBS’s renewed commitment. The commitment was made in Ak Chin, Ariz., in the new St. Francis of Assissi Church. It replaced a small much loved structure badly in need of repair.

Besides working long distance with the ASBS in the Southern Arizona, Sister also keeps in touch with groups in Needles, Calif., and in Sugar Grove, Ill. She recognizes that the ASBS are an extension of the SBS community; by their presence locally, they can carry out evangelization and witness to SBS values of unity and justice.

When asked why she extends herself so much, she replied, “My teacher in eighth grade taught meditation. I fell in love with Christ and wanted to share His love.”

Sister entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Boston, then later, drawn by Christ to the ministry of the Sisters of Blessed Sacrament, she got permission from both congregations and the Church to make the transfer. “I see it as a call within a call,” affirms Sr. Annette Marie.
While stationed in Sacaton, Sr. Annette Marie met Ramona Button, a member of St. Anthony Parish and now an ASBS. A farmer and business woman, Ramona is also a nurse who visits the elderly and monitors their physical condition. She often volunteers her skills as a cook for parish special events.

The ancestors of the Pima arrived in the Sonoran Desert at least 2,000 years ago. The Gila River provided an abundant source of water. Archaeologists found traces of primitive canals used by Pima farmers to successfully grow squash, beans, wheat and cotton long before contact with Europeans. Mission Fathers encouraged the Pima to dig deeper ditches and raise crops on the rich bottom lands of the river. By 1850 Pima farmers supplied military expeditions and migrants with food and fiber. Theirs was a sustainable agricultural economy.

Large numbers of migrants settled upstream. Pima water diminished cutting back their arable land to a few thousand acres. The US Supreme Court defended the Indians’ water rights, but local courts and Congress ignored the Supreme Court. Pima farming economy collapsed. Poverty followed.

By the late nineteenth century, with starvation hanging over them, many Pima became dependent upon government rations — mainly wheat flour, lard and sugar. The collapse of their farming system and dependence on unhealthy food led to a health disaster — the Pima developed the highest rate of diabetes in the WORLD!

In 1963 the National Institute of Health surveyed rheumatoid arthritis among the Pimas and the Blackfeet of Montana; they discovered an extremely high rate of diabetes among the Pima. Two years later, the Pima people volunteered to work with the NIH to study the cause and effects of the disease. They are still involved more than 45 years later. People all over the world are benefitting from the on-going results of this cooperative study.

After years of campaigning, in 2008, the Gila River Community finally won the largest settlement of Indian water-rights known. With abundant water once again, and healthier foods being grown, the fight against diabetes has gained an ally.

**RAMONA’S STORY** [http://www.ramonafarms.com](http://www.ramonafarms.com)

My father, Francisco ‘Chiigo’ Smith, an O’dham farmer, grew many traditional crops on my mother Margaret’s ten acre allotment located near Sacaton, on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Arizona. My mother was an herbalist and traditional healer. My father grew corn, chiles, tepary beans, various types of squash, gourds, Pima wheat, melons and sugar cane. Together, they taught me the value of our traditional foods to our daily nutrition and way of life.

My husband Terry and I began farming on that very same allotment in 1974. Our first crops were barley and alfalfa.
After expanding a few years later, by leasing land from my relatives and other community members, we added cotton, corn and wheat.

In the late 1970’s, some community elders asked us to grow the Bafv (tepary bean), which had nearly become extinct due to the lack of water that put many of the local subsistence farmers out of business. We discovered that my father had left a few seeds of the white and brown tepary beans in glass jars in a trunk in the old adobe house that I grew up in.

It became clear to us, especially with the urging of our community elders, that it was to become our mission to 'bring the bafv back' to the community. We were able to get started with those few seeds of each color and learned how to produce the beans on a small scale. Once we perfected our production techniques, we were able to develop our bean project into a larger enterprise and now market our beans in the local community and surrounding areas, in different colors and package sizes.

We also offer other wholesome American Indian grown traditional, heirloom and non-traditional food products. Welcome to Ramona Farms!

Button article taken from http://www.ramonafarms.com Used with permission.

Historical introduction: Sr. Mary Franceline Malone.

The world’s most drought tolerant domesticated bean. The tepary has a high protein content and a unique flavor. An ancient bean of the Akimel O’Odham and Tohono O’Odham tribes of the Sonoran Desert. History has traced these beans back to the ancient Huhukam People. Tepary beans were found in the Casa Grande Ruins, a prehistoric Huhukam structure in Coolidge, AZ. Tasty, easy to digest and probably the healthiest bean on the planet, the tepary bean is native to the Sonoran desert. Tepary beans have more protein and higher fiber than ordinary beans and a lower glycemic index (41-44) so they are a great energy food for dieters and diabetics. They digest slowly so you get sustained energy for up to 6 hours after eating them. They may be used in any bean recipes.
The principal means Mother Katharine used to help Negroes in the South and elsewhere focused on religious and educational efforts. In the 1930s racial justice and civil rights issues especially in the South drew her attention.

She urged the Sisters to keep her informed on interracial matters. She herself got involved.

In 1934 she joined the American Scottsboro Committee for the legal defense of the Scottsboro Boys, nine Black teenagers accused of rape in 1931. She urged the sisters to write to President Roosevelt about the case. Brought to trial with inadequate defense and denied an impartial jury, all but one were found guilty and sentenced to death. One of the accusers later recanted, but that did not free the youths. The case was considered a miscarriage of justice and finally led to the end of all-white juries in the South.

Mother Katharine encouraged religious superiors and SBS to listen to Father LaFarge’s Interracial Hour. She supported the Catholic Interracial Council which in 1959 (after her death) became the National Catholic Council for Interracial Justice. Later an SBS letter writing campaign and financial contribution supported the NAACP anti-lynching campaign.

NAACP.— Late in 1932 Walter White, the Executive Secretary of the National NAACP, was invited to visit the Motherhouse and shortly after he thanked Mother Katharine and the Sister of the Blessed Sacrament for … their “ready response to our plea” for a large contribution to underwrite an investigation of conditions in the Mississippi Flood Control Project.

This was a federal project to improve the system of levees along the Mississippi after the extensive flooding and damage in 1927. It was directed by the Army Corps of Engineers, but the laborers were contracted, housed and fed in camps operated by local Southerners. Reports reached the NAACP of conditions in the camps for Negroes which approached the return of slavery in matters of living conditions, garnishing of wages, excessive hours and extremely high prices for necessities. When White had sent out a plea for contributions, Mother Katharine initially gave him $1000 to support this investigation. Apart from some help from Mrs. Morrell, … he was apparently unable to raise much more.

As the investigation continued, Mother Katharine sent $1500 for the same project. White and his assistant, Roy Wilkins, continued to send regular reports to her. He wrote that they continued to gather information about work conditions in the camps set up for Negro workers on the levee construction, “all of this being made possible by Mother Katharine’s and Mrs. Morrell’s generosity.” When the investigation was complete, they sent reports on the strategies and setbacks encountered in getting a resolution through Congress.

“Thanks to your generosity and that of Mrs. Morrell, we have the means with which to enlist the support of a great many organizations…. Without your help we would never have done any of this.” [He gave an account of SBS contributions] to the investigation and legislative efforts, which resulted in the exposure and correction of the blatant discrimination and inhuman treatment against Negroes in these camps.

[After a later trip] White wrote that their earlier trip had found evidence of brutality, 70-100 hour work-weeks, and various charges against wages that left the men 10 cents an hour, an amount which was often kept from them. This time they found decent food and housing, the national norms of the forty-hour week at 40 cents an hour, with a government inspector present to check the payroll. They found evidence of brutality or intimidation at only one camp and they would file a complaint with the War Department about that.

“You and Mrs. Morrell through your generous contribution for this fight have given hope and opportunity to some 35,000 Negroes employed on this project…..” He regretted that she would not “…let the public at large know to whom we are indebted for the great accomplishment in getting decent working conditions and adequate wages for 35,000 workers.”
ASBS Pilgrimage 2013

Who do people say that I am? Who do you say that I am?

Mark 8:27

It is important to know who you are. If you don’t, people will try to make you into who they think you are.

Through Baptism you are a part of the Body of Christ. Know that. Let people see it.

Homilist: Fr. Jeffery Ott. O.P.

We followed St. Katharine’s steps in New Orleans. Now we bring home her love for all God’s people.

Thanking the Associates for their chapel donation, Pres. Norman Francis said financing its construction was like having the St. Katharine Drexel Chapel on layaway.
If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? Lk 12:28

The future is in God’s hands. We prepare, but accept what God does. God does not want us to worry.

Homilist: Deacon Harold Vincent

How do we promote devotion to our Lord?

A pilgrimage is different from a trip. It is a journey to find God.

If you can use anything, Lord, you can use me.

Two salesmen set up shops in a place in Africa where nobody wears shoes. One saw a lack of opportunity and failed. The other saw possibilities and succeeded.

Perspective is everything. It determines our actions.

God qualifies those who are called. God does not call the unqualified.

If you can use anything, Lord, you can use me.

Keynote: Father Jeffery Ott, O.P.
To trace the hand of God in human affairs, we turn to private lives. We watch for signs of God’s presence in His elect. Some scarcely known servants are my ancestors and family members. It seems a paradox to call them scarcely known when they were well known throughout New Orleans and beyond. What may be scarcely acknowledged are their connections to St. Katharine Drexel.

Prof. Medard Hillaire Nelson, my maternal great-grandfather studied for the priesthood in France. The oldest of 13 children, he was forced to leave the seminary to care for his siblings when his parents died.

With his education and command of seven languages, he opened a private school in the French Quarter on Burgundy Street in New Orleans. He taught his children, grandchildren and all persons, black and white. Professor Nelson taught Italian immigrants with Mother Cabrini. When Mother Juliette Gaudin of the Sisters of the Holy Family needed help, he established their first orphanage.

It was my great-grandfather who suggested to Archbishop Blenk of New Orleans that he encourage Mother Katharine Drexel and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to come to work among the Negro Catholics in his archdiocese. He spoke to Mother Katharine about the need for Catholic higher education for Negroes. Ultimately, he became a member of the Board of Directors who helped to establish Xavier University.

One of his daughters, Mary Nelson Francis, taught sewing and embroidery at Xavier Prep. Mother Katharine took her students’ embroidery to display at the Motherhouse.

The son of Emile and Mary, Nelson Francis, a graduate of Corpus Christi, Xavier Prep, Xavier University and the University of Indiana (MA in Music), was a multi-talented musician. He played the violin, viola and cello in the Xavier Prep and Xavier University orchestras. For many years he taught music at Xavier Prep and briefly at Corpus Christ School. (I was in the Xavier Prep Chorus under his direction.) At Xavier University, he took leading roles in several grand operas. He sang in Corpus Christi’s adult choir and was a member of the New Orleans Black Chorale.

Agnes Gabriel Lagarde, my mother, taught in St. Katharine School, named after Mother Katharine. She met Mother Katharine when her mother Angelina Nelson Gabriel, Prof. Nelson’s daughter, registered her for the seventh grade at Xavier Prep. After completing high school and normal school at Xavier, she taught school in St. Charles Parish.

Mother Katharine asked Sr. Grace, in charge of the normal school, to ask Agnes Gabriel and Laura Seraphin, her two angels, to open a two-room school, St. Ann, in Malette, La. The Malette children called Mother Katharine, La Bonne Mere, “the good mother.” Fifty years later, I was missioned to St. Ann Parish in Malette. I met several persons who remembered when my mother and Laura taught there in the early 1930s.

A number of my other relatives including my father Roland Lagarde were connected to Mother Katharine and the SBS. Cecelia Lagarde Broussard taught in the rural schools in Louisiana. Onelia Gabriel Sarpy was Xavier’s first registrar. She served Xavier University for 42 years in several capacities. These scarcely known servants could be called, “Pioneer Associates of the Sisters of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.”

Abridged from speech given by Sr. Roland Lagarde to the Associates in New Orleans, June 21, 2013
ASBS Leadership
Embraced by Members

During the Associates of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Pilgrimage in June 2012 to Xavier University in New Orleans, Sr. M. Norbert Moline, ASBS Co-Director, passed the leadership baton on to her Co-Director, Carole Blank who now assumes the role of Director. To work with her are two Assistant Directors, Joan Chisholm and Joyce Page.

The transfer of leadership took place in the XU auditorium packed by ASBS from North, South, East and West. Southern ASBS organized the local details of the pilgrimage and played host to their sisters and brothers, new not only to the university, but to New Orleans as well.

When the new ASBS team presented Sr. M. Norbert with a gift expressing appreciation for her 16 years as Director of the Associates, 180 ASBS filled the air with resounding applause.

Sister later wrote in the ASBS Newsletter, “This journey together, God’s gift, has been blessed because of your great dedication, your witness to growing in God’s Spirit and your reaching out in love and service to others…. My journey with you has always been very special, a mutual sharing of God’s call.”
In 1949 I was a senior in high school. Believing Christ was calling me to be a religious, I wrote to several congregations, including the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Only one Sister sent me a personal letter and a telephone number to call for an interview — Sr. Consuela Marie.

I called, had the interview. A friend later asked what I intended to do after graduation. I heard myself saying, “I think God wants me to be a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament!”

When I was a postulant and first-year novice, Sr. Consuela Marie was vocation director and editor, writer and photographer of Mission Fields at Home (later shortened to MISSION). Learning that I had some artistic talent, Sister asked me to do a few illustrations for the magazine. Wow!

Her enthusiasm for our SBS vocation and her desire to promote our ministry was an inspiration. We novices looked forward to each issue of Mission Fields at Home.

Sr. Consuela Marie was born in 1899 and grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y. After high school, she received a BA summa cum laude from St. Joseph College in Brooklyn in 1921, then a Masters from Fordham Institute of Professional Writing in 1922. Her studies included Latin, history and English. On Oct. 15 that year, she entered the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Having already earned a post-graduate degree, as a postulant she began teaching at Holy Providence, a boarding school at the Motherhouse. After profession of vows, Sister taught at Xavier Prep and at Xavier University in New Orleans and St. Francis de Sales in Rock Castle, Va. In 1938 she was called to the Motherhouse to teach the apostolines, many of whom had come from Ireland, in Blessed Sacrament High School.

Until 1937 Mother Katharine had been Superior General of the congregation. When a severe heart attack incapacitated her, Mother M. Mercedes was elected as the second SBS Superior General. In 1940 she decided to bring back Mission Fields at Home (established as a magazine in 1928, then becoming a newsletter) as a magazine. Sr. Consuela Marie, who became editor of the newsletter in 1939, now became the editor of the magazine.

Being editor meant visiting our mission sites, writing the articles, recording scenes with the camera, typing, designing a layout and getting the magazine off to the printer. When the cartons arrived back, the editor or her helper if she had one used a machine with metal address plates to individually address each magazine. Next came the job of sorting them according to P.O. regions, originally without zip codes! Then off they went to the U.S. Post Office and from thence to all over the United States, a few even crossing the ocean.

To add variety to an issue, Sister often wrote a poem to fit the season. Articles about the cultures and crafts of the people demonstrated her skill in historical research. Sister held the job from 1939 until 1953 when she returned to Xavier University.

Meanwhile, in those days, the magazine editor was also the moderator of the National Alumni and vocation director, giving talks, writing letters. In 1961 she earned an M.A. in Theology from Notre Dame University.

The copywrite date on Katharine Drexel, a Biography is 1966. When did Sr. Consuela Marie find time to do all the research and to write it in such a way that it still is hard to put it down?
I am excited about the reprinting of Sr. Consuela Marie’s book. That book is near and dear to my heart, because prior to reading that book in the 1960’s, I had never met a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament, or knew who St. Katharine was. That book brought me to the SBS.

I have journeyed with Gary and Kathy Scott since 2010 encouraging them to trust that God will provide for the reprint of this book and brainstorming on sources of funding. We knew the SBS did not have extra money to spend on the printing. I saw the book last April while I was in Sugar Grove. It is beautifully done.

The Advisory Council for the Associates of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament voted to contribute $4,000 toward the reprinting from the proceeds from the Pilgrimage. I contributed a small portion, and Gary and Kathy raised the rest of the money from their parishioners and Gary’s dentist.

God is good. When He sees that we are trying, and we ask His help, He truly listens. We never expected to receive such an outpouring of contributions from the St. Katharine Drexel Parish. I pray that St. Katharine will intercede for special blessings on Gary and Kathy and Maxine and Randy Fletcher and all of the parishioners in Sugar Grove.

Carole Blanks, ASBS Director

Thanks to the untiring efforts of ASBS Gary and Kathy Scott and Randy and Maxine Fletcher from St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Sugar Grove, IL, Sr. Consuela Marie Duffy’s biography of Katharine Drexel has now been republished. They have spent the last three years working on this project. Randy, an alumnus of the University of Missouri, works in the book industry. He and Maxine financed the retyping of the text into digital format by the University of Missouri press, Mizou Media. With moral support of the ASBS, SBS, the parish and pastor, they all invested heart and treasure willingly in this important project for the Sisters and the Church. Speaking at Sunday Masses, they successfully raised funds to cover the printing costs for 2,500 copies of the book. The new edition updates readers on the canonization of St. Katharine in 2000 as well as a new cover featuring Sr. Lurana Neely’s collage found in the back of St. Elizabeth’s Chapel. Randy now is creating a business plan for marketing the book. Gary, meanwhile, is exploring conversion of the print version to an e-book for the younger reading audience.
The youngest of three children, Amy was born in Hazleton, Pa. She was baptized in St. John Nepomucene in nearby Freeland. It was there she received the sacraments and found a spiritual home during her school years. While a senior at Freeland High School, she felt attracted to religious life. She contacted the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, but was advised to work a year, to pray and evaluate whether her desire really was a call from God. Believing her call to be authentic, Amy arrived at the front door of St. Elizabeth Convent on Sept. 1, 1971. She was received as a novice on Aug. 31, 1972. During her preparation for vowed life, Sr. Amy took classes at Holy Family and Chestnut Hill Colleges. In her second year as a novice she worked at Eastern State School and Hospital, hoping for a ministry in nursing. On pronouncing the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on Aug. 12, 1974, she was assigned to the House of Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans. A year later she moved to Hesed community, but continued as a full time student at XU. Before receiving a B.A. from Xavier in 1980, Sister was sent in 1977 to teach first grade at St. Elizabeth School, Chicago. In 1978 she returned to Xavier as a full time student, then in 1979 Sister was sent to San Carlos, on the Apache Reservation. She was assigned to All Saints in Harlem, N.Y., in 1983. In 1988 she was back in New Orleans, teaching at St. Monica School. She later taught at St. Michael Indian School in Arizona, then in Philadelphia, Pa., and Birmingham, Al., where she continued teaching for 10 years. By the end of that time, her hip was causing a limp. She moved to the Motherhouse, got training and a job helping elderly people with transportation and other assistance. Meanwhile, after consulting her doctor, she was eventually scheduled for a hip transplant. During July 2013, she successfully had the operation, was healing well, went to therapy and returned to St. Michael Hall to continue therapy. In a wheelchair, she came to Mass, dinner and supper where she enjoyed chatting with the sisters. She was looking forward to returning to her job. On Saturday morning, Aug. 24, the nursing aide brought Sister her breakfast and when she collected the trays later, Sister seemed fine. When, however, she did not come to the nurses’s station for her medications, the aide went to her room. There she found Sister already dead, as confirmed by the registered nurse on duty. A blood clot caused her sudden death.

Mary Gertrude Wilson was born in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Her mother died of influenza three weeks later. Baby Mary was sent to live with her aunt and uncle. She was baptized, made first communion and was confirmed at St. Vincent de Paul Church, and her education began in the parish school. Later she transferred to St. Benedict School. Mary attended Hallahan High School for two years. She became an apostoline on Sept. 8, 1935, at the Motherhouse in Bensalem, then a postulant on Sept. 2, 1936. After completing her secondary education at the Motherhouse in 1937, on Aug. 9th, she was received as a novice and became known as Sr. Mary George. Soon after she started her college studies at the Motherhouse’s Villanova Extension. She eventually received her BA in Education from Villanova and an MA from Northern Arizona University. Meanwhile, she prepared for her big day, the day when she gave herself to God through the profession of vows on Aug. 9, 1939. Her educational ministry stretched from second grade through high school, specializing in home economics. She taught in New Orleans and in Lake Charles, La., New York City, N.Y., Cleveland, Ohio; Marty, S.D.; Santa Fe, N.M.; and at last in St. Michael High School, on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, where she spent 27 years. Her home economics classes, especially in cooking, were popular with the students, particularly with the boys who enjoyed eating their studies. After retiring from teaching, she remained there for three years, then left in 2003 for St. Michael Hall at the Motherhouse. Her sense of humor brought many a smile to the sisters and nurses. Over the years her physical and mental condition deteriorated. She was on Hospice Care only one night. Surrounded by praying sisters and relatives, Sr. Mary George died peacefully the following morning.

I fear suffering, but not if it is dealt out by the God of Mercy
Who will not make me bear what is above my strength.

St. Katharine Drexel
Sr. Maura Treacy  
December 13, 1921 - July 16, 2013

Born in Mountmellick, Eire, Mary Margaret Treacy was baptized four days later in the local church. In a few years her brother Thomas was born. Before she was five years old, both of her parents died. She subsequently went to live with her aunt who owned a pub/restaurant. Mary was confirmed on March 14, 1931, in Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Portarlington. She received her early education in Norrette National School. When old enough to travel by bus, she finished primary school and two years of high school at the Presentation Convent in Portlaoighise.

In 1939, Mary joined a group of other young women on an ocean liner heading for America so they could become Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. After finishing high school as an apostolate at the motherhouse in Bensalem, she entered the convent as a postulant on Aug. 28, 1941. The following year on Aug. 25, she became a novice and received the name Maura. On July 16, 1944, Sister made the total gift of herself to Christ by vowing poverty, chastity and obedience. Her first mission was Corpus Christi in New Orleans. In 1946, Sr. Maura became a U.S. citizen. Except for six years at St. Ignatius in Philadelphia, four years at St. Edward in Cleveland and three at St. Michael Indian School in Arizona, her ministry was in New Orleans: Epiphany, St. Monica, Holy Ghost, St. Peter Claver, Ursuline Academy and at Xavier Prep where she taught religion and later was a counselor. Sister received a B.S. in education from Villanova in 1951, a diploma for teaching the Visually Handicapped from Catholic University in 1953 and an M.A. from Xavier University in 1970.


Sr. Marie Sullivan  
June 22, 1927 - August 17, 2013

Marie and her twin sister Margaret were born in Pittsburgh, Pa., and baptized on July 10, 1927, at St. Basil Church in the Garrick area of the City. It was at St. Candice Parish in Pittsburgh that the twins attended elementary school, made their first communion and were later confirmed. Both graduated from St. George High School in 1945. After graduating they applied for a job at Manufactures Light and Heat and were hired on the condition that they would work in different offices. Attracted to religious life, Marie wrote to Extension Magazine for names of congregations dedicated to the African American apostolate. She and her sister were advised by a priest to contact the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

On Sept. 8, 1946, Marie and her twin entered the convent. At her reception as a novice on July 16, 1947, Marie became known as Sr. Maria Gratia. On July 16, 1949, she pronounced her first vows. While in the novitiate Sister began her college work at the SBS extension of Villanova University. Although the twins were assigned to different missions, they both graduated from Villanova in 1957. In 1969, Sr. Maria Gratia earned a master’s degree from St. John College in Cleveland. Sister Marie’s (returned to her baptismal name) mission life took her to New Orleans, La.; Beaumont, Texas; Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; Philadelphia and Bensalem, Pa.; Washington, D.C.; New York, N.Y.; St. Louis, Mo.; Macon, Ga.; Chicago, Il.; Ft. Pierce, Fl.; Old Laguna (this was the first time she and her twin were missioned together), Santa Fe, and Shiprock, N.M.; St. Michaels and Pinon, Ariz.; Los Angeles, Calif., and Birmingham, Al. In 2006, Sr. Marie suffered a stroke which brought her to St. Michael Hall. Her twin, Sr. Margaret, assigned to St. Elizabeth a bit later, helped care for her. Sr. Marie died at St. Michael Hall on August 17, 2013.

MISSION magazine

Due to fiscal restraints imposed by the financial downturn which has affected the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as it has many of our readers, MISSION will be issued only **TWICE** a year. The subscription remains $10/year.

Thank you for understanding. We hope you will continue with us.
The smiles on Letisha Miller, Sr. Christine Smith and Tiffani Blake radiate the joy felt by Associates and Sisters as they gathered at Xavier University in June for the Associates of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament 2013 Pilgrimage to New Orleans, La. Many of the Associates enjoyed their first experience of the N.O. cuisine and culture. They also became familiar with the XU campus, SKD chapel and the work being done by the faculty there. A tour through the city took in the sites touched by St. Katharine Drexel’s concern for Black people’s right to faith, education and justice.