Dear Friends of St. Katharine Drexel,

In the name of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament I send greetings to each of you in this first “e-mail communication” to those whose parish and/or school bears the name St. Katharine Drexel.

What a wonderful idea this is to join with others in sharing and proclaiming good news, especially the good news of the Gospel. Mother M. Katharine when excited would say, “Holy Angels”!! Angels we know are messengers from God who bring good news. Your e-mail communication network is a type of modern “angelic” sharing! It is exciting!!

May God bless all your wonderful endeavors. “I looked up in wonder at God’s wonderful ways and thought how little we imagine what might be the result of listening and acting on a desire He puts into the heart ...” SKD.

Sr. Patricia Suchalski, SBS
President

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**Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament – Powerhouse of Prayer**

*Sister Ruth Catherine Spain* is a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament who grew up in the Philadelphia area. During Sister’s many years as a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament her ministry has taken her to Chicago, IL; New Orleans and New Iberia, LA; Philadelphia, PA. Sister served as a musician, teacher, parish minister and within those roles all talents were used. Sister was a great producer of school plays and musicals. For years Sister Ruth Catherine worked tirelessly on the Canonization process of Saint Katharine Drexel.

Now Sister is living at Saint Michael Hall where she is still ministering as one of the “powerhouse of prayer” members. Sister is the “Prayer Sister for the Saint Katharine Drexel Parishes”. She will be and has been praying for you and now you have a new prayer partner. Sister, since she is not one to retire, spends a few hours daily in our Mission Center Gift Shop greeting visitors as well as making the shelves look more organized.
Saint Katharine Drexel was born Catherine Mary Drexel, on November 26, 1858, in Philadelphia, PA. She was named after Catherine Hookey Drexel, the mother of her father, Francis A. Drexel, a wealthy banker and son of an Austrian immigrant, Francis Martin Drexel. Her mother, Hannah Langstroth Drexel, died a short time later, on December 30, 1858. Kate had a three year old sister, Elizabeth Langstroth. Francis Drexel married Emma Bouvier in 1860 and welcomed a third daughter, Louise Bouvier Drexel.

The girls were home schooled, not only in letters and numbers and the social graces of a wealthy young lady, but in religion and social justice as well. After completing their sacramental preparations with the Religious of the Sacred Heart, the girls joined Emma in providing aid to the less fortunate of Philadelphia. Three afternoons a week, people in need came to their home and received aid in the form of rent payments, shoes, clothing or food. The girls also taught a Sunday school for the children of their servants. The family had “Soirées with the Saints” on Sunday evenings and prayed the Rosary together. They attended Mass at the Cathedral on Sunday.

The family’s strong circle was broken when Emma died on Jan. 29, 1883; Francis died Feb. 15, 1885. The family circle changed again when on Jan. 17, 1889, Louise married Edward Morrell, an attorney. On Jan. 7, 1890, Elizabeth married Walter G. Smith, also an attorney. Elizabeth died in childbirth, on Sept. 26, 1890; her child was still-born. Louise lived until Nov. 4, 1945; she did not have any children.

Earthly marriage was not for Kate; her spouse was to be a divine One. On Feb. 12, 1891, Catherine Mary Drexel pronounced her first vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as Mother Mary Katharine, foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

The combination of prayer and charitable activities that Emma had taught the girls laid a strong foundation for Mother Katharine’s work as the foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. For the community’s apostolate was to be a dual one – of prayer and work. Sister Catherine prepared for her first profession with the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh from 1889-1891, learning how to pray the Divine Office and other religious duties, and how to perform the many tasks in the manifold apostolates she would undertake. Returning to the Philadelphia area Mother Katharine opened the former Drexel summer home in Torresdale as the first Novitiate and temporary Motherhouse. Then, in 1892, Mother Katharine and her new congregation moved to the motherhouse in Bensalem. Preparation for their ministry among Blacks and Native Americans continued.

Stephanie Morris, Ph.D., C.A. (Certified Archivist)

Director of Archives, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
“St. Katharine’s Circle” holds many hopes.
Here are just a few:

“Just as the Blessed Mother is mother to us all, we pray the St. Katharine Drexel’s patronage will unify her namesake parishes in a familial bond that will inspire us to serve God and all of His people. As St. Katharine said, “Press forward and fear nothing.”
Sent in from: St. Katharine Drexel Parish, Martell, California (www.stkathrinedrexel.com)

“Our hope is that the newsletter will, by linking her namesake churches, schools and other organizations, become a beacon of light shining on the extraordinary accomplishments of Saint Katharine Drexel during her lifetime. As such, it could be a source of renewed enthusiasm for participating in similar activities within our own faith communities.”
Sent in from: Saint Katharine Drexel Mission Church, PO Box 64 Maple, NC 27956

“St. Katharine’s Circle will be a great way to hear what other St. Katharine Drexel Schools around the nation are doing. She was a wonderful woman and role model. Our students and staff strive each day to be as prayerful and generous as St. Katharine was. May God bless you all!
Sent in from: St. Katharine Drexel School, 1800 S. Katie Ave. Ste 2 Sioux Falls, SD 57106
Saint Katharine Drexel Mission Church, Maple, NC

The old saying, “there is safety in numbers” may be true but when the Spirit is moving people to spread the Good News it is not the number of people that is important but rather their openness, dedication, humility and determination to succeed. This mission church is an example of how these qualities along with innumerable volunteers and peoples’ generosity and sacrifice can produce the environment to hear, spread and live the Word of God.

Currituck County, NC had no Catholic Church within the county and the Diocese of Raleigh wished to change that. It was January 1, 1995 that the Diocese established this as a “Station”. Worship was held in clubhouses, senior centers and even the open field which was to become the site of the actual mission building. Beginning with 12 families and growing to 50 families by 1999, a building campaign was initiated to convince the Diocese of Raleigh that they had the means to construct and maintain a multipurpose building in Maple, NC where the Diocese owned several acres of land. Through years of fundraising and grant writing over $300,000 was raised.

On December 22, 2002, the first Mass was celebrated in the new Mission Church. The church was dedicated on March 3, 2003 the Feast Day of Our Patroness. It was and remains the first and only Catholic Church in the history of Currituck County.

How was the name chosen?

During pre-construction planning, many meetings were held with the Diocese and the Diocesan Vicar, Msgr. Jerry Lewis asked if a name had been chosen. He suggested that consideration be given to St. Katharine Drexel as a possibility particularly since she was the most recently canonized American Saint and worked with her Sisters to help educate the poor in the south and west. It was reviewed and found to be the name of choice. The pastor was Rev. John Gillespie whose family was from the Philadelphia area. He wrote to Bishop Gossman at the time, who approved of the name and commented, “Great Choice.”

Holy Family Catholic Church is the mother parish in Elizabeth City, NC. The current Pastor is Rev. Vic Gournas and he has a priest of Hispanic origin who assists with the Saturday evening Mass said in Spanish. Father Vic says the 8am Mass on Sunday. All staff are volunteers except for the Faith Formation Program and bookkeeping. In 2009, a new portable classroom building was purchased and installed behind the church and provides space for Faith Formation Classes, a food pantry and other parish activities. A beautiful Memorial Garden was constructed in the rear of the property in honor of the Blessed Virgin, Mary. The number of families this Mission Church serves fluctuates around 100.

Outreach continues in many areas of support within this agricultural community at all times of the year but particularly at Thanksgiving and Christmas making up baskets for those in need, having an Angel Tree and support to the migrant community. The mission contact and historical accountant is Tom Scott and we thank him for this glimpse of the timeline, building and pictures of one part of St. Katharine’s Circle.
Upcoming Important Dates:

**Foundation Day** – February 12 (1891): The founding of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Novena Tea** – February 20, 2014  2 pm – 4 pm at the Mission Center to prepare ourselves for the Novena leading up to the Feast Day celebration.

**Novena** – February 22 to March 2

**Feast Day** – March 3  The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament will celebrate the Feast Day of Saint Katharine Drexel on Sunday, March 2, 2014. Following the Feast Day Mass a Presentation of the Saint Katharine Drexel National Justice Award will be presented to: Katie Sullivan and Matthew Johnson

– National Coordinators National Franciscan Volunteer Ministry of Franciscan Holy Name Province, NY

From the Communications Coordinator

We hope all who read *St. Katharine’s Circle* will be enlightened, enriched, and will strive to incorporate St Katharine’s life mission into their own lives and families. When we look at St Katharine’s complete gift of self to do Our Lord’s will and be an Apostle to the Oppressed, we must focus on what will guide us in our lives, schools and parishes to bring her mission into the needs of today. Sharing in this *Circle* we can assist, support and perhaps inspire one another to focus on keeping St Katharine’s mission alive and well, and far reaching.

It is the plan to feature a variety of articles that come from various parishes, schools and centers and to include historical facts along with news from the Mission Center and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. There is no doubt that St. Katharine will guide the direction of this endeavor to bring about a unity among all SKD entities and strengthen the fabric that brings us together.

**Accompanying this Newsletter is a copy of the St. Katharine Drexel Novena along with the song written in honor of St. Katharine by Lori R. Clark. It was performed in St Elizabeth’s Chapel in March, 2013 for her Feast Day and the National Justice Award. Both the Novena and song may be used in parishes and schools as her Feast Day approaches. Let us pray and rejoice together!**

Please contact **Martha Horton** with any news items about your parish or school or whatever connects you with the mission of St. Katharine Drexel. We look forward to having your participation.  

mhortonnewslink@yahoo.com/ (603) 545-8323.  Our next "St. Katharine's CIRCLE" is due out May, 2014.

Please send any information and/or comments no later than **March 15, 2014**.

Comment Corner:

Please add the Shrine and Mission Center’s web site to your parish bulletin or school information page if you are able to.  [www.katharinedrexel.org](http://www.katharinedrexel.org)  Watch for the updated web site coming soon!

Contact for The National Shrine and Mission Center -  [skdcenter@comcast.net](mailto:skdcenter@comcast.net)

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Lori R. Clark, Music teacher – Lyrics and music for song written in honor of SKD
Thomas P. Scott, Maple NC
Hail, Saint Katharine Drexel
Saint Katharine Drexel Regional Catholic School, Holland PA

Hymn Tune: Claudio
Lyrics by Lori R. Clark
written 2012

Come enter in ye students, Come enter to this school;
Come grow in faith and knowledge, Come learn the Golden Rule;
May we be always worthy our school to revere;
May we be always worthy our school to revere;

Self control and kindness are virtues we respect;
So we come before You, oh Loving God most dear;
Son, All glory to the Spirit, Most Holy Three in One. Pray for us Blessed Mary, Pray for us saints a

one day by day;
Til we are formed and reared to give back to the world.
Til we are formed and reared to give back to the world.

Follow the way of goodness;
And fondly think of these days whenever we are

Hail, Saint Katharine Drexel, We lift our song in praise;
As we go forth to serve and lead all of our days.
Day Nine: PRAYER AND WORK

The active life to be productive must have contemplation. When it (contemplation) gets to a certain height it overflows to active life and gets help and strength from the heart of God. This is the way the saints produced so much fruit, and we’re all called to be saints.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, model for the union of prayer and work, pray for us.

CLOSING PRAYER:

I wish to be one who conscientiously takes part in the unfolding of God’s plans, and eventually have a glorious part in the final unfolding of time into the glory of God’s Kingdom in heaven. If we are disciples of Jesus we shall be happy to spend ourselves and be spent for the salvation of souls.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, pray for us.

SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL
1858 - 1955

Born a wealthy, educated Philadelphia socialite of the late 19th century, Katharine Drexel could have made of life what she chose. Her choice came out of her strong Catholic faith and deep compassion for the poor and oppressed among Native and African Americans.

On February 12, 1891 she made her first vows as a religious, founding the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament dedicated to sharing the message of the Gospel and the life of the Eucharist. St. Katharine established many ministries among the poor and led a life devoted to Eucharistic prayer and outreach to the poor.

St. Katharine died on March 3, 1955 and was canonized on October 1, 2000. Her feast day is March 3rd.

Shrine of Saint Katharine Drexel
Open Daily 10 am to 5 pm with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament daily
All are welcome!

SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL
MISSION CENTER & NATIONAL SHRINE
1663 Bristol Pike, Bensalem, PA 19020
215-244-9900 (ext 402)
www.katharinadrexel.org

Printed with ecclesiastical approval.
OPENING PRAYER:

Ever Loving God, you called St. Katharine Drexel to teach the message of the Gospel and to bring the life of the Eucharist to the Black and Native American peoples.

By her prayers and example, enable us to work for justice among the poor and oppressed. Draw us all into the Eucharistic community of Your Church, that we may be one in You.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day One: EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is a never-ending sacrifice. It is the Sacrament of love, the supreme love, the act of love. Help me each moment today and always to communicate myself to You by doing Your will.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, lover of the Eucharist, pray for us.

Day Two: EVANGELIZATION

I looked up in wonder at God’s wonderful ways and thought how little we imagine what may be the result of listening and acting on a desire He puts into the heart. Nourish before Him great desires... May our desire be to bring Him hearts, for all are His by right, having been purchased by every drop of His blood.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, model for those who evangelize, pray for us.

Day Three: PEACE

Peacefully do at each moment what at that moment ought to be done. If we do what each moment requires, we will eventually complete God’s plan, whatever it is. We can trust God to take care of the master plan when we take care of the details.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, steadfast in trust, pray for us.

Day Four: SERVANT OF THE POOR

Kindness is the natural fruit of goodness of heart. He (Jesus) loved every human being as the image of God... and all that came within range of His benevolence were treated kindly for God’s sake and their own.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, lover of the poor, pray for us.

Day Five: SUFFERING OF CHRIST

Often in my desire to work for others I find my hands tied, something hinders my charitable designs, some hostile influence renders me powerless. My prayers seem to avail nothing, my kind acts are rejected, I seem to do the wrong thing when I am trying to do my best. In such cases I must not grieve. I am only treading in my Master’s steps.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, follower of the suffering Christ, pray for us.

Day Six: THE CROSS

(Christ) may be leading me out to a cross. If so, I can have no hesitation about following Him! I must follow Him closely, so that... I shall be near Him, my Good Shepherd, Who will help me to carry it, for He still bears His Cross in each one of His children.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, bearer of the cross, pray for us.

Day Seven: DEVOTION TO MARY

Teach me, O my dear Mother, the lesson of sacrifice. Help me, Mother, to take from the hands of Jesus, in the spirit of humble love, devotion to my daily crosses.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, daughter of Mary, pray for us.

Day Eight: BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

Out of our common todays and yesterdays we are building for eternity. No thought, no work of ours ever dies. We shall meet them all again, and in the world to come shall find our gathered harvest.

- St. Katharine Drexel

Brief pause for reflection

St. Katharine Drexel, woman of vision, pray for us.