

*Saint Katharine's CIRCLE*Quarterly Newsletter **Volume II, #4** November 2015**From the new President of the SBS:**

Leadership Team: (from left)  
 Sr. Jean L. Olmstead, Councilor; Sr. Jane Nesmith,  
 Vice-President; Sr. Donna Breslin, President;  
 Sr. Sandra Schmidt, Councilor.

In February 1891, St. Katharine Drexel, listening to desires God placed in her heart, professed her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and became the first Sister of the Blessed Sacrament. Today, we continue to vow ourselves to God through our congregation in a free and total gift of self. We remain faithful to the mission Christ has entrusted to us – to prayer and service among the Black and Native American people.

The Eucharist is at the heart of our Charism and Mission. Through the gifts of community and service, we are called to address the hungers of the world and to share the bread of our lives in a spirit of generosity, joy and gratitude. Our desire to effect unity and community among all peoples impels us to oppose all forms of prejudice, racism and oppression.

Since the beginning of our Congregation until today, we trust in God's faithfulness and goodness which continues to empower and energize us each day. Our spirituality is enriched and strengthened by partnering with diverse cultures of people who share their lives and love with us ~ a mutual blessing.

God Bless, **Sr. Donna Breslin, SBS**

**MY POPE MOMENT!**

I would like to share with each of you this priceless picture that I took at the Cathedral when Pope Francis celebrated mass for the priests and the sisters.

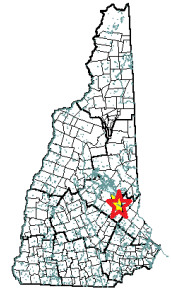
Imagine sitting in the fifth row from the back in the center aisle at the end of the pew. When Pope Francis walks into the Cathedral he is on my side where everyone could greet him. Now I'm standing with my I phone in my hand hoping to at least get a good shot. Well I not only took a good picture but Pope Francis literally STOPPED in front of me and looked directly at my phone, posed, smiled at me and lo and behold I took the picture. This was a once in a life time opportunity for me. As nervous as I was because of him being so close to me, I kept saying to myself, "press the camera button, press the camera button, press the camera button." Well, thank God I came out of my "brain freeze" and took the picture. After that experience I could have taken other pictures but I was so excited with the one I had that I forgot to take more pictures. I love taking pictures. However, this was one of those special moments in my life that made me realize that I had a beautiful picture that I will always treasure.



Eucharistic Blessings, **Sr. Lynn Marie Ralph, SBS**

## *Our Featured Parish:*

### ~ SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL PARISH ~ ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE *CELEBRATES CHURCH'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY*



On July 25 Saint Katharine Drexel Parish in Alton, New Hampshire, marked the tenth anniversary of their new church's dedication in 2005, an event that, at that time, symbolized the bringing together of Catholics in Alton, Alton Bay, Barnstead, Center Barnstead, Gilmanton Iron Works, Melvin Village, Mirror Lake, New Durham, Tuftonboro, Wolfeboro, and Wolfeboro Falls.

The Romanesque brick church building with its distinctive verdigris-green steeple replaced three churches that had served the Eastern Lakes Region of New Hampshire: Alton's Parish of Saint Joan of Arc, destroyed by fire in 2000; Wolfeboro's Parish of Saint Cecilia, a former barn now used as a theater by Brewster Academy; and Barnstead's Saint Paul's Church, a roadside mission of Saint Joan's. The original parishes dated back to the 1880s, when Saint Joan's was itself a mission church, first of Saint Leo's in Gonic, New Hampshire, and later of Saint Anthony's in Sanbornville. Saint Cecilia's was originally the Church of the Sacred Heart, but as the summer population of Wolfeboro—called "The Oldest Summer Resort in America"—grew, the church was moved twice—first to donated land on a side street in 1908, when it was dedicated Saint Cecilia's and later, in 1941, to a Main Street location.



Two years after the devastating fire at Saint Joan of Arc in 2000, the parishes were merged as Saint Katharine Drexel Parish, with Father George Ham as Pastor. In 2004 ground was broken for construction of a church on a site between Alton and Wolfeboro. Here "The House that Ham Built" would rise among the pines, incorporating Father Ham's traditional aesthetics as well as modern acoustics, lighting, floor plans, and technology. A pipe organ from a church in Massachusetts was installed, and stained-glass windows from Saint Cecilia's were put to new use. Because Saint

Joan's windows were lost in the fire, two new windows—a replica of the Saint Joan's "Rose Window" and a depiction of Saint Joan to match the depiction of Saint Cecilia—were commissioned. The new church was dedicated in 2005.

According to current Pastor Robert F. Cole, the new church has helped to unify the Saint Katharine community. He said, "The inspiring beauty and welcoming layout of the new church have helped to unify the nearly 3,000 local residents and summer visitors served each year by the original parishes."

(continued on next page)

The importance of the new church in unifying Saint Katharine Drexel Parish was celebrated on July 25 at a major community gathering that was the centerpiece of a summer-long series of events marking the anniversary.



The celebration began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter A. Libasci, followed by the blessing of the Stations of the Cross in a new “Prayer Grove” built by parishioners. Next came an extensive reception with food prepared by parishioners, followed by the first performance ever of the seven-movement “Saint Katharine Drexel Gloria” commissioned for the event, directed by composer Andy Campbell and performed by the Saint Katharine Drexel Choir and the Clearlakes Chorale. The new “Gloria” combines classical tradition and popular modern themes. The audience rose to its feet for a standing ovation for the performers and the parish.

Saint Katharine Drexel parish uses as its logo a rendering of the famous statue of Saint Katharine holding an African-American child and a Native American child. According to Father Cole, “We use that image to remind the community of our charitable mission. Our parishioners are very active in helping others, with 63 ministries working in the church and the community, plus programs helping missions in Navajo, NM and as far away as Haiti and Africa as well as our neighbor in need close to home. We love our church building, but more important is Saint Katharine’s example in serving others. Pope Francis talks about the Church as a ‘field hospital.’ Well, our church building is just our ‘base camp’ from which we conduct our mission of service to others.”



By: Deacon Candidate, **Rick Hilton**

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*“Charity means to live by the Spirit. If we love one another, God lives in us. There is no other practice that brings God into our lives than charity.”*

*M. M. Katharine*



## ANOTHER MOMENT FROM THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES:

By Lou Baldwin (with permission from [CatholicPhilly.com](http://CatholicPhilly.com))

As part of the Festival of Families celebration Sept. 26 on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, Amanda “Amy” Wall, a young adult from St. Bede the Venerable Parish in Holland, delivered a Bible reading from Hosea 11:1-9, which speaks of God’s unwavering love and forgiveness of Israel, despite its many transgressions. The passage is relevant to the world, to America and to the human family today because of how we so often stray from the ways of God.

In a way, Wall is an odd choice to deliver this particular message. Her own first experience in the loving mercy of God goes back to when she was 2 years old, an innocent toddler with no personal sins in need of forgiveness.

Born with profound hearing impairment, she was completely cured through prayer to then-Blessed Katharine Drexel for intercession before the throne of God. Her cure was the authenticated miracle cited for the 2000 canonization of St. Katharine.

Wall was presented to Pope John Paul II during the canonization ceremony and she still cherishes the memory of him kissing her on the head. Now she has the memory of being in the presence of another pontiff, Pope Francis. Wall credits the faith of her own family for the miracle. Her older brother Jack learned about miracles while studying for his first Communion, and he suggested they pray. Her sister Jeannie declared, “If Amy can’t hear I want to be deaf too.”

That scared their mother, Connie. Shortly before that the family had seen a television presentation of the life of Mother Katharine Drexel and they began to pray for her intercession. In just a short time a teacher in an early intervention program for deaf children noticed that Amy was actually hearing.

The trip to Rome for the canonization was really a highlight for the family and in a way, the lives of the three Wall children were altered forever. Drexel University, which was founded by Katharine Drexel’s uncle, Anthony Drexel, awarded all three kids full college scholarships when they came of age. Jack and Jeannie are already graduated and Amy is looking forward to graduation and perhaps a career in the human resources field.

Their mother, who was the spiritual core of the family, did not live to see this, and Amy believes without the scholarships probably none of them would have been able to go to college.

At times Wall feels a little bit of guilt about the miracle. “Why me?” she asks herself. “Why not other people?” Yet in her studies she has reveled in sound, learned French and Korean and developed a love for music. She is also studying American Sign Language so perhaps she can assist others who have not received the miracle of hearing.

Hearing is a gift that Wall appreciates, recalling a quote she heard: “God gave us two ears but only one mouth. It is more important to listen than to speak.”

Before her reading at the Festival of Families, Wall said she expected to be a little nervous because Jack and Jeannie were not standing beside her. “We always did things together,” she said. But she was wearing the little cross that belonged to her mother and that had been blessed by Pope John Paul II. It was given to her by Jack when she graduated from high school. “It’s like my mother will be there with me,” Wall said.



**2015 Gala Highlights:** October 10, 2015



The Gala honoring the canonization of St. Katharine Drexel echoed the joy of Pope Francis' message. The evening was a bit chilly as the people began to arrive, but the sun was still



shining. A picture of the Pope welcomed people at the entrance of the tent. Soon the white tents filled with chatter and the smell of tempting food. We were together to help support the ministry of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament -- a ministry that proclaimed God's love for ALL people. The Mayor of Bensalem was there as well as folks from West Philadelphia. Employees of



the Sisters mingled among a pediatrician and her husband, a monsignor, the Jewish Chief of Police, etc. Strangers greeted strangers, pulled out I-phones and shared family photos. The meal over, the band heated up the room with dancers, fun, laughter and togetherness.

By **Sr. Franceline Malone SBS**

Here is a link to a short video with highlights of the evening: <https://vimeo.com/143173583>

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## *November 26, 1858: the birthday of Katharine Drexel.*

### **This year it happens to fall on Thanksgiving Day!**

Please take a little time on or near that date to honor our Patroness in some way as a group or by yourself. You might do one of the following:

- Offer a Mass or rosary to St Katharine ~ Donate your time to a good cause*
- ~ Pray for the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament*
- ~ Place a small token of thanksgiving by her statue/picture*

**The Shrine and Mission Center will be honoring her by:**



***“Mother Katharine’s Birthday Tea”  
Thursday, November 19 2pm-4pm***

***What a great idea!! Those who cannot get to Bensalem...  
Have a cup of tea that day, put some music on  
and remember her.***

***Blessings, Martha Horton***

## Looking ahead to 2016.....

If any parish or school that has not had a turn at being FEATURED yet would like to be in 2016, contact me by the end of December 2015 either at [mhortonnewslink@yahoo.com](mailto:mhortonnewslink@yahoo.com) or call me at (603) 545-8323.

Our goal is to eventually have all SKD Parishes and Schools featured in ***St. Katharine's CIRCLE.***

Each parish and school has its own unique story that will bring us into a larger circle of the mission of Katharine Drexel. Many parishes and schools have designated a contact person for this newsletter. Check at your respective offices and if one has not been noted, feel free to contact me and I will be able to assist you from there.

All the best, **Martha and the CIRCLE team.**

***Many Blessings to all during the Thanksgiving Holiday and  
A Joyous Christmas Season to you and your families.  
Let us grow the CIRCLE into the New Year.***



***“The cave of Bethlehem was  
the great educator of the world.”  
~ St. Katharine Drexel***

**Contributors this quarter are:**

Sister Donna Breslin, Sister Pat Downs,  
Sister Lynn Marie Ralph, Sister Franceline  
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