

St. Katharine Drexel



1858–1955

Feast Day:
March 3

Katharine was the second child of a very wealthy family in Philadelphia. For years her family had used their money to found and support good causes, such as schools and hospitals.

Katharine wanted to give her life to helping other people. She especially wanted to help Native Americans, who lived in poverty and had no education. After her father died, Katharine and her sisters traveled to Europe. Pope St. Leo XIII received the sisters when they asked to visit him. Katharine explained to Pope Leo that she wanted to give money for missions for Native Americans. Pope Leo suggested that Katharine be a missionary herself.

Katharine entered a convent in Pittsburgh. She took the name Mother Katharine when she began a religious community, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. A few years later, she opened a school in New Mexico. She asked friars from Ohio to join her in missions for Navajos and Pueblos, which she funded. She also gave money for the printing of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for Navajos. Catherine also worked to help African Americans. Even though she faced threats of torture and death, Mother Katharine opened Catholic schools for African Americans. She opened more than 60 schools, dedicating her life and fortune of 20 million dollars to helping others.

Mother Katharine had a heart attack in 1935, and began to grow weaker. She spent the last years of her life in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. She died in 1955.

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