

**WHAT MIRACLES DID
SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL PERFORM?**

Katharine is not noted as a miracle worker while she was alive. However, Our Lord did work two miracles through Katharine's intercession that led to her canonization. Both came from the same Pennsylvania town and both had to do with the restoration of hearing.

Katharine Drexel, who died in 1955, was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1988 after decreeing that the hearing of a deaf teenage boy from Bensalem, PA, had been restored because of his family's prayers to her.

In 1995 another family, also from Bensalem, had a young deaf daughter who had her hearing restored after praying to Katharine Drexel. Extensive subsequent investigations have found no known medical reason for the restoration of the little girl's hearing. This miracle led to Katharine's canonization.

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Saint Katharine Drexel

Feast Day: March 3



**Foundress of the
Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
for Black and Native American peoples.**

Saint Katharine Drexel

*Saint Katharine Drexel was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 26, 1858. She was the second daughter of Francis Anthony Drexel, a wealthy banker, and his wife, Hannah Jane. Hannah died a month after Katharine's birth, and two years later her father married Emma Bouvier, who was a devoted mother, not only to her own daughter Louisa (born 1862), but also to her two stepdaughters. Both parents instilled into the children by word and example that their wealth was simply loaned to them and was to be shared with others.

Katharine was educated privately at home; she traveled widely in the United States and in Europe. Early in life she became aware of the plight of the Native Americans and the Blacks; when she inherited a vast fortune from her father and stepmother, she resolved to devote her wealth to helping these disadvantaged people. In 1885 she established a school for Native Americans at Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Later, during an audience with Pope Leo XIII, she asked him to recommend a religious congregation to staff the institutions which she was financing. The Pope suggested that she herself become a missionary, so in 1889 she began her training in religious life with the Sisters of Mercy of Pittsburgh.

In 1891, with a few companions, Mother Katharine founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. The title of the community summed up the two great driving forces in the life – devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and love for the most deprived people in her country. From the age of thirty-three until her death in 1955, she dedicated her life in a fortune of twenty million dollars to this work.

Request for help reached Mother Katharine from various parts of the United States. During her lifetime, approximately sixty schools were opened by her congregation. The most famous foundation was made in 1915 when she founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first such institution for Black people in the United States.

In 1935 Mother Katharine suffered a heart attack, and in 1937 she relinquished the office of superior general. Though gradually becoming more infirm, she was able to devote the last years to Eucharistic adoration, and so fulfill her life's desire.



She died at the age of ninety-six at Cornwell Heights, Pennsylvania, on March 3, 1955. Her cause for beatification was introduced in 1966; she was declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II on January 26, 1987. Katharine was beatified by Pope John Paul II on November 20, 1988. Because of her lifelong dedication to her faith and her selfless service to the oppressed, John Paul II also canonized her on October 1, 2000. She became only the second recognized American-born saint. At her death there were more than five hundred sisters teaching in sixty-three schools throughout the United States.

*(excerpted from: www.catholic.org; L'Osservatore Romano)