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Black Saints: Katherine Drexel

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Black Saints

Nov. 15 St. Katherine Drexel

Did you know that a canonized saint who described herself as ?The mother and servant of the Indian and Negro races? helped finance Holy Redeemer Parish and School in Washington DC?

Holy Redeemer is the only parish founded by Black Catholics still housed in its original site in the city.

In 1858, St. Katherine Drexel was born into great wealth in Philadelphia, Pa. As she grew up, St. Katherine?s parents taught her that their money was meant to be shared with others. St. Katherine took this to the heart throughout her long life, especially in service to suffering Native and African Americans. She gave more than 21 million dollars of her own money to help found dozen of churches, schools, and hospitals across the United States. Besides founding her own religious congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, St. Katherine also established Xavier University in New Orleans, La. It?s the only Catholic African American College in the country. St. Katherine Drexel died in 1955 and became a saint in the year 2000.

More about Black Catholic history

Blacks in Catholic Christianity have a long and vibrant history.

Much of that history is generally unknown to Black Catholics as well as to the rest of the faithful. On July 24, 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate this long history and proud heritage of Black Catholics. During this month we celebrate the presence of our ancestors who kept the faith and are models of living the Gospel life.

November is Black Catholic History Month.

Sign up [1] for our daily Black Catholic Saints email during the month of November to learn more about these holy men and women.

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