

March Celebrations

March 3 "St. Katharine Drexel"



Here is her story from AmericanCatholic.org:

If your father is an international banker and you ride in a private railroad car, you are not likely to be drawn into a life of voluntary poverty. But if your mother opens your home to the poor three days each week and your father spends half an hour each evening in prayer, it is not impossible that you will devote your life to the poor and give away millions of dollars. Katharine Drexel did that.

She was born in Philadelphia in 1858. She had an excellent education and traveled widely. As a rich girl, she had a grand debut into society. But when she nursed her stepmother through a three-year terminal illness, she saw that all the Drexel money could not buy safety from pain or death, and her life took a profound turn.

She had always been interested in the plight of the Indians, having been appalled by what she read in Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor*.

While on a European tour, she met Pope Leo XIII and asked him to send more missionaries to Wyoming for her friend Bishop James O'Connor. The pope

replied, "Why don't you become a missionary?" His answer shocked her into considering new possibilities.

Back home, Katharine visited the Dakotas, met the Sioux leader Red Cloud and began her systematic aid to Indian missions.

She could easily have married. But after much discussion with Bishop O'Connor, she wrote in 1889, "The feast of St. Joseph brought me the grace to give the remainder of my life to the Indians and the Colored." Newspaper headlines screamed "Gives Up Seven Million!"

After three and a half years of training, she and her first band of nuns (Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored) opened a boarding school in Santa Fe. A string of foundations followed. By 1942 she had a system of black Catholic schools in 13 states, plus 40 mission centers and 23 rural schools. Segregationists harassed her work, even burning a school in Pennsylvania. In all, she established 50 missions for Indians in 16 states.

Two saints met when Katharine was advised by Mother Cabrini about the "politics" of getting her Order's Rule approved in Rome. Her crowning achievement was the founding of Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic university in the United States for African Americans.

At 77, she suffered a heart attack and was forced to retire. Apparently her life was over. But now came almost 20 years of quiet, intense prayer from a small room overlooking the sanctuary. Small notebooks and slips of paper record her various prayers, ceaseless aspirations and meditation. She died at 96 and was canonized in 2000.

Her shrine is in eastern PA if you can make a visit. KatharineDrexel.org

March 7 "Sts. Perpetua and Felicity"

In the year 203 in the North African city of Carthage, Roman culture dictated that all good citizens of the Roman world should honor the pagan gods of the Roman world. The way the Romans saw it, all good Romans just naturally worshipped their Emperor's gods, just as good citizens paid taxes and obeyed the laws. They did not understand that Christians, because they believed in Jesus Christ, could not honor any gods but the One True God. Whenever people make a choice that leads in a different direction from the majority, this can cause misunderstanding and fear. The Romans felt that because the Christians refused to worship Roman gods, the Christians were traitors to Roman society. Because of this, the Roman Emperor decreed that it was



Felicity and Perpetua

against the law to become Christian under pain of death. In spite of this law, many good people who heard the Word of God and believed in the One True God were not afraid to join the Christian Faith anyway, knowing that God would protect them in spite of everything. At this time, a high-spirited young woman named Perpetua lived in Carthage. Her husband had just died, leaving her with a new baby to care for. She went back home to live with her mother, who had secretly become a Christian, and her father, who was still a pagan. When she heard the Good News from her mother—the Gospel stories about the life and teachings of Jesus—her heart led her to answer His call to become a Christian. After Perpetua was baptized and embraced the Faith, she invited her brother, her maid Felicity, and her maid's husband to learn about Jesus and discover the wonderful Love of God. When they went with her to the secret meeting of the Christians, the Roman soldiers came and arrested them all. All of them, along with the teacher who was teaching them about Jesus, were thrown into a dark, crowded, hot dungeon. The conditions were so horrible that the teacher died there in prison. Perpetua was allowed to keep her baby with her in prison, but, because her father was so worried and upset that he could not convince Perpetua, in spite of pleadings or beatings, to change her mind and worship the Roman gods, he took her baby away from her. Perpetua suffered deeply because she was separated from her baby, but she knew that her mother and father would care for her child. Felicity, her maid, suffered even more because she was arrested just before it was time for her to give birth to her first child. She went into labor and had her baby in prison, without any comforts of home. Soon afterward, her baby was taken away, too, and raised by a holy Christian woman. On March 7, a day of great feasting because it was the Emperor's birthday, both Perpetua and Felicity were taken into the arena as part of the "entertainment," while thousands of Carthaginians watched a mad cow attack them. Perpetua's brother and Felicity's husband were attacked by an angry leopard. Even though they were badly beaten by this ordeal, the Christians remained courageous and faithful to their beliefs, refusing to worship pagan gods or wear robes that honored the Roman gods. They did not die as a result of their tortures and beatings, so the Roman soldiers came into the arena (after the animals were taken away) and killed them with their swords. Just before they died, they exchanged the Kiss of Peace, greeting each other with great love and serenity. They died praising God, and all were amazed at how happily they went to their martyr's reward in Heaven. The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicity is an account of the death of these holy women, written in part by St. Perpetua herself. The two saints were buried together in the Basilica Majorum in Carthage.

March 9 "St. Frances of Rome"

FRANCES was born at Rome in 1884. Her parents were of high rank. They overruled her desire to become a nun, and at twelve years of age married her to Lorenzo Ponziano, a Roman noble. During the forty years of their married life they never had a disagreement. While spending her days in retirement



and prayer, she attended promptly to every household duty, saying, "A married woman must leave God at the altar to find Him in her domestic cares."

After her husband's death, barefoot and with a cord about her neck she begged admission to the Oblates community, and was soon elected Superioress. She lived always in the presence of God, and amongst many visions, was given constant sight of her angel guardian, who shed such a brightness around him that the Saint could read her midnight Office by this light alone.

For this reason, bright lights to guide her even at night (like a car), she is considered the Patroness of Automobiles. She is also the patroness on Housewives. We should call on St. Frances often to help us to always be in the presence of God, even in the midst of our housework.

Clean out a closet or scrub a floor today in her honor!

March 10 Start St. Joseph Novena



March 17 "St. Patrick"

The St. Patrick Breastplate

*Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
Christ in the fort, [i.e., at home]
Christ in the chariot seat, [i.e., travelling by land]
Christ in the stern. [i.e., travelling by water]*

*Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

*I bind to myself today
The strong virtue of an invocation of the Trinity,
I believe the Trinity in the Unity
The Creator of the Universe.*



March 19, "St. Joseph"

Here is a simple, but powerful Nine Day Novena Prayer to St. Joseph. **Start on March 10.**

(Note: This prayer was found in the 50th year of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Sometime during the 16th century, it was sent by the Pope to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. It is said that whoever shall read this prayer or take it with them, shall never die a sudden death or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.)

Say this prayer for nine days. Then let go and let God. Trust that whatever is the outcome of your novena is truly what is best for you in accordance with the will of God.)

O Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires.

O Saint Joseph, assist me by your powerful intercession and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ, Our Lord; so that having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers.

O Saint Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me, and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. Amen

*O Saint Joseph, hear my prayers and obtain my petitions. O Saint Joseph, pray for me.
(Mention your intention)*