

# SAINT *of the* WEEK

## St. Katharine Drexel

*1858–1955*

**Feast Day—March 3**



The daughter of a wealthy Philadelphia banker, Katharine received marriage proposals but wanted to become a contemplative nun. After inheriting a fortune, she visited the Dakotas and witnessed American Indians' poverty, subsequently pleading with Pope Leo XIII to send them more missionaries. But he and others encouraged her to found a congregation to work among people of color. In 1891, she and thirteen companions became the first Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. For more than forty years, she led the order, using her fortune to establish numerous missions and schools for Indians and African Americans. Following a major heart attack in 1935, she retired to a life of prayer. Canonized in 2000, she is the patron of home missions.

