Saint Ephrem’s Newsletter… for you!

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To our dear Homebound Parishioners,

December and January proved to be very, very busy here at St. Ephrem Parish. As many of you can understand, they are the two busiest months of the year. But now, hopefully, everything might calm down a bit, now that 2020 has begun!

We continue to pray for peace—in our nation and throughout the world. We remember those who are suffering in Australia due to the wildfires and those in Puerto Rico due to the series of earthquakes. Your prayers are so appreciated!

Since we are so close to St. Katharine Drexel here in Bensalem, I thought for the next few months we might focus on her and her life. Perhaps during these months, as we focus on her words and spirituality, we might also grow in the virtues that she exemplified during her life…

St. Katharine Drexel (1858-1955)

Kate Drexel was born into a Philadelphia family of wealthy bankers but spent most of her life in Bensalem. She left a life of luxury for a life of service to God and God’s people. In 1891 she professed her vows as the foundress and superior of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Their Motherhouse would be built in what is now called Bensalem. From here, Mother Katharine supervised missions among the African Americans and Native Americans in cities, bayous, and on reservations. Mother Katharine was canonized on October 1, 2000.

In 2016 the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament decided to sell the Motherhouse property, since the maintenance of buildings over 100 years old was becoming a financial burden. Sisters living in the assisted living wing of the Motherhouse were moved to Paul’s Run in northeast Philadelphia and the other sisters were moved to other convents. At that time the crypt at the Motherhouse was closed and subsequently moved to the Cathedral of

SS. Peter and Paul in Phila. Presently, the process of having a “national shrine” there is in motion.

Construction of townhouses is expected to begin soon on the grounds of the former Motherhouse and will take several years to be completed.

**However, the good news is that St. Elizabeth Chapel, ( St. Katharine’s chapel) closed in 2018 will be retained as a worship site under the aegis of St. Charles Borromeo Parish**. No date for the re-opening of the Chapel has been announced yet. Administrative offices of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament will be located on the renovated property, possibly this year. The Sisters’ Cemeteries on the grounds will remain there.

 --Stephanie Morris, ASBS, Ph.D., C.A.

So, during this twentieth year since St. Katharine’s canonization, we will be sharing some of St. Katharine’s insights and quotes with you. Through this endeavor and in gratitude for the re-opening of the Chapel, may we all be led to a deeper love and devotion to the Lord through the words and thoughts of St. Katharine Drexel.