



**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
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**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP CHARLES J. CHAPUT, O.F.M. CAP.
REGARDING TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT FROM
THE SISTERS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

On behalf of the clergy and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I send my prayerful best wishes to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as they prepare to celebrate their 125th anniversary later this year. Our local Church has a very special connection to their beginnings as Philadelphia's own Saint Katharine Drexel left her prominent home and life in 1891 to found an order of religious women dedicated to serving impoverished Native American and African American people as well as others struggling with poverty.

Long before I came to Philadelphia, I keenly admired the sisters for their fidelity, mission, and hard work, which have transformed countless lives. Earlier today, the congregation's leadership announced steps being taken on a national level to rededicate existing resources in a way that will best support their mission and enable ongoing care for retired and infirm sisters.

As part of this plan, the congregation will market two properties for sale. One of them is the current Mother House in Bensalem, where the National Shrine of Saint Katharine Drexel is located. The sisters have gone through much careful discernment and study prior to this decision. I applaud their careful forethought and efforts to ensure that they can carry on the mission and vision established by Saint Katharine Drexel.

I'm also happy to share that I've guaranteed Archdiocesan support for the sisters as their plan unfolds over the next few years. They've committed to keeping the national shrine open to visitors through at least 2017. When the time is right to do so, the remains of Saint Katharine

Drexel will be transferred to the care of the Archdiocese and entombed in an appropriate location in the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. It is both an honor and a blessing to accept this responsibility. We'll also work collaboratively with the sisters to make sure their archival records are cared for appropriately within our Archdiocese.

The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament are a gift to the Church. I pray for the success of their efforts and thank them for their selfless and dedicated service to others in the name of the Lord.

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Editor's Note: For more information on today's announcement from the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, please contact Sheila King Public Relations at info@skpr.net or (312) 622-3999. For additional information on the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, please visit www.katharinedrexel.org.