

Dear Xavierites and Friends of Xavier,

I pray and hope that this letter finds you in good health. As you may know, Xavier University of Louisiana will celebrate 100 years of excellence since its founding in 2025 by St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. While part of the celebration will be focused on centennial activities and the \$500,000,000 campaign to help secure Xavier's future, I am writing to you about another element of the centennial today.

Xavier University of Louisiana has the distinction of being the only Catholic and historically Black college and university in the nation. It is also the only institution of higher learning established by St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in a network of schools and missions established across the South and Western United States. So it is, as a Catholic university, that we take a moment to announce how our Christian spirituality and Catholic identity will be made a part of our Centennial Celebration.

St. Katharine Drexel is famous for saying, "With God's help, there is nothing to fear." We have taken these most famous words of St. Katharine Drexel and will have them serve as a guiding theme of our triennial years leading to 2025.

Our initial year's programming and activities will focus on walking in the steps of social justice. In the second year, 2024, our programming and activities will be focused on the eucharistic celebration and communion. And the final year, 2025, philanthropic giving of self, service and resources.

With each passing year, as we draw closer to our centennial celebration, we will be more united in spirit around the ideals of St. Katharine Drexel.

Do not hesitate to share with me your prayer requests at vlaroche@xula.edu. Be assured that you and yours are in my daily prayers. If you find yourself on Xavier's campus on a weekday, feel free to stop by St. Katharine Drexel Chapel for private devotions. All Xavierites, past and present, and visitors are welcome to join us for weekday Masses at noon, Monday-Friday, and 12:30 p.m. on Sundays during the academic year. Our Campus Ministry team includes two other full-time staff ministers, Mrs. Lisa McClain, director, and Rev. Mitchell Stevens, our interfaith chaplain. Both are esteemed graduates of our beloved Xavier.

May God, through the intercessions of St. Katharine Drexel and St. Francis Xavier, bless you and yours, especially during this Lenten season,

Fr. Victor Laroche, O.P.

University Chaplain and Special Assistant to the President for Catholic Identity