



Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Volume 28, Number 1

Celebration



From Forebears to Future:

Continuing the Charity Legacy

Sister Hyeon Lee is the newest member of the United States Province of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to embrace the Charity Charism modeled by the congregation's first leader, Mother Aloysia Lowe.

Mission Statement

The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill is an international, apostolic community of women religious, baptized in Christ, and vowed to continue the mission of His Church. In the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Elizabeth Seton, the congregation conceives its purpose to be an active ministry on behalf of the Kingdom.

This service is: informed by Gospel values, responsive to the needs of a changing world, guided by the prudent use of available resources, respectful of human dignity, protective of human rights, devoted especially to the poor and oppressed, rooted in faith, animated by prayer, supported by the common life, and performed in humility, simplicity and charity.

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February, 2019

Dear Friends,

February might be the shortest month of the year, but when we northerners find ourselves enduring its gusty winds and winter nights, it can seem as though February will never end. Yet we know that spring will come; we need to watch for it! Ash Wednesday will soon be here and we will begin to long for Easter on April 21st. The winter prelude helps us to enjoy spring's new life.

In our spiritual lives we also have winters and springs. This issue of *Celebration* will emphasize our legacy which begins with Mother Seton, who was no stranger to these spiritual seasons. The legacy continues with Mother Aloysia Lowe who founded our branch of the Sisters of Charity. Through the nearly 150 years since, countless women came to follow and minister to others through our community for the Church.

Yes, we are proud of our legacy and the women who went before us and began such wonderful ministries. Seton Hill University, DePaul School for Hearing and Speech, several hospitals, numerous schools, and Elizabeth Seton Center have embodied our charism.

Today we continue that legacy through these same ministries and others. We add to our vowed members when, on February 23, 2019, Sister Hyeon Lee will profess vows for the first time as a member of our province. We welcome her and know that God will bless her in her love for Our Lord and his people. With her we see fresh life budding.

Sometimes, our sisters feel as though our community is going through a period of winter, but just as we know spring will come, so too we believe we will also experience a community spring. We believe that as we received our charism of charity from Vincent, Louise and Elizabeth, we will move it forward. The forms may be different but the charism will endure.

You, our friends and benefactors, are continuing this legacy as you embrace a partnership with us. We are so blessed to have each of you in our lives.

May this time of waiting for spring also be a time of knowing that you are loved by our God.

In the Spirit of Elizabeth,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sister Catherine Meinert, d.c." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Provincial/President, Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

by Jane Strittmatter, Director of Public Relations
for the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

Seton Legacy East



Sister Victoria Marie Gribshaw

“Sister Victoria Marie Gribshaw, recently retired from the faculty of Seton Hill University, is a champion of many causes, all growing out of her keen interest in economics and social justice and how they intersect. She studied housing issues, the plight of single women with children, and the management of family resources. She was certified in Family and Consumer Sciences by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Sister Victoria Marie cared for her students and her colleagues, always quick to offer help and solutions for their difficulties. She was active in her professional associations and encouraged her students to participate as young professionals.”

—Sister Vivien Linkhauer, SC
Vice President for Mission and Identity of Seton Hill University

Her scores of professional appointments, achievements, and awards are remarkable. Still, after a career at Seton Hill University that spanned over four decades, Sister Victoria Marie is quick to assert, “My most important accomplishment has been the success of my students. I wanted to fit students for the world in which they would live.” It is clear that Sister Victoria Marie has lived the legacy of Elizabeth Ann Seton and the Sisters of Charity who served before her at Seton Hill University.

During the 2018 Centennial Year of Seton Hill University, the members of the Business Administration Department were honored at a special celebration.

“Forward at 40,” recognized four successful decades of business studies at Seton Hill. As faculty, staff, and alumni shared memories of the past forty years, one name surfaced with regularity—Sister Victoria Marie Gribshaw. It was evident from the stories that Sister Victoria Marie passed on the legacy of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton with her business colleagues whom she helped to hire and mentor. As their department and division chair, Sister Victoria Marie helped to shape the success of the business program as it morphed over the years to meet the needs of the college/university and adapt to new technologies and resulting business strategies of our changing society.

When Seton Hill included business classes in the curriculum to help bolster enrollment, Dr. Paul Mahady, Assistant Professor of Accounting, was one of the first business instructors to be hired. Paul fondly attested to Sister Victoria Marie’s generous spirit *and* her expertise as a family and consumer economist as evidenced by her homemade brownies:

“One of the things I best remember about Sister was the way she would take a person under her wing. It didn’t matter if the person was a student, faculty, or staff member. When Sister recognized she could make a difference in that person’s personal, professional, or academic life, she never hesitated to act as a mentor. I always looked forward to Division meetings when Sister was the Chair of the Division of Social Sciences because she often would bring her homemade brownies to the meeting. Her brownies were never too sweet or too gooey. She is a master brownie maker.”

Dr. Cathy Giunta, Professor of Business at Seton Hill, recalled that Sister Victoria Marie was part of the faculty team that developed the idea for the Management Program which is now the Business Administration major. True to her charism of charity, Sister Victoria Marie demonstrated her steadfast support, encouragement, and concern for others, professionally and personally.

L-R Sister Victoria Marie Gribshaw, SC, Ph.D.; Douglas Nelson D.Sc.; Catherine E. Giunta, Ph.D.; Sister Vivien Linkhauer, SC, Ph.D.; Dr. Doina Vlad, Ph.D.; Paul Mahady D.B.A.; Lyzona Marshal, M.B.A.



"I have known Sister Victoria Marie as a friend and colleague at Seton Hill University for decades. I know that when I need a friend to talk with, she has always offered prayers and has been supportive of me and my family through good times and difficult times. When she was my Division Chair, she encouraged me as I completed my doctorate, and we would use our late work hours to find time to update each other on our families, our joys, and our concerns."

Sister Victoria Marie was a guiding force for Dr. Doina Vlad, Associate Professor of Business, during her first years at SHU. A native of Romania, Doina recently became a naturalized citizen of the United States. She invited Sister Victoria Marie to attend her naturalization ceremony in Pittsburgh. Doina embraces and demonstrates Sister Victoria Marie's legacy of Setonian excellence in her current roles as the University's faculty development representative to the International Academy of Business and Economics Association and to the Northeast Business and Economics Association. Doina recalled:

"I remember her sitting in the classroom while I was teaching and needed guidance. She gave me good feedback, and told me some ways to improve my style and delivery. To help me grow as a teacher, she sent me to a four-day workshop on teaching economics in Washington, D.C. That helped to improve my course design and classroom pedagogy. Sister is very much dedicated to SHU's growth and did everything in her power to make sure that growth happened, while she was Chair of the Division of Social Sciences for seventeen years."

Lyzona Marshal, Assistant Professor of Business, sees Sister Victoria Marie as a visionary leader and as a compassionate colleague.

"In April 2005, I was invited to interview for a position to manage SHU's E-Magnify Women's Business Center. I decided to attend the center's signature event in Pittsburgh, as it would eventually become one of my responsibilities. During my 'secret' reconnaissance mission to look behind the scenes, Sister Victoria Marie was the first person to spot me as a new face. Her approach was in classic Sister Victoria Marie style, direct yet cordial, while she conducted her own informal interview of me. I didn't know at the time if she was a committee member or not, so I responded to her questions as best I could during that fortuitous hallway meeting. Once she was satisfied with my responses, she looked me directly in the eyes and said, 'We need you to be a faculty member over in the Business Division.' I was stunned yet intrigued and could only half babble out a response about needing to complete my current interview."

Fast forward 13 years and I find myself working as full-time faculty member in the School of Business (formerly the Business Division) because Sister Victoria Marie offered me a different opportunity. She was clear that her goal as division chair was to have a diverse faculty to reflect the changing demographics of the student population. Honestly, my first thought was this was her only interest in me, but I later learned that she also sought to find and develop talent. She worked with and coached me as I transitioned from staff member to an adjunct faculty member to a full-time faculty member in the School of Business."

Sister Victoria Marie's formal role has changed but she remains a true colleague, sharing tips and strategies on classroom management, course design or redesign, and a general concern for her colleagues. When I fought to destroy cancer's grip on my colon, she offered prayers, support, and compassion. When I casually disclosed how I went alone to chemo treatments, in true 'Sister Victoria Marie form' she demanded to know the date of my next appointment and announced that she would be coming with me because I am not alone. Today, I'm thankful for good health and a great career because of a nun that unwittingly foretold my future as she sought out diverse talent on a cold day in April."

Sister Victoria Marie's investment in the students at Seton Hill did not go unnoticed by former Dean of Students, Charmaine Strong. Charmaine recalled that as a class advisor, Sister encouraged students to pass on the Setonian legacy.



“Sister worked diligently with the new student class of 1990 until their graduation in 1994, teaching the students the traditions and the meaning of the traditions. The class gift was a cash donation to Seton Hill to help with expenses for the renovation of the Canevin/Lowe stairs. Then she served as the advisor for students entering the college in 1996. When they graduated in 2000, the millennial year, the class gift was the establishment of the Millennium Scholarship. This fund provides financial aid for Seton Hill junior or senior level students serving as class officers and/or Seton Hill Government Association (SHGA) officers with academic merit and need, and recognizes in perpetuity the generosity of the Seton Hill College Class of 2000 and their advisor, Sister Victoria Marie Gribschaw.”

Charmaine has also witnessed Sister Victoria Marie share a spiritual legacy with students, most notably the Women’s Basketball Team. For nine years, Sister Victoria Marie has supported the team through prayer and friendship at their games. Team members affectionately refer to her as “Sis.”

Seton Hill University Associate Professor of Communication, Dr. Jen Jones, now occupies the office that once belonged to Sister Victoria Marie. As one whose research attends to social issues in communication, corporate ethics, and leadership, Jen feels at home with the mission and identity of the University founded by the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill and values her friendship with Sister Victoria Marie.

“I wrote a reflection for the SHU Centennial time capsule, and in it I stated how fortunate I am to know the Sisters of Charity. They have made a profound impact on my life, and now, especially after participating in the Charity charism formation program, I feel the torch passed to me to carry on their legacy. It is a great thing to carry forward; I am made stronger through God’s power and the sisters’ prayers.

Writing this reflection, I sit in my office at St. Joseph Hall, which was once Sister Victoria Marie’s. I feel the presence she left here as I look out the same windows she gazed through. She has helped me to see the world with eyes of humility, simplicity, and charity. Our conversations in this office were often about those values. For example, when I wanted to take students to serve homeless in Pittsburgh, she gave me the courage to do it. Another time, when I wanted to help a family in need, she provided resources to pass along to them. She also showed me how to integrate Catholic Social Teaching into very practical courses in Business. By doing so, students learn that business is not just about making money; it’s about contributing to human flourishing by valuing human dignity and uplifting human rights. Sister and I have attended weekday Masses in St. Joseph Chapel together. Faith and prayer are other important lessons Sister Victoria Marie taught me.

I felt called to work at Seton Hill after reading about the University’s history and the Sisters of Charity, and this calling has grown stronger over the years as I’ve been able to learn about and live the mission. As such, I am able to truly experience my work as a vocation, and to do my part with humility, simplicity, and charity to cultivate Setonian students committed to transform the world. I am sincerely grateful to the sisters for cultivating this in me, as well as to my beloved Setonian colleagues, who are filled with the charism and contribute to the cultural ethos of Seton Hill. I am grateful to be in community with them and pray we may make the sisters proud.”

After having been a huge part of campus life for 44 years, Sister Victoria Marie is irreplaceable. But her legacy lives on through the lives she touched. Sister Vivien Linkhauer says it best:

“Her ‘can do’ spirit modeled on Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the foundress of her Sisters of Charity community will continue to inspire all who have known her and seen her in action. May her legacy live on!”



Sister Victoria Marie and Dr. Jen Jones look at a picture of Sister on the Centennial wall at Seton Hill University.



Left: Sister Victoria Marie takes time to share observations about the women’s basketball team with Charmaine Strong, a basketball fan and former Dean of Students at Seton Hill

University. For nine years, Sister volunteered to pray with the team at home games and often traveled with the women to away games. But this year, Sister Victoria Marie was named the official team chaplain. Coach Mark Katariski says, “Sister Victoria Marie’s presence has been a wonderful experience for the team.”

by Jane Strittmatter, Director of Public Relations
for the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill



Sister Marian Grace Brandt

Hundreds of persons came together at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Scottsdale, Arizona, on September 9, 2018, to honor the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill who ministered in the dioceses of Phoenix and Tucson for 85 years. The warm reception given the sisters at the 85th Anniversary party at the school confirmed that they had touched lives of many students, parents, faculty, and staff of the school through their charism of charity.

The Sisters of Charity opened Our Lady of Perpetual Help School (OLPH) in 1956. Sister Marian Grace Brandt was the last in a line of nine Sisters of Charity to serve as principal there. When she assumed leadership at the school in 1991, Sister Marian Grace brought with her 35 years of experience as an educator, 21 of those as a principal. Over the years, she had learned to build comradery in the schools that she administered by organizing activities and social gatherings for her teachers and staff members. As principal at OLPH, she strengthened community and stability within the school by providing similar opportunities for her staff to enjoy time together. The faculty organized Friday “happy hours” at a local restaurant so they could unwind and decompress at the end of the school week. Sister Marian Grace joined them. No doubt this custom helped teachers to enjoy their weekends so they could return to the classroom feeling refreshed and enthused each Monday morning. Sister created an atmosphere that was faith-filled, kind, and caring. Teachers

enjoyed their workdays because their great spirit fostered excellence in the classroom. OLPH teacher Sue Corrao called Sister Marian Grace “the unifier of the staff, faculty, and whole school community. She brought everyone together and accepted everyone.”

Described by former students and staff as a woman of boundless energy, Sister Marian Grace was not one to stay in her principal’s office all day. She connected with the students through daily classroom visits and knew each student by name. During lunch hour, she would often shoot hoops in the school yard where the students could watch her from the ramada (a roofed shelter with open sides) and keep count. When she made a basket, the students cheered. If she missed, they would express their disappointment with resounding moans and groans of sympathy.

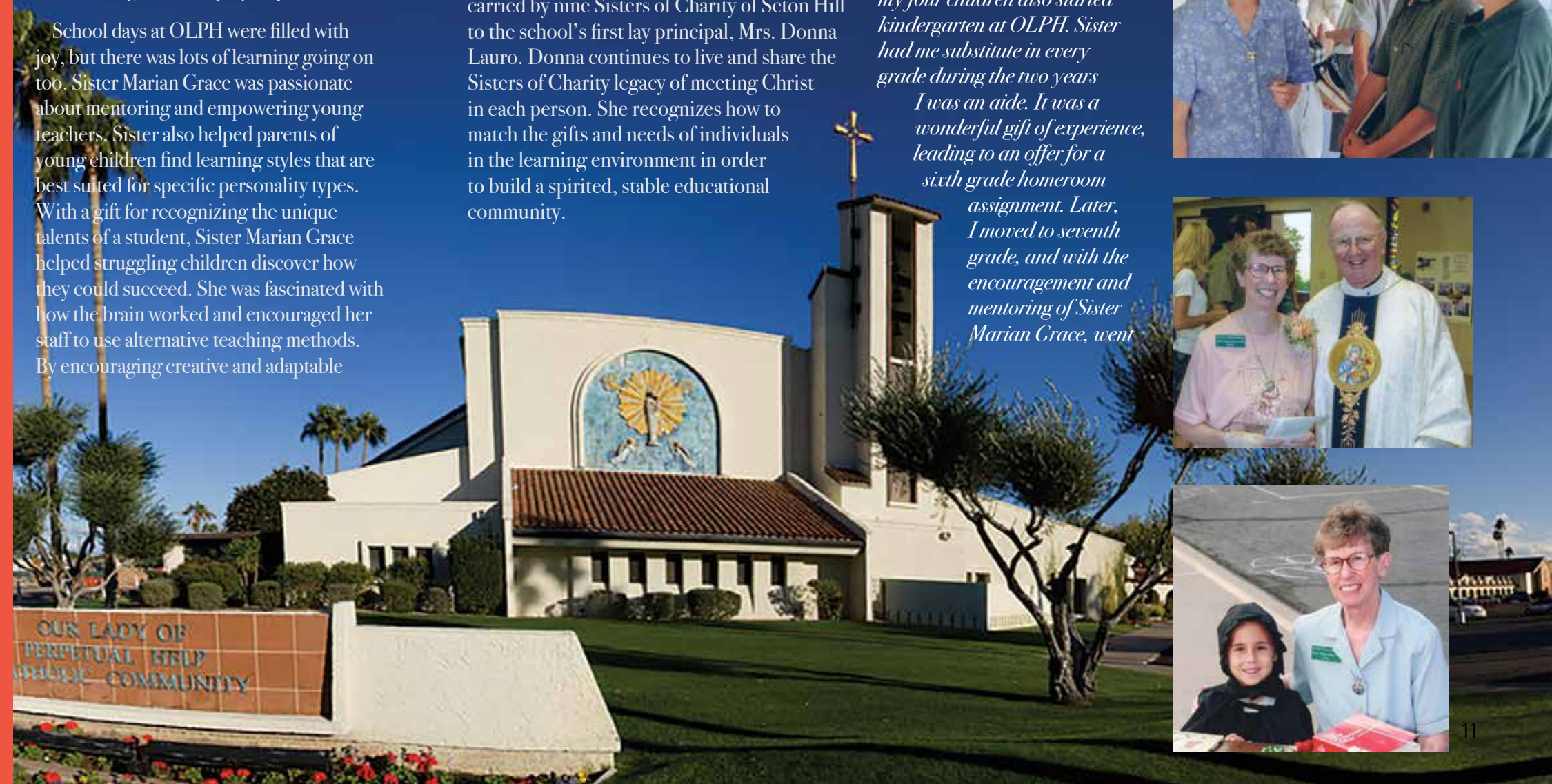
School days at OLPH were filled with joy, but there was lots of learning going on too. Sister Marian Grace was passionate about mentoring and empowering young teachers. Sister also helped parents of young children find learning styles that are best suited for specific personality types. With a gift for recognizing the unique talents of a student, Sister Marian Grace helped struggling children discover how they could succeed. She was fascinated with how the brain worked and encouraged her staff to use alternative teaching methods. By encouraging creative and adaptable

educational techniques, Sister Marian Grace enabled students and teachers to grow in faith, acceptance, and love and to be present to one another. Teacher Katie Baker remembered that Sister Marian Grace always said, “Wherever you are, be there. Be present.”

“Her legacy will be that those kids will look back on their time at OLPH and feel that they were important,” said former Assistant Principal Sue Snyder. “Sister Marian Grace was present. Present from early in the morning to late at night, at morning arrival greeting everyone, at lunch recess shooting baskets, at sports games after school . . . she was there. She didn’t cook. She filed late reports. She had piles of paper—not important. She knew being present to her people was important. By her example, faith came through”

When it was time for Sister Marian Grace to retire, she passed on the torch that had been carried by nine Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to the school’s first lay principal, Mrs. Donna Lauro. Donna continues to live and share the Sisters of Charity legacy of meeting Christ in each person. She recognizes how to match the gifts and needs of individuals in the learning environment in order to build a spirited, stable educational community.

“I met Sister Marian Grace in 2000 when I joined OLPH parish and attended a hospitality luncheon with my four-year old quadruplets. She kindly introduced herself, welcomed me and the kids to OLPH, and sat with us at the brunch. I instantly knew OLPH was the right parish and school for me and my children. I shared with Sister how I had always wanted to teach but instead majored in accounting and worked on Wall Street before relocating to Arizona. Sister Marian Grace told me it wasn’t too late and that my degree could get me a substitute certificate. She hired me as a teacher aide for grade two in August 2000 when my four children also started kindergarten at OLPH. Sister had me substitute in every grade during the two years I was an aide. It was a wonderful gift of experience, leading to an offer for a sixth grade homeroom assignment. Later, I moved to seventh grade, and with the encouragement and mentoring of Sister Marian Grace, went



back to school for my Masters in Education Leadership. None of this would have ever happened without her influence. I will be forever grateful to her.

Sister Marian Grace offered so many opportunities for me to learn firsthand. I attended board meetings, finance meetings, booster meetings. I sat on strategic planning committees, and helped with daily operations tasks such as scheduling. We spent many summers working on the whiteboard in my classroom with different colored markers for different grades until the schedule was finalized. School life was much simpler then, but without all the precious hours, days and years spent with Sister Marian Grace I wouldn't be the principal I am now.

Keeping the charism of the Sisters of Charity was very important to me. I sat on the committee with Sister Marian Grace, the pastor, and a few parents to design our crest. We included the three crescents from the Seton coat of arms as recognition of the Sisters of Charity. Part of my vision when I became principal was to uphold the charism and grow the service component of our school, living up to a mission of service. We have since developed an expansive Celtics in Mission program serving the poorest of the poor.

Sister Marian Grace welcomed all and gave everyone a chance. We continue to serve all children, meeting them where they are, teaching them, and nurturing them the way Sister Marian Grace modeled for us for so many years. We have been trailblazers. We have accepted students with Down Syndrome and some on the autism spectrum, all for the love of God."

After retiring at the school, Sister Marian Grace ministered at OLPH parish for six years preparing parents for the baptism of their children. When she made the decision to return to the motherhouse in Greensburg after serving in Scottsdale for 25 years, Sister Marian Grace was gratified to see that the charism of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton permeated the daily life in the parish and the school. "I have been rewarded by seeing many of the first graduates of the school become leaders at OLPH and in other parishes. I have seen the fruits of our labors when I interviewed graduates who brought their babies for baptism. My heart is filled with gratitude for all the priests, sisters, teachers, parents, children, and parishioners who have been part of my life."

Sister Marian Grace will always be remembered for sharing her favorite teaching of Elizabeth Ann Seton: "Be present to the moment, do the best you can, and leave the rest to God." Although they may be separated by thousands of miles, those who have been part of Sister's life will continue to know her presence as they, like Sister Marian Grace, meet Christ in others, all for the love of God.



Like Sister Marian Grace, Principal Donna Lauro is an educator who is present to the moment, meeting students where they are.



Sister Marian Grace left a lasting mark on the community of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Scottsdale. Through her work for many years as principal and later as the baptismal preparation coordinator, she impacted countless members of our community. Phrases from The Sign of the Cross help to illustrate Sister Marian Grace's legacy powerfully yet simply.

"In the name of the Father..."

As an OLPH teacher I was able to experience and witness how Sister Marian Grace began and ended every faculty meeting and school function placing our Heavenly Father at the center of our work. I have very fond memories of our meetings ending in a sacred simple singing of "O Lord, you are the center of our lives."

"and of the Son..."

Sister Marian Grace as our principal exemplified that we were the hands and feet of Jesus to every student and parent we encountered. Sister Marian Grace was able to recognize that each of us had specific gifts or strengths, and she encouraged us to share them with our students and school community.

and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

As an educator I always appreciated that Sister Marian Grace never stopped being a lifelong learner. She always showed interest in new ways to teach or help students and inspired others to do the same, clearly a sign of the Holy Spirit in our school. This was especially true of students who were challenging to teach. She would always take the opportunity with us teachers or with a group of students to remind us that our witness or interaction with people might be their only encounter with Jesus.

Susan Alpers

Math Resource
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School

Sister Marian Grace has many wonderful memories of her days as at OLPH. Her students gave her two memorable gifts, a hot air balloon ride and a helicopter ride. Newscasters were there to record both events and named her "the flying nun." Her memory book is filled with lovely photos of the persons, places, and activities she enjoyed in Scottsdale. Each moment was precious.



Sister Margaret Ann Hanley



Sister M. Emily Miller



Sister Rosaline Walsh



Sister Mary Joseph McElhinny



Sister Mary Timothy Adams



Sister Miriam Ellen Chalmer



Sister Jean Ann Wilburn



Sister Mary Richard Rixner



Sister Marian Grace Brandt



by Sisters Barbara Einloth and Edie Strong

In the opening words of his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*! Pope Francis reminds us that “our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.” The encyclical serves as an impetus for the Sisters of Charity to attend, with fresh focus, to all of creation both in the present and with an eye to the future. We have seized on it because Pope Francis has called our Church to respond to this critical issue, and we are women of the Church. It is a concern which has profound implications for the future and the legacy of charity. It is also an issue with which we have some history, especially over the past 30+ years.

Sister Sung Hae Kim, our General Superior, has pondered and shared with us elements of a profound care for creation in the writings of Mother Seton. She highlights Elizabeth’s

awareness of nature and its significance as an expression of God’s creativity. Her work sensitizes us in new ways to make connections between current calls for protection of the earth, our only home, and roots of the spirituality we share with our foundress. Indeed, this is part of Elizabeth’s legacy to us.

From 1983 to the present, sisters have engaged in varied and active efforts related to justice and environment. These include study, lectures, workshops, collaborative efforts and formal commitments. (*Sister Sung Hae’s presentations and the extensive history of the congregation’s eco-justice work are chronicled on the Sisters of Charity website at www.scsch.org/socialjustice/eco-justice.*)

Efforts to cooperate with nature’s cycles on the property in Greensburg have included a season of wildflowers replacing meadows and, more recently, cultivating a garden in a different meadow and sharing its produce. The butterfly garden and a local beekeeper’s hives entice and protect those two species, so essential to pollination and food growth. In Korea, the Sisters maintain an organic farm and for many years worked to protect the mudflats from harm. Currently as we in the US Province engage in a study of our land and best uses for it into the future, we are mindful that this acreage contributes to the beauty and wholesomeness of nature.



Presently our environmental thrust is interprovincial. In 2016, the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill accepted the words of Pope Francis as a challenge, and formed an Interprovincial *Laudato Si'*! Committee as one way to respond to the congregation’s 2014 desire “to accomplish a systemic response to a wounded world.”

As a first step, the *Laudato Si'*! Committee chose to implement a study of the encyclical. In the United States, this took the form of small group study based on the guide titled *Climate Change: Our Call to Conversion*, published by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center.

Recently, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which warns that the climate crisis is growing faster than previously predicted. It lists Mongolia among the countries that will experience complete desertification

if the world doesn’t act now to drastically and quickly reduce carbon emissions. (Desertification is the process of turning fertile land into desert incapable of supporting life.) According to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), if the current trend of desertification continues, over 50% of the Earth’s land area could be desert by 2100. Currently, desertification in Australia, Spain, Africa, southern Europe, northwestern China and Mongolia is threatening the entire global ecosystem. The report said that desertification in Mongolia is rapidly spreading, and the country is facing an unprecedented threat of disappearing entirely if powerful and urgent actions are not taken.

In response and in coordination with the International Union of Superiors General (of women religious) and the Global Catholic Climate Movement, Sisters of Charity, both in the United States and in South Korea, are launching a campaign to raise money to purchase trees for planting in Mongolia. Mongolia’s effort has been on-going for many years; in other words, our trees are not the only ones being planted! Ten dollars plants a tree; \$25 plants a tree and nurtures it to maturity. Our offerings will be sent to the Korea Forest Service which has been working since 2007 to plant trees in Mongolia. If you would like to support this effort, please send any donations to the Sisters of Charity, clearly marked for the Mongolia Tree Planting Project.

Legacy reaches back and stretches forward. Today we realize a deepened sense of each person’s responsibility to act—in the day-to-day—as a member of the earth community. We recognize the necessity and privilege of joining our efforts with God’s as we nurture the earth and minimize the threats it faces so that it will continue for the future. With each individual and community whose awareness is heightened, whose action is spurred, we contribute to the expanding sense of “care for the earth, our common home” rippling into the future.



Learn more about the Sisters of Charity extensive eco-justice work including the **Mongolia Tree Planting Project** at www.scsch.org/socialjustice/eco-justice. Support the Mongolia Tree effort by donating online or mailing donations clearly marked for the Mongolia Tree Planting Project to Sister Mary Norbert Long, 144 DePaul Center Road, Greensburg, PA 15601.





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INTERVIEW WITH Sister Helen Timothy, IBVM,
Principal of Salpointe Catholic High School, Tucson, Arizona

by Julia Trimarchi Cuccaro, Esq., Director of Development for the Sisters of Charity of
Seton Hill

This is the ninth in a series of *Celebration* interviews that applaud the remarkable accomplishments of some of our friends, contributors, partners, and volunteers. These are people who in some way demonstrate a great appreciation for their communities and for the mission of the Sister of Charity of Seton Hill. This interview is with Sister Helen Timothy, IBVM, the principal of Salpointe Catholic High School in Tucson, Arizona, a school where many Sisters of Charity taught over the years. A few years ago, Salpointe, at the invitation of the Carmelite order, decided to adopt a new and dynamic curriculum that seeks to integrate the spirit and lessons of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, into the daily life of its students. As many of you know, the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill dedicated their second Wellness Conference to *Laudato Si'*. Currently, the sisters here in the United States and South Korea are engaged in an intense study of the encyclical and the ways in which the provinces can integrate its teaching into the daily lives of the sisters.

Editor's note: *Salpointe Catholic High School was built in 1950 and named for Jean Baptiste Salpointe, Arizona's first bishop. The school was operated by diocesan clergy until 1953, when Carmelite priests assumed administration and staffed the school with members of several religious communities of sisters. Sisters Julia Teresa Dolan, Eugene O'Donnell, and Mary Rebecca Kelsey were the first of 39 Sisters of Charity who staffed the school. Although the Sisters of Charity technically withdrew in 1967, several sisters continued their ministry at Salpointe. Sister Diane Temple was there from 1983 until 2001; Sister Laura Coughlin taught there from 2008 to 2013; and Sister Jeanne Bartholomeaux was missioned to Salpointe as recently as 2016.*

Q: Several years ago when I was visiting Tucson, I picked up a copy of the Arizona Daily Star with the lead article featuring Salpointe Catholic High School and its adoption of a new curriculum. I was electrified to read that the curriculum is based on Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*!. Tell me, how did this come about?

A: It started from an invitation. The encyclical had been very well received in the secular press, and I read it and thought it was a beautiful document. The invitation came shortly after from the Carmelite NGO⁽¹⁾ and its representative Sister Jane Remson. She wanted us to help develop a secondary education curriculum based on the teaching of the encyclical. It was quite an honor because the Carmelites operate forty-four high schools in the United States.



Q: I should say! So you were in the process from the start. How did you begin?

A: First we needed instruction. Some of us, including faculty, traveled to different places, such as Loyola University New Orleans, where Sister Jane resides. After breaking the encyclical into parts, we started to recognize themes. Eventually we integrated the themes into our own lesson plans.

Q: Did you work within your own existing curriculum or develop an entirely new one?

A: We have integrated the new curriculum into the existing one. I see it more as supplementing what we already have in place. The lessons of the encyclical are regularly integrated into the academic curriculum, into the arts, literature, history, science, and even math.

Q: How did you break it into deliverable parts?

A: Well, we decided that for the next four years we would work around key themes that we had identified, such as care for our common home, access to safe and drinkable water, and population control, to name some of them.

Q: You know, when I first read *Laudato Si'*!, I was struck by its simplicity, its directness, and its clarity. It's very readable! A theme I discerned is how the Pope links our consumerism and lack of care and respect for our planet to the misery and poverty that plagues human beings everywhere, including affluent people. His message clearly resonates with Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

A: Yes it does! The document is so simple and has real universal appeal, and it is not just faith-based or for the faith-based. There is no judgment in it. No punitive language. Instead it says "let's start to look at what we can do now." How can we practically live this? "Care for Our Common Home" is what we have promoted at our school. We communicate it in every way we know how. We've even put it on tee-shirts as a way to create awareness!

Q: What has created the greatest interest?

A: Where we've found the deepest resonance is with those issues that affect the students most directly. Believe me, we had some real challenges. We have a committee that includes students and holds regular meetings. We decided to try "meatless" Mondays in our school cafeteria as a way to bring intensity to what we are trying to accomplish. Well, we really faced a lot of pushback! It caught us unaware! Some of the students who come from ranching families were very upset and argued that it interfered with the livelihood of many families. Other students supported it because, for example, they were vegetarian. We only instituted the program for one month, but in the meantime, students were obliged to discuss it and some even wrote about traditional meat processing versus modern practices and the consequences. It ended up really energizing us.

We have also instituted "the four R's": Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, and Refuse. Each individual can be very powerful in refusing to do something bad for us. You know communications on cell phones have given students a worldwide view. They are beginning to understand how powerful they are.

Q: This reminds me of the thousands of school students across Australia who recently left school for a day to demand the government do more about climate change.

A: Yes! For example, here we have a food service contract with an outside company for our cafeteria services. They often serve drinks from Styrofoam cups. Our students can and do refuse to use Styrofoam and are free to bring their own containers from home. In fact, this year our teachers will not permit single use plastic drinking containers in our classrooms. All our water fountains have been converted to accommodate filling the containers. Our students also noticed and asked those students who drive to school on cold mornings not to leave their engines idling, with the heater on, while they wait for school to open. In science class we learn about using cleaner fuels in our cars. Here in Tucson, we only have two stations that offer cleaner alternatives.

Q: What is your favorite part of the encyclical?

A: It's in Passage #49, "We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

Q: One last question: is there a person in your life who has meant a great deal to you personally on a spiritual level, who has sustained you over the years?

A: Yes. Joan Chittister, a Benedictine sister who lives in Erie, Pennsylvania. Look her up. She's a writer, lecturer, and theologian. She's really a saint. She's always challenging us to find justice where you can find it.

Q: Sister, what a pleasure it's been to get to know you. We all wish you continued success, and it's my hope that more and more schools try to do what you are doing.

⁽¹⁾ Non-Governmental Organization with special status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and Affiliated to the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the United Nations



The Salpointe school theme for 2018-19 is from *Laudato Si'*!—"Time for Action: Care for Our Common Home." Salpointe students focus on how lifestyle, culture, and personal decision-making impact our earthly home and affect all the precious life forms it sustains—including humans.

Preserving the Oral History of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

by Casey Bowser,
Archivist for the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill



"My father always held Sisters in high esteem, so just before I entered, he remarked, with a gleam of pride in his eye, 'Just think, we will have three angels and a Sister.' The angels, of course, referred to three of my little sisters who died before the age of four."

— From the oral history of Sr. Mary Timothy Adams, OH-72

"My mother, when we had anybody broach this idea of being a missionary, she always said — a missionary term meant foreign missionary, you know. It did to us, too. She always said, there's enough work to be done at home. Home missions. Lord rest her. She died in 1955. It was 1960 when I came [to Korea]. I think maybe she was rooting for me up there. She saw a global picture by that time, perhaps."

— From the oral history of Sr. Mary Agnes Carey, OH-84

Oral history is an inheritance of the human experience. It allows us to hear and re-live a story through the words of the ones who can tell stories best—the ones who experienced the events of their tales. More than words on a page, oral history traditions vivify and characterize the subjects, places, and plotline. Oral stories



humanize history. The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill have a deep oral history legacy. Stories are shared after the death of a sister at a reflection. Conversations at the lunch table delve into stories of growing up during the war years, tales of the novitiate, and experience in places both far and near.

In October 2018, the archives of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill was awarded a \$29,925 grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) to reformat 165 at-risk oral history cassette tapes and 25 ¼-inch open-reel recordings as part of a pilot project to digitize 700 oral history tapes in the collection. The project is titled "Conserving the Charism: Preservation of the Oral Histories and Legacy of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill."

These oral histories explore life in religious community and preserve firsthand accounts of the Sisters in their various missions. Missions in western Pennsylvania (including neighborhoods of Pittsburgh, Altoona, and Greensburg), Arizona, Louisiana, Ohio, West Virginia, California, Maryland, and South Korea will be explored. The open-reel tape recordings document subjects such as the mission to Korea and the canonization of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

In collaboration with the Northeast Document Conservation Center, the tapes will be transferred to more sustainable digital formats. Audio material will be made available to the public as "Sister Spotlights" with contextual photographs and documents added by interns from Seton Hill University. This nine-month project will be valuable to individuals studying religious communities, women's history, Catholic history, education, healthcare, and much more.

The Oral History Program of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill began in 1982 as part of the centennial anniversary of their arrival in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. The Community Archivist, Sister Sara Louise Reilly, led a group of volunteer sisters to conduct oral history interviews with elderly members of the community. Sister Sara Louise arranged for volunteers to attend several workshops on oral history, including a two-day workshop with pioneer oral historian, Martha Ross. In 1986, the community recruited a part-time coordinator for the program. The interviews were produced on Panasonic tape recorders and the compact cassette tapes were submitted to the Archives for preservation.

Through "Conserving the Charism," the oral tradition of the Sisters of Charity will be shared with future generations, scholars, and the many constituents of the community in perpetuity. The Setonian charism, evident in the voices and accounts of the Sisters of Charity, will continue to inspire, motivate, and imbue the world with a legacy of love and faith.

Sister Marie Corona Miller (right) has conducted hundreds of interviews for the Oral History Program since its inception in 1982. She is pictured with Sister Mary Lou Lisowski who recently recorded an accounting of her religious life for the collection of tapes.

The Wise Women of the Archives

by Casey Bowser,
Archivist for the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

"The dreamer turns her back upon the future; she sees only the past, and keeps it with her in the present. The visionary faces only the future, and learns nothing from the past. The wise woman from her vantage point in the present contemplates the vista of history; she comprehends the reality of the past and the possibilities of the future."

— Sister Mary Electa Boyle, Author of
Mother Seton's Sisters of Charity in Western Pennsylvania

Sister M. Electa Boyle, the first archivist of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill and Seton Hill College, ruminated on the role of the archivist as one who can learn from the past to inform and guide the future. The sisters have had many gifted and dedicated archivists over the years—Sisters Teresa Clare Kernan, Sara Louise Reilly, Mary Catherine Seli, and Louise Grundish.

These sister-archivists have organized, cataloged, and filed the history of the congregation. They have directed facts and hidden history into the deep recesses of their minds. They have come to know the legacy of the community through the smiling eyes of thousands of photographs, through letters from children to their beloved teachers, through decision-making in the Council minutes of past leadership, through a simple object left behind by a sister. This intimate knowledge, this evidence of the charism at work has become manifest in the role of archivist and they have passed on this tradition.

On August 17, 2018, the commitment of one of these archivists, Sister Louise Grundish, was honored at the Society for American Archivists annual conference in Washington, D.C. Sister Louise received the Sr. M. Claude Lane, O.P. Memorial Award which recognizes an individual for outstanding contributions to the field of

religious archives. Sister Louise began her archival career as Assistant Archivist in 2004 under Sister Mary Catherine Seli. By 2006, she had become full-time archivist. During her tenure, she was a major participant in the Slippery Rock History Project: Sisters in Health Care in Western Pennsylvania, an exhibit donated to the Senator John Heinz History Center in 2010.

Sister Louise has served as president of the Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) and volunteered as the editor of the ACWR newsletter. She's an active member of SAA, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives



Archivist Emeritus Sister Louise Grundish has passed on the torch to Casey Bowser.

Conference, the US Catholic Historical Society, the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, and the Westmoreland County Historical Society. In addition, she was influential in forming the Charity Federation Archives, providing leadership for one year as its liaison.

Sister Louise now enjoys her role as archivist emeritus, passing on the deep historical legacy of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to a new archivist, Casey Bowser. The recognition of Sister Louise by the Society of American Archivists truly honors all of the sister-archivists of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill who have built upon the great lives and lessons of those who have come before. These wise woman have taught us valuable lessons about the past for the sake of our future.



Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

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Upcoming Events

February 15, 2019 - April 21, 2019**TREES FOR MONGOLIA**

Donations Accepted
Sister Mary Norbert Long
DePaul Center, Greensburg
724-836-0406, x6623

Sunday, March 10, 2019**LENTEN VISIT AND VESPERS**

Caritas Christi, Greensburg, PA
2:00 p.m. – Visit and Refreshments
3:30 p.m. – Solemn Vespers
724-836-0406, x6615

Saturday, March 30, 2019**11th ANNUAL SOUNDS OF CHARITY**

Benefits the Ministries of the Sisters of Charity
6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Ramada Inn, Greensburg, PA
724-836-0406, x6615

April 1, 2019 – May 31, 2019**SUMMER FUN CASH TICKET - JUNE**

Available for purchase
DePaul Center, Greensburg, PA
724-836-0406, x6646

Thursday, April 11, 2019**SISTER MARY SCHMIDT LECTURE**

Sister Teresa Kotturan, SCN,
Sister of Charity Federation NGO at the UN
Seton Hill University, Greensburg, PA

Friday, April 12, 2019**WELLNESS CONFERENCE**

Grateful Living: Aging, Resilience, and Holistic Health
Caritas Christi, Greensburg, PA
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon
724-836-0406, x6615

Saturday, May 18, 2019**PEACE WALK AND PET BLESSING**

Sisters of Charity Complex,
Greensburg, PA
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon
724-836-0406, x6615

Saturday, July 13, 2019**JUBILEE CELEBRATION**

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