



Newsletter

February, 2023

Volume 20, Issue 1

Full Affection for Each Person

There is a quote from Louise de Marillac that struck me as I read it several days ago, so I share it and my reflection upon it with you now. It is: "I beg you to show the poor great affection." It struck me, because although I strive to see Christ in every person, I don't experience myself showing "great affection" to every person. Seeing Christ in each person has become an intellectual exercise for many of us. Louise challenges us to let what is intellectual become a heart thing. Seeing Christ in a person is not just acknowledging that God has chosen to dwell there. Are we excited to meet God there? Can we smile at the good God has planted there? Can we see the potential God sees? Can we encourage the good to grow there? Can we encourage the potential to become reality? Does the goodness there evoke thankfulness in us for its gracing our life? Do we feel blessed to be in the presence of such potential? For Louise, each person was an opportunity to meet Christ and run to him with great affection.

In the Greensburg A Seton Family, we are not able to experience persons who are poor together, because of the geographic limitations of our personal circumstances. So we encounter those experiences as they enter our personal lives. Some groups can do things together to serve those who are poor. The poor is not a collective of people with a category assigned to them. They are individuals whom we meet as companions on the journey toward God. Do people become more than a statistic for us? Does each become a person with hopes and dreams of his/her own?

In 1797, several years before needing to depart for Italy with her ailing husband, Elizabeth and others started the first charitable society in New York City, "the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children". In this work of tending to the poor, the sick, and the dying, Elizabeth Seton earned the title "Protestant Sister of Charity". In one of Elizabeth's letters to her friend Julia, who had moved to Philadelphia with her two children after the death of her husband, she wrote: "Poor Mammy Brown received my first visit...Her situation is deplorable, I believe she is getting better every day." She goes on to tell of each person she visits. The people Elizabeth and her friends visited were real people to her, companions on their own journey toward God.

I picture Elizabeth having such affection for each of her sisters and brothers-in-law when her father-in-law died; she had to move from her home on State Street in New York City to the homestead of her husband's family to care for his five siblings who were still at home when their father died and left them orphaned. She was so close to friends that I picture Elizabeth knowing them each as a person. I picture Elizabeth getting to know her sister-in-law Cecilia even more closely as she nursed her over her illness, despite being stiffed by in-laws when Elizabeth converted to Catholicism. I picture her getting to know each child in her schools in New York, Baltimore, and then in St. Joseph's Valley near Emmitsburg. I picture her getting to know each of the sisters in her religious community as a real sister and friend. Can we do better at seeing others with "great affection"?

By Sister Edie Strong



Remembered Fondly

Joelen Catanzaro was a member of Greensburg A Seton Family for many years. She was an educator in middle school through community college, teaching art, calligraphy and gifted children in the diocese of Pittsburgh and public schools of southwestern PA. She was a lector, usher, member of the choir, and facilitated a prayer group for her parish. She was active in Meals-on-Wheels, and a Sister of Charity for 19 years.

Nadeen Montez was a member of Tucson Seton Family. She tragically died in a vehicular accident. She had participated in many ministries at her parish. She was a founding member of the Tucson Seton Family. She was a life-long learner of her faith. Friends describe her as having “an irresistible smile and an infectious good nature”.

Jackie Weatherwax was a member of Pittsfield Seton Family. She was a member of the leadership team there at one time. She is described as having a quiet personality. She was involved in many ministries in her parish.

Sister Mary Jean Petrarca was a leader of the Brookline Seton Family. When asked to take on another assignment, Sister Mary Jean accepted but included supporting Seton Family among reasons it might be good to stay at Elizabeth Seton Convent. She spent many years supporting handicapped children and adults at Pioneer School and the Emmaus Community.

Jodi Poole was a member of Pittsfield Seton Family. She had a special heart for the homeless in her neighborhood. She provided meals out of her own means and her own home for the hungry. Pittsfield Seton Family helped her to expand this service under her leadership and infectious enthusiasm for the ministry.

Nina Mastragelo was a member of the Pittsfield Seton Family. She worked as a clerk and then as a scheduler, first for a telephone company and then for an electric company. She is described as having been a kind-hearted and special person. She was a lector and Eucharistic minister in her parish. She helped with many activities in her parish and civic organizations and provided leadership where needed. Her volunteering included the gift shop and reception desk at the local hospital.

Sister Gertrude Foley first envisioned Seton Family around 1998. At that time, two groups had emerged

– Seton Associates and Seton Volunteers.

Sister Gertrude’s idea was to form one group from these two, recognizing laity as essential in the life of the Church. She also recognized the spirituality of Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, and Elizabeth Ann Seton as a gift to the Church which Laity were invited to guide their own journey of faith.

She was later named coordinator of Seton Family. Her most notable contribution during this time was the Seton Family Manual that guides us today. She was able to grow in her understanding of Seton Family as time went on. One example of this was the expansion of the pillars of Seton Family from four to five. Originally, the thought was that the four pillars of Seton Family were prayer, community, learning and apostolic spirit. These are the elements that guide each gathering of each group, with the idea that each member would incorporate these four into their own personal spirituality. As time went on, some groups started providing service to those in need together as a group. This “service” naturally flowed from the “apostolic spirit” that was named in the four pillars. It became clear that “service” was really one of the pillars identifying who Seton Family is. Seton Family was not complete without it. So “service” became a fifth pillar guiding the ongoing life of Seton Family.

We owe much to Sister Gertrude for bringing the Vincentian-Setonian spirituality to the laity through the birthing of Seton Family.

May these past members and all those who have gone before us know eternal happiness with God, who lures us by his love.

Times, They Are a Changin’

Thanks to Sister Claudia Rushlow who led Tucson Seton Family for many years. She now supports Greensburg A Seton Family; we are very grateful to have her presence there. Sister Jeanne Bartholomeaux and Sister Mary Elizabeth Lawrence have taken up the leadership in her absence. This Seton Family is very active and grateful to have Sister Jeanne and Mary Elizabeth take up the call to leadership in Sister Claudia’s absence.

Sister Marian Madden has passed the leadership baton to Toni Michel for the Greensburg B Seton

Family, but still actively supports the group. Sister Marian has led the Greensburg B Seton Family for many years. We are grateful to her for her able leadership and grateful to Toni for her willingness to carry on as Sister Marian steps aside within this group. Actually, the group pretty much runs itself, with members taking turns leading each gathering, so, as Toni claims, there isn't much to do as leader.

Mary McIntyre has accepted the baton of leadership from Sue Schoppen for the Brookline Seton Family. This group also passes around leadership for each gathering, teaming up to make each gathering an inviting time together. We thank Sue for her able leadership for many years and Mary for accepting the challenge.

Pittsfield Seton Family takes a team-approach to leadership. They recently had a change in their leadership team from Ann Cooper, Ann Brennan, Chris Stodden, Nancy Rodda, and Robin O'Brien to Rosemary Polidoro, Ginny Peniuk, Chris Stodden and Robin O'Brien. Rosemary has been on the leadership team before and has returned for a second round. Chris and Robin are staying on and providing continuity between the two teams.

Group Profiles

Tucson Seton Family is a group of 12 members. They have used *Laudato Si'* as a guide for their learning as a group, using "integral ecology" to see more clearly their responsibility for people and the planet. They are reminded by Elizabeth Ann Seton that "we are citizens of the world" and by Pope Frances that "we are living in an age of the migrant". One of the largest national migrant center in the U.S., Casa Alitas, is located nearby. One of their members, Michelle Brubaker, volunteers at Casa Alitas and has been very helpful in the group's discerning how they could help as outreach for Tucson Seton Family. They are learning how best to speak about immigration with others who do not share their views. They are nurturing peace and tranquility within themselves, taking to heart Elizabeth Ann Seton's thought that "You will help other by the peace and tranquility of your heart as much as by the eagerness or care you can bestow upon them"

Pittsfield Seton Family is about 45 strong with 8 members who are no longer able to be active. Sister Colette Hanlon supports Pittsfield Seton Family and encourages its members. The group hosts an annual retreat to which they invite members of neighboring parishes. They are active supporters of "Cathedral of the Beloved", an ecumenical effort to feed the hungry on the lawn of St. Joseph's Parish and nurture their spirits. They look for other ways they can help their local community reach those in need. Their monetary donations presently go to helping the local food bank. The group has recently spent time on prayer and the lives of founders Vincent de Paul, and Elizabeth Ann Seton. They have considered the Catholic social teachings as well.



Above—Ann Brennan, Chris Stodden, and Ann Cooper celebrating past leadership of Pittsfield Seton Family.



Above—Robin O'Brien, Nancy Rodda, and Sister Colette celebrating past leadership of Pittsfield Seton Family. Left—some of the Pittsfield Seton Family.



The Greensburg B Seton Family is a group of around 3 members and 3 sister supporters. Sister Sharon Carpenter is the newest sister-supporter for this group. Welcome to Sister Sharon The group mainly spends their time together in bible study. They just completed using Henry Nouwen's series titled "Art of Living" as catalyst for their sharing.

The Greensburg A Seton Family is a group of 7 members and one inquirer. The group started in 2023. They have spent time learning about Seton Family and the founders, Elizabeth Ann Seton, Vincent De-Paul and Louise De Marillac. They are presently working with the 5-day Vincentian Busy-person's retreat found online at www.famvin.org Members come from many parishes and a wide range of geographic areas, so service, one of the pillars of Seton Family has been a challenge for them, which they believe they have solved by donating each month; one member chooses the charitable project for that month and sees that the donation gets to it. The group inducted one new member in a joint ceremony with Brookline Seton Family last fall.

The Brookline Seton Family includes about 18 members, 2 members who are no longer able to be active, and 3 sister supporters. Six new members were inducted last fall: Nancy Biaculli, Gloria Bondi, Eileen Crossey, Anne Marie McCann, Mary Ellen McNulty, and Judy Rauch. Welcome to all new members. Members pair up to plan and lead each gathering. The group is very close to the sisters who live at Elizabeth Seton Convent.

Simply Seton Women is our newest group. They are about 8 women and one sister supporter. They were originally named Simply Women. This group that has been together for years and started when the Sisters of Charity used their Doran Hall building as a retreat center. Sister Geri Marr is a member of this group as well as supporting the Greensburg A Seton Family. She saw that the two groups were similar in what draws them together. She introduced Simply Women to Seton Family. These women are interested in exploring the relationship further.



Please pray

for eternal happiness for...

Youngest son of Allene Kelly, who was a member of Northeast Seton Family; the father of Robin O'Brien of Pittsfield Seton Family; Joe Haddad, husband of Pittsfield Seton Family member, Mary Haddad; and for all our loved ones who have gone to their eternal happiness.

o

for healing for...

Jim Del Greco, son of Catherine Del Greco who is a deceased Seton Family member; a retired priest friend of Greensburg A Seton Family member Terri Tedeshi; Juliet, granddaughter of Greensburg A Seton Family member Mary Ann Skwirut; and for all our loved ones in need of healing.



