



Newsletter

April, 2021

Volume 19, Issue 1

Love Inventive to Infinity

Pittsfield Seton Family members employed an online questionnaire to see how members were responding to the needs of others during this year of the pandemic. Responses to the online questionnaire revealed that members dealt with this difficult period with amazing grace, generosity, creativity, and skill. Certainly the Setonian practices of prayer, learning, community, apostolic spirit and service were working among them.

For most, first priority and obligation was the safety and health of their own families. Some saw family members on weekly scheduled zoom meetings. Neighbors looked after neighbors. Delicious Christmas cookies arrived on doorsteps. Homemade soups went out to the elderly. Caring and supportive phone calls reached those who were alone. All members received both Advent and Lenten reflection books, delivered by Seton Family leaders. Greeting cards were mailed to the sick.

Zoom meetings were planned monthly, and members got to see each other again! At one point, seventeen members showed up! The group shared songs, prayers, readings, news, and discussions, using the time slot they traditionally met in person. Despite some technical challenges, this was a learning experience for all!

Throughout the months, from March 2020 on and continuing even until now, members have received daily spiritual sustenance from emails forwarded by one thoughtful member. EWTN, Dynamic Catholic, Seton Family news, daily Masses and homilies from Bishop Robert Barron were sent to members' inboxes. Their new Bishop William Byrne's 30 second reflections for each day of Lent brought clarity to the scripture and also smiles!

Privately, members had more time for attention to prayer. They connected to God for their hopes and needs through reading, meditation, daily Mass, the rosary, and/or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Some continued to participate as lectors and Eucharistic ministers when it was safe to return to Mass. A group of members cooked an amazing dinner for the new bishop and priests one Saturday night!

The future of Pittsfield Seton Family looks promising. The consensus among members is that they need to eventually continue to feed the hungry and offer help to the homeless. Perhaps they might help one of their members expand her food pantry, which she maintains in her downtown apartment and distributes to those she knows are needing food. Does their group want to invite more diverse people to join? What can they do for needy children in our area or in the world? There is much to do! Now they feel grateful and blessed and ready to use their God-given talents, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, to make a difference in the years ahead. Happy Easter to everyone! Alleluia!

Contributed by Nancy McGill and Barbara Dalo of Pittsfield Seton Family.



Happy 20th Anniversary!



Learning

Thoughts on “Simplicity”

Pittsfield Seton Family read an article titled “Simplicity”, by Sr. Maria Doris Angel Lopez, DC. This article is about St. Vincent de Paul’s understanding of simplicity and how it relates to members of Seton Family as members of the Vincen-tian Family.

The dictionary meaning of simplicity: “the quality of being simple, uncomplicated, lacking ostentation, subtlety”. Simplicity must become a lifestyle. It is a rule of life which enables us to accept and to interact with ALL people with the kindness and dignity they deserve. Thoughts, words, and actions are offered for the love of God, not for personal recognition or adulation.

The dictionary meaning for duplicity: “contradictory, two-faced thought, speech, or ac-tion; deception.” We live in a duplicitous world: politically, spiritually, socially, and medically. So-cial media causes friction among family, friends, neighbors, and parishioners. We need to monitor what we watch, read, or listen to. We need a bal-ance. We need simplicity. We need to keep in con-tact with those near and at a distance to give and nurture our support.

Duplicity is not just the state of world in which we now live. If we look back to the history of the world and the church, we will find greed, cheating, lying, and disrespect. The opposite of duplicity is honesty, simple truth, respect, trust....simplicity! “Simplicity is a virtue that in-cludes more than truth and purity of intention; it is also a quality through which all deception and du-plicity are removed from our words and actions.” Our words and our actions need to be in accord with the “maxims of the gospel.”

Thoughts on “Covid-19”

Certainly the pandemic brought negative experi-ence in its wake: Everything in life we enjoyed has been either cancelled or altered due to the vi-rus. Interactions with family, friends, and parish-ioners have been minimal or nonexistent. We have not been able to enjoy large group gatherings or celebrations with family/friends or at church. The rise of Covid-19 cases and deaths, especially when this touched our family and friends,

has been scary. We’ve lost family and friends and can’t attend their funeral services. We’re not able to get close to anyone to shake hands or to give hugs. We miss coming together for in-person Seton Family meetings and any other meetings in our personal or parish life.

There have been some positive experienc-es during the pandemic: We have more time for reflection, meditation, praying, reading the Bible, and listening to Bishop Barron or viewing his vid-eos. We’re learning new things like hosting or attending ZOOM meetings. ZOOM has brought families and friends together. We found more cre-ative ways to interact with others: drive-by birth-day celebrations and a neighborhood art show. We’ve enjoyed listening to the positivity of oth-ers. We reached out to a member who could not find anything positive. We encouraged all to limit watching the news and to find a comedic outlet.

Thoughts on “Peace”

How do we achieve peace, in the world, our com-munities, in ourselves and in our home? How do we keep Peace? Where do we find hope in con-tinuing to seek peace?

Most in the Brookline Seton Family agree that the political divisions in our country and in our families are disturbing. In order to achieve peace and harmony in places where we live, we must work to respect other people and their opin-ions. This isn’t always easy. Respect is a key element in keeping peace. Possibly, we all should try to work one-on-one with individuals who have different opinions from ours. However, in some instances, politics, especially right now in our world, is not a subject that can be discussed with our family members or close friends and so we ignore this subject completely.

Did you know that the word “peace” is mentioned in the bible more than any other refer-ence? Jesus said, I give you my peace, not the world’s peace.

An overwhelming sentiment in the Brook-line Seton Family discussion was “hope”! Mem-bers named something that gave them hope in the future of our world. The pandemic has shown in so many ways that people inspire us. Children have involved themselves in food drives, charita-ble works to raise money and, in one instance, a child directed that her guests bring a food item to

donate rather than a birthday gift. Inspiration can be found in Sr. Cyril Aaron, SC. She was the dean of Seton Hill College but left that post so that she could serve the poor in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, showing that there are many examples of good people throughout history.

Phoning people who live alone and can't get out right now just to connect so that they know they aren't forgotten. ABC Nightly News ends with a good story every night, because so much of our news is just plain depressing. The sentiment of the group is that the majority of people in our world are good and want to do good work. Prayer plays a big part for our inner peace as well, especially praying the rosary; finding peace and comfort with Mary.

Fratelli Tutti

"*Fratelli Tutti*" is becoming a household phrase as Brookline Seton Family starts to read Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti, on Social Friendship*. This encyclical is a sequel to Pope Francis' *Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home*. We are part of the earth community. *Laudato Si'* emphasized that we are an integral part of creation; how we treat each other is indicative of how we treat the earth. *Fratelli Tutti* looks more closely at how people are treating each other, the effect it is having on the human family and the whole earth community, and the meaning of the Christian call to love each other. *Fratelli Tutti* can be downloaded from the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) website or purchased from them or on Amazon. Make *Fratelli Tutti* a household phrase for your own spiritual enrichment.

Visit Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg, Maryland

Seton Shrine virtual tours are available through April and May, at least. Tour the buildings and grounds important to Elizabeth Seton and her early band of Sisters of Charity from the convenience of your own home. This is an opportunity for all Seton Family members, especially those who live at a distance from these historic sites and are not able to visit in-person. Search under setonshrine.org/virtual-tours for information.



Pittsfield Seton Family is diving into the book titled You'll Never Be Younger, by William J. O'Malley, SJ. Sounds like a book for all of us to read!

Prayer

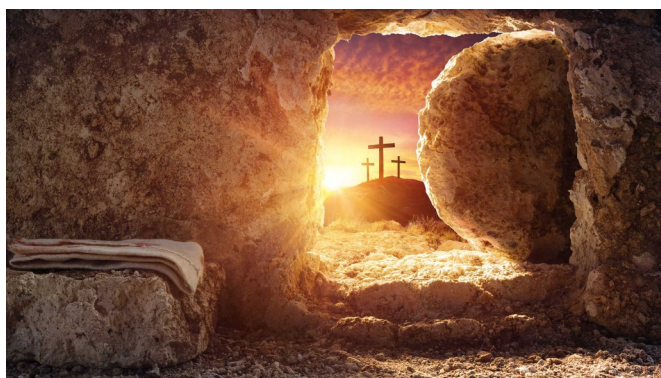
Brookline Seton Family has used Lectio Divina as a model for praying together. Their bookmark relating the process is shared with all in this issue of the *Seton Family Newsletter*. Prayer is initiated by God. Scripture is a wonderful way to listen to God before responding.

Brookline Seton Family encouraged one another to keep Lent front-and-center in their spiritual life by sharing their Lenten practices.

Ideas for an opening prayer: Prayer of Seton Family, Seton Family Promise, a Prayer for Lenten Grace, a moment of silent prayer petitions, followed by a prayer for healing or some familiar prayer.

Sharing: Pittsfield Seton Family members shared a Lenten reflection from a booklet shared in common and reflected on: What thought(s) left a lasting impression on you? Did it lead you to put these thoughts into action?

Some reflections shared by Pittsfield Seton Family: "Reaching for the Rock" used the scripture passage "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church." Peter denied Jesus. He is an example of a disciple who made mistakes and received God's mercy. We are drawn to Peter not only because he is fallible but also because he represents hope and faithfulness. We are not perfect. We make mistakes. God is always with us. He waits with open arms with His love and mercy when we falter.



“Mundane Miracles” used the scripture passage “But his servants came up and reasoned with him. ‘My father, they said, ‘If the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it?’” Jesus wasn’t accepted by the people in His own hometown because He was just the carpenter’s son. They didn’t recognize the extraordinary in the ordinary birth of the child born in a stable. If we wait for the extraordinary to happen, we miss the special, ordinary moments which occur daily - like the deer family in the backyard, nature’s beauty on a walk in the woods captured on camera, a snow-covered bush on a side yard, the kindness of the front-line workers, volunteers, and vaccine recipients at a vaccination site, the vaccine itself! All of these miracles are extraordinary, and we need to live in the present and find miracles every day. We find God in each of them. Prayer: God of both the extraordinary and the ordinary, give us eyes to see the miracles around us and faith to believe you are present even in the most mundane moments of our lives. Cure our cynicism with healing waters of your unconditional love.

“Childlike Love” uses the scripture passage “For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Have our Lenten goals just been a list of rules, rituals and sacrifices? Or, are we meeting our goals for the love of God? God only wants our trust, love, and devotion. An aunt consoling a nephew whose father passed away unexpectedly, reminded him that, in God’s eyes, he is enough. We are all enough when we chose love. Prayer: God of infinite love, it can be challenging to love those who don’t love us, to love those who hurt us, to love in the face of hate, but we know it is the only way to true joy. Teach us to love as you do, without limit, without conditions.

“A World Apart” uses the scripture passage “The things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create.” It is easy to look at the bad things that occur in our lives. Can we look at all of the good that occurs and rejoice? We may not be able to change our circumstances or our world, but we can change our reaction and attitude. Prayer: Spirit of God, speak to me in the silence. Fill my heart and mind with the knowledge that the way forward can be trusted even if it can’t be changed, if I am grounded in God and rejoice always.

Ideas for a closing prayer: A Prayer for Lenten Simplicity (screen share), Prayer to St. Vincent de Paul.



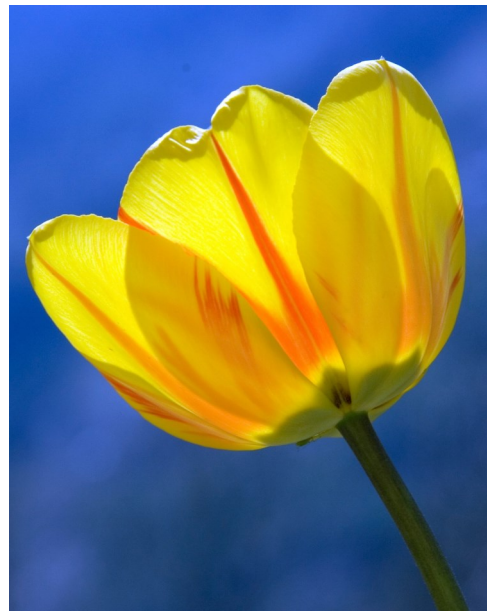
Community

Pittsfield Seton Family lost a dear friend when Fr. Deeker died. They scheduled a Mass for him and shared warm memories.

Sister Claudia Rushlow, facilitator for Tuscon Seton Family, calls members frequently to keep in touch with them during this time when in-person gatherings are not possible. This group does not have the advantage of having zoom available to them because of technological challenges!

Apostolic Spirit

For a look at Apostolic Spirit, see how members put that spirit into action. Apostolic spirit is the fire burning within us that has us see the need around us and the opportunities to serve using the talents and skills and circumstances that bless our lives.



Service

Brookline Seton Family continues to support Wednesday's Table, providing food to the hungry.

Service, as we have found ways to serve pre-pandemic, may not be available to us in pandemic times, but remember Vincent’s words: “love is inventive to infinitely.” The feature article contributed by Pittsfield Seton Family for this newsletter certainly shows how “inventive” love can get in challenging times. In particular, it shows that “service” is

as close as response to needs in our own families, neighbors, church family, or can be as far flung as our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Please Pray for...

Eternal happiness for all our loved ones who have died recently and for those who have no one to pray for them.

For healing for:

Brother of Elaine Broderick, Pittsfield Seton Family; Patty and Ray Nichols, daughter and son-in-law of Bonnie Mele, Pittsfield Seton Family member; Ann Brennan, Pittsfield Seton Family; Susan Merker, friend of Pittsfield Seton Family; Barbara Dalo, Pittsfield Seton Family; Michele Sweet, sister of Pittsfield Seton Family member Beverly Dubiski; Marianna Pacheco, Pittsfield Seton Family; Katrina, daughter of Pittsfield Seton Family member Lola Warren; Elaine Broderick, Pittsfield Seton Family member; Sue, friend of Pittsfield Seton family member Barbara Dalo; and all our loved ones who are in need of healing.

For blessings on all in need of god's blessing at this time.

Opportunities!

“We Can’t Quarantine Compassion”

Every year Seton Hill University and the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill collaborate to offer a lecture on a timely topic of social and environmental justice with global impact. It develops an understanding of Catholic Social Teachings and how they pertain to this dialogue. This year Catherine O'Donnell will be the guest lecturer. She is the author of Elizabeth Seton: American Saint and will address the topic “We Can’t Quarantine Compassion”, connecting Elizabeth Seton’s experience of relationships with our challenging times. This year the lecture is being offered virtually and free to everyone. Register at www.scs.org. When you register, a link to the lecture will be sent to your email address. The virtual lecture will be held Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 7:00-8:00 pm EDT. Don’t miss out on this wonderful opportunity to hear a renowned author on Elizabeth Seton tackle a timely topic from Elizabeth’s point of view.

Register now; this is dated material!

Vincentian Family Meeting on zoom

Vincentian Family members from the Diocese of Pittsburgh and Greensburg are gathering virtually on Saturday, April 24, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Seton Family members from these two dioceses are encouraged to join this gathering. The title of our time together is “Carrying the Charism Through and Beyond Covid-19”. As part of the program on April 24, Seton Hill University Service Learning Students will present their experiences. There will be time for questions, sharing, and discussion on our mutual call to service. No registration is required. The zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83264336878?pwd=SWIOYkZ5bDIZRjMyWVJYZVgyc0xTZz09> Or just get into zoom and join with Meeting ID 832 6433 6878 and Password 062722.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Seton Center!

Seton Family Core Team decided to congratulate Elizabeth Seton Center in Pittsburgh on the occasion of their 35th anniversary and promote the Seton Family group centered in Brookline in Pittsburgh by putting an ad in Elizabeth Seton Center’s celebration booklet. Elizabeth Seton Center offers inter-generational services to children and seniors, with day care which includes many opportunities to interact. The Center was established in the Elizabeth Seton High School space when the high school merged with then South Catholic High School to form Seton La Salle High School. The ad is designed by Lynn Wagner and beautifully uses graphics that cannot be adequately depicted here. The best we can do is share what the ad says:

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Spiritual Connection

Graduates of ESHS and others, you may be interested in knowing there is a group in the Brookline area who meet once a month to connect with the “Seton Spirit”

If interested, please contact Julie Dott Schoppen, ESHS '75 for more information on Seton Family—deepening learning, prayer, community, service and apostolic spirit.

(Julie’s contact information)



SETON FAMILY
Congratulates
Elizabeth Seton Center
on 35 years of service

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Read a Scripture passage aloud slowly. Notice what phrase captures your attention and be attentive to its meaning. Silent pause.

Mediatio: Read the passage aloud again, reflecting on the passage, allowing God to speak to you through it. Silent pause.

Oratio: Read it aloud slowly a third time, allowing it to be your prayer or your response to God's gift of insight to you. Silent pause.

Contemplatio: Read it aloud slowly a fourth time, now simply resting in God's word.

The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill Statement on the Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccine

"Impelled by Christ and moved by Gospel values proclaiming the inherent dignity and equality of every person, we, the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, declare that we are committed to using our private, personal and societal voices to effect equitable global distribution of and access to Covid-19 vaccines. We pledge to commit time and effort to work with and establish collaborative efforts to that end within our charism family, our extended Christian family and in cooperation with other religious institutes and interested international NGO's to make the Covid-19 vaccines available to all."

The most recent information on the global efforts to assure that all have access to the vaccines can be found at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/01/world/vaccine-patents-us-eu.html> (thanks to St. Maria Goetschalckx, SC). Please think creatively about how Seton Family can join this effort, in whatever way we can in our own circumstances.

