



THE HEART OF THE HALL

The student publication for the Office of Mission and Ministry



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Editor's Note

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace in this world. You will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

The world these past few months has almost become unrecognizable as our country is experiencing a period of time commonly referred to as “history in the making.” Ordinary life quickly circled into pandemonium after students returned to campus from their blissful week of spring break and were immediately met with emails from President Nyre on the suspension of “all in-person classes.”

Face masks and rubber gloves have become common accessories and keeping six feet apart from our neighbors has never been as necessary as it is during the current global pandemic. Across the world, individuals are challenged by the dramatic changes of remaining indoors, and students at Seton Hall consequently realize they have overlooked the beauty of attending a university and being surrounded by their fellow classmates and professors.

The most essential message that “The Heart of the Hall” wishes to communicate to its staff and readers is the way in which faith can alleviate the struggle of present times. Finding peace within the disorder brought about by the coronavirus can make the difference between a good day and a bad day while confined in our homes. Finding hope, most importantly, allows individuals to accept the changes of the world and to adapt to the uncertainty of daily life that will soon be overcome by the Lord.

This experience, our “history in the

the making,” has become a universal setback undergone by the entire world. It is through this collective suffering that nations come together and work toward something beautiful—whether it be a cure to the virus or the actions of communities supporting each other in both little and large ways. The benefit of a loving community and the encouragement of life above what is ordinary and physical connects the five pieces of writing included in our Spring Edition.

Emma Newgarden, the other Co-Editor-in-Chief of “The Heart of the Hall,” begins the issue with an article addressing the Church’s solution to closing its chapel doors and hosting virtual Masses. Questions about this major difference in religious practice, such as the validity of a ceremony without the sacrament of the Eucharist, are answered by the writer who relates the celebration of Mass online to medieval Christians who worshiped in the past. The value of communion is also explained through Emma’s article to resolve the anxieties of those no longer able to receive.

Nicholas Cizin, a senior at Seton Hall University and new writer for the publication, reflects on his pilgrimage upon Mount Athos and shares various tidbits of wisdom learned while speaking to the monks on his spiritual journey. He hopes that his experience at the monastery will inspire others to find a similar peace in their everyday lives—or even a peace necessary to cope with the unfamiliarity of COVID-19.

The next article is written by another new member of “The Heart of the Hall” team, Silvia Maresca. In her article, “Called by God,” Silvia

compares diverse vocations and provides a personal story on how she discovered her passion for elementary and special education.

Ben Jaros, a soon-to-be graduate of Seton Hall and founder of the publication, leaves the community with one final message. An appreciation for the ordinary moments of daily life constitutes the core of Ben’s article as he references the spread of the coronavirus that stripped individuals of their normal routines. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the saint who gifts the campus with her name and guidance, is connected to the current situation of the world through her trials as a widow and single mother.

The Spring Edition concludes with a poem written by James Unciano titled “Jesus Is All We Need.” A detachment from material possessions and the freedom found in loving Jesus is illustrated through James’ inspirational words.

On behalf of “The Heart of the Hall” and all its members, we hope that you are staying safe, healthy, and remembering that the support of a community and simple reflection during these difficult times can compensate for the negativity surrounding our modern lives.

By Bridgette Favale
Editor-in-Chief Of Layout



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VIRTUAL MASS:

SPENDING SUNDAY ONLINE

By Emma Newgarden

When Catholic churches first began to suspend Masses a few weeks back, the threat of the pandemic still felt surreal. At that point, Seton Hall was still open, and while rumors of other schools sending students home were beginning to circulate, I still felt very far removed from it all. “That can’t happen here,” said the voice of denial in my head, too absorbed in my little bubble of campus activities to heed the news of alarm spreading across the country.

In a matter of days, the cracks began to show; first classes were canceled, then my spring track season was called off. But for me, the reality of the crisis only set in after reading the email announcing that Mass at the chapel, whose doors I had never once seen closed in my time at Seton Hall, was no longer open to students and public—except, that is, by internet

“livestream”, each Sunday at 8 p.m.

The Seton Hall community was not alone in feeling this loss and confusion surrounding the Church’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea that the holy Mass could simply “go virtual” just like any class, club meeting, or other staple of university life struck many students as dubious. Catholics all over the world were left reeling at Pope Francis’ encouragement to stay home and watch the Mass online instead.

Despite understanding the necessity of avoiding physical contact in light of health and safety concerns, the sudden switch to virtual platforms raises a slew of questions about the relationship of the Church to technology as well as the significance of the Mass itself. Is watching a virtual Mass worthwhile even without being able to receive the Eucharist? Is there a difference in validity from the physical Mass, and

why does it matter?

Answering these questions really comes down to understanding the overall meaning of the Mass. While celebration of the Eucharist is at the center of the sacred liturgy, participating in it has never been contingent upon receiving. In medieval times, most Christians received the host very rarely, despite being physically present at Mass.

Simply gazing upon the elevated host was believed to bring the faithful into the closest possible contact with the Divine Presence. This belief stemmed from the ancient (mis)understanding of physical sight as an intrinsically higher sense than taste and touch, and that the eye forms images by sending out rays of light which it then receives back. To see, was literally to be in communion with an object and to partake in its existence.

While this notion falls considerably short of the Church’s full understanding of receiving Communion, medieval Christians were definitely on to something with the idea that people are able to share in the body of Christ without physically ingesting the host; they were making

what is known as a “spiritual” communion. The key, however, was not so much in laying eyes on the Eucharist, but in the intense longing to become united to Christ that was expressed through this act. In spiritual communion, a worshiper who expresses in prayer a genuine desire for the Lord to enter his/her heart and begs for His grace becomes united with all members of the Church, and, along with them, does become an actual participant in the totality of Christ’s sacrifice.

In this way, Christian soldiers overseas, secret Christians in Korea, and countless groups throughout history unable to practice their faith openly have been able to participate in the sacrifice of the Mass. The same opportunity extends to us today, prevented by quarantine from attending the Mass in person.

For us, watching Sunday Mass online or on television expresses that same desire as the Medieval Christians, to enter into communion with Jesus as far as we are able, at least in our souls if not, for the time being, in our bodies. In fact, virtual Mass may represent an even more conscious act of will because we have to re-orient our brains to view screen-time, in this moment, as something devotional, resisting the urge to multitask or change the channel as we might during any other broadcast.

However, Christianity is a very tactile religion. At its heart, the Incarnation, the mystery that God became man in Jesus Christ, is closely tied to the truth of Jesus’ real presence in the Eucharist. For Christians, matter matters, and receiving Jesus’ body is still the ultimate form of communion.

Therefore, virtual mass is not a substitute for the actual liturgy. Yet, neither is it merely a pale imitation intended only to provide symbolic consolation, to “make up” for our absence. It truly allows us to join in a community of worship to hear the Word of God, which moves us to call out to Him in praise and thanksgiving. Many saints of the Catholic Church

have been witnesses to the value of spiritual communion. The testament of St. Clare of Assisi is particularly meaningful for our present situation.

One Christmas Eve, when Clare was too sick to go to Mass with her sisters, the Holy Spirit projected the same service onto her bedroom wall for her to view. For this miracle in the 13th century-essentially, the first livestream! - St. Clare was named patroness of television.

Her experience draws us to appreciate that the Mass is a great gift which is offered for us, though we often take it for granted. Having the opportunity to view the Eucharistic celebration, even on a screen, means having the ability to be strengthened with the grace of the sacrament.

In some ways, the virtual Mass presents an opportunity to dig deeper into our faith and become more grounded in the enduring validity of this greatest prayer of the Church. The way it keeps the integrity of the sacrament testifies confidently to the resilience of our faith to respond to crises in the modern world.

However long this pandemic persists, the Church will remain our rock, a strong foundation to lean on. Regardless of physical separation, we are as ever her body united in Christ, just as Seton Hall is still our university even away from campus.

In modern day America, we are so blessed to have easy access to the sacraments, without fear of persecution, restrictions, or censure. Particularly at Seton Hall as a Catholic University, we are used to seeing church as a place that is always available for us to walk in seeking solace and community.

The challenge for us as this pandemic runs its course is to accept that extra element of sacrifice in physical distance, but also to realize that we still can find that unity; by “tuning in” to Mass, we may join in spiritual communion and grow in love and ongoing for the Eucharist, anticipating the joy of the day when our chapel may open its doors again.

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FOUR DAYS ON THE *Holy Mountain* By Nicholas Cizin

This past summer, I was blessed to spend four days on Mount Athos. The pilgrimage was organized by the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), a national college student ministry. Mount Athos, often referred to as the Holy Mountain, is a peninsula in Northern Greece dedicated solely to monasteries.

According to Athonite tradition, the Blessed Virgin Mary, sailing to Cyprus with St. John the Evangelist, was blown off course and landed on the peninsula. Overwhelmed by its natural beauty, she blessed it and asked her Son for it to be her garden. A voice replied saying, "let this place be your inheritance and your garden, a paradise and a haven of salvation for those seeking to be saved."

The peninsula is known to have a Christian presence for the last 1,800 years and historical monastic traditions dating back to 800 A.D. It is currently home to twenty monasteries, twelve sketes, which are smaller monastic communities, and individual cells scattered among the wilderness, where monks live in isolation.

We stayed at Xenophontos monastery, dedicated to St. George the Trophy-bearer. It was founded in 998 A.D. The monastery sits on the coastline with mountains in the backdrop. Built with castle-like walls, it is a fortress of prayer and peace. Two churches stand in the center of the monastery, representing the heart, or center of life at the monastery. One church was so

old that some icons on its stone walls had been defaced by invading Ottomans and pirates. Although rich with artifacts and history, Mount Athos is anything but a stagnant museum; it is a peninsula with a ceaseless mission, to pray constantly for all of humanity and to assist pilgrims on their spiritual journey.

Our day started with church services at 4:30 AM. Walking to church in the middle of the night, I felt like we had traveled back in time when Christians worshiped secretly at night to escape Roman persecution.

Starting the full liturgical cycle with the Hours services, and then Orthros (Matins) and Divine Liturgy, morning services concluded around 9 AM. These long hours in church were anything but painful. They were moments of peace and serenity, captivated by melodious chanting.

Before the sun rose, we could hardly see the icons on the iconostasis (icon screen in Orthodox Churches), but as dawn broke, the golden iconostasis was illuminated by beams of sunlight. It was a breath-taking moment. I felt as if we were at the center of the universe;



nothing outside of the church building mattered at that moment. This level of devotion and concentration emanated from the monks. Their entire way of life epitomizes the laying aside of earthly cares. Breakfast followed Divine Liturgy. We ate in silence while a monk read aloud a story on the life of a saint. After breakfast, the monks worked, gardening, cooking, painting icons, and we visited other monasteries.

Finally, we returned to the monastery for evening services and dinner. Everything at the monastery was structured. From when to attend church, eat, work, and relax, it reminded me of the ironic truth that in structure and obedience to Christ we find freedom.

At the monastery we had a chance to visit the ossuary, a building used to house the bones of deceased monks. I felt a presence there, one of grace and peace. A monk explained this was the grace the deceased monks acquired while alive and left behind in their bones. It shows the very real connection between body and soul. He also pointed out how all the skulls looked the same.

No matter who the monks were in life, they all looked the same now. This was a sobering reminder that the same fate, death, awaits us all, and that we shouldn't focus on earthly things which pass away. We were very fortunate to speak with the abbot, or head monk, of the monastery. He shared wisdom with us and answered our questions. I will relay some of his messages to you.

The abbot was keenly aware of our struggles as college students and the challenges of living in the twenty-first century. Technology gives us access to ample information and communication, but it has also created new challenges and dangers. The abbot pointed this out saying, "we think we can find happiness through technology, and it has its good uses, it requires self-control."

I can personally relate to this. My phone is an incredible distraction. I've caught myself scrolling endlessly on social media. Technology can distract us from our schoolwork, those around us, prayer, or even our relationship with God. Social media can make us feel horrible about

ourselves, if we compare ourselves to the flawless pictures posted.

I am not advocating the absence of technology, just to be more aware of how much we use it and in what way. Are we using it in search of happiness? Genuine "joy, peace, hope and love all come from Christ" said the abbot. It amazed me how calm, peaceful and joyful the monks were. Their traits certainly demonstrate the effect of prayer, fasting, and a Christ-centered life.

Rest is also difficult to find in our day and age. Through technology, we can work anywhere and at any time. Burn-out and feeling overwhelmed is common among students. The abbot reminded us that, "similar to how we seek relaxation when our body is tired, when you're spiritually tired, seek relaxation through prayer and confession."

When stressed, we should seek spiritual relaxation. Attending OCF or Campus Ministry retreats have certainly helped me manage the semester workload. It feels counterintuitive to spend an entire weekend at a retreat instead of studying, but it's always worth it. I come back spiritually renewed, and energized to take on schoolwork.

In times of spiritual exhaustion, turn to the Lord. As the abbot continued, "put Christ ahead of your difficulties, because He's always present. Through Christ the impossible is possible. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The abbot told this encouraging story about praying amidst busy schedules and everyday tasks:

One day a man was visited by an angel. The angel asked the man why he didn't pray. The man replied, "because in the morning I am too busy. Before I go to work, I must make breakfast, get dressed, and brush my teeth. I have no time." The angel told him to pray while doing these things.

Prayer does not have to be complicated. It can be a simple "Lord give me strength" or "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me" while washing the dishes. Thinking of God in your daily life is prayer. The abbot also instructed us to "love God and love your neighbor. You love God by being

obedient to His will, and you love your neighbor by understanding and forgiving." Life is very complicated, but by focusing on these two things, we can start to simplify it and our relationships with others.

The abbot then shared some advice on the spiritual struggles with sin. He said, "there are two ways to ignore thoughts. First, do not open a dialogue with them, and second, participate in prayers to calm the thought coming up inside." Temptations start as a thought. By calling on God and asking for His assistance, we can ignore our thoughts and resist temptation. He also stated, "our ego prevents progress in our spiritual life," and "with sins we repeat, continue to confess and do not lose hope."

Finally, I asked the abbot what to do if you feel like you're just going through the motions of prayer, because sometimes while praying I am just not "into it" like I am other times. He said, "don't be discouraged, because just like when eating food, you don't have to be thinking about food for it to still nourish you." This was very encouraging. While the abbot spoke to us, he continued to pray on a prayer rope. When one of us asked how he is able to talk and pray at the same time; he smiled and lightheartedly asked how we are able to talk and breathe. He explained that the condition of his heart – where there is remembrance that God is with us – allows him to pray constantly.

I cannot thank the monks and everyone that made the trip possible enough. Glory to God! It was an experience I'll never forget. After visiting the monastery, I felt spiritually renewed, far more relaxed and refreshed than after a beach vacation. College is a great time to take advantage of trips through Seton Hall's Campus Ministry or OCF. If you have never visited a monastery, I implore you to do so. There are many right here in the United States. We can even use this time of COVID-19 to contemplate the Abbot's advice and cultivate our prayer life. We can all find the same spirit of peace and joy that is present at monasteries, in our own homes, "for indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).



“Who do you want to be when you grow up?” I am sure we were all asked this question at some point during our childhood and/or young adulthood. As college students, we now face this topic more pressingly as we are at the beginning of our adult lives.

But questions such as “What is your major?”, “What career do you aspire for?”, or “What do you want to do with your life?” still absorb us. At times we may be sure of our direction, yet other times we may doubt it.

This past January, I had the opportunity to attend a day retreat on the theme of vocations at my parish. This helped me reflect more deeply on this topic and its connection to my personal life as well. At the retreat, I learned that the word vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare*, which means to call, summon, and name.

God calls us, He summons us, and He names us as His own. He has placed His mark on each of us by creating us in His image and likeness; therefore, each person is

a child of God simply because they are a human being. Ultimately, it is in God that our identity is found.

Another major highlight of this retreat was when people were invited to share their vocation stories. These accounts mostly revolved around marriage and religious life, which are typically referred to as the main vocation paths. As I listened to the stories, I could not help but ask myself again the question, “What is my vocation?”

Growing up in a very devout Catholic family, I learned about the beauty and richness of my faith from a very young age. The earliest memory I recall is when my grandmother gathered my two older siblings and me to teach us the catechism. The passion and love that radiated from her during these moments were surely a testament of God working through her to bring His little ones closer to Him!

As the years passed by, I slowly began discovering the love for children that God put into my heart, which is ultimately what drove me to major in

CALLED BY GOD

BY SILVIA MARESCA

elementary and special education. For the past five years I have been teaching religious education at my parish, and I can testify it is a very meaningful and special part of my week.

Not only am I able to teach children, which is something I sincerely enjoy, but I teach them about Jesus, and the wonderful truth of the Catholic Faith. Each time my eyes meet the young faces, I recapture the image of my grandmother teaching me catechism,

and I strive to bring the same passion, joy, and love I saw in her. Though I do not yet know what my specific calling is, I often find it helpful to reflect on the main vocations: the consecrated life and marriage. But why are these considered vocations?

We can first begin by analyzing what it means to live the consecrated life. The priesthood has its roots directly in Jesus Christ, Who prior to His Ascension into Heaven said to His Apostles, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 18-20).

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Here, Jesus made it clear that His mission is to continue till the end of time, and it continues today with the presence of the priests in our Church. Through them, Jesus' sacrificial love for us continues to be commemorated each time at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass right here in the Seton Hall campus chapel and churches worldwide.

With the gift of the Eucharist we are invited to receive Jesus Christ fully into our lives and be the light

and presence for others around us; without the priest, the grace from all the sacraments would not be possible. As St. Jean Vianney stated in his Catechism on the Priesthood, "The Priest is not a priest for himself...After God the priest is everything."

The Catholic Church has a true gift in the priest, a living reminder that Jesus Christ continues to be with us. We also have a gift in all the other consecrated people, sisters and brothers, who, likewise, by taking the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience choose a life completely devoted to God and leading the flock of humanity to know, love, and serve the Lord.

The second main vocation worthy of reflection is marriage. Its origins in Christian tradition are rooted in the first book of Holy Scripture, Genesis, when "God created man in his own image...male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:27 & 28).

Jesus Christ referred to this very passage when He declared, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh". So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Matthew 19:5-6).

Thus, the union of husband and wife is not only a human institution, but is divinely rooted in Christ, which is why it is referred to as Holy Matrimony. The sacrament binds together a man and a woman, who choose each other and unite themselves under a covenant of love, vowing life-long faithfulness and "procreation and education" of their children (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1601).

Looking back at Genesis, it is clear that in the creation of families, marriage serves God's purpose and plan for humanity. Similar to the religious life, this vocation is a great challenge and requires a radical trust in God for husband and wife to grow in knowing, loving, and serving God and guiding

their children towards this ultimate goal. Along with this, both of these vocations seem to require an amount of self-sacrifice: the consecrated person renounces a worldly life, and instead chooses poverty, chastity, and obedience; and in marriage, both man and woman may renounce career goals, an independent life, luxury, etc. and instead devote themselves to God through each other and their children.

But what about single life? Is it possible to have a vocation and be single? And do careers fit anywhere in this puzzle? Recently, I learned the very inspiring story of the Catholic Italian woman, Annalena Tonelli, which can help answer this question.

At 27 years of age, Annalena moved to Wajir, Kenya, originally as a teacher, but then began ministering to the sick people in the village. She worked largely among the very poor and destitute Muslim and Somalian communities, especially those people with tuberculosis, who were often ostracized and left to suffer and die alone, because of the stigma associated with this disease.

Her humanitarian efforts included establishing the Farah Center (Center of Joy), where the sick could come to live while Annalena treated their illnesses. Furthermore, not only did she serve them medically as a nurse, she additionally treated each person with dignity and, most of all, with love: listening to them, walking through life with them, being the presence of love.

Annalena would often spend hours into the night staying by her patients, whom she referred to as "God's sparrows." She cared for everyone, no matter how sick they were. This is a living proof of how the language of love can cross the divide of all human barriers, such as fear or difference of religion.

Sadly, in 2003, Annalena was brutally shot as she served the sick in the village. However, her legacy lives on to this day in the center that still stands.

The essence of her life of service is

summed up well in these words she she spoke:

“The poor are waiting for us...The ways of service are infinite and left to the imagination. Let us not wait to be instructed in how to serve. We invent and we live the new heavens and the new earth each day of our lives. If we don’t love, God remains without an epiphany. We are the visible sign of his presence and we make him alive in this infernal world where it seems that he is not. We make him alive each time we stop next to a wounded person” (Rachel Jones, A Love Stronger Than Fear, para. 10).

Annalena could have chosen a life of comfort, free from exposure to the terrible diseases she faced daily in the villages of Africa. Instead she sacrificed this, and indeed her life, for a greater good, touching the lives of the neediest.

She went where God was calling, and by serving the hundreds, she served God and fulfilled Jesus’ words “whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25: 40).

Furthermore, Annalena’s work was more than a career; her concern was not earning an income, making a living, or personally advancing in the medical field. All her efforts were put into action for the good of others. No doubt, it was not an easy life for her, but as Pope Benedict XVI stated in his encyclical letter Spe Salvi, “Man was created for greatness—for God himself; he was created to be filled by God.”

In this sense, greatness does not consist of material wealth, fame, and fortune. Instead, it is in knowing, loving and serving God that each person can discover their greatness and their vocation, which extends beyond the superficial purposes of a career.

As Seton Hall students preparing to be the future leaders of the world, this is truly worth pondering and striving for. Only in God’s

happiness and fulfillment for our lives. Perhaps then, vocation is as St. Teresa of Calcutta stated: “Do not worry about your career. Concern yourself with your vocation, and that is to be lovers of Jesus.”

So whatever anxieties or uncertainties we may be facing about school, work, or anything regarding our future, let us place all our hopes, fears, and dreams in God’s hands.

“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

With hope and joy we can continue to know, love, and serve God and trust in His beautiful design for our lives.



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ON HOPE

and

"GETTING
BACK
TO
NORMAL"

BY BEN JAROS

The Heart of the Hall would like to formally say farewell to Ben Jaros, a graduating senior and the founder of the publication. We thank you for everything you have done to strengthen the Christian voice of our Seton Hall community!

In an email to the entire University Community on Tuesday, March 10th, President Nyre announced to all students that classes would be canceled for the remainder of that week and, that classes would "resume online beginning on Monday, March 16th, through at least Sunday, March 22nd."

The announcement was met with a mix of disbelief, of euphoria, for what some saw as a "Second Spring Break," and of a pervasive ambiguity about what this would mean for the future of the semester. It also raised a faintly guilty suspicion: Did our Administration, and every University Administration in the country, over-react?

We had no way to really know, at the time, nor, candidly, did they. Many students either briefly went home with the intention to come back, "after everything had passed." Or, having just been home for Spring Break decided to "wait it out."

Then, on Wednesday March 18th, one week later, in an announcement from the University's Health Intervention and Communication team, all students were informed that remote learning would continue for the rest of the Spring semester and that, unless granted an exception, students living on campus had three days to move out.

In one moment, all of the future semester's ambiguity had been transformed into a concrete reality that hit like a punch to the gut: The Spring Semester of 2020, as we had known it, was over. However, canceling in-person classes was just the beginning. Commencement would be postponed. In-person Masses at Seton Hall and broadly throughout the country were canceled. State and local governments ordered the closure of all "non-essential" businesses.

Many companies put some freeze on hiring, leaving many graduating

seniors extraordinarily anxious about their immediate future.

All of these changes have left many feeling despondent in their day-to-day lives, anxious about the future, and wondering, "What will it look like once we get back to normal?"

This normal will look different for the members of our administration, of our faculty, of our priest community, and of our student body, in particular, our graduating seniors. Yet, we are not just anxious about what getting back to normal will look like, we are also anxious about "when" that return will take place. This uncertainty about the timeline seems to be a greater cause of the anxiety and fear affecting our community.

This anxiety has, if nothing else, revealed how the "ordinary" and "mundane" moments of our lives are anything but "ordinary." Having talked with many faculty members who have been here over twenty years, they have told me it is easy to fall into a year-to-year rhythm.

The Summer ends, students come back to campus, classes begin, Christmas break comes, spring classes begin, and before one knows it, commencement happens, and the process starts all over again.

Yet, this year, in 2020, the Mystery that orients the course of history and our lives brought a different plan for the school year. No in-person classes. No casual Starbucks with friends. No rushed, or skipped, meals between classes. No Commencement in May. No "non-essential" work. The cycle was broken.

Thus, the closures and the virus allow us a unique opportunity, not just unique, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rediscover the importance of all these

run-of-the-mill, mundane, and ordinary moments. We have an opportunity to recognize the ordinary for what it actually is: extraordinary. This rediscovery is not just a solitary exercise, rather, it is an opportunity to rediscover more poignantly who we are as Seton Hall.

The Ordinary is Extraordinary

Considering that opportunity, let's start our rediscovery with our namesake: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Elizabeth experienced her own fight with infectious disease. Her husband, William Seton contracted tuberculosis. So, in 1803, Elizabeth and William journeyed to Italy from New York City, with their five children, hoping the climate would help William's failing health.

In anticipation of the challenges ahead for her life, she wrote, "resign the present and the future to Him who is the Author and conductor of both..."

Despite the journey, the family would be quarantined in the lazaretto at Livorno for several weeks. William Seton would die from tuberculosis before the year's end. In an instant, Elizabeth became a widow, with five children solely dependent upon her. She was far from home. She was unemployed, and she had five kids to feed. She was anxious about the future with no way of knowing what "normal" would be for her again or when it would arrive.

Does any of this sound familiar? A quarantine? Death? Unemployment? Uncertainty about the "normal," and anxiety about the future? This couldn't only be in 1803, because it sounds an awful lot like our situation in 2020. But it is. And her response in 1803 is just as momentous then as it is for us today.

In this moment she wrote, "My God, you are my God, and so I am now alone in the world with you and my little ones, but you are my Father and doubly theirs." One can feel the brokenness of her heart, as she exposes not only her dependence on

"our" Father, but her children's dependence on Him as well.

Yet, in this moment, does she despair or act out of fear? No. In this moment, she acted courageously. She knew, and internalized, what every member of this community sometimes needs reminding of: that she would never be alone. She writes, "I have been in a sea of troubles...But the guiding star is always bright, and the master of the storm always in view."

Nonetheless, in her pain, suffering, and anxiety, what did Elizabeth direct her attention towards? She attended to the ordinary. When she returned home to the United States, she recognized the "ordinary" need of education. Up until the mid-1800s, there was no "public," elementary school system in the United States. Rather, all primary and schooling beyond that was run through various Presbyterian, Episcopalian or other Protestant denominations.

These schools refused to serve the needs of the increasingly growing Catholic population in the United States. Elizabeth recognized this ordinary need. The need for an education. The need for the unification of faith and formation of mind. In so doing, she founded the Catholic, parochial school system and the Sisters of Charity. She recognized that the ordinary needs are actually extraordinary.

Members of the Seton Hall community, and, in particular, members of the Class of 2020, this Covid virus and its impact are not the cause of OUR despair. Rather in the words of Winston Churchill, they can be the cause of our "finest hour."

It is easy to be afraid of the uncertain in an era when we are so used to having control. It is even more difficult when your peers and the leaders (in the media, politics, the Church, etc.) seem afraid as well. But ultimately our hope for the future rests on something surer than all the experts who advise our policymakers or on all the hard,

serious efforts of all the leaders in government, business, and culture. Rather, in this hour, our hope for the future comes from the moment that each of us recognized that in-person classes and casual coffee with friends were not just events, but occasions of grace.

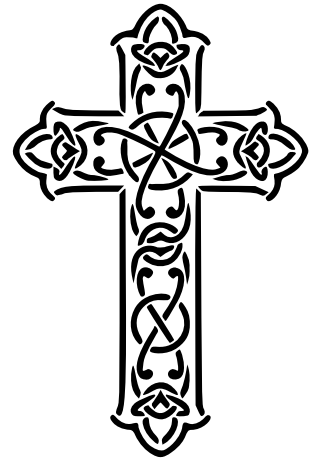
Our hope comes from the recognition that for all there may be said for technology and online courses, we have, paradoxically rediscovered through them at the end of this semester what matters most for the foundations of this campus community- real interpersonal society. May you take this to heart and remember today and for the rest of your days, that the ordinary moments are not so ordinary. Rather, the ordinary moments are extraordinary.

Congratulations Class of 2020 and remember as we go out into a sea of troubles, "the guiding star is always bright, and the master of the storm always in view."

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Pray for US.



JESUS IS ALL WE NEED



By James Unciano

We
always seek for fame,
But
we never seek His Name.
We
always seek for money and power,
But
we never appreciate the blessings He showers.

Worldly
things we say loud and proud,
But
in Jesus we are silent and quiet.

This
is what society is.
It takes away our
heart's true bliss
Which
is Jesus Himself
And
not our very own prideful selves.

Jesus
is all we need.
For
in life, in Him we will succeed.
No
material things will ever match His love,
Nor
even people will be greater than Him above.

Realizing we need
nothing in life
Will
make us satisfied with His loving guide,
Because all those
worries and fears that we hold deep inside
It
is Jesus who will set it aside.

Even those material attachments
Is
against His commandments.
Erasing
all those things is an advancement;
In
our gifted life, that'll have an enlightening
enhancement.

Let's pray and hope that
we all proceed
In
this satisfying message of God we all can read.
Because throwing away
all the greed
Will
result in our lives that God will lead,
And we will shout,
"Jesus is all we need!"

As part of the Augustine Collective, our publication includes reviews, art, and poetry. Contact an Editor to submit art, poetry, or essays.

Meet the Writers

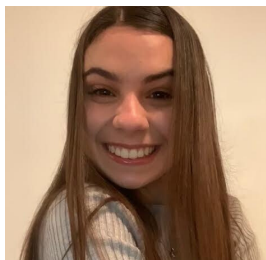
The Heart of the Hall gathers a unique and driven group of student writers.



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Emma Newgarden is a sophomore Classical Studies major from Staten Island, NY. On campus, she is a member of the Honors Program and an editor for "The Heart of the Hall." She also runs on Seton Hall's cross-country team. In her free time, Emma enjoys reading fantasy novels and coming up with new recipes.

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Bridgette studies English as a sophomore at Seton Hall University. She combines her passions for writing and the Catholic faith as an editor of "The Heart of the Hall" in which she hopes to enrich her understanding of how to create a publication for her future in an English career. Bridgette can often be found playing piano or hiking at times when she is not working on a new edition.

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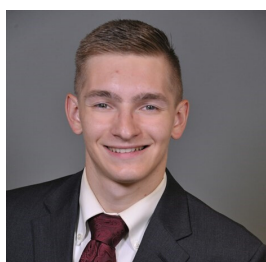
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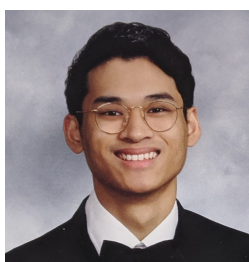
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"The Heart of the Hall" appreciates the help of Ellen Mangan, Matthew Forget, and Sarah Adam who worked as copy editors on our spring articles.

Interested in joining the team? Please reach out to any of our staff.

A full list of staff members can be found on our website
<https://blogs.shu.edu/heartofthehall/>

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Mission Statement:

"The Heart of the Hall publishes articles to lead students, faculty, and alumni to recognize the value in the Catholic Mission at Seton Hall University, by drawing their hearts and minds towards Catholicism's truth and beauty."

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