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THE HEART OF THE HALL

The student publication for the Office of Mission and Ministry

Editor's Note

As the campus fades in and out of winter each week, we are all reminded that change is in the air, and change within our publication is no exception. As we enter the Spring semester, we welcome new members to the Heart of the Hall Staff. New faces and voices promise to bring new life to the publication, reinstating its place on campus.

This issue includes pieces from veteran writers, and relative newbies, offering a dynamic mix of pieces. Topics range from the writings of early Christians to the real-life application of Christianity in current events.

First, Erich Sanders offers his reflections while reading St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Erich's piece emphasizes that powerful words will stand the test of time and continue to be relevant for generations to come. While reading his piece, I am reminded that the call to sainthood applies to everyone. Augustine's writings serve as a reminder that this call is attainable, even though the struggles on the path are concrete. Erich reminds us that saints are not those who never fell, or struggled, but rather are those who became convinced of the love of God.

Emma Newgarden, a recent graduate, offers insight into the role of forgiveness in the face of political turmoil by examining the situation in Ukraine. While injustice and harm are apparent, Emma reminds us how Christ loved and forgave sinners, calling us to enact the same love. This reciprocal relationship is related every

time we pray an Our Father saying, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Being reminded of the gratuitous mercy of God gives hope to all who depend upon it.

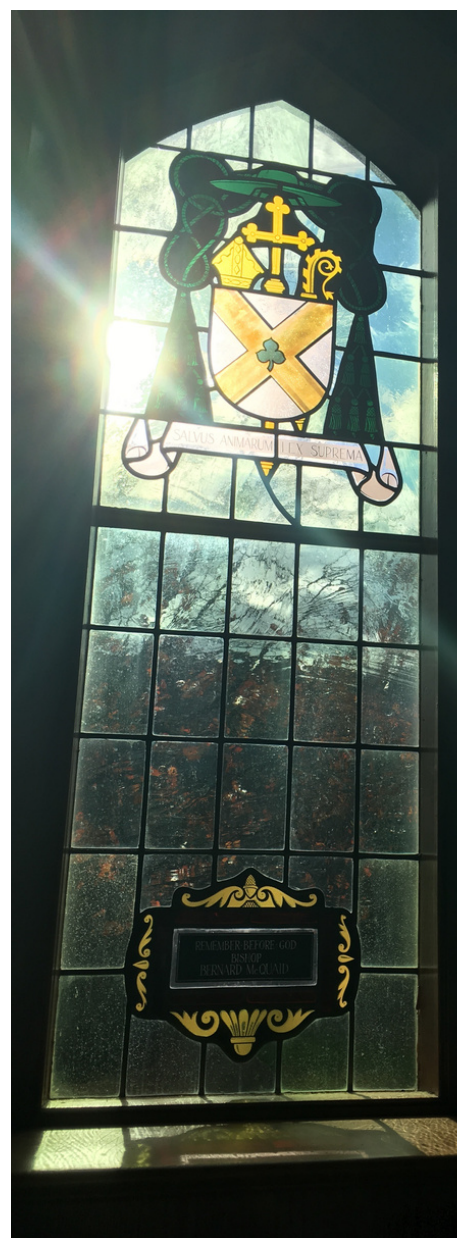
Catherine Harkin's piece follows, wherein she offers her contemplations on the beautiful icon in our campus chapel. Catherine considers not only the literal depictions but relates the image to scriptural passages, enlightening a catechetical meaning for our lives. After reading her piece, I find myself taking a closer look at all the iconography around our campus, wondering about its history and meaning.

In a biographical piece, Mariela Genao considers the life of our university's Patron Saint. She calls for deeper reflection on Elizabeth Ann Seton, whose name is used so often on campus, that it runs the risk of losing meaning. Mariela reminds her reader that the campus acts to draw us closer to Seton, and calls us to emulate the things that made her so remarkable.

Lastly, I offer my own piece reflecting on the role of the liturgical season, Lent, that we are currently living. Lent always seemed a burdensome time of year when God asked me to do a little extra for Him. Instead, this piece recognizes that the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are gifts to all of us and bring with them a promise of freedom.

The Heart of the Hall team hopes you enjoy this edition and find something within it that resonates with your own life. Amidst the hustle and bustle of the middle of the semester, when everything seems too busy to relax, we hope the articles contained will help you to see the bigger picture. Sincerely,

Isabel Condon
Editor-in-Chief





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MEDITATIONS ON ST. AUGUSTINE



By Erich Sanders

The first time I encountered St. Augustine's words in the classroom, I was just beginning high school. The famous quote from the **Confessions** – “Thou hast made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless till it finds its rest in Thee” – stared at me from the front of the room and seemed to sum up something very important about my relationship with God. Going into college I never read more of Augustine than that quote, though those words always lingered in the back of my head. Once the summer began, I decided to read the **Confessions** in full. As I began to read, I couldn't understand why the **Confessions** are revered as a literary masterpiece. It all felt too personal for me to be reading as if I were eavesdropping on a conversation that I had no right to hear.

“Thou hast made us
for
Yourself, O Lord,
and our heart is
restless till it finds
its rest in Thee”

But as I continued to read, the beauty of Augustine's writings began to come through: he, a great and holy saint, experienced the same things we as college students of the 21st century do. His honest prayer to God through his writing touches the heart in a way much deeper than any simple biography could. The reader comes to see that the themes and struggles of the Christian life are not only perennial but experienced by even the greatest of saints.

Throughout the course of Augustine's writing, three major themes arise that I see as particularly important for the college student – the deep-seated desire for love, the importance of time, and the constancy of God's grace. For each of these, I would like to offer some thoughts that I had while reading.

“I cared for nothing but
to love and to be
loved.”

Confessions, Book II.2

Augustine’s observation about his adolescent self is so salient because it speaks to a deep truth in each of our souls: God has placed a desire there that can only be filled by Him. But too often we do not seek the fulfillment of this desire in its only true end, but in what masquerades as satisfaction. Augustine understood this as well, remarking that, beginning in his youth, he “could not distinguish the clear light of love from the murk of lust” and participated in the latter to satisfy the true desire of the former (Book II.2). However, lust, as is repeatedly meditated upon throughout the course of the **Confessions**, does not satiate that initial desire for love in a satisfactory manner. Instead, it creates chains that bind the unhappy soul to a vicious circle which makes it only ever emptier; continually gorging on the very thing that makes it famished. Love, on the other hand, does the opposite. It liberates the soul and allows it to come to the very source of love itself. In each of the moments where he addresses God, Augustine makes clear this positive, actualized reality of love, noting that those moments of lust substituting for love made him more aware of the need for fulfillment as he continued through life.

For the college student, this emptiness produced by the pursuit of the goods of the world may be an incredibly familiar feeling. As Augustine implies in Book II of the **Confessions**, the term lust, while usually denoting sexual sin, pertains to any inordinate desire “...to be pleasing in the eyes of men” (Book II.2). How often do we find ourselves worried about how we appear to others? Perhaps it is the appearance of our academic record, our social status, or the way we as Catholics appear in our contrast to the hyper-sexualized modern world; but these worries, at the end of the day, take away from the fullness of love which God offers and instead expand the emptiness brought about by placing the world and its pleasures above Him. If we offer all that we struggle with or worry about to God, and place ourselves in the fullness of His love, we will be at peace and experience the only true resting place for that deep desire of love in our souls

“For what is now the
future, once it comes,
will become the past,
whereas You are
unchanging, Your years
can never fail.”

Confessions, Book XI.13

So often we treat time as if it were a guarantee. Detailed planners break apart each aspect of our day, constant stress about deadlines plagues us, and the never-ending slew of worry that our time is ill-spent occupies our days. However, when we step back a little, does this meticulous documentation truly reflect the reality of time? In Book XI of the **Confessions**, Augustine meditates on the nature of time in relation to creation and his conclusion shatters the modern notion of the guarantee of time. For time, when examined, appears to be in the present moment, and lacks a truly substantial being in what has passed or what is yet to be. Further still, the very notion of a “present” in Augustine’s thought is even more difficult to pinpoint than the non-being of the past and the potential being of the future. The divisions of a single moment are nearly infinite (even the term “moment” has no agreed-upon span) and thus the “being of the present” is something almost unknowable; it just is.

Augustine’s meditations rest on a foundation which is all too often forgotten by the modern Christian – the fact that God is beyond the created realms of time and space (see Genesis 1:1, **Confessions** Book XI.1-3). The struggles of the day-to-day are well known to Him even before they have passed, and we can meditate upon them. Obsessive planning, anxiety for the future, and worry about the past take on a new meaning when approached in such a fashion. All these occasions become times to place our trust in the Lord who knows us, soon to become the indeterminate present and then beingless memory, if we take Augustine at his word. In short, what weighs us down can become uplifting occasions for us, in our endlessly hectic world, to place a deeper trust in God and His promises for us. While not an invitation to avoid our due diligence, Augustine’s meditations on time and the eternity of God help remind us of our dependence upon Him as creatures and the impermanence of this life.

“In all sorts of ways, over and over again, when I was far from You, You coaxed me to listen to Your voice...”

Confessions, Book XIII.1

Though the treatment of grace in the **Confessions** is deep and multifaceted, one of the core components is how grace operates in the smallest and most unexpected moments of life – indeed, even when we sin. Many of the moments Augustine recounts which impacted him and acted as spurs towards returning to God are not epic, deeply felt moments of consolation or direct moments of communing with God. Rather, they are little parts of his life which, when meditated on, can be seen as a grace. The famous episode of the pear in Book II is a perfect example of a small moment of grace (Book II.6). At the time he stole the pear, Augustine could not place his finger on exactly why he committed the act. It appears so insignificant in the larger scheme of his life – an act of petty theft done for a short thrill as a youth. Yet, this simple episode was for Augustine a grace as it allowed him to perceive the depth of meaning behind the act; for it became a conduit provided by God to see the futile nature of sin and the perverse but fleeting pleasure it brings. In fact, the very creation of the **Confessions** can be seen as a result of such small graces for, ultimately, the **Confessions** are the prayer of a contrite heart calling out to God, contemplating its failings so that it may grow deeper in love with the truth.

If we consider grace as something deeper than positive experiences or impressions, how much more does it open the Christian up to contemplating the beauty of the Lord? Each moment of the day, from the difficult 8AM class to the late-night study session, is opened to contemplation as a gift from the Lord. Even the sins we commit can become occasions to thank God; indeed, for His mercy, but also in the recognition of the sin and the desire to start again. To overlook the apparently “mundane” is to overlook the greatest conduits of God’s love. After all, Augustine was not taken up in ecstasy when he made the decision to accept Christ fully. He simply listened to the voice of a child and read a small passage of scripture – yet it changed the very course of his life (Book VIII.12). Let us strive to find God in the overlooked moments, for perhaps it is there we will become most aware of the graces the Lord wishes to bestow.





A Call to Forgive

BY EMMA NEWGARDEN

As the war in Ukraine continues, one of the many questions bubbling to the surface of the Christian consciousness invariably concerns forgiveness. What exactly is this spiritual work of mercy? What does it entail? What are its proper applications and limitations when it comes to wartime atrocities? Historically, forgiveness has been central to the response of the Church. In 1965, the bishops of Poland sent their German counterparts an invitation to the 1000 Year Anniversary Celebrations of Poland's Christianization. This document, known as the Letter of Reconciliation of the Polish Bishops to the German Bishops, extended forgiveness for the crimes of World War II and asked forgiveness in return. Following this precedent in today's crisis, Pope Francis and the Church in Ukraine are already calling out the need for forgiveness, urging the faithful to pray for Mr. Putin and to ask for the strength to forgive.

“Forgiveness is precisely what enables us to pursue justice without falling into a spiral of revenge or the injustice of forgetting.”

Pope Francis

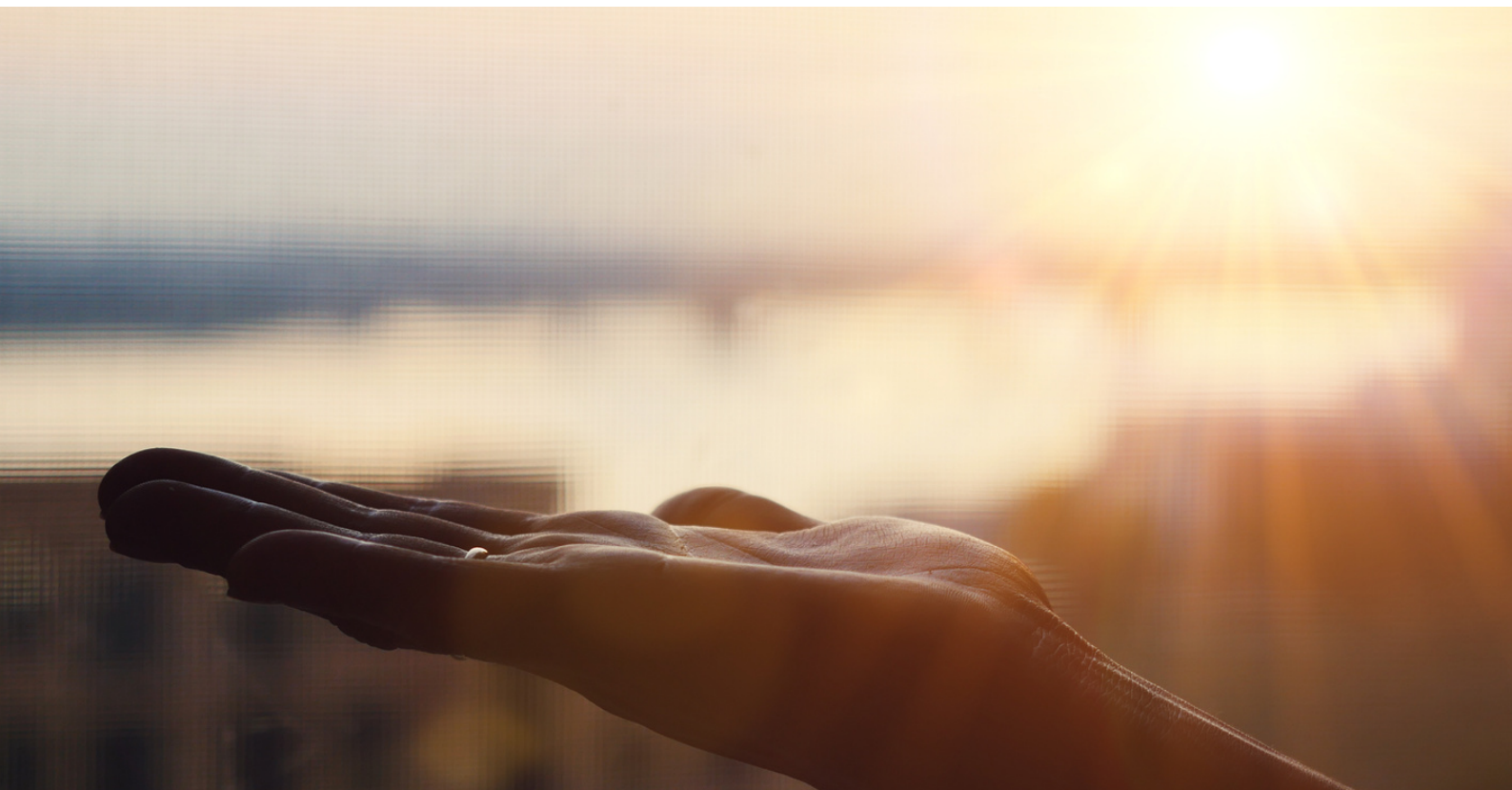
But what does forgiveness really mean? First, we must determine what forgiveness is not. To forgive is not to be a pushover in the face of injustice, nor does it entail a passive acceptance of the inexcusable. Such a “forgive and forget” approach, which encourages us to simply forget the past and move on as if nothing had happened, could end up perpetuating cycles of violence and wrongdoing, and thus prove incompatible with justice. In his encyclical ***Dives in Misericordia***, John Paul II notes that the “requirement of forgiveness does not cancel out the objective requirements of justice...In no passage of the gospel message does forgiveness, or mercy as its source, mean indulgence toward evil, toward scandals, toward injury or insult. In any case, reparation for evil and scandal, compensation for injury, and satisfaction for insult are conditions for forgiveness” (14). Forgiveness, therefore, does not mean treating someone as if he had never sinned. Rather, as Pope Francis writes in ***Fratelli Tutti***, “Forgiveness is precisely what enables us to pursue justice without falling into a spiral of revenge or the injustice of forgetting” (252). It means letting go of the anger and hatred that fuels violence and incites harmful acts.

Of course, we all know that “letting go” of anger is far easier said than done. Often we cannot seem to help lingering feelings of anger even after we’ve made peace with someone who hurt us. But the good news is that forgiveness is not a feeling. Feelings are fickle, and not totally within our power. God does not expect that upon uttering, “I forgive you,” all the wounds will disappear. What He does ask for is our willingness to release the anger someone has prompted in us, even if it’s going to take time before the negative emotions go away. Remember that real love is not a matter of feelings, but of willing the good of another. In forgiveness, we practice loving our enemies, desiring their salvation as fellow humans created in the image of God.

On the other hand, Christians do have the obligation to forgive anyone who repents of his sin against them. Jesus commands his disciples, “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him” (Luke 17:3–4). We are called to forgive as God Himself forgives- over and over, as many times as human beings do evil and repent. This is the basis upon which we in turn ask God to forgive our own sins, in the words of the Our Father: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” In this prayer that Jesus taught us, our forgiveness before God depends on our willingness to forgive others; we are literally asking Him not to forgive us unless we ourselves forgive. God in his radical mercy upends the norms and expectations of human justice; instead of the eye for an eye mentality- under which, being sinners, we’d stand no chance of passing into the heavenly kingdom- He allows us to determine the standard of our own judgment. What an incredible boon to humanity, and how greatly in our interest it makes forgiveness: the measure you use will be the measure used for you, and we all need the longest measure we can get!

Clearly, forgiveness is a powerful force. In 1965, the Communist authorities of the People's Republic of Poland saw the bishops' Letter of Reconciliation as a weapon: it countered their propaganda, which sought to maintain tension between Poland and West Germany for the sake of social order. Perceiving this threat to the violence and hostility they wished to perpetuate, the Communist state began a campaign of anti-Catholic persecution, desperate to stop the spirit of forgiveness from overtaking these nations in conflict. It is this same spirit that is needed to bring peace and healing to all parties involved in the Ukraine-Russia conflict today. Although physically far away from the action, we at Seton Hall can do our part praying for the repentance of all peoples affected. Let the Holy Spirit strengthen us to forgive one another, that God may forgive us our own transgressions.

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REFLECTION IN THE CHAPEL

BY CATHERINE HARKINS

In the midst of everyday life on campus, between the different buildings and people going about their days, there is a quiet place of rest. Upon entering the Immaculate Conception Chapel, many visitors are struck by the immense beauty and detail of the chapel. All throughout the day, students, faculty, and visitors come to the chapel with a similar goal, to find rest in the Lord. The Gothic style chapel, in which the cornerstone was laid in 1863, is the oldest building on campus and has been continuously maintained and preserved. The chapel at one time served both the school and the South Orange community and was the place of ordination for the first classes of seminarians ordained from Seton Hall. To this day, the chapel continues to provide the sacraments for the community, with daily mass and reconciliation as well as the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

The chapel is ornamented with murals and stained glass windows which, in their beauty, remind us of the beauty of God's creation. Although the chapel has undergone several renovations and restorations, it continues to remain a place of worship for the Seton Hall community, a place of sanctuary. Many modern churches and chapels have lost the detail that this chapel has. This not only affects our perception of the spaces themselves, but of life overall. In the details and beauty of the chapel, the one praying can contemplate the beauty of nature and creation. Each detail holds significance theologically and biblically to remind us in our prayer. The artist responsible for the murals in the chapel is Gonippo Raggi, an Italian painter who came to the United States to paint numerous churches including

St. Patrick Pro-Cathedral and the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark. The murals were painted during a major renovation of the chapel in 1931.

Above all, the most memorable and stunning image in the chapel is of Mary, under her title of the Immaculate Conception. The image of the Virgin Mary is placed directly behind the altar, the central figure surrounded by ten angels. The angels are seen praising Mary, playing trumpets and burning incense. They are painted sitting on clouds on a blue background with gold stars. This shows us the praise that Mary receives in heaven. It reminds us that Mary is Queen of Heaven, that she has been given an immense amount of power from God over all creation. The Virgin is styled similarly to the image of the Miraculous Medal, an image given in a vision to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830. She stands with her hands stretched outwards which coincidentally are aligned with the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross above the tabernacle. In the original work by Raggi, there are rays of light radiating from Mary depicting her as the "woman robed with the sun" (Rev. 12:1), signifying the grace that come from her intercession. In the original work, around the outside was written "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee", the same words written on the Miraculous Medal. This prayer is still present in the chapel; above the altar is written on a scroll below God the Father in Latin, "Regina Sine Labe Originali Concepta Ora Pro Nobis".

Our Lady in this image is shown with a crown of twelve stars standing with the moon under her feet, and crushing a serpent (cf. Gen. 3:15), signifying her glory and victory over all time and space and her position as the new Eve. Eve's disobedience to God brought original sin, while through Mary's obedience to God's will, salvation was born, and she has become the Mother of the Redeemer. Her head is adorned with a crown of twelve stars for the twelve tribes of Israel and the apostles. This is also in reference to the Revelation of John, "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, robed with the sun now standing on the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant, and in labor, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth" (Rev 12:1-2). The book of Revelation, or Apocalypse, is significant to us living in the time following Jesus' death and resurrection as it is a description of the end times when Jesus will come again. This icon of Mary and the description that it is based on from Revelation point to the role and importance that the mother of Jesus has in these times.

For Catholics, the veneration of Mary, mother of Jesus, is an essential part of prayer and worship. Our Lady holds a special place in Catholic life; she has been given numerous titles that show us just how important she is to God's plan for salvation. The Catholic tradition distinguishes itself from our doctrine and teachings regarding Our Lady, because she was chosen by God to bring Jesus into the world, and through her intercession, we can draw closer to Him.

Despite being free from original sin and crowned Queen of Heaven, Mary's life on earth is a sign for us of humility. Mary was just a young Jewish girl betrothed to marry Joseph. Yet God saw that in her He would fulfill the promise He made to His people and for the whole world. In the Magnificat, Mary proclaims, "for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His Name." (Lk 1:48-51). Mary accepted God's call and through her yes, God was able to do what seemed impossible.

Not only did she accept God's will, but she also praises Him and gives thanks, despite the many sufferings and difficulties that she was destined to face. Throughout the life of Jesus, from the Annunciation to His Crucifixion, Mary is present and open to accepting what the Lord desires for her. In her acceptance, God is able to work, which is a sign for us to see what God can do when we accept His will over our own. While she was humble, meek and silent during her lifetime, as very little is written of her in the gospels, she is exalted and given great power in Heaven. She is the model of the covenant that God makes with each of His children. Mary is a powerful advocate for us to the Father in Heaven and the way that we can draw closer to Jesus. It is a blessing to have such a powerful icon in our own chapel, as by viewing and contemplating it, we can better understand Our Lady and draw closer to her son. The Immaculate Conception Chapel is truly the heart of the campus and its Catholic faith and tradition.



As you pace down the green towards Jubilee or jot into that two o'clock class at 2:01, have you ever wondered about the spiritual foundation that supports the cement below your feet? Have you ever thought about the story, the life, the soul that carried her mission to forge a path towards the monumental construction of this beloved university? When you hear Seton Hall, you maybe think of basketball, or you remember the anxiety of finals, or you hear church bells ringing with an outstandingly resonant frequency. Whatever it may be, what brings you to Seton Hall transcends the hours of writing, studying, and reading. In the end, the mystery behind the Hall comes down to one meek woman named Elizabeth Ann Seton.

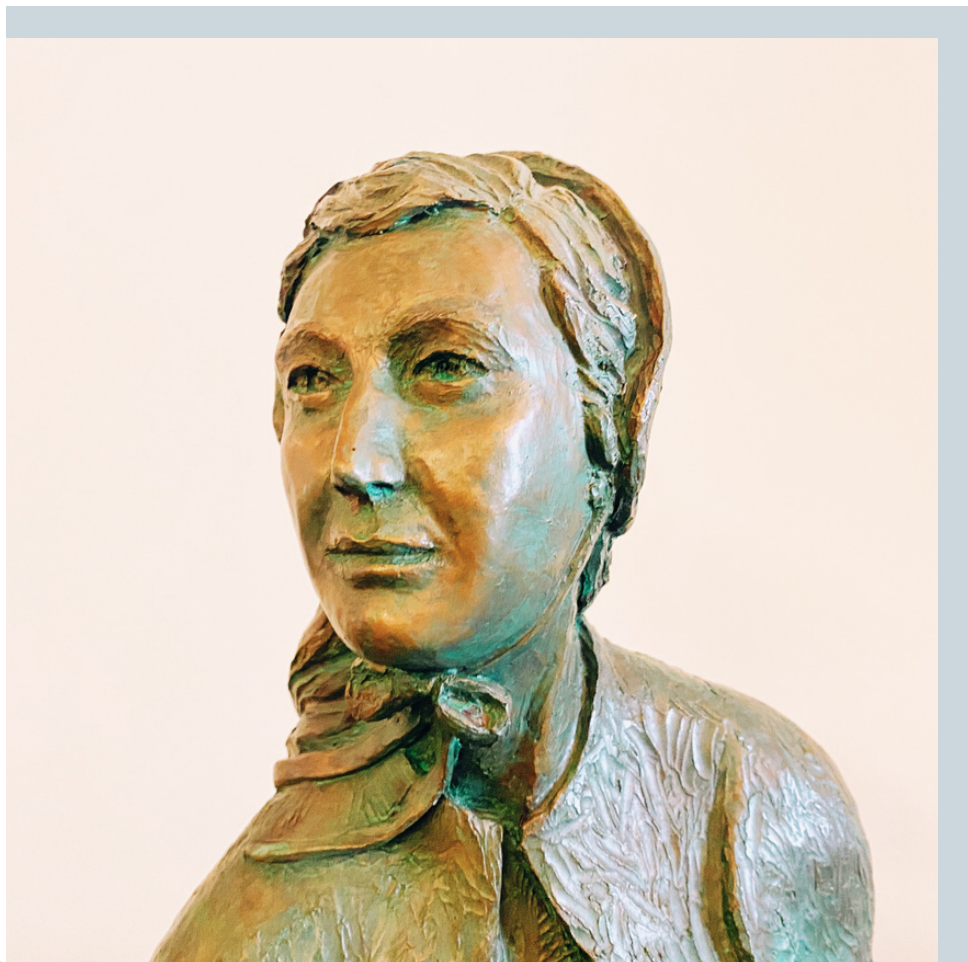
Our university's name stems from a humble woman, who said yes to God's will for her life. Born in New York City in 1774, Elizabeth Ann Seton had a life filled with many trials and tribulations, yet through it all, she remained faithful to the mission God had prepared for her. Elizabeth was born into a wealthy family, where she was raised Episcopalian. Only three years into Seton's life, her mother passed into the Lord's house. She grew up with her father and later converted to Catholicism. Elizabeth Ann Seton was like any one of us; she had sufferings and trials, but she leaned on God for everything.

The Woman Behind Our Name

BY MARIELA GENAO

One of the most unique aspects of our school's patron is her distinctive conversion to Catholicism at a later age. Elizabeth Ann Seton was proof to us all that service and acts of charity are as significant and effective as performing physical miracles. Charity is a miracle of its own. Even before converting to Catholicism, Seton devoted her life to serving others. She was dedicated to assisting the

poor and serving her family. Elizabeth Ann Seton was married and had five children, which she raised in the Episcopalian faith. However, after enduring the hardship of her husband's death, she found the Catholic faith in Italy. Elizabeth Ann Seton was significantly impacted by the Eucharist as a true manifestation of the body and blood of Our Lord. The Eucharist in all its majesty was a mystery that captured Elizabeth, and since then she never turned back. It is not by chance that our school has a crucifix in every room. The chapel's doors are always open, and even offer all of us a moment to rest and adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Our school's name holds her story within it, and thus we can see evidently through the murals, statues, and crosses how this humble woman made an impact on our school. Her devotion to the Eucharist and the Catholic faith is made present through the physical layout, design, and buildings that make up our school.



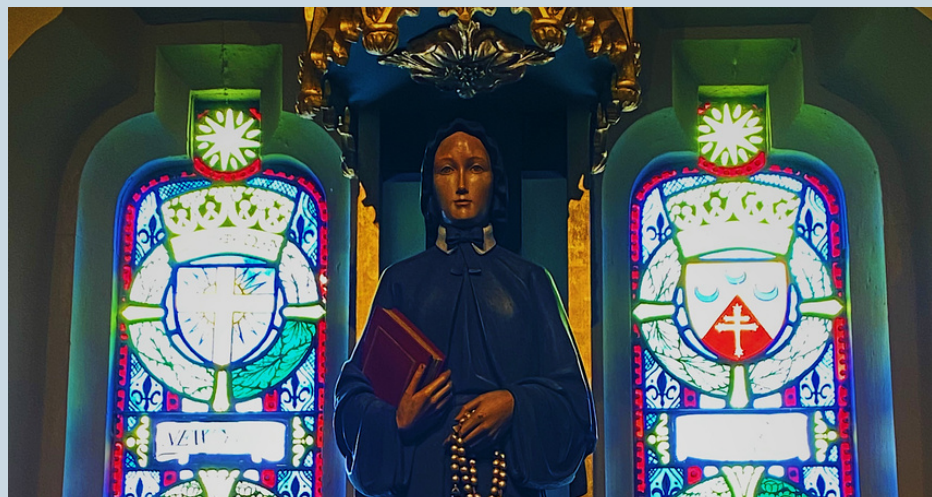
Through this time of her conversion to Catholicism, Seton developed a devotion to Mother Mary and took her name when she received her Confirmation. If you have ever made your way into the chapel, you will see the beautiful icon of the Virgin Mary's assumption into heaven. This detail reminds us of Elizabeth Ann Seton's devotion to Mary. When we pray to Mary, she always leads us to her Son. Similarly, every aspect of our school leads back to Christ, as the source of all our lives, and the source of Elizabeth Ann Seton's life.

After her conversion, Seton experienced persecution during her attempts to serve the community. During her life, many Protestants were in open opposition to Catholicism. Because she grew up as a faithful Episcopalian, and then converted later in life, she faced many struggles on behalf of her devotion to the Catholic faith. Seton, inspired by the Holy Spirit, opened a boarding school for students, and when parents discovered her newfound conversion to Catholicism, they forcefully took their children out of the school. They were unaccepting of the Catholic teachings she based the school on, and she experienced a period of great difficulty. The backlash that stemmed from her conversion caused many years of financial struggles, but these hardships never prevented her from fulfilling God's will. She persisted through the storms and held fast to Christ.

Eventually, Elizabeth Ann Seton established many Catholic schools through her charism and devotion to the service of others. In fact, in 1808 she and her family moved to Baltimore to open a Catholic school for girls. So many women from across the country began going to serve, and it eventually became known as an order called the Sisters of Charity. This was the first women's order established in the United States of America, and it all started with a humble woman who said yes to God's will. She was soon elected as mother superior of the order and zealously gave her life for the service of others.

In 1813, the sisters of charity and Elizabeth Ann Seton made their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Elizabeth Ann Seton went on to become the first canonized saint raised in the United States. Today she is known as the patron saint for Catholic schools, because of the many schools she established throughout the United States. Her legacy continued long after she died, and today it persists within our school's name: Seton Hall University.

Now, whenever you hear our school's name, you can remember the story behind it all, and the impact a woman of faith has had not only on our school but on us all.





Lent has dawned upon us again, and I often find myself with mixed emotions at the arrival of this season. I recall childhood memories wherein the family would give up television, or I would take it upon myself to give up chocolate. Each week was directed toward Sunday when I could cheat. The time of year marked itself with terms like "denial," "sacrifice," and a general sense of "giving things up." However, this mentality often caused me to lose the real purpose of Lent. I thought I was doing something for God, offering something up for His sake because that is what He wanted. Consequently, no matter how many things I said goodbye to for forty days, Lent failed to achieve its real purpose. Rather than examining Lent as a time where I "did God a favor," this year my goal is to recognize it for what it truly is: an opportunity for my heart to change.

St. Thomas Aquinas asserts that the universe was created *ex nihilo*, or "out of nothing."

LENTEN FREEDOM

BY ISABEL CONDON

He argues that God made everything, including the matter that makes up everything. Because of this belief, Aquinas accepts that everything existing in the universe was "possible not to be." Nothing in the universe can be classified as necessary since there was a time before it and will be a time after it. This statement includes humanity. However, Aquinas opposed the notion of infinite regression, therefore, he knew there is one Necessary Being. God is the only thing that exists, which has always existed, will always exist, and is not dependent on anything else for any of His attributes.

While many may have been familiar with this argument as one of Aquinas's five proofs for the existence of God, its relevance to our daily lives ought to be stated. God exists and does

not depend on us for His existence. Rather we depend on Him to keep the world spinning and our feet rooted on the ground. Yet every year, I believed that the Creator of the universe would be improved by my shunning peanut butter cups. God does not need anything from us, and He does not require us to make sacrifices. Instead, God sees the condition of the heart of man.

The beginning of Lent marks itself with the familiar gospel reading of Christ's temptations. The reading demonstrates Christ's humanity, but it also shows us our true nature. No one of us is free from the temptations that Christ encounters. Rather Christ's battle with these temptations marks how fundamental this experience is to our humanity. By examining these temptations

and the answer the Church provides for each, the true goal of Lent becomes enlightened.

"If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." (Mt 4:3)

The devil begins by attacking Christ's comfort and security. The absence of food creates a visceral fear. Because we live in a time and place where the literal lack of food is rarely an issue, and usually solvable through Door Dash, this temptation may seem less concrete. However contained within it, lies the fundamental fear that God will not provide. We all have moments of fear and doubt when we think God has forgotten us. Consequently, we all feel the real and heavy burden of providing for ourselves. Every grade, every dollar, and every relationship becomes a responsibility that we hold. We must work, earn, and achieve because nobody else will do it for us. While this attitude can produce excellent worldly results, it fails to recognize the identity of man as a Child of God.

"It is written: One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." (Mt 4:4)

Christ gives his answer, demonstrating the solution of the Church to this temptation: fasting. When the worries of life entrap our minds and hearts, we forget that God has marked us as His own. We forget that He will take care of us. Things like food, social media, streaming services, and sleep can often act as an escape from the daily woes of our lives. Lent presents a moment where we stop using those distractions so we can see how we need God and how He provides.

"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." (Mt 4:6)

The devil leads Christ to the top of the Temple and presents an alternative method for the plan of salvation. Through this act, he suggests the second fear that leads all humanity to sin. He asks Christ to consider that God has

made a mistake in His life by asking Christ to suffer and die. Every day we face the same temptation when we look at our lives and think: "God should not have made my life like this." This lie sprouts doubts of all kinds. It becomes nearly impossible to trust God with your future when you believe He has made a mistake in your past.

"Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test." (Mt 4:7)

Christ gives his answer, and with it, the Church teaches us to live a life of prayer. Prayer exists so that we might come to know and trust God. When a thousand things are piled on my plate, taking time to pray seems like the most irrational solution. To sit quietly in adoration could not possibly help with the assignments on my desk. However, prayer allows us to form a connection, for St. John Chrysostom says prayer "is the longing for God, too deep for words." Through prayer, we can understand the hand of God in our lives, and the suffering which the devil tells us ought not to be, can become the place where God makes known His power and love.

"All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." (Mt 4:9)

The devil's final temptation presents the opportunity to worship someone or something other than God. Simply, it presents idolatry. Through this action, we demonstrate what we value above God. It can be easy to fall prey to the notion that once we gain something, be it money, power, recognition, or anything else, we will obtain happiness. When we believe this, our lives become reoriented around the praise of that idol. We offer it our time, energy, and thoughts. Rather than this pursuit bringing the joy it seems to promise, it enslaves us.

"Get away, Satan! It is written: The Lord, your God, shall you worship, and him alone shall you serve." (Mt 4:10)

Rejecting all that the devil offers Him, Christ demonstrates the need to worship God alone. However, learning to live this

devotion and breaking away from the slavery of idolatry can be difficult. The Church presents the answer of almsgiving, in which we demonstrate freedom from the pull of this world. Rather than the action being directed for the benefit of the poor, it is meant to help the giver. By giving away money and time, we see that we can be happy without these idols.

Through none of these temptations or their solutions is God changed. Instead, man comes to live freely, not relying on the things of this world to make him happy. Christ's temptations reveal to man the condition of his heart, which doubts God. Lent offers a time to consider the ways the devil has brought you to doubt God's love, therefore harming you. Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving cease to be considered obligations and sacrifices, becoming a path to freedom. Easter represents the moment that Christ broke the slavery of mankind to sin and death, but first, we must come to recognize our status as slaves, so that the Paschal Exodus represents a real change in our hearts.



Meet the Writers

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



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