



Celebration

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Missionary Spirit: The Source of Courage and Compassion in Ajo, Arizona

Sister Harold Ann Jones was 24 years old when she was sent to serve the people in Ajo, Arizona in 1946. Caught up in the missionary spirit of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, she traversed the desert on a bumpy dirt road with praise on her lips and adventure in her heart. The beauty of cactus flowers lured her deeper into a desolation she had never before known. Now, she admits that her youthfulness and the grace of God helped her to ignore the dangers of the territory and quench her fear of the unknown.

Ajo was a mining town. In 1911 the town's population was a mere 25 people. A large source of copper drew what became the Phillips Dodge Mining Company and over 3,000 workers and their families to the small town only 43 miles from the border of Mexico. The workforce was made up of American, Mexican and Native American laborers. Everything in the town was owned by the mining company, including the church building. On Friday nights, many of the workers who received their paychecks minus any cost of purchases made at the company

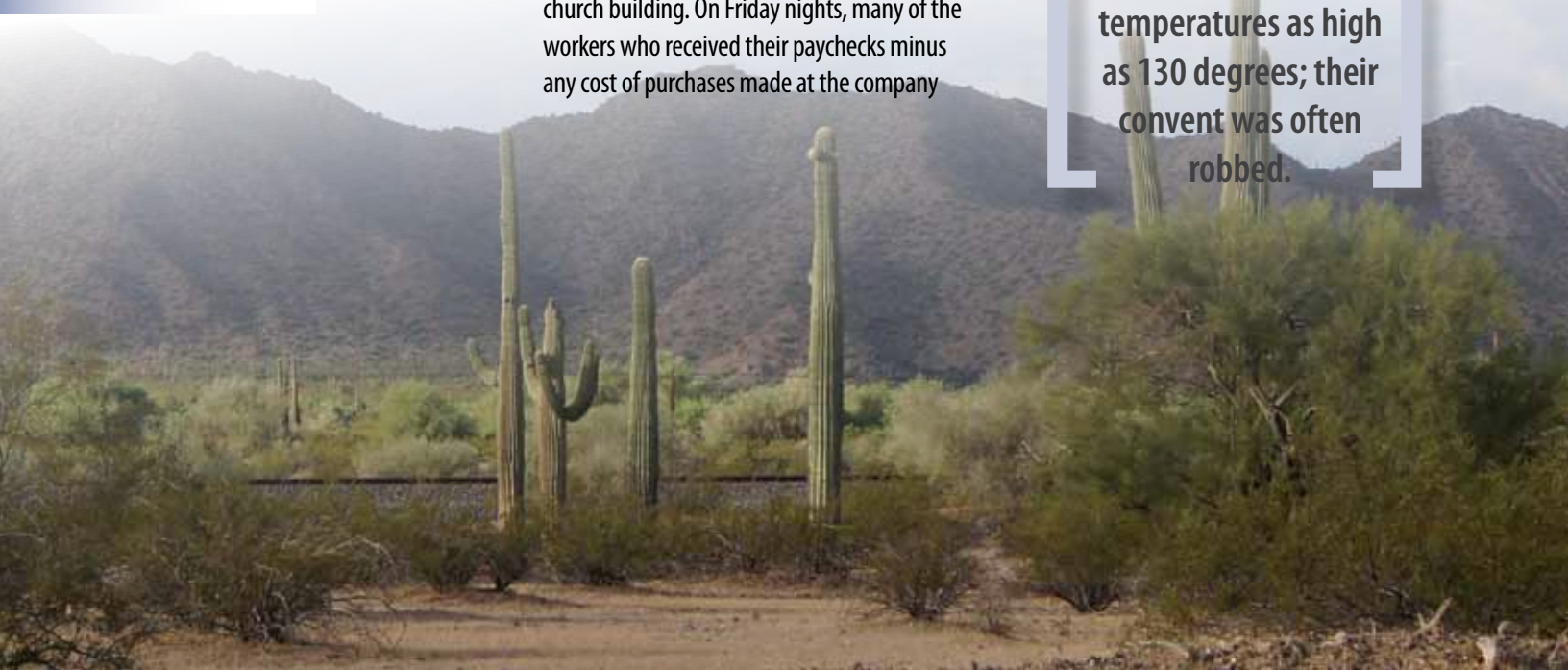


store, promptly headed to Mexico to spend what was left on alcohol consumption. The parish priest, Father George Feeney, called on the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to come to help convert and educate the poor community.

Upon her arrival, Sister Harold Ann was met by Sisters Mary Bertrand Wall, Theodosia Murtha and Ann Cecilia Hungerman who had arrived earlier. The Sisters were forced to rely on their faith to meet the extreme challenges before them. With no transportation, they walked dirt roads to visit families who lived

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They withstood temperatures as high as 130 degrees; their convent was often robbed.





A Letter from Sister Vivien

The missionary spirit of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton is a thread woven into the fabric of our history and is present today. Elizabeth wished that she, like Saint Francis Xavier, could have traveled the world to bring the good news. That same spirit that guided our Sisters in Ajo in the 1940's continues in both our North American and Korean provinces. I have just returned from Korea where I was blessed to attend the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to that country. Our Korean Sisters honored us as they would have Mother Seton. They celebrated with us the 50 years of missionary spirit that has **now** spread to missions in China and Ecuador.

Elizabeth wished that she, like Saint Francis Xavier, could have traveled the world to bring the good news.

On the flight back, I recalled the pictures from our missions in China and Ecuador; pictures of children of poverty who now have hope for a future. I thought of other pictures that I have seen that tell of the positive change that our Sisters have made in this world; pictures of Ajo, Pittsburgh, Greensburg and so many other places. I am amazed and humbled as I perceive the power of the missionary spirit as manifested through each of our Sisters who have given up their very lives to serve Christ.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we give thanks for the missionary spirit that brought **the Savior** to us. We acknowledge the command given to us to love one another, to be of one spirit.

I challenge you to look for the missionary spirit in your own heart and through **acts of daring to go forth into new ventures**, of giving, volunteerism and praying for one another.

Vivian Lenkauer, A.C.

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Ajo

Talk to Us...

Sister Francis Louise Honeychuck celebrated her 96th birthday on October 23, 2010 and read the myriad of cards of congratulations with excitement as she admired a bouquet of red roses sent for the occasion. She actually paused from her daily chores to give thanks and celebrate. Soon she was back to chapel for evening prayer and a visit to the Computer Room to check emails and to play a game of *Spider*. Sister describes *Spider* as a good way to keep her mind active.

I sat down with Sister Francis Louise two days later to ask her about her experience with computers.

"My first computer was one of the early Apples. I had a child in class at DePaul and I was struggling to teach him language. His grandfather bought him a computer and I said to myself well I am going to learn that too. It was a wonderful tool to teach someone to speak about things that meant something to them.

'What happened to you yesterday?'

'My grandfather gave me a computer.'

'Write that down. My grandfather gave me a computer. Did you go with him to buy the computer?'

'No, it was a surprise.'

'Write, My grandfather gave me a computer as a surprise.'

On and on we wrote about things important to the student and he would write and then be able to read his own story. It was a way to teach tenses and verbs and adjectives."

"Sister Jeremy Mahla encouraged me to learn more and more about computers. I love the email. I have two friends Peggy and Eileen Harvey who send me wonderful things which I enjoy. Peggy worked at DePaul and she went to Holland to study. Sometimes she sends pictures which she took of beautiful tulips. I enjoy the beauty of the things she sends.

Email also keeps me in touch with former students. I like to know how they are doing and I am proud of their many accomplishments. By the way, I used the same method of teaching language when I helped our Korean Sister, Sister Oh Hae to write and speak English. We started with a very simple sentence of what she had done in the infirmary that day and now she has a very interesting journal of all the things she has seen and done in the United States. Her English is now quite good. When she returns home to Korea she will be able to tell her story in her English as well as Korean. I especially like her description of her trip with the other sisters who attended the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City in 2009 honoring the Sisters of Charity in New York. It was quite an experience for Sister Oh Hae."



I remarked to Sister that she has seen so many changes and developments in technology in the years she has lived. I asked whether she would like to stop being introduced to new things.

"Oh, no, never. I want to learn as long as I can. I can still do so much and I want to keep doing and helping."

As I left Sister I thought about the new blog on our website. I suspect it will not be long before she is writing back to former students and to others who stop to "Talk to Us" on the blog. I challenge you to join the Blog and keep in touch.

Help us know what is meaningful to you and learn more about the sisters whom you know and, perhaps, with whom you have lost touch.

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in company-owned adobe huts. They withstood temperatures as high as 130 degrees with no air conditioning and lived together in tight quarters in a small convent on the edge of town. Often their convent was robbed. Despite the harsh conditions, the Sisters pressed on. The town of Ajo was in desperate need of conversion. The Sister's missionary spirit was their source of courage and compassion. One by one, families were ministered to in love. Some of the men were drawn back to their faith. The attendance at the Mass grew.

As the parish continued to grow, the need for Catholic education drew more Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to Ajo.

Sister Marie Patrick Sullivan received her assignment to Ajo with joy. She and her companions left Tucson in an old rusted rattling car that they named Betsy after Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton praying that it would make it to Ajo. The car was blessed but one of the tires was not. In the middle of the desert, three Sisters of Charity stood in full habit waiting for the Lord's provision. Soon, a car full of laborers came to their rescue and changed the flat tire. By the evening the Sisters arrived safely in Ajo.

The Bishop of Tucson, like the Sisters of Charity, had a heart for the poor. Bishop Daniel Gercke asked the Sisters to assist him in providing for the spiritual needs of the people on the Mexican side of the border. Still under the effects of communism, the Mexican parishes were boarded up and it was illegal for a priest or nun to wear religious apparel. Filled with the missionary spirit, the Sisters boarded Betsy

One evening, the Sisters invited the growing parish to a midnight Mass. A group of non-Catholic high school students decided to investigate hoping for some excitement. As they quietly crept toward the building, the sound of singing met their ears. They were so touched by the devotion of the parishioners that they all converted. One student became a priest; another, a woman religious.

and followed Bishop Gercke and Father Feeny to the border town of Sonoita.

The United States Border Patrol in Sonoita consisted of one man. He and his wife agreed to allow the Bishop to use their home as a temporary church. By 9 am, the make-shift church was in order and the Sisters were eagerly waiting for the spiritually thirsty. News of the gathering was spread by word of mouth so no one really knew how many people would respond.

All at once, the desert came alive; the Sisters were stunned. Hundreds of Mexican men, women and children came pouring across the border. Tears streaming from their eyes, their smiles reflected the joy that sprang up from souls that were starved. One by one, the Bishop, the priest and the Sisters ministered to the people. It was evening before they had finished. The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill boarded Betsy, prayed for safe travels and headed back to Ajo. A holy silence filled the car.



Sister Harold Ann Jones

Many religious in those days were martyred for ministering to the needs of the Mexican people.



Let me tell you that all of you are missed greatly here in Ajo. So many times we don't realize until it is too late the treasures we possess. Having you Sisters dedicate so many years in Ajo was the work of our Heavenly Father. I know we have all gained by your presence here."

Cecilia Alley, a resident of Ajo



The American, Mexican and Native American cultures lived in separate quarters of the town of Ajo. As the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill continued to minister to the needs of the people, a large percentage of the Mexican population and many of the Native Americans were drawn to the Church. During the next 8 years, education became the primary need. Sister Agnes Vincent Brazill became a strong proponent for the

Catholic education of the children. She succeeded and soon more Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill arrived.

Sister Joan McGinley arrived in Ajo at age 23 and was touched immediately by the poor conditions in which the people of Ajo survived. Looking down into the eyes of the little children, her first communication to her new students was a gaze that said I love you. Immediately she discovered her first challenge, the language barrier. Her first graders numbered 43 and they all had to be taught English first before they could begin the rest of their studies. Within 6 months, Sister Joan's students were reading and writing in English.



Sister Joan McGinley

The challenges of the first years were many but there were blessings, too. Often a noise at the front door signaled a gift. Fresh fish from Mexico and fruits and vegetables found on their doorsteps brought joy and sustenance.



Sister Marie Patrick Sullivan

"We were never in want. God supplied all our needs!"

Sister Marie Patrick Sullivan



Over the years, more than 60 Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill ministered to the people of Ajo. Today, the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church stands as testimony to the sacrifice made by our Sisters.

The missionary spirit that filled Mother Seton also filled our Sisters in Ajo and is still alive in our Sisters today. Our four Sisters who sailed on the cargo ship, the California Bear in 1960, carried that spirit with them to Korea. Today we celebrate 50 years of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill in Korea and the spirit lives on through our Korean Sisters who, in turn, have reached out as missionaries to China and Ecuador. On November 9, 2010, the Sisters who serve on our council went to Korea to celebrate our world-wide ministry. The visit brought together the two halves of the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Family.

"The 50th Anniversary Mass, celebrated at Eun-hae School in Gwang-ju, Korea, was a glorious tribute to the growth and stature of the Korean Province. Flags of the congregation, Korea and the United States were followed by the flags of China and Ecuador where the Korean Province has now established missions. The Archbishop of Gwang-ju and the two former bishops were the concelebrants of the liturgy which was attended by many members of clergy, other religious congregations and the laity, especially the graduates of St. Joseph High School in Kang-jin where our work began. During the liturgy a particularly touching moment occurred when the former Sisters of Charity English teachers were asked to stand and be recognized. These sisters returned to Korea for this occasion as guests of the Korean Province. After the liturgy, the Korean sisters sang the Cantata composed by Sisters Cecilia Ward and Mary Schmidt. Their spirited rendition of this beautiful choral suite brought tears to the eyes of the many of the American sisters. What a privilege it was to be present for this joyous occasion!"

Sister Vivien Linkhauer

For almost 150 years, some of the world's poorest communities have been places of mission of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. In missions to the poor, our Sisters have experienced the missionary spirit that rose up in Saints Vincent DePaul, Louise de Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton.

We now turn to our laity, our Seton Family, the Circle of Charity and all of our Partners of Charity; we are joined to you. Experience the missionary spirit in your hearts; listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit and ask to be assigned a mission. For some, it may take the form of volunteerism. Others may be called to vocation. You may be asked to join the thousands who give financially or to share your talents in employment. Whatever your mission may be, perform it to the best of your ability.

In the words of St. Peter...

"Each one should use whatever gift they have received to serve others faithfully, administering God's grace in its various forms."



Sister Mary Timothy

A Patient
at
Caritas Christi

The twinkle in her eyes was...

Everyone remembers the sometimes teasing, sometimes questioning, but always intense twinkle in Sister Mary Timothy's eyes. The old adage, "The eyes are the windows of the soul," arouses a curiosity about the spirit that generates that hallmark.

Today, as she sits in her wheelchair at the nurses' station at Caritas Christi, silenced by the debilitation that often challenges 96-year-olds, mention of "Altoona" or "Pinochle" can bring back the twinkle! Yes, Pinochle! She was a master card player.

One Sister said that Sister Mary Timothy was in charge at Marymount when her group made its 30-day retreat there. "Recreation times were limited, but we left there with an appreciation of Ignatian spirituality—and the finesse of winning at Pinochle."

Sister Mary Timothy, born Rose Marie Adams in Altoona just days before Thanksgiving, 1914, entered the

*Sister Mary Timothy with CCD class for blind students
Saints Peter & Paul Elementary School, Tucson, Arizona*

"I graduated from St. Mary's Elementary in Chandler in 1969. Sister Mary Timothy was Principal at the time. Although she was only as tall as the students, she was well respected. At the end of lunch break or recess, Sister Timothy would ring the bell on the playground and all students, no matter where you were or what you were doing, would freeze in place. Sister would look around and make sure that everyone was still and not talking, then she would ring the bell again and we would all walk to get in line.

One memory I have was being a finalist in a spelling bee. Sister Timothy was calling out the words and my word was signature. I had Sister repeat it a couple of times, because it sounded like an e instead of an a and so I spelled it "signetur". I never forgot how to spell it again after that.

Our family had a special relationship with the Sisters being that my aunt was a Sister of Charity, Sister Mary Ramon. It didn't mean that we had special privileges, but we all had a love and respect for the Sisters. I remember at graduation, we asked Sister Timothy if she would like to join us for lunch at Bob's Big Boy. She came with us, and after that day we had a special friendship."

Ernie Serrano

Ernie Serrano is a lay partner of the Sisters of Charity who every year sends candy canes to Sister Mary Timothy who distributes them to the Sisters at Caritas Christi.

Thank you Ernie for your wonderful gift.



Sisters of Charity, Sept. 8, 1932, with the approval of her pastor who wrote, "... she is a girl of very good moral character and very deep faith." After earning a degree in education at Duquesne University, she spent her life in education ministry.

The West—Tucson, Ajo, Phoenix, and Chandler—benefitted from her dedicated service for 35 years! Those were primitive times in Arizona, checking one's shoes every morning for scorpions was very important! Long trips to Indian reservations to teach catechism tested one's endurance. Often, she balanced 2 responsibilities—superior in the convent and principal in the school.

Understanding that doing God's work in Arizona did not preclude the Sisters missing family back East, Sister Mary Timothy planned parties and trips for the Sisters, especially around the holidays. Her itineraries included Sedona, Nogales in both Mexico and Arizona, the Grand Canyon and other interesting sites. Of course, coolers of food and cold drinks were stashed in the trunks of the cars.

As principal, Sister Mary Timothy visited classrooms, sauntering up and down the aisles, observing. One day in a 2nd grade, she noticed a science project, an ant farm. The young Sister-teacher was excited to share some new information, "Tommy's mother said that ants will eat bird seed, so she sent some in for us!" Without a pause, Sister Mary Timothy said, "Great! Just what we need around here—singing ants!" Her quiet sense of humor is legendary!

Her own creativity in the classroom is evident in an article published in *Today's Catholic Teacher*, Nov. '77, in which she describes a "Book Parade" her 8th graders organized. Each selected a favorite book, made a large cardboard depiction of it, mounted it on small wagons and paraded around the block accompanied by children in costumes who tossed candy to proud parents and friends lining the curbs. A drummer and a flute player provided martial music.

Sister Mary Timothy's teaching assignments also included Cathedral, Altoona; St. Simon and Jude, Blairsville; St. Jerome, Charleroi; St. Regis, Trafford; and St. Pancratius, Lakewood, CA. After leaving the classroom, she moved to Assumption Hall where she worked at the switchboard and managed transportation for 4 years before retiring in 1994.

Sister Mary Timothy's gift of presence in the Sisters of Charity is one of deep faith, generosity and quiet humor. An anonymous philosopher once said that being a Christian means living as though writing a fifth gospel. Sister Mary Timothy has done just that!

Barbara Rose

a nurse at Caritas Christi



Ask anyone who works for the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill why they work here and you will get the same answer. "Because we have purpose here and we're appreciated for it".

Nurse Barbara Rose is a prime example.

"From the very beginning it was different working with the sisters. The constant stress at my old job nearly made me decide to get entirely out of the profession. You never really got to know the people you were caring for. Here we get to know each of the patients really well. We know their needs and we know them as friends. We often laugh and joke with them when we visit their rooms or see them in the halls. You can only treat people well if you know and understand them."

Barbara Rose attends to the needs of our aging Sisters at Caritas Christi.

"I just love Barbara!" exclaimed Sister Beatrice McQuade. Everyone at the dining table agreed.

"She's always really there for you—I mean, she understands pain!"

Ten years ago, Barbara met the Sisters of Charity when she applied for a nursing post at Assumption Hall. Almost immediately, the residents had to be sent for temporary stays of two or three years at various places due to the demolition of Assumption Hall and the building of Caritas Christi. Barbara's work was with those sisters who were transferred to Jeannette Hospital.

"After we moved to Caritas Christi it was amazing. We had better equipment and caring staff. The whole atmosphere was different from the other care facilities where I've worked. It is far less stressful when we work as a team, as we do here. We're not regimented—and that makes all the difference when you're responding to a patient's needs. The best way to explain it is that we are all family here!"

Like all the employees at Caritas Christi, Barbara is a part of our family. It is not in the employment application, it is not something demanded; it is just something that happens when God brings caring people together.

Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

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 **Yes!** I will call to find out how I
can help the Sisters through my will or
other planned gift options.

For the first eighty years of our community
history, teaching, nursing and social service
absorbed our attention and our energy with no
thought of pay. Fifty years ago, a few of our nurses
provided basic health care for our aging and ill
Sisters. The novices (newcomers to our community
of life) did everything else required—maintaining
the house, helping to prepare and serve the meals,
assisting in so many ways. We had a lot of young
Sisters then in proportion to the number of our ill
and aging. Each year a new batch of young Sisters
came and took the place of those who were moving
on to the work of the schools and hospitals.

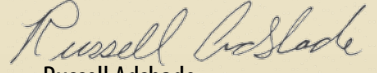
Today, we depend on our laity. A wonderful corps
of nurses and aides, dietary personnel, housekeepers,
and maintenance staff work here every day at Caritas
Christi. In addition to the costs of health care proper,
our costs include attending to the well-deserved wages
and benefits for this extended family of ours. They are
part of the Body of Christ. We absolutely could not do
without them."

Sister Gertrude Foley



When you put the Sisters of Charity of Seton
Hill in your will, your gift annuity or other form of
planned gift, you are sending a message to our
Sisters that says, "I care for you!"

**Please, tell them that
you care. Contact me at
724-691-2379.**


— Russell Adshade,
Director of Institutional Advancement
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill