



SETON FAMILY

NEWSLETTER

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We Live in the Spirit

Among the marks of the Vincentian-Setonian spiritual way, we find “attentiveness to the Spirit of the Risen Jesus, entrusting oneself to the Spirit’s action.” What does this mean? How does it look when I’m “being attentive”? Let’s spend a few minutes thinking about this.

When we were children, our parents and teachers probably often reminded us, “Pay attention.” The human mind is very active, and it isn’t easy to focus on something for very long. Have you ever noticed how your mind can “wander off,” especially when you need to concentrate on something you are reading? Because we all have this experience, we might wonder how it’s possible to “be attentive to the Spirit of the Risen Jesus”—when he’s not even visible!

The scripture scholar Luke Timothy Johnson gives us some help on this topic when he writes, “Attentiveness is not quite the same thing as concentration, which suggests an intense focusing of the mind in order to see or hear something accurately. Attentiveness suggests alertness, yes, but also receptivity. It is a ‘leaning toward’ the other.”

Being attentive to the Spirit of the Risen Jesus means learning to “lean toward” the Spirit of God revealed in Jesus. Johnson goes on to say that this leaning “involves on one side the human spirit with its capacities for knowing and loving, and on the other side the Holy Spirit of God, which mediates the presence of the risen Jesus to humans.” In other words, we’re not in this alone. God’s own Spirit invites us into this relationship.

“Practicing the presence of God” is a well-loved devotion in our spiritual way. This devotion helps us to develop attentiveness to the Spirit of the Risen Jesus and to entrust ourselves to the Spirit’s action in our lives. You can start by taking a moment—that’s all it takes!—when you first get out of bed in the morning. A simple prayer—“Spirit of Jesus, I give you my heart, my spirit and my life”—for example, can help you make this connection first thing in the morning. It helps to make a habit of using a simple prayer like this at various times, perhaps when you get into the car or at some other time that occurs regularly in your day. Little by little, this practice will increase your attentiveness to the Spirit of the Risen Jesus, who is active in your life. You will find it easier to settle down for prayer, then, when you have more than a moment or two. Just begin with your morning awareness exercise.

To be attentive to the Spirit doesn’t mean we have to force ourselves into some sort of “state.” It does take time, though, and it takes the effort to make the time during our day to turn to the Spirit present in us and around us. If you “don’t feel like it,”—well, just start by expressing that thought along with your desire to be in touch. Some saint once said, “To desire to love God is already to love him.” I’m sure it’s also true that the desire to attend to the Spirit of the Risen Jesus and to entrust ourselves to the Spirit’s action in our lives is already the beginning of an intimate relationship with him.

Sister Gertrude Foley, SC
Seton Family Coordinator

Congratulations

Joseph Herzog graduated from Saint Mary-Basha Elementary School. Andrew Nicolaus and Alicia Shebel graduated from high school; both plan to continue their education in college. Joseph, Andrew and Alicia are members of the Chandler Seton Family group.

Carmen Creamer, member of the Jacksonville Seton Family group, has reached a milestone in her life, graduating from college with an AA in Medical Office Administration.

Sister Colette Hanlon, facilitator for the New Haven Seton Family group celebrates her golden jubilee this year. The Chandler Seton Family group joined Saint Mary Parish in celebrating Sister Mary Norbert's golden jubilee with Mass and a reception, including a video presentation on her life.

Congratulations to Joseph, Andrew, Alicia, Carmen, Sister Colette and Sister Mary Norbert. We are proud of you. We wish you much success and happiness in days to come.



Community

Bonds of relationship among members seems to be occurring naturally as groups learn and pray together. The Greensburg Afternoon Seton Family group often invites the Greensburg Evening Seton Family group to join them when they have someone coming to make a presentation. This occurred with a presentation on the Mysteries of Light by Father Donald Conroy. It also occurred for a presentation by Marsha Kable, Director of the Office for Lay Ecclesial Ministry for the Diocese of Greensburg, on lay ministry in the church. Some Seton Family groups are considering holding joint activities this summer. If they materialize, we will hear about them in our next newsletter.

Apostolic Spirit

The concept of "apostolic spirit" is rising in our awareness of being participants in the mission of Jesus. As a member of the Carefree Seton Family group put it, "We have been learning to take our inner faith and send it out to the greater world through prayer, thought and action. Also, we are learning the value of recognizing small moments in everyday life to share our faith and to help those in need." Apostolic spirit finds expression in our lives in many ways. Members of the Bethae Park Seton Family group have helped transplant flowers for nursing home residents, visited patients in a nursing home, and set up a May Altar. Members of the Toronto Seton Family group plan to continue visiting nursing homes. They also plan to visit the county home where residents seldom have visitors.

The Munhall Seton Family group, like many other groups, has members who are active in different ministries. Several members are Ladies of Charity. Several are Eucharistic Ministers at Mass and to the ill. Some are Catechists to children. Several members help with mailings for the Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh. As they see it "We are one body with many parts, one group with different gifts. We come together for prayer, discussion and friendship. We leave feeling refreshed and happy to be able to continue our ministries."

Long-Range Planning

Planning to continue a theme or focus for learning and prayer over several months, or even a year, is a concept that is taking hold in several Seton Family groups. The Toronto Seton Family group finds that May through September is their most active time, since several members spend winter months in Florida. They plan to focus on the "guidelines" and the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults this year.

Learning

Several groups have enjoyed hearing guest speakers. Sister Jane Ann is an American born member of the Korean Province of the Sisters of Charity. She was in the States recently and spoke with the Bethal Park, Brookline and South Side Seton Family groups, telling them of the beginnings of the mission in Korea and just how the sisters have responded to the needs of the people there. It was also exciting to hear her share the beginnings of the Seton Family there. The Seton Family in Korea is somewhat different but we each have responded to the spirit that came from the founders. The Brookline Seton Family group is considering helping Seton Family in Korea in some way next year.

Father Conroy, temporary chaplain at Caritas Christi, spoke with the Greensburg Afternoon and Evening Seton Family groups on the Mysteries of Light. He recalled thinking to himself many years ago that there were key moments in the life of Christ that were not included in the traditional mysteries of the rosary and mentioning this to a colleague. He told of how he would often pray the rosary based mysteries in the life of Christ as they spontaneously came to him. He spoke of being gratified that this inspiration in his life found universal expression in the Mysteries of Light, given to the church by Pope John Paul II.

Several Seton Family groups are also exploring the new Manual, written by Sister Gertrude in consultation with the group facilitators. The Manual is rich in food for thought and shared reflection on the universal call to holiness, the essential role of the laity in the Body of Christ, and the spirituality taught to us by our founders as a way to grow to maturity in response to our call and role in the church. Some Seton Family groups focus on a section of the Manual at each of their gatherings. The resources section offers additional options for learning. The prayers included in the Manual are yet another resource for groups to use when praying together.

The Toronto Seton Family group is studying the new "guidelines", reviewing several pages at each monthly meeting. The members have each purchased the text, the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. At each meeting, they spend time reflecting on the saint that is the focus of a chapter. For the first meeting, they reflected on the life of Elizabeth Seton, the saint presented in Chapter one. Other Seton Family groups report using Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John and Deus Caritas Est as the basis for reflection together.

Prayer

For healing for:

Jack Breen; Mary Russell; Ok Hy Beauchamp; Raul Navarette, brother of Renee Higginbotham; Grace Harrington; Chuck Stoebe, husband of Bernie Stoebe; Ken Wagner; Jennifer, granddaughter of Grace Harrington; Alminta Galvan; Judy Roseberry; Toni Michel's daughter-in-law; Jackie Smith and for all the friends and loved ones of our Seton Family members who are in need of healing in body, mind or spirit.

For the intentions of:

Raul Navarette and his family; Jacqueline English; and the special intentions of all members of Seton Family and the Sisters of Charity.

For the repose of the soul of:

Lillian McNally, mother of Lilly Dancison; Gloria Dropik, sister of Dolly Blycheck; Ralph Michel, father-in-law of Toni Michel; the husband of Mary Agnes Walsh; and any other loved one who has died recently.

For the special intention of:

peace in our world, the end of violence, and safety for those in harm's way.



Retreat in Jacksonville

The Jacksonville Seton Family group was joined by a member of the Raleigh Seton Family group for the retreat "What Does It Mean to Have a Spirituality?," presented by Sister Gertrude Foley. The retreat was held in the home of a Seton Family member and ended with Mass at the parish church. The participants received the day's thoughts and reflections enthusiastically and were renewed in spirit as they gained insight into the integral nature of spirituality in their lives.

A surprise!

Three members of the Jacksonville Seton Family group attended a retreat. During the course of the retreat, they described Seton Family to one of the directors who was also an artist and had much personal interest in Elizabeth Ann Seton. On the last day of the retreat, this director presented the three Seton Family with a "really cool" drawing that incorporates the Seton Family initial. They want to find a way to share the drawing with all of us. Stay tuned for its debut!

Save the Date!

The Seton Family groups in the west plan their annual retreat for January 12, 2008, at Saint Mary's in Chandler. The retreat in the northeast will be held September 22, 2007 at Caritas Christi in Greensburg.



New members

We welcome Lucy Scazafave and Patrick Brommel as new members of the Carefree Seton Family group.