

from the Youth Ministry Office:

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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the Sign of the Cross

*"...my standard, which
is none other than the
cross of Jesus Christ."*

Mother Seton

This month, I'd like to introduce you to an old friend of mine, **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton**. I first got to know her when I was a twenty-something and our friendship has grown even deeper and stronger over the years. She is the inspiration for this month's article because she lived the Paschal Mystery (the Sign of the Cross) in her life as single woman, wife, mother and consecrated woman. She is a good patron saint for all who work with youth, especially in catechesis and education.

As we approach the **Year of Faith** established by Pope Benedict to be celebrated October 11, 2012 - November 24, 2013, **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** is one of the key saintly examples of evangelization in our country. I predict that she have an important role to play as we celebrate this special year in the Church.

The following snapshot of her life is taken from *Personal Vocation: God Calls Everyone by Name* by Gemain Grisez and Russell Shaw, published by Our Sunday Visitor:

"Elizabeth Ann Seton is the first person born in the United States to be canonized a saint. Her life was marked by absolute trust in God's goodness, in the face of sufferings and losses of the most painful kind and by the resolute determination to carry out God's particular will for her, no matter what that might entail. As her biographer, Joseph I Dirvin, C.M. observes, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's story is in many ways the story of a woman called to be a mother. (*Mrs. Seton: Foundress of the American Sisters of Charity*).

Elizabeth – Betty, she was called – was born August 28, 1774, the second daughter of Catherine Bayley and her husband, Richard, a prominent New York physician and medical researcher. Although one grandfather was rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on Staten Island, any special form of religious life was far from her thoughts as she grew up. Her interests were boys, parties, and the prospect of marriage.

Even so, she had a gift for contemplation, as it appears from her account of a morning in May, 1789, when alone in the woods, she was suddenly aware that 'God was my Father, my all.'

'I prayed, sang hymns, cried, laughed, talking to myself of how far He could place me above all sorrow. Then I laid still to enjoy the heavenly peace that came over my soul; and I am sure, in the two hours so enjoyed, grew ten years in the spiritual life.'



In due course, Betty happily married William Seton, heir to a prosperous family export-import firm. They had five children.

When Betty's husband's father died, Will Seton took over the business while Betty became a kind of substitute mother to her husband's younger siblings.

Though not yet twenty-four, she rose splendidly to the occasion. Dirvin comments on the 'fierce' motherliness already so much part of her character.



Although her religious views at this time were in her biographer's words, 'hodgepodge of belief and observance.' Betty was an intensely religious person. An Episcopal clergyman, John Henry Hobart, took her in hand and gave her helpful guidance. She and her sister-in-law and friend Rebecca Seton were so devoted to good works that others referred to them as the 'Protestant Sisters of Charity.'

But Will Seton's health was not good. The tuberculosis

from which he suffered grew steadily worse. There were disastrous setbacks to family financial interests in London and Hamburg. Piracy took a fierce toll on Seton merchant ships. The last straw was the floundering of a Seton ship and the loss of its valuable cargo. Will Seton was ruined. His health declining rapidly, he decided on a desperate step, a sea voyage, apparently in the forlorn hope it would help him recover. He, Betty, and their eight-year-old daughter Anna would visit his business associates and friends the Filicchi in the Italian port city of Livorno. Parceling out the other children to family and friends, they sailed from New York on October 2, 1803. To all appearances, the trip was a disaster. The difficult sea voyage took seven weeks. Upon arrival, Will was placed in quarantine because he had come from New York where yellow fever was raging and because he was himself so plainly ill. He died December 27 at the age of thirty-five.

No one reading about these events can help marveling at the kindness of the Filicchi family, who found themselves with unexpected guests, Elizabeth Seton and her daughter, in tragic circumstances. These devout Catholics took a liking to the young Episcopalian widow and began to have hopes of her conversion. Sometimes they took her to Mass. One day in a monastery church, an English tourist leaned over to Elizabeth at the elevation of the Host and said in a loud, sneering whisper, 'This is what they call their *Real Presence*.' She wrote:

'My very heart trembled with shame and sorrow for his unfeeling interruption of their sacred adoration...'

In the spring of 1804, with these stirrings in her heart she sailed back to New York. Although friends and family were aghast when she told them she was thinking about becoming Catholic, a year later she took that decisive step, to their horror and her own immense relief.

Shunned by people who formerly were close to her, she tried to make a living by running a school, but her first venture failed. Eventually, the pieces of her life started coming together. Convinced she was destined to do some 'great work' in the Church, her spiritual advisor, Father William Dubourg, urged her to move to Baltimore. In 1808 she did, opening a school and, with the encouragement of Archbishop Carroll, taking steps towards the founding of an American branch of the Sisters of Charity. 'I shall be the mother of many daughters,' she wrote. On March 25, 1809, she professed vows.

She and the first members of her community moved to rural Emmitsburg, Maryland, where they opened a school near the recently founded St. Mary's College. By her wish and at the Archbishop's insistence, her children accompanied her.

Life in those beautiful, isolated foothills was not easy, and the little community had internal tensions and problems as well. 'I am a mother encompassed by many children, not all equally amiable or congenial,' Elizabeth wrote. On another, particularly difficult occasion: 'Here I stand with hands and eyes both lifted to wait the Adorable Will. The only word I have to say to every question is: *I am a mother*. Whatever providence awaits me consistent with that plea, I say Amen to it.'

In time, the Sisters of Charity grew in numbers, and their school succeeded; today, Mother Seton's founding of her school in Emmitsburg is generally regarded as the beginning of the parochial school system in the United States. New foundations were launched, and they, too, put down roots. She 'accomplished more in twelve years than most people do in a whole lifetime,' a biographer commented.

For Elizabeth Seton, the bridge of reconciliation and secret of peace lay in discerning, accepting, and living out her personal vocation. That is true for all followers of Christ."



Of course, we will not all have her unique calling to so rich a motherhood and its consequences, but we will have particular callings of our own, irreplaceable roles, whether exalted or humble in the eyes of others, in

accomplishing God's will and participating in the mission of the Church, which continues Jesus' redemptive work.

Jesus' redemptive work was accepting and accomplishing God's will for Him, even to accepting

death on a cross...for our sakes! There it is again...the Sign of the Cross!

Mother Seton wrote to her sisters, **“The first end I propose in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner he wills it; and thirdly, to do it because it is his will.”**

Mother Seton died in 1821 at the age of 46, only sixteen years after becoming a Catholic.

She was canonized on September 14, 1975.

Her feast day is January 4.

April 22, 2012 Junior High Festival at KMS High School near Murdock

The location of the Junior High Festival is KMS High School in Kerkhoven, near Murdock. The event will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The time of the Mass is tentatively set for 4:00 p.m. The publicity packet will be coming out shortly.

World Youth Day 2013 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The next World Youth Day will be held in Brazil, two years from now in 2013. Rio de Janeiro is the hosting city. Because of safety issues, costs, liability, and the anticipated crowds, the Diocese of New Ulm is not organizing a pilgrimage to this WYD and Bishop LeVoir is not planning to attend. The Office of Youth Ministry will be focusing on local celebrations or events within the diocese instead.

NCYC 2013 Indianapolis, Indiana

I am very grateful to all of you who participated, and to the many volunteers who made NCYC 2011 a wonderful experience. Can you believe it, it's already time to start planning for the next NCYC! It will be held in the very same location. An Interest Indicator will be sent out soon so that we can get a sense of how many are thinking about going. Your response to the Interest Indicator is a “ballpark figure” and does not entail any financial commitment at this time.

Summer Discipleship Camps

We're still finalizing details for the two summer Discipleship Camps. I'm planning to schedule the Young Women's Camp in June and the Young Men's Camp in July. Tom Hartman will be the Camp Director for the “Kayak Adventure” along with Fr. Todd Petersen and Fr. Craig Timmerman. Kelly Colangelo and Kiki Wallyn will direct the young women's camp. Name and theme of the young women's camp still TBA. The tentative dates for the girls are June 10-14, 2012; and for the guys July 8-12, 2012. The publicity packet will be coming out very soon.

*“Will not Jesus Christ be with me? Was I not signed with the cross of salvation in Baptism?”
-St. Elizabeth Ann Seton*



Upcoming 2011-12 Dates

Mon, Feb 6	DRE/YM Gathering	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Mar 12	DRE/YM Gathering	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Apr 16	DRE/YM Gathering – Curriculum Day	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Pastoral Center, New Ulm
Sun, Apr 22	Junior High Festival	11:00 am – 5:00 pm	KMS High School, Kerkhoven
Mon, May 21	DRE/YM Spring Fling	Noon-4:00 pm	TBA

Check out Riverbend TEC! For more details and an application check out the Web site: <http://riverbendtec.org/>

RB239	January 14-16, 2012	Bird Island, MN	RB241	March 17-19, 2012	Winsted, MN
RB240	February 18-20, 2012	New Ulm, MN	RB242	June 23-25, 2012	Bird Island, MN

From the Religious Education Office

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Catechist Enrichment

by **Bryan Reising**

Every January, (and September), I am on the road doing catechist in-services. I love bringing these opportunities to parishes and Area Faith Communities periodically. And of course in September we normally have Faith Formation Days. This article will look at the basics that catechists need to know and at the end, I will list some catechist formation opportunities. These can be shared with your catechists when you meet with them.

It Is a Calling

According to the *General Directory of Catechesis* (GDC), catechists are called by God. “It springs from the Sacrament of Baptism. It is strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation they participate in the “priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry of Christ.” (184) In addition to the common vocation of the apostolate, some lay people feel called interiorly by God to assume the service of catechist. The Church awakens and discerns this divine vocation and confers the mission to catechize. The Lord Jesus invites men and women, in a special way, to follow him, teacher and formator of disciples. This personal call of Jesus Christ and its relationship to him are the true moving forces of catechetical activity. “From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to ‘evangelize,’ and to lead others to the ‘Yes’ of faith in Jesus Christ.” (185) – GDC, 231

Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation of catechists is as important as learning the content of the faith as well as learning methodology. Spiritual formation includes the regular means that we grow spiritually: the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation’ daily prayer life’ praying with other catechists and the parish catechetical leader’ and opportunities for reflection, adoration, and retreats.

Practicing the Faith

Practicing the faith publically is very important because we who are laity are witnesses within the world: the marketplace, the neighborhood, the workplace, and our involvement with society. Like the GDC says: “The catechetical activity of the laity also has a proper character which is due to their condition in the Church: “their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity.” (182) The laity engage in catechesis on the basis of their insertion in the world, sharing all the demands of humanity and bringing to the transmission of the Gospel specific sensitivity and nuances: “this evangelization, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life, acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world.” (183) – GDC, 230

What Do You Need to Know

“The context of this doctrinal formation should be drawn from the various areas that constitute every catechetical program;

- the three great eras in the history of Salvation: the Old Testament, the life of Christ, and the history of the Church.
- the great nuclei of the Christian message: the Creed, the Liturgy, the moral life and prayer.” – GDC, 240

Getting to Know the Parents

A key area for catechists is for the catechist of children and adolescents to meet the parents. In talking with the parents, the catechists can share what will be covered during the catechetical year, what materials are being used, and how the parents’ help and collaboration will increase the chances for seeds of faith to be planted and for growth in the faith to occur throughout the young person’s life. In addition, the parents can understand their faith more, practice their faith more, and grow in their faith.

Discipline

Very often, the issue of discipline is brought up. Keep in mind that discipline is not a bad thing. In fact the word discipline comes from the word disciple. Ground rules are to be set at the beginning of catechetical year and they are to remain consistent. An extra adult in the room besides the catechist can help as well. It is someone who can keep the ground rules in check during the class so that every student has a good opportunity to learn and to encounter our Lord.

Know the Curriculum

Various curricula are used by different publishers. Before the catechetical year begins, have the catechists look at the students’ texts as well the



catechist manual. Check out the publisher's Web site. Look at alternative lesson plans and creative ideas. Look at prayer opportunities and charity outreach events.

Be Creative

One Wednesday evening, I was subbing to teach a group of 5th graders. The topic? The Ten Commandments. I looked at the lesson plan, read the text, prayed, and I quickly assessed the group before me. (I was warned before that they were a little rambunctious). We first gathered to pray. I decided to use the lesson plan, but alter it as a group activity. I listed on a chalk board – yes – a chalk board – a group of numbers: 1, 2, and 3, and then 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. I had the class work as a team to fill in the words for the Ten Commandments. They were successful! Then I read to them some “case studies.” I started with some simple cases and then asked them what Commandment was broken with those case studies. I would ask them what the person should have done to ensure no Commandment was broken. This led to some very fruitful discussion. We do need to be creative as we look at who we are catechizing to maximize the learning opportunities.

Create a Prayerful and Good Learning Environment

I always create a prayer area in the room, with a Bible, a picture of Jesus, or a cross, or seasonally, I put up things that reflect the liturgical year like an Advent wreath. Many times the students are in desks because of the texts. However, movement is good. Sitting on the floor around the prayer area at the beginning, then some desk time, and then an activity where they are all standing in a circle. This movement helps them to focus better.

Heart

There are some lesson plans that require the heart as a starting point. Prayer, reflection, and faith sharing are included here. Prayer experiences can really help your students to encounter the God who truly loves them. Publishers have many ideas regarding these experiences.

Head

Learning about the faith can be interesting and fun. Teaching with passion and mixing up the routine like playing a game with Catholic faith facts can help the students' knowledge of the faith. Like with the heart, many publishers have ideas to creatively teach the faith.



Hands

Making the faith real for the students is very important. Opportunities where they can live the faith can come in many forms: during class time, a charity outreach opportunity related to the lesson or for homework, a charity outreach activity for the family (so the student can talk about the experience the next time they meet).

Face

And a catechist must reflect the joy of our faith. Joy and a love for the Lord can be very attractive for our students, our young disciples! A smile portrays faith, hope, and love to all the catechist meets!



Further Resources

- For further information, regarding catechists and their formation, see the GDC, numbers 230-252.
- For excellent catechist formation, the University of Dayton has great online opportunities for a certificate in catechesis through VLCFF. To set up your profile as a new student, go to: https://vlc.udayton.edu/profile/become_student.php. If you already set up a profile, go to: <https://vlc.udayton.edu/certificates/catechesis.php> to learn more about the certificate, and go to: <https://vlc.udayton.edu/>, put in your user name and password, and go to Register for a Course. To see Cycle 2 course, further information is found in this newsletter.
- In addition, MCEA will have its convention in Rochester this year: August 19, 20, and 21. There will be some excellent workshops for catechists here. Perhaps a bus or two can journey to Rochester!

Remember, scholarships are available through the Mohr Catechist Formation Fund for both VLCFF and MCEA Convention!

Upcoming Gather for Feb

February 6, Pam Coster of Charis Ministries in Chicago, Illinois, will present on “Ministering and Involving Young Adults.” Please RSVP Cindy soon: cblickem@dnu.org, 507-233-5325.

Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation Designates

If your area faith community or parish already has a designate for Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation, please e-mail Cindy to confirm who it is. If you currently do not have a designate, contact the pastor about appointing someone and forward that name to Cindy: cblickem@dnv.org. We are hoping to have some great opportunities and resources for both evangelization and adult faith formation, hopefully starting this spring. One of the things we are working on is the Catholicism Series by Fr. Robert Barron.

Mohr Catechist Formation Fund A Gift for You, Catechists, Youth Team Members, Teachers of the Religion

This scholarship fund is a great gift for your catechists, teachers, youth ministry team, and many of you! You can receive scholarships for Faith Formation Day and other catechist formation opportunities, opportunities outside the diocese like the NCCL Conference, online courses through the University of Dayton's VLCCF (Virtual Learning Community of Faith Formation), and even some college courses on faith formation. An application is on our Web site:

<http://www.dnv.org/word/documents/MohrScholarship-CatechistFormationFund-Application.pdf>. Please submit your applications soon!

VIRTUS

All Catechists are required to:

1. Have a background check before beginning to volunteer;
2. Sign Forms A & B of the diocesan sexual misconduct policy before beginning to volunteer;
3. Attend VIRTUS training within 60 days of beginning to volunteer;
4. Do the online training as assigned. This is to be done as soon as possible – communicate this with your catechists, volunteers, and youth ministry adult team.

The VIRTUS training is for ages 16 or older. An individual must be 18 to serve alone in a ministry with minors. If you have a question about VIRTUS, please contact Margy Manderfeld at 507-233-5305. Please do not contact VIRTUS directly unless you need a password.

Remember: Reports for the Children's Training were due November 30. We still have some that are outstanding. Please send them in ASAP!

Schedule your make-up sessions (deadline for make-up sessions reports to be turned into the Safe Environment Office by March 1, 2012). These are for children who do

not have the opt-out form and who missed the training in the fall. Please do not have their parents fill the opt-out form. Those were due before the scheduled children's training.

Remember, Opt-Out Forms are accepted (and signed by the parent) before the children's training in the fall. After that initial training, Opt-Out Forms are not provided to the parents. The Opt-Out Forms created by the diocese is not to be altered or changed. Please be sure to provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the Parent Handbook as required by the Charter so that they can train their child at home. To access the Parent Handbook in English or Spanish, log on to our VIRTUS account, go to the Educators tab, then to Lesson Plans, Step 2: Click here to read or print *Teaching Touching Safety*.

Please respond to the Safe Environment Office's request for any updates or corrections.

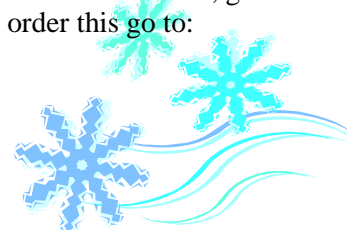
Interested in a Masters in Theology, Religious Education, Pastoral Ministry, Parish Administration, or Canon Law?

- St. Mary's University of Minnesota: www.smumn.edu/ipm. (They offer MA or a Professional Certificate in Pastoral Ministries or Pastoral Administration; they also offer a Graduate Certificate in Canon Law)
- St. Paul Seminary Graduate Program for Lay People: www.saintpaulseminary.org (this includes an optional online distance learning degree. Their degrees include an MA in Theology, Pastoral Ministry, and Religious Education).

From NCCL

Even though Catechetical Sunday is over, NCCL has an item that you may be interested in:

Do This in Memory of ME: This distinctive one-inch lapel pin is composed of a high-shine gold chalice with a white enamel host positioned on top. It is surrounded by the phrase, "Do this in Memory of ME." This pin, which carries the words of the catechetical theme for this year, is ideal for Catechetical Sunday and a reminder to all catechists of their role to present lifelong catechesis for the Eucharist. **It is also an excellent insignia for Eucharistic ministers as well as a gift for children receiving their First Eucharist.** This is an exclusive NCCL product. To see this, go to <http://tiny.cc/nsio5>; to order this go to: <http://tiny.cc/wu17m>



Upcoming Opportunities



Bishop Lucker Lecture 2012

The Bishop Lucker Lecture this year will be Sunday, March 18, 2012 at the Church of St. Catherine in Redwood Falls at 7 p.m. The presenter for this year will be Jim Ennis, executive director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. His topic will be ***Sowing Seeds of Hope in a Distracted World.***

James F. Ennis is executive director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, an 88-year old non-profit organization serving the rural church, rural people, and their communities throughout the US through education and advocacy assistance. Jim was former director of Food Alliance Midwest, a Minnesota-based affiliate of the national nonprofit organization, promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Prior to his work at Food Alliance Midwest, Jim worked in marketing and project management with The Pillsbury Company and The Clorox Company respectively. He earned a MBA degree from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management, and he holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, Davis, where he studied agricultural and managerial economics.



Prior to attending the University of Minnesota, Jim served for three years with a Christian mission organization, starting up and leading a college student ministry at the University of Zambia in Lusaka. Jim is married with five children, ages 22 to 10 years.



MCEA Convention

August 19, 20, and 21, 2012 at Rochester, Minnesota, Mayo Civic Center! Plan now for you and your catechists to attend! How about one or two busses? For further information, see: <http://www.mncatholiced.org/index.html>



University of Dayton's VLCFF

Cycle 2: February 26 - March 31
(Registration: Opens Jan 10; Closes February 22)

- [Catholic Beliefs](#)
- [Christology](#)
- [Church History 2](#)
- [Collaboration and Community](#)
- [Ecclesiology: Pilgrim Church](#)
- [Evangelization and Discipleship](#)
- [Faith and Human Development](#)
- [Galatians](#)
- [History of Catholic Social Action](#)
- [Images of Jesus](#)

- [Introduction to Catechesis](#)
- [Introduction to Christian Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Practical Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Prayer](#)
- [Introduction to Scripture](#)
- [Leadership in Ministry](#)
- [Leadership Roles and Skills for Adult Learning and Faith Formation \(AFL 5\)](#)
- [Marianist Studies: Social Justice](#)
- [Marianist Studies: Prayer](#)
- [Mary in Scripture and Tradition](#)
- [Media, Faith, and Values](#)
- [National Directory for Catechesis](#)
- [New Testament](#)
- [Old Testament](#)
- [Parish as a Learning Community \(AFL 2\)](#)
- [Praying with Children](#)
- [Principles for Addressing Diversity Issues in Youth Ministry](#)
- [Relational Ministry with Youth](#)
- [Roman Missal](#)
- [Sacrament of Marriage: A Holy Calling](#)
- [Sacraments](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Doctrine](#)
- [Theological Reflection: Key to Connecting Faith and Life \(Seminar\)](#)

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership

The cost of an individual membership to NCCL is only \$60.00. This is only \$5.00 a month. Receive *CL (Catechetical Leader) Magazine*, *CL Weekly* from Lee Nagel every Monday, discounts on resources, and information on the national conference and regional workshops! *Use the Mohr Scholarship Fund for this opportunity!* For further information, check out the Web site: www.nccl.org. For information on the national conference, go to www.nccl.us.

Parish Catechesis Question



How do you form your catechists? Would you consider taking a VLCFF course and share this experience with your catechists and invite them to earn a Certificate in Catechesis so that they too can become equipped to pass on the faith? Share these with Bryan: breising@dnu.org.