



In the Footsteps of . . .

Lives of the Founders of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

In the footsteps
of simplicity,
we follow
Vincent
on the path to God.
Yet,
God is the path —
the way
of the single-heart
the way...
to integrity of being.

In the footsteps
of love,
we follow
Louise
empowered by humility.
Opening our gifts
out of our need...
for God
and one another.

In the footsteps
of faith,
we follow
Elizabeth
through darkness
into light—
working
at the edges
of life...
risking on hope.

In the footsteps
of possibility,
we follow
Mother Xavier
with the courage
of freedom,
the strength
of commitment,
the blessing
of community
and a heart...
for God Alone.

—Anita Constance, SC



Introduction

All of us hold in our memory persons who have affected our lives, persons who have shown us the way, persons who give us an example to follow.

Founders of religious congregations are those men and women who have heard God's call and begun a noble work for the Church. Members of religious congregations look to their founders for guidance and strength. They see in them persons of vision who listened to God's voice and went boldly on to do what was needed for those in need.

It is our hope that you, our Seton Associate, will come to know Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac who began the Daughters of Charity in France, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, who began the Sisters of Charity in the United States and who adapted the rule of St. Vincent for her new community, and Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan, who founded the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth



Saint Vincent de Paul: His Life and Spirit

by Sister 'Thérèse Dorothy Leland, SC

"The charity of Christ urges us." This beautiful line from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians was the theme of St. Vincent's life. When the Vincentian Fathers celebrated their tercentary in 1960, they wrote: "This rallying cry of Vincent's was not an empty slogan prompted by a sentimental or emotional attachment to those in need, but the affirmation of someone who believed that the poor, and all people, are beloved of Christ, have souls to be saved, and need the consolation and assistance deriving from the teachings of Christ."

For those who may not be familiar with his early life, Vincent was born in Pouy in southern France of a poor peasant family. When it was time for him to decide what to do with his life, the pastor of the local parish encouraged and supported him in his studies for the priesthood. We are told that Vincent had a rather self-seeking start in the beginnings of his priestly life but he underwent a striking conversion in which he gave himself over to God in the service of the poor.

In the seventeenth century, the time in which Vincent lived, "countless numbers of both the rural and urban poor, who had no other choice, left their homes in desperation and began a life of wandering and begging." (These words describe some of the conditions in our own times, don't they?) The rich feared the poor as carriers of disease and plague. And thus "came the State's plan to make the poverty of the poor complete by depriving them of their last human possession, their freedom. The homeless roaming the streets of towns and cities and any vagrants begging for food or money, were imprisoned!"

It was in God's plan that the Church's response to meeting the needs of the poor was the charism given jointly by the Holy Spirit to the collaboration of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac.

The suffering poor that Vincent and Louise saw all around them moved them to respond. To accomplish their works they called on others: the priests of the Mission (we know them as Vincentian Fathers today), Daughters of Charity, Ladies of Charity and parish Confraternities of Charity. These latter groups were composed of laymen and laywomen who shared in the charitable works whatever they were, wherever the needs were visible.

One biographer tells us that "Vincent's special charism, a gift of the Spirit for the entire church, was an overwhelming love of God that led him to see Jesus in every person he met and to express his love in ministering to every human need."

Sometimes we are so amazed at the extent of his ministries we lose sight of the depths of his contemplative spirit; *this* was the spirit that motivated him in all that he accomplished. Many of the men and women of his time were in admiration of the spirituality of the man. Men like St. Francis de Sales and Abbe Berulle and other spiritual directors told those they guided to look at Vincent, imitate his spirituality.

What guided Vincent, and must guide us, is an *unquestioning faith*, the faith that goes beyond knowledge because it is a gift of the Spirit, a faith that is lived out in the daily circumstances of our lives. It is the spirit of faith that delights the heart of God. It is proof positive that we rely on God and not on ourselves.

How could Vincent become such a man of faith?

Only because he was a man of prayer. We are told that he was most at home in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. It was here that he made every important decision and found the wisdom which was so clearly of the spirit.

Because of his deep prayer life he was one of those who made it clear that they were well-fitted to deal with life. The works that they established are alive and enduring. Isn't it true of all the saints? Their works live after them!

In addition to his love for the Eucharist, Vincent was a man of the Gospel. He asked himself at every moment, "What would Jesus do in this situation? How would He respond to this sinner? To this sick person?" He had only to open the Scriptures to find the answer.

Just as Jesus emptied himself to take on all of our humanity except sin, so Vincent wanted to be poor among the poor, to empty himself of all pretention, all self-sufficiency, in order to allow Jesus to minister to the poor through him. "Humility," he said, "creates space for God. We must put on the spirit of Christ, the spirit of humility and simplicity in order to be an instrument of God's love."

Although St. Vincent is often called the Saint of Humility, he said himself that simplicity was his favorite virtue. "Wherever you discover simplicity, you discover God Himself. He who walks in simplicity, walks in confidence. God gives to the simple lively faith. They believe and relish the words which Jesus left us in His Gospel."

And *what about his Charity*? He was canonized as the Saint of Charity, and Pope Leo XIII made him the Patron of the Poor. His whole life was a life of love; his whole message, a call to love as Jesus loves the Father and as he loves us.

Every Christian, married, single, consecrated priest or religious, is called "to cast fire upon the earth" in order to enkindle God's love in all hearts.

Let us ask the grace to imitate and follow in the footsteps of Vincent and all those who joined with him... the grace to live the spirit that he fostered, that of humility, simplicity and charity. This is the call that we, the Sisters of Charity of today, issue to our Seton Associates, to laymen and laywomen, to continue the Way of Charity, the Way of Love.

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Louise de Marillac: A Woman For All Ages

by Sister Anne Guinee, SC

Pentecost Sunday May 30, 1993, marked the 370th anniversary of the day when the Holy Spirit allowed Louise de Marillac, co-founder of the Daughters of Charity, to glimpse what the future held for her. "I understood... that I would live in a small community, making vows—in a place dedicated to assisting the neighbor, but I could not imagine how this would be." Louise was thus unclear and uncertain of God's plan for her but surely the inspiration of that Pentecost was a focal point of her prayers and life.

This graced woman, born in or near Paris on August 12, 1591, to Louis de Marillac and an unknown mother, was early to know poverty of spirit and deprivation of maternal love. Her father, however, was devoted to this "natural" child and entrusted her care and education to his aunt, a Dominican nun at the Monastery of Poissy where, as her later life attests, she received a sound intellectual and religious training.

Late in her childhood her father moved her to a kind of "domestic science" school where she acquired the vocational skills she would need as wife, mother, and "file de caritae." Here, too, she continued her devotion to spiritual writings and felt drawn to the life of the Franciscan Sisters called the Poor Clares. This desire was thwarted by her own poor health and de Marillac family opposition.

Instead, they arranged a marriage to a minor nobleman, secretary to Queen Marie de Medici, Antoine Le Gras. Although the bride was twenty-two, the husband ten years her senior, the marriage was happy and within the first year a son, Michael, was born. Antoine's wealth and rank permitted the family to live in comfort and to move in the court society that introduced Louise to many families of high rank.

This happy family life began to suffer as Antoine's health failed, and after four years of painful illness, his death in 1625 left her a widow at thirty-four with limited resources and a young son.

From her teens Louise had had excellent spiritual directors—among them Honoré de Champeigny, Pierre Camus, Bishop of Billey and finally the priest who was to be God's instrument in guiding her to her life's great work, Vincent de Paul. With his permission she made, even prior to her husband's death, a vow to remain a widow, one further step on her journey toward a life of self-discipline and consecration. It was in the organizations that Vincent had begun in the parishes where he preached, the so-called "Charities," that Louise found the channel to pour out the service to the poor toward which her rank, education, and dedication impelled her.

It was in 1628, on Pentecost, that Vincent finally answered and approved her frequent petitions to allow her to form a group in the city of Paris that would support girls serving the poor. With his permission Louise developed an organization that would aid in the works of charity. Vincent and Louise became partners when he finally authorized her, in 1629, to visit each of the Charities founded in the rural areas.

After years of prayerful service, Louise finally defined the format for the Company in 1633. Though there was a need in the rural areas, it was the instability of the "Ladies of Charity" in Paris that led to her making her foundation there. Louise saw that the work of "the ladies" would be greatly enhanced through the assistance of an auxiliary group made up of girls from rural areas who were socially free to work with the poor and the sick. In order to support these girls who wanted to assist the "ladies" she opened her home to them and began the training that would become incorporated into the Rule.

Among the first of these, Marguerite Naseau, a self-taught cowherd, came to be the prototype of the Company described by St. Vincent— "God intended her to be the first Daughter of Charity and servant of the sick poor of Paris. She attracted other girls to the work...

"Everybody loved her because there was nothing in her that was not lovable. Her charity was so great that she died from sharing her bed with a poor plague-stricken girl. When she was attacked by fever, she bade good-bye to the sister who was with her and went to the hospital of St. Louis where with her heart filled with joy, she died."

Marguerite's spirit inspired many and the initial four sisters within a year grew to twelve. (The Daughters of Charity were born! This was a birth that would eventuate in a world-wide apostolate of charity that perdures to the present day.) These augmented numbers were sorely needed for service to the sick and the poor and for their instruction in the catechism. To these ministries were added by Louise the care of the wounded on the battlefields, the foundlings in the crèches, the supervision of hospitals, and the education of the young.

Foreseeing the extension of the work of charity, Louise prayed, entreated and exerted her personal efforts to obtain a strong foundation for the Company. To this task she brought intellectual, spiritual and practical gifts that enabled her to supervise the multiple works entrusted to the sisters of her community. Her numerous extant letters, diaries, and instructions attest to her ability as an educator, administrator, psychologist and leader.

Perhaps her closest friend, advisor, and co-founder, St. Vincent de Paul, summed it up best in two conferences given after her death in 1660 on the qualities of a good leader. Here, paraphrased by an American writer*, they are:

1. One who releases and fosters potential in those being led.
2. One who affirms others.
3. One who listens well.
4. One who facilitates various people working together.
5. One who lets others take the bows.
6. One who withdraws at times for the reflection needed to gain perspective and renewed vision of the future.
7. One who has courage.
8. One who is sensitive to people.
9. One who goes beneath the surface in conversations and judgments... and asks Why.
10. One who makes each individual in the group feel he or she belongs.

When in 1934 Pope Pius XI declared her a saint and in 1960 Pope John XXIII named her "Patroness of All Christian Social Workers," they publicly acclaimed what her daughters had known from the birth of the Company in 1633—St. Louise de Marillac, child of God, wife, mother, foundress and spiritual director was truly "A Woman for All Ages."

*Joseph M. Champlin, "Leadership," *The Catholic Standard*, Washington, DC, January 16, 1981.



Elizabeth Bayley Seton:

A Model of Holiness

by Sister Kathleen Flanagan, SC

Summary of Her Life

Elizabeth Ann Bayley was born in New York, August 28, 1774. She was the second daughter of Dr. Richard Bayley and Catherine Charlton Bayley, whose father was the rector of St. Andrew's Anglican Church on Staten Island. Elizabeth's father was a skilled surgeon and compassionate physician, and one of the first public health officers for the port of New York. Unfortunately, he was often away from home when Elizabeth was a small child and teenager, and she, who idolized her father and craved his affection, had to learn to cope with his absence and emotional distance.

Elizabeth's mother died in 1777, leaving Mary, Elizabeth and Catherine (born in 1777) as well as her bereaved husband Richard. Baby Catherine died in 1778, and Dr. Bayley married again in that same year. His new wife was Charlotte Amelia Barclay, whose mother Helena was a member of the Roosevelt family. Unfortunately, the two older girls never quite fit into the new family, and they spent extended periods of time at their uncle William Bayley's home in New Rochelle, New York. Thus Elizabeth experienced a childhood and adolescence marked by family upheaval and separation. She was never close to her stepmother, and her relationship with her father only became close after her marriage.

In 1791-2, Elizabeth met William Magee Seton, a member of a prominent, upper class merchant family in New York. They were married on January 25, 1794. The next six years were ones of great happiness for the Setons. Will and Elizabeth were important parts of the New York social scene of the time, neighbors of Alexander Hamilton, prominent members of Trinity Episcopal Church, and proud parents of Anna Maria,

William, Richard, and Catherine Josephine. Their youngest child Rebecca would be born in 1802.

This time of happiness was short-lived, however. Will's father died in 1798. He had a great skill as a businessman and the shipping firm began to decline after his death. Another factor in its decline was seizure of Seton ships by pirates in international waters, as well as natural disasters, such as storms destroying the ships. Will Seton, now the head of the company, had to declare bankruptcy in 1802. The Setons had to sell their beautiful home and most of their possessions and move to simpler housing. To complicate matters, Will was responsible to care for six of his own brothers and sisters, left fatherless by the elder Seton's death in 1798. Now he and Elizabeth had five children of their own, and his own health was failing.

In a desperate attempt to help him recover his health (he suffered from tuberculosis) Will, Elizabeth, and their eldest child Anna Maria sailed for Leghorn, Italy, in the fall of 1803. Will had old-time friends and business associates living in Leghorn and it was hoped that the sea voyage and the mild Italian climate would bring a cure. However, William Magee Seton died in Italy on December 27, 1803, and is buried in the Protestant cemetery in Leghorn. His heartbroken wife and daughter were taken in by his Italian friends, Filippo and Antonio Filicchi, or more precisely, Antonio and his wife Amabilia. These good Catholics consoled Elizabeth and Anna, and their own kindness and piety eventually caused Elizabeth to take an interest in their faith. Her questions and their ability to speak with conviction about the importance of Catholicism for her own salvation forced Elizabeth into a lengthy soul-searching quest for truth. The search included rigorous reading of theological texts given her by Catholic and Protestant friends and advisors, exchange of letters and lengthy conversations. That quest continued even after Elizabeth and Anna returned to New York in the spring of 1804. Though she could never come to a definite rational conclusion about which church was the true church of Christ, she came to a faith decision that she belonged in the Catholic Church. She was received into that church on March 14, 1805, and for the next three years was a parishioner in St. Peter's Church on Barclay Street, New York City.

For the next three years Elizabeth, as a widowed mother of five, struggled to support her family financially and protect them in their fragile faith. This was especially difficult, since many of her former friends and

relatives who were Protestant rejected her. Anti-Catholic feeling ran high in this time, and Elizabeth was suspect not only because she became a Catholic, but also because she was influencing two of her sisters-in-law to become converts also. Though she tried many kinds of work, such as opening a tea-room and running a boarding-house, Elizabeth was scarcely able to care for her family financially, and in the end, had to rely on contributions from Antonio Filicchi and probably from her brother-in-law and sister the Posts.

Thus, it was providential that Elizabeth met Reverend William Dubourg, a Sulpician priest from Baltimore in 1806. Father Dubourg recognized the importance of education for both boys and girls in the new American nation. He had opened a college for young men in Baltimore and was interested in starting a school for young women as well. More than a year after their initial conversation, Elizabeth and her children left New York in the spring of 1808 and sailed to Baltimore where, with Father Dubourg and Bishop John Carroll's encouragement and support, she opened a school for girls in 1808. In the following year, Elizabeth, who also felt the desire to become a religious, first pronounced the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience before Bishop Carroll. From then on she was known as Mother Seton. A modified form of the rule of St. Vincent de Paul for the Daughters of Charity in France was used as a guide for Elizabeth and the young women who joined her. By 1809, the house and school on Paca Street in Baltimore was becoming too small. Land was purchased in Emmitsburg, and all moved there in the summer of 1809. After a three year struggle to survive in terribly crowded and difficult circumstances, the little community moved into the "White House," a newly constructed school/convent in Emmitsburg. It is there that Mother Seton and the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, as they were originally known, continued to live and develop as the first native religious community in the United States.

As with earlier periods of her life, this time too was marked by the tragedy of separation and death. Elizabeth's sisters-in-law Harriet and Cecilia, who became Catholics themselves and then joined the new community, died during this period. So did Anna Maria and Elizabeth's youngest daughter Rebecca. Her sons William and Richard, educated at the Sulpician college in Emmitsburg, drifted from one kind of job to another, never very successfully, bringing great worry and anxiety to their mother. Each boy eventually settled on a career in the Navy, where Richard died at sea in 1823. William retired from a successful career

in the Navy in 1834. Catherine Josephine, Elizabeth's only surviving daughter, eventually joined the Sisters of Mercy, where she enjoyed a long and productive life, living to the ripe old age of 91!

For Mother Seton, this period was also one of struggle to keep the new community together and develop St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg, as well as the free school for the children of the area. It was a time when she had to balance her own vision for the future of the community with that of varied priest-superiors, one of whom favored another sister over Elizabeth as head of the community. She handled all with grace and humor and love. Her own health, never robust, eventually failed, as she too succumbed to the "Seton complaint" of tuberculosis. She died in her 47th year, January 4, 1821.

A Sampling of Her Virtues

Mother Seton was a woman of great faith. Faith, fundamentally, means trust in God and the development of a close relationship with God. Elizabeth *knew* God's love and care for her. In a journal begun when she was in Italy, Elizabeth recalled some incidents from her painful teen-age years in New York. She said:

"14 years of age—at uncle B.s New Rochelle again. The bible so enjoyed and Thomson and Milton hymns said on the rocks surrounded with ice in transports of first pure enthusiasm... joy in God that he was my Father insisting that he should not forsake me—my Father away, perhaps Dead—but God was my Father and I quite independent of whatever might happen..." (Kelly and Melville, *Elizabeth Seton: Selected Writings*, p.345, just as in the original).

And later on, from the same journal: "God is with us—and if sufferings abound in us, his Consolations also greatly abound, and far exceed all utterance" (Kelly and Melville, p. 105).

Throughout her life she was nourished by God's Word in the Bible. Again, from the Italian journal: "...finished reading the Testament through, which we began the 6th of October and my Bible as far as *Ezekiel* which I have always read to *myself* in rotation, but the lessons appointed in the Prayer Book, To W {William}—to day read him several passages in Isaiah which

he enjoyed so much that he was carried for awhile beyond his troubles—indeed our reading is an unfailing comfort— Wm. says he feels like a person brought to the Light after many years of darkness when he heard the Scriptures as the law of God and therefore Sacred, but not discerning what part he had in them or feeling that they were the fountain of Eternal Life” (Kelly and Melville, p. 121).

She was also nourished by the Eucharist. As an Episcopalian, she celebrated “Sacrament Sunday” several times a year, and clearly had a reverence for the Eucharistic liturgy as a sign of God’s presence, but it was only after struggle and prayer that she came to believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist as held by the faith of Catholics. This became the defining moment in her search for a faith-home for herself and her children. Once she came to that belief, she could no longer stay in the Episcopal church. And awe and reverence for Eucharist as worship and nourishment and agent of transformation became characteristic of Elizabeth’s piety in her later years.

She was a woman transformed through the school of suffering. She experienced the pain of rejection as a child, of loss through death and rejection of so many loved ones as a young adult, of misunderstanding by friends and superiors as convert and as religious, of physical and emotional hardship as pioneer foundress. In a letter to one of her early companions in the Sisters of Charity (who later joined another community) she wrote:

“I do not feel the least uneasy about you—if you suffer so much the better for our high journey above—the only fear I have is that you will let the old string pull too hard for solitude and silence, but look to the Kingdom of souls— the few to work in the little Vineyard, this is not a country my dear one for Solitude and Silence, but of warfare and crucifixion ...” (Kelly and Melville, p. 298).

Finally, she was a woman capable of tremendous love. She loved her father, despite his slights. She was passionate in her love for her husband and children, even when they disappointed her. She had extensive correspondence with many friends, and she never abandoned any of them, Protestant or Catholic. She loved the children in her school, the sisters of the community, the priests of the area, and the neighbors. She is well-named as Mother Seton, foundress of the first American religious

community, the Sisters of Charity. Her last words to the sisters are a fitting way to end this biographical sketch: "Be children of the church, o thankful."

A Reading List on Elizabeth Ann Seton

Alderman, Margaret and Josephine Burns. *Praying with Elizabeth Seton*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1992. This is one of the newest paperbacks about EAS. It is part of a series called "Companions on the Journey." It tells the story of Elizabeth, but organizes her life according to themes, and has questions for meditation at the end of each chapter. Each chapter is meant as a kind of meditation on some aspect of Elizabeth's life, and some might like this format.

Code, Msgr. Joseph B., ed. *Letters of Mother Seton to Mrs. Julianna Scott*. Emmitsburg: Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, 1928, 1960. The letters of Mother Seton to her longtime friend give an insight into her warm nature, and some of her concerns.

deBarbereg, Helen Bailly. *Elizabeth Seton*, tr. and adapted by Rev. Joseph B. Code. New York: Macmillan, 1927. I have always like this biography. She comes through as warm, loving, and you do get a sense of her life and spiritual journey. Some of her journals are woven into the text.

Dirvin, Joseph I. *Mrs. Seton, Foundress of the American Sisters of Charity*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1962, 1975. This is the biography most of us "grew up on." I find it the least satisfactory of the biographies. There are a few historical inaccuracies, but more, she comes across (to me) as too "soupy." Other writers, and her own letters and diaries, are more helpful.

Kelly, Ellin M. and Annabelle M. Melville. *Elizabeth Seton, Selected Writings* (Sources of American Spirituality). Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987. At this point, this is one of the best. It is not exactly a bio, but selected writings, introduced by some pages of explanation of this particular phase of her life. In many ways, it is the best book to read, because it allows EAS to speak for herself. I only grew to love her when I sat down and read her own letters and diaries.

Melville, Annabelle M. *Elizabeth Bayley Seton, 1774- 1821*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1951, 1976, 1985. This is the classic text. It was originally Melville's doctoral dissertation at C.U. which she revised for publication. It is the most thorough book, and traces the early history of the Emmitsburg community as well. But for many, it is probably a little too ponderous to enjoy.

White, Rev. Charles I. *Mother Seton, Mother of Many Daughters*, revised and edited by the Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949. This is another "old-timer" which I liked reading because it made her a living person. You get the "feel" for her.

Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan

by Sister Blanche Marie McEniry, SC

Catherine Josephine Mehegan was born on February 19, 1825, in Skibereen, County Cork, Ireland. Her parents were Patrick and Johanna (Miles) Mehegan. At the instigation of Catherine, she and her sister Margaret left home for America without the knowledge of their mother in 1844. Several years later she was one of the first postulants received by the New York Sisters of Charity (1847) after their separation from the Emmitsburg community. As Sister Mary Xavier, she was one of the first three sisters who opened Saint Vincent Hospital in New York. In 1858 Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, first bishop of Newark and a nephew of Mother Seton, was "loaned" Sister Mary Xavier Mehegan and Sister Mary Catharine Nevin to take over the direction of five novices who had been trained for him by the Cincinnati Sisters of Charity. The sisters were to have the option of returning to New York after three years. Both remained. The New Jersey community, known as the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, was formally inaugurated on September 29, 1859, at old Saint Mary's, Newark, and Mother Xavier became its first Superior.

On July 2, 1860, the motherhouse was moved to the Chegaray estate in Madison acquired by the sisters from Seton Hall, which was moving to South Orange. A select school for girls was opened, and both the motherhouse and the school were named Saint Elizabeth. During the Civil War Mother Xavier worked with the sisters in hospitals in Newark and Trenton. Many women came; new land was purchased and new buildings built. The missions flourished and new ones were opened in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. In 1899 Mother Xavier opened the College of Saint Elizabeth, the first college for women in New Jersey.

Mother Xavier died on June 24, 1915, in the ninety-first year of her age, having been sixty-nine years a religious, and fifty-seven years a superior. Her community numbered twelve hundred sisters. There were ninety-

four missions including schools, hospitals, orphanages, nurseries, homes for the aged, and one college.

She had lived her life in the most exact observance of the Rule of the Community, intent on the greatest possible simplicity of life and the maintenance of the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul. It has been said of her that she never asked her subjects to do anything that she herself had not done before as an example. Above all, she was a woman of prayer.

Because her faith in prayer was great, her courage was great. When she came to Madison with only five dollars and a statue of the Virgin Mary she had need of supreme trust in God if her work of charity was to grow. Neither at that time nor in the years that followed, when trials arose that are inseparable from positions of authority, did she seem to worry over her weighty responsibilities. She met the problems with confidence, not in herself, but in God, and made her decisions resolutely. She used to say that before retiring at night she left her problems in the chapel and thought no more about them until the next day.

In taking up her work she had had no predecessors to whom she might turn for guidance, no models of activity who might serve as stimulus and incentive. She had to find her own path and often quite literally to make it.

But the work was done; the future, under God, was assured and she could take her rest.

Sharkey, Sister Mary Agnes, *Sisters of Charity of New Jersey*, (3 vols.), 1933.

McEniry, Sister Blanche Marie, *Woman of Decision*, 1953.



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the following Sisters of Charity and Seton Associates: Sisters Ellen Clifford, Barbara Conroy, Anita Constance, Eileen Eager, Ellen Farrell, Kathleen Flanagan, Cheryl France, Barbara Garland, Patricia Godri, Barbara Grebenstein, Anne Guinee, Anne Haarer, Edna Francis Hersinger, Regina Hudson, Ellen Joyce, Thérèse Dorothy Leland, Alice Lubin, Blanche Marie McEniry, Cecilia McManus, Dianne Moore, Rosemary Moynihan, Noreen Neary, Julie Scanlan, Maureen Shaughnessy, Dorothy Sheahan, Jeanette Swan, and Jean Whitley; and Seton Associates Arlene Kleissler, Mary Marinucci, Sophie Martin and Monika Ruppert.