



THE INQUISITOR

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Honoring Our Queen of May By: Shannon O'Malley

May is the month of Mary and during this month we honor her as our Queen of Heaven and Earth. With the school year ending, having Seton's annual May Crowning was the perfect way to have the students and staff come together to honor our Blessed Mother. Before Seton's typical Monday morning Mass at All Saints, the students processed into the church with bouquets of flowers to place on the altar for Our Lady. After the celebration of the Mass, everyone walked over to the Marian statue, and gathered while listening to the lovely choir's

melodious voices. The ladies chosen in each grade for the May Court were Annie Dusek, 7th grade; Gabriela Brown, 8th grade; Rose Ellis, 9th grade; Monica DeMicoli and Mary Catherine Hurley, 10th grade; Lili Griffin and Julia Starrs, 11th grade; and Madeleine McCloskey, 12th grade, along with Amelie Halisky as the May Queen. After the court processed in, Amelie crowned Mary with a beautiful flower crown and the court, accompanied by their partners, led everyone in the rosary.



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The World's Greatest Heroes

By: Emma Fox

In a society that shuns authentic motherhood and fatherhood, the national holidays in May and June should be celebrated even more than before.

This year Mother's Day was May 14, and Father's Day June 18. Each spring and early summer, these two special Sundays come around and the beauty of parenting is celebrated in the United States. How are you going to show your parents that you love and appreciate them? I challenge you to do more than merely a store-bought card and flowers.

Mothers have a unique role in the family which is the building block of society which means that they are crucial in our culture of the world. Think about your mother and how many seemingly small sacrifices she makes for you, your siblings, your dad, and everyone around her each hour. How often does she worry about you even when you are fine? On Mother's Day, you should make sacrifices for her. Worry constantly about her. Is the living room clean, is she washing too many dishes (if she is washing any the answer is yes), is she stressing about supper, is she exhausted from a sleepless night? As her children you have a loving obligation to always love her, and love

requires action. What will you do for your mom today that shows her you love her?

Only a few weeks later, Father's Day is celebrated. This is such a wonderful excuse to spoil your dad and show him how much you love him. He has an extremely impactful role in the home and outside. Most dads are out working all day and come home only to continue working or fall asleep. Make Father's Day the most special day ever for him. Play sports, watch what he wants to watch, see to his happiness. While you would not probably buy him flowers, find something your dad loves and serve him through it. Dads are amazing and should be your heroes. You have no homework that week because it is summer now so make sure to spend your day with him.

Parents are a wonderful gift and on Mother's and Father's Day celebrate them with the very life they gave you. Give yourselves away in response to their constant gift to you. Mary, Mother of God and Saint Joseph, foster father of the Christ Child, pray for our parents.



My Fair Lady

By: Anneliese Orr

The Spring musical: one of the biggest and most successful fundraisers has come and gone again! This time the Seton stage was filled with a record-breaking cast of 135 students! This classic musical follows the story of a cockney girl who pays a language professor to teach her proper English. Comedy, romance, and drama are sprinkled throughout this spectacular performance. Senior Maggie Saffian starred as Eliza Doolittle, and junior Gabe Callaghan starred as Professor Higgins. Their performance on its own is worthy of praise, but the massive cast contributed vivid energy which carried audience members through the musical. As Mrs. Carroll stated, "I have never seen such joy and excitement in one room." Another student after seeing the performance

for the first time said, "It is the best My Fair Lady I have ever seen!" After seeing it a second time, the same student said that it only got better. Another overlooked, but crucial, part of the show is the stage crew. "Being stage crew means I must stay on my toes and be ready for when they next need me. It's an amazing experience, though, because I get to watch the entire show from behind the curtain," one anonymous stage crew member stated. The stage crew are the people that make the whole musical come together. In all, every person involved in My Fair Lady - cast, stage crew, tech, volunteer parents, directors, costume ladies and the hair and makeup artists - all helped make the show become the spectacular production it was.



Another Perfect Prom

By: Matthew Baldwin

Thanks to the help of the 2023 Senior Student Council, this year's annual Seton Prom went without a problem, giving a fun night to all the juniors and seniors that went. Held at the Piedmont Country Club in Haymarket, the Senior Student Council were there first thing in the morning to help set up and prepare for the night's Prom. The attendees began to show up, taking pictures with their dates and talking with friends, until the doors opened at 6:30 and everyone was invited inside. The students, along with many teachers, obliged. The country club itself boasted a beautiful view of the nearby golf courses for the students to admire as they walked around and socialized until dinner was served. Dinner consisted of many sides for the students to choose from, along with their choice of chicken, steak, or pork as their main course and bread pudding for dessert. The students said grace and got in line to serve themselves. After a delicious dinner and a fun time socializing with friends, all students were invited outside to witness the traditional Junior Dance. The juniors did a spectacular job with their dance to Big John by Jimmy Dean, directed by Mr. Heisler, with Joey Allan and John McGraw as the stars of the show. After a round of applause from the seniors and teachers, the music began and people took to the dance floor. The students danced all the way into the night until it was time to announce the annual Prom King, Queen, Prince, and Princess. After a moment of silence, Joe Dwane and Cate Waldron were announced as Prom Prince and Princess, followed by Tim Blanchette and Cat Griffin who were announced as Prom King and Queen. All four walked to the top of the dance floor, where they were crowned and given sashes. After their coronation, they led all the students in the last slow song of the night. As tradition, the last song played was Sweet Caroline, and both classes joined in a big circle around the dance floor, before saying a final prayer, singing the Salve Regina, and ending the 2023 Prom Night.



The Pilgrimage

By: Josiah Albin

Since 1980, it has been a yearly tradition for the students and staff of Seton School to take a pilgrimage to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Shrine located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Although during Covid the Seton community was unable to go, there was still a Rosary pilgrimage around the Seton property. This year there were no restrictions, so Seton was allowed to attend the Mass and enjoy the Shrine.

In previous years we attended the 11am mass, but after 2020, Seton now attends the 9am Mass. This year, we were blessed to have the Seton choir singing for us led by Miss Vicente and cantor Maggie Saffian. As Mrs. Carroll said, "The choir sang beautiful hymns. The acoustics are amazing in the Shrine Basilica." Father Michael Isenberg, Diocesan Director of Vocations, was

the homilist. His homily was about Mother Seton's life and how she had to face many trials and hardships when she converted to being Catholic. She moved from New York to Emmitsburg even though it was not considered a metropolis by anyone. Even though she moved, she still had many difficulties in her life, including sickness and homelessness. A key detail Father pointed out was that when she was sick, she asked for her bed to be moved closer to the Chapel, so that way she could be closer to God in the tabernacle.

After Mass people tried to go to the Mary Grotto, but unfortunately there were complications and many people ended up just having to say rosaries as they drove home. Even so, the event was still a successful Pilgrimage and was enjoyed by all who attended.



Seton Seniors Future Plans

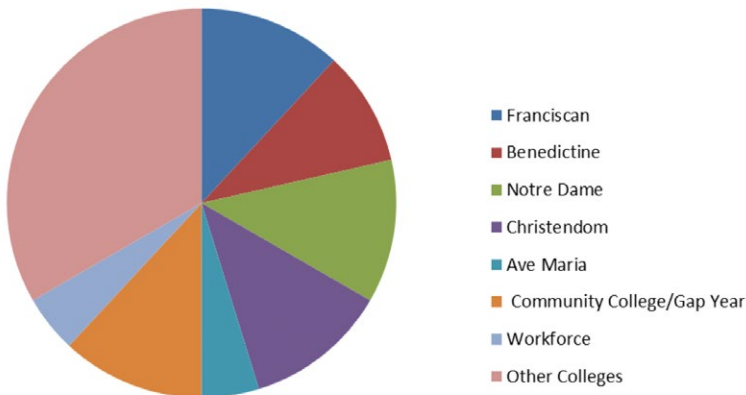
By: Matthew Baldwin

As the end of the school year begins to come around, many Seniors have big plans for their futures after Seton. This year's Seniors are going to variety of places after Seton, with many of our Seniors are going to colleges such as Franciscan, Christendom, and Benedictine, with a handful of them also going to the University of Notre Dame and a few of them going to Virginia Tech, the University of Dallas, and the University

of Kentucky. While most of the Seniors are going to colleges, some are taking gap years or doing community college instead as an alternative. The graph shows the demographic of where the Seniors are going after Seton to give the reader a better idea of what percent of Seniors are going where. On behalf of Seton, we wish the Seniors of 2023 the best of luck for their future and will keep them in our prayers.



Senior's Future



Spectacular Senior Banquet

By: Henry Knight

Each year, the seniors at Seton have one last group event before graduation, which is the Senior Banquet. The tradition is that the seniors are seated in the front of the gym with all the parents gathered at tables surrounding the other half of the gym, while the junior class serves all those attending. It would not be a banquet without food, and the classic Mexican food that was served did not disappoint, thanks to the Pogue family. There was a wide variety of tacos and toppings, chips and salsa, nachos, and fried ice-cream and tres leches cake for dessert. After the teachers, parents, and seniors indulged in this feast, they watched a nostalgic slide show of the senior class, from their days as seivies all the way through to their senior year, which was put together by Addie-Quinn Kammerdeiner, Senior Class Council Secretary. Next came the speeches led by John McGraw as the junior speaker who had the whole crowd laughing all the way until his standing ovation. Tim Blanchette was the senior speaker, and he had many heartfelt words for his fellow seniors, and even some impressions of certain Seton teachers which deserved a standing ovation. Catherine Griffin went next as the Senior Class Council President, and she did not disappoint as she also got a standing ovation. The final speech was prepared by Mr. Westhoff who announced that Mrs. Carroll would cut a ribbon in front of the Seton chapel that night since she had not done it when the chapel first opened seven years ago. After this special moment, the seniors, their parents, and Mr. Pennefather and Mrs. Carroll went into the chapel to sing the Regina Caeli. To finish off the night, the seniors gathered in front of the stage to take one, final, group picture.



Senior Sailing Trip

By: Henry Knight

Each year Mrs. Salas' ALS class full of seniors takes an end-of-year sailing trip in Baltimore Maryland through Living Classrooms. The students met at Seton at 6:30AM and carpoled for the hour and a half long drive to the bay. The weather could not have been more perfect and set the tone for the great day ahead. On the sailing trip, students were taught many new things like how to read a map, and how to hoist the sails and steer the one hundred- and thirty-year-old boat. The guides were very instructive and set up different stations on the boat, showing the students about plankton, oysters, and other sea creatures. The students even got to cast out a fishing net, however luck was not on their side as their net came up empty. The boat sailed past Fort McHenry which has a deep historical significance, as it is the fort from the War of 1812 where the National Anthem was written. The sailing trip lasted from 9:30- 1:30, and after the class got back on dry land they walked around the town, exploring, and got lunch. At 3:00 the trip ended, and the class carpoled back to Seton, exhausted, but with memories to last a lifetime.



N.H.S. Induction Ceremony

By: Titus Stanton

Every year, members of the Seton student body are chosen to be members of the prestigious National Honor Society. These students are selected for their honorary acts of sacrifice, service, charity, and excellent grades. This year, Seton carried on this tradition by having 24 students accepted into the N.H.S. They were inducted into the N.H.S. during a ceremony in the gym on April 19th, 2023, with the entirety of the student body and parents of the inductees present to watch. The leading members of the Seton N.H.S. lit symbolic candles, which stood for the four pillars of the society, and swore in the inductees. During the ceremony, guest speaker Mr. DeWolf explained the importance of being a person of character and honor. He also explained how blessed the inductees are to be a part of such a prestigious and exemplary society. After announcing that the inductees were officially members of the N.H.S, the members were serenaded out of the gym to a selection of classical music. When asked about how they feel now that they are a part of such a prestigious group, an anonymous member said, "I feel very honored to serve the Seton community, and I am proud to be a part of something bigger than myself. I want to make Seton a better place and to help the younger classmen adjust to Seton's thriving community." Welcome Andrew Baltrinic, Molly Bauer, Isabella (Bella) Chau, Clara Condon, Clara De Micoli, Monica De Micoli, Haley Fifield, Emma Fox, Maximilian Gonzalez, Orla Haggerty, Jacqueline Hugo, Seth Kellogg, Jerome Kramer, Gabriel Likoy-Bokassa, Anneliese Orr, Lucy Pennefather, Jameson Pogue, Elizabeth Rohan, Anna Russo, Walter Saffian, William Sokban, Johanna Vander Woude, Luke Vander Woude, and Nicholas (Nick) Vaughan to the National Honor Society.



A Memorable Memorial Day By: Josiah Albin

Memorial Day is a notable American holiday with themes of patriotism and respect for our soldiers all throughout the states. Many Americans remember learning about the origins of Memorial Day in elementary school, and maybe having a refresher with more details in high school. But many often forget that information once they get the “A+” on their test, and they move on. But the history of our country, and the many challenges it has overcome, should be learned for more than just a grade on a test, or to pass a class. As Americans we should know our history and show genuine patriotism.

Memorial Day started three years after the Civil War ended. On May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic or GAR, established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of those who had died in the war with flowers. Major General John A. Logan declared the observance should be May 30th. It is believed the date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country. That same year the first large observance was held at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. This ceremony focuses on mourning the fallen soldiers and honoring all those who served in our wars.

In the modern day, many people celebrate Memorial Day in all different ways. Some people go for the more solitary approach by going to a memorial and silently paying remembrance, or by visiting the graves of fallen relatives and loved ones. Other citizens decide to be more celebratory and either take part in, or go to, a Memorial Day parade. Other options are going to museums or historical sites, such as local battlefields. Many tours happen, either in person or through an audio walk along the sites.

Whichever way one chooses to celebrate Memorial Day, honoring of our fallen soldiers should be the first priority, and then enjoy the picnics and backyard BBQs and the freedoms we have because of their sacrifice.



Seton Sports Wrap Up

By: Briana Shillingburg

School has come to an end and with that comes the end of sports. From the fall season all the way through the spring season, each team has shown great efforts trying to go as far as they can, hoping they could get to the State Championships. Now the very last sports season of the year has ended and many of our teams had great successes.

Ladies' Soccer: The ladies' soccer teams including junior high, junior varsity and varsity, worked very hard this season. The varsity team made it to states against Norfolk Academy but sadly lost 3-0.

Boys' Lacrosse: The boys' lacrosse team had a good season. This year was also the first year for a junior varsity team. The varsity team made it to states this year against Norfolk Christian on May 16, 2023, but lost 24-6.

Baseball: Baseball worked hard this year striving to do their best. Unfortunately, the varsity team did not make it to States this year, but hopefully this will give the returning players something to work towards next year!

Softball: The softball teams had a great season this year. The junior varsity team played more games than they had their first season last year. The varsity team went off to play in the State Tournament in Norfolk but, sadly, lost the game. The returning players are excited to see where they can go in next year's season.

Boys' Tennis: The tennis team had a great season. They ended the year with a sad loss against Highland but are very proud with how hard they worked this year.

Each Seton team put in a lot of hard work as well as dedication to their sport. Many cannot wait to see how the next year's seasons will go. After talking to some seniors, many have had different feelings on their last sports season playing for Seton. Norah Burgess said that she is very sad to leave Seton and her teammates. She has also decided to not completely leave the sports community. Norah is returning to Seton next year, not as a student, but as a soccer and basketball coach. Until then, go Seton Conquistadors!

May Happenings

By: Briana Shillingburg

There are many unique days that come along with the month of May: Mothers' Day, Cinco de Mayo, and May the 4th are days we all know, but what other days come around that make this month unique?

To start off, the whole month of May is Asian Pacific Islander month where we recognize the Asian Pacific cultures. May is also, as most know, the month of Mary.

Here are some of the unique days that come around in the month of May.

May 1: The Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker and it is also Tim McGraw, a famous country singer was born on this day in 1967

May 2: International Harry Potter Day

May 3: Niccolo Machiavelli was born on this day in 1469

May 4: National Star Wars Day: May the 4th be with you!

May 5: Cinco de Mayo. Let 's celebrate!

May 13: Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us!

May 14: Mothers' Day: Don't forget to show your moms lots of love.

May 20: Armed Forces' Day, so show all branches of the military honor.

May 22: National Maritime Day: On this day we recognize the efforts of the US Merchant Marines for their service and sacrifice and their role in protecting our Nation's security and commerce.

May 29: Memorial Day

There are many other unique things that have happened in history on these days in May. Have some fun and look them up!



Movie Review: Super Mario Bros. By: Titus Stanton

For the past 40 years, one name stands out in entertainment history above all the rest. That man is a short Italian plumber from Brooklyn named Mario. Having a TV show, movie, and countless video games, Mario and his brother Luigi have been staples of countless childhoods. This year, Shigeru Miyamoto and Illumination studios released The Super Mario Bros. Movie, the second movie to share the name.

The movie starts out in the bustling borough of Brooklyn, where brothers Mario and Luigi are trying to grow their plumbing business. After an unsuccessful plumbing job (and other escapades), Mario and Luigi are transported into a magical world through a pipe in the sewers of Brooklyn. Mario is separated from his brother, and is found by Toad, a tiny mushroom man. There Mario begins his quest to stop the evil Bowser from taking over the land.

The Super Mario Bros. Movie is a slam dunk on Illumination and Nintendo's part. Making over one billion dollars at the worldwide box office, it is a movie for all ages. Whether you're a Mario super fan or someone who's never played the games, the movie's exciting world, characters, and visuals are sure to delight the viewer. When asked about their thoughts on the movie, a Seton student said, "The animation was incredible, and the movie was surprisingly high quality. The environment and setting of the movie were also awesome. I am excited to see what other games Nintendo makes into movies and shows." While the movie does have a mediocre plot that we've all seen before about a normal person rising to the occasion to defeat evil, the movie, instead, puts its colorful style over substance. The Super Mario Bros. Movie does not hold back when it comes to showing off a variety of characters, creatures, and the world that the movie takes place in. By the time the movie ends, you can't wait to see what other adventures Mario and his companions will experience.



A Memorable Memorial Day By: Josiah Albin

The school year has ended, and everyone is excited - no school and warm sunny days! With no schoolwork to catch up on, summer is the perfect opportunity to attend fun events and activities with your friends and family in the Manassas area.

Manassas Arts + Music Festival

Havens Arts VA
 9108 Church Street
 Manassas, Virginia 20110 United States
 June 10 @ 12:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Come support The Young Visionaries, a summer youth program, by attending the Manassas Arts + Music Festival. Including musical performances, comedy shows, dance performances, vendors from small businesses, fashion shows, and more, this festival would make for a great summer day filled with exploring your different interests. Some of the proceeds will go toward The Young Visionaries' Art and Music Camp, which focuses on teaching young people art, music, and videography.

July 4th Celebration

9431 West Street
 Manassas, VA 20110 United States
 Jul 4 @ 3:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Everyone loves celebrating The Fourth of July: delicious cookout food, warm summer weather, extravagant firework displays, and the making of memories with the people you love. Why not spend this national holiday at a celebration right here in Manassas? There will be face painting, food stands, fun rides for kids, and of course, extraordinary fireworks starting at 9:15 pm. Don't forget to bring lawn chairs and blankets to be comfortable while watching the fireworks show with your friends and family!



The Magic Putting Place

8902 Mathis Ave
 Manassas VA 20110

Landscaped beautifully with flowers and bushes, The Magic Putting Place is a themed miniature golf place decorated with a magic castle, windmill, and fountain, creating a mystical feel for any fairytale lovers. This enjoyable summer activity is fun for any age and will make for memorable days with family and friends.

Nathan's Dairy Bar

8948 Mathis Ave
 Manassas VA 20110

After being tired out from the sun during your miniature golf competition, walk over to Nathan's Dairy Bar for a delicious and refreshing treat! Serving ice cream, shaved ice, milkshakes, soft serve, sundaes, and more, Nathan's Dairy Bar is a family friendly place to go and enjoy ice cream on a hot summer day.



A Memorable Memorial Day By: Josiah Albin

So you've been studying all year round and then summer comes around... great. All of that studying has long been reduced to nothing as you enter your next year of school. The greatly needed three month break has a major downside in that it stunts the learning process of the students and very few remember relevant lessons that will help them in the coming of the next school year. So how do you keep your brain fresh?

1. Reading Books - this one seems like a no-brainer, but it is amazing how much it helps students from regressing over the summer. Even though it may seem laborious, the Seton Summer Reading list has many incredible classics to pick from.

2. Exercise - believe it or not, exercising over the summer can significantly impact your learning abilities! Studies show that "strength exercise helps improve brain function and therefore learning in children." Seton offers summer camps and open gyms for many of the sports here. The Seton gym is open to more than just Seton's current athletes; camps are held here for the younger grades as well. Click on these links for this summer's workouts:

[Microsoft Word - Volleyball Camp.docx \(setonschool.net\)](#)

[2023-Skills-Drills-ONE-FILE-1.pdf \(setonschool.net\)](#)

[MrPs-Hot-Shot-Camp.pdf \(setonschool.net\)](#)

3. Podcasts - listening to podcasts over the summer can surprisingly keep your school skills keen! It keeps your mind sharp by listening, registering, and retaining. Podcasts can be found anywhere on Spotify, YouTube, Audible, and many other commonly used platforms.

4. Museums - museums are great treasures of knowledge and experience; visiting one is like a trip to the past! Museums can be very fun to visit and wander. Make sure to take advantage of the historic landmarks here in Virginia, and over in DC! Manassas has its own historic places such as the battlefields and DC has several museums, such as the Smithsonian, the National Art Gallery, and the International Spy Museum.

5. Sleep! - as you all are probably aware, sleep is one of the most important parts of growing and learning. Giving your body the rest it deserves is vital in anyone's journey, so make sure you make time for rest!

I hope the tips from above will help you become a more efficient student. Have a great summer break!



Creative Corner

Compiled by Emma Fox

Enjoy Your Smallness – S. D. Smith

Be small in a big world, Little girl.
Run free and fast and happy,
While you have the strength,
And stamina,
And the painless ease,
Of good knees.

Run, With the wide stride of an athlete,
Competing with the last joy,
A lithe, gliding repeat,
Of the same song you just sang,
In a new key,
With a new beat,
A familiar innovation,
And a singalong chorus.

Enjoy your smallness,
Before your head blocks the sitters,
In the pew behind you,
Before your shadow—cast in innocence,
Is an old friend's new darkness.
Guard your little heart,
And make art,
Before you know,
How far it might go,
And stay small in your heart,
Though the ambition, it itches,
Don't get too big for your britches,
And be as glad and grateful,
As you can.
If you can,
This too, is from the hand,
Of God.

A Woman's Life – Clare E. Fuchs

There, hidden behind brambles
Roses struggled to grow
Heads turned up, reaching.

Pink buds grew there
Catching the baby girl's fancy
Plucked by mothers, stripped of thorns.

Opening yellow ones, dancing in the breeze
Pretty, easily swayed, searching for breath
Bobbing alone or in pairs among weeds.

Pure white blooms gazing on the moon
Found by young princes,
Placed amid flowing maidens' tresses
Smooth, silverly bliss.

Red roses, for love and pain alike
Gathered in bunches
Around a new mother's bed
Full bloomed and mature
Exceed the brambles' height.

Four different colored roses
Growing tall among the weeds
One woman growing strong
Facing life ahead.



Lemon Bar Recipe

curtesy of <https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a12104/lemon-bars/>

Yields: 16 - 20 serving(s)

Prep Time: 15 mins

Cook Time: 40 mins

Total Time: 55 mins

Ingredients

For the Crust

- 2 c. flour
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 sticks (1 cup) salted butter, cut into small cubes

For the Filling

- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. flour
- 4 whole large eggs
- Zest and juice of 4 medium-sized lemons
- Powdered sugar, for sifting

Directions

For the crust:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Grease a 9-by-13-inch pan with butter. (Use an 8 x 10 pan if you would like the layers to be a little thicker.)
2. Stir together the flour, sugar, and salt.
3. Add the butter to the bowl and use a pastry cutter to cut it all together until the mixture resembles fine crumbs.
4. Press into the prepared pan and bake until golden around the edges, about 20 minutes.

For the filling:

1. Stir together the sugar and flour.
2. Crack in the eggs and whisk to combine.
3. Add the lemon zest and juice and mix until combined.
4. Pour over the crust and bake for about 20 minutes.
5. Allow to cool in the fridge for a minimum of 2 hours, then sift powdered sugar over the top before cutting into squares.

The Quiet Terror

- Anonymous

It was a quiet terror. So very quiet. But it emanated throughout the city. In the darkness of the night, there were no noises, no sounds of laughter, no parties, or plays. There was terror.

Maunitiz was the leading capital of all the cities in the area. The population was greater than all the other four cities combined. Maunitiz had banks, stores, houses, skyscrapers, parks, you name it. The city was prosperous and was led by the Governing Advisor. The citizens of Maunitiz were happy and safe.

But then, people began to whisper. Rumors of the other four cities entered Maunitiz. Rumors of violence, destruction, and death occurring and the citizens of Lopolis, Tildsburg, East Brooke, and Detron fleeing for their safety. Who was causing the violence? Why did all four cities suddenly erupt into tumult? And why did Maunitiz, the capital and leading city, not aid the needy?

The Governing Advisor sent no aid, no supplies, and no one to stop or find out what was happening. Maunitiz remained perfect—spotlessly clean, orderly and refined, everything as it should be. But a few people began to stir in their sleep, squirm in the daylight, whisper behind shut curtains. They worried for their safety. When would the violence erupt in Maunitiz?

It was a quiet terror. It started slowly, then grew. The silence of the night was deafening. The sunshine in the day was blinding. The perfect world they lived in was madness.

Now, not everyone thought that way. Many smiled and carried on in almost robotic fashion. In fact, most of the people of Maunitiz were blissful and content. Let the violence carry on outside; we are safe inside our city, the plastered on smiles seemed to say. But the select few knew something was wrong. Everything was too perfect.

How do I know all this? I myself was a citizen of Maunitiz when this perfect, silent, deadly terror began to spread. A group of about twenty of us joined together in a group bonded in many different ways. Some of us were related, others were simple workers, still others priests, and a few families. We met in secret in the Church of St. Agnes by the Town Square.

We all met in secret because it seemed to be the right thing. There appeared to be no outward enemy. But there was still the terror. And thus, we met in secret.

Back when it all started, I was a simple journalist for the Maunitiz Chronicle but I did a lot of investigating here and there on cases, news stories, and whatever I could sniff out. The violent stories and rumors of Lopolis, Tildsburg, East Brooke, and Detron reached my eager ears and I jumped to discover the case. Maunitiz had a simple structure with buildings and neighborhoods and it seemed easy to just drive out of it into the nearest city of East Brooke.

But four men stopped my car at the entrance gate of Maunitiz. Four men in black suits and styled hair told me I was not permitted out. I showed them my Chronicle card ID, my resume, my license, and anything official looking I could find in my purse. But they smiled, shook their heads, and said road construction was too risky right now.

Frustrated, I drove home where I found, in my mailbox, a simple note. It read:

Come to the Church of St. Agnes tonight at 10:00.

Let no one see you leave or enter. I know what your trouble is and it is my duty to aid you

-Fr. Terrance Goodman

I had never been much of a praying woman and this Fr. Goodman seemed like a nut. Perhaps he did know my problem, but I wasn't about to become a crazy, night-sneaking hooligan entering a church at ten in the night. So I decided to try and leave again tomorrow and went to bed.

The next day, my efforts were fruitless. And the next day, and the next. That week, I tried to leave the city, I begged to go to the other cities, I demanded, I threatened. But they smiled and said that the roads were dangerous, or there was a landslide on this bridge, or there were problems with a dam flooding a part of the highway. Now I knew that they were downright lying. But, I was a persistent investigator. I knew there was a problem and I knew that Maunitiz and its officials were hiding something from the public.

At the Chronicle, my co-worker, Estelle thought the same thing. We planned a meeting with our Chronicle president, Richard T. Morgan, to see if he shared our opinions and would help us get out of the city to investigate.

Mr. Morgan smiled and nodded through our complaints and thoughts, but at the end, he shook his head and said in a soft voice, "Everything is fine, my good people, everything is fine. The Governing Advisor has everything under control. There are just some bad road delays and well, of course, once everything's cleared up, you will go find a story, hmmm?" He smiled leeringly as if we were children.

Outside the conference room, Estelle let loose a series of colorful words and slapped her thigh frustratedly. "I've gotta get out, I've just gotta! My folks live in Lopolis and I've got to see them and make sure they're ok. I'm also going to get down to the bottom of this. You and I both know something's wrong and it's up to us to figure it out."

That night, Estelle called me up to say that she was going to drive her car to the edge of town where an old road scarcely used, winded through the mountains and eventually met up with the main road. She would take this road to get to Lopolis. I wished her luck, but told her I had another story to write and I would go the next day taking the same road.

The next morning, I drove to the edge of town to set off after Estelle, who had left the night before. A wall had been built and was freshly plastered with a metal gate barring the exit. Confused, I drove around Maunitiz, thinking it was a different place where she had left the city. Only then did I realize that the wall stretched all around the town, shadowing Maunitiz and enclosing everything. Shocked, I stumbled through my thoughts, trying to comprehend how a giant wall could have been built in one night. And where was Estelle? She didn't answer my calls, nor was she home. I began to feel the terror. No one else seemed affected. It seemed as if that wall had always been there.

That night, searching through my cluttered desk, I came upon that letter from Fr. Goodman. I was desperate for answers.

So at 9:30, I exited my home quietly, and walked through the darkness and eerie silence to the Church of St. Agnes. Inside the church was the beautiful fragrance of incense I had not smelt since I was a child. In the kneelers toward the altar were about twenty people. There were two couples, a few older children, some old men and women, and many single workers like myself. They all sat in reverent silence. They turned as I came in but instead of frowning or telling me to leave, they smiled. True genuine smiles. Not plastered on or faulty, but real smiles.

From a room off to the side of the altar came who I believed must be Fr. Goodman. He was short and round but quick, with a springy step. He stepped down from the altar and shook my hand. He said my name, then introduced me to the others there. We all left the church and went behind the altar into a small room called the sacristy. Fr. Goodman locked the door and shut the curtains tighter.

"Welcome, friends. We gather here today to meet with our dear friend—" I cut him off. "How did you know I was coming?" The old priest smiled brightly. "I just did, my friend, I just did."

And that is when I became a part of that secret society, that group of citizens who, just like me, had questions unanswered. We met every other night in the Church of St. Agnes and we asked questions and we discussed plans.

Some of the workers in the society were lawyers who had left their positions in the Maunitiz government and had been reached out to by Fr. Goodman. One, a woman named Sarah Brightfield spoke of the mysteries in the government. "No one really sees the Government Advisor. Well, I haven't at least. And no one knows how that wall was built. And you know, people are disappearing too," she said in a hushed tone.

You may wonder where I've gotten to with Estelle. Well, she never returned. I contacted everyone I knew who knew her, but I was unanswered. My friends in the Society agreed with me that she must have been taken the night the wall was built. Jerry Plumber, a husband and father of five, said that a man at his office began asking questions and trying to find out how and when the wall was constructed, but he disappeared shortly thereafter.

Did we worry for our safety? Fr. Goodman feared nothing. And in his confidence, we were safe. He told me God would protect us and help us recover the information being sucked from us each day in this silent terror.

Everyday, people disappeared. And every day, I was silent. But my mind was full of thoughts and rebellions against this oppression that no one else seemed to see, besides the Society. Eventually, no one was allowed outside the city but we no longer thought of escaping. Our minds were centered on the inside of Maunitiz. How would we stop the terror?

The answer came shortly two months after I had joined the Society. We were in the sacristy late at night, listening to Fr. Goodman when suddenly, he stopped abruptly. He rushed to the locked door and put an ear to it. We all held our breaths and listened.

The sound of the church doors opening reached our ears. A hushed footstep crept slowly over the creaking floor of the old church. Fr. Goodman, with a wave of his hand, beckoned us to the window.

We all clambered out onto the grass below and he told us to go home quickly. As the rest obediently crept away, I stayed in the shadows.

The door of the sacristy opened and Fr. Goodman turned with a benevolent and innocent smile. I couldn't see who had entered, but I heard a soft voice that chilled my bones.

My mind began to fog and all I remember is a voice telling me to run. I blindly obeyed.

The next morning found me asleep in my bed. I had no memory of arriving home, no recollection of what had happened. I walked out into the silent air. A strange smell wafted to my nose. The smell of smoke. My heart skipped a beat as I ran down the street with a dread in my heart. I turned the corner.

The Church of St. Agnes was in ashes. Its old timbers lay blackened and charred in a smoked heap. I muttered words of disbelief as I ran up to the wreck.

"Fr. Goodman!" I cried. No answer. Where was the kindly priest? Had he been taken as well? My mind began to fog again. I shook my head like a dog and came to one conclusion.

I would find Fr. Goodman even if it meant my death. This blatant persecution of a faith and of its followers was pure evil. And so I marched through the street, stopping at the homes of all the Society to tell them what had happened and my intentions.

Sarah Brightfield insisted on coming with me. I told her I was going to the Maunitizia, the tallest skyscraper in the city and the government building. I told her I was going to stop the Governing Advisor. She told me that without Fr. Goodman she would be a mind-stripped politician acting as a puppet and that she would come, no matter what anyone else said.

And so we set off, a journalist and a lawyer, in a city of terror, a city full of control and dominance. We set off to find Fr. Goodman and Estelle and all the missing citizens of what was once a peaceful haven. There was danger on all sides. Quiet danger. But we were ready. Ready to fight.