

# *The Soul of Seton*

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## *Dottie Feddersen*

### **Editors Note:**

***The plight of the poor has never been as visible to the average American as it was during the coverage of the Katrina Hurricane. For most of us who live in Plano, TX the plight of the poor is even more distant.***

***The Prophet Isaiah reminds us “to share our bread with the hungry, to shelter the homeless poor and to clothe the man seen to be naked.” (Isaiah 58:5-7). The entire ministry of Jesus is marked by concern for the weak and the vulnerable. Jesus tells us that we will be judged at the end of time on whether we have shared this concern, and he has terrible words to say to those who saw him hungry, thirsty, a stranger, or naked, or sick or homeless and neglected to help him (Matt 25:42-46).***

***The Seton Fund of our parish which is used to assist those in the situations outlined in the above scripture is administered through***

***our Parish Office of Peace & Justice. Even before Katrina, the parish has been working to meet the needs of the poor in our own community for many years. As Christians we must hear the cry of the poor and the homeless in our midst. Dottie Feddersen heard that cry and responded. For more information on working the Outreach Ministries of our parish or to make a contribution that goes to direct service of the poor, contact the Parish Office of Peace and Social Justice at 972-596-5505.***

About three years ago Dottie Feddersen’s life changed dramatically. She had worked in the telecommunications industry for nineteen years and got caught in the downsizing and reconfiguring that was part of the times. She had moved to different parts of the country—literally from coast (California) to coast (Virginia) -- and even though she was in the company of thousands of other telecommunications employees, the experience was unsettling to say the least. Dottie took some time to regroup and made a decision to retire. She gave herself time to reorganize and then she saw the ad in the Saint Elizabeth bulletin.

Pam Kaus, Director of the parish office of Peace and Social Justice, was expressing a need for help. Pam required workers to facilitate the very sensitive work of benevolence in the parish—that is the administration of the Seton Fund. In a parish with as many members as Saint Elizabeth there are many families in need. Circumstances such as loss of employment, death or illness bring people to the parish to seek help. There is a fund set aside—the **Seton Fund**—for the purpose of giving

emergency aid to these families. Parishioners contribute regularly to this fund through the special “Seton Fund” envelope which is included with the mailing of the envelopes. Dottie describes going into Pam’s office and asking if there were numbers of people who had come in volunteering to help. Maybe the position had already been filled? Pam replied that she was not exactly overwhelmed with candidates. In fact Dottie was the first. Pam explained that Dottie would be trained to interview people who came to the parish for assistance; she would be involved in making decisions about the distribution of the money in the Seton Fund. Dottie considers her Christian action and involvement very practical. This work of justice and charity interested her very much. She felt it was something she could do—a contribution she could make. There was a caution.

Dottie had just agreed to become involved in an organization called CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). These are people who serve as unbiased voices for any child who comes into the justice system through Child Protective Services. Each minor who comes before the court in Collin County is given an advocate to look out for the interests of the child. The work of the advocate involves meeting the child and learning about the circumstances of the child’s life through case investigations and follow-ups. Decisions are made about the child’s life and the CASA volunteer works to insure that the best interests of the child are served. The work requires a great deal of time and attention.

Dottie wondered: Do I have the time, the energy and the emotional strength for both of these endeavors? She soon realized that help and support came from many places. Pam provided amazing resources, experience and guidance which continue to

impress Dottie. Her RENEW group is also an important part of Dottie’s continuing effort. There are days when her work is draining and frustrating, but Dottie (again being the very practical person she is) calls on the resources available to her.

So now Dottie, a wife of forty eight years, fills her days with listening to the stories of people in need and responding to them. Her work is characterized by dependable responsible service. Sometimes the response she offers is financial. Sometimes there is a referral to other parish ministries such as a Stephen Minister or other community resources. She is sustained by remembering **“Whatever you do for the least of my brothers you do for me.”**