

HARVESTING THEOLOGICAL ABUNDANCE FROM ELIZABETH SETON'S STORY



She endured loss after loss of those dearest to her, Elizabeth allowed herself to feel the searing pain of it all, then turned it into a moment of grace.

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Memory, our past, is the key to our identity, how we tell our story- our personal story, our communal story, the story of the Church. Memories, even when difficult, can be turned into reasons to give thanks. God accompanies us through our journey and meets us in each moment. Unpleasant memories often call us to a place of letting go and ultimately of forgiveness.

Hope can be described as "the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." Trust in a God of provident care became a lifelong practice for Elizabeth. Saved by Hope, we live differently, we meet adversity with serenity and trust, and we move into the territory of imagination, which opens us to see with God's eyes, for whom all is infinite possibility. Imagine a different picture of our personal future, imagine a transformed Church.

Elizabeth was not afraid of intimacy, of real **presence**; she didn't hesitate to let others know how deeply she loved them. Love of God and religion did not cancel out love of one's spouse, friends, and family. Knowing that she was unconditionally loved by God her Father, Elizabeth was led to extend her love, well beyond her family into her fruitful ministry: she extended her sphere of caring relationships in ever widening circles. We too hear the call to be truly present to our world, meeting its pain with love.