

SAINT OF THE MONTH: ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON



Elizabeth Ann Bayley was born in New York City on August 28, 1774 to a prominent Episcopal family, and lost her mother at the age of three. In 1794, at the age of 19, Elizabeth married William Magee Seton, a wealthy businessman with whom she had five children. William died of tuberculosis in 1803, leaving Elizabeth a young widow. After discovering Catholicism in Italy, where her husband had died, Elizabeth returned to the United States and entered the Catholic Church in 1805 in New York.

After a number of difficult years, Elizabeth moved in 1809 to Emmitsburg, Maryland. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was an activist and advocate for the poor in the 18th to 19th centuries where she founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's, the first community for religious women established in the United States. She also began St. Joseph's Academy and Free School, planting the seeds of Catholic education in the United States.

Her legacy now includes religious congregations in the United States and Canada, whose members work on the unmet needs of people living in poverty in North America and beyond.

She died on January 4, 1821, at the age of 46 years old. Mother Seton, as she is often called, was canonized on Sunday, September 14, 1975 in St. Peter's Square by Pope Paul VI. She was the first citizen born in the United States to be given the title of "Saint." Her remains are entombed in Emmitsburg in the Basilica at the National Shrine that bears her name.

Her Feast Day is January 4, and she is the patron saint of: widows, death of parents, Catholic schools, and persons rejected for their Catholic faith.

A few quotes from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:

"Live simply, so that all may simply live."

"We must pray without ceasing, in every occurrence and employment of our lives - that prayer which is rather a habit of lifting up the heart to God as in a constant communication with Him."

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."
