



YEAR OF FAITH 2012 2013

Witnesses of Love

Living signs of Christ's presence in the world

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774 – 1821)

On September 14, 1975, Pope Paul VI canonized Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first native-born United States saint. Her feast is January 4th, and she is considered the patron of Catholic schools.

Elizabeth Ann Bayley was born on August 28, 1774, and baptized in the Episcopal Church. When she was three, her mother died. Later, her father, Dr. Richard Bayley, remarried. As a child Elizabeth accompanied her stepmother in distributing food and other necessities to the poor. Love for the poor marked her entire life.

At age 19, Elizabeth married William Seton, a wealthy businessman. Five children were born to them. Nine years into their marriage William lost both wealth and health. After his doctor advised a warmer climate, he traveled to Italy with Elizabeth and Annina, their oldest. Upon arriving, the three were quarantined in a cold, damp building

for a month. Shortly after their release William died.

The Filicchi family, friends of William, welcomed Elizabeth and Annina into their home. There Elizabeth became acquainted with the Catholic religion. On returning to New York, she converted to Catholicism and suffered much criticism from relatives and friends.

Elizabeth settled in Baltimore and opened a school. Women joined her not only as teachers but as women dedicated to God. In 1809, Elizabeth moved to Emmitsburg, Maryland. There she founded the first free Catholic school in the United States. She also established the first religious community of women in the country, the Sisters of Charity, dedicated to the education of poor children. Mother Seton governed her community until her death in 1821.

Sr. Mary Doreen Strahler, SND

LIVING OUR Relationship WITH JESUS CHRIST



“The first end, I propose, in our daily work is to do the will of God.”

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

For Reflection

1. Elizabeth was attracted to the Catholic Church through the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament and Mary, the Mother of God. What attracts me?
2. Elizabeth's life as a Catholic and conversion drew several friends to the Catholic Faith. How does my life attract others?
3. What values do I see in a Catholic education?

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