

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Reflection by Krystal Montgomery - Director of Religious Education

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Mother and Teacher

Elizabeth was married to a wealthy man named William Seton. They had a happy marriage and 5 children. In 1803, Elizabeth sailed to Italy with her husband William, hoping that the warm climate would help with William's poor health. He was suffering from tuberculosis. Upon their arrival in Italy, they were quarantined in a damp, cold building for nearly a month. William's health quickly deteriorated, and he passed away just two weeks later. A Catholic couple took the distraught widow into their home. They cared for her until she was ready to return to the United States.

In the meantime, they introduced the devout Episcopalian to their faith. Elizabeth was drawn to the Catholic Church and the Real Presence in the Eucharist. She asked many questions and fell in love with the Blessed Mother.

When she returned to the United States as a Catholic, she faced anti-Catholic hostility and was alienated from her family. Laws limiting the rights of Catholics in America had been recently lifted, but Catholics were not accepted by society at that time.

After a few difficult years, Elizabeth 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 and started the first American Catholic orphanage.

Elizabeth is the first American-born Catholic to be canonized. Her feast day is celebrated January 4th and she is the patron saint of in-law difficulties and widows.

“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.”

~ St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



Image Source: <https://www.catholic.org/saints>

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