

# Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton

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*Saint Name:* St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

*Dates:* August 28, 1774 – January 4, 1821

*Location:* New York City, NY

*Feast Day:* January 4

Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was born August 28, 1774, two years before the American Revolution, to a wealthy and distinguished Episcopalian family. In 1794, Elizabeth married William Seton and for a short time Elizabeth was happy and content. About a year after they married, William's father passed leaving the young couple in charge of William's seven half brothers and sisters and the family's business. They reared their own five children during years of suffering and death. Williams health and business failed and he was forced to file for bankruptcy. In a final attempt to save William's health, the family sailed for Italy, where William died of tuberculosis. While in Italy, Elizabeth Ann became acquainted with Catholicism. The Bible was always an important part of Elizabeth Ann's life and the separation from her family, as well as the death of her husband, served to draw Elizabeth Ann's heart closer to God. Elizabeth Ann captivated everyone with her kindness, patience, wit, and courtesy. She officially joined the Catholic Church in 1805. Elizabeth Ann returned to America where she started the first free Catholic school located in Baltimore, Maryland, established the first American congregation of religious sisters (the Sisters of Charity), established two orphanages, and continued to raise her children. On March 25, 1809, Elizabeth Ann pronounced her vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. She then became known as Mother Seton. Mother Seton herself became ill with tuberculosis and died January 4, 1821 at the age of 46, only sixteen years after converting to Catholicism. She was beatified by Pope John XXII on March 17, 1963 and canonized on September 14, 1975 by Pope Paul VI.



Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was the first native born American to be canonized by the Catholic Church. She is the patron for in-law problems, death of children, widows, death of parents, and opposition of Church authorities. We celebrate her feast day January 4.