



The Seton Way

Vol. 16, No. 1

Emmitsburg, Maryland

Winter 2007

1807 - YEAR OF FACING MAJOR DECISIONS And Other Happenings in Elizabeth Seton's World in 1807

The dawn of 1807 brought Elizabeth Seton closer to one of the major decisions of her life. She was considering a move to Canada where she could join a religious community. Fathers John Cheverus and Francis Matignon in Boston favored the idea. At the same time, Father William Du Bourg was urging her to come to Baltimore and open a school. Bishop John Carroll added his voice to Du Bourg's. Whatever her decision, Annina, Rebecca and Catherine would remain with Elizabeth while William and Richard continued their studies at Georgetown.

On March 14, Mrs. Seton celebrated the second anniversary of her entrance into the church. She wrote to Antonio Filicchi, "This day cannot be passed over without offering some part of it to my most dear Brother, who has so largely shared the happiness it commemorates." I, 429

The United States was faced with major decisions as well. On March 2, Congress passed an act ending the importation of slaves into the United States. However, the abolition of slavery remained a major issue. On June 22, the HMS *Leopard* fired on the USS *Chesapeake*. Several Americans died and four men were removed from the *Chesapeake* and impressed into the British Navy. The country was faced with the prospect of war. In an attempt to prevent conflict with England, Congress passed the Embargo Act in December.

Political scandal erupted in February when Vice President Aaron Burr was indicted for treason. He was accused of trying to establish an empire in the West. The facts were vague and the government could not produce credible witnesses. In September, he was acquitted.

We have no mention of it in Elizabeth's letters, but on August 9, Robert Fulton tested his steamboat, the *Clermont*, in the East River. On August 17, it made its maiden voyage from Manhattan up the Hudson River to Albany. Fulton's *Clermont* was the first commercially successful steamboat.

We do know that Elizabeth celebrated her birthday on August 28. She wrote in a journal she was keeping for Cecilia Seton, "Saint Augustine—and my happy Birth day the first in course of thirty three years in which the Soul has sincerely rejoiced that it exists for Immortality." I, 473



USS *Chesapeake* (1800-1813)

Painting by F. Muller, circa the early 1900s
Courtesy of the U.S. Navy Art Collection,
Washington, D.C.

During the year, Mrs. Seton lost two of her sisters-in-law. Eliza Seton Maitland died in March and Mary Gillon Hoffman Seton in June. Cecilia and Elizabeth helped to care for the dying women. Their nursing led to reconciliation with James Seton who opposed Cecilia's conversion to Catholicism. In October, Elizabeth told Eliza Sadler, James Seton "walked in my

room...took me in his arms like one of the children...and seemed to have met me every day of the twelve months I have not seen him—I like that—so the whole world should do." I, 469

The year closed with a first mention of Samuel Cooper who was to play an important part in the establishment of Mother Seton's community in Emmitsburg and advice from Bishop Carroll urging Elizabeth to consider whether she could return from Canada if her girls were not happy and whether her boarders' parents would release her from her obligations to them.

Robert E. Lee was born on January 19, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on February 16. The great French zoologist and geologist Louis Agassiz was born on May 28. As the United States was celebrating 31 years of independence, Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Italian patriot, was born. Deaths that year included Comte de Rochambeau who helped the United States gain independence; Cardinal Henry Benedict Stuart, the last direct descendant of James II to claim the throne of England; Angelica Kauffmann whose best known painting is probably *Cornelia, The Mother of the Gracchi*, and John Newton the composer of *Amazing Grace*.

Sister Eleanor Casey, DC
Emmitsburg Province

Sources: Numerous Choirs, Vol. I,
Compiled and Edited by Ellin M. Kelly
Elizabeth Bayley Seton, Collected Writings
Vol. I, Edited by Regina Bechtle, S.C.
and Judith Metz, S.C.

Just a Note ...

Museum buzz

More than two years ago, the parish of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Livorno, Italy gifted the shrine two striking bronze busts of Elizabeth's husband William Magee Seton and their long-time friend and benefactor, Antonio Filicchi. Gratitude goes to donor Ms. Janet McBride of Port Jefferson, NY, who made a contribution to cover the costs of building sturdy pedestals that tie in with the museum's décor, and which are designed to prevent the heavy busts from toppling over on a visitor's foot! The donation was made in memory of Ms. McBride's friend Ms. Jeanne M. MacCrea, who was devoted to St. Elizabeth Ann.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Portrait

In last year's special projects appeal letter, we told you that a lovely old portrait of St. Elizabeth in the traditional "Filicchi pose" had been restored and hung in the museum. At the last minute, it was decided to assure the safety of the newly refurbished painting by mounting it under a vitrine, protecting it from fingerprints and tears. The beautiful portrait is now hanging for all to appreciate.

Acknowledgements

Some of the many generous people who give their time and talent to help the shrine:

Mr. Rich Pencek, a former Seton Shrine Associate Board member who in 1992 wrote the shrine's first computer program to keep track of donations. We owe much gratitude to Rich who during all of these years has maintained this program and has willingly come to our aid when problems developed. Starting in the fall of 2006, the shrine bookkeeping is now managed by a powerful non-profit software program. We know that Rich's wife will be grateful (and he as well) that he no longer has to drive from Baltimore on a Saturday afternoon to bail us out! Thanks Rich!

Mr. Michael Hillman, local historian and equestrian who has maintained the shrine's website in his "spare time," along with many other Emmitsburg attractions on *emmitsburg.net*. The

shrine's web-site address is www.setonshrine.org - if you haven't seen it, try it out-we think you will be pleased!

Seton Shrine Associate Board members who have retired from the board this year: **Mr. Joseph Windish**, his wife **Mrs. Betty Windish**, and **Mrs. Ann Hall Marshall**. Mr. and Mrs. Windish, both former officers on the board, were members for more than 16 years. They also contributed their time and talent, along with members of their family, through the Seton Club of Harrisburg, to our annual St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Birthday Celebration in August. Mrs. Marshall has served on the board for the past 4 years and has been generous in sharing her time and writing talent. To all of them, we extend our deep appreciation for their dedication and interest in furthering the shrine's mission.

Mount St. Mary's seminarians and students, who have come to the shrine's aid in celebrating important liturgies such as the Founder's Award and the Annual Sea Services Pilgrimage, in addition to lending a hand in entertaining families at the above-mentioned birthday celebration. We are also pleased to have one seminarian currently volunteering as a shrine docent.

--On behalf of the shrine staff, best wishes for a prayerful, peaceful, and healthy 2007.

Mrs. Karen Harding
Shrine Director

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Bust of Antonio Filicchi
(1764-1847)
Devoted friend of the Setons



Bust of William Magee Seton
(1768-1803)
Husband of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton



Seminarians from Mount Saint
Mary's Seminary

LETTERS

I want to thank you and the Sisters for your prayers. My daughter, Kara, was operated on June 15 and when the surgeon went in to operate—the cyst was gone and everything was fine.

My prayers were answered and I am so grateful to Mother Seton.

PA

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Eight years ago I bought a relic of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and gave it to my mother who had renal cancer. She survived. Last year she gave it back to me. Earlier this year my brother was diagnosed with an aggressive form of throat cancer. He is recovering from surgery and has since been able to return to his teaching job.

Blessed be God, in his angels, and in his saints!

MD

* * * * *

Last summer I visited the Shrine, and while there I asked St. Elizabeth Ann Seton for her intercession with my hearing loss.... I had been told nothing could be done to improve my hearing.

My family physician suggested recently that changes have occurred in medicine over the last twenty years, and perhaps something could be done. I consulted

with the specialist to whom he referred me and was told he could, indeed, do something. He performed a simple procedure, called a tympanostomy, and at once a great deal of my hearing was restored.

I realize that all miracles are not so dramatic as we would like them to be, and so, in this case, Mother Seton simply directed me to a physician who helped. It is, for me at least, a miracle that I am grateful for.

PA

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I am a resident of Texas. My wife and I visited the shrine in 1999, and while there, my wife was healed of back pain.

As we entered the basilica, we were looking for a kneeler and the one that we happened to choose had a broken hinge. At the same time, an inner voice told Denise, "As the kneeler can be fixed, so can your back." Shortly afterward...the pain in her back went away. She talks often of this miracle and of our visit to the shrine.

Now it is my turn to seek healing...I have cataracts on both my eyes. Needless to say, healing is needed.

Denise...gives her permission to use her testimonial as you please.

TX

Mother Elizabeth Seton has always been a favorite saint of mine. I went to Mt. St. Joseph's College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and became familiar with her legacy there. Also, I have read several books by and about her. She was so "human" and yet had an intense spirituality and faith.

I pray to St. Elizabeth Seton as a mother and as a teacher. I pray to her for my mother Elizabeth (Betty) and my daughter Beth Ann. My mother is still living (80), but my daughter Beth (age 31) passed away due to lupus complications. I know that it was no coincidence that Beth went into a NYC hospital on the feast day of Mother Seton, January 4, 2006, and died the next day. I know that Mother Seton was praying for her as well as the Blessed Mother. I had sent my daughter the Miraculous Medal two weeks earlier, and she had it on when she passed away and when her body was returned home to Ohio. The Blessed Mother and Mother Elizabeth Seton were with her when she died and I could not be.

I continue to pray to both Mothers and encourage others to do so.

OH

Compiled and Edited by Sally Grandstaff
Shrine Staff

EDUCATORS

The National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton just made your job easier! Hot off the presses (and the CD burner): a 50-page "Learning Packet" with pre- and post-visit activities for students. The packet, geared towards 3rd- 8th grades, is ready to reprint for your class and features:

- excerpts from Elizabeth's writings on school and daily life
- vocabulary
- crossword puzzle and word searches
- suggestions for related class activities
- sample quizzes (with answer keys)
- Basilica "photo hunt."

We hope that ideas from this packet will enhance your visit to the shrine while affording the students a chance to gain knowledge about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the historical era in which she lived.

We provide this packet free of charge on a CD or in booklet form. For a copy, or to schedule a tour, please contact the shrine office at 301-447-6606, or email office@setonshrine.org.



FOUNDER'S AWARD CEREMONY

September 17, 2006

That Elizabeth Seton's pioneering efforts may remain fresh in memory, the Daughters of Charity of the Emmitsburg Province and the Associate Board of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton present the Seton Founder's Award to an individual in contemporary society whose life manifests the ideals and exemplifies the works and spirit of Elizabeth Ann Seton. This award is given every three years.

On September 17, 2006, the Seton Founder's Medal was awarded to Sister Mary Clare Hughes, Daughter of Charity. Sister's last mission before retiring was administrator of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton from 2001-2005.

Sister Mary Clare fulfills the requisites of the Seton Founder's Award in two ways: in how she lives her life, manifesting the ideals and spirit of Elizabeth Ann Seton; and in her efforts to promote recognition of and foster devotion to Elizabeth Ann.

Sister Mary Clare spent several years in hospital administration at St. Vincent's in Jacksonville, FL, St. Mary's in Saginaw, MI, and Providence Hospital in Washington, DC. She returned to Emmitsburg in 1962 to be a member of the Provincial Council, becoming provincial superior from 1974-1983.

It is apparent to all who know her, that Sister Mary Clare possesses many of the qualities and virtues that marked Saint Elizabeth Ann's life: strong faith, staunch loyalty to the Church, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and appreciation



Sister Elyse Staab, Provincial Superior, Sister Mary Clare Hughes, and Bishop Mitchell Rozanski

Mrs. Pauline Englestadter presenting Sister Mary Clare with a Certificate of Appreciation from Mount Saint Mary's University



of friendship. All who have been blessed to know her, love her. Her words of welcome to visitors at Emmitsburg in 1975 are especially appropriate:

"Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton has achieved her 'dear Eternity.' Her challenge to each of us may well be to take time to think of God again, to see His loving Providence in all the events of our daily lives, and to carry away from today's celebration the determination to serve Him in our fellow men and women."

Mrs. Sally Grandstaff
Shrine Staff

A Fresh, Young Addition to the Pilgrimage for the Sea Services



Pictured above with their leader, Maj. Rubio (left) and ADM James D. Watkins, USN (Ret) (seated), are League Cadets and Sea Cadets from the surrounding areas. Attending the Mass in their pristine white uniforms, they added a new dimension to the day. We are proud of these young men and women, and invite them to be with us annually. They are our future.

Special Project ANNUAL APPEAL FOR 2007

We Ask Your Help In
Making Possible
the Necessary Shrine
Improvements

For details see the enclosed
letter and return envelope.