



To Promote the Canonization of Mother Seton

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## Christmas On Paca Street

By Mary Louise Callahan

LIGHTS came on one by one in the Paca Street house as the little Seton girls lighted the candles scattered throughout the spacious colonial rooms where they lived with their mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

It was Christmas Eve in Baltimore in the year 1808 and the greyness of the sky overhead offered a promise of snow. Upstairs Elizabeth was giving the last-minute pre-holiday touches to the rooms before supervising the evening meal. She had known many Christmases. Many more were to come, but somehow, this one in Baltimore would be different, she knew. It was an interlude between the gay world of New York where she had run the gamut of emotions and the quiet valley of Emmitsburg which she would someday call home.

This is like resting after a long illness, she thought, to be here in this comfortable house so close to St. Mary's Chapel where she and the children could practice their religion in peace. Why, at a moment's notice they could cross the cobble-stoned courtyard to hear Mass.

Annina, Kitty and Becky, her daughters, were with her. The boys, William and Richard, were at school at St. Mary's College. Then there were her new Baltimore friends, the Catons . . . Harpers . . . Pattersons . . . Barrys . . . all leading Catholic families of the day, to comfort her during the holidays. Father William DuBourg, president of St. Mary's, his sister, Madame Victoire Fournier, and her little girls, were especially close to the Setons.

The previous June Mrs. Seton and the three girls had sailed from New York on the Grand Sachem at the invitation of Father DuBourg in order that she could open a school for girls in Baltimore. She had a feeling she was not going among stran-



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gers, but that God would always be with her and provide the help of good friends. She had not been wrong.

Elizabeth, on a sudden inspiration, walked to the French folding-windows of her room, threw them open to the cold December night and raised her face to the white flakes which had just begun to sift softly upon the town. She remembered how the snow drifted along the Hudson when she was a young girl in New York.

"But I mustn't think of that now," she told herself. "I must thank God for the present." Clearly and musically the bells of St. Mary's chimed next door. Elizabeth knelt to pray as Father Pierre Babade at the Seminary had recommended whenever she heard the bells.

The Setons heard Mass that Christmas in the delightful chapel described by Frances Trollope on her comments on American manners in the 19th century. She said "A solitary lamp hangs before the altar; the light of day enters dimly yet richly through crimson curtains, and the silence . . . had something in it more calculated

to generate holy thoughts than even the swelling anthems heard beneath the resounding dome of St. Peter's."

Considering the number of priests and seminarians at St. Mary's it is not hard to imagine that the Setons attended a High Mass that morning of 1808 and that the choir of young men's voices lifted the New Yorkers' hearts in prayer on the joyous occasion of the Birth of Christ.

At last it was Christmas Day and the snow-covered Paca Street house shimmered in the morning sunlight. An air of festivity filled the rooms where the girls were trimming the graceful spruce tree given them by friends to gladden their holiday. William and Richard, who were spending the day with their mother and sisters, were quickly (Continued on Page 2)





### Apostolic Postulation

FOR THE CAUSE OF  
CANONIZATION  
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

### Elizabeth Ann Seton

Foundress of the  
SISTERS OF CHARITY  
IN AMERICA

HIS EMINENCE

GAETANO CARDINAL CICOGNANI  
Prefect of the  
Sacred Congregation of Rites

HIS EMINENCE

CLEMENTE CARDINAL MICARA  
Cardinal Relator of the Cause

HIS EXCELLENCY

MOST REV. FRANCIS P. KEOUGH, D.D.  
Archbishop of Baltimore

VERY REV. LUIGI BISOGGIO, C.M.  
Postulator General (Rome)

REV. SALVATOR M. BURGIO, C.M.  
Vice Postulator

### Mother Seton's Daughters

Communities of the Sisters of Charity

St. Joseph College \_\_\_\_\_ Emmitsburg, Md.  
Marillac Seminary \_\_\_\_\_ St. Louis, Mo.  
Mt. St. Vincent-on-the-Hudson,  
New York, N. Y.  
Mt. St. Vincent \_\_\_\_\_ Halifax, N. S.  
Mt. St. Joseph \_\_\_\_\_ Cincinnati, Ohio  
St. Elizabeth's \_\_\_\_\_ Convent, N. J.  
Seton Hill \_\_\_\_\_ Greensburg, Pa.



Central Office

### Mother Seton Guild

EMMITSBURG, MD.

#### Guild Membership

Yearly \_\_\_\_\_ \$1.00  
Perpetual \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00

Deceased May Be Enrolled

Address all communications to  
REV. SALVATOR M. BURGIO, C.M.  
Vice Postulator

## Christmas on Paca Street

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put to work at the kitchen hearth to watch the bubbling kettle. The boys amused the cooks in the kitchen with their yuletide songs which they sang as they stirred the soup and added logs to the fire.

Cecilia O'Conway, a young Philadelphia girl who had joined Elizabeth in Baltimore, was busily engaged with the goose and the pudding. All were light-hearted and happy.

In the drawing room Mrs. Seton sat down to rest a moment beside the hearth where bright flames were dancing up the chimney. A heady scent of pine filled the room. In one corner Annina was adding the last ornament to the tree and the smaller girls were offering advice. The mother made a mental image of the scene. It will never be quite like this again, she thought.

She walked to the rosewood spinet which she had salvaged from her New York furniture and began to play her favorite Christmas music. Immediately the children gathered around her to sing. The boys came in from the kitchen at the first sound of their mother's music. They sang . . . the flames leaped in the fireplace . . . and the scent of rich spices filled the house.

It was then that the knocker sounded at the front door. Kitty, who was eight, ran to see who it was. She was overjoyed when she saw Father DuBourg, Madame Fournier and the latter's little girls. Their arms were filled with mysterious-looking packages.

"Oh, Mama," she cried, "look who is here!" Mrs. Seton advanced graciously with outstretched hands to the Fourniers, elegant in furs and velvet capes, and to Father DuBourg, who went immediately to chat with the children. He helped the boys place another log on the hearth.

A lively scene took place now that there were seven children in the room. The little French girls, who were attached to the Setons, had read poems of welcome when the New Yorkers arrived in Baltimore that summer.

It is not difficult to visualize the contents of the packages that Christmas. No doubt they contained dolls for the girls and toy soldiers or drums for the boys. Perhaps Madame Fournier brought Elizabeth something to add to the Setons' Christmas dinner. Maybe it was a book. In any event one is certain the DuBourgs did not forget the Setons that Christmas, for Elizabeth, in writing to a friend around this time, said "I find the difference of situation so great that I can scarcely believe it is the same existence. All those dear little attentions

of human life which I was entirely weaned away from are now my daily portion from the family of Mr. DuBourg, whose sister and mother are unwearied in their care of us. The little necessities which I cannot afford are daily sent to us, as a part of their family, and in every respect my condition is like a new being."

Madame Fournier, who had come from Bordeaux in 1805, was more than hospitable to the Setons. The French woman, who was manager of "the economy of the college," gave practical assistance to Mrs. Seton in getting the Baltimore school underway.

Mrs. Seton enjoyed the French culture about her, although she did not participate in its more worldly aspects, and she hoped her oldest daughter, Annina, then about thirteen, would be influenced by the Fourniers. She wrote to her friend, Eliza Sadler, that Annina was now to be molded in "the true style of the French system for young girls and a model for all who wish their daughters to be religious and discreet." And Father DuBourg was to become the first superior of the religious community which took shape during that year in Baltimore.

Years later when Elizabeth was beset with physical and spiritual problems in Emmitsburg she thought of the peace of the Paca Street house as a year of grace during which her cherished community came into being. The kindness of the Fourniers and of Father DuBourg prepared and strengthened her for future trials.

Before leaving the Paca Street house that day Father DuBourg blessed the Setons. After his departure Mrs. Seton gathered the children about her thanking God for His goodness to them. The peace of the Christ Child filled their hearts.

### Mother Seton's Communities Participate in Vistarama

The participation of Mother Seton's Sisters of Charity in the Vistarama held in Philadelphia early in October was richly rewarded by the spiritual good accomplished.

Religious orders from far and near were represented at the historic event which proved an inspiration to the thousands of visitors who viewed the numerous exhibits. Although sponsored by the Propagation of the Faith the presentation was not all missionary but rather featured Catholic Action in Action.

Exhibits of Mother Seton's Communities occupied almost a whole section of the Vistarama (see page three).



Ensemble of Booths at Philadelphia Vistarama Shows Work of Mother Seton's Communities



Thousands Participate in October Event Showing Catholic Action in Action





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## Father Burgio Lauds Documentation of Cause at Thirteenth Conference



Attending the 13th Mother Seton Conference at St. Joseph's Central House, Emmitsburg, were the following: Standing, left to right, Sister Mary Basil, American Councillor to the Mother General in Paris who is presently visiting in this country; Sister Joanna Marie, Assistant, Convent of St. Elizabeth, Convent, N. J.; Sister Isabel, Provincial Superior, St. Joseph's Central House, Emmitsburg; Sister Miriam Loyola, Halifax, N. S.; and Rev. Salvator M. Burgio, C.M., Vice Postulator of the Cause of Mother Seton.

Seated, left to right, are: Mother Claudia, Seton Hill, Greensburg, Pa.; Mother Mary, Mt. St. Vincent-on-Hudson, N. Y.; His Excellency, Most Rev. John M. McNamara, D.D., Moderator of the Mother Seton Conferences of Daughters of Mother Seton; Sister Catherine, Provincial Superior, Marillac Seminary, Normandy, Mo.; Mother Romana, Mt. St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio.

Rev. Salvator M. Burgio, C.M., Vice Postulator of the Cause of Mother Seton, spoke at length on the recently-completed massive Documentation of the Cause at the Thirteenth Mother Seton Conference held October 21 at St. Joseph's Central House, Emmitsburg, Md.

"The Documentation of the Cause in this volume is most precious," said Father Burgio. "With it the Cause rises to triumphant success or fails to advance any further toward glorification of Mother Seton. At the outset we may be confident that this work will gain for Mother Seton the title of Venerable.

"This work of Documentation is a masterpiece. It is a thorough history not only of Mother Seton, her life and virtues, her Communities and works, but also of all persons with whom she dealt, and with the conditions and circumstances of the epoch in which she lived," he said.

"Even a cursory glance through its pages," explained the speaker, "makes one appreciate the years of intensive labor that went into its study. There is not a wasted word. In one paragraph there is packed more information than one would find in pages of an ordinary historical book."

By request of His Excellency, the Most Rev. John M. McNamara, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, the sessions of the conference took place in the Emmitsburg Valley rather than at St. Louis. Sister Catherine, Provincial Superior, Marillac Seminary, Normandy, Mo., served as chairman.

Bishop McNamara presided as moderator for the Mother Seton Conferences of the Daughters of Mother Seton. His Excellency opened the sessions with an inspiring talk at Mass Sunday morning. Each Community submitted reports of activities engaged in during the past year to promote Mother Seton's Cause.

The following morning Bishop McNamara said Mass at the White House for deceased members of the Conference. Many members of the group visited the Mother Seton Guild office in Emmitsburg later that day.

Tentative plans were made to hold the next Conference at the Convent of Mount St. Vincent, Halifax, N. S.

### Mother Seton Guild

Emmitsburg, Maryland

Form 3547 Requested

The Mother Seton Guild, as the Apostolic Postulation, is the official organization for the Cause under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Rome.

Guild members not only share in the noble work of making Mother Seton better known and loved by means of literature, etc., but their membership subscriptions and donations make possible this promotion.

The MOTHER SETON GUILD BULLETIN is issued quarterly to Guild members.

May the Peace of the Christ Child fill your Hearts at Christmas