



To Promote the Canonization of Mother Seton

NUMBER 66

EMMITSBURG, MD.

SEPTEMBER, 1958

Centennial of The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

By

SISTER BLANCHE MARIE McENIRY

ON September 29, 1958, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, New Jersey, inaugurated their centennial year which will close on September 29, 1959.

The New Jersey Sisters of Charity preserve the link that binds all the branches with Mother Elizabeth Seton and her foundation at Emmitsburg. The story of toil, struggle and success which epitomizes the labors of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, under the guidance of the venerable Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan, is a fitting sequel to the splendid record of zeal and conquest which marks the works of the Sisters of Charity everywhere.

The most sanguine of Mother Seton's followers could scarcely have dreamed of the works which her successors were to accomplish throughout the United States and Canada. The triumphs which have marked their labors are but substantial and incontestable proofs that it is God's work for which they have supplied the instruments.

The New Jersey story begins with the creation of the Diocese of Newark in 1853 and the appointment of its first bishop, The Most Reverend James Roosevelt Bayley, the nephew of Mother Seton.

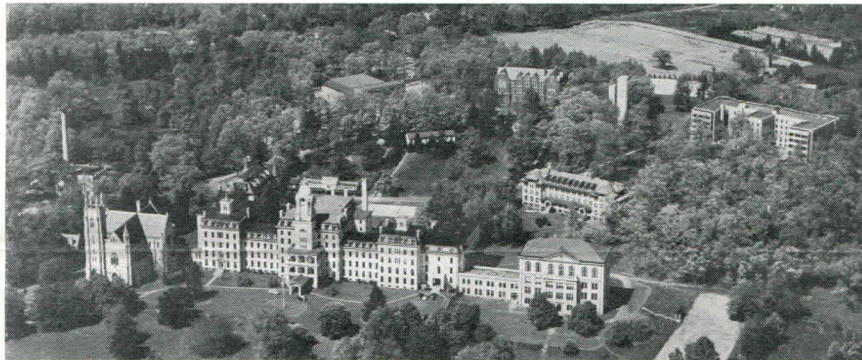
Bishop Bayley's interest in Catholic education determined him to give first place in his program of development to schools. His efforts to secure sisters from the Sisters of Charity in New York and elsewhere proving fruitless, the bishop decided to establish his own diocesan community. To this end he secured candidates from among his parishioners—five in number—and sent them to Cincinnati to Mother Margaret Cecelia George, formerly secretary to Mother Seton at Emmitsburg, for their novitiate.

The Council of the Mount Saint Vincent community agreed to give the bishop two sisters then missioned in New Jersey to direct the infant community allowing them the option of re-

turning to the New York mother house at the expiration of five years. The two sisters thus designated were Sister Mary Xavier Mehegan, who was in Newark, and who was to be appointed Mother Superior, and Sister Mary Catherine Nevin, who was in Paterson, who was to be Mother Assistant. The former had been 12 years and the latter eight years in the New York community.

On September 29, 1859, the five young novices returned to Newark, and the first mother house of the Sisters of Charity in New Jersey was inaugurated. In less than one year Saint Mary's, as the first establishment was called, was wholly inadequate for the increasing community.

On July 2, 1860, having purchased the property from Seton Hall College, Mother Xavier and the greater number of the sisters moved from Newark to Madison and took over what was to be their permanent mother house consisting of a frame building, a chapel and 40 acres of ground. Sister Mary Catherine and the remainder of the



ST. ELIZABETH'S, CONVENT, N. J.

Mother House and College, Villa for the aged sisters in background.

group stayed at Saint Mary's, Newark, which served as a subsidiary mission.

On the journey from Newark to Madison Mother Xavier carried in her arms a small marble statue of Our Lady and in her pocket her worldly wealth, the sum of five dollars.

The name of the new mother house, Saint Elizabeth's, was chosen primarily with a view to honoring the saint on whose feast the foundation was made—July 2, Saint Elizabeth, cousin of the Blessed Virgin; secondarily, to honor the saintly foundress of the Sisters of Charity in the United States, Mother Elizabeth Anne Bayley Seton.

From 1867 to 1876 Monsignor Robert Seton, grandson of Mother Seton, was chaplain at Saint Elizabeth's. After several years of parish work, lecturing, and (Continued on Page 4)



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

FAVORS ACKNOWLEDGED

The Trappists

The Trappist Monks have been most zealous in their prayers and sacrifices for the success of Mother Seton's Glorification. On a journey they often plan their itinerary so that they can visit Emmitsburg and pray at the tomb of Mother Seton. The following message speaks for their efforts to obtain favors and perhaps miracles for the Cause. The letter emphasizes the need for praying to Mother Seton alone in order to attribute credit for favors granted. The letter is here quoted in full:

DEAR FATHER BURGIO:

I thank you sincerely for the invitation to send in my intentions for a Novena of Masses preceding the Assumption.

I am trying to do my little share to glorify Mother Seton as far as the law of enclosure permits. Last May, a friend of the Monastery was seriously sick in a hospital in Atlanta. Her life was despaired of and doctors gave her 48 hours to live. The setup was perfect for a first-class miracle so I sent her a relic of Mother Seton and she improved at once. It is a miracle that she is alive today. However, the sisters in charge of the hospital saw the relic of Mother Seton and brought out the statue of their foundress and started praying to her. Of course, that spoiled Mother Seton's Cause, even if a miracle could be proven, but it gives me confidence that she is powerful over the heart of God and that, when the hour strikes, God will glorify His servant.

Respectfully yours in Christ,
FATHER M. LAWRENCE

Case of Maureen Endress

DEAR FATHER BURGIO:

I am so overwhelmed with gratitude to Mother Seton that I must pour out my sentiments of thanks for the many blessings she has favored us with.

On May 30, 1957, my little daughter, Maureen, then two and one-half years of age, suffered by accident the amputation of her thumb. The upper part of the thumb was severed from below the joint and it hung on by a thread of skin.

I rushed to our family physician. That he should be home on his day off was a blessing. He ordered me to take the child to the hospital. He phoned an eminent surgeon, Dr. X, who said he would go immediately to St. Vincent's Hospital, Staten Island.

The child was admitted to the hospital and immediately an interne made ready to clean the wound declaring that

it was the only thing left to do. A Sister of Charity intervened and requested nothing be done until the arrival of Dr. X.

After an hour and a half of delicate surgery, Dr. X had put the thumb together but gave no promises of success. After the operation we placed a touched relic of Mother Seton on the bandage of the thumb and kept it there.

Within ten days after surgery the thumb turned completely black from dry gangrene. Dr. X treated it. During the period of a year, Dr. X slowly removed the gangrenous tissue, always finding healthy tissue beneath it. The vital question during this removal process was: "How deep was the gangrene?"

On Friday, May 30, 1958, the bandage was removed and the thumb had progressed sufficiently to make the dressing unnecessary. The thumb was healthy in appearance, slightly shorter than the other thumb and there were signs of nail growth near the tip.

Three weeks later, however, the removal of a bit of bone beneath the tiny nail caused the entire nail to come off. The Doctor now was not certain that the nail would return.

In two months a new nail had grown and on last August first the bandage was no longer necessary. Now the child through medical skill has five fingers on each hand.

But to Mother Seton's power of intercession we attribute this blessing. When the accident occurred I prayed to her only for strength and resignation to bear the trial. Never in my wildest imagination could I believe the possibility that the severed part would knit to the thumb. Mother Seton obtained for me the fortitude that she herself experienced in times of tribulation and she also blessed with success the surgery of Dr. X.

My love for Mother Seton came gradually. When reading her biography I was impressed by the fact that she was a mother. This joined our hearts together, for then I knew she understood the trials of a mother and relying upon her sympathy and prayers we became fast friends.

For all these blessings and especially for spiritual graces I am eternally grateful to Mother Seton and shall do all in my power to promote her Cause of Canonization. My family is dedicated to Mother Seton, who by her prayers before the throne of God has brought us closer to Jesus and Mary.

Respectfully,
MARY ENDRESS

What the Devotion to Mother Seton Means to Me

By MARYANNE FURIA

Although the name of Mother Seton has long been familiar to me, it was not until I read her biography, "Mother Seton, Mother of Many Daughters," by Reverend Charles White that I became zealously interested in her cause of Canonization. To be sure, I had prayed for this solemn event, and often asked Mother Seton to obtain favors for me, but it was not the close relationship that should exist between friends, one of whom has already been welcomed to the regions of eternal bliss, and the other, who still yearns for his final home. For is not a saint a friend of God, who now united with his Redeemer encourages his struggling brethren to rise to the same heights?

Perhaps the most comforting bond between intimate friends is the perception which enables them to gaze freely into each other's heart and understand the mysteries of its deepest recesses. Reading the account of Mother Seton's life helped me to understand this valiant woman. Thus I was drawn from the fringes of mere acquaintanceship into the circle of her friends. Here is no alabaster embodiment of perfection, no incredible figment of an author's fruitful imagination. Here is a flesh and blood woman who shed bitter tears of sorrow, who knew the throes of anxiety and self doubt, who wrestled with the meshes of our "frail mortality." But, in the end, her spirit soared above this world's shallow restrictions to join a triumphant chorus in everlasting paeans of joy and adoration. Here is a woman who patiently accepted the blows dealt her by the world, enduring adversity and grief with supreme trust in her Creator. Here is a woman who lived not in ages past, but in the days of our own Revolution; a woman who trod the paths of our own beloved America, perhaps breathed the very air we breathe. Here is no disinterested spectator at the drama of our lives. Here is a warm and sympathetic countrywoman, a saint of God, a friend.

Among friends there is a "give and take" relationship. To pray for Mother Seton's canonization seems small return for the benefits received through her intercession. As an exalted saint, thousands will invoke her aid, and her exemplary life will lead many to Christ.

What benefits have I myself received as a result of closer contact with Mother Seton? Undoubtedly, I was most impressed by the period of mental anguish in which Elizabeth Seton analyzed the

tenets of the religion into which she had been born. During these critical months Elizabeth Seton experienced uncertainty and desperation such as few of us are obliged to undergo in our entire lifetime. By recalling the agony she suffered, I learn to regard my Faith with renewed gratitude. Is it possible ever to forget how precious a gift God has bestowed on me when I think of the torment in which Elizabeth Seton



MARYANNE FURIA

Maryanne Furia of Upper Darby, Pa., is a Senior at Villa Maria Academy, Green Tree, Pa. She had the honor of winning Second Prize in the National Essay Contest sponsored by the Catholic Press Association. Maryanne's essay was one of the 15,500 entries from Catholic High Schools in 38 States. Maryanne has been an ardent devotee of Mother Seton and we welcome her article with grateful appreciation and we express our heartiest congratulations on the honor she merited.

lived before embracing the Catholic religion? With all her heart and being Mother Seton desired the Faith which I effortlessly acquired at birth. How good is the Almighty Father to grant an undeserving child the peace and confidence others must strive and struggle to obtain!

Even while practicing her Protestant form of religion Elizabeth Seton realized the consolation Catholicity offers its children. In a letter to her sister-in-law, Rebecca, she writes some of the most memorable words in her correspondence, "I don't know how anybody can have trouble in this world who believe as these dear souls believe. If I don't believe it, it won't be want of praying. Why, they must be almost as happy as angels!"

On "Sacrament Sunday" the Protestant Elizabeth Seton and Rebecca would

visit church after church to partake, as often as possible, of the "Lord's Supper." How unappreciative I feel, remembering cold mornings I reluctantly crawled out of bed to attend Mass.

The pilgrimages of these fervent women to their barren churches teach me a greater value of the Blessed Sacrament. How often have I passed thoughtlessly by a Catholic Church when I could have halted for a brief visit? Yet any moment of the day I can greet my Savior, behind Tabernacle doors eagerly awaiting me in a captivity of boundless love. Yes, I, who have before me on the altars of my church, the Body and Blood, the physical as well as spiritual presence of my Lord, frequently neglect to pay Him homage.

A third lesson to be drawn from Mother Seton's life is her detachment from the things of this world. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." How truly Elizabeth Seton lived these words. A young heiress accustomed to wealth, she unobtrusively watched the fortunes of her husband decline with unflinching trust in divine Providence. With complete resignation she gave her beloved father to the mercy of God. Soon afterward she parted with her husband after a heart-rending and lingering illness. While yet trying to suppress her grief at William Seton's demise, she returned to New York and was present at the death of her "soul's sister," Rebecca. Separation from those she believed her friends followed when Elizabeth Seton was received into the Catholic Church. In the twilight of her life, Mother Seton with holy joy witnessed the death-scenes of her daughters. Having long been shorn of material possessions, she now surrendered to God her two dearest treasures.

Finally, of what benefit would be Mother Seton's canonization to the church? Recognition of Elizabeth Seton's sanctity will inspire those on earth to imitate her virtues. By acknowledging the crown of sainthood as her reward, we acknowledge perpetual bliss to be the final end of all who love and faithfully serve God. In venerating and loving Elizabeth Bayley Seton we thereby love and glorify the God Who was her All. Thereby we praise Him Who called His servant to dwell forever with Him in the realms of the blessed. For these reasons I am determined to do my share to help canonize Mother Seton, my friend, and the friend of all who solicit her aid.

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Progress of the Cause

To keep the members of the Guild abreast with the progress of the Cause I am delighted to inform you that the Process is now in the hands of the Promoter General of the Faith. By virtue of his office he must seriously and critically examine all the Documentation of the Cause and render a report on any flaws he may find.

It is our fond hope that before the end of this year the first Assembly will take place.

There will be three Assemblies and if a favorable vote is obtained, His Holiness will issue the declaration of Venerable.

Each Assembly will consist of 24 scholars and about 10 Cardinals. Each will have to render his own report and verdict on the merits of the case. Each will study critically the Documentation of the Cause, all the objections launched by the Promoter General of the Faith, and the replies made by the Advocates of the Cause.

Up to the time of the first Assembly all the years of investigation have been spent in the gathering of facts. The first Assembly begins the judgment of the merits of the case; however, only the Holy Father Himself will give the final decision which will crown Mother Seton with the title of Venerable.

What concerns Rome is the lack of miracles. Since only miracles can advance Mother Seton to Beatification, I have been urged to greater efforts for these graces; otherwise, after the declaration of Venerable, the Cause will be at a standstill.

It has been often expressed that better efforts will be made after Mother Seton becomes Venerable and that miracles will be forthcoming soon after the pronouncement is made.

On the occasion of their Centennial Year we extend to the New Jersey Branch of Mother Seton's daughters our heartiest congratulations and express our most grateful appreciation for their constant, heroic and generous cooperation to promote the Canonization of their Venerated Foundress, Mother Seton.

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

The truth is that Mother Seton is just as powerful now as she ever will be, even after her Canonization. There will be no change in her heavenly intercession after the declaration of Venerable; the change will be in ourselves. We will become more confident in her then, so we will be more zealous in appealing to her for favors. But this very fact emphasizes our present lack of confidence in her as mediatrix. Since the Church places no limits on private devotion, great will be the graces if we pray to her now as we would after her glorification.

Without the crucifixion on Calvary there would be no joy of Easter; without the sufferings of Mother Seton there would be no Cause for us to espouse. Only by expending our energies in both spiritual and material cooperation can we make the Church crown her with the aureole of sanctity and we claim her as "Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton."

Centennial

(Continued from Page 1)

travel he returned to Convent Station to live out his remaining years until his death in March, 1927.

The mustard seed planted by seven young women in poverty and suffering has grown to a mighty tree. In the educational annals of the United States, the feeble efforts of the founders of a hundred years ago have been glorified not only in the development of parochial schools and academies, but also in the establishment of the College of Saint Elizabeth. The institutions of charity include seven hospitals, a home for foundlings, a home for the aged, and orphanages.

Mother Xavier's work grew and prospered in a way that human foresight did not dream possible.

At her death in 1915 at the age of 91, 69 years of which had been spent in the religious life and 56 as Mother General of her foundation, her community numbered 1,200 sisters staffing 94 missions in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

There have been seven successors to Mother Xavier. The seventh and present Mother General is Reverend Mother Ellen Marie McCauley who directs over 1,700 professed sisters on over 100 missions, now including the Virgin Islands and Florida.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS!

- Mother Seton, Mother of Many Daughters \$2.25
by White, revised and edited by the Sisters of Charity of Mt. St. Vincent, New York
- Elizabeth Seton, by De Barberey \$4.00
translated by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph B. Code
- Elizabeth Bayley Seton, by Annabelle Melville \$4.00
List of Silver Medals and other articles sent on request

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.