



To Promote the Canonization of Mother Seton

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APRIL, 1967

## Father Luigi Bisoglio, C.M., Dies in Rome

### Postulator of Mother Seton Cause Was 76

Very Rev. Luigi Bisoglio, C.M., procurator general at the Holy See for the Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity and postulator of the Cause of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton, died on Friday, February 3, 1967. He was 76.

Father Bisoglio suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage on December 9 and lapsed into a coma from which he never regained consciousness. His Holiness Pope Paul VI sent the dying man his Apostolic Blessing.

The funeral was held on Tuesday, February 7, in the chapel of the Collegio Leoniano, Rome, where Father Bisoglio had lived for the past 16 years. An extraordinary press of people attended, including six bishops, Archbishop Antonio Samore, Undersecretary of State for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, among them, and the secretaries of curial congregations. Father John P. McGowan, C.M., Vice Postulator of the Seton Cause, represented the Postulation and the Mother Seton Guild.

Father Bisoglio was a member of the Vincentian Fathers' Turin Province. Born on July 6, 1890, he entered the Vincentian novitiate at Chieri, Turin, on September 10, 1906, pronouncing his perpetual community vows two years later.

While still a seminarian, he went to China where he was ordained to the priesthood at the early age of 23 on December 14, 1913. During 20 years on the foreign missions Father Bisoglio served for four years as a professor in the major seminary at Kienchang.

Returning to his native Italy, he was appointed director of scholastics for the Province of Turin, a post he held for eight years. For a period of 16 years he taught moral theology.

He was then, successively, superior of  
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Father Luigi Bisoglio as he introduced Ann Teresa O'Neill—cured of leukemia through Mother Seton's intercession—and her mother to Pope John XXIII at the Beatification ceremony on March 17, 1963. Cardinal Dante is at Pope's right.

## Mother Seton's Daughters Hold 21st Meeting at Convent Station

THE MAJOR SUPERIORS of the Federation of the Daughters of Blessed Elizabeth Seton met on November 14-16 at Convent Station, New Jersey. Mother Josephine Marie, Mother General of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, was chairman of the conference.

The other congregations were represented by Sister Eleanor, Provincial of the Eastern Province, and Sister Mary Thomas, Councillor of the Western Province, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Mother Miriam Eveline, Mount St. Vincent, New York; Mother Mary Omer, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio; Mother Maria Gertrude, Mount

St. Vincent, Halifax; Mother M. Victoria, Seton Hill, Greensburg, Pennsylvania; and the former Mothers General, Mother Mary, Mount St. Vincent, New York, Secretary of the Mother Seton Conference; Mother Mary Romana, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio; and Mother Ellen Marie, Convent Station, New Jersey.

Attending the meeting also were Sister Catherine Mary, Sister Elizabeth Irene, Sister Maria Clare and Sister Elizabeth Henry, Councillors of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth; Sister Mary Agnes, Councillor, Seton Hill;

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**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  
ARCADIO CARDINAL LARRAONA, C.M.F.  
*Prefect of the  
Sacred Congregation of Rites*

HIS EMINENCE  
ENRICO CARDINAL DANTE  
*Cardinal Relator of the Cause*

HIS EMINENCE  
LAWRENCE CARDINAL SHEHAN  
*Archbishop of Baltimore*

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

VERY REV. JOHN P. MCGOWAN, C.M.  
*Vice Postulator*

**Mother Seton's Daughters**

*Communities of the Sisters of Charity*

- St. Joseph's Provincial House,  
Emmitsburg, Md.
- Marillac Provincial House - 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.



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**Mother Seton Guild**

EMMITSBURG, MD.

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Address all communications to  
MOTHER SETON GUILD  
EMMITSBURG, MARYLAND 21727

The following excerpts are taken from an address delivered by Father Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M., author of *Mrs. Seton*, at a regional meeting of the Federation of the Daughters of Blessed Elizabeth Seton, held at Bishop Reilly High School, Flushing, New York, on January 8, 1967. A thousand Sisters attended. The excerpts are reprinted here to present what Mother Seton might have to say in the current discussion concerning situation ethics, authority and obedience.

The change which interests us most today is religious change, and this change above all we cannot refuse, for we are commanded to it by the teaching authority of God's Church. Let us make no mistake in our motivation. Our communities, like all communities in the Church, are engaged in an intensive self-study and restructuring, an *aggiornamento*, an updating of our rules and constitutions and religious practices. But we are not impelled to this by mere men, no matter how wise nor how holy. We do not respond to the brilliant teaching of theologians and philosophers, to the ascetical insights of liturgists and scripture scholars, even if they be Council *periti*, but only to the voices of the Vicar of Christ and of our bishops teaching in union with him. This is what your Mother, the Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton, had in mind when she counseled with her last breath: "Be children of the Church, be children of the Church."

The lines have been laid down for us in Vatican II's *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life*. We haven't the time, of course, to consider all its directives this afternoon, or even a few of them. I presume, therefore, to select one:

"It serves the best interests of the Church for communities to have their own special character and purpose. Therefore loyal recognition and safe-keeping should be accorded to the spirit of founders, as also to all particular goals and wholesome traditions which constitute the heritage of each community."

Need we further invitation than the voice of Paul and his Bishops to recognize the spirit of our Blessed Mother and Foundress, Elizabeth Seton?

Nor should we miss the studied use of the word *loyal*. Make no mistake about it, my dear Sisters, in many *avante-garde* circles *loyalty* is a dirty word, to be sneered at and laughed to scorn; but, for all their laughs and sneers, loyalty is still a supreme virtue, whether it be loyalty to God, to community, or to country.

Was ever a woman more loyal than

Elizabeth Seton? Loyal to a neglectful father. Loyal to a sick and financially inept husband. Loyal to her children—"if at any time the duties I am engaged in should interfere with those I owe to them, I have solemnly engaged with our good Bishop Carroll, as well as my own conscience, to give the darlings their right, and to prefer their advantage in everything." Loyal to her Sisters—"Accustomed as I am almost habitually to sacrifice everything I most value in this life," she wrote to the Bishop at the height of the Dubourg-Babade controversy, "I should have acquiesced quietly, tho' my heart was torn to pieces. But the others could not bear it in the same way. . . ." Loyal above all, at every moment of her life, happy and sad, to God.

Blessed Mother Seton had great foresight—we might call it miraculous foresight, except that God normally gives this gift to those chosen by Him to establish a lasting work. She prepared in her supernatural wisdom for the tumult of our day. Almost as if she saw the precise dangers we would face, she left the precise antidotes in her three great preoccupations: her preoccupation with eternity, her preoccupation with the Will of God, and her preoccupation with obedience.

Existentialism is the darling philosophy of the moment. The pun was not intended, but it is very much to the point. We are urged to forget the past, to turn away from the future, to live only for the present. *Action now*, in this isolated moment, is the only reality, we are told. Mother Seton thought nothing of the now, of the present, except as a step on the stair to eternity.

From her earliest Protestant childhood, eternity was the north star on which she fixed her unerring, unswervable course. It is hardly surprising, then, that she made eternity the north star of her community. It is significant that, when the rule was formally adopted on January 17, 1812, Mother Seton cried out in awe at the responsibility thrust upon her: "Eternity! Mother! What a celestial commission entrusted!" From that moment, her Sisters were to serve in the world, but only to win a blessed eternity for themselves and for those they served.

Eternity was the rock on which her love for family and friends was built. She could suffer separation from her loved ones in this life, so long as she could hope for "eternal reunion." Nor, with her usual realism, did she refuse to face up to its terrible alternatives. After assisting at the uncertain and frightened deathbed of her sister-in-law Eliza Mait-

land, she wrote to Julia Scott:

"Oh, Julia, Julia, Julia! 'The last, last, last, sad silence.' The soul departing without hope. Its views, its interests centered in a world it is hurried from. No Father's sheltering arms, no heavenly Home of joy. My Julia, Julia, Julia! Eternity—a word of transport, or of agony."

And the constant cry to her absent friend, whom she saw only once for a few fleeting minutes in 14 years, was: "Oh, Julia, my Julia, if we may but pass our dear eternity together!"

She sent the same cry across the miles to her son William:

"My stroke of death would be to know that you have quitted that path of virtue which alone can reunite us forever. Separation, everything else, I can bear—but that never. Your Mother's heart must break, if that blow falls on it."

As eternity was Blessed Mother Seton's guiding star, the Will of God was the force and power she steered by. Her letters and journals are filled with reflections on this Holy Will, and there is the temptation to quote them endlessly—if only to oppose them to today's loose talk about personal fulfillment and private conscience. Certainly the individual conscience is a sacred thing, certainly the use of one's talents and gifts to the utmost is greatly to be desired: what is frightening is the blithe assumption in so many that their consciences can never be erroneous, the stubborn insistence by so many that no one but themselves knows what is best for them. Mother Seton was not so foolhardy. She carefully instructed her first Sisters in a conference:

"What was the first rule of our dear Savior's life? You know it was to do His Father's Will. Well, then, the first end I propose in our daily work is to do the Will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner He wills it; and thirdly, to do it because it is His Will.

"I know what His Will is by those who direct me; whatever they bid me do, if it is ever so small in itself, is the Will of God for me. Then do it in the manner He wills it—not sewing an old thing as if it were new, or a new thing as if it were old; not fretting because the oven is too hot, or in a fuss because it is too cold. You understand—not flying and driving because you are hurried, nor creeping like a snail because no one pushes you. Our dear Savior was never in extremes.

"The third object is to do this Will because God wills it, that is, to be ready to quit at any moment, and to do anything else we may be called to."

Is this firm doctrine of the Will of God as unyielding and rigorous as rebellious voices would have us believe? Does it preclude all reasonableness and dialogue? Not at all. Our blessed Foundress had a passion for seeking advice. She took it freely: witness the blunt letter of reproof for her fears of inadequacy and unworthiness from Sister Cecilia O'Conway, and her notation on the back of it, "Cecilia's admirable lesson to me."

Her correspondence with her spiritual director, Father Bruté, was so much a dialogue that she might be said to have directed him as much as he directed her. She did not hesitate to state firmly to Bishop Carroll her differences of opinion with her immediate superiors, Father Dubourg and Father David. But, after all was said, she submitted humbly to her directors and superiors, whether it be Bruté or Carroll or Dubourg or even David who, quite frankly, she couldn't stand.

So little was she in love with her own authority over her Sisters that Father Bruté has testified that she was "little inclined (to) preach to others . . . to have as a Superior to instruct, direct, reprove . . . so impressed that she did poorly, badly, neglectfully, and to the injury of souls." Whatever she had to submit to, as superior or subject, however, she submitted to joyfully, for she feared above all else to do her own will:

"Would I change one shade or trial of my life—that would be madness, and working in the dark. Oh, no—the dear, dear, dear adored Will be done through every moment of it! And may it control, regulate and perfect us; and when all is over, how we will rejoice that it was done!"

To follow the Will of God in all things, especially as directed by superiors, naturally implies wholehearted obedience.

Blessed Mother Seton had this ministering virtue of obedience in abundance. It is the virtue in her perhaps most to be studied in restructuring your communities, as Vatican Council II directs, according to her spirit; for your study and updating take place in an age when the virtue of obedience has been most misunderstood, most called into question. The trouble seems to arise from the thoughtless seizing upon the catchword "blind obedience" and rejecting such a horror out of hand. "Blind obedience" is a straw man. No obedience grounded on faith is blind. It requires deep and profound faith to see Christ in others, particularly in our superiors, from Paul VI down through our Mothers General and Provincials to our local superiors. But a

faith like our good Mother's is equal to the task.

When she had failed for the moment, as she thought, to see Christ in the person of Father Dubourg, she wrote humbly to Bishop Carroll:

"You will see how good a child I am going to be. Quite a little child. And perhaps you will have often to give me the food of little children yet, but I will do my best as I have promised you in every case."

And when she had informed the good Bishop at length of her entire lack of agreement with the redoubtable Father David, and given cogent reasons for her disagreement, she nonetheless finished by vowing that "if after consideration of every circumstance, you still think things must remain as they are—whatever you dictate I will abide by through every difficulty." It was not an idle vow, for Bishop Carroll declared his considered "opinion and belief that its (her community's) ultimate success under God depends on your sacrificing yourself, notwithstanding all the uneasiness and disgust you may experience, and continuing in your place of Superior"—and she continued heroically to endure Father David for another year.

But, as she noted to Father John Hickey, faced with a similar situation years later, obedience has its reward:

"I once told you how I wished to do as you have done, and I will tell you *in return*, that all the illusion and spider web of *earthly weaving* is broken, and nothing now more bright and steady than the *divine lamp* He feeds and trims Himself, because, as I suppose, I *stayed in obedience*. Oh, this *Master and Father!* . . . How can we be happy enough in His service?"

Those who would throw off too readily the yoke of obedience—and it is a yoke—might well ponder the answer of Peter when Christ, saddened by the departure of His most devoted disciples because of their lack of faith in His promise of the Eucharist, asked: "Will you also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go?" was Peter's prompt reply, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." They might further ponder Vatican Council II's uncompromising description of religious: "They imitate Christ the virgin and the poor man, who, by an obedience which carried Him even to death on the Cross, redeemed men and made them holy."

May God bless you, my dear Sisters, in your vital task of adaptation and renewal. May His Holy Spirit bring you to see what must be done and give you the courage to do it.

## Father Bisoglio Dies

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the Collegio della Missione in Sarzana, Savona, and rector of the Collegio Brig-nole Sale Negrone, the Turin Province's major seminary, founded during St. Vincent's lifetime, in 1647.

He also served the Archdiocese of Genoa as examiner and member of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.

In 1951 Father Bisoglio was chosen by Most Honored Father William M. Slat-tery, C.M., superior general, to succeed Very Rev. Giuseppe Scognamillo, C.M., as procurator general of the Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity.

As procurator general of St. Vincent's double family, Father Bisoglio was the community's official representative at the Holy See. All communications and mat-ters of ecclesiastical administration be-tween the community and the sacred con-gregations passed through his office. The Holy See recognizes no other medium of communication with any religious order or community except through the pro-curator general. There are few excep-tions; but, for example, the Sacred Con-gregation for the Doctrine of the Father on certain matters deals directly with the superior general.

The procurator general is also postu-lator general of all causes of beatifica-tion and canonization involving members of his community; Father Bisoglio, be-sides, was postulator for a number of causes involving nonmembers of the Vin-centian community, which for diverse reasons he had been asked to undertake.

Besides the cause of Blessed Mother Seton, he strove to advance the causes of 11 Vincentian priests: the Blesseds John Gabriel Perboyre, Justin de Jaco-bis, Francis Regis Clet and René Rogue,

the Venerable Felix De Andreis, and the Servants of God Claude Chevriet, Vin-cent Ou, John LeVacher, Jules Gar-rigues, Marcantonio Durando and Salva-tor Micalizzi; five Daughters of Charity: Blessed Mary Magdalen Fontaine (and her companions), and the Servants of God Victoria Andreoni (and her com-panions), Josephine Nicoli, Margaret Rutan and Rosalie Rendu; and six oth-ers: Blessed Nunzio Sulprizio (a teen-age laborer recently beatified), and the Servants of God Aloysia Borgiotti, Cam-illus Feron Vrau, Jules André Brun, C.I.C.M. (and his companions), Philib-ert Vrau and Quintus Sié. Father Bi-soglio was thus responsible for the ad-vancement of 22 causes before the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

On December 14, 1963, Father Bisog-lio observed his Golden Jubilee of priest-hood by offering Mass in the chapel of the Collegio Leoniano. Very Rev. John P. McGowan, C.M., vice postulator of Blessed Mother Seton's cause, flew to Rome for the occasion, carrying with him the grateful felicitations of Mother Seton's Daughters and the Mother Seton Guild.

At noon that same day Father Bisog-lio happily attended a Jubilee Dinner tendered him in the refectory of the Col-legio Leoniano, and a similar dinner the following Sunday in the refectory of the adjacent Casa Internazionale, the Vin-centian Fathers' international house of studies.

The Jubilarian received many gifts and messages of congratulations, espe-cially from his friends in the United States, including spiritual bouquets from all Mother Seton's communities; and he was most anxious that Father McGowan convey his gratitude to all who remem-bered him.

On September 11, 1966, another round of festivities marked Father Bisoglio's sixtieth year as a member of the Vincen-tian community.

The name of Father Bisoglio's suc-cessor as postulator general of the Vin-centian communities and postulator of Blessed Mother Seton's cause has not yet been announced.

## Federation Meets

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Sister Mary Ellen, Emmitsburg; Sister Mary Louise, St. Louis; and Sister Marie de Lourdes, New York.

The theme of the two-day meeting was a response to the "Invitation to Dialogue," an editorial published in the first issue of *Intercommunity*. The fol-lowing recommendations were approved by Federation superiors:

- Intercommunity observance of the feast of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton. In addition to the Mass offered on the feast, a Bible Service will unite in prayer Mother Seton's 10,000 daughters throughout the United States, Canada and mission countries.

- Meetings of presidents of Federa-tion colleges to discuss possibilities of col-laboration.

- Meetings of Federation sisters who attend conventions and workshops in ele-mentary and secondary education, hos-pital administration and nursing educa-tion, and social welfare. Chairman: Sis-ter Mary Agnes, Seton Hill.

- Publication in *Intercommunity News-let-ter* of reports from Federation sisters missioned in foreign countries and those engaged locally in urban renewal, inner city, social welfare and Economic Oppor-tunity programs. Contributions to be sent to community representative.

## Mother Seton Guild

Emmitsburg, Maryland

Return 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.

**PRAY FOR THE CANONIZATION OF BLESSED ELIZABETH ANN SETON**