

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton • Saint stories

Can you guess which saint was the first to be born in America? Not many can. If you had told this saint as little girl that she would become Catholic, she probably would have laughed at you.

Elizabeth Ann grew up in a very strong Protestant family. They would have very little to do with anyone Catholic. Back then many people would judge you by what religion you were, not by your actions. Imagine choosing not to play with another kid just because he wasn't your same religion!

In 1794 she happily married William Seton and planned a life full of joy. Her husband's family had plenty of money to live a comfortable life, and the two planned to raise a family. But God had other ideas. Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever planned the perfect day and then get sick?

Just a few years after their wedding, William's father died. This wouldn't have been so overwhelming if it hadn't been for the seven half brothers and sisters it left for Elizabeth and William to raise! From no children to all of a sudden seven is a big change! Then, on top of all that, William now had to take over running the family business. To make matters even WORSE the business began to lose money and William became sick. Ever hear the expression, when it rains it pours? Well it began to rain cats and dogs for them! The business went bankrupt and William's doctor thought that for him to get better he needed to go live in a place with different weather!

William had business friends in Italy who said that they could come and stay with them. Shortly after their arrival in Italy though, William died. Through the kindness of these friends, whom Elizabeth soon discovered were Catholic, she learned that

the Catholic faith was beautiful. Eventually she desired to become Catholic herself and did!

Upon returning to the United States as a Catholic, Elizabeth faced many hardships. Protestant friends and family ignored her because she had converted. They hoped that by treating her this way, she would deny her new faith. Fortunately, Elizabeth stayed true to her new beliefs and became closer to Jesus because of it.

Elizabeth started the first free Catholic school in America. As the need for teachers arose, she began a religious order of nuns. Most religious orders don't allow you to have young children. Special rules had to be made so that she could continue to raise her children. Can you imagine your mom being a nun? Later, Elizabeth and her nuns started an orphanage. Life definitely didn't turn out as Elizabeth had planned. God always has the best plan!

Feast day: Jan. 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us!

Activity: School Without Words?!

Play school letting your child be the teacher. She or he must teach you how to do something such as how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, or how to add two numbers. But, the teacher CAN'T use any words! She or he must act out how to do the activity.

Have fun!