

## **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Bio**

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was born in NYC in 1774 to an Episcopal family. She married at the age of 19 and had 5 children. Her husband suffered from tuberculosis and was sent to Italy for treatment. Elizabeth and her eldest daughter accompanied him. When her husband died, Elizabeth and her daughter were taken in by her husband's Italian business partners and they introduced Elizabeth and her daughter to Catholicism. They returned to the U.S. and Elizabeth became Catholic in 1805. She started an academy for young ladies but struggled to keep it open. She met a priest from the French community of the Sulpician Fathers when she was about to move to Canada. In 1809 the Sulpicians invited Elizabeth to move to Emmitsburg where they along with John Dubois established Mount St. Mary's University, the first Catholic Seminary for the U.S. With the financial support of a wealthy convert and seminarian, Elizabeth began St. Joseph's Academy and Free School, a school dedicated to the education of Catholic girls. Later, Elizabeth established a community dedicated to the care of the children of the poor. This was the first congregation of religious sisters to be founded in the U.S. and the school was the first free Catholic school in America. This was the start of the Catholic parochial school system in the U.S. She spent the rest of her life developing the new congregation then known as the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph. Elizabeth was known as Mother Seton. Mother Seton died on January 4, 1821 at the age of 46. She was canonized on September 14, 1975 by Pope Paul VI. She is the first native-born U.S. citizen to be canonized a saint. Today, her remains are entombed in the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, MD.