

Daughters of Charity

Provincial Archives

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Birthday of Elizabeth Ann Seton



A version of the "Filicchi Portrait" of Elizabeth Ann Seton

(Image used with permission of the Daughters of Charity Archives. Text based on research done by Sister Betty Ann McNeil, DC)

This week we will mark the birthday of Elizabeth Ann Seton, who was born August 28, 1774. The image seen here is based on the well-known Filicchi portrait of Elizabeth Ann Seton. The Filicchi family, of Livorno Italy, were business

associates of Elizabeth Ann Seton's husband, and it was the Filicchi who introduced Mother Seton to the Catholic faith following her husband's death.

The Filicchi Portrait is based on a left-profile engraving of Elizabeth Bayley Seton by Ceroni about 1868. Ceroni based his engraving on a right-profile one by Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret de Saint-Mémin in 1797, which the Setons gave as gifts to friends and family, including the Filicchi, about 1798. Sometime after the death of Elizabeth Ann Seton's husband, William Magee Seton, the Filicchi family commissioned a portrait of the Widow Seton based on the face but with a left profile and adding the traditional mourning garb of a black cap and cape, which became the habit of the American Sisters of Charity. Amabilia Filicchi may have provided the grieving Elizabeth with the customary dress of "widow's weeds" worn in Tuscany at that time.

In response to a request from the Daughters of Charity for a copy of the Filicchi portrait, Patrizio Filicchi sent reproductions of her painted portrait to Emmitsburg in 1888, noting that he kept the painting "always before my eyes." One is now exhibited in the museum of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The original painting no longer exists; it was destroyed during World War II.

At the [first meeting of the Conference of Mother Seton's Daughters in 1947](#) those attending agreed on the style of the Filicchi portrait as the official one to be used for Elizabeth Ann Seton's cause for canonization. The Conference of Mother Seton's Daughters is known today as the [Sisters of Charity Federation](#).

One response to "*Birthday of Elizabeth Ann Seton*"

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