
New Schedule: Starting Tuesday, Jan. 18, the Portrait Gallery will be open Thursdays - Sundays, 11:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. See si.edu/visit/hours for complete Smithsonian listings.



Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton



Artist

Charles Balthazar Julien Févret de Saint-Mémin, 12 Mar 1770 - 23 Jun 1852

Sitter

Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, 28 Aug 1774 - 4 Jan 1821

Date

1797

Type

Print

Medium

Engraving on paper

Dimensions

Image: 5.6 x 5.6 cm (2 3/16 x 2 3/16")

Sheet: 54.5 x 39.8 cm (21 7/16 x 15 11/16")

Mat: 71.1 x 55.9 cm (28 x 22")

Credit Line

National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

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Object number

S/NPG.74.39.7.47

Exhibition Label

Born New York City

Elizabeth Seton, the founder of the American Sisters of Charity, was the country's first native-born Roman Catholic saint. Married with five children, she was widowed at an early age. After converting to Catholicism, she formed a sisterhood and began opening a series of schools and orphanages. Seton was elected as the first Mother Superior of the Sisters of Charity, which was established in 1809 in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Devoted to her family and friends, Seton sent copies of this small portrait by French émigré artist Saint-Mémin to loved ones, noting that the engravings portrayed "not the lively animated Betsy Bayley, but the softened matron with traces of care and anxiety upon her brow." Seton's enduring legacy included numerous communities of the Sisters of Charity, a mission of education and social work, and prolific writings. She was beatified by the Catholic Church in 1963 and canonized in 1975.

Data Source

National Portrait Gallery

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