



PRAYER FOR THE BIRTHDAY OF ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON, AUGUST 28, 2014

INTRODUCTION *200 years ago Elizabeth Ann Seton turned 40. The world knew war, violence, turmoil and uncertainty, much like today. Napoleon's defeat in the spring of 1814 meant the end of warfare on the seas for a time. Pope Pius VII was released from prison in France and returned to Rome. But as the War of 1812 continued, a British force invaded Washington, DC, and burned the White House, the Capitol, and other public buildings. Amid this insecurity, Elizabeth and her young community chose to expand their mission, sending three Sisters to care for orphans in Philadelphia. In midlife, she worried about her children's future and described herself as "a bag of bones." Yet she continued to "hazard yet forward," meeting the grace of each moment with unshakable confidence in a God who would never abandon her.*

CALL TO PRAYER: Let us celebrate God's gifts to Elizabeth Ann Seton, a valiant woman, filled with faith and trust amid the twists and turns of life. Let us join our hearts and voices in thanksgiving.

SONG: We Walk by Faith (traditional); You Are Mine (D. Haas); Trust in the Lord (Roc O'Connor) - or another of your choosing

PSALM

Praise be to You, O Gracious One!

Blessed are those who reverence the Holy One, who greatly delight in the Word!

For they dwell with Love, and their children will learn of peace and justice.

Abundance and wholeness will be their heritage, and truth will be their banner.

Light penetrates the darkness for those who face their fears;

Love stands by them with mercy and forgiveness.

It goes well for those who are loving and kind, who live their days with justice and integrity.

They become co-creators with God; they bless the world with their presence.

In times of trouble, they know not fear; their hearts are firm, trusting in your Loving Presence.

Yes, their hearts are steady, they are not afraid; even their enemies are blessed by their love.

They are generous and give freely; the needy are offered shelter and food;

justice and mercy make their home there; and their righteousness endures forever.

The unloving are witness to this; who knows when the seed will find a fertile heart?

The fruits of those who know Love are blessing to all!

Glory be *(Psalm 113, adapted from Psalms for Praying, Nan C. Merrill)*

READING – Matthew 8:23 – 27

Jesus got into a boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" He said to them, "Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?" Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. The disciples were amazed and said, "What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?"

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING *In the readings and prayers, is there any phrase that speaks to your heart? Any phrase that challenges you?*

LITANY (alternate): *(Quotes in italics are Elizabeth Seton's words.)*

Elizabeth, teach us to trust
- that *"every good work we do is a grain of seed for eternal life."*

Elizabeth, fill us with courage
- to *"push on...since the Providence of God turns out so often quite different from our calculations."*

Elizabeth, empower us
- to *"find our way forward through transitions,...to make of hazards, opportunities and occasions of grace."* (Diane Collesano, SC-NJ)

Elizabeth, strengthen our confidence in God
- who *"smiles at the anxious, calculating heart, and makes everything easy to the simple and confiding."*

Elizabeth, keep us steady on the path of Charity,
- committed to *"do what we can, and God will do the rest."*

CLOSING PRAYER

God of Love, we celebrate Elizabeth Ann Seton,
our sister, founder and saint.
We pause on the road, on the journey,
at the threshold, gathered with others
who long to be rooted deeply in your love.
Impel us toward you and toward our sisters and brothers in need,
with passion and compassion.
Move us from the reality of today into the mystery of tomorrow.
Like Elizabeth, may we meet our grace in the midst of life,
and be ready to welcome you
as you come to meet us from the future.
Amen.



Share a sign of peace and community with those around you.

- Prayer prepared by Regina Bechtle, SC (NY); image: Hazard Yet Forward, Margaret Beaudette, SC (NY)