



1774-1821

THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton
The First Native Born Saint of the United States of America

Military and Families Seek Intercession of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Annual Pilgrimage for the Sea Services October 4, 2009

Emmitsburg, Maryland, August 27, 2009 – Members of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Merchant Marine, and the public will come together on Sunday, October 4, 2009, to honor Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, “Patroness of the Sea Services.” The Annual Pilgrimage for the Sea Services is hosted by the Daughters of Charity, and supported by a committee of retired Naval Officers and their spouses, chaired by Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret). The Mass begins at 3:00 p.m. in the Basilica at the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, 333 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the public is invited to attend. The Seton Shrine will be open between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. for tours.

“It is powerful to know that Saint Elizabeth Ann’s two sons were mariners and that she shared the same worries and concerns for their safety as we (parents and spouses) do for our loved ones who are serving in the military. We can be very thankful to have the freedom today to have the opportunity for the Eucharist to be ever present in the military.” Eugene and Heidi Castle, parents of son Tony, a Navy lieutenant, commented that their son served as a lay Catholic leader on the submarine when it was deployed. To this day they believe that the Saints continue to keep the military safe and out of harm’s way.

As Saint Elizabeth’s heart was always praying for the safety of her sons, the Castles continue to pray for the safety of their son Tony, as do thousands of other parents and spouses. “To attend the Annual Pilgrimage of the Sea Services is amazing. To know that as you sit and pray in the Basilica, Saint Elizabeth is there watching over us, as she does over the men and women in the military.”

- The principal celebrant and homilist for the Mass is **His Excellency the Most Reverend J. Kevin Boland, D.D., Bishop of Savannah, Georgia**. Bishop Boland was appointed the National Bishop of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), by Cardinal Francis George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In his role, Bishop Boland is responsible for fostering the work of the maritime apostolate among the U.S. bishops and overseeing the work of the AOS national director.
- Admiral Watkins has been closely associated with the Seton Shrine and the Daughters of Charity since 1977 when, with then Chief of Navy Chaplains John O’Connor (later John Cardinal O’Connor, Archbishop of NY), he worked to proclaim the newly canonized Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton as “Patroness of the Sea Services” because of her link to the Navy through her two sons. Admiral Watkins also helped to establish the annual day of prayerful observance through the Navy Chaplains Office. In 1994 due to the increasing demands of a small Navy, the event was discontinued; but through the efforts of Admiral Watkins and his dedicated group, it was reinstated in 1998. Today military personnel and their families will join together to seek Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton’s intercession for the safety of all those in the sea services.
- Music for the liturgy will be provided by the **Naval Academy Catholic Midshipmen Choir from Annapolis, Maryland**.



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- Also supporting the event are the youngest partners of the Navy, the Sea Cadets of Ft. Detrick, Maryland, who will once again assist the ushers before the Mass.
- The Ceremonial Guard, Military District Washington, D.C. will Post the Colors.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting Karen Harding, Shrine Director, 301.447.6606 or by email at office@setonshrine.org.

About the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton:

Two hundred years ago, Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton founded the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph's, the first new community for religious women to be established in the United States. She founded Saint Joseph's Academy and Free School, the first free Catholic School for girls staffed by Sisters in the United States. Her enduring legacy of 200 years includes six religious communities with more than 5,000 members, numerous schools, social service centers, and hospitals throughout America and around the world. Her works led to her canonization on Sunday, September 14, 1975, in Saint Peter's Square, by Pope Paul VI. The first citizen born in the United States to be canonized, her remains are entombed here in the Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. Visit our web site, www.setonshrine.org to learn more about the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.