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An Annotated List of the Writings of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (1)
Compiled by
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AND
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Elizabeth Bayley Seton was the first American-born canonized saint in the Roman Catholic Church. She was the foundress of the American Sisters of Charity and is credited with starting the parochial school system in the United States. Coming from a Protestant background, converting to Catholicism, and becoming a co-worker with John Carroll in the formative years of the Catholic Church in the new republic, she was one of the most influential Catholic women in the early nineteenth century. Elizabeth Seton’s writings offer a rich insight into her life and her times. Her spirituality and deep personal relationships as well as the detail of her life as widow, convert, single mother, educator and religious are revealed in hundreds of letters, personal journals, meditations, and instructions to the sisters, some never before published.

The thirteen religious congregations which comprise the Sisters of Charity Federation have undertaken the publication of the complete corpus of Seton writings. Documents have, to date, been located in fifteen repositories in the United States and Canada. Their publication will provide rich source material for those interested in religious history, women’s history, and the history of religious life as well as those with a special interest in Elizabeth Seton herself.

As a step to the publication of the writings, an annotated list of the holdings in each repository will be published in several issues of Vincentian Heritage. This first installment includes listings from all archives of the Sisters of Charity and the Daughters of Charity except Saint Joseph Provincial House in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Next will be holdings from non-Sister/Daughter of Charity repositories. Finally, will be a listing from Saint Joseph's Provincial House, the repository for the largest collection of Seton writings. We hope those interested will find this material helpful, and we invite additions to, or comments on, these lists. Send your comments to: Judith Metz, S.C., 5900
Recalling the past is useless and vain. Never passes a day but some family is deprived of its support — children of their parents, the wife of her husband. Hopes that Rebecca has written to Eliza Maitland, who has endured much sorrow this summer.

[n.d.] To Rebecca Seton. ACS 139-142.

At 7 A.M. several sails were discovered in the harbor, but all ended well. Describes beguiling ways of her children, mentioning three year old Dick and Kit, who is Rebecca’s godchild.


Recounts William Seton’s financial problems and poor health. Doctor Bayley, Elizabeth’s father, sent New Year’s gift of cakes, rai-
sins, and biscuits. The holidays were not the most unpleasant Eliza­
teeth has experienced.

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to her Son William

June 17, 1815. From Elizabeth and daughters Bec and Kitty, to her son William, France. Through Father Bruté. ACS 294-295-296-297.

Both girls long to hear from him—they have not had a word since he set sail. Dick comes regularly every Wednesday and has given them the red rooster that William formerly cared for. Concerned about the upheaval in France, they remind him to keep a journal.

Elizabeth recalls to him the good example of his grandfather who spent himself for others. Has not heard from New York since William left it, except that Uncle Post has gone to England. Begs him not to forget God.

April 9, 1816. To her son William. From Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary. Postscript of Elizabeth’s on Richard Seton’s Letter. ACS 290-291-292-293.

Elizabeth tells William not to mind dear, crazy Dick—he is not such a “sap” as he appears, since she has proof enough of his good sense.

April 25, 1816. To her son William, Leghorn, Italy. From Emmitsburg. ACS 57-58.

Within two months, has sent dozens of letters in all directions after hearing of William’s disappointments. Has also written to Philip and Antonio [Filicchi]. William’s and Richard’s conduct fills her soul with comfort. Asks that they never let her pride in them be brought low.

May 20, 1816. To her son William, Leghorn, Italy. From Emmitsburg. ACS 59-60.

The third time that she has written to him within a week. Relates the happy scene of Bec, Kit, and Sister Cecilia preparing a box for delivery to William.
July 24, 1817. To her son William, Leghorn, Italy. From Emmitsburg. ACS 71-72-73.

Has not heard from William in five months. Is unhappy over lack of prospects for Richard, who talks of being a farmer. Kit's health is better. The Posts have visited. Assures William that he is tenderly loved and hopes that he sometimes approaches the sacraments.


Longs to hear from him. Does not know whether he is on board the Guerriere or between decks in harbor. Bishop Cheverus has not written since William has been in Boston. Mr. Fox reports that Richard is very well in Washington, but no letters have arrived.


Has written every way she can imagine, but has had only letter dated March 13 from Valparaiso. His sisters talk of him constantly and play at being "William and Dick." Kit, the more mischievous, is always Dick, from whom there is also no word. Let no one say that deep affection kills, since she grows strong in the absence of her sons.
Expresses her concern until she hears about his reception and his situation at Leghorn. Motherly advice about facing life. Advises him to trust in Providence. Asks him to write often. Richard misses him very much. Recommends that he show his love and appreciation for the Filicchi family and that he exhibit good conduct.

**July 2, 1816. To her son William. From Emmitsburg. AMPH RG 1-3-2.**

Mentions receiving his letters and forwarding various letters. Tells about Kit’s departure from Saint Joseph’s to visit Ann Tiernan in Baltimore; there were many tears at the separation. Bec is very ill. Elizabeth is concerned whether William enjoys his faith as much as she does.

There is a note from Bec to William, enclosed with this letter, in which Bec says how sorry she is that he had not received all the letters they wrote and that she hopes that he will meet her “in the world where there are no separations.”

**June 16, 1818. To her son William, Midshipman, U.S. Ship Independence, Boston Harbor. From Emmitsburg. AMPH RG 1-3-2.**

Explains about the money she has requested William Barry to send to him. She mentions her illness (she had to be bled) but is better now. Kate has come home. Tells of her efforts to find the picture books he has requested.

A note from Kate to William is added.

**August 24, 1818. To her son William. U.S. Macedonia, Boston Harbor. From Emmitsburg. AMPH RG 1-3-2.**

Expresses concern for him as he prepares for his long journey and offers to send money, even if she must borrow it.

**[n.d.]. To her son William. AMPH RG 1-3-2.**

Exhorts him to be faithful to his God and to his religious practice.

**[n.d.]. To her son William. Mountain [St. Mary’s]. AMPH RG 1-3-2.**
Note in which she states her happiness that he is with Richard and near them; looks forward to Wednesday. A thousand blessings.

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Josephine C. [Kit] Seton


Recommends her to greet all her friends in Baltimore. She is the happiest of mothers over her darling’s cure. In a postscript, inquires into Richard’s needs.


Asks for news from her and gives her motherly counsel. Tells her of Rebecca’s pain. A note from Rebecca is written at the end of the letter.

Postscript from Elizabeth Seton to Unidentified Person

[n.d.]. AMPH RG 1-3-2.

“You never told me if you saw Mrs. Fox and if you loved her as I did. —Tell my dear [Madame Chatard?] one of her darlings served in the sanctuary yesterday, Sr. Betsy could not remember which one—but all are well—love to my Ellen, Julia—and—tell Pére we beg him to bless—”

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Richard Seton

May 8, 1820. To Richard Seton, at Mr. A. Filicchi’s, Leghorn, Italy. Politeness of Mr. John Lohman. From Emmitsburg. AMPH RG 1-3-2.

Expresses concern for him (worries whether he has kept his faith); and comments on the lack of correspondence (6-8 months) from him. Comments on Kit’s involvement with Ellen Wiseman and the Harpers.
[n.d.]. To Richard B. Seton. AMPH RG 1-3-2.

A very short note telling of her love for him and reminding him of his duty to God.

Documents from the Archives of
The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Mount Saint Joseph, Ohio

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi and His Family


Elizabeth expresses disappointment at not having seen him that morning and wishes he had looked for her. She had hoped for a fraternal benediction; so would he please send a kind word with Mary [Filippo's wife] and let her know when he is to leave.


Elizabeth has heard from Mrs. Filicchi who mentions a box of elixir which she is sending for the children. The box of hats, then, should be left at Murray's since that box is not intended for Elizabeth.


Elizabeth misses him but thinks of him whenever she thinks of her soul. She is praying daily for enlightenment while reflecting on the promises given to Peter and the sixth chapter of John along with the Bishop's [Carroll] letter and the writings of Francis de Sales.

Continued September 2, 1804. Elizabeth hopes for a letter from him. She reports a conversation she had with Wright Post about her beliefs. He told her that if she really believed the doctrine of the Church, nothing should prevent her joining it. However, she is still unsettled in her faith and asks his prayers.

Continued September 8, 1804. Elizabeth is concerned that she has not heard from him but trusts that he is safe. She is still begging God to show her His will in her regard. Mr. Hobart visited her briefly
telling her that the Church is corrupt and has returned to primitive doctrine. She sees that her help lies only in God.

Continued September 12, 1804. His letter has finally arrived. She is happy to hear of his safety and of the hospitality he received in Boston. She prays for him. Her children are sick with whooping cough, so frequently she prays at night as well as day for the light of truth. A letter from him would encourage her.


She awaits his next letter [usually arriving every nine days] and hopes he himself might come soon.

Continued October 15, 1804. His recent letter was disappointingly short, but she will continue hers to him since he seems to appreciate them so much. She is still struggling with the decision to join the Church or to stay with her own. Mr. Hobart seems to have lost interest in her case for which she is happy. She sometimes thinks that God will never answer her prayer for light.


She had not meant to reproach him in her last letter even though it has now been a month and two weeks since she heard from him. She has had much work to do since her servant has been sick. This added fatigue, along with cold and pain in her breast, has not prevented her writing. She lists several reasons why he might be prevented from writing to her. She tells him about the plan to keep a boarding house for about twenty boys [including John Wilkes' sons] from a nearby school. She believes it will open early in the new year.


Her struggle for faith continues. When she thinks of him, she calls on God to bless him and to let her see the workings of God through him. She begs for God's mercy. Now she begins to know what prayer is and what fasting is.

She awaits his return since he is the only one to whom she has revealed her secret thoughts and struggles. Mr. Wilkes has told her that the proposed boarding house cannot open until May.


She is happy to hear he is not traveling in the bad weather. She deplores the lack of knowledge of religion even in those well instructed in other fields. She notes his high regard for the Catholic priests of Boston and asks him to tell one of them about her, since one day this might benefit her or her children. She chides him for his apologetic attitude about his use of English in his letters.


She cannot give him directions to Mrs. Scott’s home, but it is near the home of Mrs. Scott’s brother-in-law Mr. Cox, who is well known. She continues to pray for Antonio and promises never to “go to the altar in spirit or in reality without remembering my most dear Brother.”


The plan to open a home for boys has been given up, but in spite of the consequent concerns for her living situation she finds joy and consolation in her union with God.

Continued April 9, 1805. At Saint Peter’s she takes pleasure in seeing her children worship so devoutly. She speaks of difficulty with externals of the Church but acknowledges that she now has as perfect a happiness to be found on earth. She wishes him well and regrets that in his business affairs he is reminded of Seton with vexation.

She realizes Antonio is very busy in Philadelphia with business meetings and correspondence. She is well satisfied with her director [Rev. Matthew O'Brien]. Her friend Mrs. Dupleix defends her to her critics. Elizabeth has moved to a nice house with lower rent. The savings will pay for winter clothes, and besides she is nearer to Saint Peter’s.

Continued April 19, 1805. She is concerned since she has not heard from him. Mr. Wilkes has remarked about her becoming a Catholic but says it makes no difference with him. Her own sister, Mary Post, asked her if she still went to her [Mary’s] church, so Elizabeth openly admitted that she has gone to Saint Peter’s since the beginning of Lent.


She had not written earlier because she did not want to mention her struggles and stress. Now she could write freely because she was at peace. Now poverty, suffering, displeasure of friends, only lead her closer to God. Antonio has been well in spite of the severe winter and was so pleased with the picture of Amabilia which she had sent recently. He talks often of her and of his children. Elizabeth asks to be remembered to the children [Patrick and Georgino]; the brother and sister of Amabilia [Gaspero and Rosina]; Doctor Teitelli, who had tended to William in the Lazaretto; and Mr. Hall, the Protestant clergyman who visited William. She also thanks Amabilia for the basket of figs and the raisins.


To celebrate the arrival of a letter from him, she opened the piano and let the children dance. He has been gone three weeks, and she was not certain if it was to the south [Philadelphia] or to the north [Boston]. She is waiting for an answer to her letter to [Rev. John] Cheverus.

Continued April 23, 1805. Rev. O’Brien has a good opinion of both
Filicchi men. He called Antonio an upright excellent character; Filippo "a miracle." She agreed with Rev. O'Brien but said that Filippo was superior to Antonio only as a merchant and only in his own department.


She has not been able to go to church because her servant has been sick and she herself overly-fatigued with extra chores. She asks Antonio if he has taken on any pupils for the Italian language or has met any "sirens," praying that his good angel has no cause to leave him. Mr. Hobart has warned her one-time friends of the falsity and danger of her beliefs. She told him that he should do what he thought was his duty and she would do hers. She sees that he might have cause for being embittered.

Continued May 1, 1805. An English gentleman [Mr. White] and his wife plan to open a school for young ladies and perhaps boys. If it succeeds, they will need an assistant, so they have asked her to do it. She can enroll her own children and can contribute to the support of her family. She wants Antonio's opinion of the project. She questions why she cannot reveal her true feelings but acknowledges that he has requested that "the kindness and sweetness of affection must be veiled." She realizes that God knows the affection is one of sincerity, simplicity, and holiness.


Elizabeth's former friends circulated that the Whites were Catholic and that she would use the school to advance her religion. Mr. Hobart warned everyone of the dangerous consequences of the proposed school. Mrs. Sadler and Mrs. Dupleix explained that the Whites were Protestant, after which Hobart withdrew his condemnation and said he would use his influence for the school. Mr. Post and Mr. Wilkes gave only a cool assent. She herself said she would bless God whether it succeeded or failed.

Continued May 9, 1805. Elizabeth says she had written to thank
Mrs. Scott for her attention to him while he was in Philadelphia.


She has been elated about receiving a letter from Rev. Cheverus and considers it a privilege to receive counsel from such a distinguished person. She owes this honor to Antonio. She is now settled in a comfortable house in which the proposed school will be set up. It is within one street of the church, so she will be able to attend every day.

June 1, 1805. Letter #17. To Antonio Filicchi. From New York. AMSJ A11 035.

His recent letter with accounts about his children brought her much joy. Father O'Brien will introduce her to the Society of the Holy Sacrament the next day. She longs for Antonio to return to New York where he will find her school scarcely begun. Two friends of earlier times called on her to make sure her Catholic principles will not be imposed upon the pupils of the school. One of the ladies told her that they did not fear a Deist teacher but that a Roman Catholic was thought of with horror. She answered that this was a contradiction in principles—to tolerate every sect but Catholic. They parted friends agreeing not to bring up the subject of religion again.


She wishes him well on his voyage to Montreal. Mr. White is unable to pay the next quarter's rent so she has had to move herself and her family to the country home of Wright Post. Her liberty is gone, but, worst of all, she is unable to attend mass and receive the sacraments.


Her stepmother Charlotte Bayley has died. Elizabeth regrets that her relatives have none of the consolations of prayer and the sacraments available to her. She is happy Antonio is in Montreal because yellow fever is rampant in New York and Philadelphia.

She has been busy sewing and mending winter clothing for her children. She also has had to spend more time doing household chores which allows her little time for writing. She and her children pray daily for him and Rev. Tisserant. Her situation is forlorn in being deprived of her religious practices. Besides, her children are being led astray by bad principles which she cannot always check. She begs him to try to get her boys into a school in Baltimore if possible.


The Posts have urged her to go to Sunday service at their church to hear some of their fine speakers, but she declined, staying at home with her children. She had written to both Revs. O’Brien and Tisserant to ask about Friday abstinence. Both dispensed her under the circumstances, but she said she would use the dispensation only if necessary to keep the peace. She says she is a little frightened by Antonio’s idea of a Canada seminary, but she has a secret idea which would render the Baltimore plan more preferable.


Mr. Wilkes has asked her to consider again setting up a school for his and his brother’s children and others. He will tell her more if Mr. Harris, the schoolmaster, is willing to work with a Catholic and if the parents will entrust their children to her care. She is anxious to do anything to make a living. Some have made such proposals as a tea store or a china shop or a school for little children, too young to be influenced by her religious beliefs.


She writes to him, in spite of his injunction of not writing, to celebrate the anniversary of her entrance into the Church. She has not been well throughout the winter, and her critics say it is the consequence of her keeping Lent. That is untrue, she says.

Word has come from Mr. Kelly of Georgetown and from Mr. Tisserant that her sons could be enrolled at Georgetown for two or three years. She awaits his [Antonio's] decision on this matter.


The school matter is settled. Rev. Barry will conduct the boys to Georgetown. She has written to Mr. Kelly to make sure the boys have what is needed. She has also written to Bishops Neal and Carroll. She is grateful for all that Antonio has done to bring this about.


She gives Antonio a message from Rev. Tisserant—that he will be sailing to France in ten days and would like Antonio to accompany him. She has received the sacrament of Confirmation on Whitsunday [May 25] from Bishop Carroll. She added Mary to her name. [She began signing her letters MEAS.]


While he has been crossing the ocean, she has been in "a sea of troubles." Relatives and friends were outraged when they learned that Cecilia Seton [age 15] had become a Catholic. They threatened that she should be sent out of the country and that Elizabeth and her children should be put out to beg. Cecilia took a few clothes and went to live with Elizabeth. If he [Antonio] were still in America, she would ask him to arrange a refuge in the Order of Saint Francis for his converts. She still has received no word about the school from Mr. Wilkes.


She recalls the anniversary of her conversion and thanks him again for his part in it. She and Cecilia have recently assisted at the
deathbed of Mrs. Maitland, Cecilia’s sister. This brought them into contact with relatives who were so impressed with Cecilia’s manner that they became reconciled and even invited her to their homes.

Continued March 30, 1807. She appreciates her pastor Mr. Hurley, rigid and severe in calm, but indulgent and compassionate in trouble. She also receives letters from Mr. Cheverus and Mr. Matignon.

Continued April 10, 1807. She is happy that he has reached his home in Italy. Mr. Kelly [Georgetown] has told her that her boys have excelled in their studies. Soon Dr. Matignon will be in New York, and she thinks he wants her to be his private secretary. Letters of advice he has sent her lead her to believe that he will not consent to her Canada scheme.


Mrs. James Seton, Cecilia’s sister-in-law, has died, and Cecilia has been taking care of the children. The governess, however, has reported to James that Cecilia was teaching the children the Catholic religion. This has renewed old hatreds and ridicule for Cecilia and for Elizabeth.


Her pastor Mr. Hurley has been replaced by Mr. Sibourd. The only place she visits is the Barry family who show great interest in her Canada scheme. She will do nothing to further that scheme without the approval of her Bostonian friends. She gives an account of her financial assistance: Mr. Wilkes pays the house rent; Mr. Post says nothing; Mrs. Startin [Elizabeth’s godmother] seems tired of her promise but paid $100 once; Mrs. Scott pays regularly; twice she has drawn on Antonio’s account at Murray’s. Cecilia has for the time being stayed at the home of James Seton. As for her internal life, she is filled with peace and consolation.

Much has happened since her last letter. Certain circumstances led to a series of actions. The priests in Boston did not favor her plan to go to Canada. Her boarding school dropped from ten to five, and three of the five would leave soon for college. Some of her benefactors had withdrawn support. Rev. Dubourg, then president of the College of Baltimore, invited her to Baltimore to open a small school for the promotion of religious instruction. There she could support her family and shelter them from the danger of Protestant influences. Both Dubourg and Matignon assured her that she would receive financial support. She happily consented and was able to bring $1000 with her to the project. She transferred her sons from Georgetown to the College of Baltimore. The seminary provided a lot on which she planned to build her school.


The success of the school depends upon his generosity and the charity of people in Baltimore. She trusts in the will of Almighty God but if she dared ask anything of God, it would be that they may never be compelled to return to New York.


She asks God’s blessing on the Filicchis, spiritually and temporally. She knows they would do something to help promote the faith in her little school. She has already begun instructing girls for their first communion. Anina is an excellent companion to the girls. Her boys are somewhat a disappointment since they show neither talent or the application in their studies.

January 21, 1809. Letter #34. To Filippo Filicchi. From Baltimore. AMSJ A11 052.

At communion that morning the thought came to her that the Filicchis could build a school. The property would be theirs, and they would have promoted the faith. She noted that she did not ask for herself since she had already vowed poverty. As soon as they had lodging, the two Seton sisters would come to assist her in school.
February 8, 1809. Letter #35. To Filippo Filicchi. From Baltimore. AMSJ A11 053.

A recent convert [Samuel Cooper], who is about to receive the tonsure at the seminary, wants to donate his fortune to establish a school for girls as well as a place of employment for the aged and uneducated which would benefit the poor. If the Filicchis could build on the property given by Dubourg, then Cooper would give the money to get the establishment started and support it in its initial year. The plan would call for two separate buildings. She feels “backward” in asking this favor, but she realizes he understands her motives.


She had not heard from Leghorn for eighteen months. She is sorry to hear of Filippo’s illness and promises to pray for him. She will also have ten holy sisters pray. Then she tells him (asking him not to laugh) that she is the head of a community of ten pious women who are known as Sisters of Charity. When they get a larger place, six more women will join them. She thanks him for the $1000 but finds it necessary to request more so that the Community might be firmly established.

Continued May 20, 1810. She tells him about the conversion of Harriet Seton, her moving to Emmitsburg, and her death. She also reports that Cecilia died a few months later. Elizabeth herself has become more of an outcast from family and friends in New York. Her community of sisters numbers twelve with twelve more waiting to join them. The school is thriving. The Bishop [Carroll] hopes to establish a school there, however, a number of sisters will always be kept at the Mother House “to keep the spinning, weaving, and knitting and school for the country people.” All the clergy in America support her venture and “there is every hope that it is the seed of an immensity of future good.”

Continued May 22, 1810. She calls upon his generosity again, noting that she can no longer get help from New York where, according to one report, her name cannot even be mentioned. His friends in Boston are well, and she hopes that some day she might be asked to send a group of Sisters there.

An Italian clergyman is leaving America to return to Italy. He has given her $1000 in gold for safe keeping, for which she has given him a bill to present to Antonio who will pay him the $1000. She knows this transaction will be all right since he [Antonio] had commanded her to call upon him for help if necessary. [A note is affixed to this letter by Rev. Zocchi that the sum was paid to him by Antonio on September 21, 1810.]

July 1, 1814. Letter #38. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph's Valley. AMSJ A11 056.

She briefly reviews the news included in her last letter (four years ago). She then tells about her children; Anina has died; Rebecca uses a crutch for her lameness, the result of a fall; Kitty is good and happy. The two boys are old enough now to be earning their way. Neither is especially talented or ambitious. William, the elder, is trying to decide whether to go into a counting house or to go to sea. Her only concern is that they save their souls. Now that they are of an age, she feels she will no longer have to draw out his $400 yearly bounty.


She regrets that her son William arrived in Italy before she was certain whether they would receive him or not. She certainly did not want to abuse or take advantage of the Filicchis' goodness. If they find it necessary to send him back to America, she will still bless God that he had had the opportunity to see Catholics and the Catholic religion as they are, not the "shadow" he sees in America.


She tells him she is sorry that her son William arrived there before Antonio had given permission. She could not foresee difficulties [insurrection in Italy] nor determine the situation there. He may scold her for her weak, broken-down mind. While America might hold
many disadvantages and dangers for William, yet whatever decision is made about the boy, it is in God’s hands.


She hopes that he has received the letters on the subject of William being sent to Italy. She is afraid that William might forfeit his [Antonio’s] protection, but she must trust in God.

November 20, 1815. Letter #42. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 060.

She has heard from him in August, the first letter since 1812. Once more, she says she is sorry about William’s arriving in Italy too soon but admits that the matter is closed since William reports that he has been made to feel welcome. All the sisters pray for him and his family.

April 22, 1816. Letter #43. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 061.

William has reported that he has received parental care from Antonio and Amabilia. He seems to appreciate their support and protection. She and the sisters pray especially for both Filicchi brothers on their respective feast days. Mary Post, her sister, still corresponds with Elizabeth. After having said that she no longer draws on his Murray account, she fears she may be forced to draw out $200—for Richard’s expenses; for preparation for William’s voyage; for Rebecca’s trip to a doctor in Philadelphia. Josephine [little Kit] now earns her way by teaching in the school.

January 12, 1817. Letter #44. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 062.

She wants him to write to her about William and how he is progressing since all that William ever tells her is about the kindness of the Filicchis to him. Rebecca has died [November 1816] but the sorrow at losing her is not as great as the anxiety that William will preserve his religion.
February 24, 1817. Letter #45. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 063.

Richard has been working in a counting house but must leave it in May or June as the owner, Mr. Tiernan, will hire his own son who will arrive from Europe. She requests Antonio to try to find a position for Richard either in Europe or America.


Content is the same as Letter #45.

April 1, 1817. Letter #47. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 065.

William has written to her that while he has always been well treated by the Filicchis, he feels that he is not really earning his bread. He is not useful enough to replace a clerk in the count house. Elizabeth asks Antonio to talk with William and tell him whether he has the requisite qualifications to become a merchant. Then, if William is not fit for the work, please advise him to enter some other course. She fears William will, like so many Americans, want to join the navy. How she had wished that her son might have lightened the burden of Antonio.

June 1, 1817. Letter #48. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 066.

This letter, thanking him for his gift of $100, is being delivered by Mr. Cooper, who had been the “founder” of Saint Joseph’s. He had intended and she had hoped to conduct a nursery for poor country children, but it has become a means of “forming city girls to faith and piety as wives and mothers.”


This letter is carried by Richard whom Antonio has sent for to work in Leghorn. She thinks Richard is better-suited for such work
than William was. He has a mind for business and activity but a quick temper. She has no means to pay his passage so she asks Antonio’s help once more. William is back in America and seems much improved in disposition. He is seeking an appointment in the navy. The sisters now have a branch in New York as well as in Philadelphia.


Richard’s letters praise the kindness and generosity of the Filicchi family. She hopes and prays that he succeeds there in order to show the Seton’s love and gratitude. She says that she may be going soon to meet Filippo [deceased 1816], but health is uncertain at age forty-five. Their orphanages are doing well. William is in the navy and will be sailing soon on the Pacific Ocean.


She wants him to invite Mr. and Mrs. Harper to his home when they arrive in Italy. They are American benefactors, and she would like them to meet him and Amabilia.

November 11, 1818. Letter #52. To Antonio Filicchi. From Saint Joseph’s Valley. AMSJ A11 070.

Dr. Matignon has died and is sorely-missed by Bishop Cheverus. She, too, has been threatened by death but leaves all to God. Her anxiety is for Richard’s success. William was shipwrecked but has returned, while Kitty is loved and admired by everyone.


Rev. Mr. Dubois has told her to ask Antonio to send eighteen composition urns for the altars since they are $4 to $10 per pair. She does not like to make the request, but Dubois will remit the payment.

She is concerned that she has not heard from Richard for six months. She remembers all of Antonio’s family with love and gratitude, especially Patrichio and Giorgino and Amabilia. She sends Mr. Dubourg’s mandate from Louisiana in regard to Lent. Letters from New York have requested Sisters to come to take care of 800 state school children.


Richard has returned and is in Norfolk delayed by some bill. She has requested General Harper’s help, not for Richard’s relief but as a mother’s duty. She has always prayed that no matter what difficulty her children experienced, they would save their souls. She points out that the little grain of mustard seed which he helped plant with his part in her conversion has rooted and spread. They will next go to Baltimore and to Conewago. She received the last sacraments three weeks ago.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Unidentified Person

[n.d.]. Fragment. AMSJ A11 004.

She writes from their summer place where William has had a small touch of the fever, but the leisure he has enjoyed has been beneficial. The fever has been so bad they did not return to the city until November 1 when they removed to Stone Street. The greater part of the family furniture has been sold and the rest divided. Mary and Charlotte have been placed at a boarding school in Brunswick. The younger girls passed the winter at home where Rebecca and Elizabeth taught them until Rebecca’s health failed. Comments on Rebecca’s, Samuel’s, and Edward’s virtues.
Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Rebecca Seton

June 8, 1799. To Rebecca Seton. From Long Island. AMSJ A11 005.

She expresses hope that Rebecca’s journey to Philadelphia went well. She gives news of her arrival on Long Island and how little Will and Ricksy are doing and assures Rebecca that she is well loved and that her change of location will be good for her health. Elizabeth knows she is anxious to hear from the children and will try to assure that they write. She asks Rebecca to write when she feels well enough and assures Rebecca that she will give them her attention.

June 27, 1799. To Rebecca Seton. From Craigton. AMSJ A11 006.

They had a busy week arriving early to attend Emma’s wedding and then moved to Craigton for the summer. Everyone is well at the moment. Aunt F visited and they agreed to suggest to Rebecca that she write a few lines once a week to some of the family if it is not too much. Elizabeth is trying to make arrangements to send Rebecca’s clothes to her but there has been a delay. Elizabeth herself does not know what to send. Elizabeth has received letters from the girls and the boys and has sent them treats. Will is off on a trip. She has been busy but will write soon. She gives family news and reports that the children are all well.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Miss Seton

1816. To Miss Seton in Baltimore. AMSJ A11 007.

She sends her love and prayers as do all there.

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to her Son William

August 27, 1815. To her son William in Leghorn. From Emmitsburg. AMSJ A11 013.

[Letter from Kit and Rebecca to William in Leghorn with EAS note at end.] Receive this letter with the tenderest blessing of the whole soul of your mother.
February 4, 1816. To her son William in Leghorn. From Emmitsburg. AMSJ A11 008.

[First part a note from Bec.] She reports on Bec’s health which is so poor Elizabeth fears William will not see her again before she goes to heaven. She is uneasy at Richard’s absence and inquires how William is getting on with their friends. She will write to thank them for their present to the American Church. She asks for his prayers and love and tells him her health is better. She assures him of how precious he is to her.

1817. To her son William in Leghorn. From Emmitsburg. AMSJ A11 009.

Since she found out her letters will not leave Baltimore for three weeks, she is sending this duplicate to New York hoping for better success. Richard is busy this spring, but it is undecided if he will remain at Mr. Tiernan’s. She discusses William’s concerns about his work in Leghorn and how much they owe the Filicchis. Kit is well and will pass some time in Baltimore with Mrs. Chatard although she is reluctant to leave home. Elizabeth comments on how much she is concerned about those who are gone, himself and Richard.

April 21, 1818. To her son William. From Emmitsburg. AMSJ A11 010.

She assures him that the things she has said about her poor weak heart are from the pain of separation and not from thought of his profession. Whatever Providence wants in that regard is what she wants. No news from Richard. Kit will enclose a note. One of the sisters died very suddenly last night.


Received his letter from the Macedonia about his proposed two year voyage. Do not think of coming here when the departure date is so uncertain. Do not worry about her health, there is nothing alarming as to immediate consequences. Kit would be ready to pound her for writing him not to come if she was not forced to see the thing in reason. She has taken measures to see that he will receive $50 and has
taken measures to see that he gets what he needs in clothes. Received a letter of May from Dick. He tells of the death of one of his dearest friends by a dagger. He speaks of the Filicchi’s persevering kindness. She gives him news of people around Emmitsburg and speaks of how many send their love.

[n.d.]. To her son William. AMSJ A11 012.

Perhaps he has something he would like to pack in his trunk before she closes it. The trunks will go Monday probably. She will come to him tomorrow if the weather is good.

**Letter from Elizabeth Seton to her Son Richard**

[n.d.]. To her son Richard. AMSJ A11 014.

She is a little stiff with the good old gentleman, it is best not to press too much. Be good and she will fight his battles until he is able to fight theirs. She will not rest till she gets him busy somewhere. [Crossed out section about another year at the mountain.] Dear Wednesday close at hand.

**Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Sarah Ann Cauffman**


Excuses herself for having not written. Expresses religious sentiments and says she thought of them and how much she loves them and prays they will be reunited with Saint Joseph’s family. Sends her regards to Mrs. W. and her aunt.


Wishes she could have been with them for retreat and shared in their preparations for the feast of the Assumption. They missed her. And how goes all her affairs? How happy she is in the care of her aunts. Comments on several people at Emmitsburg.

She is uneasy that Sarah should be unhappy with Kit’s ungratefulness. Elizabeth asked her if she had written to Sarah when she was in New York. Tell her aunts of Elizabeth’s gratitude for their kindness. She has been sick but is better. Tell Ellen she will write as soon as possible.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Margaret George

May 28, 1819. To Margaret George. From Emmitsburg. AMSJ A11 001.

Tells her to take care of herself and expresses concern for the other sisters in New York. Margaret has much to do for our Lord.

Other Documents

[n.d.]. Renovation of Baptismal Vows. AMSJ A11 015

Baptism is the return to God’s love. We rely on God’s mercy and the merits of our Blessed Savior. We swear to live faithful to the promises of our baptism which we are about to renew. She asks pardon of God whom we have grieved so often and pardon of our parents whom we have afflicted so much and pardon of others whom we have so often offended. We renounce the devil and the world which we endeavor to repress. We pledge ourselves to serve God faithfully, to love our neighbor. Amen.


Four prayers to imitate the virtues of Blessed Jerome Emiliani [?], Saint Camillus, Saint Francis [de Sales], and Saint Vincent de Paul.

[n.d.]. Elizabeth Seton’s Notebook. AMSJ A11 074.

Page 1 to 51 is a portion of the Gospel of Matthew copied into the notebook by Elizabeth Seton. The remainder of the notebook contains reflections on the spiritual life addressed to “my daughters.” It contains extensive sections on the spirit of recollection, the practice of the presence of God, ways of honoring the will of God, and beneficial practices in the living of religious life. The notes have a large section quoting from the writings of the saints, especially in reference to the
Blessed Sacrament, and another large section discussing the need for mortification and self-denial. The concluding section is on the Two Standards.

November 19-December 27, 1804; June 4, July 8, 1804. Leghorn Journal. AMSJ A11 002.

Journal written for her sister-in-law Rebecca Seton. This daily journal recounts her experiences with her dying husband and her daughter, Annina, from their arrival at the Lazaretto in Leghorn, Italy, to William's death on December 27, 1803. It concludes with entries for June 4, 1804, the day of her return to New York, and July 8, 1804, the day Rebecca Seton died.

Documents from the Archives of
The Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul
Mount Saint Vincent, New York

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Lady Isabel Cayley


[Written between January and September 1794 when the young Setons were living with father-in-law at 65 Stone Street]. Is writing at request of William Seton, Sr. [father-in-law] to have Lady Cayley [his sister] provide forty pounds a year for the upkeep of a Mr. Ganrineau in quarterly payments of ten pounds each. William Seton wishes some information on the person with whom John Ganrineau has placed his father. Apologizes for inconvenience.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to William Magee Seton


Loving newsy letter. Thanks him for his two. Sadler in a carriage accident; looks forward to his return.
Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Anna Maria Seton

January 31, 1802. To Anna Maria Seton [age 7 1/2]. From New York. AMSV L 110: 10, 2.

Anna gets a note because she is a good girl and can write herself. Papa sends love and tells her to be attentive to her reading. Signed “your own mother, EAS.”

May 1, 1809. To Anna Maria Seton in Baltimore. AMSV L 110: 10, 5.

Meditation on obedience (not in EAS handwriting) with a short note to Anna Maria attached.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Cecilia Seton


[Cecilia had become Catholic on June 20, 1806]. The peace you feel is from God. How grateful we should be when thinking of Eternity. Be faithful.

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Rose Stubbs


Welcomes Rose Stubbs recent letter with good news of family. Tells of Harriet Seton’s death [12/22/09], of the latter’s conversion, and the family confusion. Mentions Rose Stubbs reply to EAS letter of 1809, admits religious life is serious choice, lets Rose Stubbs know she has a “home” at Emmitsburg. Notes rising numbers in sisterhood, gives summary of daily life. Thinks Pope [Pius VII] may be martyr. Ann Barry died, Cecilia Seton sick, William almost died [10/09].

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to her Son William

[William at Chatards. William tried in vain to get work at Tiernans; then went on to Bordeaux with Bruté]. Tries very hard to ascertain William’s true desires. Praises the generous Chatards. Richard hopes William will stay in America.


Regrets he has not received her numerous letters; overjoyed to receive his through ship captain. Gives careful account of expenses, and mentions how well Catherine earns her $200.00 per year in piano lessons. Averts to Filippo Filicchi’s bad health, inquiries after Amabilia Filicchi’s brother, Nicola Birrazatez. Sisters interested in William.


Speaks of his coming to see her and tells him he will see Richard before the latter takes off.


[William disillusioned with commerce]. Kit and she delighted with his awaited letter. Regrets his disillusionment, had heard only praise of him. Will write Antonio. Will not regret that he does not have “property”—better to strike out for himself. Notes that dependence on family money brought Setons to ruin. Loving note from Kit at close.


Admits she is not well. Misses him but knows he has to leave. No news from Richard nor from the valley. Little children and the adults very kind to her. Write.

Just received his third letter and will enclose this with business letter to Bishop Cheverus. Is writing in the night. Has foreboding over this parting. Aunt Post wrote of William Bayley’s death [their half-brother]. Sent Richard’s letter from Leghorn to him. Received $40.00 from Mr. Barry; told how she disposed of it. Hope he received the quadrant from Mrs. Dougherty. Be good to “your Jacks” and give them tobacco. All here pray for you.


Has asked Kit [with E. Sadler] to come home lest her friends think she is imposing on them. Someday Kit will have to make her home with friends. No letters have come. Write. [Poignant note].


Mentions good health, Kit’s fair health. The latter very happy. Kit prepared to go to Tiernan’s [Baltimore] to see dying Sally but decided against it. Heard good news that he was safe. Gave small news. All seemed tranquil among their friends.

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Robert Fox


Mentions that his daughter Jane wrote him last week, hopes he returned safely from last visit to his daughters, who parted with him bravely. Every respect to him and Mrs. Fox [a professional note to Robert Fox whose children were her students].

September 8, 1816. To Robert Fox in New York. From Emmitsburg. AMSV L 110: 10, 12.

Charming report on conduct of Fox children, Eliza, Jane and Mary. Other New York girls at Emmitsburg make her proud of “my New York girls.” Thanks him for his care of her letter to Mr. Ogden.

By accident tore his daughter Mary’s letter but would not recall her from play to rewrite it. Other daughters wrote last week. Mentions her daughter Rebecca died recently [November 4, 1816].


Note to Mr. Fox to tell him that William would be in New York and would visit him.


Your children happy with the package received from home. All had a touch of mumps. Look forward to your coming. Hopes Mrs. Fox will receive her Kit. Please see that the enclosed [to Mr. McDonald] is received.

May 9, 1818. To Robert Fox in New York. From Emmitsburg. AMSV L 110: 10, 23.

Requests that Mary who has not made her first communion return and prepare under Margaret [George]. As daughter Kit will return to Aunt Post [in New York], Mary can accompany her home. Jane and Eliza are excellent but Mary needs more help. Parents have much responsibility.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Elizabeth Fox


[Perhaps a note added to Jane Fox’s letter to her mother]. Speaks of their concern [children and EAS] after mother’s leaving. Apparently severe weather. [A gracious note].
Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Catherine Josephine Seton
[n.d.]. [Probably late summer or fall 1816]. From Emmitsburg. To Catherine at Dr. Chatard's Baltimore. AMSV L 110: 10, 11.

Emotional recall of day Catherine left for Baltimore. Night prayers for Catherine and early awakening. Signed "Your Own."


[Catherine visiting either Tiernans or Harpers]. A short loving note to her daughter. Rebecca's letter not saved.


Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Ellen Wiseman Gottesburger

Refers to Ellen and George as one [implies recent marriage]. Advice on being a good wife. Will send the rest of "her things" at future time. Respects to Mr. Heeney [Cornelius] and her George.

Letter from Elizabeth Seton to Elizabeth Boyle


Loving intimate account of her recent near-death. Very feeble. Superior [Dubois] ordered silence in the infirmary. Chat about duty changes. Looks forward to Elizabeth Boyle's letters. Took all day to write this letter.
Other Documents


Prayers in EAS hand; partial Text
Little Office of Blessed Sacrament

November 19, December 27, 1803; June 4, July 8, 1804. Leghorn Diary. AMSV N/P 110: M. II, 12.

Journal written for her sister-in-law Rebecca Seton, her "Soul's Sister," which documents the voyage to Leghorn, Italy, with her ailing husband William and eight-year-old daughter, Anna Maria, their month of quarantine in the Lazaretto prison, William's suffering and death, and the kindness of the Filicchi family, William's business associates. The journal is a testament to Elizabeth's deep faith and trust in God throughout a time of loneliness and trial.

The MSS at AMSV contains entries from November 19, 1803, when the Setons were confined to the Lazaretto, to December 27, 1803, when William died in the Filicchi home in Pisa. The MSS also includes an entry from June 4, 1804, the day Elizabeth and Anna Maria returned to New York, and July 8, 1804, the day Rebecca Seton died.

1802-1803 (possibly). Personal Devotions. AMSV N/P 110: M. II, 12.

Booklet which contains prayers and reflections apparently arranged for personal devotion. The contents are arranged for each morning and evening of the week, as well as scripture verses from the psalms or elsewhere, with reflections on or explanations of them. Whether they are Elizabeth Seton's own compositions is not clear.

April 28, c. 1804 (date). Pyamingo Reflections and Notes on Spiritual Subjects I. AMSV N/P 110: M. II, 12.

Noted as reflections in Mother Seton's writing, possibly original, possibly copied from books received from the Filicchis, from the time of her trip home from Italy on the ship Pyamingo. Contents of Booklet I include: prayer of Our Lord in Gethsemane, conversion of Saint Peter, treason of Judas, and God's judgment. Contents of Booklet II include: holy communion, perfection of ordinary duties, living in the
presence of God, necessity of humility of heart, charity of Christ, gentle, benevolent, universal, and hatred of sin. Also in this folder is a small scrap of paper containing a reflection on the need for unity of hearts among Christians.

C. 1804. Reflections and Notes on Spiritual Subjects 2. AMSV N/P 110: M. II, 12.

A typed note states in part that this booklet of discourses on Psalm 23 and other scripture selections is in Elizabeth's handwriting and continues: “According to our traditions, they are notes of sermons delivered by Reverend Henry Hobart.” Scripture references are as follows: Psalm 23, Habakuk 3: 17-18, Isaiah 9: 6, Matthew 8: 25, Exodus 20: part of verse 24, and Psalm 94: 19. The last pages (2: 87-90) contain diary entries written shortly after the birth of Elizabeth's youngest child, Rebecca. In these notes, dated 13 September 1802, Elizabeth speaks of a sort of spiritual turning point.

Prayer Books. AMSV N/P 110: M. II, 12.

(Small) in French Plaintes et Complaisances du Sauveur par L'Auteur de L'Ecole du Sauveur, Paris, 1807 chez P. Gueffier, vue du Foin, Saint Jacques, N. 18 (inside cover, pasted) No. 73 Saint Catherine’s Convent of Mercy 1075 Madison Avenue, New York Community Library (This repeated on inner page) (handwritten) Rebecca Seton 1st Jy, 1816 our Eternity of divine love (in Mother Seton's writing) J. M. J.

Small Notebook. AMSV N/P 110: M. II, 12.

(In another hand) “Handwritten copy of Leghorn Diary, including death of Rebecca Seton (1804) Instruction on Humility.” It is not clear whether this latter is Elizabeth’s original composition or perhaps a transcription or translation.

Baltimore, printed at James M'Henry for John W. Butler
South Gay Street, 1807
Inscription: Saint Josephs
Anna Maria
RTJ Seton
7th September 1810
Eternity
Never to End [It is unclear whether the inscription is in Elizabeth’s hand.]

Printed Prayer Book. Title page missing. AMSV N/P 110: M. III, 25.

Pagination not consecutive, faulty assemblage of pages. Some notes in French, possibly Bruté’s writing. Sketch at bottom of page, reminiscent of Bruté’s work. Book contains handwritten prayers and underlining in Elizabeth’s writing.

Notebook. Marbleized cover and leather. Kelly, Selected Writings, refers to this as “Notebook 3” (pp. 354-58). AMSV. N/P 110: M. III, 25.


Notebook reversed. On envelope “For Trifles Light as Air.” Sunday, February 14, 1808.
Clifton Wilderness
Notation: “This book was given to Sr. Elizabeth [Boyle?]. Nearly all in it was written by the hand of our much loved Mother Seton."
[It is unclear whether the reflections that follow are EAS' original compositions, or even her writing]. The notebook contains prayers, reflections, notes, instructions, a plan of life after retreat, points for an examen of conscience, and daily schedule for a retreat for new comers. Some topics covered are love of God, sin, death, judgment, presence of God, harmony in community, prayer, Mary’s virtues, peace, Christmas, fearing God excessively.
Leather Notebook (Kelly refers to this as “Notebook 2” in Selected Writings, 353). AMSV N/P 110: M. III, 25.


Documents from the Archives of
The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to Rebecca Seton


She writes to her sister-in-law who is visiting in Dover. She tells of how she and the children miss Rebecca and notes that she has had letters from some of the Seton children, Harriet and others. Mrs. Sadler will stay with Elizabeth and her children until her husband, William, returns from a business trip.


She writes to her sister-in-law who is visiting at Mr. Wise’s Summer Hill near Alexandria, Virginia. She tells of the seriousness of William’s business problems, comments on how he bears the difficulties with firmness and patience. She tells of the activities of her children—Richard is now the youngest. She hopes that Rebecca will be with her in May.

June 7, 1801. To Rebecca Seton in New York. From Staten Island. ASH A-103.006.

The letter is one of great longing to see Rebecca, “. . . but there is no distance for Souls & mine has surely been with yours most faithfully.” She tells of how her children often speak of Rebecca. “And Kate always gives a long call when I speak your name.”
June 17, 1801. To Rebecca Seton in New York. From Staten Island. ASH A-103.006.

A brief letter expressing her disappointment that Rebecca was unable to visit with her as she had anticipated.

Letters from Elizabeth Seton to her Son William

December 1816. To her son William. From Emmitsburg. ASH A-103.006.

Elizabeth appends a letter to that of Simon Bruté to her son. She speaks of the death of her daughter, Rebecca. Tells of her eagerness to have a letter from William. Christmas has just passed; in a day or two it will be a new year, 1817. Tells of Kit's efforts to cheer her following the death of little Rebecca. Notes that she has no recent news from Richard. A letter from Catherine [Kit] to her brother, William, accompanies this letter of Elizabeth.


Elizabeth writes of her sadness of separation from William, reminds him of some of the matters that they have discussed, encourages him to be faithful in receiving the sacraments when he can. She concludes: “Dearest, dearest child of my soul, mind we must be one day where we will part no more.”


Elizabeth writes concerning a financial matter of concern to him and hopes that it has been favorably resolved. Encourages him to make the proper preparation for his next voyage.

October 24-25, 1818. To her son William. From Emmitsburg. ASH A-103.006.

Elizabeth appends a note to a letter written to William by his sister, Catherine. Elizabeth’s note tells of her joy in hearing from William from Gettysburg. Catherine’s letter recounts some of the information contained in a letter from her brother, Richard, who is in Italy.
Handwritten prayers and reflections by Elizabeth Seton appear on the fly leaves and selected pages of this book. They cover such topics as God Incarnate, humility, the passing nature of life, eternity, the love of God and how to live in it, living according to the Spirit, and abandonment to God.

Heaven

A brief meditation which includes references to heaven in the scriptures and from the saints, and a reflection on the depths of love to be experienced in heaven.

Handwritten Bill. December 6, 1814.

Appended to the bill is a handwritten note from Elizabeth Seton to the father of a student at Emmitsburg assuring him that his daughter is well and has what she needs for the winter.