

The Holy Name of our Lord, January 1, 2017 Year A

Collect: Eternal Father, you gave to your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be the sign of our salvation: Plant in every heart, we pray, the love of him who is the Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Numbers 6:22-27 read from the Revised Standard Version Bible

The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron and his sons, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

The Lord bless you and keep you:

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

"So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

The Word of the Lord

Psalm: 8 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 O Lord our Governor, * how exalted is your Name in all the world!

2 Out of the mouths of infants and children * your majesty is praised above the heavens.

3 You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, * to quell the enemy and the avenger.

4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, * the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

5 What is man that you should be mindful of him? * the son of man that you should seek him out?

6 You have made him but little lower than the angels; * you adorn him with glory and honor;

7 You give him mastery over the works of your hands; * you put all things under his feet:

8 All sheep and oxen, * even the wild beasts of the field,

9 The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, * and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.

10 O Lord our Governor, * how exalted is your Name in all the world!

The Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11 read from the God's Word Bible

Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross.

This is why God has given him an exceptional honor — the name honored above all other names— so that at the name of Jesus everyone in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will kneel and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord

The Gospel: Luke 2:15-21 read from the Holman Christian Standard Bible

When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the feeding trough. After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard, just as they had been told.

When the eight days were completed for His circumcision, He was named Jesus—the name given by the angel before He was conceived.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On January 4th we remember Elizabeth Seton, founder of the American Sisters of Charity.

Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was the first native-born citizen of the United States to be canonized in the Roman Catholic Church, on September 14th, 1975.

Seton was born on August 28th, 1774 to Richard Bayley of New York City. She was raised in the Episcopal Church. Her mother, daughter of an Episcopal priest, died when Elizabeth was three. At the age of nineteen, she married William Magee Seton, a wealthy businessman. Five children were born to the marriage.

Her husband's business lost several ships at sea and the family ended up bankrupt. Soon after, her husband became ill and his doctors sent him to Italy for the warmer climate, with Elizabeth accompanying him. In Italy, they were held in quarantine, during which time her husband died. She spent time with a wealthy family where she was exposed to Catholicism. Two years later she converted to Roman Catholicism, on March 14th, 1805 and was received into the Church by the first bishop of Baltimore, John Carroll.

To support her children, she started a school in Baltimore, but it failed due to the anti-Catholic bigotry of the day. In 1809, after some trying and difficult years, Elizabeth moved to Emmitsburg, Maryland, where a year later, at the invitation of Samuel Sutherland Cooper she established Saint Joseph's Academy and Free School, a school dedicated to the education of Catholic girls.

Eventually, Elizabeth was able to establish a religious community in Emmitsburg, dedicated to the care of the children of the poor. It was the first religious community of apostolic women founded in the United States. The order was called the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph.

The remainder of Elizabeth's life was spent in leading and developing the new order, which expanded to include the Sulpician (**suhl-pish-uh n**) priests of Baltimore. Today, six independent religious communities trace their roots to the humble beginnings of the Sisters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Seton died January 4th, 1821.

Let us pray: Holy God, you blessed Elizabeth Seton with your grace as wife, mother, educator and founder, that she might spend her life in service to your people: Help us, by her example, to express our love for you in love of others; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**