

is a remarkable contribution that will hopefully inspire new scholarly interest in the subject. It is sophisticatedly argued and well-researched, and offers a valuable resource for considering the application of probabilism to a legion of different challenges brought about by increases in both new information and uncertainty in the early modern world.

Christopher P. Gillett

The University of Scranton

christopher.gillett@scranton.edu

DOI:10.1163/22141332-00602008-18

Catherine O'Donnell

Elizabeth Seton: American Saint. Ithaca: Three Hills, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2018. Pp. XIV + 508. Hb, \$36.95.

For years I have dutifully lectured about Saint Elizabeth Bayley Seton, “Mother Seton,” in my upper-level theology course, “History of the Catholic Church in the United States” at Loyola University Maryland. I must confirm, however, I did so more perfunctorily than with any genuine fervor. Thanks to the outstanding scholarship of American Catholic historian Annabelle McConnell Melville’s groundbreaking biography, *Elizabeth Bayley Seton*, I did, of course, grasp Seton’s pioneering work in Catholic education in America, especially for young women, and her singular role in the development of religious life in the new nation, but I never felt drawn to her as a person, either intellectually or spiritually. I am pleased to report that diffidence in me has been set aside by Catherine O’Donnell’s outstanding 2018 biography of this extraordinary woman.

Whether it concerns Seton’s early adult life as an Episcopal trend setter in Manhattan seeking spiritual solace at Trinity Church; her complex, but solicitous, relationships with her husband, William Magee Seton, and five children, or her roles as “Mother and mother” in the community’s life at Emmitsburg, Maryland, this volume peels back layers of a reflective life, that of a vocation that we Jesuits would refer to as a “contemplative-in-action,” the rich intricacy of which I have been, up to this time, regrettably unacquainted.

To cite only one instance, I was riveted by O’Donnell’s scrutiny of Seton’s association with John Henry Hobart, a Protestant Episcopal Church divine, spiritual director and author assigned to Trinity Church, Manhattan, who first stirred in Elizabeth a learned attentiveness to the subtleties of Christianity. Her subsequent correspondence with Hobart, a clergyman of prodigious spiritual acumen, as well as a future Episcopal bishop of New York and founder of the General Theological Seminary in New York City, at the time of her election of

Catholicism over High Church Episcopal Christianity, is a singular revelation and one that becomes all the more absorbing when the profound, yet refined, substance of Seton's faith and theological understanding induces him, however hesitantly, to acknowledge the wisdom of her conversion.

The reader of *Elizabeth Seton: American Saint* cannot also help but note with acute relish, and perchance even a tinge of gratifying amusement, Seton's seemingly unique co-equal relations with the various Catholic priests with whom she toiled during her years in Baltimore and Emmitsburg. Although O'Donnell assiduously surveys the role that Elizabeth Seton had in the advancement of female leadership in the American Catholic Church of the early nineteenth century, she seems at her scholarly best when investigating Seton's interactions with formidable men. In an era when even the great-Americanist liberal hierarch John Carroll—a Jesuit (although the Society of Jesus was suppressed universally from 1774 to 1814), founder of Georgetown College and bishop and archbishop of Baltimore from 1790 to 1808—placed the vocation of the cleric and the training of seminarians far above that of the religious sister, Seton would bring around to a profound respect for her life and thought most, if not all, of the priests assigned with her at St. Joseph's House and Mount St. Mary's College.

The relationship between Carroll and Seton has often been commented on, but O'Donnell's volume explores with perception and meticulous erudition her collegiality with other outstanding members of the American (often French-exiled) Catholic clergy of the time. John Dubois, a priest who fled his homeland during the French Revolution and joined the Sulpician order in the United States, as the first president of Mount St. Mary's would collaborate with Elizabeth Seton in her school and in the skillful translation and transition of the rules and constitutions for the Sisters of Charity from France to the Blue Ridge mountains. Although these two remarkably assertive individuals would often disagree, by the time of her death in 1821 Seton and Dubois were so spiritually intimate that she humbly tasked him to convey her parting words to her sisters. Elizabeth entrusted him to implore her sisters to live as "true daughters of charity" and to ask them to forgive her for the least "scandal" she had manifested during her tenure as "Mother" and, especially, in her final, distressing illness.

While this study is exhaustive in its exploration of the multifaceted and meaningful relationships Seton had with her three daughters, if not her two sons, and her many Sisters of Charity, I would like as a final point to highlight a particular friendship that O'Donnell sees as a central thread in Seton's life, that of Juliana Sitgreaves Scott. Nominally, a lifelong Protestant, and a person who never truly shared Elizabeth's zeal for the life of the spirit, to the degree that early in their acquaintance Elizabeth had referred to her as "a little vain shadow," the author discerns something markedly illuminating about Seton's

humanity in the companionship, often geographically separated, of these two women. “Julia” Scott, who was born in Philadelphia, lived most of her adult life in New York City and first befriended Seton during her marriage to a politician known to the Bayley family. Julia returned to Philadelphia after being widowed, embarking on a correspondence with Seton that lasted until the latter’s death. It was during that period of their friendship that Julia’s recently married daughter had died on her honeymoon in Europe. Never reproving her friend for her worldly outlook on life, Elizabeth wrote letter after letter sharing with an appreciative Julia her own protracted struggles after the death of her daughter Anna Maria. This is the Elizabeth Bayley Seton one gets to know familiarly in Catherine O’Donnell’s portrait of an American saint.

O’Donnell, an associate professor of history at Arizona State University, writes about religion, culture, and politics in early America. She has also authored *Men of Letters in the Early Republic*, and if her detailed and compelling scholarship in *Elizabeth Seton: American Saint* is any indication, that volume should be required reading for anyone engaged in the cultural research of the early years of the United States of America.

Joseph S. Rossi, S.J.

Loyola University Maryland

jsrossi@loyola.edu

DOI:10.1163/22141332-00602008-19

Harvey Markowitz

Converting the Rosebud: Catholic Mission and the Lakotas 1886–1916. The Civilization of the American Indian Series 277. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. xvi + 303. Hb, \$34.95.

Harvey Markowitz is associate professor of sociology–anthropology at Washington and Lee University. For many decades he has studied relationships between Catholic missionaries (primarily members of the Society of Jesus and the Sisters of Saint Francis of Penance and Christian Charity) and Sicangu Lakota Sioux Indians of the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. He is an adept speaker of Lakota language. He has served prominent institutions such as the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the D’Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History at the Newberry Library. For ten years (1975–85) he was curator of the Eugene Buechel, S.J. Memorial Sioux Museum and anthropological consultant at Saint Francis Mission on the Rosebud Reservation. Thus, he brings to this, his first book, based on his 2002 dissertation, substantial expertise and mature