

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 13, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The announcement by Pope Paul VI that Elizabeth Bayley Seton will be canonized in 1975 as the first American-born saint of the Roman Catholic Church is a milestone in our Nation's diverse spiritual history. The fact that a woman is the first native-born American named to sainthood by the Holy See is all the more historic since women have never made a greater contribution to America's national life than today.

It is fitting that we recall at this time another woman -- Mother Cabrini who was born in Italy -- who was named a saint by the Holy See after devoting much of her life to religious work in the United States.

Mother Seton's singular honor is a tribute to all American women who have entered the religious life to serve in schools, hospitals and charitable work. She died in 1821 but today there are thousands of Sisters of Charity -- the religious order she founded -- carrying on the important service which Mother Seton began. I congratulate them on this most joyous occasion and wish them well in their future endeavors.

#