



# ENCOUNTER EMMITSBURG

Emmitsburg, Maryland is a beautiful small town just 90 minutes from the Washington D.C. area. Nestled at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, it is home to two major Catholic shrines which host thousands of visitors each year and is the perfect setting for a short pilgrimage of faith. Encounter Jesus as you walk in the footsteps of the first native-born U.S. citizen to be canonized as a saint.

This document provides a general overview of this experience, however, please go to [www.tinyurl.com/emmitsburgmd](http://www.tinyurl.com/emmitsburgmd) on your portable device (or scan the QR code below) for links to the full experience.



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON  
YOUTH, CAMPUS, &  
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES



## PLACES TO VISIT

Emmitsburg is the home of Mount St. Mary's University and the **National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes**. This is truly a beautiful site. Set in beautiful scenery surrounded by woods, you can walk alongside Christ during his Passion as you pray the stations of the cross, climb up the steps to Calvary as you reach Christ crucified, and stop and pray, asking our lady's intercession at the Grotto of our Lady of Lourdes.

**The Basilica and National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** is one of the top eight Catholic pilgrimage destinations in the U.S. A beautiful place to learn more about the first native-born U.S. citizen to be canonized. Explore the shrine museum (no cost), visit the home where she lived, the places she prayed, and the where she taught. Pray and ask for intercession at her tomb, learn about the Civil War Sisters, and take time to walk through St. Joseph Cemetery and pray for those who have died. The museum has a scavenger hunt for younger children.



Visit the **National Fallen Firefighters Memorial** just next door to the Seton Shrine to pray for those who made the ultimate sacrifice while trying to save others. In 1809, Mother Seton opened a boarding school for girls on this site. The school later became St. Joseph's College, one of America's first Catholic women's colleges. The Daughters of Charity closed the College in 1973, and sold the buildings and more than 100 acres to the Federal Government in 1979.



To take in the beauty of God's creation, visit **Cunningham Falls State Park**. Surrounded by the beautiful Catoclin Mountains, this park is home to Maryland's highest cascading waterfall. A hiking trail and a short walking path both lead to the falls where visitors enjoy picturesque views year round. Other hiking trails of various difficulty levels weave through the park.



## BEFORE YOU GO

1. Plan your pilgrimage by visiting the websites to the shrines and consider attending Mass or Confessions at one of these locations.
  - National Shrine Grotto - [www.nsgrotto.org](http://www.nsgrotto.org)
  - National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - [www.setonshrine.org](http://www.setonshrine.org)
2. Before heading out on your pilgrimage, take some time to learn about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (read bio on back or watch a video)
3. Pack your favorite snacks, lunch, sunscreen, a hat, picnic blanket, water, umbrella, etc.
4. Check websites for closings or special events.
  - [www.tinyurl.com/cunninghamfallsmd](http://www.tinyurl.com/cunninghamfallsmd)
  - [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org)



## ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was born in NYC in 1774 to a wealthy Episcopal family. She married at the age of 19 and had 5 children. Her husband died from tuberculosis ten years later and through the experience she entered the Catholic Church in 1805. She started an academy for young ladies but struggled to keep it open. She met a priest from the French community of the Sulpician Fathers and in 1809 the Sulpicians invited Elizabeth to move to Emmitsburg where they along with John Dubois established Mount St. Mary's University, the first Catholic Seminary for the U.S. With the financial support of a wealthy convert and seminarian, Elizabeth began St. Joseph's Academy and Free School, a school dedicated to the education of Catholic girls. Later, Elizabeth established a community dedicated to the care of the children of the poor. This was the first congregation of religious sisters to be founded in the U.S. and the school was the first free Catholic school in America. This was the start of the Catholic parochial school system in the U.S. She spent the rest of her life developing the new congregation then known as the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph. Elizabeth eventually became known as Mother Seton. Mother Seton died on January 4, 1821 at the age of 46. She was canonized on September 14, 1975 by Pope Paul VI. She is the first native-born U.S. citizen to be canonized a saint. Today, her remains are entombed in the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, MD.

Or listen to the following podcast on your way to Emmitsburg: The Saintcast Podcast: #37 January 5, 2007 Short Biography (Start at 21:40 – Runs about 13 minutes)



## TRAVEL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Please protect us on the journey we are about to take. Keep us and those around us safe from the dangers of the road. Send your heavenly angels to be with us and give us courtesy and patience with other drivers. Help us to be mindful of your presence and your love at all times. Help our family to have patience and understanding with each other. Guide us to make our time together meaningful. Help us to make compromises when necessary and handle any chaos that comes our way with your love and grace. Open our eyes to truly see the beauty of the memories we are creating that will last a lifetime. Amen.

## TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

The idea of pilgrimage dates back thousands of years. The purpose of pilgrimage is not simply going on a tour, rather it is meant to be an experience of faith. From the time that the pilgrim leaves home until they return, they listen to what God may be calling them to in their lives. A pilgrim should always return home a little different than when they left. Perhaps reflect on these questions:

- What was the most inspiring thing that you saw or heard today?
- Mother Seton called the Emmitsburg area the “Valley of Blessings.” List some of the blessings of your pilgrimage.
- Is there anything about the life of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton that you could apply to your life?
- Mother Seton’s favorite psalm is Psalm 23. Read it together and reflect upon why this might be her favorite?
- How might you grow in your faith life or relationship with Jesus as a result of this pilgrimage today?

## OTHER PLACES TO STOP ON THE WAY HOME!

- Stop at **Stavros Pizza** for dinner! [www.stavrospizzaemmitsburg.com](http://www.stavrospizzaemmitsburg.com). Small hole in the wall, but they have great pizza! This is a nice place to stop to continue making memories.
- **Catoctin Mountain Orchard** [www.catoctinmountainorchard.com](http://www.catoctinmountainorchard.com). You can buy delicious freshly baked pies or frozen to bake at home, fruits and veggies, snacks and other goods.
- **Gateway Candyland** is a great spot to stop on the way home for all sorts of sweets. Great ice cream and a huge variety of candy. [www.gatewaycandy.com](http://www.gatewaycandy.com)

---

### PHOTO CREDIT INFORMATION:

“Emmitsburg Pano.jpg” by Vasilymeshko is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0

“Memorial Chapel” from [www.firehero.org/fallen-firefighters/memorial-park/national-fallen-firefighters-memorial-chapel/](http://www.firehero.org/fallen-firefighters/memorial-park/national-fallen-firefighters-memorial-chapel/)

“Mother Seton Teaching” by Lawrence OP is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

“Cunningham Falls” by Isock is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

“National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes 04.jpg” by Bohemian Baltimore is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

“Woman visiting Grotto”, Photograph by Kevin Bohli

“Outside of Seton Shrine”, Photograph by Kevin Bohli

