



FOUNDER'S DAY

21 November

*The Story of Elizabeth Prout:
Small In Stature, Giant In
Courage And Perseverance*

Meet our Foundress

Let's meet Elizabeth and get to know a little of her story and of the story of the beginnings of the Cross and Passion Sisters.





Birth

Elizabeth Prout was born on the 2nd September 1820, in the historical border town of Shrewsbury, England.



Baptism

She was baptized into the Church of England (Anglican) on 17th September 1820.

Father – Edward Prout, was a baptised Catholic who was no longer practising.

Mother – Ann Prout, was a devout Anglican.

□ *St Julian's Anglican Church, Shrewsbury.*



Living in Shrewsbury

Edward Prout worked in the Coleham Brewery as a Cooper.

(A cooper is a person trained to make wooden casks, barrels, vats, buckets, tubs, troughs and other similar containers from timber staves that were usually heated or steamed to make them pliable.)





Leaving Shrewsbury

When Elizabeth was eleven years old, the Coleham Brewery closed down and Edward Prout was out of work.

Nothing is known in their history for almost the next ten years.

Stone

By 1841, the Prout family were living in a town called Stone, Staffordshire.

Edward Prout was again working at his trade in Joule's Brewery.





Becoming Catholic

Elizabeth grew up in Stone. Feeling a new spiritual calling in her life, she became a Catholic sometime between 1843 and 1846.

She, like St John Henry Newman, was probably received into the Catholic Church by Fr Dominic Barberi, a Passionist priest well known for spreading Catholicism in England in the 1800's.

Answering the call

It was while living in Stone, through prayer and the sacraments, that Elizabeth Prout discerned what path she would like to take in life.

She decided to respond to the Lord's call to become a religious sister.





Infant Jesus Sisters

Ireland + England

Infant Jesus Sisters

In 1848, Elizabeth joined the Sisters of the Infant Jesus.

Early New Year 1849, however, Elizabeth was sent home from the convent because of a tubercular knee. Doctors said she would never walk again.

Family or Faith?

Nursed by her mother, she got so well that she could walk again.

Forbidden to go to Mass when she was at home, she was forced to make a choice between her family and her faith.

Elizabeth left home and made her way to Manchester looking for work.

Here, in September 1849, with the help of Fr Gaudentius Rossi, she got a job teaching in St Chad's School in Angel Meadows, a very poor area of Manchester.





The Catholic Sisters of the Holy Family

In 1852, here in St Chad's Parish, with the help of Fr Gaudentius Rossi and others, Elizabeth founded "The Institute of the Holy Family".

Elizabeth, the leader, was given the name Mother Mary Joseph of Jesus.

The spirit of the Institute was to be the spirit of the Holy Family living, working and praying in their home at Nazareth.

A radical new venture!

Elizabeth Prout's Institute was a new venture.

The Sisters lived in community combining a humble and prayerful life with an active ministry outside the convent.

There was no class distinction among members. No dowry was required. Lack of education was a not an obstacle.

Sisters went out to teach, to sew, to work in the mills or in any employment compatible with their religious state.

They had no property, no patrons, and no security. They pooled their wages and when they were out of work they, like their neighbours, went hungry. Dire poverty was often their lot.



Death



Elizabeth died on the 11th January 1864 at the convent in Sutton, St Helen's, Lancashire. She was 43 years of age.

Her body, together with that of Blessed Dominic Barberi and Fr Ignatius Spencer, lies in the shrine of St Anne's Church in Sutton, which is near Liverpool.

The church and shrine are now a place of pilgrimage.

Sisters of the Cross and Passion



In 1875 the Sisters were affiliated to the larger Passionist Congregation, founded by St Paul of the Cross. This had been the desire of Elizabeth all along. They changed their name to “**Sisters of the Cross and Passion**” and ever since have worn the distinctive Passionist sign.

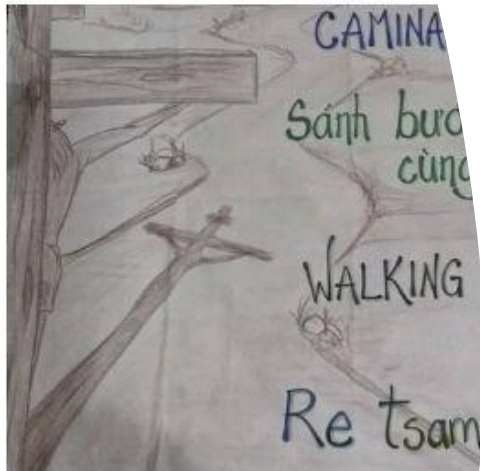
Meeting the Needs of the Time

The early Sisters responded to the needs of their time through active service in diverse ministries but particularly through education and social work.





Cross and Passion Sisters today



Today we find Cross and Passion Sisters ministering in places as far apart as England, Ireland, North America, South America and Africa.

More recently sisters have worked in Australia and a new foundation in Vietnam is at a fledgling stage.

Poverty, inequality and injustice continue to challenge us on a global and local scale.

The Sisters struggle to make a difference and work in collaboration with many people of all cultures who feel called to work for justice for the poor and for the planet.



Servant of God Mother Mary Joseph of Jesus

At the end of the 20th century a renewed interest in the life and work of Elizabeth led to the cause for her canonisation (sainthood) being opened.

The next step in her Cause would be a declaration from Rome of her heroic virtues and thus Elizabeth would be styled *Venerable*.

'Mother Teresa of Manchester' on the path to sainthood



times, campaigners have said.

The Vatican has considered the case of Mother Elizabeth Prout, who died in 1982 and is expected to be the third step on

will prompt a formal Vatican investigation into two miracles that have been attributed to her by seriously ill people who prayed to her for healing.

Cardinal John Henry

A giant step to sainthood for 'Manchester's Mother Teresa'

Steve Doughty
of Affairs Correspondent

ACTORIAN poverty campaigner and feminist forerunner known as Mother Teresa of Manchester is set to become the second English saint of modern times.

Elizabeth Prout, who was born in Walsbury in 1820, was an activist who opened schools for poor children and set up homes for destitute women in the industrialised North West. She is considered to have been ahead of her time in teaching women skills to earn their own living. She would be Britain's first female saint and the first woman to receive sainthood without being put to death for her faith since the 13th century. Her Elizabeth has now been given the title 'venerable' by the Vatican - a key step on the road to canonisation.

A landmark comes 15 months after Pope Francis canonised the late 19th-century revival of English Roman Catholicism. Cardinal Henry Newman.

Catholic authorities will now look for evidence of two miracles linked to her name, the final hurdle before being named a saint. Sister Dominic Hamer, Elizabeth's biographer and a member of the order of the Passionist Sisters she founded, the Passionist Sisters, said: 'We can imitate Elizabeth in many ways and pray with confidence.' She added Elizabeth was practical, generous and self-sacrificing.

After converting to Catholicism, she became a nun aged 28 and took on a teaching post in some of the poorest areas of industrial Manchester where she later opened a



Pioneer: A stained glass depiction of Elizabeth Prout

chain of schools and hostels. She set up the Passionist Sisters community - which ran into criticism within the Catholic fold for alleged revolutionary ideas - and required nuns to

earn their own wages to support themselves, and teach other women to do the same. Prout died of tuberculosis in Lancashire in 1864.

Her cause for sainthood was submitted in 2008 and theologians have now concluded that she lived a life of heroic virtue and is worthy of the title 'venerable' by the Vatican.

If canonised, she would be the first English female saint since St Margaret Clitherow, St Anne Line and St Margaret Ward were elevated by Pope Paul VI in 1970. They were executed in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

The most recent female saint who was not put to death for her faith was 11th-century princess St Margaret of Wessex, who was canonised in 1250. Albanian-born Mother Teresa, revered for her work with the poor in India, was made a saint in 2016.

Dedicated:
Elizabeth Prout
set up schools
for the poor
and taught
women skills
to earn a living



500k over-75s hounded for

THE ROYAL MINT

Venerable Elizabeth Prout

There are two reports of miraculous cures attributed to Elizabeth's intercession.

These, in addition to her heroic status, are being investigated for future beatification and canonization.

The cures involve a person with cancer and a person with severe brain damage from a skull fracture.

Elizabeth Prout was declared Venerable by the Vatican in January 2021.



Founder's Day?

November 21st was chosen as the Patronal Feast Day for the Sisters of the Cross and Passion.

It is the [Feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple](#).

It was chosen because it was the day that the first four young women were received as Novices into the Congregation. This happened at St Chad's Church in Manchester.

Inspired by Elizabeth

Since the first days of the Congregation's history, our mission has been to reach out to people who suffer.

Inspired by and identifying with Jesus who suffered on the Cross and rose again in triumph, we seek to bring comfort and hope to people enduring the pain of poverty, ill-health, social exclusion, ignorance and low self-esteem.

In all this we are trying to follow the **example of our foundress, Elizabeth Prout**, a social activist of her time, whose main concern was the plight of the poor. To be engaged in this way demands that we live a life **supported by one another and nurtured by prayer.**

Our School
Values
inspired by
Elizabeth
Prout:

Commitment

Respect

Inclusion

Integrity

Growth

THE LE CHÉILE PRAYER

In the power of the Spirit
and in keeping with the traditions of our
founding Congregations
we pray that, for students, teachers
and parents alike;
our schools may be places of learning and
discovery,
places of hope and joy,
places of courage and confidence,
places of gratitude and generosity,
places of faith rooted in love.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,

Amen

