

Seton MAGAZINE



"Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church"

APRIL 2013



YOUR QUESTIONS

How do I give attention to my toddlers while teaching my older kids?

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STUDY SKILLS

Seton offers a free online study skills course to help students with their school habits.

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CENTER ICE

A report from the Hockey Rink is brought to you by John Clark.

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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
Pray for Us!

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On the cover:

The Gowans kids help out their parish priest as Altar Servers and "bulletin girl."

*"With you every day,
every step of the way"*



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Share your story and INSPIRE another family!

If you have enjoyed reading about our Feature Families, would you consider giving back?

Send a paragraph about your family's home-schooling journey with a picture to Christine Smitha at cmsmitha@setonhome.org for a chance to be featured in Seton Magazine.

Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School

Dr. Mary Kay Clark



Our Mother of Good Counsel

We home schooling parents are constantly faced with decisions about our children and about their daily schooling assignments, but also about running the household, scheduling doctors' appointments, running errands, getting the laundry done, preparing meals.

We daily need the good counsel of the Blessed Mother, certainly the perfect role model for all of us home schooling parents. Many of us parents have adopted the devotion of Our Mother of Good Counsel. This title for her is based on a miraculous painting or fresco that suddenly appeared free standing, suspended in mid-air above a church wall, in 1467, in the small Italian town of Gennazano, thirty miles from Rome. It was later learned that the painting was miraculously transported from a shrine in Albania.

A wealthy widow, Petruccia, lived in the town of Genazzano in the 1400s. She received a vision from the Blessed Mother who asked her to use her money to repair the parish church, Our Lady of Good

Counsel, which was in ruins. Petruccia was hoping that the members of the church would help her rebuild the church, but because they did not help, she eventually ran out of money. Nevertheless, at eighty years of age, Petruccia never gave up believing that the Blessed Mother would help her rebuild the church.

On Saturday evening, on April 25, 1467, while the town was having a festival, a white cloud appeared over the parish church. The citizens saw the large white cloud stationary above the church, and they heard beautiful music coming from the cloud. It was reported that all the bells in the town began to ring. Slowly the cloud opened up, and a beautiful fresco of the Blessed Mother and the Baby Jesus slowly floated down from the cloud and rested itself, free-standing, above a short wall, a part of the uncompleted side chapel. The citizens immediately began proclaiming, "A miracle! Our Mother of Good Counsel!"

There followed many miraculous cures, the church was quickly rebuilt, and many processions and devotions were started in the church as people prayed to the Blessed Mother to ask her intercession with her Baby Son.

The painting of Our Mother of Good Counsel is a bright fresco done on a very thin sheet of plaster, the consistency of an egg shell, still free-standing. No one has been able to identify the substance of the "paint." The fresco is in soft colors, filled with the two faces of the Blessed Mother and Child, with beautiful red colors dominating, and with a simple rainbow over their heads. The Baby's face is unusual in the adult look in the eyes, mouth, and nose. The Blessed Mother has a strong

nose and mouth, and beautiful almond-shaped eyes.

After the appearance of the fresco, the church was rebuilt, and in 1956, a small chapel was built around the miraculous painting. A professional Catholic photographer, with a special love for Our Mother of Good Counsel, wrote a book about this fresco and donated to Seton his remarkable photograph of the painting which now appears on the cover of *Catholic Home Schooling*.

The holy Pope Pius XII composed a prayer to Our Mother of Good Counsel in 1953: "Holy Virgin, moved by the painful uncertainty we experience in seeking and acquiring the true and the good, we cast ourselves at thy feet and invoke thee under the sweet title of Mother of Good Counsel. We beseech thee: come to our aid at this moment in our earthly sojourn when the twin darkness of error and of evil plot our ruin by leading minds and hearts astray.

"Seat of Wisdom and Star of the Sea, enlighten the victims of doubt and of error so that they may not be seduced by evil masquerading as good. Strengthen them against the hostile and corrupting forces of passion and of sin. Mother of Good Counsel, obtain for us from thy Divine Son the love of virtue and the strength to choose, in doubtful and difficult situations, the course agreeable to our salvation. Supported by thy hand, we shall thus journey without harm along the paths taught us by the word and example of Jesus Our Savior, following the Sun of Truth and Justice in freedom and safety across the battlefield of life under the guidance of thy maternal star, until we come at length to the harbor of salvation to enjoy with thee unalloyed and everlasting peace. Amen."



Your Questions...

answered by Dr. Clark

Do you mind if I send work to be graded only when all the children are finished with their quarter's work?

You might save a little on postage this way, but it is not the best educationally for your children. It is best to have work graded as quickly as possible, since the concepts should still be fresh in the students' minds, and grader comments will be most profitable. This is why we encourage taking tests online and/or uploading assignments on your MySeton page. Work graded electronically is often immediately graded by the computer. When it is not immediately graded, it is still graded and returned much more quickly than a mailed assignment.

Sometimes parents send in an entire year of work for a student at once. When that happens, there is really nothing the graders can do to help the student, since there is no ability to do better on future tests.

It is very easy for assignments to be uploaded to our website. Many tests can be taken online for older students. If you don't have a home computer, your student might still be able to take the online tests at your local library.

When tests or assignments are done on paper, you can fax the work to Seton to save time and money. Our fax number for grading is 540-636-1602.

My husband and I believe that we are the best judge for how our children are doing, and we don't want to give a standardized test to our children.

Certainly parents are the best judge of their child's abilities, but we still encourage you to administer a standardized test each year. In some states, this is a legal requirement; but, even where it is not required, it is a good proof that your children are progressing. Most families will never need such proof, but it is wise to have standardized test scores in case of some unexpected situation.

Enrolled families receive one free CAT test each year for each enrolled child. When you mail in the third quarter work for a student, we automatically return a CAT test with the papers. If you are sending work electronically, you need to request it.

You may request and administer your free CAT test from our testing department at any time, although we believe that testing after the third quarter is likely to yield the best results for students. Besides the CAT Test, we also offer the Terra Nova Test and the Iowa Test. Some parents might like to use one of these tests since they are more comprehensive than the CAT; however, there is a charge for the Terra Nova and the Iowa tests. Simply go to our Seton website, click on Testing, then move your cursor to Testing Products.

I am keeping up with the younger children, but what do you suggest to help me keep aware of my high school daughter's work?

Your best helper may be your husband. He could check her work assignments every evening or at least every other evening. He could check two or three subjects each night. She would be aware that he will be checking, which might help her to keep on target.

If your husband cannot help, perhaps a grandparent or another relative would be willing to come by once a week, just to oversee the assignments. If she is having problems in a particular area, you would learn about it.

My children want to join various sports teams in the community, but I am a little reluctant.

You may be reluctant because you realize how much time would be required out of the home, and thus away from your home schooling classes. Some children learn quickly and may have time for the sports activities. You certainly could consider telling your children that they need to keep up with their studies if they want extra-curricular activities. This can be an effective motivation for students.

From surveys that we have conducted at Seton, we have found that students who have some outside activities often do better with their schooling. Sports activities can be valuable to students for many reasons, including the development of heightened self-discipline.

You do want to be careful about the sports teams your children join. Sometimes, especially at older ages, the other children can pass along attitudes and language that you do not want for your children. If your church of-

fers teams, or if there is a local home school league, you might want to start there. Otherwise, ask other local parents about their experiences with sports teams.

My son needs help in how to approach different assignments, but I am not sure how to advise him for some of them.

The first place to start is the Seton lesson plans. Most assignments have specific directions, and these directions are your best resource for the assignment. For some assignments, such as book analyses, we offer further resources online on your MySeton page, both chapter notes and audios, as well as videos, especially for the high school levels. If you need further direction, you might post a message on our message board or contact a counselor.

If the issue is not so much a specific assignment as it is learning skills, Seton offers many resources. We sell a series of workbooks for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 called Skills for School Success. These books provide helps for students for organizing assignments on a calendar, and learning strategies, such as Read, Cover, Recite, Check. The series emphasizes techniques for previewing book chapters by reading headings and subheadings, taking good notes, outlining written material, strategies for answering chapter questions, proofing assignments, understanding different kinds of graphs and tables, and analyzing various information in the dictionary.

Seton provides a free online Study Skills course for students in 7th and 8th grades, as well as for high school students. The course aims to help students implement routines for study, to organize the study area and study materials, to find appropriate space, and to limit distractions which interfere with studies. The course also includes ideas for study techniques. On our Seton website, click on Curriculum, then scroll down and click on Free Study Skills Course.

We are behind because of medical problems in our family. Do you have any ideas how we can catch up?

Consider the fact that you have the summer ahead of you. Many home schooling

families are continuing home schooling during the summer, or at least some courses. In areas such as reading and math, this keeps the children reviewing and improving. Unlike children who do not have schooling over the summer, these children keep their minds active in areas which might suffer if they were not reviewing during the summer months.

Lessons could be cut short over the summer, especially in those subject areas in which the student is doing very well. If your student consistently scores 100 on the spelling or vocabulary tests, consider limiting the study time to two or three days per chapter, instead of five.

For high school students, it is best not to skip any assignments, but you may be able to cut down on some of the home-graded assignments. Your student might do some assignments orally to save writing time.

Some students move more quickly through courses by focusing on one course all morning, and a second course all afternoon. This way, a student can do two or three days worth of lessons each day and obtain final grades on those courses very quickly, and then move to two other courses done in the same fashion. Finishing assignments, earning a quarter grade, and finishing courses quickly can give a very good motivational push to a student.

My son loves the challenge of his math course, and will be finishing up in the next month. May I order his books for the next grade, though he will be starting only his math now?

You certainly may order his next level books now. Many of our students move more quickly in a favorite subject. You may order either the next grade level for just math, or you may order the whole curriculum for the next grade level. One of our counselors will note on our computer that your son is moving ahead in

math, but will not be starting the other courses until later. Certainly, a huge benefit of home schooling is that the student can move ahead in courses in which he is excelling, and yet can move more slowly in courses in which he needs more time to master the concepts.

I am a part-time afternoons-only working mother, and home schooling my two boys. They need to work alone in the afternoon. Do you have any suggestions?

You have not mentioned other factors, but we know some families with mothers who teach part of the day, and fathers who teach the other part of the day. In one family, mother teaches a couple of days a week, and dad, still working on his graduate studies, teaches the children the other days of the week. Some families have a home-schooling dad who is physically disabled or cannot find work, but teaches his children while the mother is working. In some families, a grandparent oversees the schooling either every half-day or a few days of the week.

In a situation in which the parents are not available all day, the parents put two children on the same grade level, at least in some subjects, so they can help each other with their lessons. Most children like this arrangement. Each family situation is different, but the important thing is to find what arrangement works best for your family. If you are willing to look at creative solutions, you may find there are more options available than you think.

How can I give attention to my toddler while I am home schooling the older children?

As much as possible, your toddler needs to be involved in the home schooling activity. Normally, the mornings are the best time of the day for toddlers. If they could express themselves verbally, they would say, "I want to learn and act like everyone else!" Toddlers want to copy everything that is being said and done. They want their own school books.

Toddlers like older brothers and sisters to help them with their home schooling.

If you have one child in a primary grade, first, second, or third grade, work your toddler along with that child. As you listen to your primary grade student read his book, sit the toddler on your lap and let your toddler be involved in the reading lesson, looking at the

pictures and listening to the story. When you ask your primary student a question about the story, ask your toddler a question also.

Toddlers are especially receptive to learning the catechism with a primary level brother or sister, and often like to answer the question first. Toddlers especially like stories in the history books or lessons in the science and health books.

Have you heard of the new Common Core standards for public schools?

Every few years, the U.S. Department of Education comes out with a new "program" for the public schools of America. They have had the "Goals 2000" and the "No Child Left Behind" and now they are implementing the "Common Core State Standards."

The subjects these standards are requiring are the same as usual, though they are emphasizing more math and science. At the same time, the new standards don't emphasize literature to the extent that we do for high school. English courses in the public schools often overlook the great works of literature, especially those which emphasize traditional American and Christian values.

The Common Core State Standards are for public schools, not for private or home schools. Parents concerned about their children's ability to score well on standardized tests should realize that our students traditionally have scored in anywhere from the eighty-fifth to the ninety-th percentile on standardized tests. We expect that they will continue to score very well, regardless of what is implemented. Nevertheless, we are all concerned about nationally-standardized education.

For a detailed analysis of Common Core curriculum and methods, check the Home School Legal Defense Association website, and the Heritage Foundation website. Check the internet for information on local state policies and news on the Common Core standards implementation in your area.

Seton intends to continue according to the teachings of the Church, helping parents teach their children the subject areas while incorporating Catholic values, under the approval of the bishop of Arlington. We will still maintain our accreditation from AdvancEd, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Virginia Council for Private Education, which have never demanded we follow the curriculum of the public schools. Please note that Virginia has decided not to accept the Common Core State Standards, along with a few other states.

Let us pray for one another

Every day at Seton, gathered before the altar at our afternoon Angelus, we offer prayers for our families and friends. We encourage you also to pray for other homeschooling families, especially those who may be suffering from illness, unemployment, or other crosses.



Going Where God's Will Takes You

BY ANDREA GOWANS

Hello from the Gowans' family! – Dad Bob, Mom Andrea, son Hugh (age 9), daughter Lauren and twin brother Leo (age 7), and beloved cats Mr. Kitty and Stella. We live on a 300 acre ranch with a vineyard, fruit orchard, pecan trees, chickens, fishing pond, a John Deere tractor, four wheelers, and all the accoutrements that come with living out in the country. Our town's public schools are rated among the best in the area. Families from neighboring towns vie to have their children transferred into our public schools. There is a Catholic elementary school in the next city, and there are a number of excellent private schools. Our family chooses a different path. We choose to homeschool.

Are you going where God wants you to go, or where you are expected to go?

Up until a month before we started homeschooling, neither my husband nor I had ever heard of this thing called “homeschooling.” Concerned for the spiritual welfare of our children, our pastor was the one who introduced us to the idea. At the same time, my husband and I already knew that we had to reconsider the option of public schooling for our children. Intrigued by this alternative of conducting “school at home,” my husband researched the academic aspects, while I read



Dad Bob, Mom Andrea, son Hugh (age 9), daughter Lauren and twin brother Leo (age 7)

a number of books (including Dr. Clark's homeschooling manual), and we were introduced to a number of families in the parish who were actively homeschooling. One homeschool mom prophetically said, “Once you start [homeschooling], you will never go back!” She was right.

As we took the plunge into homeschooling, our pastor recommended Seton Home Study for its academic excellence and solid Catholic catechesis. We have been using Seton Home Study since day one, and have been extremely pleased. Following the Seton program, my husband and I are reassured that our children are covering all grade-appropriate material and that they are receiving a quality education – with no additional effort (or guesswork) required on our part!

Initially we started homeschooling for academic reasons. Now, 4 years later, we homeschool for a myriad of reasons, including family benefits, spiritual benefits, and simple obedience to God's Will. I have felt very much like Abraham, being called out of the “comfortable” life of typical schooling and into the unknown of homeschooling, but I know God has a plan far beyond what I can comprehend.

Following God in the Day-to-Day

Structure has been a key element in our homeschooling. School days begin at 8:30 a.m., when the children and I gather



Stella, our female tortoise-shell, has earned the nickname “best student” because not only is she always in the classroom with us, but often she is plopped right on top of the books! (She must be reading them, I tell myself.)

in the “classroom” (a spare room originally planned and designed to be my husband’s home office). Thanks to Seton’s clear and consistent workbook format, each of the children knows what assignment pages need to be completed that day, and can immediately get to work.

I juggle my time between Hugh, Lauren, and Leo, actively working with whoever needs my attention and assistance at the moment. If I’m busy with one child, the others work on an independent subject like Handwriting or Spelling until I can work with them. We also follow a “two subjects, then break” rule. After completing two subjects, each child gets about ten minutes to go outside, play in his or her room, get a snack from the kitchen, etc. As the children finish their work, they know to pile it on my desk – an old laminated folding table – so I can review and correct.

Classroom and textbook work takes until lunchtime, when we all gather to eat and then take a nice hour-long break (by that point, my brain needs it as much as the kids need it). We do Science and/or Writing after lunch, as well as correcting.

Each of the children has a different learning style and pace. Although Lauren and Leo are twins, and each in 2nd Grade, they are as different as can be! Their learning styles and the speed at which they grasp concepts is wildly different. What works with Lauren is a total bust with Leo, and vice versa. In fact, Lauren often acts as surrogate teacher to Leo when I’m not available. Other people might find this strange – a peer teaching a peer – but I find it one of the many blessings that homeschooling allows — a demonstration of love, patience, and joy in helping a sibling. It is also a good reinforcement of the concepts Lauren has already learned! If you can teach it, then you know it.

In general, we are done with school work around 3:00 p.m., which allows for ample outdoor playtime before ballet, Cub Scouts, sports, or other activities. On weekends, our two sons assist at Mass as altar servers, and our daughter serves as “bulletin girl,” distributing bulletins after Mass at our parish, St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Denison, Texas. We are careful, however, to limit the number of activities our children pursue. Busy-ness does not equal holiness. There is no joy in running and driving from activity to activity to the point of exhaustion and frustration.

One of the activities our family does cherish is inviting our current pastor over for dinner. He is a frequent guest, and we love him like

a favorite uncle. I especially appreciate the opportunity our children have to spend so much relaxed time with Father. It is important for our children to soak up and grow in the Faith. Some of their faith-building is accomplished academically, but a lot is accomplished in what I call “sitting at his feet”—simply sitting with Father at dinner, playing a game of checkers or chess with him, and getting to know him personally outside of church.

Taking up the Cross

Schooling your children is a very intense devotion. It is often a daily challenge for me as the mom-teacher to maintain my patience and energy level (which is why daily prayer and reliance on the Lord are a must!). It is also a challenge to ignore feelings of insecurity and self-doubt, and concerns that maybe I am not doing “as good a job” as someone else would do at another school. Maybe my kids are not learning “enough” from me, and could learn more or do better somewhere else. When I struggle with these thoughts, I lean on my husband, who lifts me up spiritually and reassures me that we are on the right path with homeschooling.

Another source of inspiration from which I draw is our local Christian homeschool co-op that meets regularly for enrichment classes. The kids enjoy being with other kids; I enjoy being with other homeschool moms, and our closest friends have come from the co-op. I couldn’t travel this homeschool journey alone. The apostles had each other for strength and support—I need other homeschool moms! I am grateful for the blessing these families are in our life.

Yet another small pick-me-up is when the kids and I change our routine by doing our homeschool work at the local community college. Every two weeks or so, we pack up the school books and head to the college library, where we grab a study room for the morning, complete with a massive whiteboard, and rolling chairs! It’s a great change of pace and scenery. The college students and staff get a kick out of seeing the pint-sized students, while my kids get a kick out of being around the college-age kids, and we get to top

off the day by enjoying lunch in the college cafeteria. Ah! College-days are always fun and surprisingly productive days!

Are you going where God wants you to go, or where you are expected to go?

God has a plan for our family, and for each of our children. I know with certainty in my heart that homeschooling is part of God’s plan for us, but time alone will tell where God’s plan ultimately will lead us. As a homeschooling family, we are certainly not going where society expects us to go! Instead, we choose to go where God wants us to go.

By Andrea Gowans, homeschooling mom of three on the Gowans Ranch in God’s country, Texas.



Study Skills Online Course

To Access Seton's free online Study Skills course, just visit:

www.setonhome.org/courses/study_skills/

Success in Seton Home Study School depends on how well you know HOW to study. On the Seton website, we have a free online study skills course, specifically geared for students in grades 7 through 12.

With good study habits, students will find schoolwork much easier, will obtain better grades, will learn more quickly and with less effort, and in homeschooling, will progress to the next grade more quickly.

In a speech by Pope John Paul II, His Holiness made the following remarks to a group of high school students: “[High school] is a time of preparation, so that the more serious your commitment in carrying out your duties today, the more certain and fruitful will be the exercise of the mission entrusted to you tomorrow. Apply yourselves, therefore, to study with great industry.”

High school is a time of great opportunity. It is a time when learning should be your main focus. You have few outside responsibilities. Like the knights of old, you have been given only a few years to train yourself for the great things you will accomplish later in life.

As with any training, how you do your studying is important. There are more efficient uses of time; there are better ways to organize and plan. Not only the time you spend studying, but how you spend the time studying can determine the level of success.



✓ **Attitude**

A poor attitude will get you nowhere. If you have negative feelings about yourself, if you think you cannot do well, that is exactly what will happen. If you think positively, if you believe in yourself because God made you, because He loves you, and because you realize that God has important plans for you for the future, then you will do better.

Keep trying to accomplish your goals. So many times a person thinks things should come easily. But that is not God's plan. St. Paul said that life is supposed to be like a race, with many obstacles to overcome. Paul was proud of his “hurdles,” his sufferings in shipwrecks and his times in prison, because he realized they were obstacles to be overcome in order to win the race, to win the ultimate heavenly goal. We should look on our studies as hurdles to proudly overcome when reaching our goals, both in this world and for the eternal goal.

✓ **Set Short Term Goals**

While you know your long term goal is graduation, and mid-term goal is finishing up this year with good grades, you need to focus on short term goals even more. You need to focus on the goals for this month, this week, today. Each day, you should have goals for just one day. Each day you accomplish your daily goals, you know you are one step closer to accomplishing your weekly goals. Each weekly goal completed moves you closer to accomplishing your monthly goals.

✓ **Planning**

Think out your plan of steps before you do anything. Loading up on books or scouting around on the internet will be wasting time, and you will become discouraged. When your dad plans a vacation trip across the country, he doesn't just load everyone in the car and start driving. He takes a week or two weeks just to plan which roads to take. You need to do the same. Take the time to plan ahead. Planning is a vital first step. If you don't have a plan, you will not reach your goal, especially if your goal is to do a good job!





If you have a report due on a certain date, or if you want to finish up a high school course by a certain date, the first step is to get out your calendar. Mark the date on your calendar when you want to have your report or course finished. Count back how many days or weeks you have to accomplish your goal. Be sure to not count days you know you cannot work on your lessons. Be realistic. Set a date that gives you some extra days in case you become sick.

Studying

Studying is done best when you are by yourself. It is a personal and sometimes seemingly lonely task. You need to develop the ability to concentrate, which cannot be done with distractions by other people, with vocal music in the background, or with younger brothers and sisters playing nearby. Eating and talking to your friends on the phone or useless time on the computer are absolutely disastrous during study time.

Try to find a quiet but fairly comfortable place to study. Your study area should be yours. It can be a quiet corner of your bedroom. It cannot be a room with distractions.

Organize Your Study Area

Select and arrange a permanent work surface. A desk with a smooth clean surface, and drawers or space for your supplies, is important. Be sure the surface area is sufficient so you can spread out your textbook and notebook and set up your computer. Spend time organizing everything in and on your desk. You will be more happy to do your schoolwork if you have a desk that is yours and if it is suitable for your own studying.

Keep your study area organized. Be sure you have all the supplies or materials you need in your study area, especially a dictionary and a thesaurus. Do not have things in your study area which might distract you. Don't keep your smart phone nearby. Don't eat in your study area.

SQ3R Study Method

Studies have shown that the SQ3R method is an effective method of studying.

Survey. Survey or look over the whole chapter or lesson: the headings, the subheadings, the pictures, the maps, the graphs, the end of chapter Review Questions.

Question. Turn the section headings and subheadings into questions. If the heading is "Causes of the Civil War," then out loud ask yourself: "What are the causes of the Civil War?"

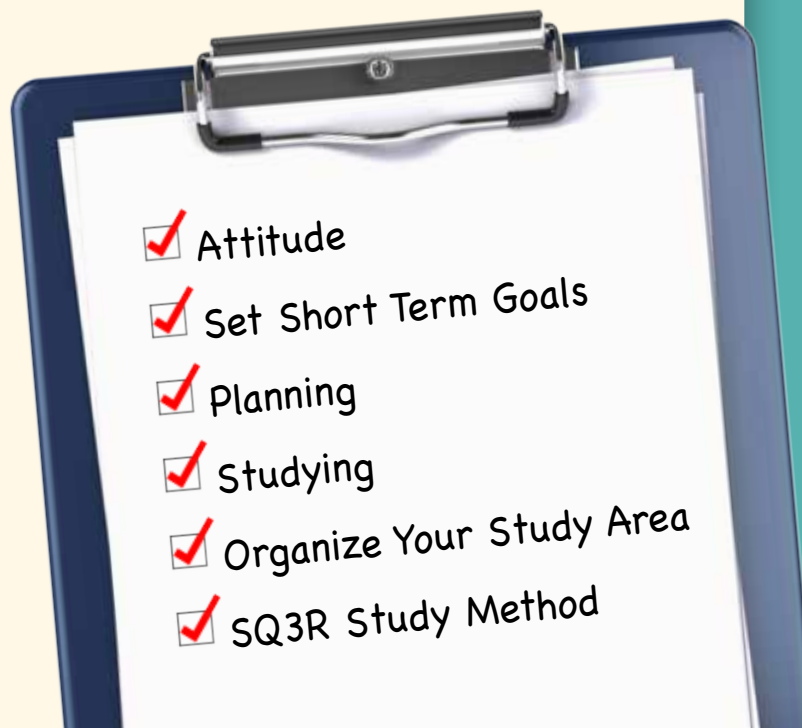
Read. Read the text out loud, carefully and thoughtfully, thinking about the chapter Review Questions. Be thorough in your reading; look up words in the dictionary. Write a very brief outline as you read, using only single words.

Recite. Recite out loud so you are hearing the ideas for each section. Try it later without looking at the book. If you cannot recite the information, go back and read it again.

Review. Usually a textbook has Review Questions at the end of each chapter. Review should be done each day as well as at the end of each week, and before taking a test.

Conclusion

If you need help, the best people to ask are your own parents. They care about you more than anyone else in the world. They will help you learn how to study, and help you while you study. You are part of a team, the family team. Seton is part of your team as well. Never hesitate to call or e-mail a counselor if you are having difficulties.



How Much Mom Time?

Work-text based subjects, including spelling, vocabulary, phonics, handwriting, and math, are ideal to introduce and accustom students to working on their own. Other subjects often require more parental involvement. They might be referred to as the “content-rich” courses which include religion, reading, composition, and for high school students, history and science. These subjects frequently require a more sophisticated thought process, memorization, and using skills from other subjects. My experience has shown me that teaching moms and dads need to provide more individual help in these content-rich subjects.

What does “content-rich” mean?

“Content-rich” is simply a label that I am putting on those subjects that require students to take in information about various topics, memorize some of it, figure out what the facts mean, and how they connect to previous knowledge the students have gained. Then, as they go into middle school, and junior and senior high school, students are often asked to think about topics in these subjects, form ideas about them, organize their thoughts, and then write about these ideas, using rich vocabulary, as well as proper grammar. Since each child has unique needs, parents should be aware of those subjects which require more one-on-one mom or dad time. Some assignments in the higher grade courses will be interdisciplinary.

What does “interdisciplinary” mean?

An interdisciplinary assignment requires students to use content and skills from more than one area of study. Composition assignments require forming ideas or putting together ideas about the assigned topic, which requires correct and precise grammar. History and science require reading comprehension and thinking skills, which should be developed with practice in the junior high years and solidified in the high school years. Often reading assignments contain elements of history. Our children should be learning that just about every subject, even including music, art, and physical education, have some connection to our Catholic Faith. My experience is that even the brightest students sometimes need to be “walked through” interdisciplinary assignments, at least at first. Our high school students should learn not to

compartmentalize their studies, but to apply their knowledge across subject areas.

Reading

As a big portion of educational information is gained through reading, so reading is second only to religion in importance. In Pre-K, K, and 1st grade, reading is mostly phonics as the student learns to decode the sounds. Mom knows that often students in these grades require lots of one-on-one. In 2nd and 3rd grades, children read simple stories with a controlled vocabulary as they gain fluency, and can often do this work on their own. Older students can help moms by listening to younger siblings. By 4th grade most students can read a variety of chapter books on their own – and should! Recreational reading is an important key to educational development.

By 4th grade, many students are capable of reading the stories in their readers and workbooks by themselves, and completing assignments with little help from the teaching parent. Some of my children could. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to continue occasional oral reading to correct pronunciation and to check comprehension skills. While I did not have much time to listen to each one of my children read aloud every day, my solution was to assign the short poetry selections from the *Faith and Freedom* readers to be read to the entire class of brothers and sisters. The children enjoyed their reading performance, and I was able to make sure that their pronunciation and comprehension was keeping up.

Starting in fourth grade, when my children began to read for book reports, I would often read the assigned book with them, if I felt it might be rough going. This is not cheating. The main purpose of the book reports is not to increase reading fluency; rather book reports are the earliest steps in literary analysis and writing skills. Sometimes, I simply read the book on my own, but either way, the student and I could discuss the main ideas. I continued to read their literature assignments during high school years, as well. That’s how important I believe strong reading skills and literary analysis are to a student’s development.

Religion

Let me stress right up front that the primary way parents teach the Catholic Faith

to their children is by word and example. Even before they start Pre-K work, your children should be

accustomed to saying the most common prayers daily. Before their fifth birthdays, they should know how to make the Sign of the Cross, and recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father, Guardian Angel Prayer, and Grace before Meals. Many children find the Fatima Morning Offering a bit long, so I taught my pre-school children the offering I recited as a child:

Good morning, dear Jesus,

This day is for you.

I ask you to bless,

All I think, say and do.

When I made these prayers part of my family’s daily routine, I found that I never needed to formally teach them to my children. Many families say the Angelus at noon, the family Rosary in the evening, try to attend Holy Mass, and receive the sacrament of Penance once a month. All of these sacraments and devotions are the strong foundation of your children’s Catholic Faith on which the Seton religion curriculum is built.

The *Religion for Young Catholics* series is so easy to use. Simply have your children read the daily lessons, and answer the questions. As in history and science, allow them to check their own work with the answer keys, and then once a week, review the questions with them.

It is not a good idea to wait until the week before the exam to have the children memorize their questions and answers, but it can be tough to find the time for review. Take a page from the book of the teaching sisters of my childhood and try to find some time to drill the questions every day. It need not take much time, but even just a few minutes each day will have a big payoff at test time.

If, like me, you find you have too little time to drill during each school day, do not give up hope. This is an ideal activity in the evening after dinner. The youngest children can “show off” for Daddy. Your older children can drill younger ones. Some of us families used to put extra copies of the *Baltimore Catechism* in the car. We were in the habit of reciting questions and answers on the way to various activities. We found that the car is a great place



BY GINNY SEUFFERT

Seton Home Study School

**2013
CONFERENCES****MO, St. Louis—April 5-6, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)****2013 St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference**

Cardinal Rigali Center
20 Archbishop May Drive, St. Louis, MO 63119
Fri.: 6 pm – 9 pm (Exhibits only)
Sat.: After 8 am Mass – 4:30 pm
Info: Cassie at 636-398-4001 or
www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com

GA, Atlanta—April 12-13, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**IHM Georgia Homeschool & Parent Conference**

Gwinnett Center
6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
www.ihmconference.org

TX, Houston—April 19-20, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**IHM Houston Homeschool & Parent Conference**

University of St. Thomas – Jerabeck Athletic Center
3800 Montrose Blvd, Houston, TX 77006
Hours: Fri.: 4pm - 9pm, Sat.: 9am - 4pm
Info: 540-636-1946
www.ihmconference.org

NJ, Berlin—April 13, 2013 (Sat.)**14th Annual CHAPLET Catholic Homeschool Conference**

Mater Ecclesiae Roman Catholic Church
261 Cross Keys Road, Berlin, NJ 08009 (actually in Pine Hill w/Berlin mailing address)
9 am – 5 pm
Info: Tony Schiavo
www.chaplet.org or conference@chaplet.org

PA, Monroeville—April 26, 2013 (Fri.)**IHM Pittsburgh Homeschool & Parent Conference**

DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh–Monroeville Convention Center
101 Mall Boulevard, Monroeville, PA 15146
12 pm – 8 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
www.ihmconference.org

NY, Buffalo—May 3, 2013 (Fri.)**IHM Buffalo Homeschool & Parent Conference**

Buffalo Niagara Convention Center
153 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY 14202
2 pm – 8 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
www.ihmconference.org

IN, Indianapolis—May 4, 2013 (Sat.)**2013 Quo Vadis Catholic Homeschool Conference**

Holy Rosary Parish
520 Stevens Street
Indianapolis, IN 46203
Sat.: 8:30 am – 5:30 pm
Info: 317-786-3629
hfheindy@yahoo.com or
www.hfheindy.org

LA, Lafayette—May 10, 2013 (Fri.)**IHM Lafayette Homeschool & Parent Conference**

Cajundome and Convention Center
444 Cajundome Boulevard
Lafayette, LA 70506
2 pm – 8 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
www.ihmconference.org

MD, Mt. Airy—May 17-18, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**IHM Maryland Homeschool & Parent Conference**

St. Michael's Parish – Poplar Springs
1125 St. Michael's Road
Mt. Airy, MD 21771
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm
Sat.: 9 am – 4 pm
www.ihmconference.org

NC, Charlotte—May 24-25, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**IHM Carolina Homeschool & Parent Conference**

Belmont Abbey College – Student Commons
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road
Belmont, NC 28012
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
www.ihmconference.org

MN, St. Paul—May 31-June 1, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**15th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair**

University of St. Thomas
2115 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
Fri.: 4 pm – 8:30 pm
Sat.: 8 am – 5 pm
debandbradnelson@msn.com
www.mnconference.org

to review work in all subjects, especially if the children make study sheets.

History and Science

If your children are capable of reading the chapters in history and science by themselves, then by all means allow them to do so. If you are using the Seton worktexts, there is no reason they cannot check their answers to the chapter questions, using the answer keys, as well. How, you may ask, can you make sure they are not “cheating” by not reading the material, but just copying the answers from the key into the textbook?

I solved that dilemma, and prepared my kids for their quarterly exams by reviewing the chapter questions with them every couple of

days. This is pretty easy: just read the chapter questions aloud and ask the student to provide you with the answers. The first time we went over them, I told them to study more diligently. A couple of days later, I might assign them to write the questions they had trouble answering in their notebooks so they made their own “study guide” for difficult questions. I would continue to review every chapter during our sessions, especially going over the missed questions. All of this was not terribly time-consuming and really helped at test time.

Summary

Try to hear your children read aloud as time permits.

Reading some of your children’s assignments allows you to share ideas.

As your children become fluent readers, it is perfectly fine to allow them to read lessons in reading, science, history, and religion on their own.

Children can check the chapter questions themselves using the answer keys Seton provides.

Put aside a bit of time every day to review work — during the school day, at night, in the car, or whenever you can find the time.



College Prep

HOMESCHOOLERS AND MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES

On December 31, 2011, a new law was signed into existence, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012,” otherwise known as H.R. 1540. Section 532 of this act deals with military enlistment of high school graduates.

Subsections (a), (2), (A) and (B) are important to Seton students. Subsection (A) defines as acceptable recruits who receive a diploma from a secondary school that is legally operating. Since Seton operates legally in all 50 states, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (S.A.C.S.), and is recognized as a private school by the State of Virginia, our students are covered by this provision.

All parents who file the necessary paper work with their school districts have established their homes as homeschools that are legally operating. Subsection (B) is similar in that it defines a recruit as acceptable if he “otherwise completes a program of secondary education in compliance with the education laws of the State in which the person resides.” If a Seton family files the proper paper work with their local school district, Seton graduates should not be rejected by their local military recruiters.

If you want to enlist in a military service and the recruiter is under the impression that the D.O.D. is restricting enlistment for homeschoolers, bring this law to his attention, and, if the problem continues, ask to speak to his supervisor about the situation.

Congressional Representatives from four different states worked with the Home School Legal Defense Association (H.S.L.D.A.) to pass this law. Thank you H.S.L.D.A., and both houses of Congress, for supporting this important legislation.

Center Ice

Thanks to some good friends generously giving us tickets and inviting us to go along with them, Veronica and I recently went to see an NHL hockey game. I have four alpha-male boys, yet somehow it is my daughter Veronica, the possessor of impeccable cosmetology talents, who is the biggest hockey fan among my kids.

We sat just a few rows up from the ice, almost directly behind the net. You can learn a lot about the game from that viewpoint. For those of you who are not “into” the sport, let me assure you: it is physically brutal—these guys aren’t missing teeth because of bad dentistry. The amount of endurance hockey takes is staggering. Next time you watch a match, forget about the game they’re playing, and just watch the skating. Skating forwards and backwards in full gear for twenty minutes at a time takes vigorous dexterity. Then throw in the sliding on the ice, being slammed into the glass by opponents on skates traveling awfully fast, and getting tripped by opponents at full speed. At some point, you almost begin to question the very sanity of the players, and wonder if they understand that what they’re doing is crazy.

At hockey games, the fans all stand and cheer when their player scores, but I was most impressed with the goalie, because his job must be the hardest. I read somewhere that if you show up at a pick-up hockey game, and volunteer to be the goalie, people appreciate you. That may be due to the fact that hockey sticks flying near your head all night and frozen pucks coming at your face at speeds of 120 miles per hour is not most people’s idea of amusement. And it’s not terribly forgiving. Jacques Plante, who played goalie professionally for almost 30 years, once said, “How would you like a job where, every time you make a mistake, a big red light goes on and 18,000 people boo?”

Thousands of us sat and watched the goalie heroically stop shot after shot at the net, stopping some shots with his chest, some with his glove, some with his legs, seemingly impervious to the pain and exertion that each “save” physically cost him. Though his shoulders and quadriceps must have been begging him to rest, he stood firm. And the closer the oppo-

nents skated to the goal, the more intense his concentration must have become. The viewer got a sense that the goalie’s mind and body were working together and striking a defiant tone, almost telling the opponent, “There’s no chance you’re getting anything in my net tonight. Not while I’m here. No way!”

At some point in the second period, I began to see the similarity between a goalie and fathers. While the goalie has a net that he must protect, we have a family. Good fathers stand and protect against the things that would assail their families, such as the drugs, pornography, materialism, and atheism that are so prevalent in the world today. On the other hand, seemingly unaware that there is even a game to be played, many fathers today leave the net unguarded, and then wonder why their families break down.

Herb Brooks, the coach of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team, once told his players, “If you give 99 percent, you will make my job very easy.” Whether he realized it at the time, Brooks was giving a life lesson to his players—that there’s a big difference in life between giving all you have and almost all you have. And it makes you wonder if there is someone thinking that right now about us fathers: “Give 99%, and you’ll make my job very easy.” The good news is that if you give 100%—if you love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, it makes the work of evil almost impossible. And part of this 100% is looking over and realizing that your coach is God, Who has given you all the tools you need for the strength of a father.

In the most important game Brooks ever coached—in fact, the most famous hockey game ever played—a group of amateur American boys took on the best Soviet hockey team ever assembled, and won. At the end of the game, the announcer, Al Michaels, famously asked a question which is remembered to this day. It was a very simple question: “Do you believe in miracles?”

We need to live a life of believing in miracles. We need to believe that God can take us unworthy servants—faults and all—and mold



BY JOHN CLARK

Why Home Schooling?

Father John Hardon, a highly respected Catholic theologian, now deceased and currently being considered for beatification, spoke to homeschooling parents at a conference. This is a selection of his comments.



SERVANT OF GOD
FATHER JOHN HARDON

Why homeschooling? First, homeschooling is the most ancient form of Catholic education. For the first 300 years of the Church's history, there couldn't possibly have been Catholic schools. There couldn't even be Catholic churches. The underground catacombs under the city of Rome were the churches. Schools were out of the question.

In the first three centuries, the Faith was established exclusively through homeschooling. Many of these Christian homeschooled students, strongly instructed in their Faith, became the martyrs on whom the Church was built.

For the next 500 years, homeschooled Christians not only established the Faith, but they reached out to the far regions of the known world. For the next 700 years, it was home schooling that spread the Faith, parents teaching their own children. The Church reached from the northern tip of Scotland to the southern tip of Africa. Religious orders came into existence. Some of these orders taught children, but most taught the parents who taught their children.

From the beginning of the history of the Catholic Church, the huge majority of children were never educated in Catholic schools.

The second reason why I support homeschooling is that wherever the Catholic Church has been established and has flourished, homeschooling has been constant and continuous. It is one thing to establish the Church in a country; it is something else to maintain the Catholic Church, even in survival existence. Historically, home schooling has done that.

The third reason why Catholic homeschooling has been necessary and indispensable is that parents are with the children from conception through all the years

into adulthood. What a difference it is for parents to be with their children physically as well as spiritually! One of my definitions for Catholic homeschooling is the phrase "parents in intimate spiritual relationship with their children."

This is no casual piece of rhetoric. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Matrimony not merely for the purpose of providing parents with the grace which they need to remain faithful to one another until death, but also to provide them with additional graces and strengths. In fact, the Sacrament of Matrimony was instituted to make homeschooling possible! It was instituted to give parents the graces they need to teach their children.

I have taught school for forty years, including twenty-five years of teaching my fellow Jesuits their theology. As a teacher, I have not been sacramentally guaranteed with the grace to effectively teach pupils what they most need. Only parents have been given the graces and thus the guarantee, by the Sacrament of Matrimony, to effectively teach their own children what they need, especially in the Faith, but also in other areas. Parents, and no one else, are sacramentally guaranteed the grace of effective teaching of their children.

Unless children receive sound Catholic home education, institutional education will be useless. Faithful Catholics have always been opposed by those who do not share their religious convictions. The principal source of that opposition from the beginning has been secular educators and the powers of the state. Opposition to the Faith and opposition to the right of parents to teach their children even the fundamentals of the Faith has been going on since the dawn of Christianity.

I have several suggestions to you parents. First, if you're going to engage in homeschooling, you've got to be powerfully, powerfully, powerfully motivated.

Secondly, parents, if you are going to teach your children the Faith, you yourselves must learn, you yourselves must understand, what you hope to teach your children.

Thirdly, parents must cooperate with each other. Father must cooperate with mother in the teaching of the children. Not the mother alone, not the father alone, but father and mother must cooperate to teach their children.

Again, if you want to share your Faith with your children, you must have a deep Faith yourselves, and this means it must be a Faith that you are living. There is nothing that homeschooling needs more than parents who are living their Catholic Faith.

In conclusion, I pray this prayer for homeschooling parents. Lord Jesus, You were taught by Joseph and Mary at home in Nazareth. Give especially to these parents the light to see how indispensable homeschooling has been over the centuries, and how absolutely necessary is homeschooling, even for the survival of Your Church in our day, as it has been historically. But above all, dear Jesus, give us the courage we need to do what You want us to do because, dear Savior, the purpose of Catholic education is to prepare souls for eternity. Give us the courage of our convictions. Amen.

us into fathers who can raise saints, and become saints ourselves in the process.

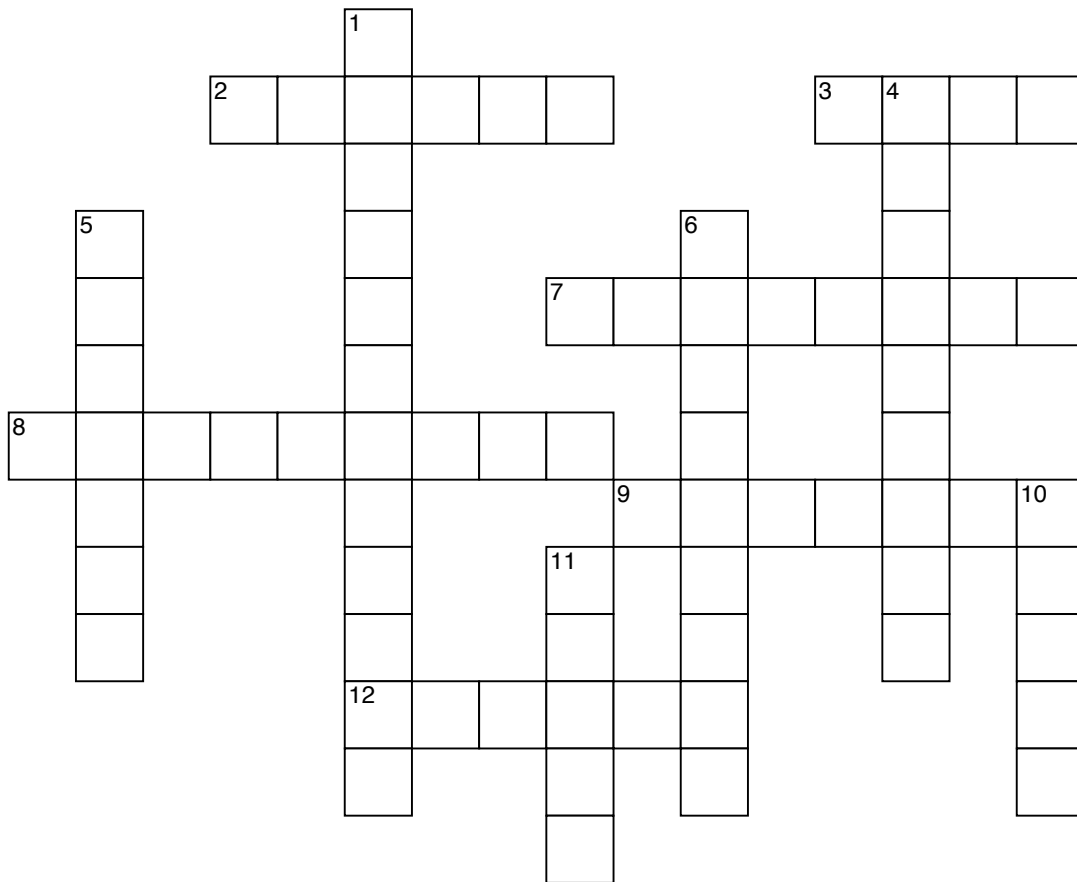
We fathers may not be able to help the fact that others try to trip us, or slam us into the glass. We may not be able to help the fact that others take shots on goal, but we can do something to withstand them. We fathers must stand up to evil and say, "Not

tonight. Not on my watch. No way!" Each father is given graces to protect his own children. Homeschooling is a way that many of us fathers have chosen; it is not the only way, nor is it the complete answer, but for many of us, it's a huge part of the solution.

Jacques Plante was right about the booing. But I hope he understood two other

things: first, that a "save" is properly named and second, that when he made them, there were a lot of cheers. In his case, it was only some fans cheering about a game played on ice. But in your case, when you make saves for your family, the choirs of Heaven are cheering. Loudly.

A Catholic Crossword



ACROSS

- 2** This saint is usually pictured fighting a dragon; his feast day is April 23.
- 3** He wrote the shortest Gospel.
- 7** Jesus appeared to this saint and taught her the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.
- 8** This sacrament unites a man and woman in holy marriage.
- 9** This sacrament removes Original Sin.
- 12** This sacrament makes a man a priest: Holy ____

DOWN

- 1** This sacrament makes us soldiers for Christ.
- 4** ____ of the Sick; this sacrament gives strength to the soul of a person who is in danger of death.
- 5** This sacrament is the main way by which we receive forgiveness for our actual sins.
- 6** The Body and Blood of Jesus; also called Holy Communion
- 10** We celebrate Divine ____ Sunday on the first Sunday after Easter.
- 11** The feast day of Saint Catherine of ____ is on April 29.

Spring Reading for the entire Family!



Twenty Tales of Irish Saints

Over the years, saints have inspired many tales that go beyond what we know about them. These pious fictions are delightful and can even be instructive. For the lovely legends of the saints that have come down to us reflect not only the holiness but also the joyfulness of the saints. These Irish legends are in that tradition. Patrick, Brigid, Columcille — “the three brightest jewels in Ireland’s crown” — are here, and Canice, Finbarr,

Cormac, Finnian, Brendan, Gall, and others.

Alice Curtayne brings to these legends of Irish saints a rich grasp and a deep love of the Catholic faith of her native Ireland. She has unerringly chosen stories which will appeal to readers young and old and she tells them with the poetry and feeling that mark the work of every true Irish storyteller.

P-RD06-55 \$14.95

The Latsch Series

Based on the author’s own experiences, these stories vividly describe memorable people and events of the Pellowski family and its Latsch Valley neighbors and descendants. Immersed in the vigorous life of their American-Polish community the world for young Anna and her friends is filled with fascinating possibilities - as well as lots of hard work. Grades 4 and up.

P-RD05-49 \$40.00 4 Book Series
\$11.00 each

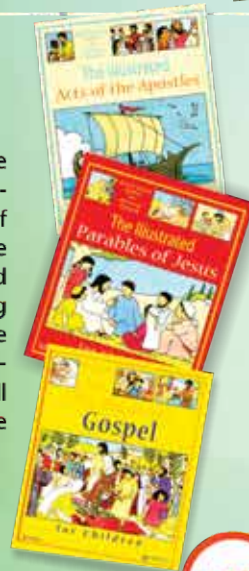


For the Little Ones

Illustrated Bible Stories

These wonderful children’s books are written in a youthful yet tasteful comic-book style presentation on the life of Jesus, His Parables, and the Acts of the Apostles. They are written in a simple and engaging style, told in a way young readers will find attractive. The simple words and beautiful, expressive four-color comic-book style illustrations will captivate children whether they read the book on their own or with their family.

P-RL03-30
\$42.00 3 Book Set
\$14.49 each



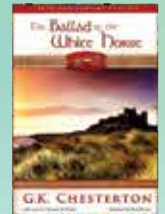
High School Classic Literature



M-HSEN-33
\$3.95

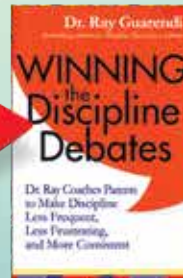


M-HSEN-23
\$6.95



P-EN11-18
\$12.00

Parent Resources



Winning the Discipline Debates

This covers a series of the most common (and most frustrating) discipline scenarios between parents and kids. The debates are interspersed with Dr. Ray Guarendi’s enlightening comments and observations. Learn, laugh, and let Dr. Ray coach you to stand strong and become a more confident parent. From preschool to the late teen years, with Dr. Ray as your coach, everyone wins!

M-FMBK-38
\$15.95

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www.setonbooks.com/spring

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Expires April 30, 2013 | use the coupon code **SPRING13**

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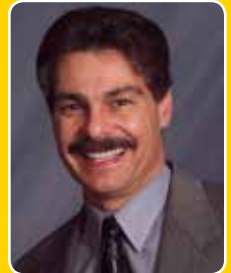


Seton Graduation 2013

Seton's graduation ceremonies will take place on Saturday, May 25. If you are interested in registering one of your students, visit:

www.setonhome.org/grad2013

Register by April 15!



Ray Guarendi
Commencement Speaker



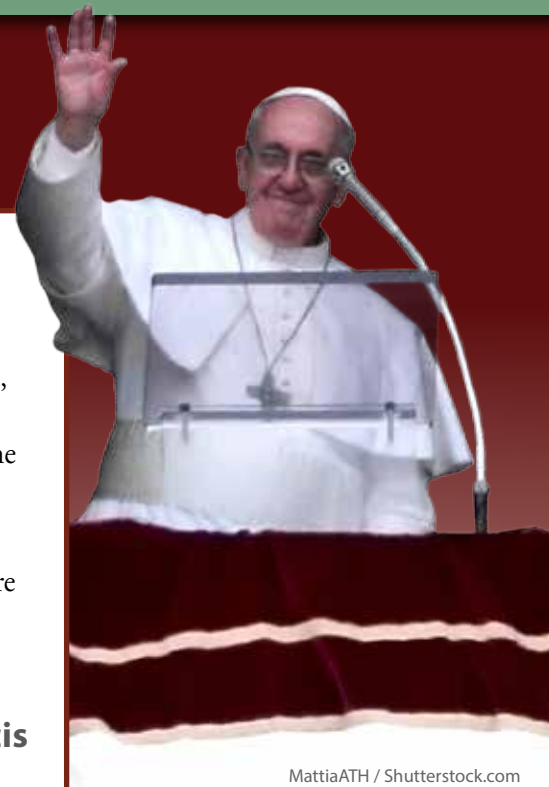
PAPAL WISDOM

Habemus Papam!

And now, we take up this journey: Bishop and People. This journey of the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the Churches. A journey of fraternity, of love, of trust among us. Let us always pray for one another. Let us pray for the whole world, that there may be a great spirit of fraternity. It is my hope for you that this journey of the Church, which we start today, and in which my Cardinal Vicar, here present, will assist me, will be fruitful for the evangelization of this most beautiful city.

And now I would like to give the blessing, but first - first I ask a favour of you: before the Bishop blesses his people, I ask you to pray to the Lord that he will bless me: the prayer of the people asking the blessing for their Bishop. Let us make, in silence, this prayer: your prayer over me.

Urbi et Orbi, **Pope Francis**



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G-SM13-04

