

Seton



MAGAZINE

"Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church"

MAY 2013



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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
Pray for Us!

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On the Cover:

The Domangue family with their local priest, Fr. Van Constant

*“With you every day,
every step of the way”*



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**Do you have a compelling
homeschooling story?**



If you do, and you would like a chance to be featured in *Seton Magazine*, please send a paragraph telling us about your family along with a photograph to Christine Smitha at cmsmitha@setonhome.org.

SHARE YOUR STORY AND INSPIRE ANOTHER FAMILY!

Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School

Dr. Mary Kay Clark



The Way of Divine Love

Sister Josefa Menendez was a Spanish mystic who lived from 1890 to 1923. In 1920, she joined the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Poitiers, France. During her four years of a simple and hidden life, she wrote down the words dictated to her by Jesus during miraculous appearances. His words have been published in *The Way of Divine Love*, a book which was highly recommended and endorsed by Pope Pius XII.

Sister Josefa wrote the words exactly as given to her by Jesus, words which give strong evidence of the never-ending Divine Mercy for each one of us who asks Him for His forgiveness. The stirring words of Jesus as He relates the details of His Passion and His thoughts for each step during His Passion, have served as meditations for many for more than 50 years.

The dictation of Jesus shows us the quiet way to sanctity through devotion to daily duty. As He dictates His deeply spiritually moving words of Divine Love and Mercy, He would suddenly tell her to stop writing so she could tend to her jobs in the convent, such as training novices, or working in the laundry room. None of her fellow sisters suspected her marvelous and miraculous interior life.

From Josefa's amazing visits from Jesus and His words reminding her of her daily duty, we homeschooling mothers can draw strength in the understanding that our

spiritual life can and must continue along with our homemaking and homeschooling activities.

The nuns would say that Sister Josefa made her little "sphere of influence one of prayerful industry." Our homeschooling home can be the place where we influence our children to work diligently, but always accompanied by prayer and a prayerful attitude. We can make our children sensitive to the continual presence of God within us and within our home. Before our family begins the duties of each day, we can unite ourselves to Jesus and what He will ask of us that day. Morning prayers, reading selections from the Bible or

words from a saint or about a saint, daily Mass, all these can contribute to show our children how our home and family, how our homeschooling, is essential to develop our spiritual lives.

Jesus told Josefa that her convent was a place where He could find peace and joy, a silent faithfulness to His Commandments, a charity and helpfulness toward each other. Surely this is the meaning of "the domestic church," which the popes have asked the Catholic home to be!

Ironically, many believe that we homeschooling parents want our children to escape from the "real world." In fact, it is because we are concerned about the salvation of those in the real world of temptations and sorrows that we teach our children how to carry the message of the

love and mercy of Jesus Christ to others. In our homeschooling domestic church, we are training ourselves and our children to take the message of salvation as Jesus told His Apostles and disciples to "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The nuns said of Josefa that "she felt her responsibility" in her dedicated training of the younger nuns. Our dedication can give us joy in serving our children for God's glory and their salvation. The nuns said that "with patient good nature" and with "sweetness," she "exact" from her young nuns the "interest, care, and perfection" necessary for good work to please Jesus.

Saying the Morning Offering with our children, the whole family can offer everything during the day for His greater honor and glory. If everything is done for Jesus, can any of us ever allow anything to be done thoughtlessly?

While we may yearn for private time behind closed doors to spend with Jesus in "recollection," we busy homeschooling moms must "recollect" in the middle of kitchen duties or math class, feeding the baby, or teaching diagramming.

We may never reach the "spirit of sacrifice" of Josefa, who was allowed to suffer the wounds of Jesus, but we can aim for an extraordinary spiritual life, one hidden and interior, one specially reserved for our beloved Jesus.

We must ask His Blessed Mother to help us each moment to continue to carry out our daily and humble duties of home management, and to carry out our very special calling to raise saints through Catholic homeschooling.



Your Questions...

answered by Dr. Clark

I feel like my life is a treadmill. It's always running ahead of me and I am always trying to catch up.

My book, *Catholic Home Schooling*, has a chapter on "Home Management" which has some ideas you might want to use. Also, we sell a great book by Ginny Seuffert called *Home Management Essentials*, which gives ten quick ideas about how to bring your home under control.

One problem we all have is wasting time looking for things, whether it be books or school supplies. This is often caused by lack of preparation. Consider ordering your materials during the summer and take the time to organize all your supplies. You may need to throw out or give away old supplies you have never used. Consider clearing out "stuff" from several rooms in your house, maybe one room per month.

Organize the school supplies in those big plastic buckets or tubs you see at the stores. Purchase them in different sizes and different colors. Be sure you purchase the tops so you can stack them. Use them for current homeschooling materials, but store them away with other materials for future use, such as off-season clothes.

Ask your children once or twice a year to gather up some of their toys to give to the local second-hand shop or for your local church rummage sale. Throw out or give away at least one piece of furniture from each room. Just organizing and reducing the things in the house will give you more time and less hassle cleaning!

Very few parents can homeschool successfully without a daily planner. I have lived by a planner since high school. Start your junior high and high school students on their own daily planner. If they have their own planner, they are more likely to follow it.

Not only will you know what to do and when, you will not be in a perpetual frantic state or feel you are on a treadmill. Purchase a Seton Daily Planner, fill in your half-hour schedule realistically, and then live by it, at least as much as you can. With children there are frequent, maybe daily, changes in your plan, but most of us with planners manage

to finish up either later when the kids are in bed, or very early in the morning. We moms need to schedule and plan for the unexpected. Backup plans are essential for less stress when things don't go smoothly.

Some people like having things written down in a plan book, but others feel more comfortable keeping their schedule electronically. This certainly does have advantages, such as being able to schedule reminders throughout the day.

Schedule chores for all your children. This gives them daily physical exercise between their classes. Schedule kitchen duty, bathroom duty, laundry duty, vacuuming, and anything else they can do to help you. Everyone is learning, and everyone is working to keep the home clean, neat, and organized. Teach your children the importance of being a responsible citizen of the family. Older children can help supervise younger children, or you can have a team of a younger with an older child. Teach your children the importance of throwing out stuff, giving away stuff, doing family or household chores, and working a plan.

My husband likes math and wants to teach my son, but using his own materials. How can I obtain a grade in math from Seton if I don't use your books?

I would suggest that your husband look at our tests and teach along with what our courses teach, so that your son can still take our tests. It is not unusual for a parent to want to use a favorite math textbook, but for Seton to record a grade, we need to have the student take our tests. Your husband can give the tests at any time when he believes your son is ready for the test. They may even be taken out of order. Your husband may want to refer to our textbook along with his lessons in case the vocabulary might be slightly different.

How can I get everything done in these final months of the school year?

There are a number of things to think about, such as finding a couple of hours on weekends when the children can finish their assignments as you think is best. One time after a move, I asked the children if they would rather work extra on the weekends or work

into the summer months. I was pleased how dedicated they were to doing their work on the weekend. No fiddling around on the weekend!

Consider having your high school student who is behind in one subject, do one hour with Dad when he comes home in the evening, or one hour before he goes to work. Consider having a college student in the neighborhood come in for one hour two days a week to help your high school student move along with his assignments.

Think about "summer school" for the month of July for any student not finished with his English and math. Some families go all summer with just a few courses, especially math and phonics and reading. Studies have shown that students forget over the summer much of what they learned during the year, so schooling at a relaxed pace over the summer is often a good idea.

With older students, work out a schedule and help them to stick with it. When students have some control over their schedules, they are more likely to stick to them.

Realize that perhaps a student may need an extra few months to conquer a subject, such as math or English, and could take it next year. Remember, homeschooling is about moving a child at his own pace, at a pace that is best for him. Don't push if his brain is not quite ready!

Try to remain calm, say prayers to your children's patron saints, and just keep moving ahead, one day at a time. Moving forward is progress, even when you are moving slowly.

I think my son may have a learning disability. He seems to be struggling.

Keep in mind that each one of us develops differently and at different rates and ages. You cannot expect that by some arbitrary age a student will be reading or doing long division.

If you would like some professional advice, call Stephen Costanzo in our Special Services Department. Look on our website at www.setonhome.org. Click on Curriculum and scroll down to Special Services. Our website explains not only the department but also answers several special services questions. Stephen helps parents to adjust the Seton program or he suggests alternative learning

materials. We have a program for dyslexia and individualized programs for other learning methods.

What are your suggestions for the music and art classes?

These classes need to be for only one hour per week. Perhaps an older sister or brother would like to help with the younger children, thus accomplishing the class for both. Sometimes a grandmother or an aunt or a friendly artistic or musical neighbor might come over, or invite your children to go to her house for friendly weekly music or art classes. Check the music or art classes at local community centers, libraries, museums, and so on. Even a few classes for a few months, or over the summer, can give your children some good experiences in the areas of music and art. Some amazing things can happen when a musical instrument or a watercolor paint set is put in the hands of a child! Many a famous musician began with just a second-hand instrument.

How can I help my 5th grade boy become more of an independent learner so I can work more with the younger children?

We do want our children to learn to be independent learners, but at the same time, we need to balance that with being involved enough so that we are giving them the values, ideas, and perspectives we want them to learn from us. You might assign some work independently for some days of the week, but then be more involved on other days. The spelling, phonics, and vocabulary could be done independently on the later days of the week, but on Monday, you might go over the initial concepts. In courses like these, you want to emphasize any ideas that relate to Catholic values as well. Beginning reading assignments in history and science could be done independently but in mid-week, you want to be sure your son is understanding the concepts or you may want to add your own ideas or examples. Math, English, and reading are subjects that you want to oversee daily so that there are no misconceptions which might be repeated and need to be “unlearned” later. You want to be involved with beginning chapters in Religion, but certainly his writing and memorizing work can be done on his own. As time goes on, you will become aware of those subjects he can do successfully without your daily attention. Be careful, however, with paragraph and book report assignments. With these assignments, you need to be helping or directing very closely.

Let us pray for one another

Every day at Seton, gathered before the altar at our noon 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.



Seton has an online study course which is designed for grades 7 through 12, but you might want to look at that for ideas that might help your son.

I'm hearing a lot lately about Common Core. How can my student be prepared for Common Core-based standardized tests?

First off, although almost all states have adopted the Common Core standards, so far no state has adopted Common Core based standardized tests. Alabama is now considering doing so, and it is possible that other states may adopt such Common Core standardized testing in the future. The states which require testing usually offer a range of tests from which parents can choose. The Common Core based tests will likely be added as an option at some point, but it seems unlikely they would be mandated at any point in the near future.

Currently Seton Testing Services offers not only the CAT test but also the Iowa and the Terra Nova tests.

Homeschooled students in general, and Seton students particularly, have always done very well on standardized tests. We expect that trend to continue, regardless of what tests are adopted by the various states.

There are several ways for your student to prepare for standardized tests. Find on the internet free sample questions which provide practice for your student. Purchase books or find in the library books which give practice questions and usually provide the “thinking” behind each question, particularly in the area of math. Enroll your student in a local standardized SAT or ACT test preparation class, or find a teacher who would help prepare your student. Find on the internet an official free online SAT preparation test course.

Purchase an ACT and SAT study guide book, such as *The Official Study Guide for the SAT Subject Tests*, published by The College Board.

The best preparation for your student is to keep doing the daily work, and give the standardized tests we offer each year. Course grades and standardized test reports can help determine where your student needs more instruction or practice. While Seton provides the CAT test free for enrolled students, you may purchase from us the Iowa Test or the Terra Nova test, which are more in-depth tests and may give more information about a student's progress.

Would it be okay for my 7th grader to redo a test before I send it in? He does not understand an important concept in division of fractions.

Especially for the elementary grade levels, it is important for parents to be sure that the student knows the material before taking the test. As teachers in classrooms do, you should give your student a review of the material or at least a review of what type of questions may be expected on the test. However, if your student does not do well on the test, go ahead and review the misunderstood or not-yet-learned material. Have your student redo those test questions, without telling him the correct answer, of course.

Another possibility is to create a pre-test for your student. Write down several problems similar to the ones on the Seton test and see how your student does on those. Based upon this pre-test, you can have your student take the Seton test, or do more review.

Remember, you are homeschooling with Seton because you want your student to learn the material, not for Seton simply to record grades.



A Never-Ending Adventure

by Steven and Joy Domangue

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Life does not always turn out as we expect! We are Steven and Joy Domangue and we have been married since 1994. Although we intended to have a large family, several years without growing our family made it clear that adoption would be our only alternative. It was a roller coaster ride dealing with adoption agencies, state governments, social workers and lawyers, but in 2002, we adopted our son Phillip as a newborn.

Our Parenting Journey

What we thought we knew about rearing children in the beginning has been replaced with the reality of learning from our mistakes. Over the years, we have asked others whom we trust for advice and have found ways to overcome obstacles. When we have been successful, it has been because we have willingly accepted and followed the Catholic Church's teachings.

We first heard about homeschooling through Steven's oldest sister, who had been homeschooling her children in Colorado. We also knew families from St. Francis Academy (SFA), a local homeschool group. Steven and I noticed that these large families had well-behaved children who were very knowledgeable in their faith. We recognized that their experiences could definitely help us when we would be traveling down the unfamiliar road of homeschooling. We started attending meetings with SFA when Phillip was two.

Joy's Perspective

When we began homeschooling, we were choosing books from different sources and it was difficult to be organized. This changed when we joined Seton Home Study School. The curriculum was challenging for Phillip and, as his teacher, the organization helped me stay on target. Catholicism was gently woven throughout the workbooks and texts of each subject, which meant that religion was not just a subject but a part of living our faith in everyday life. Using Seton's online services made keeping track of Phillip's grades simple.

Over the years, I had noticed things with Phillip that seemed odd, such as his dislike for coloring, his difficulty in using scissors, and most of all, his unusual spelling patterns that often made no sense, despite instruction. As for his frequently unreadable handwriting, I thought he simply wasn't trying.

Seton counselors were valuable in helping us learn that Phillip has a condition similar to dyslexia called dysgraphia. This is a processing issue that affects his motor skills and makes writing difficult for Phillip. However, Phillip has a gift for memorization which allows him to recite large amounts of information accurately. Seton staff helped us adapt to a different teaching method that was beneficial to his learning style. I thank God that I am now able to see my son's struggles and work with him to overcome them.

We have never regretted our decision to homeschool, and began seeing the benefits early on. We see how homeschooling builds

a strong, lasting bond between parents and children. I appreciate the opportunity to foster an enthusiasm for learning and reading in my son. The Catholic morals and values learned at home are supported and nourished by the education received through Seton's homeschooling curriculum.

However, homeschooling doesn't stop at the closing of books or the ringing of a bell. It is a way of life for both the parents and the children. As his parents, we are able to



see problems as they arise, instead of hearing about them later when they may have been magnified. By remaining consistent in teaching our beliefs to our son, we can give him the tools to follow God's plan, hoping and praying that he will take with him the values which we have tried to instill in him.

Whenever I find myself confronted with the question "Why do you homeschool?",



the first thing that comes to mind is, “Why *wouldn't* we?” I think back to those early days spent with my baby, watching and helping him grow and learn. Those times are not gone. We are still growing and learning together, for learning is a never ending adventure.

Father Van Constant and Father Will Comellas have been our spiritual advisors, confessors and good friends and have been a tremendous source of inspiration in our lives. They offer the Tridentine Latin Masses at the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in the diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, where Phillip serves as an altar boy. Their spiritual guidance for our group has been invaluable and they are very supportive of the homeschool families in their mission.

Steven's Perspective

In my God-given role as the head of the family, it is my job to make sure that the family stays on target. I must be receptive to what the family needs for accomplishing our goals. This means stepping in and handling the discipline when needed. It also includes offering encouragement and guidance to Joy in resolving issues. If I am disengaged, the chances of success are diminished. I firmly believe that fathers need to be involved so that they can help mothers reduce the stresses that eventually lead to discouragement.

As I see it, developing and maintaining a good attitude is more important than good grades. Good attitudes tend to lead to successful academics as lifelong habits of learning are developed. This good attitude is important for all of the members of the family to maintain,

however, because children learn attitudes, good or bad, by our example more than our words.

The best way to determine if homeschooling was successful is if your children continue the tradition by doing the same with their children. If they do not see the value in homeschooling and their experiences are largely negative, it is unlikely that they will choose the same path when it is their choice. We work hard in our family to make sure that homeschooling remains a positive experience.

We have been told by other parents that homeschooling is going to hurt Phillip's social skills. Many times, these same parents allow their kids unlimited access to TV, video games and the Internet. We prefer the traditional and tested method of interacting with people of all ages. We do enjoy watching movies, but we screen them first, to ensure they won't work against what we are teaching Phillip, and we discuss the lessons in the movies so that those



teaching moments are not lost.

Above all, I think it is very important to explain “why” we believe what we believe to Phillip. As he gets older, we continually reveal more of the “why” so he is able to better understand and value our reasons and our faith. Homeschooling gives us the time to pass down our unfiltered beliefs and traditions to him.

What We Have Learned

As much as possible, we try to do activities as a family because we know this time together will not last forever. We firmly believe that fathers and mothers are the primary educators of their children. We look at the end result that we desire instead of the day-to-day challenges that can sidetrack our family. We try to handle problems as they occur instead of letting them build to something bigger.

Living our Catholic Faith is vital to our family, and homeschooling definitely fits into that equation. Like all other faithful parents, we know that teaching the Faith is our most important task, as we hope that each of us will reach Heaven. All parents have faults and shortcomings, and we definitely have our share of them. However, we strive each day to improve ourselves as we make our journey to God and our eternal home.

God Bless!

Phillip is an active boy who has a vivid imagination, enjoys playing sports, reading adventure books, and wrestling with his Dad. He is good at procrastinating on his chores, asking millions of questions, and finding ways to be distracted from the current task at hand.



An Assurance of Academic Excellence

Seton Home Study School's Accreditation Program

Did you know that your school is accredited? Seton Home Study School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) in association with AdvancED, a private and prestigious organization that accredits more than 30,000 schools around the world. Accreditation is a method of quality assurance designed to acknowledge schools that operate with a high standard of educational principles and practices. Accreditation is voluntary, not mandatory. Seton's accreditation has benefits both for us as a school, and for you as a family with enrolled students.

Accreditation is not simply a matter of paying a fee and receiving a piece of paper with a seal of approval. Accreditation is much more than that. First, it presupposes a commitment to improvement and excellence in the attitude of the school and staff. This attitude must be evident in our efforts toward enhancing the quality of the education we provide and the efficiency of our services, so as better to assist our families. The effectiveness of our practices must be demonstrated to the accrediting agency through a series of performance reports based on self-evaluations and surveys that are submitted throughout the year, culminating in an on-site review by AdvancED members every five years. In a way, this is like participating in an ongoing audit to make sure we are doing the best job we can.

What accreditation means for us

Looking outward, being accredited is good for Seton Home Study School because it means that Seton is valued in the world of education. An external organization, AdvancED, assesses Seton for its performance on world-wide established standards, and

we meet or exceed those standards. Because we meet or exceed these standards, and have the accreditation to prove it, Seton is accepted as a peer by other institutions, and this acceptance serves to validate homeschooling in the eyes of educators everywhere. Looking inward, Seton's directors and staff use the accreditation process of self-examination to ensure that we always meet or exceed the standards we have set for ourselves as a Catholic homeschool program.

What accreditation means for you

Seton Home Study School's accreditation is good for you because it puts you in a strong position. If family members ask, if local authorities ask, if your neighbors ask, if the parish priest asks, you can answer with confidence that your child is enrolled in a rigorous private school, recognized and accredited as such. When your high school student submits applications to colleges and universities, admissions committees will recognize the name of Seton Home Study School, and they will not wonder about the readiness of your child. Admissions committees will trust the transcripts because they come from an accredited school. If you transfer from Seton high school to another high school, your credits are more likely to be accepted by your new school. If you live in a state that maintains stricter regulations concerning homeschooling, you already know how valuable it is to be enrolled in an accredited school.

What accreditation does not mean

Accreditation does not mean that Seton Home Study School will ever be less Catholic. The accrediting agency does not interfere with our school identity or the school mission. In fact, the accrediting agency's purpose is to make sure that we are



2012 Seton Staff Photo

fulfilling our mission. We state our mission; the accrediting agency does not. Our mission has always been and will always remain the Catholic education of Catholic children in Catholic families. That strong Catholic standard will never be altered, so you can always depend on Seton to provide you with wholesome materials, solid religious grounding, and a Catholic perspective.

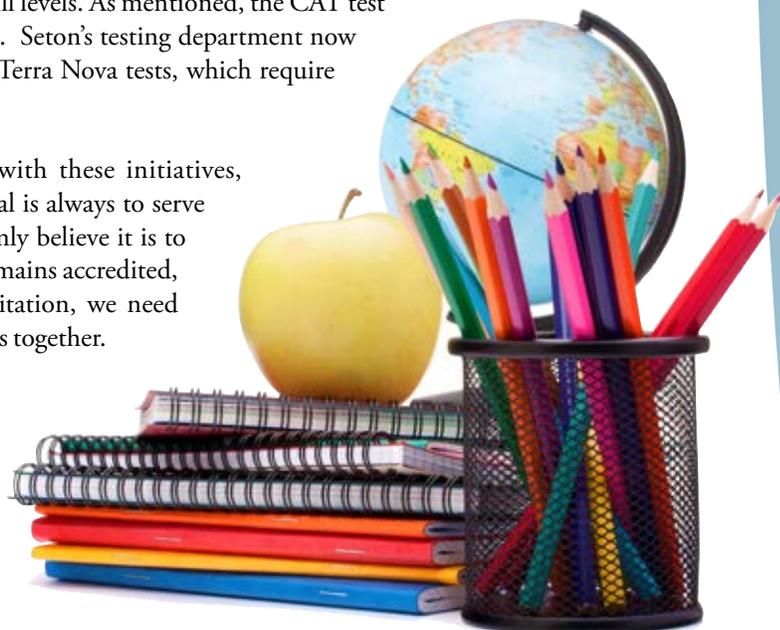
Accreditation also does not mean that Seton Home Study School will become less rigorous in its approach to academics. We recognize that the path to changing our society lies in young people who know how to analyze issues from a Catholic perspective and are able to defend truth. The Board of Trustees, the president of the school, the faculty and staff of Seton Home Study School remain completely committed to the goal of educating young Catholics to be of strong mind as well as strong principle. The essential skills of analysis learned in literature, precision and logic learned in mathematics, and coherence learned in English will never be abandoned. Knowledge of human nature and important ideas learned in history, along with a healthy appreciation for the power of creation learned in science, will continue to be brought home to Seton students, as they pursue an education in advance of what many of their peers undertake elsewhere. Seton Home Study School will not lower its standards.

We need your help

In the past few years, accreditation has come to focus more and more on students and families, as proof is sought to demonstrate a school's quality. AdvancED, our accrediting organization, has asked us to engage our families in a unique survey. This will not be the first time Seton has used surveys, as you may be aware. However, as part of our re-accrediting process, AdvancEd would like to see a minimum 40% participation rate. These surveys are entirely anonymous, so you need not be concerned about personal information being distributed. If you and your family will participate in a survey, it would be a great help in the accreditation process.

The second action for which we ask your collaboration is standardized testing. Standardized testing is one of the simplest ways to show student performance levels, thus showing educational quality and institutional effectiveness. Standardized testing is objective. Standardized test results provide a valuable tool Seton Home Study School can use in maintaining accreditation. Many of our parents already have their children take standardized tests on a regular basis, so continuing the practice will not be unusual. Seton's practice has been to send free CAT standardized tests when third quarter work is graded, meaning that families who do their own grading would not automatically receive a test. Starting in the 2013- 2014 academic year, standardized testing will be sent to all Seton students in the 4th and 7th grades. We encourage you to use standardized tests for other academic years as well, because standardized tests are often an excellent way to gauge your student's skill levels. As mentioned, the CAT test is free to enrolled families. Seton's testing department now also carries the Iowa and Terra Nova tests, which require an additional fee.

As we move ahead with these initiatives, remember that Seton's goal is always to serve Catholic families. We firmly believe it is to your benefit that Seton remains accredited, but to retain that accreditation, we need your help. We are all in this together.



College Prep

FINAL ACADEMIC PREPARATIONS

You've finally just about completed everything for your long-anticipated diploma. There is still the fourth quarter Government test, one English essay, and a Religion test. Summer is just around the corner. The weather is beautiful. Your friends want you to join them for a good hike or a pick-up baseball game. Why not relax a bit? DON'T DO IT!!

The Seton curriculum is challenging. The end of your high school career might find you tired and in a mood to "just get through" without much regard for the quality of your work. The Senior Slump is a common disease, but it can have serious effects on your whole attitude toward academic pursuits. Giving in to it opens the door to a myriad of bad study habits which may make college much more difficult than it needs to be.

Sometimes Seton Seniors find themselves scrambling to complete their work at the end of the summer while juggling their final preparation for college. In such a situation, it is all too easy to produce mediocre work or to miss important details in preparing to leave home. A far better plan is to make certain that all your Seton work is complete before going on that hike or playing baseball. You will enjoy your play a great deal more when you know that there is no longer any unfinished Seton business hanging over your head. You are much more likely to cover all your bases in preparing for college, too.

The end of Senior year might be the worst possible time to "just get through!"

Excellence in English

After twenty-five years of homeschooling, and seeing English offerings at hundreds of homeschooling conferences, I can tell you – absolutely – that I have never seen anything more thorough, more carefully planned, or more Catholic in content than Seton’s English courses. While you may be assured of Seton’s excellence in English, anything worthwhile is hard work, and this subject proves that rule. Let’s face it! English is really two subjects: grammar and composition. Grammar requires a mature thought process, an analytical thought process, while composition is complex to teach and to learn. While Seton’s English courses are challenging, it has proven to be within the reach of the vast majority of students, and is well worth the effort. A few simple tips, based on my own experience, might help English studies proceed more smoothly in your homeschool.

Using the Worktexts to Teach Grammar

The Seton worktexts are carefully laid out, and have been improved over the years to make them more thorough in the explanations, and easier to use with color-coded examples. Generally the grammar rule or definition is printed in a box at the top of the page. At least in the early grades, Mom needs to review the concept and the directions, and to make sure that the student understands what is expected. Practice exercises are divided into groups. Have the student complete the first several problems and then check his work. This allows you to make sure your student “gets it” or to provide further instruction. If everything seems to be going well, your child can complete the rest of Exercise A independently.

Additional exercises, Part B, can be handled several ways. First, if the child struggled with Part A, then by all means review the concept again and have him complete the rest of the page. You might assign the B Exercise for evening work for a couple of reasons. First, it allows you to keep your English class to a shorter length during the school day. Second, there is some evidence that children learn better when they see the work again, when the concepts are repeated, within hours of them first being introduced.

You might save all or part of the Part B exercises for review. For example, you can

assign one or two examples from several pages everyday at the beginning of English class to make sure the student does not forget what has already been practiced. Finally, even if your student breezed through Exercise A, you still might assign Exercise B to reinforce the concept in the child’s mind. The teaching sisters of the so-called Golden Age of Catholic schools did not hesitate to assign work, even if they felt most of the students had already grasped it. It seems counterintuitive to homeschoolers, but completing assignments in their entirety builds better understanding, speed, accuracy, neatness, and diligence.

Help is on the Way

This particular procedure may seem a bit complicated, especially if Mom is trying to juggle several students at once, so the Seton grammar worktexts, *English for Young Catholics 1 – 4* are adding some really nifty parent/student aids which should really simplify teaching English. The size of the print font will vary: small print means “parent reads to child”; large font indicates “student reads.”

Colorful interesting icons indicate when something should be memorized, like: *A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing.* Another icon will imply that the student will need some help from the teaching parent. Another indicates that the student should write the answers in that section.

A Strong Start in Composition

With the exception of 8th grade, most, although not all, of the composition instruction is found in the lesson plans. Composition is multi-disciplinary in that it requires children to think about what they want to say, organize their thoughts into a logical outline, and then put their ideas on paper using proper spelling, penmanship, sentence structure, and punctuation. Do not be discouraged if skills build slowly. If you follow the instructions and assign the work in the daily lesson plans, your child will make steady progress. Children master composition the same way a performer makes it to Carnegie Hall: practice, practice, practice!

My handiest tool to teach language skills at the earliest level was the *Morning Workbook*. I would purchase the bound, marble-covered, blank notebooks with the lines for beginning writers, usually red baselines, and dotted

center guides. (Hint: It is much easier to find these books in school supply season.

Purchase several to see you through the entire year.) In kindergarten, we might practice writing the student’s first name, and then later, family name as well. The student learns to write J.M.J. on the top line to dedicate work to the Holy Family of Nazareth. If a student in the younger grade cannot yet copy his or her name, write it in yellow highlighter to trace. After that is conquered, have the student write, “My name is Joseph Jones,” with capital letters for the first word and names, and a period at the end of the sentence. Start adding, “Today is Tuesday,” again with appropriate capitalization and punctuation. Then change it to “Today is Tuesday, May 14, 2013.” Practice writing the date using the full spelling of the month, the abbreviation, and just using numbers. I would use the bottom of the page for work the student needed for extra practice, perhaps a few lines of a number or letter the child reverses frequently.

In 2nd and 3rd grades, have children write their address and phone numbers. They will learn how to spell their siblings’ names by practice writing them, but always writing full sentences, such as “My sisters’ names are Betty and Belinda.”

Buy an outdoor thermometer and let the children record the daily weather. “Today is Tuesday, May 14, 2013. It is a sunny day. At 10 A.M., the temperature was 60 degrees Fahrenheit, with a gentle breeze from the west.” From K until 3rd grade, this daily *Morning Workbook* assignment should take no more than 15 or 20 minutes of class time.

Building Skills

By the 4th, 5th and 6th grades, your students will have gained a strong composition skillset with the help of these short daily assignments; now you want to add to them. Have the children keep simple daily journals, recording the weather, their plans each day or week, or the books they are reading. Often girls decorate their journals with colorful covers using fancy gel pens. Boys will be more cooperative if presented with day-planner type books, or lesson planners. What is most



BY GINNY SEUFFERT

Seton Home Study School

2013 CONFERENCES

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 Cath. 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

OH, Cleveland—June 7-8, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM Cleveland Homeschool & Parent Conf.

St. Adalbert Church – Keller Center
66 Adalbert Street, Berea, OH 44017
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

KS, Kansas City—June 7-8, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers 2013

St. James Academy
24505 Prairie Star Pkwy, Lenexa, KS 66227
Fri.: 3:00 PM – 9:30 PM
Sat.: 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM
Info: Maribeth at 816-454-3729 or
www.kccatholichomeschooler.org

TX, San Antonio—June 7-8, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

2013 San Antonio Catholic Homeschool Conf.

Education Service Center 20
1314 Hines Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78208
Fri.: 1 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 8am – 5pm
Info: info@sacatholichomeschool.org
www.sacatholichomeschool.org

MI, Lansing—June 14-15, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

"It's Great to be Catholic" Family and Home Education Conference

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church

41233 Ryan Road, Sterling Heights, MI 48314
Fri.: 6:00 pm – 9:30 pm
Sat.: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Info: mchemails@gmail.com or
www.homeschoolcatholic.org

MI, Detroit —June 14-15, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.) TBA

Info: info@ihmconference.org or
www.homeschoolcatholic.org

VA, Fredericksburg —June 21-22, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

Immaculate Heart of Mary National Homeschool & Parent Conference

Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center
2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Fri.: 9 am – 9 pm, Sat.: 9 am – 4:30 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

CA, Costa Mesa — June 21-22, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

SCCHE (Southern California Cath. Home Educators) 14th Annual Conf. & Curriculum Fair

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
1015 Baker Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
8:30 am – 6 pm
Info: www.sccchehomepage.com
Rita Koppes at 714-271-1272 or
Msg4Prk@sbcglobal.net

TX, Arlington —June 28-29, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM N. Texas Homeschool & Parent Conference

Arlington Convention Center
1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington, TX 76011
FREE ADMISSION!
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm
Sat.: 9 am – 4 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

important is that ideas are written down using full sentences and proper rules of grammar.

At this age, students might continue to record the daily weather, perhaps giving the temperature in both Fahrenheit and Celsius. They might record the books they are reading, "Last night, I began to read *The Winged Watchman* by Hilda Van Stockum. It is the story of a family living in Holland during the Nazi Occupation." They can keep track of the family's shopping list. "We need to buy eggs, butter, and milk." If there is a calendar in the journal, allow them to keep track of family

appointments. Just keep them writing!

At the end of 6th grade, most students are completing longer written assignments in subjects such as reading, history, and religion, and the daily journals have served their purpose.

It's Worth the Effort

Some of my children worked quite diligently to complete Seton's English assignments, especially in the upper grades, and not always without complaint, but their efforts brought a big payoff. Ask any

college professor, or a former Seton student now attending college. Many students entering college are woefully unprepared for the demanding writing assignments. Seton students are ready; in fact, some students report breezing through their college work. All the hard work is worth it, as many Seton graduates report not only obtaining high grades but also being paid to help other students in the college English workshop!

Buy a Tablet

When I was growing up, my homeschool materials were essentially limited to the books that we could obtain. If I were really lucky, I might be able to get a poorly-produced educational video or cassette tape. That was about it. In striking contrast, we homeschooling parents now have a plethora of academic riches, and as the technological advances continue, the argument to homeschool only becomes stronger. The opportunities increase daily, and I wanted to just share a few of the resources that we have been using lately. I plan on writing about some of these over the next year both in print and online, but I wanted to start by encouraging homeschooling parents to purchase an essential homeschooling tool: an iPad.

You can buy an iPad for about \$400 to \$500, and while that may be a hefty sum for many parents, I urge you to consider it. In fact, if you can afford to, I would recommend buying several.

Besides the iPad, there are many other choices for tablet computers. Three attractive choices are the Kindle Fire (priced from \$159 to \$269), the Samsung Galaxy Tab (priced from \$179 to \$349), and the Google Nexus (priced from \$199 to \$499).

The difference in pricing for the various models of iPads and other tablets is due to different amounts of internal storage and also whether they offer wireless internet through regular phone networks. Models which offer phone-network internet not only cost more, but also will require you to set up a data plan with a monthly charge. Unless you really know what you want, buying a lower-priced “wifi only” tablet with the minimum storage available is probably the best way to go. It is also a good idea to investigate which apps and services are available on each tablet, as some apps are exclusive to certain tablets.

Once you have your tablet computer, you will need “apps” to run. I recommend the following apps and sites. It’s not an exhaustive list, but it’s a start.



BY JOHN CLARK

Google Earth

Learning geography from a book is fun, but never as fun as using Google Earth. This program allows you to see an actual photo of the entire planet and zoom in to any address or region in the world. For those of you who are not familiar with this program, you will probably believe that you read the last sentence incorrectly. You didn’t. I was using this program with Philomena the other day, and we looked up her grandmother’s house and the burial place of Jesus. As we did so, the program zoomed out from California, and we watched the earth turn until it arrived at the new spot, and then zoomed in on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. It’s incredible—and free.

KhanAcademy.com

An MIT graduate and hedge-fund manager named Salman Khan began producing videos and sending them over the internet to instruct his cousin who lived far away. What began as a tutorial to one person became a gift to the world. The slogan of Khan Academy is: “A free world-class education for anyone anywhere.” They’re on the way. Khan Academy has over 4,000 videos covering math, economics, chemistry, astronomy, civics, and more. Its mathematics section begins with “1 + 1” and goes all the way through calculus. My children use it all the time, and they love it. The students can learn at their own pace, and even practice their lessons on the iPad’s touch screen. Did I mention it’s free?

iTunes U

If your idea of the perfect school would be assembling the best teachers in the world in the convenience of your own living room, iTunes U (available only on Apple devices) comes pretty close. In Apple’s desire to make education accessible to their users, iTunes U (University) offers a wide array of online classes and lectures.

There are hundreds of thousands of downloadable lectures from colleges ranging from Princeton to Christendom to Ohio State University, and most of them are free. With this application, you can take a class in Financial Markets from Yale, followed by a Probability course from Harvard; in the afternoon, you can hear a lecture from Dr. Warren Carroll, and finish up your day with a class in chemistry from Ohio State—all from the comfort of your living room in your robe and slippers.

Rhapsody

Rhapsody is a music subscription program that costs about \$10 a month, and while it doesn’t have every musical piece ever recorded, it’s close. I showed this to my mom and dad the other day at dinner, and they couldn’t think of a song that I couldn’t play for them. If you are teaching your children classical music, this is a pretty good learning tool. (Please keep in mind that some of the music on the site is objectionable, so you will have to monitor use.)

Church Teaching on Marriage and Parents

Church teachings can be seen in the papal document *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*. In Section IV, "Father and Mother as Educators" and Section V, "Paths of Formation Within the Family," the Church teaches the essential need of children for a mother and a father, and the need for the children, and the responsibility of the parents, for parents to teach their children.

"God gives [married persons] the grace to carry out their mission adequately... parents...are sustained from day to day by special spiritual energies received from Jesus Christ. [37]

"...marriage [the sacrament]... consecrates them [husband and wife] for the strictly Christian education of their children... it enriches them with wisdom, counsel, fortitude, and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit... [37]

"Parents must never feel alone in this task. The Church supports and encourages them, confident that they can carry out this function better than anyone else. [40]

"In another Church document, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, we read, 'Since they have conferred life on their children, parents have the original, primary, and inalienable right to educate them; hence they... have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions...' [42]

"No one is capable of giving moral education in this delicate area (of human sexuality) better than duly prepared parents. This right also implies an educational duty. If in fact parents do not give adequate formation in chastity, they are failing in their precise duty. [43,44]

"...through this document, the Church holds that it is her duty to give parents back confidence in their own capabilities, and help them carry out their task. [47]

"The family environment is the normal and usual place for forming children and young people to consolidate and exercise the

virtues of charity, temperance, fortitude, and chastity. The family, as the domestic church, is the school of the richest humanity. This is particularly true for the moral and spiritual education ...In a Christian home, parents have the strength to lead their children to a real Christian maturation... [48]

"Children...are better disposed to live according to those moral truths that they see practiced in their parents' lives. They will have confidence in them and will learn about the love that overcomes fears, and nothing moves us to love more than knowing that we are loved. [52]

"The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model or norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters, and the different generations living together in the family. [52]

"And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home, at times of joy and at times of difficulty, are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible, and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society. [52]

"...it must be stressed that education for chastity is inseparable from efforts to cultivate all the other virtues... [52]

"The practice of decency and modesty in speech, action, and dress is very important for creating an atmosphere suitable for the growth of chastity... Parents...should be so watchful so that certain immoral fashions and attitudes do not violate the integrity of the home, especially through misuse of the mass media. [56]

"The good example and leadership of parents is essential in strengthening the formation of young people in chastity. A mother who values her maternal vocation and her place in the home, greatly helps develop the qualities of femininity and motherhood in her daughters, and sets a clear, strong, and noble example of womanhood for her sons. [59]

"A father, whose behavior is inspired by masculine dignity without *machismo* will be an attractive model for his sons, and inspire respect, admiration, and security in his daughters. [59]

"This is also true for *education in a spirit of sacrifice* in families, subject more than ever today to the pressures of materialism and consumerism. Only in this way will children grow up with a correct attitude of freedom with regard to material goods, by adopting a simple and austere life style, and being fully convinced that *man is more precious for what he is than for what he has*. [60]

"No one can deny that the first example and the greatest help that parents can give their children is their generosity in accepting life, without forgetting that this is how parents help their children to have a simpler lifestyle." [61]

Quotes from *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, Pontifical Council for the Family, Guidelines for Education Within the Family, November 21, 1995

EBooks

Ebooks (electronic books) provide access to the world's great literary classics, most of which are available for free. (Actually, I paid 99 cents for St. Thomas' *Summa*.) The beauty of it is you can transport thousands of books in a little electronic device. What more to say? That's pretty cool.

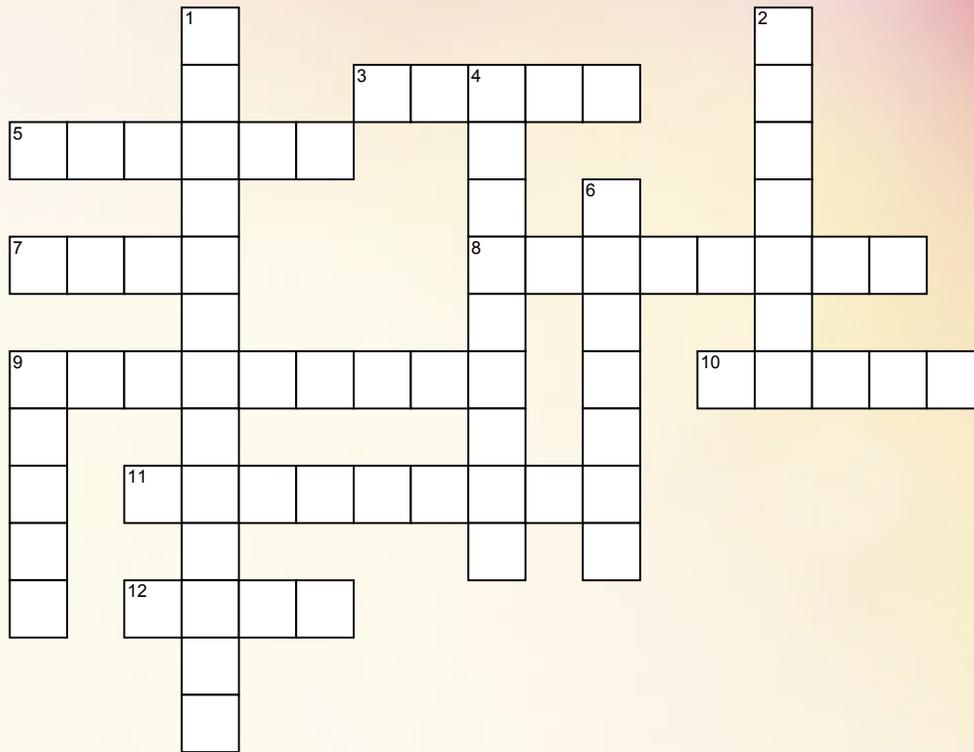
When I think back to the days of being a homeschool student, and then consider what

is available for my own children, I begin to feel a little jealous. It's not fair. The good news is that the job of homeschooling as a parent has gotten much easier just in the past year or two. There are hundreds of apps that you will find beneficial for your children. You can determine which are best for your family, but whichever ones you decide upon, you will find a tablet computer to be a fantastic addition to the homeschool assortment of tools.

Besides the great things computers offer, they also offer plenty of bad. Be sure to monitor your children's computer use.

As I mentioned, in the following months, I am putting together a resource on the Seton homepage to direct parents to apps and sites that will help with the homeschooling process. If you have suggestions for me, please send your ideas to johnfclark@live.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

A Catholic Crossword



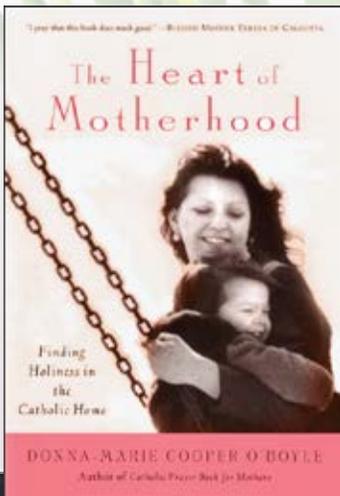
ACROSS

- 3 There are seven ____ of the Holy Spirit; all souls in the state of grace have these.
- 5 The gift which enables us to judge correctly concerning the things of God
- 7 The gift of great awe and reverence for Our Lord, which keeps us from offending Him by sin: ____ of the Lord
- 8 That day, about three ____ people were baptized.
- 9 This feast is celebrated fifty days after Easter.
- 10 This Apostle preached to the crowd, telling them to be baptized and to believe in Jesus Christ.
- 11 The gift which enables us to see God reflected in all creatures and to praise Him in them, but yet to see the nothingness of creatures in themselves so that we will desire God alone
- 12 The Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of ____.

DOWN

- 1 The gift which gives us an insight into the mysteries of the faith so that we may live by them
- 2 The Holy Spirit gave the Apostles this virtue, which enabled them to boldly proclaim the Gospel.
- 4 The gift which gives us a Christ-like courage to love God in the face of all obstacles, even death
- 6 The gift through which we receive the light of the Holy Spirit to guide us in practical matters
- 9 The gift by which we are attracted to reverence God as our Father and all others as His children, our brethren

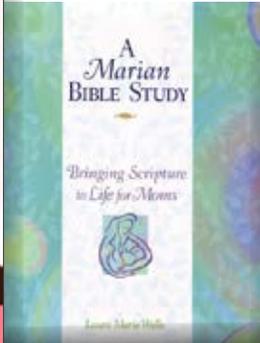
Mother's Day inspiration



The Heart of Motherhood

Warmly written, explore the value of family meal times, suffering as a form of prayer, and the recognition of moments of grace and "everyday miracles". Encouraging and supporting the vocation of motherhood with gentle and loving care.

\$16.00 M-FMBK-35



A Marian Bible Study

Delve into Mary's life from the Annunciation to her Assumption into Heaven. A way for moms to study the Scriptures pertaining to Marian events and to look at ways they can imitate Mary's virtues.

\$9.95 M-RLBK-34



The Catholic Family in the Modern World

Written by Father John Hardon. Handbook for the Catholic Family. Theology of Matrimony and of the family in general. Tips for a family keeping the Faith in a secular world.

\$3.50 M-RLBK-04



Mother Seton & the Sisters of Charity

The story of her life in a well-to-do Protestant family, the death of her husband, her conversion to the Catholic Faith, her founding of the Sisters of Charity and the first American parochial Catholic school.

\$9.00 P-RD08-37



St Rita of Cascia **NEW!**

Wife, Mother, Widow, Nun. Popular in the Church for centuries, St. Rita is known as the "Saint of the Impossible" because of her amazing answers to prayers, as well as the remarkable events of her own life. A story of a soul completely resigned to God's Will.

\$9.00 M-RLBK-74

Saint Monica **NEW!**

The famous mother whose prayers, patience, and perseverance finally obtained her son's conversion - the great St. Augustine. Includes her childhood, difficult marriage, anguish over Augustine, constancy and ultimate joy at his conversion.

\$7.00 M-RLBK-75

All Mother's Prayer Book

Prayers especially for mothers! The 'gestation novena' of prayers for nine minutes, nine hours, nine days, nine weeks, or nine months helps establish a spiritual program for expectant mothers.

\$3.00 M-RLBK-34

The Privilege of Being a Woman

Dr Alice von Hildebrand elaborates the privilege women have in being naturally more capable of human concerns, self-gift, sensitivity, dignity, loveliness, heroic sacrifice, and the ability to awaken what is best in men through weakness and tenderness.

\$7.00 M-FMBK-30

celebrating motherhood with Mary



The Song of Bernadette DVD	\$17.00	M-RLDV-54
Our Lady of Good Help DVD	\$10.00	M-RLDV-24
The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima DVD	\$17.00	M-RLDV-57
A Handbook on Guadalupe	\$7.95	M-MKBK-01
The Blessed Virgin Mary NEW!	\$7.00	M-RLBK-18
Pray the Rosary NEW!	\$3.00	M-RLBK-91

for children

Set of 8 Marian Coloring Books	\$22.00	P-RL02-27	The Day the Sun Danced DVD	\$12.95	M-RLDV-04
An Alphabet of Mary NEW!	\$12.00	P-RD03-35	Our Lady of Fatima Picture Book	\$1.50	P-RL03-23
Sweet Mary: Holy Heroes	\$14.50	P-MU00-32	Hail Mary Pillowcase	\$14.95	M-SSCP-18
Apparitions of Our Lady	\$6.95	M-RDB4-36	Rosary Mysteries Pillowcase	\$14.95	M-SSCP-14



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PAPAL WISDOM

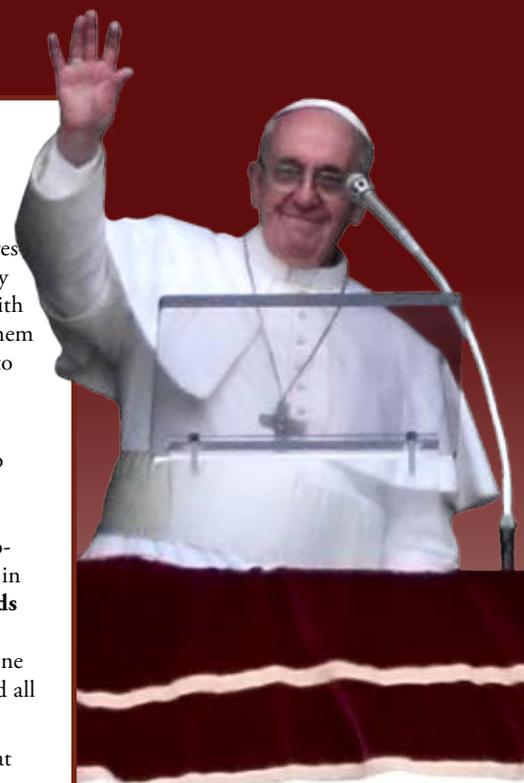
Pope Francis celebrated his inauguration Mass on the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19). He spoke about St. Joseph as protector of Jesus and Mary:

How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. From the time of his betrothal to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, he is there at every moment with loving care. **As the spouse of Mary, he is at her side in good times and bad**, on the journey to Bethlehem for the census and in the anxious and joyful hours when she gave birth; amid the drama of the flight into Egypt and during the frantic search for their child in the Temple; and later in the day-to-day life of the home of Nazareth, in the workshop where he taught his trade to Jesus.

The vocation of being a “protector”, however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God’s creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. **It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents.** It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. **Be protectors of God’s gifts!**

I implore the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, Saints Peter and Paul, and Saint Francis, that the Holy Spirit may accompany my ministry, and I ask all of you to pray for me! Amen.

Pope Francis: Homily at the Mass for the inauguration of the Pontificate March 19, 2013



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www.setonhome.org

540-636-9990



G-SM13-05

