

# Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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Members of the Nelson family at the site of Mother Seton Rock.



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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.

We are all united in the Communion of Saints, and God allows us through our prayers to uphold, support, and console other members of His Church. Let us, then, remember to pray for one another as we all walk the path of homeschooling, so that we may all join together in prayer, one day, in Heaven.



# LETTER

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR



## St Elizabeth Ann Seton on Her First Confession

This article was written more than twenty years ago by Margaret Flagg, who had a special devotion to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, whose feastday we celebrate January 4.

The words of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton on the day of her first Confession are very appropriate: *“How awful are those words of unloosing after a thirty years’ bondage! I felt as if my chains fell, as those of St. Peter at the touch of the Divine Messenger. My God! What new scenes for my soul!”*

What a tremendous expression of freedom is in Elizabeth’s words which depict a mystery that is beyond our understanding: the mystery of God’s infinite Mercy and infinite Divine Love. I can imagine Elizabeth Ann Seton after her Confession being filled with tears of gratitude and wonder. After her Confession, as she approached the altar with His Real Presence, she experienced a heart overwhelmed with light and joy.

Elizabeth described the words of absolution in the confessional as “awful.” She meant the awe of wonderment. In one instant, she was freed of all the sins of her past, of all those ‘thirty years of bondage.’ It was as if she were among the Israelites wandering through the desert and finally entering the promised land.

The absolution of Confession is like an intense Lenten season in which we come to a better awareness of our sinfulness through pondering the sufferings of Christ, only to find that on the Third Day, His promise of redemption and resurrection is fulfilled and is really true. What a celebration! What Alleluias burst from souls who have waited so long for that day! The chains of sin are broken! We are free to enter Heaven with Christ as God’s own children, provided that we cooperate with His grace.



Image cc FranzMayerstainedglass

“What new scenes for my soul,” Elizabeth wrote. She realized that, at that moment, her soul was free. It no longer held the burden of sin that it had carried for thirty years. Her soul had become pure! Her soul tasted the possibilities of eternal life, and she was overwhelmed by the thought.

This lifting of the burden of sin in Confession also may bring in its gentle wake new enlightenments. We are able to ponder truths with greater understanding and focus more clearly on those things that are most important in life. With daily examinations of conscience, and frequent Confession and Communion, we gradually see more and more of our own nothingness in comparison with God, and more and more of the glorious purity of His Light.

The oft-used analogy for Confession is that of an object coming out of darkness into the light. The closer it comes, the more visible its imperfections appear, because the light begins to illuminate what had been hidden in the dark. Rather than focusing on these imperfections, which can lead to despair, we should rejoice in the truth, the truth of ourselves and of Him Who is Truth, and “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

Confession is the way of perfection. Confession is a sign of promise, of hope. As the rainbow was to Noah, Confession is a sign, but the sign of Confession is more profound and promises Life Eternal. Confession is an invitation to join the ranks of the Church Triumphant!

# your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

## How do I figure out the grade for my students for Section A on the quarter reports?

Usually you should average the weekly quizzes or perhaps two or three end-of-chapter quizzes. If there are not specific quizzes, but only daily work for a course, then you can give a grade that is more like an overall average of the work done during the quarter. The grade does not have to be exact. For example, if a student generally receives a B on daily work, then give a B for the week or the quarter. You don't need to go through every single daily lesson and average them exactly.

The parent grade is one part of each quarter grade. Seton averages the grades of all quarter tests or assignments sent to Seton with the parent grade to get the final quarter grade.

If there are exceptions to this rule, as sometimes happens in high school courses, it should be explained in the introduction section of the lesson plan manual.

## I have an active wiggly little boy who does not want to sit still for his schoolwork. What do I do?

Despite the fact that institutional schools expect young children to sit quietly for long periods of time, this is simply not a reasonable expectation for many children, especially for boys. The idea should not be to suppress your son's natural need for activity, but to work with it.

Sometimes you can incorporate lessons with activity, such as oral work, quizzing on addition and subtraction facts, asking for missing words, assigning any recitation to show his knowledge. Alternate sit-down lessons with "activity" lessons. Give your son active things to do between lessons, even for only five or ten minutes, such as making his bed, putting away his toys or books, gathering or putting away laundry, jumping rope, sweeping the front porch steps, or any other useful activity.

## Do I need to keep attendance records for my school district or for Seton?

We cannot predict the future of local, state, or federal regulations or controls over homeschooling, but we suggest that all families keep attendance records, especially since some states want the information. Most states now are more concerned about standardized test scores, but that does not mean they won't want other information in the future. Keep attendance records for your school district in case they are requested later.

For many years, Seton has sent out paper attendance recording sheets. However, we have plans in the near future to create an online attendance record for each student, which will be accessible from your MySeton page. This should be more convenient for families since the records won't be liable to getting lost or damaged.

## How many times may I call for counseling? Is my time limited for each call?

There is no specific limit on the number of calls or length of calls. Counselors are happy to help students and parents by explaining assignments, grading policies, and even concepts with which a student may be having problems.

We hope that parents and students understand, however, that our academic counselors are counselors and not tutors. While, for example, a math counselor can explain long division, the math counselor cannot go through an entire page of long division with each student. A student who needs a great deal of personalized attention will likely need a tutor who can spend several hours a week with the student over a long period of time.

Besides the counselors, Seton offers many resources for students to learn the

material in the course. The first resource is the lesson plans, which explain how to use the books and other course materials, and contain suggestions for how to proceed through the course. When using the lesson plans, don't forget to read the introduction, which gives an overview of the course in general and often contains helpful information.

Another great resource for courses is your MySeton page. Almost every Seton course—especially high school—has some online resources, such as study guides for book analyses. It's a good idea to check what's available online for each course at the beginning of the year.

For general questions about a course, you can also look at our course-specific

message boards. If a parent or student has a general question about a course, it's entirely possible that someone else had the same question, and an answer has been posted already.

*While it can sometimes be helpful to have one's shortcomings pointed out, it's even better to receive assistance in dealing with the problem.*

## My husband says my main problem is that I am not organized.

While it can sometimes be helpful to have one's shortcomings pointed out, it's even better to receive assistance in dealing with the problem. If your husband is a great organizer, you should ask him to help you become better organized. He could have some good ideas, but he also needs to be realistic. In addition, it might help if he teaches certain classes, either in the evening or on weekends. He could be especially helpful in subject areas in which he is strong and perhaps you are not. If he cannot help with the teaching, perhaps he could help in other ways, taking the kids for a field trip, or helping the children or-

ganize their own schooling areas, or making a schedule for them to do certain jobs around the house that take up your time. When dads are involved in the homeschooling or the housework assignments, schooling goes more smoothly because the children see that both parents are committed to homeschooling.

All the children should have certain responsibilities, not only for their school work, but also for household duties. They should understand that if mother is struggling to get students to do their work, dinner will be late or certainly not prepared as they like. The children cannot expect a timely dinner if you need to spend an extra hour with students who have not done their assignments. Maybe after a few late dinners, or a few quickly-prepared meals, they might be more willing to work on their assignments when they should.

### **Our family recently went through the process of answering two surveys for Seton's accreditation process. What were the results?**

The survey results are currently undergoing analysis, and a more complete report will be available in the coming months. In general, responses were quite positive, though there were certainly some suggestions for how we might improve. It is quite clear that our families appreciate the Catholicism, academic rigor, and support services we provide with our program.

One of the frequent suggestions parents made was that Seton increase the digital resources that we offer. You'll be happy to hear that there are plans underway for developing our technology, providing interactive components to our online courses, producing more video resources, and generally increasing our online content over the next several years. This will all occur not as a replacement but in addition to our current services.

Regarding surveys generally, they are very helpful to us in determining what is working well and what needs to be improved. There will likely be more accreditation surveys over the next year, but also more surveys to specific groups of families and surveys about specific topics. When we create a survey at Seton, we do so with a concrete goal in mind. We try to make every question on a survey relevant to Seton's future plans. In other words, we don't glean information simply for the sake of

information, but so that we can act on the information we receive.

For this reason, it is very important that we reach a high participation rate from our families. To be statistically significant, a certain number of responses is necessary. But beyond this minimum, it's not just the survey responses, but the family comments which are important. We appreciate when families take time not only to check a box, but also to write out what they think.

So, we thank you for your past participation, and hope it will continue in the future.

### **What one practical New Year's Resolution for home schooling moms would you recommend?**

Try not to become distracted. Even if you need to stop to put in a load of laundry, go right back to what you were doing with your homeschooling project or teaching lesson. Help your children not to become distracted during the homeschooling class. The children certainly can take off ten minutes for a jump-rope activity, but don't let it go on or allow it to be a "stepping stone" to run outside and play ball when the math assignment needs to be done.

In the world outside the home, assignments need to be done at certain times. Employees just cannot stop and go out for a hamburger whenever they want. In the same way, it's good to practice self-control and self-mastery in the home, so that tasks can be completed in a timely way. This is not to say that schooling—or life—needs to be drudgery. It's actually the case that working hard to get done what needs to be done gives people more time to do what they enjoy.

### **I am so busy teaching my children, I don't think I should be involved with the state home schooling organization. My friends disagree among themselves about this.**

We all need to realize that while our local counties may try to make regulations about homeschooling, they are required to look at the state regulations. County school boards can not go against

state regulations (although counties do sometimes try to enforce requirements which go beyond state regulations). So it is important for all homeschooling parents to be aware of what is happening at the state legislative sessions which might concern homeschooling in

the state. In some states, there is a Catholic state organization, but if they are not keeping up to date on government regulations, you should join the Christian state organization. These usually are very strong in keeping track of what is happening in state legislatures, and many

even have paid lobbyists who report quickly on any proposed bills which could affect homeschoolers.

For many years in the United States, the value of religious freedom was a point of common agreement. In 1993, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which established strong statutory protection for religious freedom, passed the House of Representatives unanimously and passed the Senate 97 to 3. Now, however, with moral issues such as gay marriage and employers being required to provide contraception to employees, the United States seems to be moving away from that commitment. Catholic organizations are now having to file federal lawsuits in hopes of vindicating their religious rights. The state supreme court of New Mexico recently ruled that religious photographers may not refuse to photograph gay marriages, and that giving up one's religious beliefs is simply "the price of citizenship." The times being what they are, we all need to stay informed, and even get involved whenever we can.

An easy way to keep up on events in your state is to look on the website of the Home School Legal Defense Association at [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org).

*Help your children not to become distracted during the homeschooling class.*



**Dr. Mary Kay Clark** has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes two columns for the Seton Magazine and is the author of *Catholic Home Schooling*.



Image: CCA Currell

# Upon this Rock

by Jennifer Nelson

Pregnant and nauseous, I traveled with my husband, kids, and parents to Emmitsburg, Maryland, to sit on a rock. Yes, a rock. It's a long story that begins and ends with Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

As I sat on the rock from which Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton taught her first three students, with my first three "students" Gianna (6), Gabriel (4) and Lucianna (2) (with another pupil in the womb), I could not help but feel completely overwhelmed... and thankful. I was overwhelmed at God asking me to be the primary educator of my children, and thankful that He had brought Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton into my life to serve as a role model of being open to His Will.

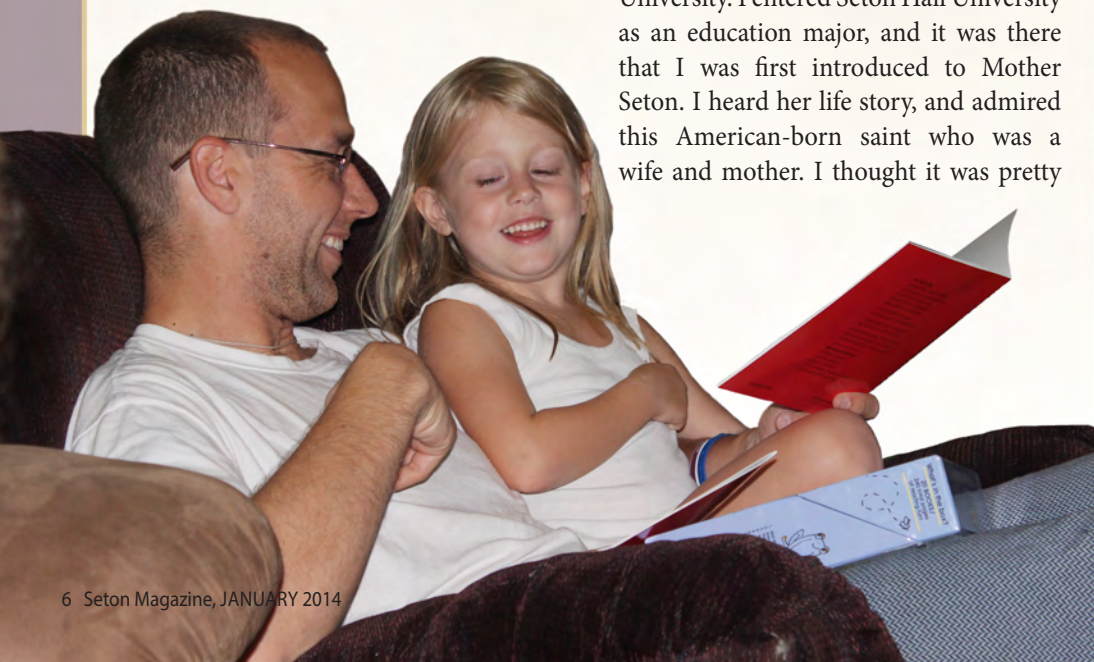
Sitting on this rock, teaching her students, did Mother Seton feel inadequate like I did? Did she wonder how she would do what God was asking of her? Mother Seton may have felt overwhelmed, and she may have felt inadequate, but her faith and trust led her to found the Sisters of Charity and the Parochial School System as we know it. Her quote resonated in my mind: "The first end I propose in our daily work is to do the Will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner He wills it; and thirdly, to do it because it is His Will." God's Will led me to Seton Home Study School.

## How It Began

My journey began back at Seton Hall University. I entered Seton Hall University as an education major, and it was there that I was first introduced to Mother Seton. I heard her life story, and admired this American-born saint who was a wife and mother. I thought it was pretty

wonderful that she and I shared a birthday (August 28th) and a middle name. Little did I know how much her life would serve as an example to me on following the Will of God.

I met my husband, Derek, at Seton Hall University. He was a Protestant (like Mother Seton had been) and a great Christian man who loved the Lord very much. I didn't know when we began dating that the Lord would use me as an instrument to bring Derek to the fullness of the Catholic Faith. In turn, God would use Derek to guide me to the belief that God created the perfect school, a school called the family.



I don't have any tips on how to homeschool like a pro, or a series of best practices in dealing with a screaming 2-year-old while trying to homeschool your other children. I don't have the answers because I am still learning! What I do know is that we just take each day as it comes to us, and we take care of what God has put in front of us for that day. We are in the process of learning how to crawl before we learn how to walk!

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton had a very challenging life! As homeschoolers, we all follow in her footsteps by accepting the crosses that come with doing what God wills for us. When Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton was becoming Catholic, her entire community of friends, relatives, and those around her began to ostracize her and condemn her for her decision.

In deciding to homeschool, many of us face the same persecution that she faced. People judge us and think that we are harming our children. They ask questions about how they will be “socialized” or ask if you are a certified teacher. When we do anything that is counter-cultural, we are called names or spoken about in whispers. As homeschoolers, we have to live the Gospel, and forgive our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, just as Mother Seton did. I always tell my children that if you want to live the way Jesus wants you to live, look at what the ‘world’ is doing, and do the exact opposite.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton followed what God willed, not what the world willed. Though it led to heartache and loss of friendships, it also led to a life full of God’s grace and new friendships that were truly Christ-centered. This has been an important lesson for our family.

## *Many Blessings*

Living in a Christ-centered home has helped our homeschooling efforts. We have been blessed to live in a home with my parents, both of whom support us in homes-



chooling. The children learn so much from their grandfather, Robert, who was a history major, and their grandmother, Lucy, who is a Catholic school teacher. My in-laws, Lois and Jim are good Christian role models for my children and support our decision to homeschool. Many of the priests at our parish of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rockaway, NJ, have been wonderful. Our Pastor, Fr.Sigmund Peplowski is a firm believer in family faith formation and the parents’ role as primary educators. He gave us desks for our homeschool room and provides spiritual guidance. Fr.Marcin came to bless our classroom on our first day!

Fr. Marcin constantly asks the children how school is going, telling them to keep up the good work when they make their report. Our children have gotten to know our priests well through attendance at daily Mass, and we have made wonderful friends among the people who attend daily Mass. They have become like a large extended family for us. Just as Mother Seton lost her worldly companions but found an extended family through her sisters and all the families she helped in her work as an educator and foundress, so we homeschoolers find our own new home when we leave the world behind.

If we homeschoolers follow faithfully in Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton’s footsteps, we will gain a deep devotion to the Eucharist, to Sacred Scripture, and to the Blessed Mother. These three devotions were essential to her success in doing all the work she did after becoming Catholic. Mother Seton was able to do God’s Will because she had a deep prayer life, and great fidelity to Him. We must follow in her footsteps and devote ourselves to God above all else. The laundry will get done and, somehow, dinner really will get on the table, but prayer is the most important task. If our children see us loving God above all else, that will be the best lesson they could learn, and if God has called us to teach our children, He will



assuredly give us the grace we ask of Him to do it well.

On my thirty-second birthday and at the two-hundred and thirty-ninth birthday celebration of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, my husband gifted me with an icon of Mother Seton that would be hung in our homeschool room. It says, “Our least action, when done for God, is precious to Him.” God sees every little toy picked up, every piece of laundry folded, every dinner that is put on the table, each prayer spoken, each diaper changed, and each act of love. In our homeschool, we try not to get discouraged or do grand deeds every day. We do the best we can do, and we know even if it is a little thing, if it is done with a lot of love, it is precious in God’s eyes.

As Catholics, we are called to be saints and to raise saints. I am so thankful for Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton’s shining example to all of us homeschoolers, and to Seton Home Study School for its Catholic curriculum that helps us to truly form our children in the faith. As my footsteps carried me away from the rock where Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton taught her first students, they brought me to the narrow path, one that leads to pure joy in knowing I am doing what the Father wills for me and for my family.



# Choosing the Right College



## How do I begin to figure out financing for college?

College is one of the most expensive investments in life. Whether the student or the parents foot the bill, rather large sums are involved. One of the most important steps in financing college begins by talking to the college financial office. They would be able to give information on available scholarship money and the qualifications, work-study programs, and grants.

Another important step is getting on the Internet and doing a scholarship search there. A program such as [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) will allow you to enter family information and filter scholarships to present programs which apply to your situation. An important step is to take the PSAT test in October of 11th grade. This test is the benchmark used to determine National Merit Scholarships. Many states have funds available for students who will attend college within the home state; check with your state Department of Education.

Parents with a young, growing family often begin to put a small sum aside each paycheck for an education fund. Such a fund begun at a new child's birth could amount to a tidy sum when college time rolls around. Check with employers, your parish and your diocese, as well as any professional organizations or unions. They often have programs.

In addition, fraternal organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus or the Elks, often have scholarship opportunities for members' children. Yet another approach is for the student to plan on taking a bit longer to finish the degree. By taking fewer courses, the student would be able to work and thus incur much less debt during the academic career.



## Is a campus visit absolutely necessary?

The campus visit is not absolutely necessary, but it is usually a very good idea. There really is no good way to know the atmosphere of a given college without personally checking the school. The advertisements of a college would emphasize the positive aspects of the school, of course. The campus visit will allow a student to see what actually happens on the campus and to ask questions of those already enrolled there. Most colleges will arrange for a visit lasting one or two days. This will allow the prospective student to attend a few classes and, perhaps more important, discover how students behave outside class hours. The visitor might be pleasantly surprised to find the students to be studious and responsible, obviously aware of why they are in college in the first place.

On the other hand, the school might be a riotous bedlam, a place where any serious study is all but impossible. The visit should clarify if a student's mind and morals would be in danger at any particular college. There may be varied reactions to the visit. A student might be able to say fervently, "No way!" The reaction might be, "Hey, this place already feels like home!" Either way, valuable information is gained. The campus visit is strongly recommended!



We at Seton are very excited about a new initiative called the Seton College Partnership Program. Learn more on our website!







with Bob Wiesner

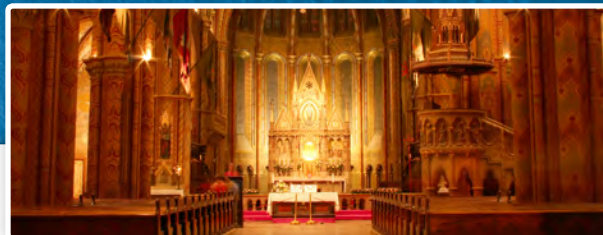


## How do I determine if a college is right academically?

The interests of the student will largely determine whether a given college is a good fit. A young person interested in a financial career would not be well-advised to choose the Peabody Conservatory of Music! A great deal of time and effort will be saved by concentrating the search on those colleges which offer degrees interesting to the student.

A young person does not necessarily know what he or she wishes to do in life, of course. An undecided student may wish to enter a liberal arts college with a wide variety of majors. More than likely, while a student is still working through the general degree requirements, some course will attract the attention of the student and lead to a decision on the major.

Another approach for the undecided student is to attend a two-year institution for the general requirements. This will still expose the student to a variety of courses, but will also result in substantial savings on tuition. Most four-year colleges will accept general requirement courses from junior colleges. The student will most likely still be able to live at home as well, eliminating room and board costs.



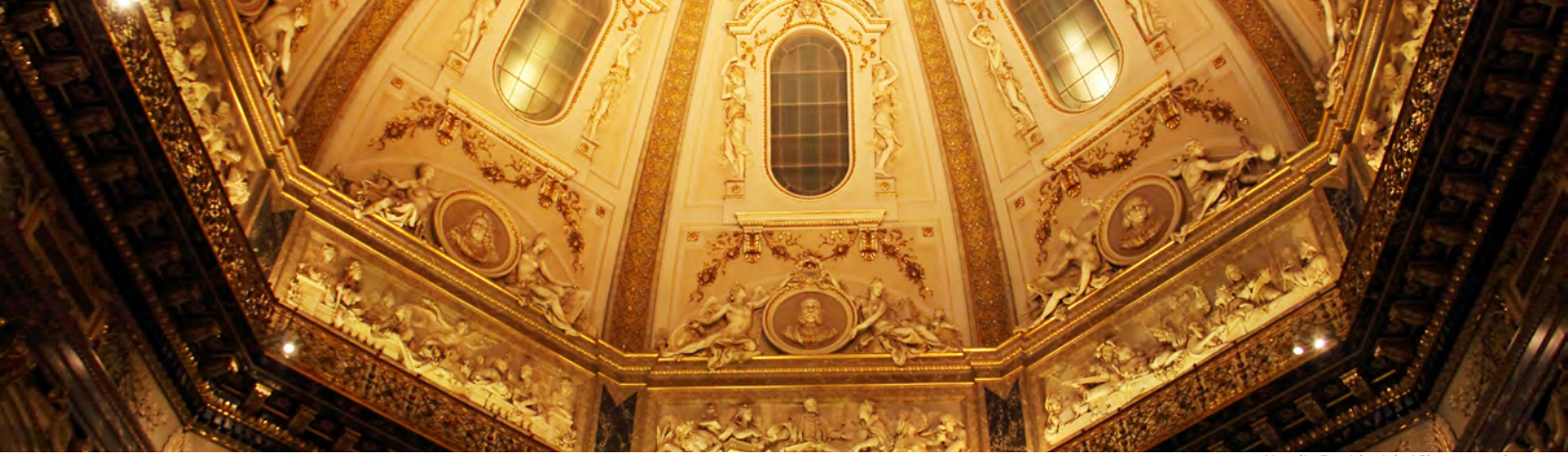
## What are the spiritual qualifications of the college?

By far, the most important consideration for any Catholic student entering college will be the possibilities for living and furthering the life of faith. Gaining three doctoral degrees is of no use if a soul is lost in the process! So, it is vitally important for a student to determine what the Catholic facilities are like on the campus. A visit to the chapel and a meeting with the chaplain is an excellent idea. There should be few questions about the spiritual life on campus if a Catholic college is being considered, although even then a good look at the services is warranted. Most secular colleges have a Newman Center which serves the needs of Catholic students.

Some Newman Centers are superb and can boast of many converts among the non-Catholics at the school. Others might be something of an after-thought in the diocese, maybe even served by only a part-time priest. These latter may be a bit problematic; a full-time priest entirely dedicated to the spiritual lives of students is of great importance. Try to attend Mass on the campus visit and perhaps even go to Confession; this is the best way to learn if the campus will serve the needs of Catholics at the college. If a college is likely to lead to spiritual damage or neglect, that college is emphatically not a good choice!

As with any big decision, a student should accompany decisions about college with a great deal of prayer. A helpful guide would be the guide to colleges published by the Cardinal Newman Society. The advice of a spiritual director or pastor, one's parents, and other reliable, trusted adults should be given earnest consideration.





Natalia Davidovich / Shutterstock.com

# Museums

BY JOHN CLARK

A few months ago, I wrote an article dealing with blaming yourself as a Catholic parent whose children have veered off course. In it, I told the story of a man who spent an afternoon in a famous museum. The man walked around and observed the paintings of Raphael and the sculptures of Michelangelo. After spending four hours in the museum—unimpressed by anything—he decided he had seen enough. On his way out, he told the museum curator, “I’m leaving. I haven’t seen anything good here today.”

Donning a facial expression of sadness, pathos, and a tinge of anger, the curator responded, “My good man, this art was not on trial. You were!”

I probably received more comments about this article than any other over the years. Several people approached me to tell me how much this meant to them. I knew that people needed to hear it, but I underestimated how much they needed to hear it. It’s sad to think that so many parents have been tormented over the years, blaming themselves for their children’s mistakes and failings. And I wanted to take this opportunity to add an addendum to the story.

Obviously, walking through a museum is allegorical to being shown the Faith, and rejecting it. But I want you parents to remember something. This trip through the museum is not a one-time event: it happens every day.

In my own life, I remember going to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, when I was about twelve years old. I saw the masterpieces, but I was

more interested in eating lunch or doing something else that I considered fun. However, my story didn’t end when I was twelve. Thirty years later, I went back to this same museum, and stood and stared in wonder, recognizing now that I was in the presence of breathtaking beauty.

My spiritual life has gone pretty much the same way. I see something today that I didn’t see yesterday, and by the grace and mercy of God, I’ll see more tomorrow.

Maybe the story should continue, and go like this.

As the man started to walk out of the museum, the curator ran out to the road to stop him. The curator put his arm on the man’s shoulder, smiled, and said:

“I’m sorry that you didn’t see the beauty in the museum today. Some people see it right away, and each day they come here, they find something wonderful that they missed the day before. For others, it takes much longer. But tomorrow is a new day, and we open bright and early. I’ll be very happy to see you then.”

In many ways, whether or not we hear Him, that is what God tells us every day.

Why doesn’t God grant us all flashes of spiritual insight? Why does He seem to let some people stray more than others? Why doesn’t everyone see the beauty, the compassion, and the mercy of God?

I have a theory, and it goes like this.

To use a chess analogy, salvation is about the “endgame.” Catholic spiritu-

ality recognizes this. Jesus instituted a sacrament for the dying, and we pray for a happy death. Every time we say a Hail Mary, we’re asking for Mary’s prayers “at the hour of our death.” The final moments are emphasized because we will be greatly tempted at the end of our lives. In the final moments, the devil will tempt us with the idea that what he offers is greater than what God offers.

We’re not sure how we will be tempted, but God is omniscient. He has always known exactly how the devil will tempt us in our final moment.

We also know that God brings good out of evil. Maybe the good is that those who have strayed from the Faith already know about the empty promises of the devil. Those who have once fallen away have experienced the hell of a life without friendship with God. Maybe they will realize that their attraction for sin has held their happiness in check their whole lives, but now they can choose happiness.

In this final moment, when they are forced to make a decision between good and evil, they will bring out their Queen. And the prayers of the “Hail Mary” will be answered.

We have every reason to hope in the mercy of God for ourselves and for our children. We have every reason to believe that the fruits of His mercy will be seen today, tomorrow, and forever.



**John Clark**, a Christendom College graduate, holds a degree in Political Science and Economics. He is a popular writer and speaker at family and homeschooling conferences.

# 2014 Conferences Listing

Catholic homeschooling conferences where Seton will offer materials for preview and sale, as well as a \$30-per-child enrollment discount (grades 1-12)

More about venues, vendors, and contact information at:  
[www.setonhome.org/conferences](http://www.setonhome.org/conferences)

## **TN, Nashville - March 14, 2014 (Fri.)**

IHM Tennessee Homeschool & Parent Conference - Aquinas College

## **NY, Long Island - March 21, 2014 (Fri.)**

IHM Long Island Homeschool & Parent Conference.

## **LA, Covington - March 29, 2014 (Sat.)**

Roman Catholic Homeschool Association of Louisiana "Catholic Homeschooling: A Way of Life"

## **FL, Jacksonville - April 3, 2014 (Thurs.)**

IHM Jacksonville Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **GA, Atlanta**

### **April 10-11, 2014 (Thurs.-Fri.)**

IHM Georgia Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **MO, St. Louis**

### **April 11-12, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

2014 St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference

## **AZ, Phoenix - April 12, 2014 (Sat.)**

2014 Arizona Catholic Homeschool Conference

## **TX, Houston**

### **April 25-26, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

IHM Houston Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **CA, Santa Clara**

### **April 25-26, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

NCCHC (Northern California Catholic Homeschooling Conference)

## **WI, Milwaukee - May 2, 2014 (Fri.)**

IHM Wisconsin Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **IN, Indianapolis**

### **May 2-3, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

2014 Quo Vadis Catholic Homeschool Conference

## **MD, Mt. Airy**

### **May 16-17, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

IHM Maryland Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **NC, Charlotte**

### **May 23-24, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

IHM Carolina Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **NJ, Berlin - May 24, 2014 (Sat.)**

15th Annual CHAPLET Catholic Homeschool Conference

## **NY, Buffalo - May 30, 2014 (Fri.)**

IHM Buffalo Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **MN, St. Paul**

### **May 30-31, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

16th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair

## **PA, Pittsburgh - June 6, 2014 (Fri.)**

IHM Pittsburgh Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **KS, Kansas City**

### **June 6-7, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers 2014

## **TX, San Antonio**

### **June 6-7, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

2014 San Antonio Catholic Homeschool Conference

## **MI, Detroit**

### **June 13-14, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

IHM Michigan Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **VA, Fredericksburg**

### **June 20-21, 2014 (Fri.-Sat.)**

IHM National Homeschool & Parent Conference

## **CA, Costa Mesa - June 21, 2014 (Sat.)**

SCCHE (Southern California Catholic Home Educators) 15th Annual Conference & Curriculum Fair



## COLLEGE ISN'T FOR EVERYONE

BY BOB WIESNER

Seton is clearly a rigorous academic program, designed to enable students to excel in college. But, for any number of good reasons, many Seton graduates do not continue their studies after high school. Truth to tell, a liberal arts college education really is not mandatory for success in life or salvation; students who choose to enter the work force or the trades after high school are not therefore second-class citizens!

Some years ago, a book appeared discussing the theme, "Do what you love; the money will follow." Anyone who has a passion for a certain trade or artistic endeavor will almost automatically do splendid work and make a success of his chosen career. People will always recognize superior workmanship and will reward it with their support.

But money isn't everything, either. A person who takes pride in his labor and allies it with God will also develop a solid spiritual life. Any well-done work accomplished for the glory of God and the service of neighbor is a holy task, blessed and sanctified just as abundantly (or even more so!) as the cerebral work of academia. The world would be in a sorry state indeed without morally upright and competent electricians, mechanics, and plumbers.

The very briefest survey of Church history will reveal that carpentry holds a certain pride of place in Christian labor, followed closely by the fishing industry. Then there is the career of St. Matthew... but that clearly is another story!

# The Marks of a Quality Catholic Education

BY GINNY SEUFFERT

Every Catholic homeschooler knows the marks of the church – One, holy, catholic and apostolic. We recite them in the Creed at Mass, and they remind us of the nature of our Church. In much the same way, Catholic homeschooling has marks and characteristics too. In keeping with our traditions regarding education, the marks of Catholic homeschooling are *excellent, orderly, and Catholic*, and each of these should in some way characterize our family learning.

## Excellence

Beginning with monastery and cathedral schools, the Church expanded the number of children of all backgrounds who could receive a formal education. The Catholic Church founded the university system in Europe – the roots of American higher learning. Rigorous standards of the parish school system in the late 19th and early 20th century America lifted the children of Irish, German, Polish, and Italian immigrants out of poverty in the tenements, to comfortable lives in mainstream society – often in just one generation!

In the last quarter of the 20th century, parents, remembering the excellence of their own Catholic educations, refused to settle for anything less for their children, and brought them home. Before Seton began to publish Catholic materials, mothers were scouring garage sales to purchase discontinued Catholic textbooks that would demand the best from their children. Pioneering homeschool parents committed their lives to continuing the Church's tradition of academic distinction, and now we can do no less.

*Excellent* comes from the verb “to excel”. For students to excel, they should do their best to achieve as much as they can achieve. Excelling does not mean the same thing for each student. In fact, each student has different talents and abilities, and an excellent program should challenge each student, regardless of talent level. Since homeschooling is individualized

instruction, it is uniquely suited to provide this challenging educational experience for each child.

Having taught as many as seven children in a given academic year, I know how challenging it can be to maintain high standards. Nevertheless, we must always keep in mind that this is our God-given vocation, and it is worthy of our very best efforts.

## Order

In the Bible, order and right thinking are seen as being close to God, while confusion and disorder are seen as moving away from Him. In the Old Testament, the confusion of the Tower of Babel scattered the peoples; in the New Testament, the speaking of tongues brought scattered peoples together.

Parents report that Seton's lesson plans are a prime motivation for enrolling, but every family, enrolled or not, needs to have a carefully planned school year. Even if you simply divide your text into four quarters, and assign the appropriate number of pages daily, you and your children must know what is expected. Students need some sort of check-off list so they can plan their days and know when they have accomplished the right amount of work. To ensure homeschool success, remember the business adage: “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.”

Then, remember another adage: “A place for everything and everything in its place.” Provide each child with a bin or shelf to store schoolbooks, and make sure the materials are returned there at the end of each school day. Place pens, pencils, and crayons in cups near their workspace. Keep folders to store each child's completed tests or required assignments in a safe place. Have one drawer or bin for staplers, rulers, protractors, and other tools. Keep your organization simple, but insist that materials are stored where they are supposed to be.

Finally, although many busy moms cannot have a home from the cover of *House Beautiful*, clean and tidy is within our reach. Make sure that each child has a chore (pick up the floor, sweep, set or clear the table, load the dishwasher) that he or she understands how to do, and then insist that the job is done. Many parents find twenty minutes to tidy up at lunch, and again after the school day, to be helpful. Junk all over the place does not lend itself to an orderly, serene environment.

## Faith

As mentioned above, we should permeate our curriculum with the Faith because God is the Creator of all things, so when we study the world we are really asking Him to reveal Himself to us. Important discoveries in science, or events in history, are the Holy Spirit working among men, who either cooperate with or refuse, His grace. We should include religion because stories of holy saints who have loved and served God, touch the heart, lift the mind, and urge our children to accept inspiration of the Spirit.

Teach Catholic students the important contributions of those who have shared our Faith. The list is far too long to enumerate here, but consider: Nicolaus Copernicus (the first person to accurately describe the heliocentric solar system), Gregor Mendel (father of genetics), Rene Descartes (father of modern philosophy and analytical geometry), Louis Pasteur (father of bacteriology), and Antoine Lavoisier (father of chemistry). Faithful Catholics led the way in Western scientific research, and our children need to know that.

Catholic education has been successful because it is based on the truth of the Faith, insists on the best from both teacher and student, and occurs in a place of peace and order.



Ginny Seuffert has been a leading writer and speaker about homeschooling and family management for more than two decades. She has given hundreds of talks at conferences and has written scores of articles on everything from discipline to home management.

# Memorize Your Catechism

Shakespeare in one scene has Hamlet walking up and down in the castle with a book open in his hand. When Polonius comes up and politely asks, “What is it that you are reading?” Hamlet replies, “Words, words, words.”

Until children have “over-learned,” that is, have memorized their catechism, it is just words, words, words. It takes time for the meaning to soak in. But memorizing must come first.

In order to understand, a person must know words and their meanings. To understand well, he must know the exact meaning of the words. But it is not enough to know words, rather one must be able to instantly recall the meaning of the words lest he read on and on and on, getting no meaning out of it!

Each field of study, such as economics or politics or even sports, has its own special words, or vocabulary. A person working in any field of study must be familiar with the terminology of that field. How much more we ought to be trained in the knowledge of Jesus and Heaven!

With language, the key to all human activities, proficiency is basic. For example, the work on the Tower of Babel was suspended, was made impossible in fact, when the workers could no longer understand each others’ words!

A person who needs a foreign language is fully aware that sloppy knowledge of the other language will not do while visiting a foreign country! A person with an exact knowledge and understanding of that language is much easier to understand by others who speak the language. That person with great understanding of a foreign language can conduct day-to-day business. He has honed or fine-tuned his memory skills by learning another language. Such a person is not only valuable to others, especially his employers or others he represents, but he also has a richer appreciation of the foreign lan-



guage and even the culture on which was based the language.

Language study is memory-recall training, and it demands mastery of each word and its possible meanings in different situations, in order to use it correctly in conversation. This requires drill, drill, drill in recitation. If you cannot express clearly what you think you know, you still do not know it. In learning another language, it is extremely helpful to practice with another student and recite the lessons.

Recite, recite, recite! Besides a foreign language, other subjects profit from the same method. If a student has the opportunity to tutor others, he immediately observes that he must explain and repeat, explain and repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat.

The language of God is doctrine, which is contained in the catechisms. In order to live as God wants, we Catholics must know the catechism, which is the language of Catholic teachings, or doctrine. The evidence of this is in the Gospels. Jesus reminded the Jews in the Temple: “I was with you daily in the Temple teaching.” Jesus was teaching, His listeners were learning. Jesus was teaching them and us.

What we learn to understand in the catechism is most important. It is important to know “The Blessed Trinity is three divine Persons in one God.” This is hugely more important than memorizing that thirty-six

inches equals a yard. Everyone needs to know that “The Mass is the unbloody Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary.”

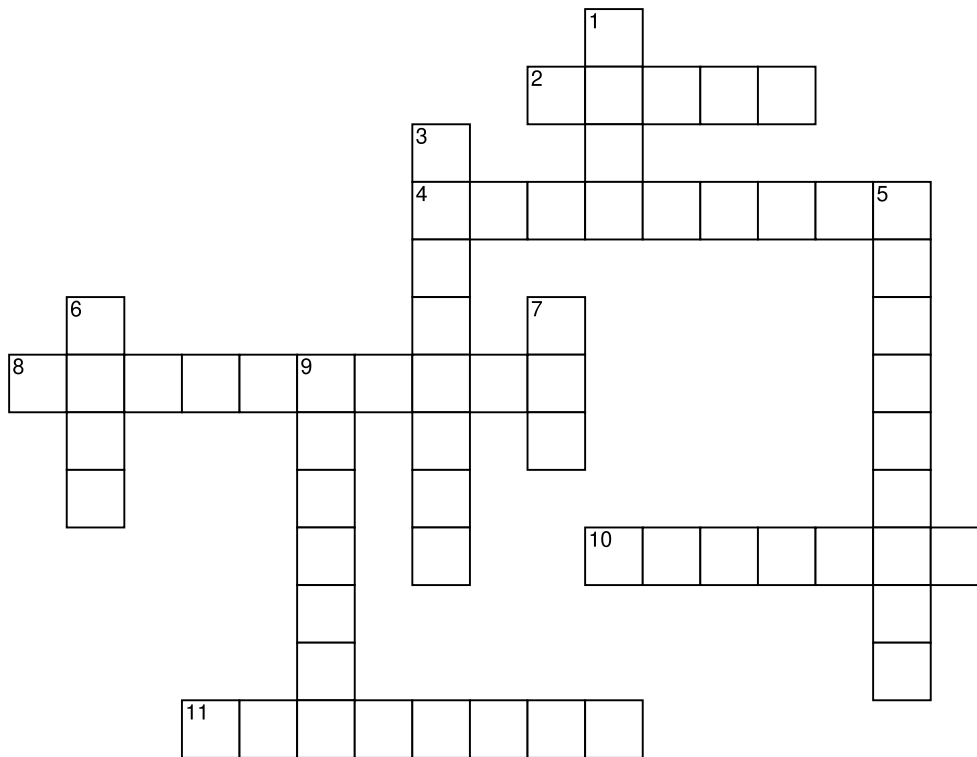
However, it is not enough to know. We must know what we know with certainty. This comes about with thorough memorization and through living the teachings of Jesus. What we learn in childhood should continue to grow and to develop all through life. Faith, like other things in life, requires practice.

It is by Catholic dogma in our catechism that we know what we must believe, and in knowing this, we know what Jesus wants us to learn. By memorizing the catechism questions and answers, which is the deposit of our Catholic Faith, we can form our character and our personality in the pattern of Godliness according to Jesus Christ. This is especially true if we live by what we have learned.

Be assured, the Catholic catechism is Heaven’s wisdom and knowledge passed down to the Catholic Church by the Holy Spirit. Jesus declared, “Everything I have from the Father, I have made known to you.” And again, Jesus said, “The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will recall to your minds all that I have made known to you.”

How wonderful to know with certainty the eternal truths of Heaven through our Catholic catechism!

# THE FOUR MARKS OF THE CHURCH



## ACROSS

- 2 There are four \_\_\_\_ of the Catholic Church by which all men can recognize it as the true Church.
- 4 This mark means the Catholic Church was founded by Christ on the Apostles, and the Church is governed by their lawful successors.
- 8 The Church encourages us to go to \_\_\_\_ frequently.
- 10 The second commandment of the Church is to fast and to \_\_\_\_ on the days appointed.
- 11 This mark (also known as universal) means the Catholic Church teaches all nations all the truths revealed by God.

## DOWN

- 1 The first commandment of the Church is to assist at Mass on all Sundays and holy \_\_\_\_ of obligation.
- 3 The sixth commandment of the Church is to observe the laws of the Church concerning \_\_\_\_.
- 5 The fourth commandment of the Church is to receive Holy \_\_\_\_ during the Easter time.
- 6 The Catholic Church has this mark because it was founded by Jesus Christ and provides the means of leading a holy life.
- 7 The Catholic Church has this mark because all its members profess the same faith and have the same sacrifice and sacraments.
- 9 The fifth commandment of the Church is to contribute to the \_\_\_\_ of the Church.

INTRODUCING THE...

# SETON HERITAGE COLLECTION

In celebration of her feast day, January 4, and to encourage devotion to her, we offer this new selection of religious articles and books related to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

See more online at [www.setonbooks.com/setonheritage](http://www.setonbooks.com/setonheritage)



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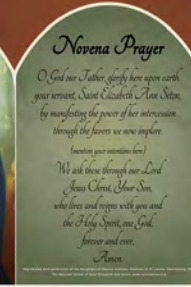
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Magnet  
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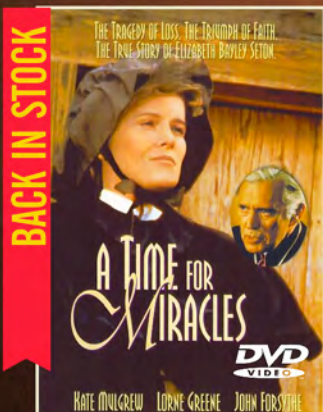
8x6" Square Diptych  
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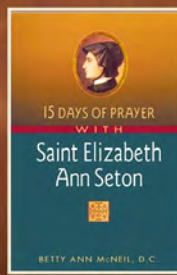
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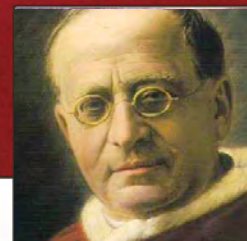
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# PAPAL WISDOM



## *On Christian Marriage*

Let it be repeated as an immutable and inviolable fundamental doctrine that matrimony was not instituted or restored by man but by God. Not by man were the laws made to strengthen and confirm and elevate marriage, but by God, the Author of nature, and by Christ Our Lord by Whom nature was redeemed; and hence these [marriage] laws cannot be subject to any human decrees or to any contrary pact, even of the spouses themselves.

Yet, although matrimony is of its very nature of divine institution, the human will, too, enters into it and performs a most noble part. For each individual marriage, inasmuch as it is a conjugal union of a particular man and woman, arises only from the free consent of each of the spouses; and this free act of the will, by which each party hands over and accepts those rights proper to the state of marriage, is so necessary to constitute true marriage, that it cannot be supplied by any human power...

Therefore, the sacred partnership of true marriage is constituted both by the will of God and the will of man. From God comes the very institution of marriage, the ends [purpose] for which it was instituted, the laws that govern it, the blessings that flow from it. Man, through generous surrender of his own person made to another for the whole span of life, becomes, with the help and cooperation of God, the author of each particular marriage, with the duties and blessings annexed to it from divine institutions.

*Pope Pius XI*