

# Seton MAGAZINE

*"Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church"*

JANUARY 2013



## WITH SETON ON THE SEAS

ONE FAMILY'S EXTRAORDINARY  
HOMESCHOOLING ADVENTURE

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**Did you know?**



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's body is venerated at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

**Vol. 1 No. 7, January 2013**

The Seton Magazine (formerly Seton Newsletter) is published monthly by

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**Subscription Information**

Subscription is included with your enrollment.

Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year or \$25 for two years.

Free online at www.setonhome.org/archive

On the cover: Katie, Jamie, & Chay McWilliam in front of the St. Mary Statue outside the site of "St. Mary's House" near Ephesus, Turkey (2012).

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



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**There is a Great Story**

behind every homeschooling family



Homeschooling is an adventure, and each family who embarks on the adventure has a unique story, touched and guided by Divine Providence.

**We'd like to feature your story.** If you have a story, or would like to share part of your homeschooling adventure with us, please contact Christine Smitha at csmitha@setonhome.org.

**SHARE YOUR STORY AND INSPIRE ANOTHER FAMILY!**

## Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School

# Dr. Mary Kay Clark



## New Year's Resolutions

As we begin the new year of 2013—a year in which scores of Catholic organizations are suing the federal government simply to secure basic religious freedom—we can easily be anxious about the state of the world. Rather than look around us, perhaps we should look within ourselves and meditate upon our own spiritual life and that of our family.

While we recognize the value of our decision to teach our children at home, we also need to look at how our spiritual life is proceeding. Our New Year's resolutions need to resolve to avoid the weaknesses of the past year and to move forward to the job of making our family life more holy and more focused on living the life Jesus has called us to live.

The Three Wise Men followed the star to the Holy Family, but have we ever considered that others saw the same star? Perhaps others were not open enough in their hearts to recognize the signs that could lead them to eternal life. Even when the Three Wise Men were in the evil King Herod's court, they kept their minds and hearts on their goal. They were not impressed with the gold and the worldliness of the king's court, but rather were determined to follow the golden star above in the heavens to the King who lay in the golden hay of a poor manger.

The religious leaders, supposedly the wise men of Herod's court, knew where the true King was to be born, but they did not follow the Three Wise Men. They chose to remain behind in King Herod's court, rather than put forth the effort to travel to find the King of Kings. Were those religious leaders too busy with earthly things, earthly concerns? Were they afraid that if they met the true King, they would need to change their lives?



We just celebrated and are still celebrating the coming of the King of Heaven and Earth, the King who gave us life, the King who gave us all the joys and blessings we have ever had. As we start the New Year, we must thank Him who has so blessed us. He gave us His Light to understand what is happening around us and how we must protect our children from the false values being promoted by our society.

Living in today's America, we see that Truth has been clouded by an acceptance of all ideas, whether right or wrong. Absolute values certainly are not accepted in the public squares of America, unless they are values which denigrate and marginalize Christian beliefs.

Many have left the Church; many others stay in the Church but ignore the moral teachings. Many go to Holy Communion, but few go to Confession. Many in the Church vote for leaders who promise to govern contrary to God's law.

This month, on January 4th, we celebrate the feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. She was not born Catholic, but sought the truth by daily reading and studying the Bible. While in Rome, she came to see the Truths of the Bible in the Catholic Church. Willing to leave her Protestant friends, she became Catholic and began teaching her own children the Faith. Eventually, she started a little school to teach other children along with her own.

The most important truths to learn are the Truths of the holy Catholic Faith. One of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's biographers wrote: "No teaching of Elizabeth Seton could be devoid of religion." A school which does not teach the truths

of Faith is a school which leaves out those things which are most necessary. What is true generally in life is true also in education: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

In this month of January, let us remember to look up at the golden stars; let us look up to Heaven for the light that Jesus has so graciously provided for us, the light of understanding our Faith, the light of understanding the importance of teaching the Faith to our children.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, you spent your life in prayer; you looked for the Truth in the Bible; you found the Truths of the Bible in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Help us to protect the Catholic Truths for our children. Help us to continue to teach our children. Help us to persevere in spite of the lack of Christian values in the society surrounding us. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us, for the Church, and for our children.



# Your Questions...

answered by Dr. Clark

## Virtual Views

On Facebook, we asked:

**What is your favorite thing about the Seton curriculum?**

The Catholicism and how organized it is, dividing workbooks by week, for example, also the little notes the graders put on my kid's tests. I feel like they truly care for them.

-Kristin B.

That the lesson plans are so detailed and easy to follow.

-Leo L.

The counseling and complete curriculum were the reason I chose Seton in the first place for our family, but I am now so delighted with the lesson plans that I never want to try to teach without them. The flexibility of being able to adjust everything for my kids makes my life so easy, why would anyone ever want to do this any other way? Seton makes my home school.

-Mona C.

That every subject is saturated in the Faith.

-Virginia H.

*continued on page 10*

### **How important is it that I stay on the Seton schedule?**

The Seton lesson plans set a schedule based on what we believe is realistic for the student to accomplish each day. In addition, the schedule is planned so that the student finishes the course in about nine months. However, a great advantage in homeschooling is for the parent to adjust the schedule according to the abilities of the individual child. If a child can do two days of math assignments in one day, let him do it. On the other hand, the same child may need to take two days to do one assignment in English.

You may want to write dates or times next to the lessons in the course manual, or you may want to write abbreviated assignments in the Lesson Planner. Seton also provides adjustable lesson plans available for parents on the Seton website.

Keep in mind, however, that while assignments should be adjusted for the individual student's abilities, sometimes lessons are not being done in a timely manner to make way for social or sports activities. It may be important for children to have some of these activities, but when students reach high school, they may be very unhappy that they have fallen behind in their learning skills. You and your children should stay in daily prayer so that you are making the best decisions for each subject for each day.

### **What is the best way to prepare my high school, or junior high student, to take a test?**

Long ago, the young nuns encouraged us to pray together for remembering our lessons and doing well on our tests. They often told us stories about a saint with an experience related to our present situation. We always wrote a J.M.J. at the top of our papers and tests as a constant reminder that we wanted Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to help us remember our studies. Teaching your students to pray about everything important, including their school assignments and tests, is essential.

For most courses, simply studying the material should be sufficient. For the upper grades, parents should look over the test and emphasize to the student what should be studied while not giving the specific questions. Teachers do this all the time in the classroom: "Be sure you understand the reasons for the Industrial Revolution." "Make sure you understand the difference between a proper noun and a common noun." "Be sure you can diagram adverbial and adjectival phrases." With such advice, the student is not being given the sentences to dia-

gram, but realizes he needs to review those two kinds of phrases.

In some subjects, like history and science, encourage your student to make an outline of the chapter, which should be done as your student reads and studies the chapter. You might look over the outline to make sure the important points are included. You might need to add that your child needs to memorize some of the definitions. You might tell your student that he should know the various sections of the inner parts of the Earth.

In most cases, if the student has highlighted the chapter, made an outline, and studied the various definitions, dates, and people, he should do well on the tests. For high school students, highlighting and outlining are essential for good grades as well as preparing for college.

### **How do I teach my student to recognize important points to underline or do an outline of important points?**

Most textbooks have either Section Reviews or Chapter Reviews. These review questions show clearly what are the important points to remember in a section or chapter. The student should underline these words or phrases as a notation to study these. It is a good idea for the student to actually write out or copy the words and phrases for the answers to the Review questions, thereby helping the brain to keep these in memory. The student should read the whole chapter aloud, at least twice, which also helps the brain to keep the ideas in memory.

### **How do I motivate my students to stay on schedule?**

The best way to motivate students to stay on schedule, at least the schedule you set for them, is to require the student to finish up the week's work on Saturday. This needs to be enforced, meaning the student cannot go to a scheduled sports activity or whatever is scheduled for Saturday. You will find that if you do this just one time, the student realizes you are serious and will carry out the "decree" in spite of objections!

This procedure also holds true for disobedience. In other words, if you tell your son to stop teasing his little sister, and he continues, you must give the punishment you previously stated. The punishment must be immediate, at that very moment if possible, (not on the following Saturday or Sunday) and must be enforced. It could be going without dessert or not going to the football game that afternoon. The reason most children are disobedient these days is that there

is no “enforcement,” that is, threatened consequences never happen.

**We are in a rural area and my children miss having interaction with other children.**

Some homeschooling moms in this situation start a small group for homeschooled children. In a rural area, there might be only one or two other families, but even so, there could be some every-other-week activity. It could be something like science projects to do together, or art projects in anticipation of Christmas or Easter. It could be a field trip to a local orchard or dairy farm.

**I would like to use a different science book or obtain books from the library. Do I need to teach the same subjects as are in the Seton science book?**

In general, yes. The states have set up the science courses in the schools so that the years alternate between the living sciences and the non-living sciences. So if you don't want to use our 8th grade Life Science book, we still suggest you teach Life Science in grade 8. The high school would expect that.

If you like another science book better than ours, you certainly can use any book you want, but for a grade on the Seton report card, your student needs to take the Seton tests.

While we have accepted other Catholic or Christian science books as alternatives for science, this would not be true in all subjects. Our books are Catholic because we have a definite perspective. We have the agenda as outlined in Vatican documents very clearly, that the entire curriculum is supposed to be Catholic. On the Seton website, under the Seton Mission, we quote extensively from Church documents that emphasize the importance of a Catholic curriculum. The following is one paragraph from the catechism:

“For the mere fact that a school gives some religious instruction (often extremely stunted), does not bring it into accord with the rights of the Church and of the Christian family, or make it a fit place for Catholic students. To be this, it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and text-books in every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that Religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth's entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well. To use the words of Leo XIII: ‘It is necessary not only that religious instruction be given to the young at certain fixed times, but also

that every other subject taught, be permeated with Christian piety. If this is wanting, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade and warm the hearts of masters and scholars alike, little good can be expected from any kind of learning, and considerable harm will often be the consequence.” (80)

**Why should it be important to have my children enrolled in an accredited school?**

Many public school officials are not happy that some children are not in their schools. After all, federal and state funding is based on the number of enrollments. Having your children enrolled in an accredited school, especially one recognized by other educational agencies and state departments of education, lessens the potential of having school district attempts to pressure families. Our accreditation comes from a national and international or trans-regional association. We have been blessed that the accreditation people have been friendly, though demanding of paperwork and showing continued progress.

If you look on our website at [www.seton-home.org](http://www.seton-home.org), and click on the drop-down menu for About Seton, and scroll down to Accreditation, you can read more about what accreditation means. Notice that the accreditation agency does not tell us what to teach in our curriculum, but rather that we do teach the usual courses for students to be able to enter college. Colleges are very interested in having students come from accredited high schools.

**What is your opinion regarding our freedom to homeschool under the current administration?**

Right now, the freedom of parents to teach their own children is supported by the Supreme Court. State laws have varying regulations, but so far, parents have been fairly free in teaching their children at home. There certainly are dangers looming with this administration, but we need to stay in constant prayer, along with our children. Because we are accredited by a national association, we likely have a better “position” than an unaccredited school.

**My son turned nineteen, and has fallen behind in his studies due to some serious family problems. Do you have some sort of fast track so he can get a diploma and start college?**

In spite of family problems, an education still means an education. Students will not be successful in college if they do not have a good high school education. To “fast track” high school will result in a “fast track” of dismissal from college. Perhaps a college would keep a

failing student to keep tuition coming in, but the ability to learn more than in a high school, is not likely.

**My parents don't live in the area, but I miss having their help and support. Do you have any suggestions?**

There are a surprising number of older women who are not working but would like to be helpful to someone in some way. The best way to find good Catholic older women is through your parish or nearby parishes. Many church bulletins list the names of people active in the parish, who likely know other women who might be interested in helping you with the teaching or perhaps even babysitting or helping with light house chores. Most of them probably do not want any pay, but you might offer something anyway. If you have very young children, just having someone come in twice a week to help with the chores would be a blessing.

Keep in mind that your children can start helping around the house even at the age of three. They can sort the laundry, put away their own clothes in the right drawer, make their own bed (with a simple comforter), put away their own toys in their own toy box, throw away broken toys, set the table, clear the table, sweep, dust, pick books up off the floor, and so on and so on.

**I am reluctant to have a computer available to the children. My husband says they need to learn to use it.**

Your husband is right that, today, children need to learn to use the computer, but you need to determine when is the best age for them to start using it. First, there needs to be some control, having the computer in a room such as the kitchen or dining room, a room where you and your husband can observe what is on the screen. Second, your children need to be old enough so that you can trust them to be obedient. Third, because things sometimes jump onto the screen which are unacceptable, you cannot start the children before they reach their teen years, being sure you have mature teens.

You can order educational game disks for the children to use on the computer, so they have the advantage of learning on the computer as well as learning how computers work. The Catholic encyclopedia is available on a disk as well as catechism lessons.

Seton sells a number of educational computer disks. We have stories of saints, science projects, and math tutoring disks, just to name a few.



# With Seton on the Seas

## Esprit

### A McWilliam Family Adventure

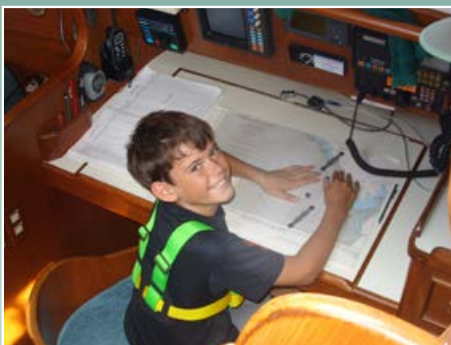
Let us introduce ourselves – we are the McWilliam Family, Chay (Dad), Katie (Mom), & Jamie, our son. Since 2003, when Jamie was 6 years old, we have been cruising around the world on our 46-foot sailboat, *Esprit*. Over the last 9 years we have become known as the “*Esprit*” family. Keep in mind as you read our story that when we are on the boat we are together 24/7 in less than 500 square feet of space.

When we started cruising, the idea of our adventure becoming a pilgrimage never entered our mind. Looking back over the years, however, we realize that in many ways it has felt like a pilgrimage. We’ve celebrated Mass around the world from the Marquesas, to New Zealand, to Fiji, to New Caledonia, to Australia, to Croatia, to Italy. What struck us, particularly during Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica, was the universality of our Catholic Faith. Almost every ethnicity was represented at that Mass. In Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India, we experienced the still very present spirit of St. Francis Xavier and found ourselves drawn to visiting those sites where he was a missionary. In Turkey we visited many of the ancient cities where the early Christian evangelists such as St. Paul, St. John, and St. Phillip, carried out their missions. The most moving moment of our Turkish experience was visiting St. Mary’s house near Ephesus. Perhaps this is because we often tap into our favorite devotion – the Rosary – particularly when underway at sea on a dark night and in rough conditions.

#### Homeschool on the High Seas

Because we are on the boat at least 6 months out of the year, the need to homeschool was obvious; however, while Jamie was still pre-school age, Chay recognized the undesirable environment of public school, and suggested we homeschool. I had some reservations, so we chose to enroll Jamie in public school, but half-way through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we became a full time homeschool family. We were not with Seton before 5th grade, but I soon decided that we needed to add a religion class to Jamie’s curriculum, so I contacted Seton Home School to explore the possibility of using their religion course. Within just a few days, we received a phone call from Ginny Seuffert to discuss our desires for Jamie’s education. Ginny quickly convinced us of the benefits of switching completely to the Seton curriculum – a decision we have never regretted.

The Seton curriculum was like a breath of fresh air. We all appreciated the wholesomeness of the readers and the unbiased presentation of the subject matter. We loved the old-fashioned rigor of the English curriculum, and were confident that Jamie was truly learning the 4 R’s – reading, writing, and arithmetic, plus religion. A further advantage was that Jamie could learn at his own accelerated pace without getting bored – a problem he experienced in the public school classroom. The interweaving of Catholicism throughout his daily work brought the Faith into our home in a subtle but definite way. It has given us the opportunity to discuss morals, values, history, and our Faith as part of everyday life– something we most likely would not be doing had we chosen the more “normal” route.



For us, there has been no better education than traveling the world as we do on *Esprit*. Jamie's real life curriculum naturally includes navigation, geography, history, weather, and so much more. Each country we visit offers the opportunity to learn its unique history and culture from the locals, from a perspective that is not presented in traditional textbooks. For example, when Jamie was in the ninth grade, we were sailing in Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. While dining with some of the locals in Banda, Indonesia, we heard about how they had helped Christians flee recent Muslim persecution. On a lighter note, we also learned that Banda is the famous Spice Island studied in school, the original and only source of nutmeg in the world. Nutmeg was more valuable than gold in the 1500's, and was a motivator of the European exploration of the world.

One of our travels' most significant contributions to Jamie's education was learning first-hand many details of World War II that none of us had previously studied. Based on his experiences during our family tours of forts, museums, and battlefields, Jamie chose to write his 9<sup>th</sup> grade research paper on the Japanese atrocities in World War II. Rather than relying solely on books, Jamie was able to draw upon his up close and personal experiences. In particular, while exploring Darwin, Australia, we learned that after the Japanese fleet attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, it continued on to Australia and attacked Darwin. Ten U.S. pilots were transporting their P-40 fighter planes to Southeast Asia and happened to be in Darwin when over 250 Japanese planes attacked. All ten went up to meet the Japanese! All were shot down and only one survived. These American pilots and the U.S. military are honored by statues and plaques in the seaside memorial park, as well as in the stained glass windows of St. Mary's Star of the Sea Cathedral in downtown Darwin where we attended Mass – quite an impressive sight.

A similar situation presented itself when it was time for Jamie to write his 10<sup>th</sup> grade research paper. He chose to write about why the American military should take action against the Somali pirates. We had just completed a cruising season which included pirate-laden waters of the Indian Ocean and the loss of our friends on the sailboat *Quest* at the hands of the Somali pirates. So we were well educated on the business culture of piracy and its effects on the world.

Below, left to right: Jamie taking an hourly reading and plotting our position on the nautical chart while underway on a passage (2008), Jamie climbing a glacier on the south island of New Zealand (2007), Jamie, Chay, & Katie at the Great Pyramids of Giza, near Cairo, Egypt (2011), Jamie & Chay at the Monastery of St. John on Patmos Island, Greece (2012), Katie, Jamie, & Chay in front of the St. Mary Statue outside the site of "St. Mary's House" near Ephesus, Turkey (2012)



### The Hand Of God

Our years of cruising have been filled with "angelic" experiences. We experience God's protective hand more often than we know. Looking back at our pirate adventure we clearly see the hand of God – we damaged our propellor, pirate activity was increasing, the weather was less than perfect for a swift passage, and some of our friends had scheduled a ship to transport boats through pirate alley. The Lord was telling us – don't transit pirate alley, turn back. We did! Thirty-six hours later, at the exact location where we would have been had we not turned around, the family on the sailboat *Ing* was captured by the Somali pirates!

It seems that the only negative comment we receive from people back in America about homeschooling has to do with socialization. One of our challenges when sailing and homeschooling has been finding companions for Jamie. We actively search out other "kid" boats when we are cruising so that Jamie is able to socialize with children his own age. Jamie has made friends with kids from around the world and still stays in contact with many of them.

While on land at home in Boulder City, NV, Jamie has been involved in Taekwondo Karate, earning his 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt and instructor's collar, has obtained his scuba diver certification, is taking gymnastics, and also participates in the youth group at our parish. Facebook has allowed him to get back in touch with kids he knew in the younger grades and establish new friendships even though he's not in school with them every day.

Although there have been bumps along the way, including those times when the principal (Chay) had to settle minor disagreements between teacher (Katie) and student, or when a history book fell overboard in New Zealand, the greatest reward of homeschooling has been our ability to be truly an integral part of Jamie's education and formative years. Unlike back in the "civilized" world of America, there is hardly a day that goes by out on the water that we don't experience a miracle. The greatest of these has been the pleasure and blessing of watching Jamie grow up into the fine young man that he has become. So when you hit "rough waters" on a dark night, pray the Rosary, count your blessings, and don't give up. You will reach the next port safe and sound.

"Considering that Turkey is an Islamic country, we were amazed when we saw the larger than life Statue of Mary, and experienced the reverence given her not only by the Christian pilgrims at the site, but also by the Muslim people. We could feel Mary's presence as we wandered the peaceful grounds of the shrine."



Jamie giving a presentation at the St. Francis Yacht Club, San Francisco, California (2012)





# On Time and On Task

**T**raining the children to do their tasks on time and in a timely manner is no small feat, yet it can be done with planning, keeping to the schedule, and lots of family prayer throughout the day.

Mornings can be hectic in a Catholic family. Getting kids out of bed, saying the morning prayers, dressing for the day, changing diapers, eating breakfast, and cleaning up the kitchen is a pretty tall order for a busy mom. Getting an early start in schoolwork may seem to be impossible, but decades of experience have taught me that there is no substitute for a **regular and early time** to start the homeschooling lessons. You might want to try some of these few simple ideas that helped my children to accomplish much **more work**, and **better work**, in a **shorter time** when they were fresh and ready to go in the morning.

## A Good Morning Actually Starts the Night Before

Before the children climb into bed, I make sure the children tidy their rooms with soiled laundry off the floor and in the hamper. The children lay out the next day's clothes, so that each child has clean socks and underwear, and "what to wear" was already decided and easily available.

I kept breakfast simple during the week. I set cereal bowls, a box of cereal, and some bananas on the counter, for the older kids

to help themselves and to help the younger ones when needed. I had my children in the habit of putting their dishes, glasses, and utensils, and those of younger siblings, right in the dishwasher after eating. Some parents like to use paper plates and bowls to reduce cleaning up time.

## Have a School Bell

One of the main reasons I found success in my homeschooling was my determination to set and keep to an early and regular start time for school work. You might like to purchase a small bell to ring to start the day. It sets a "school tone" when the "school bell" rings. Some children think it is fun and like to take turns ringing the bell each morning.

If you have only one or two children in the primary grades, a 9 a.m. start time may work for you, but if you have older students or several students, a schooling start time of 8:30 or even 8:00 worked much better for me, and may work better for you. Decide on the time, and consider setting an alarm on your stove or microwave for yourself.

At the daily set time for school to begin, have the children say a prayer, such as the Morning Offering, a popular favorite of homeschooling families. Some homeschooling families like to include the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag after the morning prayers. Consider involving the younger children by having them take

turns holding the flag during the Pledge. In my family, the end of the Pledge was the beginning for the daily schoolwork.



BY GINNY SEUFFERT

## On Task Right Away

I prepared lesson plans based on the Seton course manuals for each child, using the blank planner that Seton provides. I liked to write several weeks at the beginning of each quarter, but I know some moms like to write their own daily plans each weekend. My lesson plans for the children were very abbreviated, often just writing each subject in the left column and then, under phonics, for example, p.1, p.2, p.3, p.4, and p.5, for Monday through Friday. The children checked off pages they completed, but wrote "Mom" next to any assignment for which they needed my help.

If my daughter had trouble finishing just one section or one problem, she would put an arrow next to the problem so I could go back and help her. If she did not understand how to work the assignment in its entirety, she was to write "Help" in the lesson plan; however, she was to move on to another subject until I could get to her to explain the lesson that was not understood.

With the above procedure, both the student and I could tell at a glance what work was finished, and what still needed to be done with my help. This was a very helpful tool for me when deciding if a particular child could spare time that week to make social plans.

Some moms simply write a date next to the particular daily lesson in the Seton Course Manual for the student to work, especially for the older students. Sometimes, when a lesson needs a second day for practice or re-studying, the parent simply writes the next day's date for the same assignment. This is particularly true for high school assignments.

Seton has made lesson plans even easier for moms by providing them online, with the computerized ability to re-arrange the lesson



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# Wisdom: The Fruit of True Education

This piece is transcribed from a commencement speech delivered by the author.



DR. MITCHELL KALPAKGIAN

In Lucretius's famous words, "Nothing can come from nothing." A hundred or a thousand or a million times zero equals zero. No person can think with nothing in his mind. A person cannot think with an empty mind that is not filled with substance. A mind requires food for thought. The purpose of a bona fide education is to fill the mind with the wholesome, nutritious food for thought that will allow the mind to think, to see the light of truth, and to possess wisdom—a wisdom that will protect a person from the craftiness of the world. Wisdom illuminates the unchanging truths about human nature and the human condition ("the way things are"), the first principles that underlie the structure of reality, the laws of Mother Nature, and divine truth.

No one can be young and wise or young and prudent, but a young student can desire, seek, and love wisdom and learn from those who possess wisdom and have experience, both real people in their lives and from the classics and great works of the past—a body of knowledge called "the best that has been thought and said" by Matthew Arnold and known as the Perennial Philosophy (the accumulated wisdom of 3,000 years of Western civilization). From this classical and Christian wisdom, the mind learns self-knowledge ("Know thyself"), self-control ("Rule thyself"), and self-donation ("Give thyself")—truths that are no longer taught or known in the politically correct world of modern education that indoctrinates the young into the belief that truth is relative.

The wish of every parent and teacher is that the young incorporate this wisdom—which is most practical as well as good and true and beautiful—to make prudent moral decisions that test a person's mind, heart, and conscience. The primary business of life after graduation requires constant decision-making on a multitude of topics that require the light of the wisdom of the past, lest a person be fooled by the world, the flesh, the Devil, and the media.

What are some of these decisions that will immediately confront graduates and accompany them in the course of a lifetime?

**First**, a person will constantly be required to choose between first things and second things—between duty or pleasure, between career or family, between selfishness and self-sacrifice, between living for others or living for oneself. When a person intelligently distinguishes between first things and second things, he remembers that he is a human being before he is a chief executive officer; one remembers that he is a son or daughter, a husband or wife, before he or she is a professional or an expert. Wisdom never confuses first things and second things, remembering that love of God and love of neighbor are the first and foremost commandments. A Christian life always prioritizes the first things, remembering Christ's words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."

**Second**, a person will need to choose between merely living and living well, that is, between existing or surviving as opposed to living a fully human life rich in beauty, friendship, learning, spiritual life, and the enjoyment of people. One can live to work and pursue an exclusive economic life of getting and spending, paying bills, buying things, being a consumer, and purchasing entertainment, or one can work in order to live and to play and taste "the sweetness of life" (Homer's phrase) or "the sweetness of the Lord" (Psalm). One can live a sparse life limited only to the pursuit of wealth and the purchase of material pleasures, or one can have what Christ offered: an "abundant" life enriched by the sacraments, the blessings of family life, and a life of the mind that leads to wonder and to the knowledge and love of God. In short, one can live like Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener* who worked all day every day including Sundays and lived, slept, and ate in his office on Wall Street or live like Homer's *Odysseus* who enjoyed festive occasions of hospitality, relished conversation and learning, delighted in the music of the lyre, and relished in the Olympic Games. One can be a "workaholic" and live an unbalanced, inhuman life or work like the Italian furniture maker who took a month's vacation each year to perform in an amateur opera and renew his spirit. When blamed by an angry patron, he explained to the complaining woman, "Something of those operas will go into your sofa!" Living well is bringing the joy of play and

beauty into the daily work one does with love and with his entire heart.

**Third**, a person will be guided either by worldly wisdom or Christian wisdom, following the trendy, popularized, glamorized ideas that teach the worship of self and the cult of pleasure or living the life of the Beatitudes in the practice of poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and meekness. To choose worldly wisdom means narrow self-interest, the doctrine that the end justifies the means, and "bigger is better": the spectacular, the famous, and the wealthy are the signs of worldly success. To choose Christian wisdom is to follow the humble "little way" of St. Therese of Lisieux, for whom no task is too trivial or unimportant in serving God, the way of Christ who washed the feet of the disciples, and the way of St. Nicholas who performed good deeds anonymously in the secret of the night by throwing bags of gold into poor homes.

With the benefit of perennial wisdom and a mind rich in the timeless truths of human experience and divine teaching, a person will not be fooled by the subtle temptations and clever lies lurking to deceive the young that abound in modernity—what Melville in *Moby Dick* refers to as "the bland deceits and civilized hypocrisies" of modern civilization. These lies are many, but the ones that keep gaining in popularity are the nonsense and propaganda that teach the following fabrications: The family is obsolete; children are inconvenient and expensive; marriage is optional and unnecessary; truth does not exist because society is pluralistic and full of contradictory ideas which are always clashing; people and governments can spend money they do not have; war is the solution to all problems. Remember that the opposite of wise is foolish. If you do not have wisdom or fail to use the wisdom given to you in your education, you will be fooled again and again by the lies, clever lies, and most artful lies woven by the weavers who pretend the naked king is handsomely clothed with nothing.

**Dr. Mitchell A. Kalpakgian** is a native of New England, the son of Armenian immigrants. He was Professor of English at Simpson College for 31 years and was appointed a visiting professor at Christendom College for two years, and then served two years as a tutor at Magdalen College. He subsequently became Academic Dean, Athletic Director, and a teacher of English and Latin at Mt. Royal Academy (Sunapee, New Hampshire), a private Catholic school.

## Virtual Views

**What is your favorite thing about the Seton curriculum?**

*continued from page 4*

Having the lesson plans really guides us through the writing process. I'm 45 and I finally know how to write a good book report :).

-Lisa S.

Do you have any idea how much time I spent in the past designing age appropriate literature-based language lessons alone? Only to discover Seton's reading and grammar lessons were based on great Catholic stories. Sigh. Palm slap to forehead.

-Kim F.

We love Seton because it is deeply rooted in Catholicism. We love the English because of the sentence choices, the books for reading are about Catholics, the spelling, the history, etc., every chance Seton finds they seize the opportunity to teach our children about their Faith. Thank you Seton! †

-Deana B.

The flexibility! I am a junior and I have a job, so being able to get school done around the hours I work is fantastic!!

-Rachel B.

The easy-to-follow lesson plans, the live person when I call for help and the professionalism. :)

-Mona R.

Accredited Special Education; that is invaluable for this family with a son on the spectrum.

-Deedee M.

My daughter and grandchildren are learning so much more than they were in public school.

-Ruth H.

## According to Dads



BY JOHN CLARK

### Doubts and Demons

A number of studies have confirmed that speaking in public is the biggest fear that Americans possess; in fact, the fear of public speaking surpasses the fear of death for many people. Perhaps the human condition is such that we all have fears that are inexplicable. For instance, I have been increasingly claustrophobic for many years. I don't fly on planes; I don't like closets; and I don't go on elevators. This can sometimes be a real inconvenience; in fact, when my family recently rented a vacation spot with a penthouse on the 14th floor, I climbed the stairs. It even got to be sort of a game for my children. Lisa and the children would go up the elevator, and they would time me to see if I could beat my previous record of jogging up 14 flights.

What's funny is that, with all my phobias, when I'm speaking in front of a crowd, I'm as comfortable—maybe even more comfortable—than when I'm speaking to an individual. The reality is that public speaking has never particularly caused me any fear.

Well, almost never.

This July, after giving about 12 public speeches during the year, I arrived in Dayton, Ohio at a homeschooling conference for my next gig. I was scheduled to give two talks: one on Friday night and one on Saturday afternoon. After meeting and greeting the other speakers and assistants, I took the podium and started my dissertation. As I began the talk, I felt comfortable and confident with my presentation and the material. Then, about 30 minutes into the talk that was scheduled to last about 45 minutes, I was struck with an inexplicable sense of panic and terror. I felt like my legs could no longer support me; I felt dizzy, and the feeling kept going through me: "You are going to faint." Somehow, I kept the talk on track, and somehow, no one noticed what had happened to me internally. That really surprised me. I had brought two of my sons, Demetrius and Tarcisius, to the talk, and even they didn't notice anything out of the ordinary.

That relieved me, but something else scared me. I hadn't seen this panic coming, and I was worried that it would happen again. To make matters worse, I didn't have a few weeks to sort it all out; I had to give

another talk the next day. That didn't give me much time. I kept asking myself: "What happened? I've been giving talks for years and this never happened before. Why now?"

I came back into my hotel room, splashed some water on my face, and looked at myself in the mirror. I thought what had happened was that I started questioning my speech and my ability during the talk, and that had a physical effect. As I looked myself in the mirror, I seriously began second-guessing my ability. I thought to myself: "What am I doing? With all my talks, I don't know if I'm getting through to anyone. Nobody came to this conference to hear me. As I had been recently reminded, I'm not the effervescently amusing Dr. Ray Guarendi; I'm not the G.K. Chesterton-evangelist Dale Alquist; I don't have my own show on EWTN. What makes me think I can share podiums with gifted speakers like that? Moreover, when I'm on the road for two or three days at a time, I miss my wife and children. Is it really worth it? I give these talks essentially free of charge, and now I'm feeling sick doing these talks. Why bother?"

With a lot of prayer, I was reminded that I had an important message to share with the world: the message being that fatherhood is a great gift, and how we can become better fathers. Even with the doubts present, I knew I had to bounce back.

The next morning, I looked on the internet for advice on how to keep calm during a speech. I remember that someone commented that the more important a topic was, the more nervous you were likely to be. As I began my talk that morning, I shared this idea with the audience, saying: "I recently discovered that there seems to be a direct

“ ...God sends us angels to comfort us, and some of them are visible.

Whatever our calling in life, God gives us a mission. Along the way, demons tempt us to think that our mission is irrelevant, and they tempt people to tell us that we're not good enough to accomplish the mission. ”





# Homeschool Conferences

## **TN, Nashville—March 8, 2013 (Fri.)**

**IHM Tennessee Homeschool & Parent Conference**  
Nashville Expo Center – Wilson Hall  
625 Smith Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203  
2 pm – 8 pm  
Info: 540-636-1946  
info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org

## **FL, Jacksonville—March 15, 2013 (Fri.)**

**IHM Jacksonville Homeschool & Parent Conference**  
Embassy Suites Jacksonville-Baymeadows  
9300 Baymeadows Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32256  
2 pm – 8 pm, Info: 540-636-1946  
info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org

## **LA, Covington—March 23, 2013 (Sat.)**

**Roman Catholic Homeschool Association of Louisiana “Catholic Homeschooling: A Way of Life”**  
St. Peter’s Catholic Church (St. Mary’s Hall)  
125 E. 19th Avenue, Covington, LA 70433  
After 8:30 am Mass – 5 pm  
Info: Beth at 985-796-1274 or 504-220-4626  
beth@montelepre.com or rchalinfo@rchal.org  
www.rchal.org

## **MO, St. Louis—April 5-6, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**

**2013 St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference**  
Cardinal Rigali Center  
20 Archbishop May Drive, St. Louis, MO 63119  
Fri.: 6 pm – 9 pm (Exhibits only)  
Sat.: After 8 am Mass – 4:30 pm  
Info: Cassie at 636-398-4001 or  
www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com

## **GA, Atlanta—April 12-13, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**

**IHM Georgia Homeschool & Parent Conference**  
Gwinnett Center  
6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097  
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
Info: 540-636-1946  
info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org

## **TX, Houston—April 19-20, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)**

**IHM Houston Homeschool & Parent Conference**  
University of St. Thomas – Jerabeck Athletic Center  
3800 Montrose Blvd, Houston, TX 77006  
Hours: TBA  
Info: 540-636-1946  
info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org

## **NJ, Berlin—April 13, 2013 (Sat.)**

**14th Annual CHAPLET Catholic Homeschool Conference**  
Mater Ecclesiae Roman Catholic Church  
261 Cross Keys Road, Berlin, NJ 08009 (actually in Pine Hill w/Berlin mailing address)  
9 am – 5 pm  
Info: Tony Schiavo  
www.chaplet.org or conference@chaplet.org

## **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  
info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org



## College Prep

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

BOB WIESNER

There are thousands of colleges in the United States. How does a student decide which institution is a good fit? Many factors need examination before the final choice.

Perhaps the biggest problem for many families lies in financing a college education. College is one of the largest investments in life. A vital early step would be to discover the scholarship and aid deals a college might offer to a prospective student. A talk with the college financial office is an important early step.

The interests of a student of course are a factor. A student interested in the medical field should not spend much time looking at colleges offering Aerospace Science. If the future career is still undecided, a good bet would be a liberal arts college offering a wide exposure to varied educational possibilities.

A campus visit is a good practical idea. There is no way to know the atmosphere of a college without this visit. The reaction to the visit might range from “No way!” to “This place feels like home!” Either way, valuable information is gained.

The most important consideration should always be maintaining faith and morality at college. A student should pay careful attention to the Catholic facilities on a campus and the living conditions in the dorms. If the college is likely to lead to spiritual damage, that college is emphatically not a good choice.

As with any big decision, evaluating colleges should always be accompanied by prayer and seeking the advice of spiritual counselors.

Upcoming articles:

**February:**

The Service Academies

correlation between the nervousness that a speaker feels, and the importance of the topic he speaks about. My topic this morning: the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.”

Everybody got a good laugh, and my talk began.

As every speaker will tell you, there sometimes occurs a magical moment when a speaker recognizes that he has captivated his audience, and that is what happened that morning. After the talk, as I walked back to my table to sign books, a woman came up to me and said: “That was an incredibly important talk that men need to hear. Be patient. Just keep doing what you’re doing. One day, you will be giving that talk to crowds of thousands.”

It’s funny—how did she know what I was thinking? If she had read my heart, she couldn’t have said anything to comfort me more than those exact words. In fifteen years of public speaking, no one ever advised that I be patient and encouraged me like that. Why now?

I think the answer is that God sends us angels to comfort us, and some of them are visible. Whatever our calling in life, God gives us a mission. Along the way, demons tempt us to think that our mission is irrelevant, and they tempt people to tell us that we’re not good enough to accomplish the mission. In fact, you are the only one who was chosen to do your exact mission. Never doubt that God will help you in yours. Even if you feel like fainting along the way.

## On Task &amp; On Time, continued from page 8

plans. This is helpful for students who can do two Seton lessons in one day in one subject, and in another subject, must take two days to do one lesson.

Some children are very astute at choosing subjects that they can finish independently, while other children seem overwhelmed with the details and need more guidance. I number the assignments in the lesson plan indicating what order the student should work on first, second, third, and so on. Some parents, however, arrange a schedule by time, so that religion may be at 8 a.m., math at 8:30 a.m., and so on. Most parents schedule the more difficult subjects for the individual child in the morning hours. For the high school levels, most parents allow the students to choose the hour of the day for their subjects.

When I schedule myself to work with a child with English or a difficult subject for that child, I would schedule the other children with their easy subjects, such as spelling, vocabulary, or handwriting. With that kind of planning, the other children would not interrupt me when I needed to work with the first child on his difficult subject.

### Getting Little Ones on Task

Children in Pre-K through grade 2 will not be able to work as independently as older brothers and sisters, but that does not mean they cannot be trained to start every school day on time and on task. I place books or assignment papers set up on their workspace the night before. A nice art project for this age is to make long colored bookmarks for their books, so mom can mark the page that little ones can begin before mom is ready to sit down with them.

Pre-K and K students can practice writing a letter or number they are working on. I would write the letter in yellow highlighter for them to trace. I like to have simple assignments always ready for a student to do on his own either to start the day, or to fill in the time until I can help him. In the Catholic schools of long ago, every student was required to have a book to read in case the assigned work was finished or the teacher was not ready to begin the next subject. I found that always having assignments pre-planned for the children accustoms them to starting schoolwork punctually at the same

time each morning and to move ahead if I were not available.

First and second graders can do some simple work, especially if mom has briefly explained it that morning or even the night before. These children like to practice writing the date or the day of the week, or recording the weather, in their notebooks. They also like to write little stories about an experience they have had, or to even write their own little fictional story. Many young students can do the next assignment in phonics, spelling, and math with little or no help. An advantage of the Seton worktexts is that they tend to follow a regular pattern in the way lessons are presented. This allows us moms to better predict what children will need help with and plan accordingly. For example, when I knew that my child could not yet put his spelling words in ABC order without my help, I can still have him practice the words by writing them three times each.

### Mom in the Morning

The ideas above are intended to give us moms a bit of breathing room during our busy mornings to change one last diaper or throw a load of laundry into the washing machine. I have found that if my children get in the habit of starting whatever work they can do without me, several good things happen:

- They learn to be punctual by starting at the same time each school day.
- They learn to work independently.
- The idea that mornings are reserved only for school work is reinforced.
- They learn not to waste their time.
- They themselves are surprised and pleased at what they accomplish.

I find I must be careful myself to stay with the children. Because the children are busy at their schoolwork, does not mean I can do household tasks. I, too, need to be determined to focus my time every morning on the home schooling. I have found that unless I am in the same room as the students, working with them, they will almost always lose focus and begin horsing around. Sometimes I must insist that a particularly mischievous child pick up his book and sit where I may be working with another child.

My experience is that I must reserve household tasks for after school time and have the children help. I let phone calls go to voicemail and do not even think about checking email or Facebook. I was most successful if I devoted every morning to home schooling.

### Summary

- Start home school the same time everyday.
- Start as early as is practical.
- Children start even when I am not yet available.
- Devote every morning exclusively to schoolwork.

## LET US PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

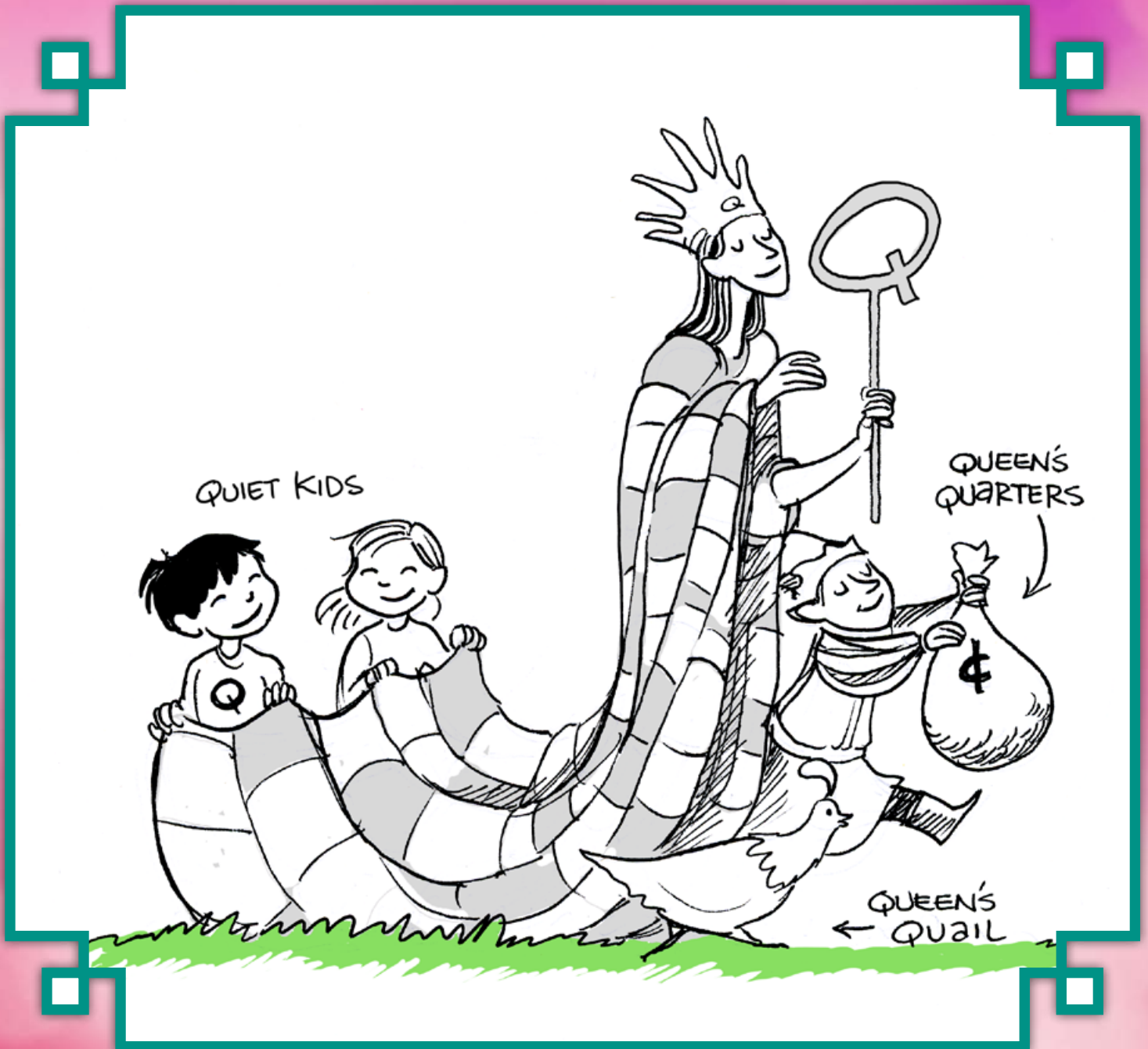
Every day at Seton, gathered before the altar at our noontime Angelus, we offer prayers for our families and friends. We encourage you also to pray for other home-schooling families, especially those who may be suffering from illness, unemployment, or other crosses.

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 home-schooling, so that we may all join together in prayer, one day, in Heaven.





# Kid's Corner

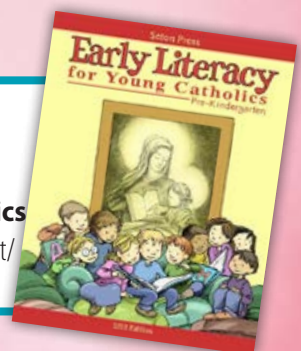


CAN YOU COLOR THE  
QUEEN'S QUILT?

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<http://www.setonhome.org/prekenrollment/>



People from the Old Testament.

OVPHTIVIFDAHCNDXLAZLARTLDDFN IW  
 JMZAAVLYDFAMCPYSGUXIFHQWGA KPHZ  
 OHINZAKDEYCXBAYMSRADATRBWECRKL  
 SVVNRBRJONAHFPZXTJCNLOYWJSNZLA  
 ELOAKOKOWQTYRWAIKTQNJLZHVTWLET  
 POEHFCKJNJHREWRLRLWOGJQGYHQDRF  
 HRYNAHGDCWASWQMROLNCABELVEGQEO  
 THTFYAMSTXRDNMZCZAWVXAHHARTWBO  
 PUXZWBHYQYAPDMWXTMOUFPPKNOAHEC  
 GIDEONAVEHSPVPHCMKWVJXYOVDQKR  
 NRCWIRENMHLIISAFPEIEJOSHUAOFAU  
 ZBRRUMLOLTBATNKJEE LSHAIMEREJHE  
 QVWSHISAUUOPQWRDOIPJHVEUQJFLQS  
 JISYBENKARJLBKAWSHFBRMKTCKZCIQA  
 DMTNSOVPSDANIELHFFZHKB AUVUIIUU  
 ZKMOVIC EEPBAGSAGFLUYCAXEPEVXIE  
 NCJSEIBVHWUZPTSTNOACORSFLBIQPE  
 NBMMDSTEMYBHMQMVLAKCTORACHELGV  
 DMUAYEWNRVGD AEUXEQZTRWCALEBBXU  
 PSFSLQRZBUFOHNZQUXVWFTVURWJHLE  
 XNAWKBEBSGLGAONKMJACOB CENPDL CB  
 BIRMETZXGXCI RCQCAZNQXXAFWGVPS  
 XMWAHAIMEHENBHTSSMADAZFIIDMZHC  
 XAETMCARVVHKALNOWFPWIQDHMNUYMG  
 BJKFBIZURXUHMIILFAIWINICXGZCHN  
 ONHNFBLWCTIDASOVMUXKIVELRTGFT  
 BEYNJISAACYDGUQMHQCKCTAQSJKJMZ  
 JBOBAGZMXHLNRJOOGHAISIDOOMGZZN  
 OMLNLSAYQKJDDKANNVQWANVMRARAAN  
 KHMTPHWPSTBJULEL IJAHHAKRNUMWSD

- |                 |                 |                 |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Aaron</b>    | <b>Esau</b>     | <b>Jonathan</b> | <b>Samuel</b>  |
| <b>Abel</b>     | <b>Esther</b>   | <b>Joseph</b>   | <b>Sarah</b>   |
| <b>Abraham</b>  | <b>Eve</b>      | <b>Joshua</b>   | <b>Saul</b>    |
| <b>Adam</b>     | <b>Gideon</b>   | <b>Leah</b>     | <b>Solomon</b> |
| <b>Benjamin</b> | <b>Hannah</b>   | <b>Lot</b>      |                |
| <b>Cain</b>     | <b>Isaac</b>    | <b>Moses</b>    |                |
| <b>Caleb</b>    | <b>Ishmael</b>  | <b>Nehemiah</b> |                |
| <b>Daniel</b>   | <b>Isiah</b>    | <b>Noah</b>     |                |
| <b>David</b>    | <b>Jacob</b>    | <b>Rachel</b>   |                |
| <b>Elijah</b>   | <b>Jeremiah</b> | <b>Rebekah</b>  |                |
| <b>Elisha</b>   | <b>Job</b>      | <b>Ruth</b>     |                |
| <b>Enoch</b>    | <b>Jonah</b>    | <b>Samson</b>   |                |



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## PAPAL WISDOM

Education and the promotion of a culture of life is of fundamental urgency in the face of the diffusion of a mentality which offends the dignity of the person and neither favours nor protects the institution of marriage and of family life...

The Catholic Church is convinced that the light for an adequate solution [to the many challenges facing America] can only come from encounter with the living Christ, which gives rise to attitudes and ways of acting based on love and truth. This is the decisive force which will transform the American continent.

Dear friends, the love of Christ impels us to devote ourselves without reserve to proclaiming his Name throughout America, bringing it freely and enthusiastically to the hearts of all its inhabitants. There is no more rewarding or beneficial work than this. There is no greater service that we can provide to our brothers and sisters. They are thirsting for God.

**Pope Benedict XVI**

Message to the International Congress on the Church in America, December 2012

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