

Seton



MAGAZINE

"Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church"

MARCH 2013



A Mission at Home

Memories and spiritual reflections
from a Homeschooling Family.

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

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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
Pray for Us!

Vol. 2 No. 3, March 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

Cover photos, clockwise from top-left:

1. Bernadette Yamakaitis practicing violin.
2. Jude Yamakaitis shows off an award won by his team, the NJ Hawks.
3. Mr. Yamakaitis with his children, Mark, Bernadette, and Jude
4. Mrs. Yamakaitis



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Care to share your homeschooling adventure?

If you would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Seton Magazine, please send a paragraph explaining what our readers would enjoy about your family's story along with a photograph to Christine Smitha at cmsmitha@setonhome.org.



SHARE YOUR STORY AND INSPIRE ANOTHER FAMILY!

Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School

Dr. Mary Kay Clark



St. Joseph, Faithful Father

On March 19, we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Joseph was chosen by God to be the foster father of the Incarnate Son of God. In our current culture, with the feminist movement still strong, the importance of fathers has been denigrated, disrespected, and questioned.

We homeschooling families who put so much importance on the value of the family and the value of parents in teaching their children must constantly work towards appreciating our fathers and husbands, but also should support even publicly the important place of fathers in our society.

St. Joseph epitomizes the highest virtues of fatherhood. St. Joseph listened to the message of God when he was asked to take Mary to be his wife. He listened and obeyed the words of the angel in his dream where he was told that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit. He obeyed the rule of law by traveling to Bethlehem, the town of David, the city where the Messiah was to be born.

Joseph followed the Jewish law by traveling to the Temple in Jerusalem with two turtle doves as a Temple gift at the time of the Presentation of the Holy Child. When Joseph heard the words of Simeon and Anna, he learned that others recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Joseph listened to the angel who told him to flee to Egypt to protect the Divine Child and His mother. That sudden trip in the middle of the night, most likely a flight without his carpentry tools and other family belongings, showed that

Joseph was obedient to God and did not question what the future would bring. He entrusted the future to God. Accompanied by angelic protectors, Joseph must have been confident that he could provide for his family in a foreign land.

Holy Joseph once again listened to the angel who instructed him to leave Egypt and to return to Nazareth where he would raise the Incarnate Son of God.

Each one of these events in the life of Joseph reminds us of the great value of fathers for the family, especially for the support, the raising, and the education of the children. Throughout the Bible, especially in the Book of Proverbs, we can read many special instructions for fathers in the raising of the children in the way of the Lord.

The importance of St. Joseph to the Holy Family and to all families was certainly declared by God in the first vision at Fatima in 1917, where thousands witnessed the three apparitions. They saw in the first apparition St. Joseph holding the Child Jesus, alongside of the Blessed Mother. Joseph blessed the crowd by tracing the Sign of the Cross three times over those standing below.

St. Joseph, we know how powerful your prayers and your help are for all families who are struggling to raise children in the Faith in a secular culture. Help us each day to remain faithful in the practice of the Faith by attending Mass and saying our daily Rosary and other prayers. Help us to realize that our

daily work should focus on the training and teaching of our children in the values and virtues needed to live the life Jesus has called each one of us to live.

St. Joseph, help us parents to realize our serious responsibility to help our children to attain the heavenly reward that God intends for them.

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Mother of God, Foster Father of the Son of God, Defender of the Family, Head of the Most Holy Family, pray for us. St. Joseph most prudent, most valiant, most faithful, pray for us. St. Joseph, Model of Workers, pray for us.



Your Questions...

answered by Dr. Clark

My son has finished his math. May I buy the next book and have him start on the next grade level?

You certainly may do that, and we can record math grades for the next grade level. The next grade-level book will start out with a review of the lessons from the previous book, so he should do very well at first. However, at some point, usually about a quarter through the book, you will need him to slow down for the new concepts being presented. Sometimes the new concepts demand a little higher analysis skills for which your son may not be ready. With the higher level book, make him work out all the problems, not just some of the problems, at least initially.

Will you be making supplemental videos for the elementary grades?

We are not making plans to do more videos for the elementary grades, unless we see a need. Younger students should not spend much time in front of the computer. Homeschooling parents should be closely involved with teaching and helping their children, especially their younger children. The videos for the elementary grades, almost all on diagramming, are very brief, only a few minutes each.

For those of you who have heard Dr. Katie Moran at conferences, you may be interested in knowing that she has done a series of videos on learning styles. Those should be made available for our parents shortly.

We are selling DVDs through our SEM department for elementary grade levels for science projects, such as the Mr. Wizard series, which is excellent and was very popular on television for many years. The programs show Mr. Wizard helping young students do various science projects.

I have six children. What assistance do you provide to help my children succeed?

The lesson plans are your biggest help to teach your children, and as the children reach about 6th grade, children can often

follow the lesson plans themselves in some subjects. Children can follow the directions to read a chapter, highlight important points, and even answer chapter questions. It is important, however, for you to ensure that your student understands the lessons and is doing well with the assignments.

Older children can sometimes help younger children by listening to them read, or watching them do some of their easier assignments, such as handwriting or spelling. You may want to consider putting in the same level two children who are not far apart in their learning skills, at least in some subjects. It is easier to teach two children in the same grade. Often the two children can help each other by quizzing each other or taking turns answering end-of-chapter questions.

High school students often take the same subjects together, which makes it easier for them and for the parents. This is most popular for science, religion, and language courses. Sometimes it is worth making slight adjustments so that both students can work together, even if an older student waits for the younger to catch up in a subject.

I have been reusing the English books. Are the tests the same as for the new books?

We know that some families try to re-use workbooks from year to year. In large families, where stretching income to meet expenses is always a challenge, this may be a necessary way to save money. We suggest that if you do this, you have the student write both the question and the answer on a separate sheet of paper. In a subject such as math, this is almost imperative to ensure that the student is solving the problem as written in the book. However, in any subject, it is pedagogically important that the student is able to see the question and the answer together.

Despite the savings, there are a few reasons why you might not want to re-use workbooks. The first is that using a separate sheet of paper is much less convenient

for the student. Workbooks are popular specifically because they are easy to use. When a student must copy what is in the workbook, it introduces an extra step that may prove to be discouraging and may mean less learning in the long run.

Second, answers in a workbook are a great way of reviewing material at a later time. Questions and answers written on a separate sheet would be difficult to use later for review.

Third, Seton reviews and reformats workbooks every few years in response to parental input. Each time we go to press, we update books based on user feedback either to correct any errors, or to use better methodology, or to include relevant new material. Using an older book may mean using a book that is not as good as the newest version.

How do I keep homeschooling with the outside trips seemingly every day?

The ability to be able to go to all the wonderful events sometimes causes us to take time away from teaching our children. One phrase that comes up with business people is “Have a plan and work the plan.” We need to focus on what we need to do and do our very best to keep to our teaching schedule. Try to limit the outside activities. Though they are important, the academics should come first.

Some families have chosen to make music or sports of primary importance, which is certainly the family’s legitimate decision. This can make sense for a particularly gifted child. We have had world-class figure skaters, gymnasts, and musicians on the Seton program. However, when a child has five or six activities a week—dance class, drama, volunteer work, soccer practice, Church youth group, scouting—a decision often has to be made between these activities and educational time. Each of the activities is certainly good in itself, but the sheer mass of them all together can become detrimental to the homeschooling program.

The one outside trip you might make every day is to daily Mass. Thank God for all your blessings, and pray for all those who have children who are suffering in some way.

Any suggestions for my second grade daughter who is struggling with math?

Math is one of those subjects in the primary grade levels when sometimes you just need to wait until the child is ready for the abstract thinking that math demands. Keep presenting the lessons but don't put pressure on your daughter. Skip around the lessons. She may be ready for geometric figures faster than three-digit subtraction. Consider online math games which might interest your daughter. Perhaps the colors and cartoon figures could encourage her to learn the math. Sometimes you can download them.

Try to stay calm. Sometimes a child becomes mentally "uptight" when mom seems upset about the child not learning the concepts quickly enough. Most of all, be patient. She is still very young. She has years ahead of her to learn math.

Why are standardized tests important?

Seton does not require parents to give their children a standardized test, but many states do require it of all the children in the state, no matter what kind of school they attend. Standardized test results are handy to have for relatives, friends, and pastors who might question the idea of homeschooling or your ability to homeschool. Sometimes fathers need to defend their homeschooling among those at work; having a great standardized test score may put their questions to rest.

Even if your state does not require tests, they are often helpful educational tools. Standardized tests not only serve to document achievement, but also to show areas in which a student might have a weakness. It is especially helpful to compare test results year by year to see how a student has progressed in each subject area.

Look on the Home School Legal Defense Association website at www.hslda.org to read the regulations for homeschooling families in your state. Besides the regulations, you can find all kinds of interesting information about homeschooling in your state, such as state and local support group organizations.

When should I give the standardized test? How do I know if my child is ready?

The standardized tests are geared for children to take in the spring, usually in late March or April.

While most of the tests still ask for objective correct answers, some are now focusing on process. So make sure your child understands those process-type questions. Seton offers practice tests for grades 1 - 12. Check the Seton website for a variety of these practice tests.

We offer the standardized CAT at no additional cost to enrolled families. We have other tests available, such as the Iowa and the Terra Nova. Because these tests cost Seton more to provide, they are not free to enrolled families. To see all the options available, please go to the website www.setontesting.com.

I am not sure my son will be able to complete all the work by June.

He does not necessarily need to do all the work. What he does need to do is learn the lessons or concepts. Most people learn more quickly or easily in some subjects than others. If he is a great speller or learns the vocabulary words quickly and easily, perhaps he can do two lessons a week rather than only one lesson a week. If he easily remembers what he reads in the science or history book, perhaps he can skip some of the written assignments, or do them orally, and take the chapter test early. For more individualized suggestions, you might want to contact one of our counselors.

Be sure to have him take the time for the English, reading, math, and religion assignments. You want to be sure these areas which "build" each year are well learned. These are the areas which demand the most thinking and analysis skills.

Are boys harder to teach?

Not really, you just need to understand the way they learn. Your husband is likely a great teacher for your boys; they will usually learn the way he learns. They have the same genes. Dads are often great teachers, but sometimes they don't get much of a chance because they are out working. If your husband is out of work or working only part-time, ask him to take over a course or two for your boys. Boys love their dads to teach them.

If you are fortunate enough to have your husband working, think about asking him to teach a class or two on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Especially if your husband does not have a lot of time for family activities, the kids may love spending this time with dad.

From teaching my own seven boys at home, one important thing I learned is to keep them moving! For some reason, they learn better if they can move around while learning. Have them stand at a whiteboard and work out their math problems or diagram sentences. They love to answer questions orally, recite spelling words or catechism answers even while jumping rope! Have you ever read walking around? Boys do. After a necessary sit-down session, give them a housework type of job: go upstairs and collect the dirty laundry, go downstairs and put the laundry in the dryer, jump rope for five minutes, and so on.

And pray a lot, together!

Let us pray for one another

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



A Mission at Home

BY ANNE YAMAKAITIS

On June 10, 2012, we gathered to celebrate our first 8th grade graduation from our homeschool. Our thirteen-year-old daughter, Bernadette, rejoiced that she had successfully completed nine years of Seton Home Study School. My husband and I rejoiced that with the grace of God, we had successfully educated her. At that celebration, my husband read and shared publicly, for the first time, the mission statement we had written nine years earlier.

So...reflecting back, how have we done in faithfully fulfilling the vision we dreamed nine years ago?

Hear, O Israel....

Well, beginning at the beginning, to love the Lord with all our strength, there is, of course always room for improvement. Over the years and together as a family, we have developed some traditions that have kept us on a relatively steady course through stormy days. We are fortunate to live very close to our parish church where there are three daily Masses! We frequent daily Mass, although it is never required because, as my middle son once pointed out, "God does not demand it." As parents, we have not demanded what God does not demand. We have, however,



Anne and the kids outside their parish church, St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Clark, NJ



THE YAMAKAITIS FAMILY HOMESCHOOLING MISSION STATEMENT

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

We are filled with gratitude to God in our hearts for the gift of our family. And as we wish to fulfill our duties as the primary educators of our children and wish that through their education they may not only grow in intellect and skills but in grace before God and man, we choose an education that is also a lifestyle. In doing so, we hope that each day, together we can grow as a family and as individuals into people who will love God above all else.

Recognizing that the time given parents to form and train their children is very short and passes very quickly we wish to make the most of every day we have together. We wish to not only offer our children an education that meets their personal needs and challenges them to grow in comprehension and skills, we wish to have the time to meet extracurricular interests without it impeding upon our time as a family.

Our primary motivation is love of God and love of our children. We look forward to celebrating each day according to the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church.



Bernadette, in addition to playing piano, decided to add violin to her disciplines three years ago and has made steady advancements.

encouraged our children to come and so they have. Each of our three children comes often to daily Mass, and God has blessed them for it. Then there is frequent confession, which we do as a family. This has become a habit and tradition. In the summer, it may be followed by ice cream sundaes. (Oh, I forgot, this is about spiritual growth!) In the evening, we have family prayer, usually a decade of the rosary followed by a few other additional prayers, ending with an Act of Contrition.

During Lent, we have up throughout the house Stations of the Cross where we say our prayers, and a family poster where we keep track of fasting (F), almsgiving (A), and prayers (P), (not to mention secret good deeds - stickers). If we have guests over, they are invited to add "Fs, As, Ps or stickers" to our annual poster, and it makes Lent more fun than penance!

We are not saints... far from it. In the confession line, we often ask each other for material to tell the priest, and get lots of input! However, we know that our goal in doing all that we do, is to TRY to love God and one another.

As the primary educator....

It took me years to trust that I could be the primary educator. One of the ways I knew that I could be successful with my children on an educational level was

through the standardized testing offered through Seton. There was a year when my middle son hated math. It was torture for both of us. ("He must have a learning disability, and I'm making it worse!") Then came the CAT tests at the end of the year, when he earned two perfect scores in math. Well, it turned out he just hated memorizing the multiplication table. He could do the math perfectly. I was able to figure this out with time, and as the years have progressed, while math is still not his favorite subject, he remains quite good at it. He is also the first one to tell you homeschooling is "awesome."

To grow in grace...

There is little value in academic success if we are not in a state of grace. Homeschooling allows us to be certain that our children's education is faithful to the Magisterium of the Church. Of course, because we are enrolled with Seton, all the material we receive is either explicitly in accordance with Church teaching or at least neutral. More importantly, however, our discussions at home and in the family answer many questions that come up in these times of great confusion--questions that must be answered with clarity and love and as only the Church and the domestic church can answer them.



Mark Joseph aka Hockey Shark #38 can be found on the ice anywhere from three to five times a week.



Jude, who enjoys the name "Basketball Jude" shows off an award won by his team the NJ Hawks.

Extracurricular interests....

So what do the kids look like when we are out and about? They are swimmers, a violin player, a piano player, a soccer player, a basketball player, an ice hockey player (#38), and as if that weren't enough, a figure skater! We have belonged to cub scouts, Little Flowers and presently Challenge Club. Yet as homeschoolers, there is not only time for these activities, but dinner is (almost) always on time!

One last word...the special education department...

Our youngest son, Jude (also known as "Basketball Jude"), has Down syndrome. It took me a bit longer to decide to home school him as I wasn't sure I would be able to do a good job with all three children. Nor did I want to lose the services provided by the public school system. However, two years ago, he began to regress in the school in which he was then enrolled. I knew it was time. I contacted Seton's special education department and made the decision I knew was inevitable. Since that time, Jude has progressed at home and his sister and brother have had no difficulty adjusting to having him. He needs more individual attention; however I get to enjoy his progress in ways that are just unimaginable. He brings joy to our homeschool and I will be forever grateful to God that the time came for him to join us.

Art Through Faith

The great art of the world is Catholic art! For anyone who believes that the purpose of art is to uplift the human spirit, this statement cannot be disputed.

For many people throughout history, their devotion to God has been expressed through works of art. By creating objects of beauty, they both praise God and reflect the beauty that God has made upon the earth. Christian love is fruitful and cannot be contained merely within itself. It must be shared. Catholic art is thus the visible embodiment of the love within the hearts of its creators.

Catholic culture, especially in Europe, has brought forth magnificent art in

paintings, in sculpture, and in architecture. Just as the Faith is passed down to each generation, so Catholic culture, through art, is part of the patrimony of each Catholic, which must not be lost to the apathy of the modern world.

At Seton, we have tried to keep great Catholic art alive in our textbooks. We include paintings, stained glass windows, churches, and even some sculpture in all our books. In an age when most “art” is ugly, and this ugliness is upheld as the standard of beauty, we stand in the breach and say “NO!”

Faith and Art

Catholic art, however, is not merely beautiful. It is not merely pretty pictures, or statues, or buildings. It is meant to tell a tale and reinforce belief. It is a visible representation of the beliefs that we hold within our hearts.

Catholic art is not merely a static thing hanging upon a wall or standing on a pedestal. Catholic art is

St. Veronica with the Miraculous Veil



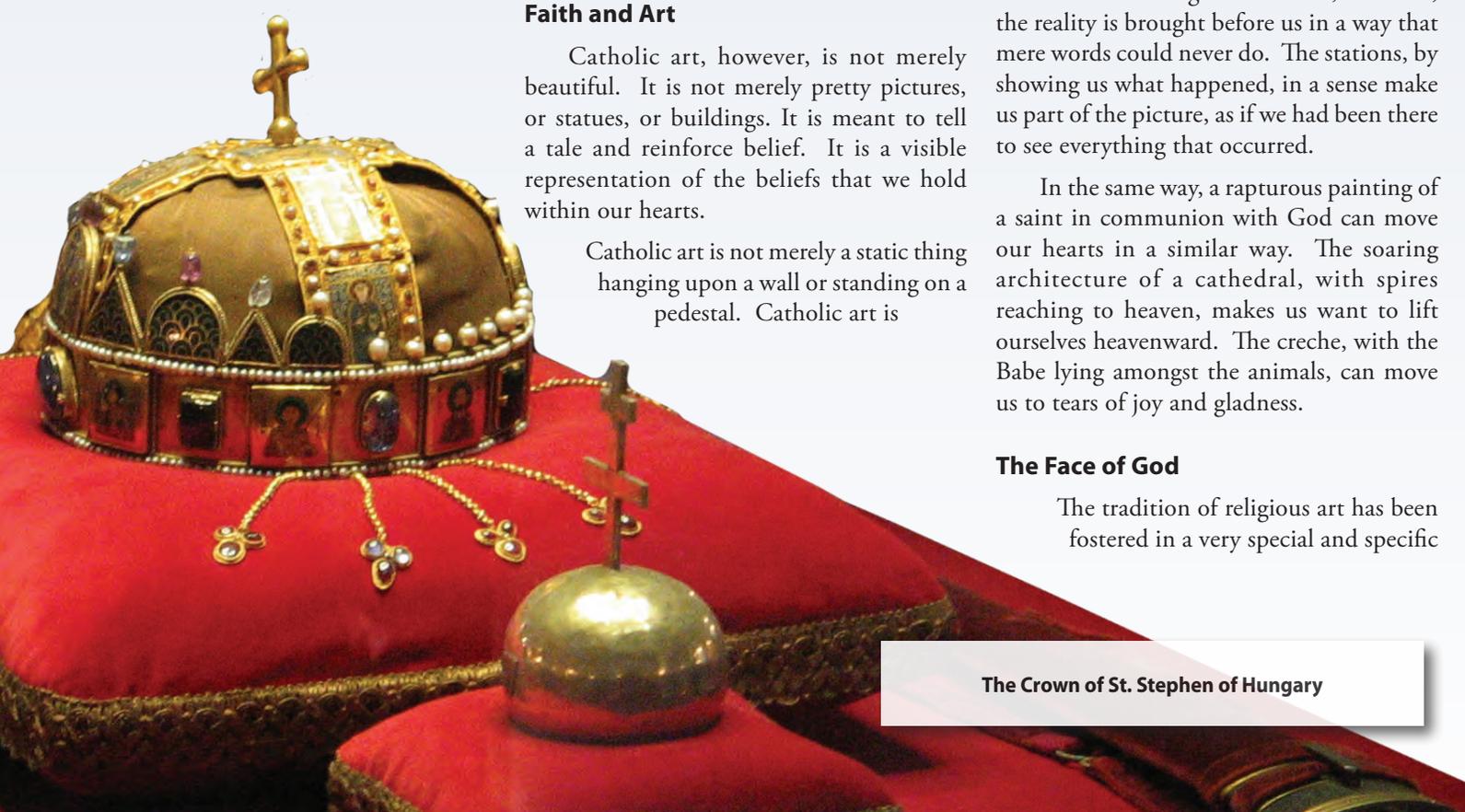
active, working to bring about a change in the viewer.

Consider, for example, the Stations of the Cross. Of course, we know what happened on the way to Calvary. We know of the falls, and of the women, and of the crucifixion. Seeing the stations, however, the reality is brought before us in a way that mere words could never do. The stations, by showing us what happened, in a sense make us part of the picture, as if we had been there to see everything that occurred.

In the same way, a rapturous painting of a saint in communion with God can move our hearts in a similar way. The soaring architecture of a cathedral, with spires reaching to heaven, makes us want to lift ourselves heavenward. The creche, with the Babe lying amongst the animals, can move us to tears of joy and gladness.

The Face of God

The tradition of religious art has been fostered in a very special and specific



The Crown of St. Stephen of Hungary

way within Christianity. In the Old Testament, we read that God forbade the ancient Jews from creating “graven images” which were to represent God. The reason for this is clear: no one had seen God.

When Our Lord came to earth, however, that changed. The invisible had become visible, and the indescribable God could now be depicted in art.

Jesus himself created the first Christian art when he left the image of his face upon the veil of Veronica. From this divine beginning, the tradition of icons was developed. Jesus pictured himself, and faith-filled artists did likewise.

The crucifixion itself is a striking image. Far from being hidden, Jesus was held aloft for all to see. In the Old Testament, after leaving Egypt, the Israelites were attacked by poisonous snakes in the desert. The Lord told Moses to create a staff with a snake at the top and to hold it aloft. Anyone who looked upon the staff would live. In the same way, those who look with faith upon an image of the crucifixion experience the love which leads to eternal life.

Rallying to the Faith

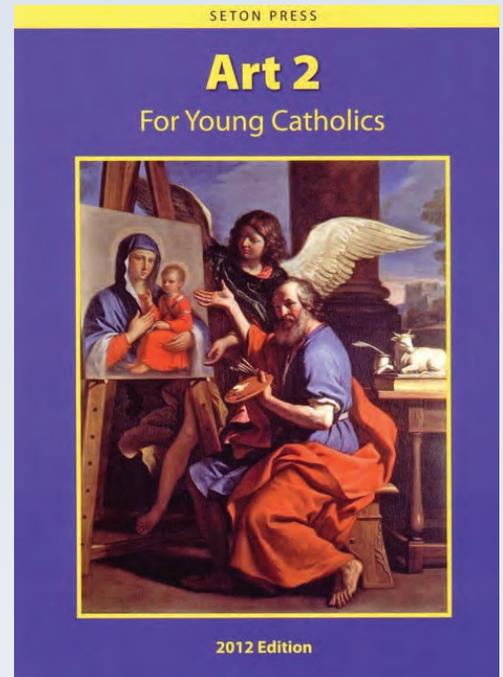
Art that is faith in action can become a rallying point for peoples, and even a symbol for nations. The Polish people have for centuries looked to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa for inspiration. Pious legend states that the Madonna was painted originally by Saint Luke on the cedar table top in the home of the Holy Family. In any case, the icon has been venerated since at least 1382 and is credited with saving Poland from foreign invasion on several occasions. In 1656, Our Lady of Czestochowa was named the Queen and Protectress of Poland. Today, pilgrims walk long distances and stand in lines to venerate the image.

The Crown of St. Stephen, also called the Holy Crown of Hungary, has symbolized the people and faith of Hungary since around the year 1000, when it was first used to crown St. Stephen. It was said the king ruled “in the name of the crown.” After World War II, the crown was recovered by the United States Army in Mattsee, Austria. The crown was held in Fort Knox until 1978, when it was transferred back to Hungary, then still under Communist rule. In the year 2000, upon the millennial celebration of the nation of Hungary, the crown was transferred to the Hungarian Parliament. It is also prominently displayed in the Hungarian coat of arms.

Mexico has gone through many travails over the years, but since 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe, emblazoned upon the tilma of Juan Diego, has watched over the Mexican people. The Virgin of Guadalupe is the woman spoken of in Revelation, “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” Though the people of Mexico are separated by many differences, veneration of the Virgin unites them. The shrine holding the tilma is the most visited Catholic shrine in the world. In 2009, over the December weekend commemorating the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, over six million pilgrims visited the shrine. Our Lady of Guadalupe was named Queen of Mexico



Our Lady of Guadalupe



Through its books, Seton tries to instill in students a love and respect for Catholic Art.

and Empress of the Americas by Pope Pius XII.

With such an extraordinary artistic heritage left to us, we Catholics ought not only to learn about Catholic art, but also to spread awareness and appreciation for it. The power of Catholic art has been demonstrated down through the centuries, having inspired countless individual souls, and stirred whole peoples. It has put people in touch with their fellow man through the common emotion and end of devotion; it has raised the hearts of whole nations to God.

In our own humble way at Seton, we attempt to continue that tradition by presenting to you a treasury of images from the history of Catholic art, spread throughout the pages of our textbooks. Through the communion of saints, we can add our prayers to those countless souls who have been edified by these same images, and join with them in the acknowledgment of the precious gift that is our patrimony of Catholic art.

Book Reports

When I first enrolled my children in the program, over twenty years ago, we were told to pick a good book and have the child write a report following some general guidelines. The present assignment—to read a set book and write the report following a provided outline—is a walk in the park, comparatively speaking. I would like to answer some of the usual questions that are asked by Seton parents.

My child has already read the assigned book. Can we get an alternate?

Often the lesson plans provide some choices for the first two quarters, and the children may pick an appropriate saint's biography for the last two quarters, so there is a bit of flexibility. Book reports are not intended to provide new reading experiences for students. Rather, they help the child learn how to analyze some excellent fiction in terms of important elements such as characterization, theme, and conflict. It would actually be a big benefit if the student is already familiar with the work.

My son prefers to read non-fiction. Wouldn't he learn even more reading about the solar system or ancient Egypt?

Reading non-fiction teaches different skills than those learned by writing book reports. While assigned books often provide a vivid glimpse into a particular time and place in history, and half are accounts of the lives of the saints, they are not primarily intended to impart factual knowledge. Instead, students read a story chosen to present important ideas about virtue and values, and then the lesson plan leads them to consider this human experience in terms of what they know about Church teaching. At the same time, the assignments encourage children to think about various literary elements — especially characterization — formulate ideas about them, and express those ideas clearly. Books about mummies or the asteroid belt are certainly valuable for your son to read, but are not really appropriate for book reports.

My daughter has trouble reading dialogue written in dialect. I suspect the book is above her reading level.

While we try to choose grade-level appropriate selections, students vary

tremendously in their ability to adapt to various elements like dialects, or unfamiliar situations and settings. It is not “cheating” to read the story with the child and even read the more difficult passages *to* her, if necessary. Look up and discuss the meanings of words that are not standard contemporary American English. Many of the greatest authors of the English language wrote in dialect (Mark Twain), or used words that have fallen out of use in our own time (Shakespeare and Jane Austen). Even Laura Ingalls Wilder, who lived as recently as 19th century America, used “mosquito bar” when speaking of a window screen. Understanding dialect can be tremendously enriching for a young reader.

Seton requires students to use ideas, and even sentences, in the lesson plans for book reports. Doesn't this stifle my child's creativity?

Book reports are not creative writing assignments. The outlines in the lesson plans guide students in gaining a *Catholic* understanding of important themes in the assigned books, and help them to express these ideas in a clear and organized manner. Too many U.S. students lack the ability to express themselves well on paper—even at the university level. These are essential skills, and although book reports can be time-consuming, they are well worth the effort.

Why don't the lesson plans give outlines for the two saint biographies for quarters three and four?

We might at some point add outlines, but right now, we are hoping students will apply the skills they learned writing book reports for the first two quarters. Because these books are based on the lives of holy people, it is pretty easy to come up with an outline. By all means, help your children if they are struggling. It might be a good idea for you to read the book first; most are relatively short. That way you can prepare a suggested outline to review with the child before he or she starts reading. Let's illustrate by using a biography of St. Thomas More of London.

First, identify three virtues that St. Thomas possessed and give examples of how he practiced them to a heroic degree.

For example, we might say, “St. Thomas possessed a brilliant intellect, which he humbly submitted to the teaching of the Catholic Church,” and give examples from his personal life, from the books he authored, or his legal decisions while a judge. The next idea might be introduced, “Despite his numerous professional and family obligations, St. Thomas had a vigorous spiritual life marked by many pious practices,” and give examples of these practices. Finally, we might say, “St. Thomas had great courage which enabled him to lose his standing in society, his money, his family, his freedom, and even his life, rather than deny the Catholic Faith.” St. Thomas' three virtues: his humility in submitting his intellect to Church teaching, his piety, and his courage are the three main ideas of the report.

My children seem to dawdle, and book reports are always the last assignments we send in to finish the grading period. Any ideas to hurry us along?

In my family, book reports were a lot less painful when we had a strict time frame. Otherwise what happened was the child read the book, procrastinated writing the report, and forgot too many details to complete the assignment, leaving what seemed like an enormous mountain to climb. Some families have their children read the first book and write the report the week before school starts. Some families have their children read their books, and work on writing the reports during the first week of each quarter, so it is finished before the other subjects. By the way, book report worksheets are now available online under *Reading Resources*.

For a relatively painless experience, you might try to follow a schedule like this one:

Introduce the Assignment – On the first day of the quarter (perhaps in the evening when you have some quiet time) look over the book with your student. Look over the Seton Book Report Worksheets or outline



BY GINNY SEUFFERT

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Seton Home Study School

2013 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
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
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
www.ihmconference.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INDEPENDENT WORK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

(or your own), and start a document on your word processor. Your student may type the required heading, the first paragraph, and the topic sentences for the middle paragraphs. This gives your child a boost and a sense of accomplishment because the assignment is almost completed.

Reading the Book – Have your child read the first chapter to you, or alternate pages. This will allow you to see how the reading level fits your child’s ability. If the child reads easily, assign no less than one chapter per day, but put no limit on the number of chapters an eager reader may finish. If the book is more of a challenge, try to set aside time for mom or dad to read with your child every day.

Working on the report – Your child already knows the main ideas of each paragraph. When an event in the book seems to demonstrate a main idea, type a sentence or two in the appropriate spot of the prepared document right away. Though this might not be the final sentence in the report, your child will feel more comfortable because he will have several sentences or ideas from which to choose the final middle sentences.

Polishing the final draft – Finish up your book report as soon as the book is finished. If the child waits even a week or two, he will forget important details. Hopefully, there are enough notes or sentences added to the

original document that finishing it will be much easier.

In Conclusion

Book reports can be time consuming for both students and parents, and can be a source of frustration if they are not done in a measured, timely way, writing sentences or ideas as the book is read. Nevertheless, learning how to analyze literature in the elementary years is terrific preparation for high school and college. As always, Seton counselors are only a phone call or email away.



College Prep

MAKE YOURSELF IRRESISTIBLE TO COLLEGES

BOB WIESNER

Choosing a college involves forming a relationship with the institution. You will be spending a significant part of your life in this relationship. Obviously, you want to like your college. There is another side to the question, though. In order to be accepted at the college, the school must like you, too!

Grades and entrance exams are important for acceptance, but admissions committees look for other characteristics as well. A student who displays a wide range of interests and achievements has a definite advantage. Seton students have great opportunities for developing a fascinating resumé.

Working with their flexible schedule, Seton students have accomplished amazing things. Missionary work, volunteering at pregnancy centers and political campaigns, coaching youth sports teams, tutoring, internships with veterinarians, professional music, solving the mystery of why some cattle breeds die in North America, developing a new medical use for snake venom, breeding show horses: most high school students can't even dream of such feats! Colleges seeing such extracurricular activity will have bidding wars for these students.

The general rule of thumb is this: take every opportunity you have to try a variety of activities. Even if you don't care for some, at the very least you will have beneficial learning experiences. Some should lead to life-long hobbies or even a career!

When speaking to colleges, you will have a great deal to say about many interesting topics. You will intrigue them. You will amaze them. You really will be irresistible to them!

Fourteen Forever

Seton recently conducted a poll to determine how popular the various columns are in this magazine. So far, the research indicates that my column is read by about the same number of teenagers as dads. So teens, this column is for you. And thanks for reading.

Men in our society are often criticized for being perpetual adolescents. Yeah, maybe—but it's not all our fault. I recently did a little research into the medical facts about adolescence, and experts seem to agree that the major problems with male adolescence are things such as acne, the desire for junk food (which results in weight gain), difficulty relating to girls, and a desire for approval from peers (which manifests itself in the need for material things such as nice clothes or a flashy car).

For me, that doesn't sound as much like adolescence as it sounds like last Tuesday.

The truth is that many of the problems of adolescence seem to linger for a long time. For instance, I guess if you had asked me when I was twelve years old if there would ever be a time in my life when I would purchase bifocals and Clearasil, I probably would have answered in the affirmative. I just didn't know I'd have to buy them simultaneously.

(Although I had terrible acne growing up, I now realize that this affliction doesn't strike everybody. My daughter, Veronica, for instance, has perfectly clear skin. A while back, she won a free facial from a high-end salon. When Lisa and I went to pick her up, the cosmetologist came out and explained just how great her skin was. When she finished, I felt like saying: "That's great, lady; now let me tell you a little about *my* childhood.")

As far as weight gain is concerned, I used to have this thing called a "metabolism." For a while, we had a pretty good relationship, but I must have said or done something unkind to it, because it won't even speak to me any more. When I shop for junk food, I often ask myself questions like, "Is this pint of Haagen Dazs Bananas Foster ice cream worth 30 sets of bench presses, lat pulldowns, and bicep curls at my gym?" (It is.)



BY JOHN CLARK

What about difficulty relating to girls?

Check.

The only difference now is that the girls I have trouble relating to are my daughters. Growing up, I had a girl friend who was frustrated that I couldn't follow the plots on the show *Beverly Hills 90210* because I couldn't tell the difference between the actors on the show (of course, as I pointed out to her, the show had no plot, so the question was moot.) Now, my three-year-old daughter Mary Katherine gets frustrated when I can't tell the difference between Pet Shop Toys and Zhu Zhu's.

I don't know what age you "get over" trying to impress your peers, but I hope it happens soon. It's getting exhausting. I used to want to be the kid with the "cool car" to impress the pretty girl. Well, I've got the pretty girl, but Lisa's not too impressed with the ripped leather seats or the Chick-Fil-A honey mustard sauce stains in my Mustang.

Some of the problems of adolescence are still present, just inverted. I used to borrow money from my Mom to go on dates and buy pizza; now my wife borrows money from my kids so she can order pizza when I'm not home.

As an adult, you may have the money to do the things you couldn't do as an adolescent, but you don't want to do them anymore. For instance, I used to like to go out for a movie and popcorn, but that doesn't seem to work out much. I've got the money to go to the movies, but trying to decide whether to see *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* or *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* is a decision that no normal human—hunter or otherwise—should ever have to make. Instead of a movie and popcorn, I opt to stay home and watch *The Rockford Files* on Netflix and eat a Twinkie I bought on Ebay.

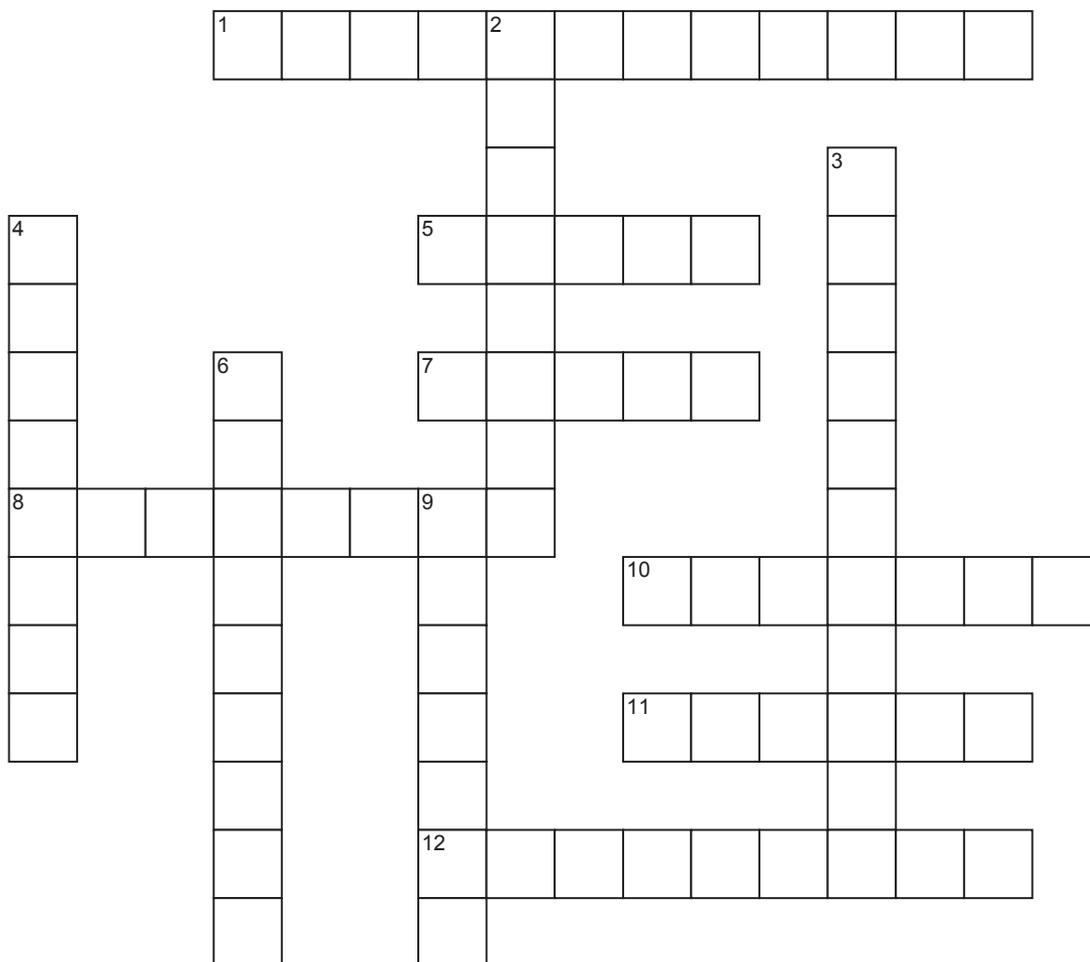
Yes, adolescence is tough, and it can stay with you for a while. But to you teenagers suffering from the problems that adolescence brings, keep the faith. One day, we'll all get over them.

I hope.

Kid's Corner



The Annunciation

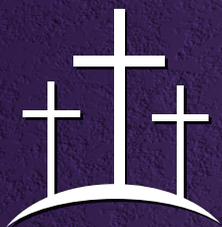


ACROSS

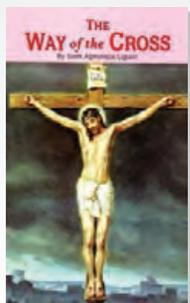
- 1 Catholics normally celebrate this feast on March 25.
- 5 Joseph was of the house of ____.
- 7 The angel said Mary was to call her Son this name.
- 8 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the ____." (two words)
- 10 "Of His ____ there will be no end."
- 11 The angel told Mary not to be ____.
- 12 Mary's cousin; the angel said that she had conceived a son.

DOWN

- 2 Town in which the angel appeared to Mary
- 3 "Hail, ____, the Lord is with you." (three words)
- 4 Mary said, "Behold, I am the ____ of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word."
- 6 Mary was ____ to a man named Joseph; means engaged to be married.
- 9 Name of the angel that appeared to Mary



prepare for *Holy Week*



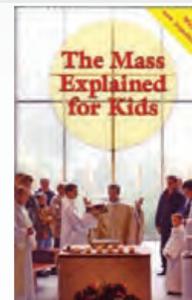
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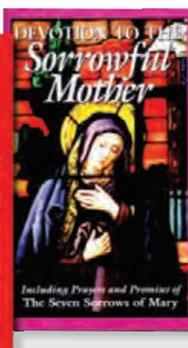
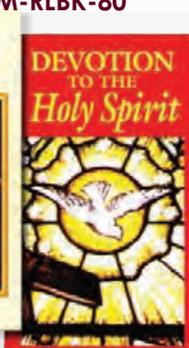
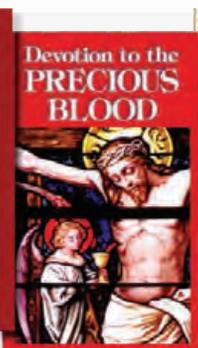
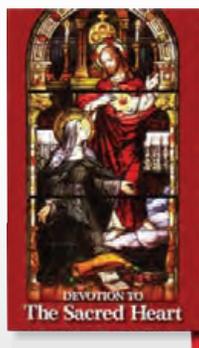
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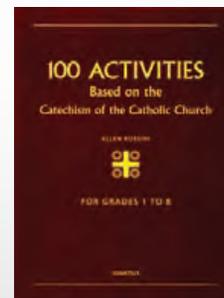
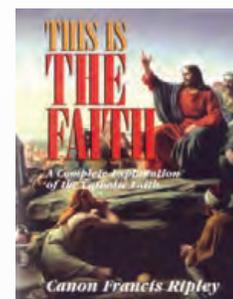
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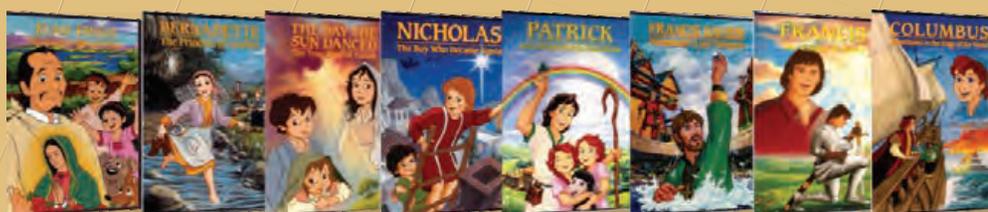
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Seton Graduation 2013

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

www.setonhome.org/grad2013



PAPAL WISDOM

The Family: Cradle of Civil Society

[They] who would break away from Christian discipline are working to corrupt family life and to destroy it utterly, root and branch. From such an unholy purpose, they are not deterred by the fact that they are inflicting a cruel outrage on parents who have the right from nature to educate those whom they begot, a right to which is joined the duty of harmonizing instruction and education with the end [purpose] for which they were given their children by the goodness of God.

It is then incumbent upon parents to make every effort to resist attacks on this point and to vindicate at any cost the right to direct the education of their offspring in a Christian manner; and first and foremost to keep them away from schools where there is risk of their being imbued with the poison of impiety.

Where the right education of youth is concerned, no amount of trouble and labor is too much... However, let everyone be firmly convinced, first of all, that the minds of children are best trained above all by the teaching they receive at home. If in their growing years they find in their homes the rule of an upright life and the exercise of Christian virtue, the salvation of society will be in great part assured.

Pope Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae*, Jan. 10, 1890



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