

Seton



MAGAZINE

"Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church"

JUNE 2013



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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
Pray for Us!

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On the Cover:

The Mills family happily reunited after Ben's successful surgery.

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



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Care to share your homeschooling adventure?

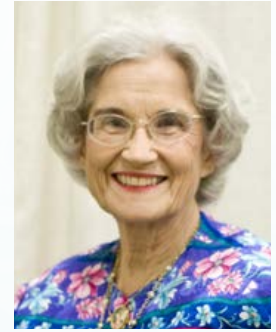
If you would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Seton Magazine, please send a paragraph explaining what our readers would enjoy about your family's story along with a photograph to Christine Smitha at cmsmitha@setonhome.org.



SHARE YOUR STORY AND INSPIRE ANOTHER FAMILY!

Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School

Dr. Mary Kay Clark



The Sacred Heart

The feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is celebrated this year on Friday, June 7th. Among Catholics and many Christians, pictures of the Sacred Heart and devotions to the Sacred Heart are popular because His Heart represents His love, care, mercy, and protection for each one of us.

God is Love. God the Father so loved each one of us that He sent His most beloved Son, Divine Love Itself, to become a human person so that He could not only teach us how to live, but also to die a sacrificial death on the Cross as a reparation for our sins.

Jesus has appeared to several saints to tell them and us about His infinite love for us. In 1923, when Jesus appeared to Sister Josefa, a Sacred Heart nun, He told her to write down messages from Him to all of us. He told her to write, "When you submit yourselves generously to the Will of God, in spite of natural interior opposition to it, in spite of the resistance of your family, in spite of the judgments of the world, when you have given yourself generously to the Will of God, then shall you be closely united to Him and taste ineffable sweetness."

Jesus is asking us to embrace with love His Holy Will, primary of which is to save the souls of our children by teaching them to live the Faith, and to keep them from the harmful ideas and practices of our society. The current culture approving death for the most innocent, denying God's laws concerning marriage, raising children to accept pagan ways, all these daily remind us of our God-given

responsibility to teach our children and guard their souls.

Let us teach our children to love Jesus in His Most Sacred Heart. Let us teach our children to love Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let us teach our children to love Him in the Holy Eucharist. Let us teach our children to love Him so much that each day they want to receive Holy Communion to feed their souls with His Divine Love.

Jesus dictated these words to Sister Josefa to pass on to us: "O chosen souls, your happiness and perfection do not lie in following your attraction, nor in living known or unknown to the world, in using or hiding talents, in being thought much of or little, in having good health or not... but [your happiness lies] only and solely in embracing with love God's Will, and being in conformity with it in what it requires of you for His glory and your holiness."

We home-schooling parents are, in a way, His chosen people. God has revealed to us the vital importance of

fulfilling our vocation of educating our children, and of directing our children in the spiritual life in such a way that they may spend eternity in heavenly glory. Through fulfilling this vocation by homeschooling our children, we experience tremendous spiritual growth ourselves. As we homeschool for His Glory, our whole family can grow in holiness.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I implore, help my family love You more and more.





My son is struggling with his 8th grade studies. I notice he enjoys playing with the younger children and prefers activities which are popular for younger boys.

It is not unusual for some children to “grow up” at a later age. Parents who recognize this often wait until their child is six years old before starting kindergarten. Parents who start these children at the usual early age sometimes discover that by 4th or 5th grade, they are struggling, especially with reading comprehension and analysis skills.

We need to think differently about learning readiness. Schools find it easier to group children in certain grades based on their age and not on their abilities. This means that some children will fall behind, and may remain behind all through their school years. It also means that some children are bored from their first year in school, and often become discipline problems by the time they reach seventh or eighth grade. Their minds cannot stand the boredom and the slowness of the class lessons.

All of this is to say that you should be more concerned with your child’s developmental age rather than his chronological age. If he is not ready for more advanced studies or such a rapid pace, consider slowing down the lessons and give him extra time to mature. Pray to St. Joseph of Cupertino, who struggled with his studies, to help your son.

Can parents really teach a subject as well as an educated and experienced teacher?

The best teacher is the one who understands the child the best, which means understanding how a child learns. Individualized instruction, geared for the ability of the individual child, helps the child learn more quickly with better retention. Individualized instruction helps the child understand concepts more easily because the parent teaches the lessons at the rate at which the child is actually learning. In a classroom situation, the teacher teaches

according to methods she thinks is best for the majority of the children, and at the rate she thinks is best for the group. She cannot take the time to analyze how well an individual student has learned a new concept, nor take the time to re-teach the concept to an individual student.

Besides the time and method of teaching, children who have the same genes as their parents tend to have the same strengths and weaknesses as their parents. Parents remember how they learned, and use these techniques with their own children, who in most cases, will learn best with the same techniques.

Best of all, parents love their children to such a degree that they take the extra steps, whatever it demands in time and patience and explanations, to help their child learn the concepts. Children recognize the love and dedication of their parents, and tend to respond by trying harder to learn their lessons.

Think of it this way. Teachers in public schools are usually certified in their subject and often have had formal training in teaching. Teachers in parochial schools are less likely to be certified or formally trained. If credentials were the important point then we would expect that public schools would be doing a much better job than parochial schools. But the truth is the other way around.

With Catholic homeschooling, we have the help of our patron saints as well as Jesus and His Blessed Mother.

Because I need to work part-time, I don’t have the time to write outlines and study guides for my children.

Students in 5th and 6th grades should be starting to learn study skills, including writing their own outlines or study guides. If you don’t have time to teach these study skills, you can refer to or download the Seton Study Skills course, which is available from a link on the front page of our website.

Convey to your student that outlines and study guides are essential to learning anything. If you do any of that kind of work at the office, share that with your child. If you need more help teaching study skills, check our Seton Educational Media website for workbooks such as Study Strategies. Check on the internet for “How to Outline a Chapter.”

Sometimes I don’t have time to call Seton with a question until nighttime when the children are in bed. What are the ways I can reach you? What helps are available in the late evening hours?

The academic counselors check their emails and phone calls every morning when they arrive about 9:00 A.M. Eastern Time. Please don’t hesitate to call. First check on our website for the proper extension for the counselor you want to reach. Click on About Seton, then click on Meet Our Staff. Be sure to tell the counselor in which state you reside so that he or she does not wake you up when calling back.

Besides being available by phone, each counselor is available by email.

We also have a Message Board. There is one for the Elementary Grade Levels, and there are several for the subject areas for the High School Courses. These boards give you an opportunity to ask a question of our counselors, but also of the other homeschooling mothers and fathers who answer some of the questions based on their own experience. The Message Board serves not only as an Announcement Board from our counselors, but it also serves as a sharing of ideas for parents. In the high school Message Boards, we see students sharing ideas as well.

How can I help my son enjoy reading? He is struggling with it.

Young children love hearing stories and if you read stories to your son, he quickly learns that exciting adventures can be found in a book. This in itself should cause him to be interested in reading.

Once your son starts reading even three letter words, continue to read to him but find books which have large print for children to read. Then read only the words that you know he cannot read, but have him read the words you know he can read. If reading becomes a joint project, if you encourage him to read with

you, he will start reading more himself. Be sure he reads from books which you know he can read. You don't want him to be discouraged because he cannot read longer words or smaller-font words.

Because boys like to be active and play outside and ride their bikes, you will need to schedule the reading when he is ready, perhaps in the evening or early morning. Don't try to have a reading class inside when the sunny weather entices him outside. Consider reading together outside at a picnic table. Encourage your child to write words or short sentences about what he sees outdoors, or what he likes to do outdoors. Reading his own writing is especially encouraging to a weak reader!

Try not to push your son too much, to the point where it becomes an "issue" to resist your invitation to read. Find large-print books that deal with animals or events which will interest him. You might be able to find something on the internet, an animal story for instance, which you can enlarge for him to read.

You may discover that your son is not quite ready for reading. He has a long life ahead of him; you don't need to rush it. Have an eye doctor check his eyesight. Do not be overly concerned until he turns nine and seems not to "understand" the sounds of the letters. Also, you certainly may phone our Special Needs department. Look first on our website: Go to Curriculum, then scroll down to Special Services. Be sure to read the whole section before you call.

Try to remain calm and keep praying to your son's patron saint. Prayer works miracles!

Are you writing more Catholic books for the high school courses?

Yes, we are, but we are also writing online courses in some subject areas. In the area of science, for example, an area in which there is constant updating needed, we believe an online course can "keep up" with recent discoveries. At the same time, an online course can present color images and videos which can show much more than a textbook. The Biology course is already online, and Earth Science is scheduled to be online shortly. Other science courses being designed are Physical Science and the 8th grade Life Science.

Our high school Spanish course offers not only the books and lesson plans, but two

audios, one for pronunciation. In addition, our Spanish teacher, Manuel Vicente, has done quite a number of tutorial videos.

We also are designing high school online courses for History of Art, Geography, Economics, and American Government.

Almost all these courses will offer the option of a textbook.

We are already producing online tutorials. Right now, these are available for the English courses, mainly, but we will be making many more for several of the high school courses. In addition, we will have Study Skills courses. Dr. Katherine Moran has done a series for our Seton students and parents on various techniques for teaching children, especially for children who might have special learning needs. We plan for these to be available online by the end of the summer.

As we are finishing up the school year, I wonder how we can get it all done by the end of June.

In order to finish up, you can try both increasing the time you spend and cut back on assignments.

To give yourself more time, consider having the children do some classes on Saturday so they can finish up. Most students would prefer that rather than going into the summer.

For the elementary levels, be sure to cover thoroughly the important concepts so that your children will be successful in the next grade level. The subjects that "build" on previous lessons from previous grades--such as religion, mathematics, reading and phonics, and English grammar and composition--must be well understood by your children. Your children need to spend the time necessary to

"conquer" these subjects.

It is possible to cut down the time for the lessons in spelling, vocabulary, history, and science by doing more orally. Two chapters in Spelling and Vocabulary could be done in one week. Time for history and science chapters may be cut down with more oral reading, oral discussion, and answering chapter questions orally.

If you find that your end of June completion date is simply not doable, then add a couple more weeks onto your schedule.

Next September, help your children make a schedule so they will complete their lessons in the time you all want. If they fall behind in any one week, they should make up those lessons the following weekend. That way, there won't be a terrible rush, and possible discouragement, at the end of the school year.

What is most important to keeping up is to stick to that daily schedule. If everyday you do what you need to do, you won't fall behind.

There has been so much discussion on the internet about the Common Core program being implemented in schools, even in Catholic schools. What will you be doing about the Common Core?

We have no plans of adopting anything relating to the Common Core standards. We are an independent Catholic school and will continue to have our Catholic books and Catholic curriculum.

Rather than Common Core, we believe in Common Heritage, which is the tried and true knowledge and ideas of Western Civilization and Catholic culture. It is this Common Heritage which we have always passed on, and which will continue to guide our curriculum.

Let us pray for one another

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





Easter Brings New Life

by Renee Mills

“Put all your heart’s confidence in the Lord, on your own skill relying never. If you but keep him in your thoughts wherever you go, he will show you the straight path.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

In the poem, *The Ballad of the White Horse*, King Alfred and all of Christianity seem to be lost to the Danes. It is a time of despair for every part of Europe. The only hope is Alfred’s faith in God, strengthened through a vision of Mary. Alfred fights a fierce battle using his God-given skills and is eventually victorious. *The Ballad of the White Horse* is the eleventh grade English requirement our oldest son, Benjamin, and I have been reading for Seton Home Study School. Our family can relate. We have had our own battle to fight, against all odds, and we have survived it only with and through the help of God.

Seventeen years ago, Benjamin was diagnosed with a rare heart condition called hypoplastic left heart. While still in the womb, the doctors had given him a 30% chance of survival and told us that we were in for a long road of surgeries and potential complications. Prior to his birth, my mom took me to visit an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, protector of the unborn. I still remember holding him one week after his birth, just before his first open heart surgery, asking Our Lady to let me keep him just a little longer. She not only gave him the strength to get through the first surgery, she helped him

through two additional surgeries as well. Our Lady of Guadalupe has become Ben’s patroness.

I can’t say that the years have been easy. Nothing of value ever is. God always takes what is hard, however, and turns it into something good. At

three years of age, Ben developed a known but rare complication called protein-losing enteropathy (PLE). Most children who develop this do not survive past a few years. Again, we placed

Ben’s health before God’s Throne and put in the time and attention needed to give him a fighting chance. Ben continued to beat the odds. He was able to live with PLE for fourteen additional years, as it went in and out of remission.

At the end of sixth grade, Ben began to need more support than regular school could provide. After much prayer and discussion of education options, we made the jump to homeschooling. It’s funny how God works. During the entire summer, while assessing our options, I met many homeschool moms and their well-adjusted, well-behaved, well-mannered children. They seemed so happy. I knew we were being led. We pulled together miscellaneous curriculum for seventh and eighth grades, then signed up for Seton in ninth grade. What a challenge! When the first few essays came back with less than great scores, we were disheartened. I often complained of the difficulty to our new homeschool friends. Yet, as often as I complained, we stuck out the first year of Seton High School. Aside from reading, writing and arithmetic, we were learning other things that God had been teaching us: patience, discipline, perseverance, fortitude and especially long-suffering (Saxon Math). God was quietly building us with His gifts. Little did we know we would need so many of these gifts in the near future.

Last February, we were told by Ben’s cardiologist that it was time to think about heart transplant. This was a mixed blessing for all of us. We knew Ben was very ill. He had been



Ben reading
Ballad of the White Horse

“Our family has had our own battle to fight, against all odds, and we have survived it only with and through the help of God.”



Ben watching the New York City skyline from his hospital balcony

slowly wearing out over the last year. Junior year studies had nearly come to a standstill. Still, the shock of hearing that we would need to walk this difficult path became almost too much to handle. Because of our religion studies with Seton, I worried about pursuing a transplant. Was it moral? I had to ask the hard questions, and out of our grave concern to act in accordance with Church teaching, insisted to our medical team that nobody could die *because* of Ben's need. Our nightly prayers became pleas for God's mercy, intervention and restoration. We all curled up in one room to gain comfort from God and from each other. God was giving Ben a way back to life, but we had many challenges and unknowns ahead. Splitting our family in two, Ben and I left our home and moved to NYC while Jeff and Summer stayed behind, to travel back and forth on weekends. I was so torn leaving my daughter, and it felt as if I had abandoned her. I often asked for Mary's intercession and protection through the long weeks and months that followed. I told both of my children to offer up their sufferings for others, but our own sufferings were only beginning. The night that Hurricane Sandy hit New York, Ben developed a terrible blood infection. He came very close to death. As I tried to comfort and assure him I kept hearing in my head, "My grace is sufficient for you." I had heard these words so many times, yet now I understood them. I had to trust in God's will for Ben and for us, no matter what He had in store for us.



Ben learns to walk again after his surgery.

For many months, we continued to place Ben's life before the Cross. The remainder of our waiting time was spent in the PICU. Ben had difficulty gaining strength after the infection, and the cardiologists were not sure if he would survive the heart transplant surgery. Sometimes he wanted to give up, but the perseverance learned in following Seton's curriculum helped us stick it out one day at a time. Finally the call came; a heart had become available. Of course, it was one of the few weekends that I was home with Summer, while Jeff was with Ben. Assured by the staff that we had enough time to see Ben before his surgery, my daughter and I boarded a small prop plane on our way to Manhattan.

It was not meant to be. Twenty minutes from the hospital, I received a call from Ben. The nurses were wheeling him into surgery. He had been given the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. He told me he was worried he'd never see me again. I told him he needed to be strong now and fight. We said an "Our Father" together over the phone. I had to put Ben in God's Hands once again - His will, not mine, be done. Many prayers and many hours later, Ben's surgery was complete. The cardiologists were amazed at how well he had done. A few were almost giddy and said they had never seen anything quite like it. One of the first things out of Ben's mouth to me was "God is Good."

I honestly do not understand how people go through times like this without God. I am so grateful for all the gifts He pours out on us so that we can live



Preparing to receive Holy Communion

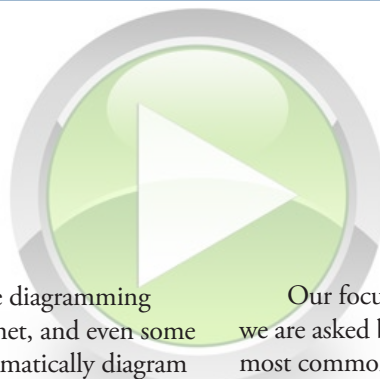
well and bear our times of difficulty. The sacraments of the Church, particularly Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and the Eucharist, have been the only things capable of sustaining us through this trial. Praying the Rosary and the Chaplet has brought us comfort and relative peace. In the midst of the most difficult decisions, Seton's training has led me to look closer at the teachings of the Church and to yearn for the truth always, for "the truth shall make you free." Sometimes God asks a lot of us, yet He loves each and every one of us deeply and always gives us what we truly need.

"Sometimes God asks a lot of us, yet He loves each and every one of us deeply and always gives us what we truly need."

Six weeks out of surgery, Ben is home. He continues to progress in his recovery. Our prayers continually go out for the family that lost their child and gave others a second chance at life. We also pray for the many people who continue to suffer with illness. I'm not sure what God has planned for us next. I hope it involves finishing *The Ballad of the White Horse* with Ben, as I have an appreciation for King Alfred's faith, against all odds.



Tutorial Videos



Several years ago, Seton decided to produce tutorial videos to help parents and students with answering the most common questions that come through our phones and message boards. We discovered that the most common questions we receive relate to diagramming sentences as assigned students in their English courses. Because diagramming is often not well understood, and because it is a very visual representation of grammatical concepts, we decided diagramming would be a perfect subject for a video.

Keshia Brown, who has worked for Seton for many years, earned her certificate in Professional Photography and has finished a year of courses at an online film school. Keshia has been a leader in teaching others and helping Seton acquire proper equipment. We purchased two cameras, computers, microphones, and other equipment. Our counselors chose sentences to explain each concept, and we hired a young lady to “perform” and explain how to diagram. Along with the presentation was a drawing which followed the explanation.

Before we were through, we had numerous diagramming tutorial videos. They range from drawing the first horizontal line taught in primary grades, to rather complex Dependent Noun clauses as Appositives for Objects of a Preposition taught in high school.

Over the years, we have had thousands of views of our Diagram Tutorials, with a steady stream of comments from parents and students saying how helpful they are.

While there are some diagramming explanations on the internet, and even some sites that supposedly automatically diagram sentences, the fact is that many sites, even the “automatic diagram” ones, contain many inaccuracies!

Frankly, it takes analytical skills to diagram a complex sentence correctly, and our video tutorials not only show how to diagram, they explain the analysis behind the diagram. Diagramming demands thinking about relationships in a sentence of ideas, which are expressed by words, phrases, and clauses.

Videos, Phase Two

After we produced the diagramming videos, we produced a series of videos with Dr. Clark and her daughter-in-law, Lisa Clark, who is homeschooling eight of her nine children. Dr. Clark and Lisa took 20 to 30 minutes per grade to explain the lesson plans, texts, and workbooks that go with each course.

Following the tutorials on the elementary grades, Dr. Clark went through each high school English Course Manual, almost page by page, to explain not only how to use the Course Manual but also explaining how to find specific helps in the Handbook in the back of the Manuals.

Our focus continues to be on questions we are asked by parents and students. The most common questions continue to be about English courses, so we have produced about 50 tutorial videos on high school English.

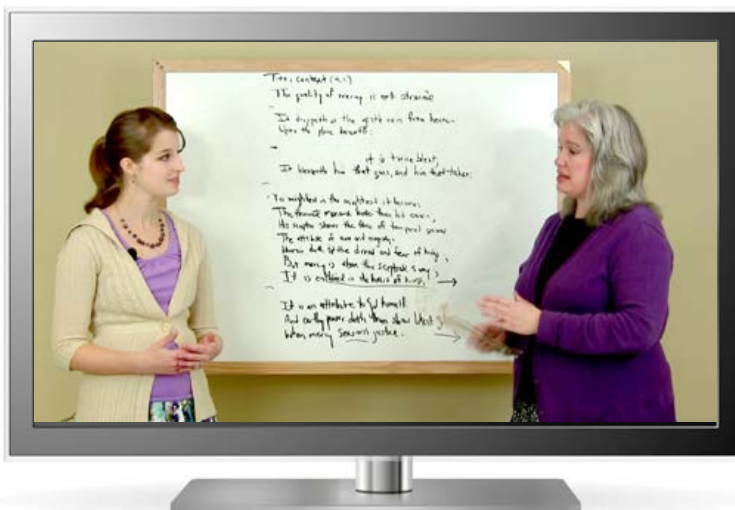
When our video production grew too big to do within the Seton building, we moved to a nearby studio where we keep the big lights, the computers, white boards, backdrops, teleprompter, staging set, camera equipment, and so on. We now are producing tutorial videos several days a week.

Our English tutorials offer more explanation for various specific assignments, sometimes offering one or two or more tutorials per weekly assignments. In addition, some tutorials offer help with the Book Analyses, which are in addition to the online audio tutorials on all of the Book Analyses for the high school English courses.

Our aim is for the course tutorials to be not only informative and helpful, but also interesting and even fun! While some of the tutorials present only one tutor, many of the tutorials present the information in a more conversational tone with two counselors. Our tutor for American Literature, for instance, is accompanied in several videos by Bruce Clark who speaks about what was happening in American history at the time of the writing of the American Literature selection.

To make the tutorials more interesting, we have added images of persons or topics related to the topic, such as images of writers and of places, for example, that the writer might be writing about.

Besides videos for specific courses, we have also made videos that we hope will assist parents in the process of teaching their children. We have been fortunate enough to have Dr. Katie Moran present several videos about different ways of



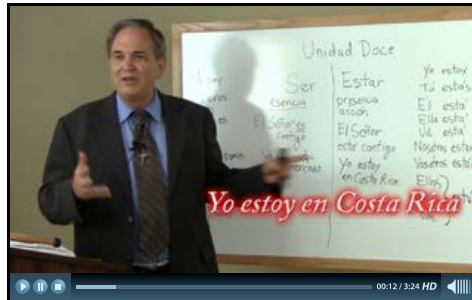
learning. Dr. Moran is a regular speaker at home schooling conferences regarding the way children learn, as well as encouraging parents to be alert to their children's strengths and weaknesses in the learning process. Dr. Moran gives specific ideas for teaching children with specific techniques.

One exciting aspect of our video productions is that they can be used as content for online courses. As we develop online courses, we are able to add videos as well as still images. We are currently working to develop three online science courses: Earth Science, Biology, and Physical Science. The ability of adding video directly into course content means that online courses can have more information and explanation than can be contained within a book alone.

The Process

The topic to be presented on a tutorial video is usually based on questions that parents and students ask. The counselors make a list of the questions and the answers. Then the presenter—the person who will actually perform in the video—works with the counselors on a presentation. Once either a complete script, or at least an outline, is completed for the presentation, the video crew sets up the stage with whatever is needed for the presentation. For example, the speaker may need a white board for an outline to be shown on the video, or may use a teleprompter which is set up near the main camera.

For most videos we use two cameras from two different angles, one with the close-up shots, and the other with the full shots to



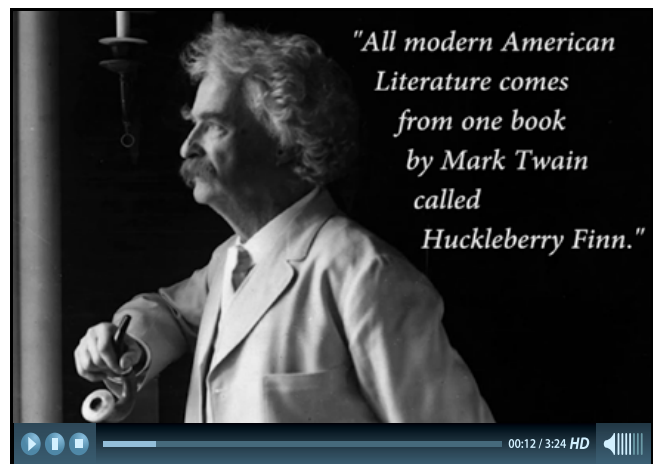
include the white board or other items. We often use blue-screen technology, which allows us to display background images while the speaker presents in the foreground. This is similar to the technology used in news casts to show the changing weather screens behind a meteorologist.

After studying various online tutorials, we have decided in many cases to have two presenters. Two presenters offer a little more interest and interaction rather than a one-person presentation. We believe a more “conversational” type presentation is often more appealing to students, since the format of questions and answers is more familiar to most students than simply one person talking.

Once the presentation has been filmed, our staff of computer video artists edit the video with a variety of close-ups and long shots. They also add visual outlines of important points to remember and illustrations of people, places, or events which relate to the topic being presented. This kind of addition helps, we believe, to keep the student interested in the information and, we hope, to retain some of the interesting aspects of the lesson.

The videos seem to be popular among our students. All combined, our videos have been played over 29,000 times. The most-seen individual videos have been played over 3,000 times and several of the diagramming videos have been played more than 1,000 times.

The videos are a response to the needs of our students. We always welcome your feedback, either on how we can make our videos better, or on new subjects we might address in videos.



Book Reports

We receive frequent questions about book reports because many children do not like writing book reports. One main reason is that most children are handwriting their book reports and, when it is necessary to make changes or corrections, they don't like rewriting the whole report. Students might be happier if they handwrite only their outline. The outline should be the most serious part of the book report because the student needs to think about what main points he wants to make, and which examples will prove the main points.

In the first two quarters in the elementary levels, we give the students the main topics for the middle paragraphs, so the student needs only to find the examples to prove the main topic for each paragraph. In the third and fourth quarters, the students need to produce their own main topics for each paragraph. These main topics should be the result of discussion with their mom or dad.

Once the student has determined his main topics, then he must list the most important points or examples to prove his topic. It is only after the student has worked with pencil or pen on paper to finalize the main topics that the student should then move to express his thoughts on the computer.

It is basic for any book report that it should be written and re-written at least three times. Great writers usually rewrite an article eight or nine times. Because of the absolutely necessary rewriting process, this should be done on the computer. Students are more likely to correct and improve their report if it can be done on the computer.

The purpose of these book reports, besides reading good literature, is to help students analyze and come to conclusions about what they have read. Seton provides topic sentences for the first

two quarter book reports; we are convinced that this is the best way to help the students. For the third and fourth quarter books, with the help of their parents, students can choose their own topic sentences.

In the first two book reports, students need to keep in mind the topics while they are reading, and mark the pages which show a conversation or an event that helps prove the point of the topics. If the student has not understood the topics, or if the student is not marking the pages relating to the topics, parents need to help the student to go back and discuss the topics.

Discussion Is Essential

It is essential for parents to have a discussion with the student before the student begins the report, during the writing of the report, and again before the final report is sent to Seton. The student should be able to explain in his own words the events in the book, and the reasons for his choices of examples for the main topics.

Children in the elementary grade levels usually cannot come to conclusions or recognize examples for their topics unless they are engaged in conversation, thus developing their thinking and reasoning skills with encouragement from their parents, or other adults.

A child learns more about his topics if he has discussed the points before he begins writing. He should be looking for points to prove the topics as he reads. He should discuss the points again with his parents after reading the book.

One way to help children develop their thinking and analysis skills is to discuss events in their daily lives or to discuss events that happen in the community. Encourage your children to think about why things happen in relation to the baby, in relation to Dad and his work habits, in relation to grandparents and, for example, their visits to the doctor, and so on. Encourage your children to think about and to explain why they have come to a particular conclusion.

Each day as your family reads the brief paragraph or explanation of the saint for the day, discuss the virtues of the saint and ask your children to give examples of how the saint "proved" that he exhibited certain virtues. Help your child to understand that a book report is not supposed to be a listing of events but rather conclusions reached based on proofs that come from the thoughts, words, and actions of the characters in relation to events that happen in their lives.

Strengthening the Faith

This kind of higher level thinking becomes more important at the junior and senior high school grade levels, but it needs to be started in the very early years. If a child attends a non-Catholic college, or works in a non-Catholic workplace, this kind of analytical thinking will be essential to keep their Catholic Faith intact and to keep practicing their Faith in spite of the secular chaos of the American culture. In order to maintain sanity and clear thinking, to keep clear Catholic truths and values in spite of being surrounded by dishonesty and corruption, our children need to be taught not only Catholic values, but also clear thinking, great analytical skills, and expert writing skills.



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

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

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

Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers 2013
St. James Academy
24505 Prairie Star Pkwy, Lenexa, KS 66227
Fri.: 3:00 PM – 9:30 PM, Sat.: 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM
Info: Maribeth at 816-454-3729 or
www.kccatholichomeschooler.org

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

2013 San Antonio Catholic Homeschool Conf.
Education Service Center 20
1314 Hines Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78208
Fri.: 1 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 8am – 5pm
Info: info@sacatholichomeschool.org
www.sacatholichomeschool.org

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

"It's Great to be Catholic" Family and Home Education Conference
Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church
41233 Ryan Road, Sterling Heights, MI 48314
Fri.: 6:00 pm – 9:30 pm, Sat.: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Info: mchemails@gmail.com or
www.homeschoolcatholic.org

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

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

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

SCCHE (Southern California Cath. Home Educators) 14th Annual Conf. & Curriculum Fair
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
1015 Baker Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
8:30 am – 6 pm
Info: www.scchehomepage.com
Rita Koppes at 714-271-1272 or
Msg4Prk@sbcglobal.net

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Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
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OH, Dayton —July 12-13, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM Dayton Homeschool & Parent Conference
St. Peter Catholic Church Family Life Center
6161 Chambersburg Rd
Huber Heights, OH 45424
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

CO, Centennial—July 12-13, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

2013 Rocky Mountain Catholic Home Educators Conference
St. Thomas More Parish
7071 E. Otero Avenue
Centennial, CO 80112
Fri.: 3pm – 8:30pm, Sat.: 8am – 5pm
Info: www.rmchec.org or 303-750-9522

FL, Tampa—July 18-19, 2013 (Thurs.-Fri.)

IHM Tampa Homeschool & Parent Conference
St. Lawrence Catholic Church – Higgins Hall
5225 N. Himes Ave, Tampa, FL 33614
Thu.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Fri.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

IL, Chicago—July 26-27, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM Chicago Homeschool & Parent Conference
North Central College – Residence Hall/Recreation Center
440 South Brainerd Street, Naperville, IL 60540
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Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 9 am – 4 pm
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info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

NY, Tarrytown—August 2-3, 2013 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM New York Catholic Homeschool & Parent Conference
DoubleTree Hotel Tarrytown
455 South Broadway
Tarrytown, NY 10591
Fri.: 2 pm – 8 pm, Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org

MA, Lowell—August 9, 2013 (Fri.)

IHM New England Homeschool & Parent Conference
UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center
50 Warren Street, Lowell, MA 01852
12 noon – 8 pm
FREE ADMISSION!
Info: 540-636-1946
info@ihmconference.org or
www.ihmconference.org



College Prep

SPIRITUAL PREPARATIONS

The most important final preparation for college lies in seeing to your continued spiritual health once you are away from home and on your own. The basics are quite clear, of course. Your strong participation in the sacramental life of the Church obviously must continue without interruption.

There is another part of your spiritual health which may be of some concern. You are going to face great exposure to ideas which may be entirely new to you. Given that Catholicism is true, you will be aware that every notion contrary to the Faith is, to some extent, a lie. Lies may be incredibly subtle, however, and it isn't always immediately obvious that some unfamiliar notion actually issues from the father of lies. So, as a help in your discernment, I urge you to a short post-Seton course reviewing some of the more pernicious thoughts you will encounter in college and in life.

The text for this course is *Dis-Orientation: The 13 "-isms" that will send you to intellectual "La-La Land."* The editor is John Zmirak, a well-known Catholic apologist with a rather wry approach born of a life spent combating "isms" beginning in his early teen years. The contributors are experts in the errors presented, ranging from Sentimentalism through Relativism, Americanism to Marxism, Consumerism and the rest, to a final chapter on Modernism. Although each section is necessarily brief, they are remarkably concise descriptions and include valuable tips for overcoming any tendencies to succumb. The book is easily available through any on-line outlet. For further help, you may wish to consider Mr. Zmirak's off-beat Apologetics works as well.

The Consolation of God



BY JOHN CLARK

Certain things in life seem common to all men. The physical things are the most obvious: we all need to eat and to sleep, and we all need shelter. But on perhaps even more important levels of psychology, emotion, and spirituality, we need peace, love, truth, and consolation. On one of the most basic levels of humanity, we need someone to put his or her hand on our shoulder and comfort us.

Sadly, modern men, in their quest for consolation, often look in the wrong places for answers. Modern men seem to face a vicious circle. Many of them arrive at work at 9 A.M., desperately seeking to be consoled by money, fame, and prestige, only to find themselves unfulfilled or unsatisfied by these fleeting things a mere eight hours later. So they leave work and attempt to seek reliefs that range from slight imperfections (such as excessive entertainment) to serious sins (such as viewing pornography or drinking heavily). In the morning, they repeat the process. The things that they believed would comfort them the most become their greatest pains.

Years ago, St. Thomas Aquinas differentiated between true good and apparent good, instructing the faithful that apparent goods are those things that falsely seem good to us at the time, but are not true goods. Sin falls into the category of apparent good, while charity is categorized as a true good. In the same vein, as the lives of so many have demonstrated, it seems that there is true consolation and apparent consolation as well.

However we seek consolation, whether it be true or apparent, it is inescapable that the places, things, and persons in which—and in whom—we find consolation go to the heart of who we are. It follows that we need to look to God for consolation because a search apart from God is a conceited and hopeless pursuit. The saints recognized this. As St. Augustine wrote, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." Reading this passage in the context of St. Augustine's life makes one wonder if the English word "restless" conveys the full import of what he intended to convey. His feeling might be more accurately expressed as, "Our hearts and wills are disconsolate until they find consolation in Thee."

Perhaps in answer to St. Augustine's observation, when I leave work everyday, I stop in the chapel and say a simple prayer to the Holy Spirit: "Dear Holy Spirit, please come upon me. Please grant me the grace of Your consolation, and the consolation of Your grace." It's a simple prayer, and the recognition of a once-very-restless man that there is no consolation apart from God. It's also a reminder of something else.

It follows that we can find consolation in the gifts God has given us, and in our families to whom He has entrusted us. For fathers, we must find consolation in our children, and it is clear that God ordained it so. God could have chosen a multitude of ways to create the human person, but He chose an act that ideally is borne of true love, granting a singular privilege of fatherhood and motherhood to one man and one woman. God allowed us to share in the creative process. He allowed us to share in fatherhood. He wanted us men to experience the love, the joy, the pride, and the compassion of fatherhood. He wanted us to console, and be consoled by our children.

Children are evidence of the consolation of God.

Despite the fact that they sneak into my room and wet my bed, they spill Trix cereal on the floor, and they embarrassingly imitate and quote the Three Stooges publicly, my children are one of the great consolations of my life. And the fact that I've been able to spend more time with them in the homeschooling process adds to my solace. As your children get older, you begin to appreciate this fact a little more than when they are young.

As my oldest son nears his twentieth birthday and my oldest daughter becomes a legal adult in a matter of weeks, it's time for me to look back on the consoling moments of my life. Though I know that over the years, it's been my hand on the back of little shoulders saying that "It's going to be OK," I have a feeling that those once-tiny hands are soon going to be on the back of my shoulder, consoling me as a continuous reminder of how much God loves us all.

Family School of Love and Virtues

BY FR. CHARLES C. FIORE
(1934 -2003)

Every Catholic knows the primacy of love in the Christian life. Jesus' words (Mt. 19:19 and 22:37) about love of God and love of one's neighbor as oneself immediately come to mind, as does St. Paul's warning (1 Cor. 1:13) that without charity as a motive, all that we do becomes "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

The Christian family, so intended by God and aided by the sacramental grace of marriage, is "the school of love," where spouses and children teach each other and learn, by trial and error, by mutual forgiveness and good example, how to love, how to go with Jesus to the Father.

Without question, homeschooling can be a boon in all this because of the give-and-take of family life. While it is not always evident in some families, and may appear tenuous in others, it is fundamental that parents and children share a natural intimacy of heart and soul that provides a "blessed floor" on which the life of the family plays itself out, and where, cleaned and swept by good will and forgiveness, we ourselves learn and help others in our families to learn what love is all about. Whatever hurts, misunderstandings, and outright disagreements occur, the solidarity of the family ordinarily is a given, an unquestioned haven, a bedrock of compassion, the focus of truth.

It is in the context of our human circumstances—our personalities within our families—that actual and sanctifying graces usually come, and in which they ordinarily work. The family is the arena that graces permeate, cleanse, and elevate to supernatural intimacy with the Holy Trinity.

Family life is the object of the specific sacramental grace of marriage, which the spouses may, and should, daily call down on their families as a matter of justice.

Indeed, the benefits of this sacramental grace for their spiritual needs and their children's needs flows in large measure from the "contract" they made with God in their marriage vows. Those benefits are their entitlements, something they may demand, so long as they are in the state of grace, from Jesus who promised that He would not be



outdone in charity (Lk. 6:27-28), and would "not leave [us] orphans" (Jn. 14:18).

That is the theory and the focus of the Christian life: love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

As every recipe is made up of ingredients, so too one's ability to love virtuously is the result of the coalescence and interplay of other virtues: the four supernatural cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

These four virtues are called "cardinal" from the Latin word for "hinge," that is, the living of the Christian life hinges upon their implementation in the lives of the faithful, and a great many other subsidiary virtues "hinge" upon, are connected with or related to them. These four cardinal virtues, with the activity of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity as their common objective, make possible the Christian life: love of God and love of neighbor as oneself.

Put another way, faith, hope, and charity are clearly the greatest of the virtues.

But prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance give us the constitutive parts, the means, the guidelines, in how to love.

The Christian, the follower of Jesus, must always love prudently (wisely) and justly (observing the rights of others), at times in the face of great doubt or difficulty (with fortitude), and always temperately, not unreasonably but with self-mastery. Without the pervasive influence of prudence, one

cannot be truly just, brave, or temperate in thought, word, or deed.

The supernatural four cardinal virtues are meant to modify and inform all our human acts, our deliberate and thoughtful words and deeds, so that our faith, hope, and charity are solid and properly Christian.

Our practice of the moral life here and now is dependent, first of all, on our vision or understanding of how the general principles of the Gospel are to be applied in these present circumstances.

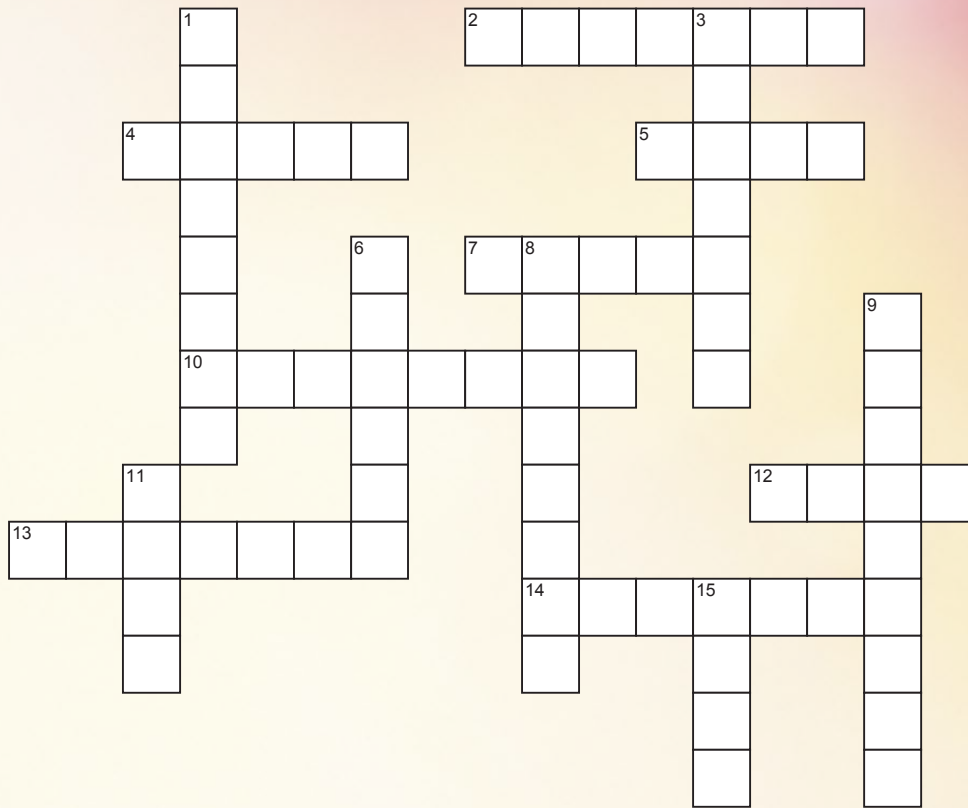
Supernatural prudence, sometimes defined as "right reason, enlightened by grace, applied to doing things," combines one's theoretical knowledge and the dictates of a properly informed conscience. In the light of these, prudence tells us to "Do this" or "Don't do that" here and now. It need not be a long deliberative process. It can happen quickly for one practiced in virtue. Prudence is eminently practical.

The process of prudence has to do with making morally correct decisions about the things we think and say and do, here and now.

Loving God and our neighbor as oneself is never easy. The practice of the cardinal virtues as means to the love of God and neighbor is a light for our minds, as well as for our hands and feet.

Fr. Charles Fiore was ordained a priest in 1961 and assisted in the founding of the Catholic homeschooling movement and the Catholic pro-life movement.

A Catholic Crossword



ACROSS

- 2** ___ the doubtful; this means to advise others on how they can love and serve God.
- 4** Give ___ to the thirsty
- 5** ___ wrongs patiently; this means to be patient, even when others hurt us.
- 7** ___ the sick and imprisoned (these are two works of mercy)
- 10** ___ the sinner; this means to lovingly express warning or disapproval of a person's sin.
- 12** ___ the dead
- 13** ___ all injuries
- 14** ___ the sorrowful

DOWN

- 1** Helping other people in their bodily needs is called a ___ work of mercy; there are seven of these works of mercy.
- 3** ___ the homeless
- 6** ___ the naked
- 8** ___ the ignorant; this means to teach others the truths of the Faith.
- 9** Helping other people in the needs of their soul is called a ___ work of mercy; there are seven of these works of mercy.
- 11** ___ for the living and the dead
- 15** ___ the hungry

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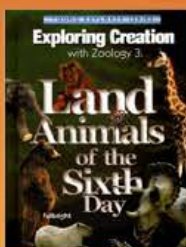
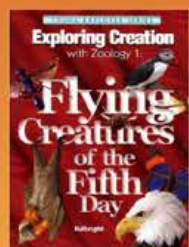
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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY



PAPAL WISDOM

Family Mission

The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to a strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the state, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth.

That this right is inviolable St. Thomas [Aquinas] proves as follows: "The child is naturally something of the father...so by natural right the child, before reaching the age of reason, is under the father's care. Hence it would be contrary to natural justice if the child, before the use of reason, were removed from the care of its parents, or if any disposition were made concerning him against the will of the parents. And as this duty on the part of the parents continues up to the time when the child is in a position to provide for himself, this same **inviolable parental right of education** also endures.

The wisdom of the Church in this matter is expressed with precision and clearness in the Code of Canon Law: "Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can, and moreover, to provide for their temporal well-being" (c.1113).

Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI

On the Christian Education of Youth (Divini Illius Magistri)

This Papal Encyclical is available for purchase at www.setonbooks.com.

