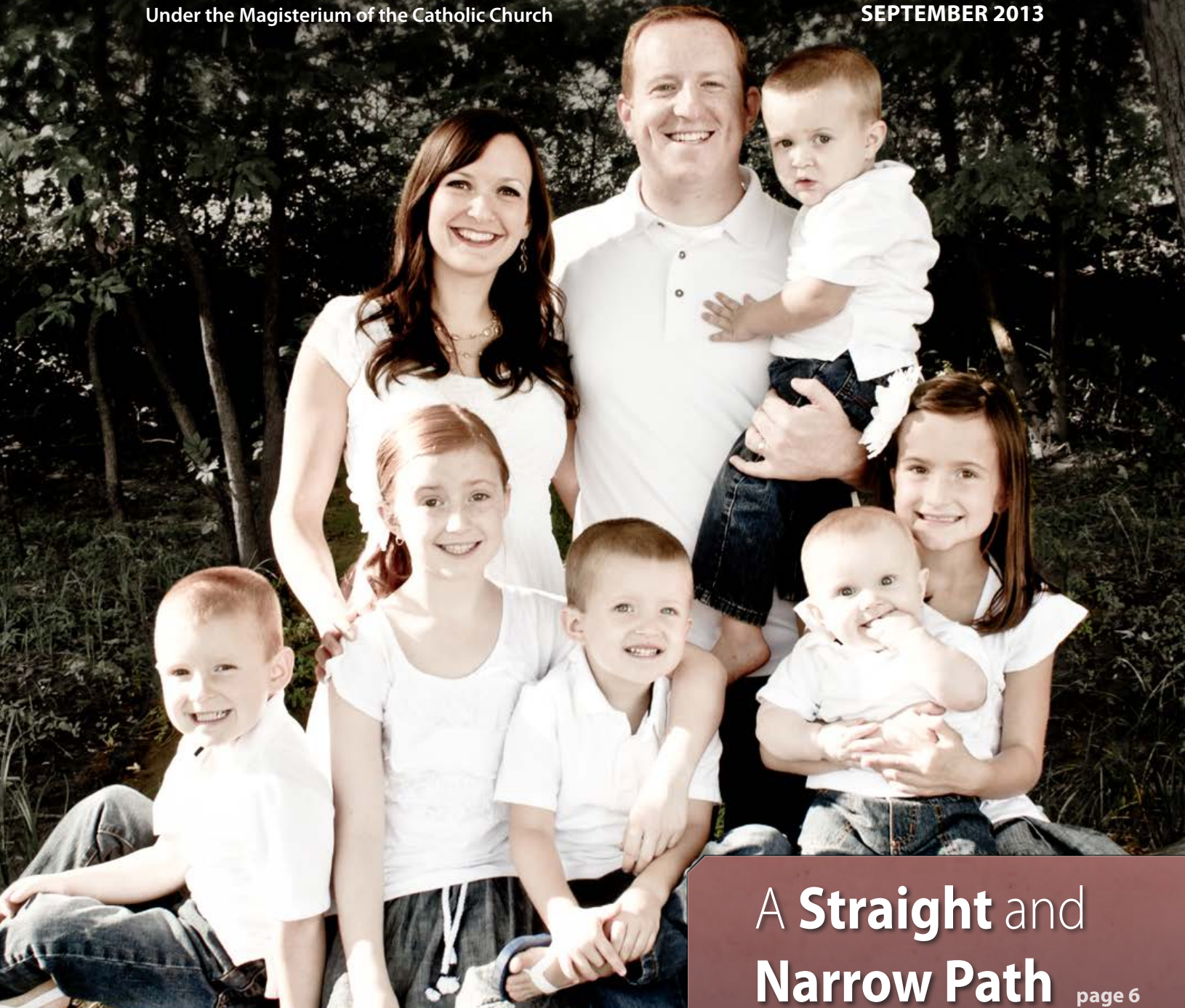


# Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

SEPTEMBER 2013



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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.

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





## Our Lady of La Salette

On September 19, the Catholic Church celebrates the apparition of the Blessed Mother when she appeared to two children in La Salette, France, in 1846. This apparition and the message are practically unknown in our country, likely because of the amazing miracles in relation to the apparitions of Fatima in Portugal and of Lourdes in France.

Since the Catholic Church has approved the apparition and even has

designated the feast day on September 19, we should be aware of the message of the Blessed Mother and her Son at La Salette, and what it means for us and our families.

Unlike other apparitions when the Blessed Mother did not speak at length, at La Salette she gave a rather long message, most of which related to the many sins of the world and the self-destructive habits of so many.

Our Lady of La Salette began her message by speaking about two sins that “weigh down the arm of my Son so much”: sins against the Second and Third Commandments. These two Commandments concern our duty to God Himself as our Creator:

“Thou shall not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

“Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.”

The Blessed Mother spoke at length about the punishments that would befall mankind because of the sins against these two Commandments.

Melanie Calvat, the young girl to whom the Blessed Mother appeared, wrote several pages of the words of the Blessed Mother. Melanie talked about seeing a brilliant light “and in this light, I saw a most beautiful lady sitting on top of [a mound that she and a friend had built].” She went “up close to the Beautiful Lady ... she began to speak and from her beautiful eyes, tears also started to flow.”

Melanie was able to quote word for word the message from the Blessed Mother. Almost immediately, the Blessed Mother mentioned the two major sins against her Son: “I gave you six days to work, I kept the seventh for myself, and no one wishes to grant it to me. This is what weighs down the arm of my Son so much. Those who drive carts [farm workers] cannot speak without putting the name of my Son in the middle. These are the two things which weigh down the arm of my Son so much.... you swore oaths and you included the name of my Son!”

It has been 160 years since the Blessed Mother gave this message to the world, but it is not likely that she expects her message to be forgotten. As Catholics who want to follow all the Commandments, we need to renew our commitment to keeping Sundays holy and to do what we can so that we and others use the Holy Name of Jesus in prayer, and do not use the Name of Jesus carelessly or in anger. Let us also continue to pray to Our Blessed Mother that abortions will end, that sins against God and unborn life will cease, and that the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage will be respected and protected by law. Our Lady of La Salette, pray for us.



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





# your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

## **Would it be possible for me to combine my children in some of the same academic subjects, such as science, history, and religion?**

Yes, many parents do that for children in adjacent grades. You need to be careful about there being too much of a difference in comprehension. In religion, you can certainly discuss the same subject, such as a particular sacrament, but when it comes to memory work or testing, unless they are close in abilities, you should use the test appropriate for each child's grade level. For instance, you may teach two students with the same religion book if they are both in Baltimore Catechism No. 2, but you may have the younger child take the tests for the No. 1 book.

In history and science, enroll them in the same grade level course, but you may need to make up a lower level test for the younger child.

For high school, we encourage parents to enroll two or more students in the same courses whenever possible, such as for history, science, literature, and others which are not dependent on a previous course.

## **I find it difficult to find time to teach science. Do I need to teach science to my 4th grader?**

You should teach science at every grade level, but the depth and the amount can be adjusted according to the ability and interests of the student. You don't necessarily need a formal science class. The science book could be read in the car and discussed by the family, even on short trips to the store. You may want the children to watch the Mr. Wizard DVD videos (for sale through Seton catalog) which present hands-on activities and experiments. Seton sells science kits, which parents and grandparents often purchase as birthday presents. Science experiments are often fun and very educational. Many cities have science museums, which kids love because they are usually very interactive and encourage children to handle the exhibits.

## **I would like to send my children's book reports for a counselor to give suggestions before I send them to be graded.**

Parents sometimes want the counselors to "pre-grade" book reports or other assignments before they are submitted for an official grade. While our counselors try to help as much as they can, as a practical matter, there is simply not enough time for them to pre-grade in this way.

Our lesson plans for book reports are very detailed, and have become more detailed over the years. We have worksheets to prepare students for their book reports, copies of which are online under Reading Resources for each grade level. Parents should be able to check over their children's book reports or paragraphs based on the comments in the lesson plans.

## **How much time should I be teaching each child each day? I have a high school student, a 7th grader, and a 3rd grader.**

Unlike a classroom situation, where the state has determined how many minutes to spend on each subject, homeschooling is all about adjusting the program to the needs and abilities of the child. One child may need more time on math, another child may need less on math. This applies to every child and every subject. We do give the likely times for a child for each subject at that grade level, but those are just suggestions.

A child in 3rd grade, for example, should not spend more than a half hour on math at one sitting. If the child needs more time, it should be broken up into two sessions in a day. An average child in 7th grade should spend 40 to 45 minutes on math. A high school student likely averages an hour on algebra or geometry class, with maybe extra time on a weekend for review.

Usually a parent discovers pretty quickly the subjects a child does more quickly and accurately, and those subjects that need more study or extra practice. Some subjects—such as art, music, and physical education—can be something very informal on Saturday or Sunday afternoon, maybe something the family members do together.

Workbook courses—such as spelling and vocabulary—can often be done by students in fifteen minutes per day. The reading workbooks demand more concentration for more complex ideas, so those assignments may take 20 to 25 minutes.

The subjects that must be done with great attention are religion and math, as well as English grammar, reading, paragraph writing, and book reports. The reading, thinking, and writing skills should be applied in the science and history courses, which may take 30 to 40 minutes depending on the assignment.

Seton recently conducted a survey of families to determine if more time spent on schooling translated to more educational success. We found that more time does help, up to a point, but that there is no absolute relationship between time and success. What is important is not necessarily spending more time, but spending the right amount of time for your children and your family. What amount of time is right is something which only you can determine.

*Home schooling is all about adjusting the program to the needs and abilities of the child.*

## **My daughter is having trouble when she takes the algebra tests. Is there any way I can help her without taking the course myself?**

You can review the kinds of questions that are on the test and then have her review and re-do the same kinds of problems from the book. It is important, especially in high school, that the test grades reflect the actual work and ability of the student, and not a grade based on



a parent helping to solve the problems during the test. Colleges especially want the grades to reflect the knowledge and ability of the student.

We do have tutorial software for each lesson in the Saxon books. Perhaps if she uses those, which can be played over and over again, they might help her to gain a better understanding of some of the concepts. We have been told by some students that they did not do well just with the book, but once they viewed the software, the concepts became much clearer. The software is available on our [setonbooks.com](http://setonbooks.com) website.

**The work seems too easy for my fourth grader. I think he could skip fourth grade and do the fifth grade work.**

It is not unusual when the next grade level begins for the work to seem easy because many of the first month's concepts are often a review of the previous year. However, over the years, we have found that it is usually not a good idea for a student to skip a grade, even for one subject. In each grade, there are new concepts which need to be learned for the following grade level. In homeschooling, the student can advance at his own rate, course by course. Let your son do the fourth grade work at his own pace, subject by subject. If he finishes a subject by January and asks for the next grade level course in math, for instance, you can order the math at that time. We have seen too many students pushed ahead and, at some point, find they are not able to handle the material. Our experience is that when students are older and struggling in high school, they often wish they were not pushed ahead in an earlier grade level.

**The DRE at my parish said that for my daughter to receive First Holy Communion, I need to use a catechism on the approved USCCB list.**

The USCCB list is for diocesan schools. According to Canon Law (see especially Canon 793), parents have fundamental rights to use the educational "means and institutions" of their choosing. For your parish to restrict the means you choose to only those on the approved USCCB list is to violate your rights under Canon Law. Most likely, the DRE is not aware of the Canon involved, and is not trying to usurp your parental authority. You may want to incorporate (or at least secure a copy of) some of the "approved" materials, so that you can honestly say you used them.

The Catholic Book Publishing Company and the many books by Father Lovasik have the Imprimatur, so parents can certainly use those books, which have been popular for likely millions of families for decades.

In fact, parents can teach by good example, and by their own words, just as the first Apostles did. Some parents and classroom teachers use videos and movies about saints, not textbooks. We sell a video with an outstanding priest, Father Pablo Straub, who teaches catechism lessons to children. Seton and other publishers of Catholic catechisms need only to have the Imprimatur from a bishop, according to the Code of Canon Law.

**We recently participated in a survey administered by Seton's accrediting agency. We were glad to provide our feedback and are curious to know what happens next.**

First of all, we want to thank all the parents who participated in the Parent

Survey that went out last month. We had over 2000 responses, which amounts to roughly 34 percent, a number very close to what we wished to achieve. Right now, the responses are being sorted, so that Seton can determine if there are areas that need to be addressed. Overall, though, your responses placed Seton in a very high bracket, and we expect that your feedback will go a long way toward helping us maintain our accreditation. We'll have more precise data on the survey in the coming weeks and months.

The next step in this process is for the students to take a survey. This survey may be proctored by parents. The survey will look very much like the Parent Survey, will be administered the same way, and will likewise retain anonymity. We encourage you to permit your students to participate, but recognize that the final decision is the parents' decision. We expect to initiate the survey at the beginning of October.

Again, we thank all of our families for all the work you put in on a daily basis, as well as all the survey participation and collaboration with Seton on efforts that are crucial to maintaining our accreditation. You are helping us be the very best school we can be!

**What should I do if my books don't arrive when expected?**

Almost all enrollment boxes are shipped with UPS. When the books go out by UPS, our system automatically sends an email notification of shipment. If you received the email, you can use the tracking number in the email to determine the delivery date for your materials.

If you did not receive an email yet, then your books probably have not shipped, and may still be in process. We may be waiting for an item, such as a standardized test, before completing the processing. If you think your books should have arrived, or you are unsure of the next step in the process, you may contact our admissions department or customer service department by phone or email.



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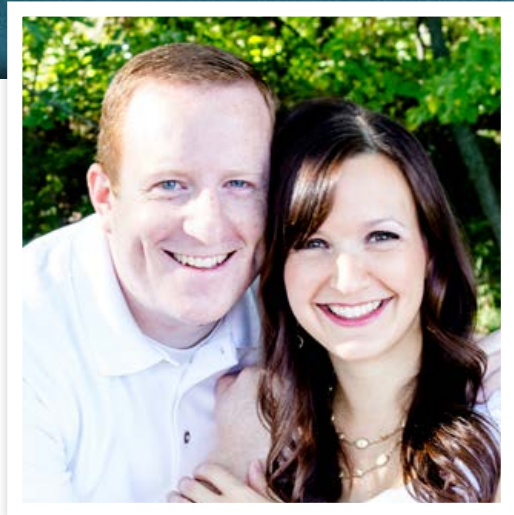
# A Straight and Narrow Path

*We are the Madrid family from Columbus, Ohio.*

*Homeschooling is what we do.*

*Seton is what we use.*

*Holiness is what we seek.*



BY KELLY MADRID

Homeschooling, put simply, could be defined as, "Teaching your kids at home instead of sending them to school." However, for our family, homeschooling is so much more than just learning subject matter while confined within the walls of our home. For our family, homeschooling is BOTH a personal conviction AND a family lifestyle choice. It is what we do. It is how we live. It is the narrow path we have chosen to walk in order to learn our Catholic faith, live our Catholic faith, grow in holiness, and help each other get to Heaven.

As parents deciding to accept the full-time responsibility of primary educators for our children, we first need a motive. Is it to steer our children away from the influences of the world? Is it to better meet the unique and individual needs of a particular child the Lord has given us? Is it merely a family-lifestyle choice, or preferred way of living? Is it to give a particular child more one-on-one attention than he or she could get in a classroom? Is it to foster closeness and togetherness amongst our children? Is it to maintain close relationships with our children? Is it a combination of several aforementioned reasons?

For our family, the decision to homeschool our soon-to-be seven children

includes ALL of the aforementioned reasoning. We believe homeschooling is truly the straight-and-narrow path to the arms of Our Heavenly Father. For our family, homeschooling is, "The way, the TRUTH, and the life" (John 14:6). We are best able to "come unto the Father" (John 14:6), to strive for holiness, and to help each other get to Heaven through homeschooling. Therefore, it is both a personal conviction on the part of us, as parents, and also a family-lifestyle choice, or preference.

### The Journey Begins

As a homeschooling mom, the beginning of my journey to this vocation dates all the way back to my childhood. I grew up as a cradle-Catholic and one of five children. I received the Sacraments. I went to Mass with my family. I went to CCD on Wednesday nights. I was given a public elementary education and a top-notch high school education at a college preparatory boarding school. However, I didn't really come to understand what it meant to be Catholic until I was accepted to a Protestant university for college.

It was during my first semester at the Protestant college that I came face-to-face with Bible-belt Baptists and Evangelical students who knew God's Word like the back of their hands. I was faced with

much opposition and with questions and statements such as: "Why do you pray the Rosary to Mary? She's just the same as the rest of us"; "Why do you Catholics worship idols?"; "Why do you worship the Pope?"; "Communion is just a representation of Christ's sacrifice."; "Only Christ can truly forgive us from our transgressions. You don't need an intercessor to do that." I very quickly realized that I was in the wrong place, but it was there that I really began to understand the Faith and experience a conversion of heart... in light of preparing myself to be an authentically Catholic wife and mother someday.

I remained at that Protestant university for two years to finish both my general classes and my soul-searching. During that time, the Lord placed in my path a humble servant of His who directed me to Franciscan University of Steubenville, where I finished my undergraduate degree two years later. Not only did I gain an understanding of what it meant to be "authentically Catholic" during that time, but I was able to live out my Catholic Faith in a way I had never been able to before, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit so present and alive on campus.

Unexpectedly, before graduation, I met my husband, Jonathon, on a cruise in



the Great Jubilee Year, and we were married two weeks after graduation in the spring of 2002. Here begins the second part of my journey to becoming the homeschooling mom that I am today. Ironically my husband DOES come from “that large, Catholic homeschooling family.” He is the oldest of eleven children—all of whom were homeschooled. When I first met my husband and his family on that providential cruise, I knew that homeschooling my children was what God wanted me to do with my life. I knew that there was something so intrinsically right and sacred about homeschooling. I had always loved children and had been around them for as long as I could remember... babysitting, volunteering, mentoring, and working in child development centers. I went to college for a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education. But... keeping your children at home with you ALL THE TIME and devoting your ENTIRE LIFE to raising and forming each and every one of them? This was an entirely new and radical concept for me. Yet, somehow, on that cruise, through the witness of my husband’s family, it just all made sense. I knew that homeschooling was what God wanted me to devote my life to doing.

After not receiving a middle name at birth, I chose my middle name to be Elizabeth at the time of my Confirmation, after St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. I legally added Elizabeth to my name after we were married. Nine months after our wedding, our oldest daughter was born, and we have been blessed with a baby every eighteen to twenty-four months after that for the last eleven years... all the way down to baby number seven... due to arrive on Thanks-

giving Day, 2013! When the time came to choose a homeschooling program for our children nearly seven years ago, there was no question in my mind or heart what we were going to use. Elizabeth Ann Seton was my patroness and the patroness of ALL schools and teachers. So, we enrolled in Seton Home Study School back in 2007 when our oldest daughter was ready for pre-kindergarten.

### Faith Permeates Life

We teach our children the truth when we choose to be their primary educators in life, not only in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but, more importantly, in their Catholic faith-formation. The Church teaches that, “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well-suited for education in the virtues” (CCC 2223). In Catholic homeschooling, “learning” about our Catholicism is woven into our way of living, and the two become inseparable; faith permeates life.

With soon-to-be seven children ages ten and under, educating my children is no easy feat! Every day, I begin my day—before my feet hit the ground—by first asking Our Heavenly Father for His grace and then by thanking Him for the ability He gives me to do what I do every day as a homeschooling mom. Even though homeschooling, for our family, is BOTH a personal conviction AND a family lifestyle choice, even though homeschooling is our vocation, we cannot do it without God’s

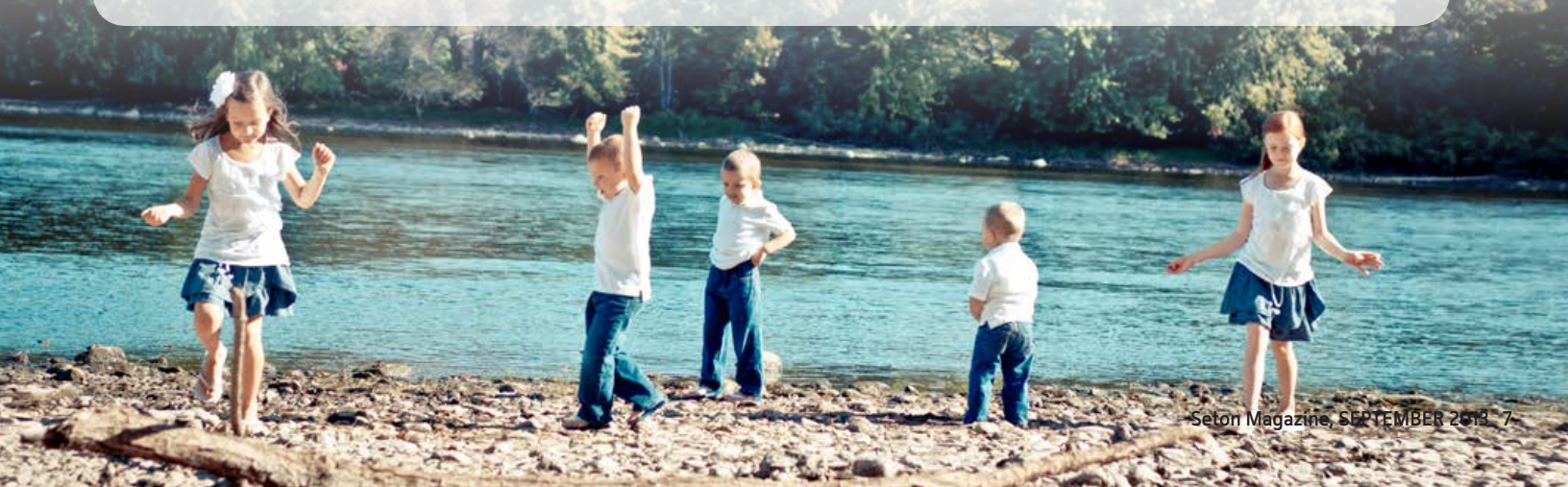


grace. Our family operates on a routine and mostly-structured homeschooling “schedule,” or “rule of life.” We all wake at the same time. Certain children have certain chores they maintain in order to help the household run smoothly... directing little ones, letting the family dog out, emptying the dishwasher, carrying the laundry downstairs, etc. We then eat breakfast together. We pray morning prayers together. We next do our studies in “schoolhouse” fashion, where we all sit together and everyone works on his own lessons for the same subject at the same time, with the little ones in-tow and with mom as instructor, guide, facilitator, counselor, and biggest support. We break mid-morning for a short time of snack, play, and chores. We have completed the subjects of religion, math, English, and reading by this time.

We then regroup mid-morning for our “more independent subjects” of handwriting, spelling,



**Continued on page 10**



# 4 Preparations to Start the Homeschool Year

Whether you are just starting to homeschool for the very first time, or are an old hand at it, a new year gives a chance for a fresh start. Although every family is different, and each family must find its own unique way of homeschooling, there are certain preparations which will help almost every family to be more successful.



## 1 Prepare Yourself

There are many things to prepare, but the first thing to prepare is yourself, especially if this is your first year. Homeschooling is an educational choice like no other. It's not just a choice between one school and another. It is a way of life, and it will make a profound impact on how you live. You need to prepare for the fact that it entails some adjustments. It also entails some failures and some rethinking and some restarts. Not everything you try is going to work. If you understand that not everything will be perfect right away, then the inevitable small setbacks won't discourage you.

Write out the reasons why you are homeschooling and put them up on your wall. Discuss the reasons with your spouse, and if they are old enough, discuss the reasons with your children. This decision affects you all, and having the understanding—and, ideally, the agreement—of everyone is important. The Bible says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). Have a vision.

In most homeschooling situations, the mother does most or all of the teaching. The father is very important, however, even if he is not doing any teaching. The attitude of the father will most likely be reflected in the children. If the father is supportive and lets the children know how important he believes homeschooling to be, the children will have a much better attitude. If the father is not supportive, the children will almost certainly pick up on this and use their knowledge to undermine the homeschooling.



## 2 Prepare Your Home

Once you yourself are prepared, prepare your home. The first decision you need to make about your home is where you will homeschool. Will the children each have areas of their own, or will

*For want of a pen,*

*a half hour may*

*be lost. For want*

*of the right book, a*

*day may be lost.*

you all homeschool together in a central location? Or will it be some combination of the two, with a time for quiet study apart and a time to come together?

Whatever you do, you need to find the space in your home both for the schooling and for storing educational materials. Storage of materials may be more important than you think. There is a saying that goes, “For want of a nail, a kingdom was lost.” For want of a pen, a half hour may be lost. For want of the right book, a day may be lost. Efficient homeschooling is a lot quicker, and a lot more pleasant, than inefficient homeschooling.

Newly enrolled families all receive a copy of Seton's **Parent Home School Handbook**.

The handbook offers lots of great ideas for achieving homeschooling success. It's not long—only about 100 pages—and reading it through and then keeping it as a reference tool will likely prove very worthwhile.





### 3 Prepare Your Curriculum

The next thing to prepare is your homeschooling curriculum. Seton sends you all the books and lesson plans you need, but you should look through them to understand how to proceed. The first thing to do is lay out all the materials and make sure that you have all the books and lesson plans you should. If anything is missing, or if you are not sure about something, call or email Seton for help.

Plan to spend at least a week familiarizing yourself with the books and lesson plans. Understand what is being taught this year in each class. Thoroughly review the lesson plans to understand how they operate, what they contain, and where things are. You might want to use colored tabs to mark important items and delineate separate sections. Look over the quarter report forms, so you understand what assignments are necessary to receive a grade in the course.

Log into your MySeton account ([www.seton-home.org/myseton](http://www.seton-home.org/myseton)) to see what's there and how it works. Make special note of course resources, which include audio, video, and samples. Look at the Message Boards, which give help on several different subjects.



### 4 Prepare Your Schedule

Finally, you need to prepare your schedule. The schedule you start off with may need to be adjusted, as you find out which subjects take longer and which are quicker. If you can, try to schedule daily Mass. If that is not possible, try to schedule at least one day during the school week for Mass. Have a daily prayer time as well, at least an opening Daily Offering so that everyone understands that what they do each day is ultimately for the greater honor and glory of God. Several additional short prayer times throughout the day are helpful as well, not only for the prayer, but for breaking up the day and giving some “down time” to the children.

*The fact that the schedule cannot always be kept should not lead you to abandon a schedule.*

Once you have your schedule, try to keep to it, but know that days will come up when you can't keep to it. The fact that the schedule cannot always be kept should not lead you to abandon a schedule. We have asked parents what advice they would give other homeschoolers to be successful: having and keeping a schedule is always the number one suggestion.

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## HOMESCHOOLING IS AN ADVENTURE!

**The homeschooling life is an adventure.** You are taking one of the most important tasks in life—educating your children—and doing it yourself, rather than handing it off to someone else. When your child reads her first word, you'll be there. When your child learns long division, you'll be there. It's not really so different from seeing a first step or hearing a first word.

When the first day of school comes, celebrate it. An opening day Mass is certainly warranted. Some families have a special breakfast or a special ceremony to mark the occasion.

**Years from now—perhaps on the day you see your last child graduate from high school—you may well look back on this time and realize it was the best time in your life. Why do we only say that looking back?**

phonics, and vocabulary while I continue to keep things running smoothly around the house. Shortly before noon, we prepare for lunch, let out the dog, tickle and kiss the little ones, and answer any phone calls/emails that need immediate attention. After an hour or so of breaking for lunch, the older ones get the kitchen back to a state of cleanliness reasonable enough to open up textbooks and workbooks. The little ones nap. After that, we gather around the kitchen table for midday prayers and our final subjects, finishing out our day with one last hour of history, science, and whatever the “art” of the day is (rotating between music, physical education, and/or art). Once the little ones awaken, we put away our backpacks, quickly tidy-up, and then usually head-out for an afternoon full of hustle and bustle, activities, lessons, and/or sports. We return home again later in the evening for family supper, to clean up from another busy and blessed day, to say our evening prayers, to turn in for the night, and to thank the Lord for giving us another day to live, love, and serve Him.

We are the Madrid family from Columbus, Ohio. Homeschooling is what we do. Seton is what we use. Holiness is what we seek. Salvation is what we can only pray we merit when we stand face-to-face with Our Heavenly Father one day. For our family, homeschooling is a personal conviction and a lifestyle choice, the straight-and-narrow path. For us, it is our way of life, our rule. There is truly no greater calling in life than properly raising the children God has entrusted to our care. “Now to Him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to Him be all glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20-21)



# O BEDIENCE

## The Bedrock for Harmony and Order in the Home

BY FATHER FRANK PAPA

Father Frank Papa, who ran an orphanage for boys for ten years before becoming a priest, gave this talk at a homeschooling conference. The following is a summary and selection of some statements from Father's talk.

We all are commanded to obey the Ten Commandments because they were given by God the Father to Moses for all of us to obey. Jesus, the Son of God, repeated the Ten Commandments and the requirement for all to obey them. We all are required to be obedient to all of God's Commandments. Sin is disobedience to the Laws of God. Everyone needs self-discipline to be obedient to God's Laws. Self-control promotes obedience. The Commandment to honor your father and mother demands obedience in every home.

Through the Fourth Commandment, God commands parents to expect and even demand obedience from their children. Today, too many parents are afraid of their children not “liking” them. But it is better to be too strict than to be too lenient because of the possible loss of the soul of the child. Parents must demand that their children follow what is right and good, and demand that their children reject what is wrong and evil.

The key to successful homeschooling is that the father and the mother must be obedient to God's Laws. The Fourth Commandment appoints parents as responsible agents of God. Parents must be sure that the truths of God's Laws are taught in the home.

Don't hide the normal consequences of disobedient actions. The parable of the Prodigal Son is often lived out by teens today. A seventeen-year-old boy leaves his home because he believes his parents are too strict, demanding he obey certain house rules such as not staying out

late, and keeping parents informed about his whereabouts. The parents refuse to allow their son to disobey the house rules. The boy wanders about, but finally realizes that other people are using him for their own goals, and don't care about him. He finally comes to realize that only his own family cares about him.

Parents, have the courage to tell your children when they are wrong. Successful families have courageous parents who discipline themselves by demanding what is right and good from their children. Trust in God and pray, pray, pray for your children. God hears the prayers of parents for their children.

Parents should raise their children as God commands them. Parents must be obedient to God by demanding obedience to God from their children twenty-four hours a day.

### Fathers Must Serve the Family

The father is God's representative in the household. A father must fulfill his role to demand obedience as God the Father demands obedience. The father must be a role model as a husband and father. Many children today grow up without a father in the home; thus the children don't know the responsibilities of a father and husband. The father has the right and the responsibility to represent God the Father in the family. It is his obligation to be obedient to God.

The mother must be a role model as a wife and mother. Children need to see and learn the responsibilities of a wife and mother. Every mother and father, especially in a homeschooling



family, are showing their children how to act as parents.

Education is not just training to live in this world. Knowledge is important, but wisdom is more important. Wisdom is living the Catholic life; wisdom is understanding that we live for eternal life. Wisdom is living God's Commandments.

Parents need to give clear expectations for their children. The parents must be "on the same page." Rules of discipline must be agreed upon and be consistent. The children must see the same response from both parents.

Parents need to pray together every day and take time to discuss the happenings of the day. There must be unity in their decision making. Children will take advantage of any disagreements between their parents, and may make their own choices when they see parents disagreeing.

The home should be a place of peace and love. The home should be a place of fresh air in a crazy world. It should be a place where people care about each other.

Parents should delegate responsibilities to the children as part of the family community. The older children can help teach the younger children. As the older children teach the younger children, academic lessons as well as

Catholic lessons and virtues are re-enforced in the older children.

### Mothers Should Not Do It All Alone

Mothers should not try to do everything themselves. Everyone should be willing to help the others in the family. Fathers need to help design the household rules and regulations. Each child should have family or household responsibilities according to his or her age and ability. Children need to feel wanted and important as part of the family. Children need to feel needed. Everyone should be involved in preparing the meals, doing the laundry, and running errands.

A successful homeschooling family includes active involvement and the taking on of responsibility by the father and the children. A successful homeschool is a place where mothers and fathers and children all care for each other, all show love and concern for each other, all strive to help each other. All members of the family encourage each other, protect each other, embrace each other, pray for each other.



**Fr. Frank Papa** spent more than 25 years working with youth, including running an orphanage for boys before becoming a priest in 1989. He earned his Doctorate in Canon Law from the Angelicum in Rome, graduated *Magna Cum Laude*, studied for an Advocacy

Degree at the Sacred Roman Rota, and taught various courses at the Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT. With extensive backgrounds in Canon Law, marriage preparation, and youth work, he is uniquely qualified to give parents tips from a Catholic perspective.

# COLLEGE PREP

READY, SET...  
WAIT A MINUTE!

by Bob Wiesner

Your books have arrived, the kids are eager to begin, the family energy level is high and prayers for the help of all the educator saints have been fervently said. Ready, set...hold on just a minute!

Take a deep breath and remember one word: ORGANIZATION!

One more day of planning and marking the calendar might just pay big dividends. Review the manuals and mark out the days for testing. Figure out who needs the computer and when. Take into account birthdays, sports events, choir practice, orthodontist visits and all the myriad other details of family life, not forgetting Dad's vacation days. Then there is that one other thing...

An important element in education, too often ignored, is making use of the occasional "break" day. Something that should be on the calendar at least once a month is an unusual activity, a change from routine academia. Every locality, however small, has any number of interesting sites to explore. Each month, pencil in a visit to a farm, or the local history museum, a concert hall or the zoo. Find out if there are periodic events, the county fair or a Renaissance Festival. If nothing else is available, a good nature hike might be in order. An exposure to differing cuisines is usually an adventure; there are internet recipes available or inexpensive cook books for virtually every ethnic food. This is an excellent opportunity for a good Cultural Geography lesson, learning about a region followed by a taste of their food. Try ground nut stew, for instance!

BY JOHN CLARK

## Cookie Cutters and Angels

It's often lamented that babies don't come with manuals. Of course, this isn't true—babies do come with manuals. They are called “parenting books.”

There are books that tell you how to parent troubled teens, overactive toddlers, or rich kids. There are books that tell you how to help your child sleep. There are books that tell you how to keep your child awake. There are books that tell you how to parent like the French. There are books that tell you how not to parent like the French.

This morning, I typed in the word “parenting” on Amazon.com and received 88,767 results. Presumably, each of these authors (along with their respective publishing companies) claims to have the answer for how I should raise my children. I read pretty fast, but even if I read one a day, it would take me over 243 years to peruse them all. By then (and I have the sense that you're getting way ahead of me), my kids would probably be grown and out of the house.

Since I don't have much hope of reading them all, I researched which one was the most popular. It didn't take me long to find the answer: *Baby and Child Care* by Dr. Benjamin Spock. According to data from the *New York Times*, during its first 52 years of publication, Spock's tome of wisdom was not only the top-selling parenting book, it was the second best-selling book in the world. (The Holy Bible took the top spot.) Another *New York Times* article even commented that Spock's book was the next best thing to a baby manual.

OK. So I found a winner. Dr. Spock knows how to raise children. But that presents me with a problem: which edition do I read? Do I throw caution to the wind and read the classic first edition, or do I read the seventh version? I

found out that Spock's views of parenting changed with the book's new editions. Often, Spock's views became odder and his opinions became more adamant, or (dare I say it?) vulcanized. For instance, the last edition before his death suggested that children adopt a vegan diet upon their second birthday (at which they would presumably eat an egg-free cake and butter-free frosting. Yum!)

The 2012 edition of the book (updated and revised by a different author) states: “The authors and publishers disclaim any liability arising directly or indirectly from the use of this book.”

Well, that's comforting. So basically what you're saying is: “If your kid gets messed up using the techniques outlined in this book, don't come crying to us!” That doesn't seem fair. When my kids complain about how they're being raised, I can't even have the satisfaction of blaming someone else. You'd think twenty bucks would at least buy me that.

If my wife allocates twenty dollars in our monthly budget for developing parental skills, I'm going to buy the Blu-Ray edition of *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. The truth is that I learned more about parenting from one viewing of that movie than from almost any parenting book I've ever read.

How's this for homespun logic:

*Who do you blame when your kid is a brat? Pampered and spoiled like a Siamese cat. Blaming the kids is a lie and a shame. You know exactly who's to blame:*

*The mother and the father.*

Good stuff.

Mr. Wonka seemed to understand two things that many parenting books fail to grasp. First, bad parenting is usually not the failure to know the right

thing; it is usually the failure to do the right thing. In truth, some of the better Catholic parenting books make this point quite well. Second, children are different from each other. How-to books are fine when it comes to working on my car engine, but not all kids have six cylinders. Why do we keep treating them like they do? As Rev. George Rutler once commented, God doesn't use cookie cutters when He makes people. Why do we keep acting like He does?

Like many fathers, I like to think of each of my little daughters as angels. And here's an interesting thing about angels: they are all quite different. St. Thomas explains this as follows:

“Since angels have in them no matter or bodiliness at all, for they are pure spirits, they are not individuated. This means that each angel is the only one of its kind. It means that each angel is a species or essential kind of substantial being. Hence each angel is essentially different from every other angel.”

Metaphysics aside, maybe we should apply that sense of individuality to our own children. No two children are the same. Raising my daughter Veronica is different from raising Mary Katherine. They are different and deserve to be treated differently.

Instead of taking the time to read about how to raise our own children, maybe we should use this time to celebrate their uniqueness and take them out for ice cream or (if you insist on Dr. Spock's culinary regime) frozen yogurt.

I think Willy Wonka would agree.



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

# HOMESCHOOLING AND THE BEATITUDES

BY FATHER GEORGE PARKER

The Beatitudes are worthy of our study. The first Beatitude, from the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus, encourages us to be poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit, we must empty ourselves of anything and everything that tends to displace Jesus Christ in our lives. Jesus must be first in our lives. He can't be in second place. He must always be front and center.

Material goods are gifts from God and are meant to be utilized to assist us as stepping stones on the journey to Heaven. We must not allow material goods to become stumbling blocks on our path to Heaven. You need to teach your children at a very early age that Jesus Christ must be at the absolute center of our lives. If you do this, you should feel confident to be teachers of your children, to be able to pass on the Faith. You should never feel that you are not up-to-snuff; with the first Beatitude, you are validated, you are an authentic teacher of the Gospel of Christ to your children.

## Will There Be Setbacks?

You will have setbacks. You will have opposition, sometimes from those you least expect it. You will, in a real sense, mourn. Yet you will become genuinely meek to those who oppose you. You will become merciful and forgiving.

We are living in the worst of times and the best of times. When I was young, everything in the society supported my Faith, everything in the culture supported my Faith. Today your children must be counter-cultural. It takes courage. In teaching your children holiness, you will pass on to them the light to see and behold the face of God.

St. Paul wrote that a multitude of saints washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They answered God's call to holiness. The saints freely chose to walk in the light of Christ. Only Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We are also called to holiness. If we are to enter Heaven, we must become holy as our Heavenly Father is holy.

Holiness is a Person, Jesus Christ. How do we wash our robes white in the blood of

the Lamb? By the constant pursuit of holiness in the sacraments, especially in the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

You homeschooling parents are courageously choosing not to expose your children to the darkness, or to the latest fads among educators. Rather, you want to expose them to the light, to the truth, to the Faith, and to everything revealed by God and all His Church teaches.

I know about the subtle forms of persecution of you and of your children. I know that many of your neighbors look upon you with disdain. Many of your neighbors think you are un-American or anti-social. But you must be courageous. Don't give up! These are man-made roadblocks. Take heart! Rejoice and be glad! Your reward in Heaven will be great!

When that great day comes, when you will be in the Kingdom and behold the face of God, you will look back and say, "What a marvelous bargain!"

Being called to holiness involves taking up the cross! It is a daily requirement of holiness to take up our cross. We are not called to be comfortable. We are called to holiness and to take up our cross.

Many voices are calling us to the darkness and to avoid the cross. But you homeschooling parents have ignored those voices, you have ignored the invitation to step into the darkness. You have clearly recognized that it is better to be a member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, with Christ as the Head, and we and our children are members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Do you remember the answer we memorized from the Baltimore Catechism? God made us to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be eternally happy with Him in Heaven.

## Why We Homeschool

You are homeschooling your children precisely because you do know Him, you do love Him, and you are serving Him through



homeschooling your children. You are teaching your children in a chaotic world to know, to love, and to serve Jesus Christ. What greater gift could you give them? You are giving them the faith and the courage to avoid and reject the darkness. You are giving them the courage to walk in the light of Christ.

Continue your work as very special disciples of Jesus Christ, no matter what the man-made obstacles, no matter what the personal cost, no matter what ridicule or insults or subtle persecutions. Don't let these deter you from teaching your children.

"Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven." One day, as a result of what you are doing, you will hear the words of our Blessed Lord. "Come, Blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you since before the foundation of the world."

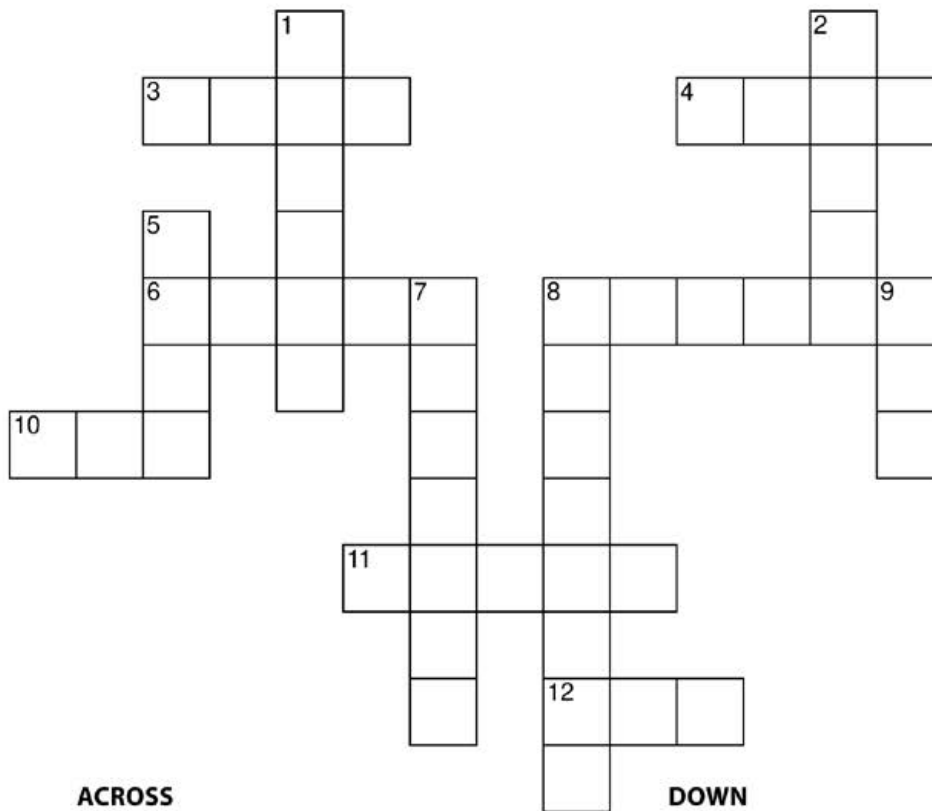
It is the best of times precisely because it is the worst of times out there. You and your children have a chance to exercise your discipleship in a much more dramatic way than our parents or grandparents. In doing that, you are walking in the light of Christ, and you will one day see God. My brothers and sisters, praised be Jesus Christ.

**Father Parker passed away a few years ago. He was an active pro-life priest, and spoke at a Seton homeschooling conference.**



**CATHOLIC  
CROSSWORD**

# The Days of Creation



**ACROSS**

- 3 Adam and Eve's good son, who offered a lamb as a sacrifice to God
- 4 Adam and Eve's wicked son, who killed his brother
- 6 On the third day, God separated this from the dry land.
- 8 Also on the third day, God made these.
- 10 On the sixth day, God made \_\_\_ to rule over the Earth.
- 11 On the fifth day, God made two kinds of animals: fish and \_\_\_.
- 12 On the fourth day, God made this great light "to rule the day."

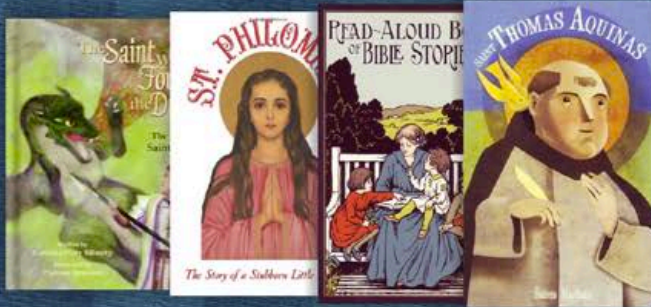
**DOWN**

- 1 God did this on the seventh day.
- 2 On the first day of creation, God made this.
- 5 Also on the fourth day, God made this lesser light "to rule the night."
- 7 God created the universe out of this.
- 8 God placed Adam and Eve in this beautiful garden, also called Eden.
- 9 On the second day, God made this.

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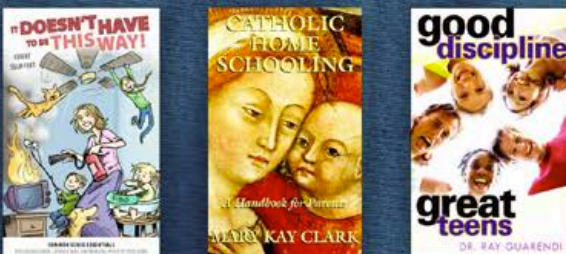
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# PAPAL WISDOM



### Christian Education Benefits Society

The proper and immediate aim of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian ... For the true Christian must live a supernatural life in Christ and display it in all his actions. For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social.

Hence the true Christian, a product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason, illumined by the supernatural life of the example and teaching of Christ. The authentic Christian does not renounce the activities of this life, he does not stunt his natural faculties, but he develops and perfects them by coordinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles what is merely natural in life ...

This fact is proved by the whole history of Christianity and its institutions, which is nothing else but the history of true civilization and progress up to the present day. Christianity stands out conspicuously in the lives of the numerous saints, whom the Church and she alone, produces; and in whom [the saints] is perfectly realized the purpose of Christian education, and who have in every way ennobled and benefited human society.

**Encyclical:** *Christian Education of Youth*, Pius XI, 1939