

# Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

SETONMAGAZINE.COM | MARCH/APRIL 2019



The Maney Family

## MANEY ROADS OF LIFE

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### 4 Ways to Enrich Your Family's Holy Week

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MARCH/APRIL 2019  
Vol. 7, No. 2

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year or \$25 for two years.



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

Spring is on its way, and with that, the feeling of all things being new surrounds us both in our domestic churches and in the liturgy.

It is delightful to see those crocuses popping out of the mud, sometimes even through the snow, knowing that the hyacinths and daffodils won't be far behind. It's a loving natural reminder that there is a light at the end of a cold dark tunnel. Similarly, God has provided a light of salvation for us to joyfully anticipate in the spring: The Resurrection of Our Lord. The preparation and sacrifice of Lent, a dark time, will soon give way to unspeakable joy as we celebrate Easter.

As a mom of a large family, I found Holy Week challenging when my children were young, and there were years I was entirely overwhelmed by it all. Jeff Minick addresses these challenges and encourages you to persevere in bringing the children to the Triduum for reasons that are not so obvious. We forget how small children influence those around them.

In addition, Tara Brelinsky has offered us moms five practical ways to freshen ourselves up for spring. I know this kind of advice can be extremely welcome after a long winter cooped up in the house.

Finally, Dr. Clark is reminding us of the graces that come with devotion to the rosary. It is so good to be reminded of Our Lady's love and care for us and how contemplating the life of our dear Lord through the rosary will bring such peace to our busy days. Ad Jesum Per Mariam!

On behalf of Dr. Clark and all the staff at Seton, please let me wish you a fruitful Lent and a joyous and Blessed Easter.

Blessings,  
Mary Ellen Barrett

P.S. - If you are planning any summer vacations near the offices of Seton, please let us know; we would love to have you stop in for a visit.

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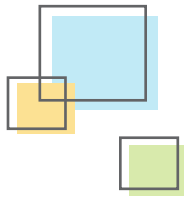
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*Photo Courtesy: Meyer Family*

## THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



We homeschool so that my SPD son can focus on real learning and not just how to manage his symptoms.

We also love that our children's physical and mental well-being is improved from working in natural light and fresh air. In fact, our entire State has become their classroom, filled with museums, parks, and travel.

- Elizabeth Meyer



SHARE YOUR WHY WE HOMESCHOOL ON **FACEBOOK**

# The Rosary

Many Americans are going through all kinds of difficulties at present: job troubles, marital infidelity, drug and other forms of addiction, the onslaught of pornography that destroys innocence and tears apart marriages—the list goes on and on.

America needs prayer. The best prayer is the Mass, which includes the Our Father given to us by Jesus. However, certainly because many people cannot attend Mass, the Blessed Mother appeared to people in different countries throughout history, to give us all a special prayer which does not require recitation in a church. This special prayer can be said at any time, in any place, aloud or in our heart. It even includes inspired words from the Bible. That prayer is the Rosary, which includes the Our Father and the Hail Mary.

The Rosary is not only a recitation of the words of Jesus in the Our Father, and the words of Gabriel to Mary, but also a reflection on the events in the lives of Jesus and His Blessed Mother Mary: the Joyful, the Sorrowful, the Luminous, and the Glorious Mysteries.

The Rosary first became a popular devotion after the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Dominic in 1208. Following her directions, he led the Catholics of Europe against the brutally violent Albigensians by gathering crowds of people to say the Rosary. The Blessed Mother also inspired St. Alphonsus Liguori to write the most amazing reflections on each mystery of the Rosary in his book *The Glories of Mary*.

Many of us are familiar with another great book, *The Secret of the Rosary*, written by St. Louis de Montfort. St. Louis wrote that, after devotion to Our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, “the holiest and solidest of all devotions” is devotion to Our Lady.

In particular, the Rosary always has been a popular devotion by Christian soldiers. Victories over pagans in battle often were attributed to the Blessed Mother after special Rosary novenas. Polish troops were known for their devotion to Mary and the Rosary. The early Polish national banner included an image of the Blessed Mother, and their “war song” was a hymn to Mary. Scottish

knights left their “golden rosaries” in Our Lady’s chapels as a pledge of Faith in her assistance.

Countless times throughout history, the Blessed Mother appeared to various saints, such as St. Bernadette at Lourdes, asking again and again for people to pray the daily Rosary for the salvation of sinners. (On Sunday morning, EWTN presents the live Recitation of the Rosary at the Lourdes shrine, on the very spot where she appeared to St. Bernadette.)

One of the most famous appearances of the Blessed Mother is when she appeared to the three children at Fatima during World War I. She told them to tell the world, suffering then as now, to pray the Rosary every day. “Pray, pray a great deal, and make sacrifices....Let people continue to say the Rosary every day to obtain the end of the war.” She asked the children to have a chapel built with a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary.

During some terrible situations in the past, especially during wars, the Blessed Mother would appear with a message for all mankind. Her requests for prayer always included saying the Rosary. In the 1950s, Father Peyton, responding to her messages, started a Family Rosary devotion on American radio

and television, not only to strengthen family life, but also to bring hope to those suffering under Communism. At that time, bishops, priests, and nuns, as well as Christian parents, were being persecuted by Communist dictators in Europe. Father Peyton’s theme for his show was “The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together.”

The various crises we are seeing in our society, in our government, in our church, and the misery and suffering we are seeing throughout the world, should make our families realize the need to pray daily for the Catholic Church, for the pope and the priests, for the United Nations to stop spreading abortion, and for America to return to being a Christian nation. Besides daily Mass, reception of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and frequent Confession, the daily Family Rosary is essential for the future of Catholicism in our nation.



Dr. Mary Kay Clark has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes columns for the Seton Magazine and is the author of Catholic Homeschooling: A Handbook for Parents.

*After devotion to Our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, “the holiest and solidest of all devotions” is devotion to Our Lady - St. Louis de Montfort*



St. Dominic Receives the Holy Rosary Photo CC Fr Lawrence Lew | Flickr

# your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

## **I like many of the Seton courses, but I would like to take only some of them, and do others on my own.**

Of course, we'd love to have every student be fully enrolled with Seton. Our staff has spent untold hours developing the courses and structure we offer to our students. We are also an accredited school, and students enrolled with Seton benefit from that accreditation. Many colleges are familiar with our program and recognize its strengths.

On the other hand, we're happy to offer single courses at either the elementary or the high school level to families who want to make use of only a few of our courses

for their children. Only parents can make choices about what is best for their family, and we at Seton are here to help in whatever way we can.

Our online enrollment program at [enroll.setonhome.org](http://enroll.setonhome.org) allows you to enroll in either the full program or in single courses. The online enrollment program makes it easy to compare costs as well.

## **My husband is in the military. Will we be able to homeschool with Seton wherever we live?**

Yes. Seton has students in almost every country, many of them children of American military service men and women. Military families are generally not bound by the local educational laws of the country in which they are stationed. They are also not bound by the laws of any U. S. state since they are not residing within the state. The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) reports that from time to time a base commander has attempted to establish educational guidelines on a particular base. However, base commanders do not have such authority and HSLDA has been successful in having such regulations rescinded.

The U. S. Department of Defense runs schools in foreign countries, but military families are not required to use these schools. The DoD recognizes that military families may legitimately choose to homeschool. Military families living within the United States are subject to the laws of the state in which they reside.

The situation is different for families living in foreign countries who are not military or diplomatic personnel. These families may well be subject to local or national educational laws, and should contact local home schooling groups who can help them understand the educational situation.

For more information on homeschooling while in the military, refer to HSLDA's summary here: <https://bit.ly/2E7xzLS>

## **My high school son is struggling with his chemistry.**

Many students find math and science courses difficult. Chemistry and physics are two courses which are inherently challenging.

If you find that your student is having trouble with chemistry, you may be able to find a tutor or a mentor to help him. You might find a science major at a local college to help. Or, if you don't have someone locally, there are many online sites offering tutoring services. (Of course, be careful with whatever tutor you choose.)

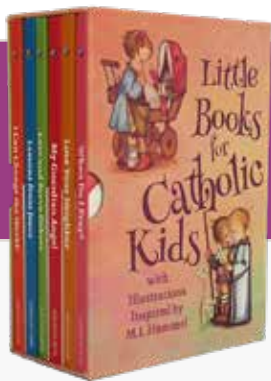
In addition, our high school counselors may be able to help. They are familiar with our courses and are happy to suggest the best route for each student according to that student's education background and ability.

## **Is there now more freedom and fewer restrictions for homeschooling families?**

For the past several years, homeschoolers have experienced greater freedom and fewer restrictions in regard to state and federal government. Homeschoolers comprise between 2% and 3% of all students in the United States. More importantly, compared to just twenty or thirty years ago, homeschooling is now widely accepted in our culture as an acceptable educational alternative.

But we must always be on guard against attacks on homeschooling. We are seeing, for example, more state regulations coming out of New York state. We must follow the regulations of our particular state and remain alert to any proposed changes.

While enjoying the freedom, we must never become complacent.



### **Little Books for Catholic Kids**

This delightful boxed set of board books with illustrations inspired by Sister M.I. Hummel ® feature life lessons for children ages 3-6 including when to pray, how to help others, being a good example and more. Ideal for teaching moments.

Set includes one each of When Do I Pray, Love Your Neighbor, My Guardian Angel, Love and Serve Others, Lessons from Jesus, and I Can Change the World! All are coated Board Books - 4.25 in. x 5.75 in. 16 pp each.

Little Books for Catholic Kids \$22.95

[www.setonbooks.com](http://www.setonbooks.com)

## How important are the online videos for the high school English courses?

Good students can certainly be successful in their high school courses without watching the online videos. However, we believe that the video educators give excellent presentations to help our students understand their English literature assignments. The presentations offer greater depth on topics that can help students to gain a greater appreciation of great works of literature.

For our online English courses, the videos are integrated directly into the

lessons, which we believe is optimal. For those taking the English courses offline, we still highly recommend that you view the English videos for deeper understanding of the English assignment.



Dr. Mary Kay Clark has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes columns for the Seton Magazine and is the author of Catholic Homeschooling: A Handbook for Parents.



# Dear Seton Families,

## RELIGION LESSON PLAN CHANGE

You may have noticed a change in the religion lesson plans for this 2018/2019 school year, and while we had the best of intentions in presenting these changes, it seems to have led to some questions among some of our families. Please accept our sincere apologies for any stress this may have caused.

### A Request From Families

Over the last several years, counselors have heard from a large number of our families that the practice of memorizing the Baltimore Catechism and being tested on the memorization was not working for them and their children.

In response to these concerns, we redesigned the tests of several of the elementary religion courses, to allow for correct but not perfectly memorized answers. We have had a very positive response to these changes but some families have missed memorizing and reciting answers. It was never our intention to take this option away from our families. We always have this option available, but we clearly did a poor job explaining this to you.

There are two sets of lesson plans and tests. Those families who prefer memorization will find those plans and tests are still available to them, and those families who want traditional memorization will be able to use the new lesson plans and tests. The textbooks for both lesson plans are identical.

## When...something is not working, we do our very best to fix it.

Currently, we are sending the new lessons as the “default,” choice; however, if you wish to have the previous lesson plans sent, please use the “Courses” tab on your My Seton page to change the revision number. The tests and quarter report sheets will be available to you there. You may also, at any time, call a counselor for advice or to change your selection.

Seton is committed to providing the best possible Catholic education to all of our students, and when families let us know something is not working, we do our very best to fix it. Thank you all for your input and patience.

God bless.



The Seton College Partner Program is a way to encourage students to continue their Catholic education by attending solidly Catholic Colleges after high school.



Belmont Abbey  
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OF DALLAS



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*Wisdom in God's Country*



OUR LADY  
SEAT OF WISDOM  
COLLEGE



BY JEFF MINICK

## 4 Ways to Enrich Your Family's Holy Week

Our Catholic holy days and seasons of penance and celebration rouse within us all manner of emotions. Christmas, for example, brings Advent with its prayer and preparation, the joy and awe of Our Lord's birth on December 25, and the festivities of Christmastide. Holy days of obligation honoring Mary—the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, Mary, Mother of God—cause us to reflect on the incredible events in the life of Our Lady and on her special place in heaven and in our prayers.

Of all these celebrations, Lent and Easter surely create the broadest emotional spectrum: the somber season of Lent with its prayer, fasting, and alms-giving; our gratitude for the gifts of the priesthood and the Eucharist; our grief over the death of Christ; the shining jubilation of Easter and the Resurrection.

Holy Week, the last week of Lent and the reenactment of the Passion of Our Lord, lies at the heart of this roller-coaster ride of emotions. When we participate in Holy Week, we walk beside Jesus and His disciples, watching His triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, commemorating the establishment of the Eucharist, observing in horror His condemnation and crucifixion, grieving His death in darkened churches, and then, with lights, bells, music, and Mass, celebrating His resurrection.



For Catholic homeschoolers, as for all Catholics, Holy Week can become a time to deepen our faith, to reflect on its many gifts, and to journey through the days that forever changed human history. As homeschoolers, we have the freedom in terms of time and opportunity to share in these monumental events and to receive the special graces they bring to us. In this week lies spiritual gold that can enrich all of our hearts. Seton mom Marsha Clarid, for example, reports that “our family visits seven churches on Maundy Thursday as a pious observance. Saint Philip Neri started this tradition in 1553 when friends would gather to do their walk to seven chapels. They would do this before dawn to counteract the carnival noise and bad behavior around them.”

## Battle of the Pews

Homeschooling parents also know, of course, the challenges and demands of Holy Week. To get all the kids dressed and in the van for Holy Thursday Mass, to take them to services on Friday, to return yet again for Easter Mass, to stop them from fidgeting during these many hours in church, to deal with little Mikey’s fever while still trying to drive Catherine, Tommy, and Josie to Friday’s Veneration of the Cross. Some of us may end Easter Sunday spent and exhausted, worn thin by obligations rather than renewed in joy.

If you have toddlers, or if you have a squad of children to dress and then transport to church—and many Seton families do—then you are a veteran in the “battle of the pews.” You know the ordeal of dealing with the four-year-old who keeps pinching his three-year-old sister, the baby crying for no apparent reason, the six-year-old absentmindedly humming Disney tunes during the consecration.

You know as well many tricks to help your children, particularly the little ones, through these hours at church. In the vestibule or cry room, Dad holds the newborn and keeps an eye on two-year-old Daniel while Mom sits with the other children in church. From her purse, Mom brings out religious books for the little ones when they are getting rambunctious. The teens are now mature enough to shush the little ones or escort them to the restroom. Because Suzan von Stultz and her family “are literally 3/4 of the choir at our church,” her family attends all masses and services of Holy Week. As practical helps in this rigorous schedule, she recommends crock-pot meals and naps before the Vigil Mass on Saturday. (Her youngest, an eight-year-old daughter, added that choir members should have water available since “singing is thirsty work.”)

All well and good. Here are four other tactics that can help us persevere in the “battle of the pews.”

**1** First, use the days of Holy Week as an opportunity to enhance your children’s understanding of Lent, Easter, and Eastertide. Raise questions and discuss the answers before attending certain Masses or special services. Why, for instance, is Easter called Easter? Why did people wave palm branches to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem? Why do some Catholics refer to Wednesday of Holy Week as “Spy Wednesday”? What is the meaning of the word veneration?

What is the significance of Holy Thursday regarding the priesthood, the Eucharist, and service to others? What “new commandment” did Christ give his followers? Why is there no Mass on Friday of Holy Week? Why was it necessary to remove the bodies of Christ and two criminals from their crosses before sunset on Friday? How was Christ’s body prepared for burial? What spices in that preparation harken back to his birth? What is the meaning of the words from the Apostles’ Creed “He descended into hell”?

Why does the Church declare that on the third day Christ rose from the dead, when by modern reckoning that time would be two days? Why is Holy Saturday traditionally a day of quiet and meditation? Why, in many parishes, are fires lit outside the church as a prelude to the Holy Saturday Vigil Mass? Why are converts typically received into the Catholic Church during this Vigil Mass?

**2** Second, we might remember the graces received by walking with Christ toward His death and resurrection. Whether we are wrestling with a two-year-old or reminding a teenager to pay attention to the homily, does not negate the fact that we are in church. We are present. We are there. We are making the attempt, however distracted we may be, to absorb the sorrows and joys of this emotion-packed week.



**3** Another tactic: Immersion in Scripture. During Holy Week, we hear passages from the Old Testament prophesying the coming of the Savior. We participate in the long communal readings from the Gospels. Opening our Bibles to these readings and going through them with our children before setting off for church can boost their interest and attention in that day's commemoration.

**4** Finally, Christ called all of us to be witnesses to our faith. Often we forget that we can offer witness simply by attending Mass. That twenty-something stockbroker who comes to church only at Christmas and Easter may take note of your family's devotion, and decide he wants the same for himself. That older woman who last month lost her eleven-year-old granddaughter to leukemia may find solace in the reverence of your children. That man who feels himself beyond all hope of redemption, who came to the Easter Vigil Mass as a last resort, may observe your family,

remember the devotion of his own boyhood, and appear in the confessional line the following week.

Does Holy Week present some special challenges to homeschooling families?

Of course.

But challenges bring rewards, and in this case, those rewards can be enormous.

This Holy Week, give yourself over to Jesus and His Church.

[For a print out of Jeff Minick's 15 Holy Week Questions (and Answers) go to [SetonMagazine.com/HolyWeekQuestions](http://SetonMagazine.com/HolyWeekQuestions). A great way to challenge young minds!]



Jeff Minick is the Latin Counselor at Seton Home Study School. He has spent the last twenty-five years teaching Henle Latin to hundreds of home-educated students. He is the father of four, all of whom were homeschooled, and grandfather to twenty-one, three of whom he helps with their homeschooling.



## WANT TO MEET SETON FAMILIES IN YOUR AREA?

### Meet Local Seton Families

Maybe you are new to homeschooling and to Seton, and need some advice or support regarding such things as daily scheduling or juggling soccer and ballet with academics.

Maybe you don't know any other Catholic homeschooling families in your community, and feel isolated or alone.

Maybe you are a veteran homeschooler, believe strongly both in homeschooling and the Seton program, and would be delighted by the opportunity to help the new families in your area.

If so, Seton's Family to Family program is here to help you.

### Bringing Families Together

After hearing from so many homeschoolers wanting contact with those families in their town or county, Seton has developed "Family to Family" to bring these families together.

Because Seton is bound by confidentiality, you must give Seton Home Study School permission to add you to the list of families that may be contacted.

### How to Get Started

If you would like to meet other homeschooling families in your area go to your MySeton page at [setonhome.org](http://setonhome.org) and click on the Family to Family button. There, you can let us know if and how you want us to make your family's contact information available.

# TEACHER'S TIP

BY ASHLYN THOMAS

## *The Art of Handwriting*

When I took the SAT in 2011, the other students and I were asked to write our names in clear penmanship, cursive. It should have been easy, except there was a problem. The testing proctor and the other students didn't know cursive. To their embarrassment, I volunteered to write the alphabet on the whiteboard so that we could continue with our standardized testing.

Thanks to my mother, and Seton, I learned cursive writing in second grade and have continued to use it over the years. But on that day in 2011, it was obvious that I was the only person in that room who had had such an opportunity. I had a question: Why had handwriting lost its significance in society?

There is certainly an art to handwriting, one that has been neglected. It is not only students, but teachers who are quickly forgetting this practice! Researchers from Princeton University and other major universities have conducted studies that demonstrate how students who handwrite notes are significantly better students than peers who rely on technology. Studies say handwriting makes a student smarter and that choosing a pen over a keyboard encourages higher brain functioning. Handwriting gives an advantage in remembering new concepts long-term, as well as developing small muscles.

Placing higher scores aside, as homeschool graduates and parents, we know how important writing is as a means for communication and the legibility of handwriting is a sure requisite!

*Handwriting... encourages higher brain functioning.*

For the young student, it can be a daunting task. However, handwriting does not need to be practiced more than 15 minutes a day, and practice can be as simple as writing a letter to an aunt or grandmother.

There are three components to handwriting: correct formation of the letter, uniformity of letter size, and slant. Practice is necessary. Oversee the student's handwriting workbook lessons. Large writing tools provide children better control as they form the letters in words. Letters should slant uniformly to the right.



Hands quickly become stiff when hand position is incorrect, so proper position is vital:

The writing tool should be held between the thumb and the first two fingers, an inch above the pencil tip. The first fingers touch the top of the pencil and the thumb is placed below. Remember to tilt the paper toward the left (for the right-handed student) so that the lines of the paper and writing arm form a 30 degree angle. For a uniform slant, pull the letters toward the center of the body.

Fine motor skills develop more slowly than gross motor skills, so if a young student finds handwriting fatiguing, remember that early handwriting should consist of copying letters, words, and sentences. Dictation and note-taking are better tasks given to an older child who has developed handwriting skills.

The purpose of handwriting is to give a person the ability to write quickly and legibly, to complete daily tasks with greater efficiency. Handwriting is a worthy cause for a teacher to share with students, not a battleground! If a young student expresses great frustration, decrease the amount of time when he is practicing his penmanship to two short periods in a day instead of a longer time.

Having been once a young Seton student and now a teacher, I believe that having patience, with reasonable expectations, is the best tool a parent can use when teaching a young student.



# MANEY ROADS OF LIFE

THE MANEY FAMILY

**WE** are a new homeschooling family of 7, but not new to Seton! Growing up, I (Mom) homeschooled with Seton from 8-12 grade. When it came time to choose a homeschooling program for my own children, it was not a difficult decision. We knew we wanted a thorough education, a very Catholic education and a flexible program for our 5 children (ages 4-12). Seton fit that bill!

Our children had previously been attending a wonderful conservative Catholic school for their entire schooling. This past year, we made a big decision for our family. We decided

to pull our children out of school, sell our home, sell our belongings and hit the road in an RV! Our purpose?

To explore the United States for the year and experience all this country has to offer first hand as well as clear up some health problems that required a drier climate.



We set out on November 7th and have been going strong. Because of the craziness of selling everything we owned and figuring out this new-to-us lifestyle, we pushed starting school off until we got on the road (thank you homeschooling flexibility!). We started in Massachusetts and fled to Texas to avoid the snow- which followed us the whole way! We explored Nashville Tennessee, many Texas locations, Santa Fe New Mexico, and now are enjoying the warm weather of Arizona.

We have experienced so many wonderful things! We were able to see a true-to-size replica of the Pantheon in Tennessee, dolphins in Galveston, Texas, the Alamo in San Antonio, the miraculous staircase that St. Joseph built at the Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and even went to Mass at the oldest Church in the United States in Santa Fe. We've learned about geography, land formations, local plants and wildlife, experienced museums on many topics, and talked with re-enactors of a few different battles and eras.

The beauty of homeschooling has been the flexibility! "School" can be learning all about the Alamo on the actual site of the Alamo. Learning how people lived during that time, who fought the good fight, why they fought, and what the outcome was. "Gym" can be sledding down the sand dunes at Monohan State Park in Texas or hiking in the Arizona desert. Our boys can learn woodcarving from other campers at campgrounds and our girls can learn sewing and beading.

Music can be Christmas caroling to shut ins and learning what a dobro is at the campground jam session. We typically try



created between book work/home assignments and having life experiences. We've been working on creating that balance and learning to be flexible.

Going from a structured school environment to a flexible homeschool traveling environment has been interesting. We're all adjusting though. One of our favorite experiences has been watching the landscape and changes in the local way of life as we travel along. Seeing how different the many areas of the country are from one another—from the way homes look and the population of areas, to the weather and the friendliness and mannerisms of the people. It really hit us while we were in Texas and kept seeing the words "revolution" and "freedom." Being from Massachusetts, we related those words to the American Revolution. It dawned on us at the monument for the Battle of San Jacinto that those words referred to the Mexican-American war.

Another fun aspect of traveling has been finding signs of the Catholic faith. Our Lady of Guadalupe is so prevalent in the southwest. She can even be found in the grocery stores! There are so many old mission churches. We've seen Mass kits on display in museums and a reliquary at the Cathedral in Santa Fe. Being at the Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe next to the miraculous stairs was a very moving experience,

to keep a Monday through Friday school schedule and do our book lessons in the morning and use the afternoon for exploring or having fun. During weeks that we are traveling quite a bit, we do math facts and spelling words in the car and look up information about things we see on the way. How does an oil well work? What is the history of Fredericksburg, Texas? Are scorpions really dangerous and what should we do if we get stung by one?



We have also made so many friends and met wonderful people in our travels! We've even been able to share about the Catholic faith with a few of them. Lots of pen pals creates good writing skills and local libraries are such amazing resources! Rainy days can be spent thumbing through books, playing new educational games, and learning local history. We've participated in a few fun programs as well. Have we had some challenges along the way? Of course! Living in a sticks and bricks house also has challenges, just different ones. We have a much smaller area to congregate in, but there's always the great



## THE BEAUTY OF HOMESCHOOLING HAS BEEN THE FLEXIBILITY!

outdoors! Sometimes schoolwork is done around our dinette. Other days it's done at the picnic table. Some days people are spread out about the RV and outside—beds, couches, table, or a big old rock outside! There is also a balance that needs to be

especially for our 9-year-old son. We decided to start a YouTube channel for our family and friends to follow. It's been fun giving them a glimpse into our lives and sharing our travels with them. You can only describe an experience so well in words; a video account gives a bit better insight. It'll never be the same as first-hand experience, but it's better than nothing for sure! We would love for you to follow along! Check us out at Maney Roads of Life. Please feel free to subscribe to the channel and share with others!



# Life and Mirrors

BY JOHN CLARK

**S**hortly before Lisa and I were married, a priest friend of mine told me something I will never forget. He said, “John, you are about to start your dream job, and you are about to marry your dream girl. But there will come a day when you look in the mirror and ask yourself, ‘Is this all there is?’”

I didn’t quite know what to say. And then he started talking about some other topic, but my mind stayed focused on his rather dour, depressing, and dysphoric prediction. So I interrupted him and said, “Father, what *then*? What gets you through *those* times?” The priest made me wait for the answer, and so, dear reader, I’m going to make you wait for a minute or two as well. In the meantime, I’m going to make a few observations about life and mirrors in the ensuing quarter-century after that conversation.

Let’s talk about a few reasons why you might find yourself in front of a mirror asking that question.

**First, some people will let you down.** You will count on them—friends, brothers, priests, husband or wife—but they’ll let you down anyway. Maybe they just forgot. Maybe they tried but failed. Maybe they can’t tell how hard you’ve been trying. Maybe they don’t understand how much you are suffering without their encouragement. Maybe they don’t know how to help. Maybe they didn’t know how important it was to you. And those are the people who like you! Others will dislike you for reasons you will never know.

**Second, there is no “dream job.”** The expression “dream job” should be

stricken from the lexicon. Yes, I’ve had some jobs that I enjoyed more than others. I’ve worked in professions that are more rewarding than others. But as far as dreams go, mostly I’ve dreamed about going home after work. (Happily, there *are* dream girls, as the past twenty-five years have also confirmed.)

**Third, the more good you do, the more you’re going to be oppressed for it.** Take a few minutes and think back on your life—on all those times that you made a sincere effort to be more virtuous and/or to overcome some sinful habit. In the words of the *Act of Contrition*, think back on the times you really meant the words “to amend my life.” It is as though a memo went out in Hell: “This guy is serious about

## IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

amending his life and staying on the road to Heaven; let's throw up some roadblocks."

If your family decides to start saying the Rosary every night at 7PM, neighbors will unexpectedly drop by, people will call on the phone at 6:59, or your dog will start barking for no apparent reason after the first *Our Father*. Roadblocks are going up. You've made a sincere effort to stop talking about the topic of politics because, whenever you do, you wind up saying something uncharitable to someone. The next day, you'll be at supermarket grabbing some milk, and all of a sudden, you find yourself baited into a political conversation. Roadblocks are going up. Worst of all, the people who love you most will say unkind things that seem very out of place for them. You're really trying to be better, but their comment will really hurt. Then a temptation will present itself when you've been weakened by these unkind words. Roadblocks are going up. These are some of the things that send you to mirrors with interrogatives.

Well, you've been patient. So now, here is Father's answer, which consisted of one word: grace. God grants us actual graces to help us overcome life's difficulties and grow closer to Him in the process. As Rev. John Arintero wrote, "Grace makes the rough smooth, the heavy light, the bitter sweet, the difficult easy."

By our baptism, God grants us the essential perfection of sanctifying grace in our souls, and if we lose that grace through sin, we must spare no effort to get it back. Each and every soul in the state of sanctifying grace is a child of God and has an indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. Saint Augustine poetically says that in this life, we cannot see God as He truly is; when we try to see God, it is as though we are looking through a darkly lit mirror. When you look in the mirror, you might struggle to see this Divine Indwelling, but **the choirs of Heaven view your soul in the state of grace for what it is: a treasure and pleasure to behold because of that Divine indwelling.** And once you begin to recognize that—one you begin to *appreciate* that—you will never look at a mirror the same way again. And you'll no longer find questions. Only answers.



John Clark is a homeschooling father, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for The National Catholic Register. His latest book is "How to be a Superman Dad in a Kryonite World, Even When You Can't Afford a Decent Cape."

# SETON STAFF SERIES



*A chat with those who serve you!*

## Thomas Centrella Production Editing Specialist



Thomas Centrella, a Production Editing Specialist in Seton's Curriculum Development Department, brings a unique set of skills to his position. He earned his BS in electrical engineering from Wilkes University and an MA in theological studies from Christendom College. He attained the rank of Captain in the United States Air Force,

has worked for more than twenty years as an editor and writer, including two years as Managing Editor of *IEEE Design & Test* magazine, and has also taught high school math and religion.

A full-time staff member at Seton for almost seven years, Thomas spends most of his day on the layouts for printed course materials and online tests. He edits some of this material as well. In addition, Thomas has written a morality book, *Morality for Catholic Students*, for Seton. When asked what part of his work is most satisfying, Thomas replied: "I find it very edifying that I am able to contribute in a meaningful way to Seton's noble work of publishing authentically Catholic educational materials. An example is the morality book for Seton's new Moral Theology course. It is an honor for me to be able to play a role in sharing the jewels of our Catholic Faith with our students."

Years before moving to Front Royal, the Centrella children were enrolled with Seton. Thomas cites three main factors that led the family to homeschool with Seton: the formal program of study, thereby ensuring that all subjects would be covered in the curriculum; immersion in the Catholic faith; and the ability to study and learn in the safety and comfort of their own home. "I also know that when our children complete Seton's program, **they will have a solid education under their belt from an accredited institution, and this will help them succeed in their future endeavors.** I think these same advantages are there for all homeschooling families who enroll with Seton."

Asked if he had any message for Seton students and their families, Thomas said, "The most important thing that we as parents need to be concerned with regarding our children is the salvation of their souls. We should keep this in mind every time we are making any decisions about their education. God bless all homeschooling families!"



# 5 Ways to Renew Yourself This Spring

BY TARA BRELINSKY

**M**ost people choose January as their time for resolutions. They envision a new year, new you ideal just as the winter months kick into full gear. However, timing health and production changes during the period when hibernation seems most enticing is kind of like swimming against a fierce current. So, it's little wonder that most of those resolutions are abandoned long before the frost melts.

Does that mean that there's no hope for making changes? Does it mean that we're all doomed to perpetual sameness, if we're not strong enough to swim against that current? Not at all! As sensible as it might be to time resolutions to coincide with the turn of the year, as Catholics, we have a better calendar to follow.

## Spirit of Renewal

The quiet, penitential season of Lent offers us the perfect time for taking inventory of ourselves, our habits and our environment. Then, once we've had time to ponder what is (and what isn't) working, and spent the season detaching from worldly things, we have the renewed vigor of spring to encourage us.

As we're throwing open the windows and spying the first signs of blossoms in the yard, our hearts are naturally more inclined to follow suit. Spring is the ideal season to adopt a spirit of renewal.



## 1 Refresh Your Style

Sometimes there is a temptation for mothers to view self-care as vain or frivolous. Some mothers boast about how long it has been since they styled their hair. And while too much attention to self could become vanity, conversely, too little attention to self can become neglect. True beauty is a reflection of God, so mothers needn't shy away from shining that beauty in the world.

To this end, refresh your style by getting a haircut, changing your hair style, wearing a new shade of lipstick, or donning a new dress or piece of jewelry. You don't have to break the budget by paying top dollar at a high-end salon or shopping for a whole new wardrobe (though you could if your budget allows it). Get your hair trimmed at a discount salon and save a little money by skipping the pre-wash and after-styling. Or patronize a local beauty school and allow the budding beauticians to practice their skills on you. Buy something new off the rack at your favorite thrift store or pick up a colorful necklace for less than \$10.

## 2 Refresh Your Environment

Reading through the *Little House on the Prairie* books with my children, I've always delighted in the myriad small ways that Ma had to make their house a welcoming home. Though they owned very few things, she still saw the value in using what she had to brighten up their tiny log cabin.

Create a warm and welcoming living space in your home by setting some pretty, artificial flower arrangements on the tables and in the bathrooms. Spruce up your old couch with a few new (or new-to-you if you buy them at the thrift store) throw pillows. Change the bedroom curtains and recover your tired bedspread with a new duvet cover. If you're feeling particularly energetic, re-paint your kitchen or dining room.

## 3 Refresh Your Menu

It's the age-old question: what's for dinner? And if your household is anything like mine, you've probably given the same old answers week in and week out. Yet, between the countless cookbook titles lining library and bookstore shelves and the even-more numerous recipes available online, there's no excuse for not trying something new.

Additionally, if your children aren't already serving as your sous chefs in the kitchen, now is the time to hand them a mixing spoon. Get your children involved in making a new recipe for dinner or allow them to experiment by adding some fresh ingredients into the salad (try cran-raisins, nuts, cheese, fruit).

## 4 Renew Your Home School

Evaluate what is working and what isn't in your current school schedule and curriculum. Then, make

the necessary changes. As home schoolers, we aren't constrained by outside forces when it comes to addressing problems and implementing solutions. So, take up the reins and confidently set the course for your home schoolers.

If your children would be better served by starting half an hour earlier or later, make the change. If your son is struggling in algebra, go back to lesson one and work through all of the lessons together. If your daughter is no longer interested in attending dance classes, bow out of the class and reclaim the hour in your week.

## 5 Renew Your Spirit

Most important of all, take the time to renew your spirit this spring season by adopting a new prayer routine. Praying always has merit, but occasionally it can become so routine that we end up murmuring through the words without meditating on the meaning. Making small changes for a time can reignite our love for our faith and refresh our spirits.

Commit to an hour in adoration as a family or include at least one daily Mass in your family's schedule each week. Keep the First Friday or First Saturday devotion. Just remember to make doable changes, rather than set yourself up for failure by over-extending your time or energy. Promise to add in one daily Mass per week and then stick with it, rather than over-commit to Mass every day and then quit when you can't make it happen.

## Blessings Beyond Our Wildest Imaginings

Our perspective affects our outlook. When we see our situation as hopeless or overwhelming (which can happen in the midst of the doldrums and tediousness of the home school year) we want to quit. The Apostles could have fallen into this trap on Good Friday or during the silence of Holy Saturday, but we know that Easter Sunday held blessings beyond their wildest imaginings.

Likewise, there is often a temptation to jump to a conclusion as to the outcome, rushing our assessment of the future before it unfolds. But God's timing is not ours. The long winter always leads to the spring just as Good Friday always leads to Easter Sunday. Similarly, the long, hard days of managing personalities and learning styles in the home school household will lead to the formation of God's people (moms and dads included).



Tara K. E. Brelinsky is a home schooling mother of 8 living children, with 6 more heavenly ones. Married to her childhood sweetheart, they make their home in North Carolina where they teach Natural Family Planning, grow a garden, raise two dogs, a cat, hamster, ducks, roosters and a flock of hens (in addition to all those wonderful kids). Tara studied journalism a lifetime ago in college, but now she writes simply for the glory of God. You can read her musings and inspirations on her blog Blessings in Brelinskyville.

# Creating **Warmth** in Your Homeschool

**T**he winters of the Chicagoland area can be severe and unwelcoming. The cold winds that blow off Lake Michigan cut through the flatlands like an axe, penetrating its inhabitants to the bone. Days upon days of bleak gray begin to weigh upon the spirit, and the only solace one may find is generally to be sought indoors. Of course, most children native to this area find themselves in school for most of winter, sheltered from the responsibilities of life and the world outside, but still challenged by the demands of their classroom and social environment. It was on one such day, in the dead of winter, that I had my most memorable moment in elementary education as a first-grader.

Mrs. Norton was my teacher. She privately summoned me to her desk that day, sensing quite rightly that there was an interior problem going on with me as a learner. During class, we typically went through problems or instruction together as a classroom of approximately 25 kids. There was little time for private instruction, and I was too embarrassed to ask questions about things everyone else seemed to understand. At some point, I fell behind and checked out of the learning process. I began to believe that I could not do the work, that it was beyond me. I filled in the blanks with straight lines on a series of assignments, which was the impetus of my summons.

Quite afraid, I approached her desk, knowing deep-down why I was there. With a mysteriously stern yet kind and reassuring face, Mrs. Norton asked: “I was going through everyone’s assignments and I found this. What is going on?” I was mum.

“Is everything okay at home?” “Yes,” I replied.

“Is this your best work?” “No.”

“If you needed help, why didn’t you ask?”

Silence. “Are you afraid to ask questions?” A little more silence and then “Yes.”

“How come?” “I feel stupid when I ask questions.”

After this, my recall blurs, but at this point, she reassured me that it was always okay to ask questions, that it was part of learning, and not to worry what others—whether she or my peers—think about me. She let me know that she would always be there to support me when I raised my hand or asked questions of her personally. She told me that I was far more capable than what I was currently demonstrating. In a word, she re-instilled within me a trust for the learning process and confidence in myself as a learner. As hackneyed as it sounds, from then on, I believed in myself, that I could learn, and when I had a question, she would be there to support me. Looking back, I gratefully recall how Mrs. Norton lived up to her special promise of support for the rest of the year, and I was forever changed as a learner.

## **Discerning Inspiration**

I will never know if Mrs. Norton was a student of humanist psychologist Carl Rogers, but my experience is a validation of some of his work and understanding of the human person and what motivates them. All teachers—whether in a homeschool or



brick and mortar school—set the tone for their classroom and thus design the environmental conditions for learning.

Writing in 1957, Rogers laid out three hallmarks or qualities that he believed every counselor or teacher should possess, traits that will foster and create an environment for personal growth. These three qualities, in brief, are genuineness and sincerity, unconditional positive regard (perhaps best considered as “unconditional love”), and empathy.

In my case, as a first grader, I found these qualities in Mrs. Norton. She spoke to me just as clearly with her tone and demeanor as with her choice of words. Because she did so, I felt that I could trust her as a teacher. This trust was engendered because of her empathy, non-judgmental attitude, and genuineness or integrity. The result is that she rekindled my interest in actually learning, rather than having me just surviving the daily classroom and bleakness outside. She guided me toward a better understanding of myself and my capability.

As Seton homeschooling parents, we can do the same. A consideration of our attitudes towards our children as students merits personal reflection. How could we be doing our job better? Where do we need help? These questions and more are ones we should not hesitate to ask as we take stock of our own homeschool. Even if we are on target with the “what” we are teaching, oftentimes a wrench gets thrown into the works when it comes to the “how.” A consideration of Rogers’ three virtues for teachers and counselors, I believe, is a fine place to begin pondering how we can be more effective as parents and teachers.



Nick Marmalejo, a history major, graduated from Christendom College in 2001. He holds a Virginia Teacher Certification and lives in the Shenandoah Valley with his wife and four children.



## Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



**Nicholas** | Chosen to sing at the National 4-H Hall of Fame, Nicholas and his parents were awarded an all-expenses paid trip to Chevy Chase, Maryland and visited the nation's Capital.



**Angelina** | Named the National Champion for Junior Black Belt in three different divisions - Sparring, Kata and Self Defense. Angelina was also second runner-up for the National title in Weapons.



Submit your photo, your achievement, and how homeschooling has helped you succeed!

[setonmagazine.com/students](http://setonmagazine.com/students)

# in the **Schoolroom**

## Where We Share Our Best Tips for Homeschooling with Seton

In Lent we are preparing for the Passion and death of our dear Lord. Children learn and remember so much better when they can be engaged with the subject in a hands-on way. Toward that end, here are a few Lenten craft ideas that you can use to help point your children toward the Cross.

**1** Make a salt dough crown of thorns to encourage children to make pious sacrifices and to pray with consistency.

In a large bowl mix 1 cup of salt with two cups of water and add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water. Hand mix until it is the consistency of dough. Divide the dough into three equal parts and roll into "snakes" about 16 inches long. Weave the snakes together and join the ends. Using a box of plain toothpicks, insert as many as you can fit into the crown. Air dry for twenty-four hours.

As the children make sacrifices, have them break off a thorn and place it in a jar or bowl in the middle of the crown. The goal is for the crown to be empty of thorns by Easter Sunday. On that day, when the children wake, the jar of thorns is replaced by a jar of candy and the crown is woven with ribbons. Their sacrifices bore fruit, the same way God uses our sacrifice and suffering to bring us eternal salvation.



**2** These beautiful Stations of the Cross posters are available at [www.setonbooks.com](http://www.setonbooks.com) and are a perfect visual aid to your children's prayers.

**3** Using a large piece of purple oaktag, attach one library pocket for each day of Lent. Using a few stickers to decorate makes it more pleasant. In each pocket put a note detailing one Lenten activity for the day - a family rosary, visiting a sick friend, cooking a meal for someone, visiting a cemetery and praying for the souls, going to adoration, praying the Stations of the Cross, things like that. Children respond very well to counting down activities, and it helps to have a little something to look forward to each day in a somber season.





# Light & Sweet

A Look at the Light Side of Homeschooling

My 3-year-old ran up to me from the other room and says, "Mommy I need you, right now!"

"Why, what's wrong?"

"Mommy, I dropped my doughnut. ON THE FLOOR!!"

"So pick it up."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

My daughter responds, "I can't. Because it's dirty and it's (whispers) sticky."

"So?"

"I'm daddy's princess mommy. Pick it up for me, please Mom!"

-Jessica

When my four oldest kids were 5, 4, 2, & 1, they were running around the kitchen shrieking like a bunch of banshees. In frustration, I slammed my hand on the table and hollered, "Knock it off! Were you born in a barn?" Without skipping a beat, Dorothy, who was four at the time, looked up at me, gave me her best smile, and sweetly replied, "No, but Jesus was, and He turned out okay!"

-Kelly

Our 10-year-old goes to Adoration each Friday. She says it's her alone time, her "me and my Jesus" time. I easily forget that she gets stressed and overwhelmed. She prays and we pray as a family, but I think Adoration helps her to do that better and gives her a calmness she needs.

-Adria

I told my preschooler that this is the year she will start Kindergarten. She replied, "Oh, I already know how to do that. You just dig a hole in the dirt, put in a seed, and water it!?" I cracked up, but then thought how accurate a description this actually is!

-Stephanie

The children (4-7 yrs and grades K-2nd) are learning the Apostles Creed and among a few of the mispronunciations: "Deceived by the Holy Spirit."

-Elizabeth

My children find it difficult to concentrate on the family rosary now that our youngest is 15 months and all over the place. My oldest calls her, "A Weapon of Mass Distraction!"

-Heather



4

Use this prayer book to pray with the children (also available at [www.setonbooks.com](http://www.setonbooks.com)).

5

This is a very simple craft that turns out quite beautifully and can be hung up during Holy Week to remind us of what we're about.

Using wet watercolor paper, have the children water color the whole page. Sunset type colors look best; but whatever they choose, make sure it's on the lighter side.

Have the children trace a crucifix (I found that a thinner one worked best). For the young ones you might want to do this step for them. Then little people can color the tracing black while the older ones should paint it.

When taped on a sunny window these pictures are really very pretty.

\*Note: This craft originated at <https://catholicsprouts.com/easy-holy-week-watercolor-art/>



# 2019 CATHOLIC HOMESCHOOLING CONFERENCES



The following is a list of Catholic homeschooling conferences where Seton will offer materials for preview and sale, as well as a \$30-per-child enrollment discount.

## **OH, Dayton, June 1, 2019 (Sat.) IHM Dayton Homeschool Conference**

St. Peter Catholic Church - Family Life Center  
6161 Chambersburg Road  
Huber Heights, OH 45424  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
Info: 540-656-1946  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **KS, Kansas City, June 7-8, 2019 (Fri.-Sat.) Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers**

Coronation of Our Lady  
13000 Bennington Avenue  
Grandview, MO 64030  
Fri.: 2:30 pm – 8 pm  
Sat.: 8 am – 4 pm  
[www.kccatholichomeschooler.org](http://www.kccatholichomeschooler.org)

## **TX, Dallas/Ft. Worth, June 13-14, 2019 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM North Texas Homeschool Conference**

Grapevine Convention Center  
1209 S Main Street  
Grapevine, TX 76051  
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Fri.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
Info: 540-636-1946  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **VA, Fredericksburg, June 21-22, 2019 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM National Homeschool 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  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **CA, Costa Mesa, June 22, 2019 (Sat.) SCCHE (Southern California Catholic Home Educators) Conference & Curriculum Fair**

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
1015 Baker Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
Sat.: 8 am – 4 pm  
[www.southerncaliforniacatholichomeeducators.org](http://www.southerncaliforniacatholichomeeducators.org)

## **MD, Mt. Airy, July 12, 2019 (Fri.) IHM Maryland Homeschool Conference**

St. Michael Catholic Church  
1125 St. Michael's Road  
Mt. Airy, MD 212771  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Info: 540-636-1946  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **TX, Houston, TBD ARCH Houston Catholic Homeschool Conference**

[www.homeschool-life.com/TX/ARCHhomeschool](http://www.homeschool-life.com/TX/ARCHhomeschool)

## **IL, Chicago, July 18-19, 2019 (Thu.-Fri.) IHM Chicago Homeschool Conference**

Bobak's Signature Events and Conference Center  
6440 Double Eagle Drive  
Woodridge, IL 60517  
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Fri.: 9:30 am – 2:30 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **NJ, Mahwah July 26-27, 2019 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM New York Homeschool Conference**

Ramapo College of New Jersey - Robert A. Scott  
Student Center  
505 Ramapo Valley Road  
Mahwah, NJ 07430  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
Info: 540-636-1946  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

For updates on all  
Seton Conferences go to:  
[Setonhome.org/conferences](http://Setonhome.org/conferences)



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### *Authentic Catechesis in the Church of the Home*

Family catechesis ... precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.

Furthermore, in places where anti-religious legislation endeavors even to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, "the church of the home" remains the one place where children and young people can receive an authentic catechesis.

Thus there cannot be too great an effort on the part of Christian parents to prepare for this ministry of being their own children's catechists and to carry it out with tireless zeal.

*Catechesi Tradendae, Catechesis in Our Time*  
Pope St. John Paul II  
16 October 1979