

Seton



MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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A Nine-Year Family Novena



— **The Worhacz Family** —



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COVER PHOTO

Worhacz Family



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

It's the time of year when many homeschooling families are beginning their studies again. Even those of us (me!) who school year-round feel the pull of new beginnings in September.

This issue is designed to encourage you in getting started. After all these years, I still love to hear how others manage their homeschool and the stories from seasoned moms who have been through it all. We hope these articles get you charged and refreshed to begin your academic year.

If you are a new-to-homeschooling parent, Jeff Minick's "If I Knew Then What I Know Now: Advice for the New Homeschooling Parent" is a must-read.

Dr. Clark writes about her devotion to Saint Francis, and I encourage you all to observe the feast day on October 4th with your children. Seton carries the DVD of *St. Francis, Knight of Assisi* for the younger children as well as Fr. Lovasik's book *St. Francis of Assisi*.

Please know that you are prayed for daily here at Seton and we are so very happy to have you be part of our family. God bless you all.

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett

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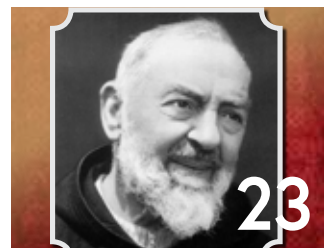
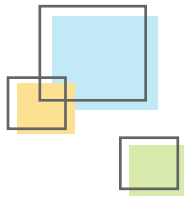
SUBSCRIPTION INFO:

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

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Seton Home Study School, an international Catholic institution, is to ensure that all of its students thrive intellectually and spiritually using a Christ-centered, educational program that empowers them to live the Catholic Faith while embracing the academic and vocational challenges of the twenty-first century.

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THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



“

We homeschool because my husband is a public school teacher. He knows kids learn better with one-on-one instruction and nothing provides that more than homeschooling.

We chose Seton because of the structure. I was nervous to begin the journey and there is no guess work with Seton. They give me what we need and I know my children are receiving a quality Catholic education. ~ Jennifer Anne Nelson

”



SHARE YOUR “WHY WE HOMESCHOOL” ON **FACEBOOK**





My Saint Francis of Assisi

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

St. Francis of Assisi has had a great influence in my life. He came into my life unexpectedly when a group of adults decided to establish a Franciscan prayer group headed up by a Franciscan priest at the Josephinum Seminary, just north of Columbus, Ohio, where I was living at the time. I wanted a stronger spiritual life because of my many responsibilities as a home schooling mom of two high schoolers plus being the principal of a Catholic elementary school I established with some other parents.

Help for Parents

As Third Order Franciscans, we not only prayed daily Franciscan prayers, but also dedicated our lives to being better parents, husbands, and wives. The Franciscan priest was aware of the “changes” that were being made and the difficulties people had to adjust to them. But most of all, he was aware of the confusion among Catholic parents who learned the Faith when they

were growing up and now found their children learning something seemingly different than what they were taught.

“St. Francis was both our inspiration and spiritual leader...”

Many practicing Catholic parents needed to cling to the Faith tighter than ever before. We all agreed to turn to St. Francis of Assisi and said prayers to him daily to help us understand the “changes” in the practice of the Faith. We knew, of course, that Catholic teaching could never change. In fact, the books at the Seminary provided us with strong Catholic teaching.

We Third Order Franciscans realized we needed not only to cling to the Faith and teach it to our children as we had been taught, but also to recognize the importance of daily Mass and daily Communion. In addition, we were encouraged by the weekly prayer meetings with the faithful priest from the seminary.

Leaders for our Children

St. Francis was both our inspiration and spiritual leader during the difficult times of raising our children in the Faith we had learned and were determined to keep. We realized our responsibility as parents was not to leave the teaching of the Faith to others, but to be responsible for teaching the Faith and living the Faith ourselves, as leaders for our children.

I personally can never thank St. Francis enough for his help in understanding and practicing the Faith. I am looking forward to meeting other Franciscan members in Heaven. I know we will have a special “party” with the wonderful, holy, blessed St. Francis!



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*.



Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY

What did you do?

I qualified for the Semi-Finals Round of the National Music Competition for Young Artist for strings category. The Semi-Finals competition will be on Nov 13, 2019.

What organization recognized the achievement?

NAMCYA: National Music Competition for Young Artists' mission is to identify and nurture outstanding young Filipino musicians through nationwide competitions, publications, festivals, and workshops in readiness for professional musical careers.

How did homeschooling help you achieve your goal?

Time was at my own disposal, allowing me more time to practice and focus on my instrument. If I were in a regular school, I doubt I would have had as much time to prepare for competition.

What are your interests?

I've enjoyed reading books since I was little. I also love listening to and playing classical music.

What are you inspired to do with your life?

I want to pursue further studies in music. Music has given me wonderful experiences and the opportunity to travel. I was on tour in Europe with the Pundaquit Virtuosi from end of May to Mid-July this year. I see myself with a career in music.

What are your favorite subjects and why?

My favorite subjects this year are English and Chemistry. Since I love to read, I enjoyed the materials provided for in English. Chemistry explained the answers to the questions I constantly asked as a child. Both subjects were in-depth and interesting.

BY ASHLEY MORRIS HAO



Submit your photo, your achievement and what you like most about homeschooling.

setonmagazine.com/students

We'd like to hear your story.



Every issue, we highlight a homeschooling family in the Seton Magazine. The stories from these families help inspire, encourage, and motivate others within the Catholic homeschooling community.

We'd love to hear your story!

To submit your family story for consideration, visit the website link below and answer a few short questions.

Find out how to share your story at: www.setonmagazine.com/family-story

your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

I have two boys in two different grade levels. Would it be okay to teach them at the same grade levels for some of the courses they can both do together?

It is always a good idea to teach two of your children together in a subject they can both handle together. Sometimes a younger one can move up a grade level in math, or an older one should move down a grade level on a subject which would be beneficial for him. Some subjects at a higher grade level can be learned easily by a younger student, such as history and science, especially when taking lessons with an older sibling. On the other hand, an older student may benefit by taking or reviewing a subject with a younger student,

especially in subjects as math, grammar, or reading. Adjust the program to fit the child is a Seton motto. One of the best features of homeschooling is to be able to adjust the curriculum based on the student's ability, not on the age or grade level.

Our state is passing more regulations for homeschooling families. Should I be concerned?

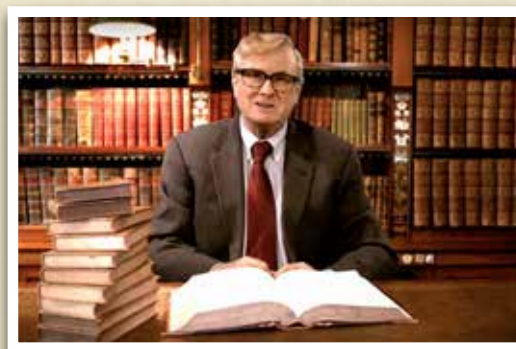
Join your state homeschooling association. The leaders stay informed about any potential legislation, either statewide or otherwise. They stay in contact with state legislators. Many state homeschool organizations have online newsletters to keep parents informed.

Having your children enrolled in an accredited program like Seton helps to keep local school districts satisfied. However, we encourage you to join your state and local organizations, not only to keep informed, but also to support those who are constantly working to protect parents' rights, and to work against any unfair local or state regulations.

Also, consider joining the Home School Legal Defense Association. Go to their website for details of their benefits and the resources that they offer. Families enrolled with Seton receive a discount on their HSLDA membership. Contact us at counselors@setonhome.org for that discount code.

Saying Goodbye To A Good Man: Remembering Dr. Patrick Keats

A good man, a loving husband and father, a dedicated and inspiring teacher, and a friend of Seton Home Study School, died on July 5, 2019.



Patrick Keats was a friend of founder Mary Kay Clark and her husband Bruce, and was an ardent supporter of homeschooling. His videos for Seton high school students include those made for English 10, English 12, and Mechanics of Composition.

"You and your children will never find better information to learn composition skills," said Mary Kay Clark.

For over a quarter of a century, Pat brought his love of literature into the classrooms of Front Royal's Christendom College. His academic credentials were strong, but his students and friends will remember him not so much for his knowledge of literature as for the joy and enthusiasm with which he conducted his classes and lived his life.

We here at Seton Home Study School ask you to pray for Pat, his wife Lily, and their children, Robbie and Lucy.

Requiescat in pace, good friend. You have made your mark. In a world that sometimes seems filled with darkness, you were a shining light.

My high school son finds it hard to finish his six subjects in one day. What can we do?

Rather than work on six courses every day, some high school students find it easier to work on only two courses at a time. In this way, they can finish each subject in two or three months. When those are finished, they move on to two more courses for the next two or three months. This works better for some students.

Using this method, students can take the morning to work on one of their subjects and then after lunch, use the afternoon to work on the other subject. The goal is to do about a week's worth of one subject in the morning and a week's worth of the other, in the afternoon.

Math is harder to do like this though and if a student chooses this method, they may want to do one math lesson a day in addition to their other two daily courses.

How can I be sure about which assignments, especially for English, need to be sent to Seton for grading?

The first thing to do as your children begin any course is to look at the Quarterly Report Forms for each subject. While some courses are dependent entirely on the parent grades (music and art, for example), most of the courses (English, religion, and math, for example), have both the parent and the Seton test grades. Take a close look at the lower half of each quarter report form, and notice which student assignments, tests, or book reports need to be sent to Seton.

I want to go to daily Mass, but how can I do that with so many responsibilities at home?

Many parents take their children with them to daily Mass. If this is not possible, the second best thing is to attend Mass yourself; you need the many graces from receiving Jesus in Holy Communion. The blessings and spiritual help you receive will make your home-life and teaching responsibilities easier. If you cannot do that, daily Mass is on EWTN three times during the day which will allow you and your children to join the Church in the daily Mass prayers. In addition, the Rosary with children is on EWTN every afternoon.

What else can we do to strengthen our children in the Catholic Faith?

A great way to help children understand what it means to be a practicing Catholic is to have a conversation each morning about the life of the saint-for-the-day. My boys always looked forward to hearing the latest story, and they especially liked hearing and pronouncing the unusual names of the saints. At Seton, we say our noon prayers together, and we remember to pray to the saint for the day on behalf of all our Seton families. Please keep Seton in your daily family prayers.



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*.



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



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If I Knew Then...What I Know Now

Advice for the New Homeschooling Parent

BY JEFF MINICK

You're new to homeschooling. You've researched a dozen programs. You've talked to friends and family, some of them enthusiastic about your decision, others doubtful. You've selected your curricula, you've listened to speakers at book fairs or watched YouTube videos about teaching children at home, and you've laid in enough paper, pens, and pencils to supply an army of clerks for three years.

Now the first day of school is at hand.

And you're terrified.

You're plagued by doubts and questions. Am I good enough to teach my children? Will teaching them change our relationship? Is the education I want to provide them superior to what they might find elsewhere? Sure, I can teach the multiplication and division tables, but what happens when we tackle geometry? In high school, I despised history, so how can I even dream of teaching that subject to my seventh grader?

What was I thinking?

Let's start with that last question.

You were thinking of the spiritual and intellectual welfare of your children. Within the constraints of your personal circumstances, you wanted to give them the best education possible. You wanted to help your kids become the best they can.

When my wife and I were homeschooling our four children, we owned and operated a bed-and-breakfast, a bookstore, and a Catholic home-education mail order company. Kris often worked outside the home, teaching nursing students in a nearby town.

What was I thinking?

As a result, for several years I did much of the teaching. At various conferences we attended, I also sold books and was an occasional speaker. When asked by parents new to homeschooling for tips, I gave three general suggestions:

Three Rules to Guide You

1. Begin your homeschooling at the same time every day. The hour doesn't particularly matter, but begin at the same time. A school day might fall apart because of obligations or emergencies, but always begin at the same time.
2. Conduct your schooling in the same location. It doesn't matter where—the dining room, the card table in the den, the screened-in porch. Young people, especially children, thrive on routine. Setting an hour and a place for school gives them that routine.
3. Buy a plastic storage bin for each child's school supplies. For the first three years of our homeschooling, we often spent precious minutes every morning tracking down a textbook or a worksheet. Returning books and supplies to those bins guaranteed starting school on time.

These and so many other tips I either learned through trial and error or from families who mentored me, sharing their advice and experiences, what worked for them and what failed.

In its ongoing effort to support homeschooling parents, Seton Home Study School encourages such mentoring. It offers conferences and speakers, and assistance by phone or email from members of the staff. On your MySeton page you will find the **Connect With Seton Families** program, which arranges for Seton families living near each other to make contact.

In April 2019, Seton put this post on its Facebook page:

What is your best advice for a mom who is just beginning her homeschooling journey?

The question brought a number of responses, some of them lengthy, some short, some long on inspiration, others much more practical. Let's look at a few of these replies.

Several of the moms stressed tackling the challenges of homeschooling on a day-to-day basis rather than fretting about the future. **Kim G.** writes "One day at a time! It is hard work but you can do it! Be organized!" **Pamela L.** seconds this idea: "So I'm on week 4 and this is our first year homeschooling. I would have to say take it one day at a time."

In her response to the Seton survey question, **Lori J.** reminds novice homeschool moms and dads to avoid too many outside obligations:

"Have books, will travel" is always a good thing but remember you also have to be home to homeschool. Try not getting too involved in extracurricular activities. Pick one or two activities that your children enjoy and keep it to that. Also, take care of yourself. If you need to rest, rest; you can't pour from an empty cup. Finally, stay close to the sacraments. Daily Mass (when you can make it, even if it's just on Wednesdays to give you a mid-week boost!) can be a source of strength!"

Lori J.'s advice—you can't pour from an empty cup and stay close to the sacraments—was the message of several other parents as well. Most parents who teach their children at home can feel themselves run ragged by school, housekeeping duties, meetings, obligations to relatives and friends, and the wear-and-tear of everyday living. As an antidote, **Ginger F.** offers this list:

1. *Pray.*
2. *Remember, every day, why you're doing this.*
3. *Ask questions. Seton has wonderful resources.*
4. *Have a little fun each day.*
5. *Have an outlet for yourself to recharge.*

Several others reinforce Ginger's five tips, advising parents to pray, to attend daily Mass when possible, to relax, and to make patience part of the curriculum. **Michelle S.** reminds us that "homeschooling is not a race." **Jari W.** writes, "Relax. God is with you." **Susan K.** wisely says, "Know there will be bad days. We all have them."

Several moms turned our attention to the greater reasons for homeschooling. **Mae A.** points out the importance of teaching virtue: "Character over curriculum. I learned this lesson from other moms as well so it's not all mine. But it has become our mission and vision in life in general."

GETTING OUR KIDS TO HEAVEN

Thirty years ago, I interviewed a Catholic homeschool mom for our diocesan newspaper. When I asked her why she was teaching her children at home, she said without pause, "To help them get into heaven!" All the respondents to the Seton survey would surely agree. As **Laura T.** tells us: "Raise your kids for HEAVEN, not a lesson plan."

Homeschooling can be a daunting proposition, yet newcomers and even old-timers should be aware that they are not alone. Many others have walked this path and have persevered and overcome obstacles. These travelers can offer support and advice in this adventure.

As **Jennifer G.** tells us: "Yes, you CAN do this!"



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 homeschools.



When speaking to Seton moms I am often asked about “adding in the fun things” to the day. It seems overwhelming to so many moms to add things to the lesson plans when there are only so many hours in the day and lessons take so much time. This leads to feeling like the beauty of homeschooling, time to pursue interests, is squashed in the day to day madness of trying to accomplish everything.

Been there, done that. We all want our children’s education to be both wide and generous. We want time to explore interests, read good books (not just the ones in the plans), spend time outdoors, play games, and goof around as children should. These are some of the very reasons many of us chose homeschooling; to provide a real childhood experience for our children as well as an excellent education.

I assure you that both can be done. It was always important to me to share books with my children. I have been an avid reader since I can remember, and raising readers was an important factor in our decision to homeschool the children. Establishing traditions was also very important to me as a younger mother. Traditions centered around our faith, our heritage, and around

the seasons. We live in the northeast and so we have four very distinct seasons, and I wanted my children to appreciate them in the context of God’s wondrous creation. However, all of this takes time.

The lesson plans should serve your homeschool; they should not be the master.

How do I fit it all in? Here’s the secret. You don’t have to fit everything in. The lesson plans should serve your homeschool; they should not be the master. There are some families that set their children in front of the lesson plans and use all the suggestions, do every assignment, and enjoy all the supplemental suggestions. This is wonderful, and if that is your way of homeschooling, Seton is delighted that you make such use of the plans. However, if you are a mom who would like to use the plans as a guide, a jumping off point, a rail for you to run on; that is wonderful, and if that is your way of homeschooling Seton is also delighted that you make such use of the plans.

BY MARY ELLEN
BARRETT

Personalizing Your Seton Lesson Plans

You see what I mean? It's your homeschool, not Seton's. You are in charge and never, ever will the Seton police come to the door and ask what you are doing. Therefore if you wish to add in some seasonal homeschooling ideas you should do so and enjoy yourself!

How do you do this and how do you decide where to fit it in? Here are my suggestions:

The best kept secret in homeschooling is that you only need to do what you want to do.

Scheduling. When my children were young, up until third grade, I made sure to schedule a four day week.

Yes, this meant that there was usually more time spent on math on those four days and we doubled up on English here and there, but this schedule left our Friday's free. Even if you just manage the schedule so that there are only two or three subjects on Friday, which I try to do through middle school, this leaves a large portion of the day for art projects, science

experiments, park days, nature walks, museum trips, visiting grandparents, library excursions and anything else you can think of. I often set up our table with an art project on Thursday night so that the creativity could begin as soon as they woke up. Paper, colored pencils, watercolors, modeling clay, glue and tissue paper are not too messy and can spark creativity and make great memories.

Picking and Choosing. The lesson plans provide a variety of assignments for your children to complete, some meant to be graded at Seton and others meant to be parent graded. In some grades and subjects there are even extra assignments based upon a child's interest or need of practice. Your MySeton page also has suggestions and supplemental ideas. The best kept secret in homeschooling is that you only need do what you want to do. If having a Seton graded report card is important to you (and I highly recommend it for high school), then you need only send in the assignments to be graded by Seton.

Any other assignments are optional. If a Seton graded report card is not as important to you, feel free to submit nothing, or as little as you choose. Some families like to have independent grading for things such as English, Reading and Religion, but it's entirely up to you, the

parent. Either way, you can free up enough time to add the extras that make your homeschool unique to you.

Make it your own. How does this all work out in practice? In my homeschool, we start with morning time, fueled by a basket full of materials that I selectively gather each month. I use this "soft start" to the day to include materials not specifically covered in the lesson plans but things that I want to expose the children to. When they were very young, this included things like learning the Pledge of Allegiance, memorizing our address and phone number, reciting poetry, and, for the toddlers, some songs and finger play.

A Catholic Homeschool Experience for the Family.

As my children have aged, this time now includes art history, composer study, Shakespeare, apologetics, Bible study, finally, the family read aloud. I find I'm much more able to read-aloud to the children in the morning than in the evening.

Some families prefer this quiet time before bed and I think that is a beautiful idea, particularly if dad can be home to do the reading. Bedtime reading fosters such good memories and family bonding. However, at this season in our lives, with adult children, working teens, many driving obligations, and long work hours it makes more sense for us, right now, to fit this in during the morning. Recent read-a-louds here have been; *Little Men*, *Farmer Boy*, *Plutarch's Lives for Boys and Girls*, *A Nest for Celeste* and *Bridge to Terabithia*. Some of these books are a first-time read for me as well, so my joy in the story is equal to that of the children's.

Often during read-a-loud time, I will let the younger ones color or paint. Studies show that children, particularly boys, retain information better when their hands are occupied, and I have noticed that it does cut down on chatter.

Seton Home Study School is here to help parents create the best Catholic homeschool experience for their family. Your homeschool won't look like mine, and mine doesn't look like someone else's, and that is totally appropriate. Seton counselors and graders stand at the ready to help and advise, but you, the parent are in charge, and we encourage you to use the lesson plans in your own way. We pray you find success and joy in homeschooling your children.



Mary Ellen Barrett is mother of seven children and two in heaven, wife to David and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books. She is editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.



A Nine-Year Family Novena

BY LAURA WORHACZ

We are the Worhacz family: Raymond, Laura, Nicole, and Mary. We are in the last year of our nine-year homeschool adventure. You could say that ours is a nine-year family novena of learning and prayer.

In 1999, we began our family's daily Mass journey. It was there that I met some very dear homeschool families. One mother was encouraging me to homeschool Nicole, my only child at the time. She gave me Dr. Clark's book, *Catholic Homeshooling*.

*"Ask, and you shall receive,
seek and you shall find" (Matt 7:7-8)"*

Years passed, Nicole started Catholic school, and I continued to pray about homeschooling her. In 2002 we relocated to Florida. My second daughter Mary was one year old, and Nicole continued attending Catholic school after our move.

The prayers that I had offered since Nicole was very young somehow awakened in my soul. I began to pray more fervently about homeschooling her for high school.

One day after Mass, I stopped in a store and saw a little angel statue at the register. She was holding a book with the word "trust." I felt that the angel was placed there for me to see.

More importantly, I felt the call strongly in my heart that we were supposed to begin our home-school journey. While I was overwhelmed with the responsibility to give my girls a good education, I was familiar with Seton and their accredited program.

It gave me a deep sense of peace, knowing that the Seton staff would grade the girls' work. I would do my part at home, and I would have all the help necessary to complete each grade.

In the first year of our home-school mission, we enrolled in Seton Home Study with Nicole in ninth grade, Mary in third. When the girls' books arrived at the front door, we were all very excited and could not wait to open the package.

Mary was only seven at the time, and she helped me unpack. She handed me each book and said, "Mommy, is this my religion book?" I said, "No, Mary, that is spelling." Next, "Mommy, is this my religion book?" "No, honey, that is your history book" ... this went on through emptying the box. I filled up with grateful tears. I felt blessed — all the images in the workbooks, along with the contents centered around our Lord. The reality struck me that my girls would be learning, reading, and studying, all the while forming their souls.

A typical school day would begin with Mass and a Rosary on the way there. Next, we would have breakfast, and then it was into the office to start school. I found the Seton lesson plans very helpful and kept the daily agenda close at hand.

Depending on the year, there were some after-school activities. The girls would have an art class, tennis, piano, etc. The first few years, we were home most of the time and very busy. Monday through Thursday, we worked very hard: chores, play time, dinner, reading, and then bed. A favorite memory of mine was night reading with my girls. Mary was always a good listener, and loved for me to read to her. We would end our reading time with the Seton catechism of the day. Mary would play with her wood puzzles as I read.

Often, I would stop and ask, “Mary, are you listening?”, and she would always repeat the last sentence I read. I often wondered if she was listening, but she always was. On Fridays, after the first few years, we joined a homeschool co-op. We were blessed to find so many families that homeschool in the Tampa Bay area.

“Spending time with our girls has been the greatest blessing.”

I am forever grateful for choosing Seton. Our girls have had an excellent education in the Catholic faith, and they have gained knowledge, a gift of the Holy Spirit.

My oldest, Nicole, graduated from Seton in 2013. She went on to study at Saint Leo University and has graduated with a Bachelor’s in English, Advanced Literary Studies. I attribute her English skills to her time enrolled in Seton. Mary will also be at Saint Leo in the fall of 2019.

One of the greatest moments for me was when Nicole thanked her dad and me for allowing her to homeschool. Nicole said, “Thank you, I would not be the person I am today had I not homeschooled.” Spending time with our girls has been the greatest blessing.

Nicole is out of the house now, yet we all feel connected by the love we have for each other. No matter where we are or what is going on, we are united in the heart of the Eucharist. I have loved home-schooling. Those who share in the Seton journey know the parents learn just as much as the students do. I am grateful for the sacrifice my husband made in working so hard, so I could stay home and educate our girls.

Along with all that was happening in the mundane, a lot of ministries flourished out of our home in the past three years. Notably, Mothers of the Blessed Sacrament, a mother’s prayer cenacle, started. We are an online

“...the graces God has poured on our family continue to grow...”

group of mothers that unite in daily prayer and petitions. I have also just published a book that my daughter Nicole helped edit. The book is titled “Consecration to Jesus through Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament: 33 Days with Saint Peter Julian Eymard, Apostle of the Eucharist.”

Thus the graces God has poured on our family continue to grow and bear fruit even beyond our home, enabling us to share with others the secrets that have made our journey a success and a joy.

Dear Seton Families,

It is amazing how swiftly the years passed by and are so grateful for the opportunity to share our homeschool journey with you.

I have a request for you, Dear friends, would you pray for my husband Raymond who is on a list for a liver transplant. Ray has been in and out of the hospital with infections as his body fights to work with an organ that is deteriorating. We are living in the grace of the moment by our daily Communion with Jesus. We are grateful for every prayer as we continue through the most challenging time of our lives.

Sincerely, Laura Worhacz



My Canadian Catholic College Experience

BY JULIA NAUS



I believe most high school graduates would agree that 12th grade is arguably the busiest, fullest, and most exciting year of high school. Managing schoolwork and extracurriculars while applying for post-secondary is not easy.

Like many high school students, I had a part-time job and participated in extracurriculars in addition to schoolwork during my senior year. I worked

three to four shifts per week as a swim coach, sang in a choir, took online math and science courses, and took a number of courses with Seton. Naturally, it was a relief for me as a busy student at the end of her high school career that I had decided early on in my senior year that upon graduation I would attend to attend Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College (SWC) in Barry's Bay, Ontario, Canada.

Founded in 2000, SWC is a Catholic liberal arts college offering a three-year Bachelor of Catholic Studies with concentrations in history, literature, theology, philosophy, classics, and soon, sacred music. Of interest to Seton students in the United States, over 10% of SWC's student body is from the U.S.

The college also offers a Basic Certificate of Christian Humanities consisting of foundational courses that prepare students not only for future years of study, but also for life in a world which is likely to question and attack their Catholic values.

As a first year student, I took Logic, Latin, Philosophy, Christian Doctrine, History of Western Civilization, Essay Writing, Biblical Literature, Choral, and Classical Literature courses. The college's brilliant faculty members were generous with their time and knowledge, and their courses opened my mind in more ways than I could have imagined.



My year at SWC helped me to grow spiritually, socially, as well as academically. The college boasts a variety of clubs and offers a number of extracurricular activities. I joined the Ecclesiastical Schola (sacred music choir), the Conservative Club, and the college's production of the musical *Pirates of Penzance*. I also picked up a work study position in SWC's Finance office.

Despite SWC's small size, there was always something going on! The college put on a number of social events every month depending on the season. Some of my favourite memories include our ziplining trip in Quebec, our February ski trip, movie and discussion nights, weekly hockey games, the Winter Formal, and of course, the swing dances.





SWC is located in Barry's Bay, a small town situated beside scenic Kamaniskeg Lake and surrounded by rolling hills covered in evergreens. The small size of both the town and the college campus has created a tight-knit community among the students, faculty, staff and locals. Central to the campus is St. Hedwig's parish which, along with its adoration chapel, is open daily so students can visit Our Lord.

Mass is offered daily at St. Hedwig's, and it was an extra blessing for me to be able to attend before classes. The student residences, each named for a saint, are within walking distance of one another. My friends and I met up almost every day at one another's residences to study, work out, cook, watch movies, talk, and spend time together.



During my time at SWC, I was especially grateful for my educational background with Seton. The Seton courses I had taken during high school, especially the Religion, English, and Literature courses, provided an excellent preparation for the classes, essays, and tests I would experience at SWC.

Seton course materials, methods, and evaluations taught me how to study efficiently and thoroughly. Most importantly, Seton's authentic Catholic perspective prepared me to study the liberal arts through the lens of Catholicism. I am blessed to have had this Catholic perspective throughout elementary, high school, and now, through my first year of postsecondary.

In September, I will begin my pursuit of a four-year undergraduate degree in Neuroscience at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus. As I transition into science, I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to study the liberal arts at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom.

During this past year, I learned the tremendous value of a liberal arts education. I have also grown in faith, developed deep friendships, learned valuable life lessons, and made memories that I will cherish for years to come. My year at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College both challenged and strengthened me. Best of all, it equipped me with the Truth and with a desire to continue to pursue Truth in my future studies and for the rest of my life.



OUR LADY
SEAT OF WISDOM
COLLEGE



Before You Open Your Boxes

BY JOHN CLARK

A friend of mine once said that there are two basic ways to start your day. First, you could take a look out your window, see the sun shining, hear the birds chirping, smell the fresh spring air coming into your bedroom, think of all the promise the coming day held, and thankfully exclaim: “Oh Great! It’s morning!” Second, you could get angry at the sun for waking you up, wonder why the birds had to chirp so darn loud, think of all the unpleasant tasks that lie ahead, and sarcastically mutter: “Oh. Great. It’s morning.”

“think about the good you are called to do...”

As book boxes arrive at the door of veteran homeschooling families, I’d guess that these are the two optional responses as well. Homeschooling is

a noble cause; it is one of the greatest signs of hope in the Catholic Church; it is a wonderful way to bring families together; it routinely outperforms its educational alternatives. But it can be very tough, especially if you’re not receiving enough encouragement. And you might be less than thrilled to see the book boxes arrive on your porch.

So, before you open your boxes, let me share a thought or two.

“God is calling you to do good.”

First, look back on the good you’ve already done as a homeschool parent. I sometimes think that the most powerful weapon in the devil’s arsenal is to tempt good men and women to think their lives are lacking importance or accomplishment. He’s hellaciously wrong. At minimum, you’ve illustrated

the importance of faith and family to your children, which is to say that you’ve made the world better. Find a quiet place and spend fifteen minutes thinking about what your homeschooling has already accomplished for your family—and for the world.

“In homeschooling life, sometimes we can feel like we are in a stuck place.”

Second, think about the good you are called to do in the upcoming school year. This is essential to the whole process. God is calling you to do good. I know that sometimes you can lose sight of the good. You can become afraid that you’re already not doing everything right. Maybe you’re afraid you’re not doing anything right.



I understand. I really do.

In the homeschooling life, sometimes we can feel like we're stuck in place. You might have thought homeschooling would have signposts for each achievement, yet you haven't seen any signs for quite a while.

In short, you feel like you're failing.

If you feel like that, please consider these words attributed to Saint Teresa of Avila:

*"Yours are the eyes through which to look out
Christ's compassion to the world;
Yours are the feet with which He is to go about
doing good;
Yours are the hands with which He is to bless
men now."*

Christ is present—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—in the Eucharist. And He desires us, nourished by the Eucharist, to represent Him and His love to the world, but first to our own families. God chose you—over all the other people in the world—to represent Him to your children.

And God doesn't make mistakes.

*"...remember the charity that God
has called you to perform..."*

Before time began, God chose you to communicate His love to your children. God made your hands to hold them, your feet to walk with them, and your eyes to comfort them. And he gave you something else: the heart and mind and grace to teach them.

"But I can't do it perfectly," you respond. Let me just say, the first time I homeschool perfectly—in fact, the first time I do anything perfectly—I promise to write a blog about it. But I hope you have a long time to wait. If you read all the hundred of blogs and columns I've written about homeschooling over the years, I truly hope you see some common threads in my life: imperfections, blunders, foibles, goofs, gaffes, failures, mistakes...and love. But I believe with all my heart that love cancels out the rest.

As you think about the year to come, remember the charity that God has called you to perform. And never worry. As Saint Teresa of Avila wrote, "It is not good for us to be disturbed by our thoughts or to worry about them in the slightest...", let us have patience and bear everything for the love of God."

Now, open your boxes.



John Clark is a homeschooling father, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for The National Catholic Register.



Thomas | When Thomas is not working on his karate or homeschooling, you might find him playing the drums or video games, or maybe just hanging out with his two dogs.



Kateri, Bella, & Andrew | Homeschooling made it possible for Kateri, Bella, and Andrew to film *Beacon of Hope* and it won the "Goodness Reigns" World Youth Day Contest, and \$1,000!

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

setonmagazine.com/students

A Unique Surrender

BY BRUCE CLARK



Bruce T. Clark, has been the Seton Historian since 1989. A homeschooling father of seven, Mr. Clark served as a Green Beret Captain in U.S. Special Forces and is the author of five historical novels: *The Custer Legacy*, *The Castro Conspiracy*, *The Blood-Red Flag*, *Redcoats and Rebels*, and *The American Renegade*.



In 1794, the US Congress approved the construction of six frigates, small easy-to-maneuver ships, to parry the thrusts of the Barbary Pirates. Three big frigates were built, one named Constitution. Each was armed with 44 cannons. The main battery shot 24-pound cannon balls.

Sometimes these cannons were loaded with a canister of 150 musket-sized balls on top of a solid cannonball. In any close action between enemy ships, the canister charges spread out like a kite in flight. That many pieces of shrapnel descending upon the enemy seamen were lethal. Crews of the powerful, easily-maneuverable American frigates consisted of 450 officers and seamen. The average cost of these frigates was \$200,000.

The last of these six frigates was launched during the 1798-1800 “quasi” war, which was an undeclared war

between the United States and France and which resulted from disagreements over treaties and America's neutral nation status. Fought entirely at sea, this “war” was a definite success, a surprise for the untrained and untried US Navy seamen.

Many French warships and privateers were captured, and only one American ship was lost. When the Treaty of Mortefontaine brought the war to an end in 1800, America's navy had gained a great deal of experience, knowledge, and trained seamen to man their ships. However, in the American War for Independence, the American fleet was generally no match for the mighty British Royal Navy. After the sea battles with France, however, the U.S. Navy had the most powerful frigates of that time.

The most famous ship-to-ship battle of America's war with Britain

was the sea battle between the USS Constitution, commanded by Captain Isaac Hull, and the HMS Guerriere, commanded by Captain James Dacres. A very unusual event of that battle is the rest of the story.

A few years before the war with England began, American Captain Isaac Hull and English Captain James Dacres occasionally met at a Boston social club which served excellent meals. One night over dinner, the two captains were discussing the relative merits of their ships. “My Guerriere is swift and as sleek as a hound, and quick to answer her helm,” declared British Captain Dacres. “If our two ships ever meet in battle, I'll wager a hundred [British] pounds that you will strike your colors,” meaning the American captain would surrender.

“It is my fervent hope,” the American Captain Hull responded, “that such a



STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those
who serve you!*



Sean O'Connor High School English Counselor

Meet Sean O'Connor, a relative newcomer to our staff here at Seton.

Sean spent part of his boyhood in the historic town of Gloucester in Virginia's Tidewater, where in addition to homeschooling he spent his time swimming, boating, and crabbing. After graduation, he attended Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas.

In addition to earning his degree in English literature at Benedictine and receiving various academic honors, Sean also participated in various campus activities and ministries. He was a part of Saint Paul's Outreach, whose goal is to build Catholic evangelistic communities on college campuses and to send Catholic graduates into the world as missionaries for Christ. Sean helped organize retreats, talks, and worship services, and often played the violin for daily Mass.

On a typical day at Seton, Sean finds himself answering phone calls from parents and students, helping them with assignments, writing letters of recommendation for students applying to colleges, and reading over lesson plans to consider ways for improvement.

"My greatest satisfaction is helping students succeed," Sean says. "I like helping them find the answer to a problem—not just giving them the answer, but enabling them to get on the right path."

He finds that some of the difficulties that arise often, particularly when students are disappointed in the grades they receive on essays, come when students neglect to read carefully the guidelines for writing the essay.

Sean then adds, "One thing to remember is that we are all improving as writers, one essay at a time, one paragraph at a time. Not receiving a perfect score on an essay is not necessarily indicative of your talent for writing. All writers, even the best ones, constantly strive for improvement."

battle will never take place; but if it does, I believe the Constitution will be victorious."

"So we have a wager!" Captain Dacres concluded.

"No," Captain Hull replied. "I will not wager a hundred pounds, but I will wager a hat."

And it came to pass that on August 19, 1812, the two ships did meet in deadly combat. When the final cannons had boomed and the last wisp of smoke had disappeared, it was the Guerriere that struck her colors in surrender. Later, when the two captains met aboard, the British captain offered his sword to Hull as a symbol of surrender.

"No, James," said Hull to his old friend. "I will not accept your sword, but I will trouble you for your hat."





SETON 2019 CATHOLIC COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Seton is committed to our students receiving the finest Catholic school education, not only in elementary and high school, but in college if they choose to continue their studies. In order to encourage our graduates to attend the finest Catholic colleges, Seton Home Study School awarded ten \$1,500 scholarships in a drawing held August 16, 2019. We are proud to recognize the winners and their chosen schools.

The selected recipients are:

Elise Asan, *Thomas Aquinas College*

Matthias Bean, *Walsh University*

Ann Berquist, *Thomas Aquinas College*

Jacob Brown, *Northeast Catholic College*

Benedict Merkowsky, *Our Lady Seat of Wisdom*

Emma Palmer, *University of Dallas*

Hannah Ransom, *Ave Maria University*

Joseph Scarlata, *Christendom College*

Mary Schwartz, *Catholic University*

Joshua Suess, *Franciscan University*



Sometimes bits and pieces of old things are worth preserving, in order to make them into something new.

We all have our own pastimes, things that we do that make us unique or at least (hopefully) interesting as individuals. One of my favorite hobbies is collecting lumber from salvaged buildings. Woodworking was but a gateway for me to begin amassing large quantities of reclaimed lumber. Pretty much all of my wood piles have come from structures built 100 or more years ago—barns, cabins, and farm houses—that I have helped salvage over the years and save from the burn pile.

“To Build Anew Again.”

So what does this have to do with homeschooling? At a glance, perhaps not a whole lot—unless you are doing an independent study on dendrochronology (the dating and historical classification of specific wood species) or are trying to create your own lumber yard. Both of those are laudable tasks in my book, but my lumber collection presupposes something else: the construction of new structures using old materials.

This indeed is analogous to homeschooling. Whether that takes place in a home where a culture of homeschooling is well-established or one that is totally fresh and new to the process, at some point we



Re-framing Our Collections

BY NICK MARMALEJO

are faced with the prospect of starting the new season of schooling. To build anew and start again. This can be a daunting task, even if we have been at it awhile.

Drudgery, a time for excitement, or something in between often describes what homeschoolers and their parents feel come Fall. Sometimes families, quite understandably, fear what comes next, or they don't know how they will make it through the year successfully, given their particular situations.

**“When the going gets tough,
contact a counselor for advice.”**

All of these experiences are natural. They are part of the process. They prompt us to reflect on our experiences and consider how to do things better.

When we take this inventory of our homeschool, we can see what worked in the past and gauge how that will fare in the future. Our collections of experiences (not to mention our collections of seemingly ubiquitous homeschooling materials) can guide us on how to proceed.

If we are new to homeschooling, we can take advantage of the experience of others who have been doing it for years and who are happy to share their advice. Many Facebook groups exist for this purpose. Seton also has a list of families who have volunteered to be contacted by other homeschooling families in their area.

And when the going gets tough, we can contact a Seton counselor for advice.

Roll Up Your Sleeves!

So many of us in our day and age do not want to start a task until everything seems perfect. While perfection is wonderful, that is not a luxury afforded to most people throughout history. Indeed, a close inspection of old buildings reveals that many who came before us rarely made the perfect the enemy of the good. They built structures that have lasted for centuries; and even as those structures came down, their leftover parts remain durable and useful.

So, as we roll up our sleeves for another homeschooling year with Seton, we should take encouragement from America's pioneers. Provided that we put forth our best efforts, we have reason to hope for our children's future and the Church. As a matter of fact, one day our homeschooling efforts will be the monuments we leave behind.



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.

in the **Schoolroom**

Where We Share Our Best Tips for Homeschooling with Seton

LapBooks

As we settle into the new school year, it is worthwhile to make some time to be creative with the curriculum.

One fun way to do this is to create lapbooks. My family has been making lapbooks for many years, and we find them a fun way to make the learning more creative and hands-on. We have made lapbooks for math, science, literature, religion, history, and even music. You are only limited by your imagination.

Lapbooks allow you to linger on a subject for a while and really explore it in depth. The whole family can work on them, each contributing according to their ability. They can be artistic and beautiful or practical and straightforward.



Pocket Shrines

A Seton Mom Heather Cushman and her children tried Mary Ellen Barrett's pocket shrine craft from our last issue of the Seton Magazine.

See all of the Cushman Family's creations on SetonMagazine.com



What is a lapbook you ask? It's simply two legal sized file folders glued or taped together to make a book in the shape of a shutter by folding in each side. Then, you simply add to the book things related to your study. There could be drawings, diagrams, mini books, accordion books, or printables. Let the kids really get creative and make the lapbooks their own special project.

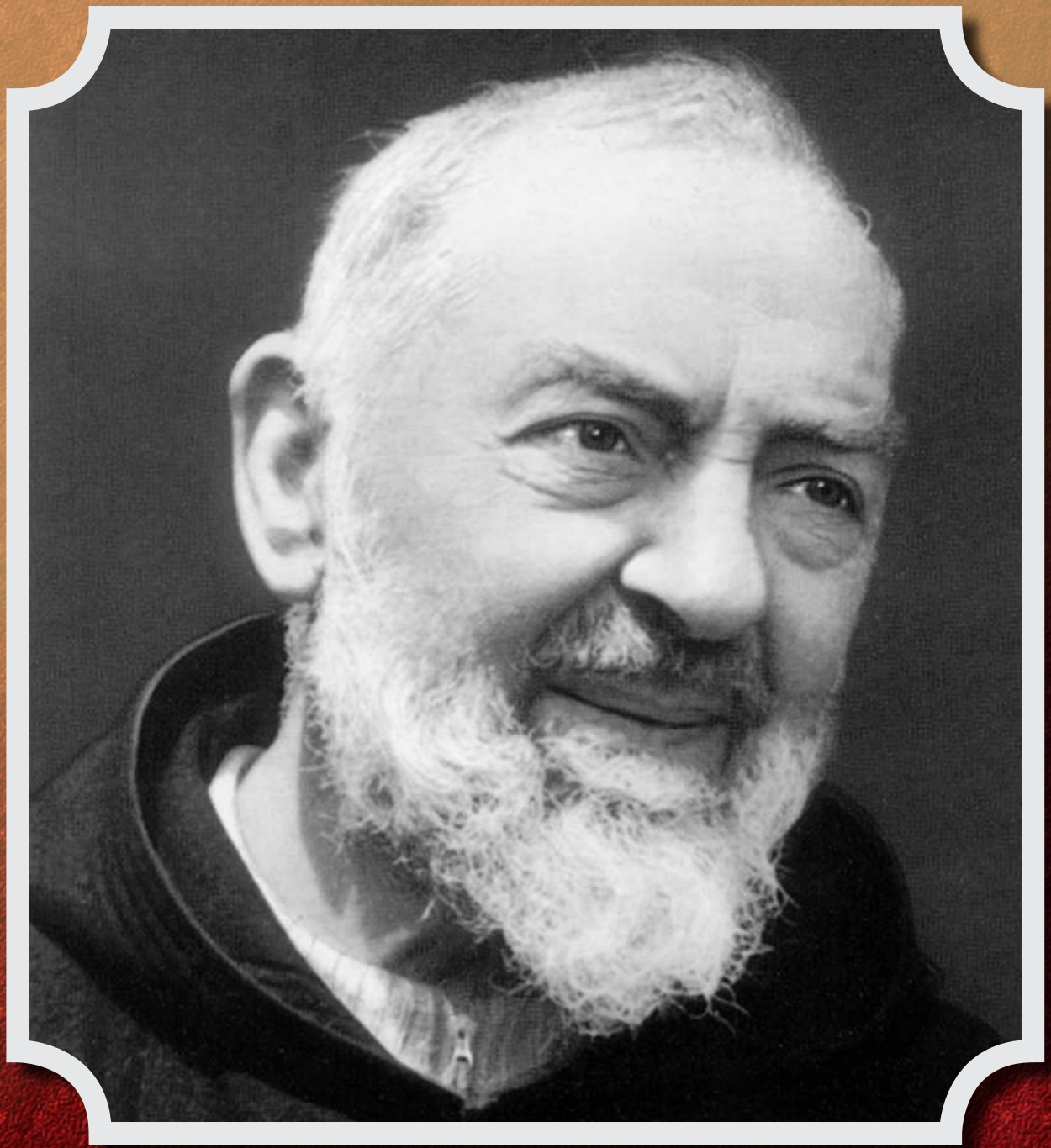
In my home, we've added to them as years have gone by, and I have one on the solar system to which all eight of my children have contributed! It's quite worn from use but it is a treasured memento of our homeschooling journey. You can see it on the Seton Home Study School Facebook page. It's in the video library with detailed instructions.

If you make a lapbook we would love to see photos! Please send them to MBarrett@setonhome.org!



Mary Ellen Barrett is mother of seven children and two in heaven, wife to David and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books. She is editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.

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Advice for Parents

One final point: man, as the image of God, is also called to rest and to celebrate. The account of creation concludes with these words: “And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it” (Gen 2:2-3).

It is the day of the family, on which to experience together a sense of celebration, encounter, sharing, not least through taking part in Mass. Dear families, despite the relentless rhythms of the modern world, do not lose a sense of the Lord’s Day! It is like an oasis in which to pause, so as to taste the joy of encounter and to quench our thirst for God.

**Benedict XVI
Address to World Meeting of Families
June 3, 2012**