

Seton



MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2020



Eyes Wide Open and Getting to Heaven

The Martin Family - pg 12



Know and Live the Truth **BOLDLY**

*How Seton Prepared Me for
John Paul the Great Catholic University*

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Let's Stop Mis-Defining Genius
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Filling the Gaps
Nick Marmalejo - pg 18

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COVER PHOTO

The Martin Family



Dear Reader,

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a blessed and beautiful Advent and Christmas season. We hope that after the busyness of those seasons that you are finding your homeschool stride again and getting back into the routines that serve you well.

In this issue, we introduce you to the Martin family of Elkton, Florida. They are a lively family with wide interests and great spirit. I think you will enjoy getting to know them, I know I did.

Speaking of getting to know people, how well do you know your child's temperament? Jeff Minick shares his research with us about the four temperaments and how this knowledge can help us relate better to our children. It's eye opening!

Have you ever considered having your child perform in a theatre production? There are so many benefits to such an activity and Julia Clark shares how drama and theatre have benefited her in "Adding Drama to Your Homeschool."

Will you be at the national March for Life? If so, we invite you to march behind the Seton banner with us! Find details at www.setonhome.org/march-for-life about meeting and how to receive a Seton hat if you march with us. There is no greater social justice issue facing our country than the protection of life, and at Seton, we are proud to exercise our civic duty alongside our students and their families.

Blessings,
Mary Ellen Barrett

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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 began homeschooling because the public school environment was not healthy for our oldest son.

I love that my kids and I can attend daily Mass, and I can provide them with a Catholic education and teach them Catholic values.

I also love that we are able to spend more time together, travel, and enjoy outdoor activities.

– Lina Haynes

”



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

Daily Inspirations from Mother Seton

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

For many years, for the January issues of the *Seton Magazine*, we have written about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Mother Seton, who was the inspiration for the establishment of Seton Home Study School.

This January, we have decided to reprint several “thoughts” of Mother as she wrote them during her years of teaching children in her Catholic school in Maryland. We hope the following Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton thoughts will inspire you in your daily homeschooling journey.

“Doubt and fear fly from the breast inhabited by Him. There can be no disappointment where the soul’s only desire and expectation is to meet His adored Will and fulfill it.”

“But first, the battle must be won, the thorny road passed over. Look up! He is ever a witness of your struggles. Put all your trust in Him.”

“Blessed, blessed Lord, keep us always in Thy company, and press our weak hearts forever in Thy service.”

“Keep your hearts at rest. Never can you find a surer way of obtaining all your desires than that of leaving all to God, Who delights to grant the wishes even for this life if you are full of confidence.”

“Oh how sweet to be every moment employed in the service and in the sight of the dearest and most generous of masters, Who repays with the tenderness of compassionate love, even the good will of His child, however imperfect its execution.”

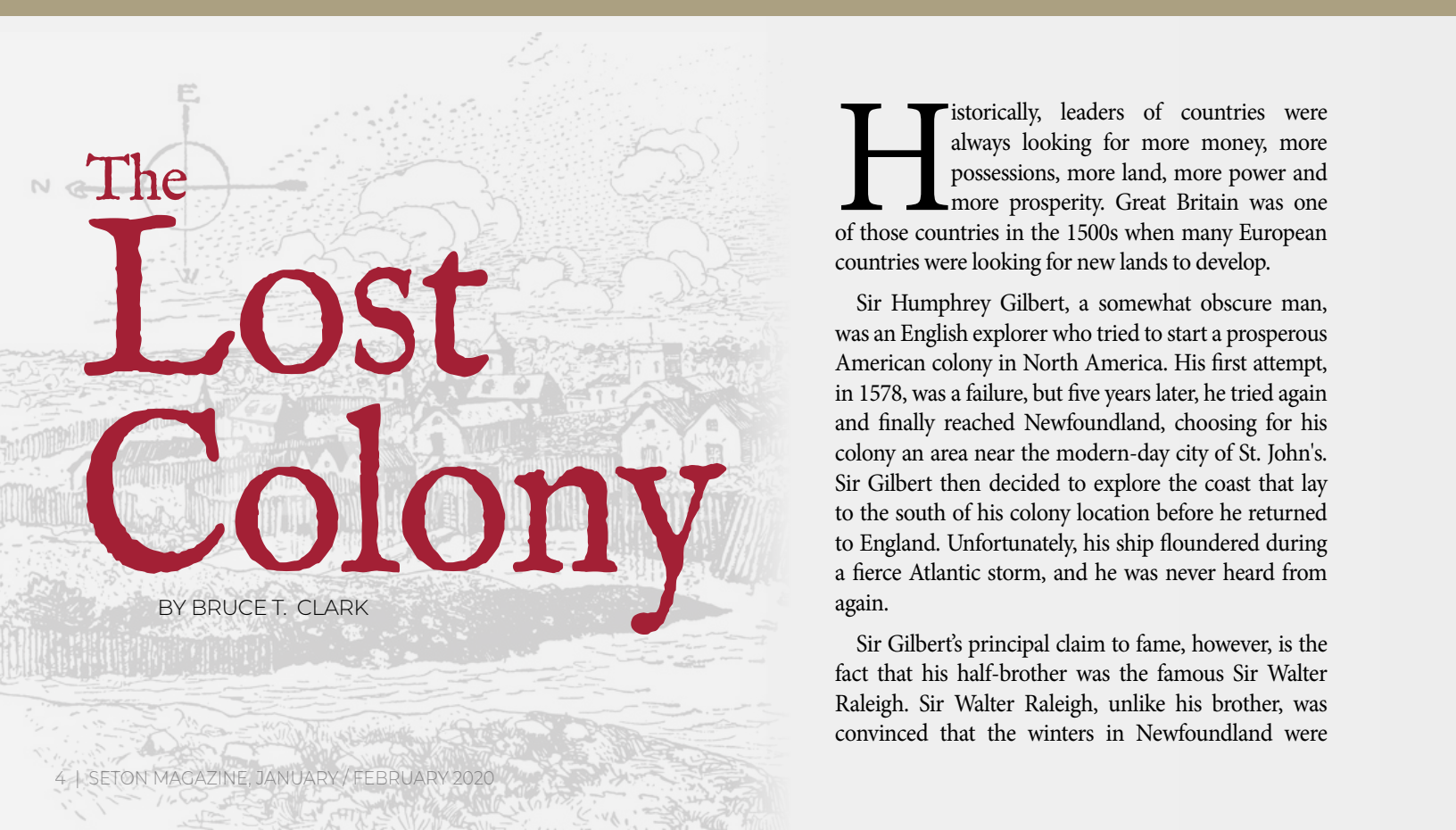
“A true joy to me indeed the daily sacrifice, and our frequent and ... daily Communion. ... This union of my soul with God is my wealth in poverty and joy in deepest afflictions.”

“In every disappointment, great or small, let your dear heart fly direct to Him, to your Saviour, throwing yourself into His arms for refuge in every pain and sorrow. He will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

“What would I consider my life if it could not obtain Your true happiness! You know what happiness; not that of the present passing hour, of course, but that which is infinite.”

“If a mother’s love could be a fortune to you, you would be rich indeed! Alas, it is poor coin in this world; but be assured, it will bear interest in heaven, where it solicits, I may truly say day and night, every blessing on you.”

“We must pray literally without ceasing, I mean that prayer of the heart which is independent of time and place, which is rather a habit of lifting up the heart to God, as a constant communication with Him.”



The Lost Colony

BY BRUCE T. CLARK

Historically, leaders of countries were always looking for more money, more possessions, more land, more power and more prosperity. Great Britain was one of those countries in the 1500s when many European countries were looking for new lands to develop.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a somewhat obscure man, was an English explorer who tried to start a prosperous American colony in North America. His first attempt, in 1578, was a failure, but five years later, he tried again and finally reached Newfoundland, choosing for his colony an area near the modern-day city of St. John’s. Sir Gilbert then decided to explore the coast that lay to the south of his colony location before he returned to England. Unfortunately, his ship floundered during a fierce Atlantic storm, and he was never heard from again.

Sir Gilbert’s principal claim to fame, however, is the fact that his half-brother was the famous Sir Walter Raleigh. Sir Walter Raleigh, unlike his brother, was convinced that the winters in Newfoundland were

“I taste the sweetness of His Presence, and feed on the Bread of angels, which warms, cheers, soothes, contents, and renews my whole being.”

“You think you make sacrifices. Look at the sacrifice of Calvary, and compare yours with it.”

“To enjoy, we must love, and to love, we must sacrifice.”

“My life would not be worth a thought if it could not contribute by its sacrifice to the happiness and desire of those I love.”

“Religion is the only real support in the uncertainties of the present life.”

“It is vain to wear the outward sign of Mary’s children on the heart, without the virtues of meekness, purity, and charity [so dear to her] within.”

“Be attentive to the voice of Grace. Dwell in prayer on the best thoughts of the moment. Love to soar above in your good time of prayer.”

“Patience and submission are the only way to gain the blessings of Heaven.”

“Those who want the protection of Heaven are surest of obtaining it.”

“Let peace and love stay with you in your pains, and they will lighten and sweeten them all.”

“Keep your heart high!”

All these quotes are taken from “*Daily Thoughts of Mother Seton*,” quotes taken from her daily writings, selected by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph B. Code, 1960.



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*.



too bitterly cold to attract even the hardest English settlers. Nevertheless, he was interested in following his brother’s wish for establishing a colony in America. Sir Raleigh was convinced that the warmer weather several hundred miles farther south would make a much more attractive location for a settlement for British immigrant families. Because he was a close friend of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Walter begged her for the funds to establish an English colony in the southern area of North America. The queen granted Raleigh’s request, but agreed to fund the enterprise only if Raleigh agreed to remain in England and not take the dangerous voyage himself.

Consequently, in 1584, Sir Raleigh managed to recruit a hundred potential settlers to establish a new English colony in America. The British settlers finally set sail and eventually landed on Roanoke Island, which lies a few miles off the current coast of North Carolina. As they started out, the colony seemed to prosper in the new land. However, as time passed, supplies and food became so scarce that, except for a few of the most determined settlers, many gave up and returned to England.

Sir Walter Raleigh, however, was not willing to give up, and he sponsored a slightly larger group of settlers in 1587. Led by John

White, a group of one hundred and fifty English settlers landed at Roanoke once again. Unfortunately, history repeated itself. The 1587 effort was just as poor as the one in 1584. Once again, food and supplies were used up far ahead of projections. Either unable, or unwilling, to trade for food with local Indian tribes, John White decided to sail back across the Atlantic Ocean and obtain more food in England.

While he was racing back across the ocean, however, the unlucky colony was destroyed and the settlers disappeared. Historians and adventurers have never been able to discover the reason behind the colony’s disappearance. None were ever heard from again. The incident has earned the unhappy name “The Lost Colony of Roanoke.” Even after centuries, it is still a baffling mystery of American history.



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*.

your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Why don't you have students memorize the catechism as you used to do?

Memorization in general has become somewhat controversial in recent years. On the one side are those who say that memorization is a very important part of learning concepts precisely and so memorization should always be encouraged. On the other side are those who say that memorization isn't the same as understanding and that a student may well be able to repeat a memorized phrase without having a good understanding of the underlying meaning.

We at Seton still believe that students should memorize their catechism answers. Just like math and historical facts, the best procedure for remembering anything is to memorize what you need to remember. On the other hand, we don't want students simply to memorize and not understand what they are memorizing. Students should be able to answer, at least partially, questions from the Catechism in their own words. So we believe that the best way for students to learn is both memorization and understanding.

We also know that memorization is very difficult for some students. They understand the concepts and can answer questions about the concepts, but they have a hard time remembering the specific words and phrases as they are presented in a book. We know it has been frustrating for students when they learn the material but still do poorly on a test for lack of memorization. For this reason, we are trying to be more flexible in that we still encourage memorization but do not require it. This leaves it up to an individual decision for parents on whether they want their children to memorize.

I have had trouble teaching the English lessons, which I never had in school. Can you help me??

You should take the time to go over the Seton lesson before you need to teach it. Seton has presented a large number of videos, by grade level, specifically on the various English lessons in our courses. Take the time to look at them before teaching the class. Students in the older grades also should look at them. Notice how many diagramming videos we have, which help to determine the part of speech.

Why Emphasize the Five-Paragraph Essay?

The five-paragraph essay is a concise and organized way to express information and support a claim. The five-paragraph structure enables the student to distill the evidence and highlight the important points. For any writer, it is important to eliminate redundant and irrelevant information, presenting the reader with an easily-discernible message.

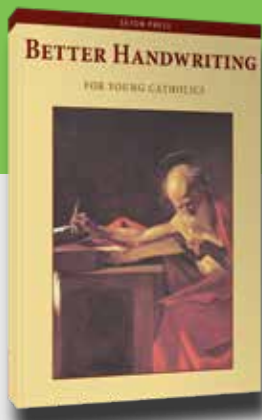
As students move on into young adulthood, being able to concisely and clearly present information in their writing, is a valuable skill, whether it be in college, the workplace, or even their personal lives. The five-paragraph essay is the mechanism by which students can learn to express their thoughts into an adaptable and ordered framework.

BY SEAN O'CONNOR
SETON ENGLISH COUNSELOR

The Organizational Principles of the Five-Paragraph Essay

- **Paragraph 1: Introduction** - introduce the topic and end the paragraph with a thesis statement (specific claim)
- **Paragraphs 2-4: Body Paragraphs** - support the thesis by introducing relevant evidence
- **Paragraph 5: Conclusion** - restate the thesis, recap the main points given in body paragraphs, and end with a personal remark





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Diagramming is much more important than most people realize. Diagramming forces students to examine and to understand the logic of relationships, which is valuable in other academic courses.

Is it too late to register my daughter in your program in the middle of the school year?

We know that many parents want to make a change in the middle of the year, so Seton has always offered a half-year program. The half-year program covers two quarters, but these can be any two quarters of the course. In some subjects, such as history and science, she can start at the beginning or in the middle. In math, you would need to determine which lesson would be best for her to begin. If she has had no English grammar, she might need to start at the beginning of the lessons. Please phone one of our academic counselors to discuss an entrance test to help determine what she needs, subject by subject.

My daughter will not be going to college. Can you help her to take practical high school courses?

Seton has three high school academic counselors to help you decide which courses are appropriate for your daughter. Just give us a call and ask for a high school academic counselor, and we will help your daughter take courses that would be best for her future needs.

In addition, Seton has partnered with a company called *JobZology* to offer a test to help students understand in what type of career they might excel. The *JobZology* test and subsequent report are free for enrolled

students, and can be accessed through your MySeton page. If you determine a specific area of interest, your daughter might look into what courses would be specifically helpful for that career path.

My son has completed the 2nd Quarter work for all his subjects except for English. May I turn in his other subjects while we finish up his 2nd Quarter English?

That is no problem. We grade the assignments as they come in. You might consider spending a little more time on his English, maybe an hour over the weekends, to help him move along a little more quickly. Of course, you as the parent can make the best decision regarding how much he can learn in a certain amount of time.

What advice would you give me to help my daughter in her high school English course?

She needs to see what she is expected to know on her test, especially the essay questions. As she reads her book for her book report, she should underline or highlight a paragraph which she thinks might be helpful in taking the test. She might notice that our lesson plans are very thorough in directing students about what they should remember. You don't need to read the books yourself, but you can read the test questions and ask her what she intends to write as the answers.



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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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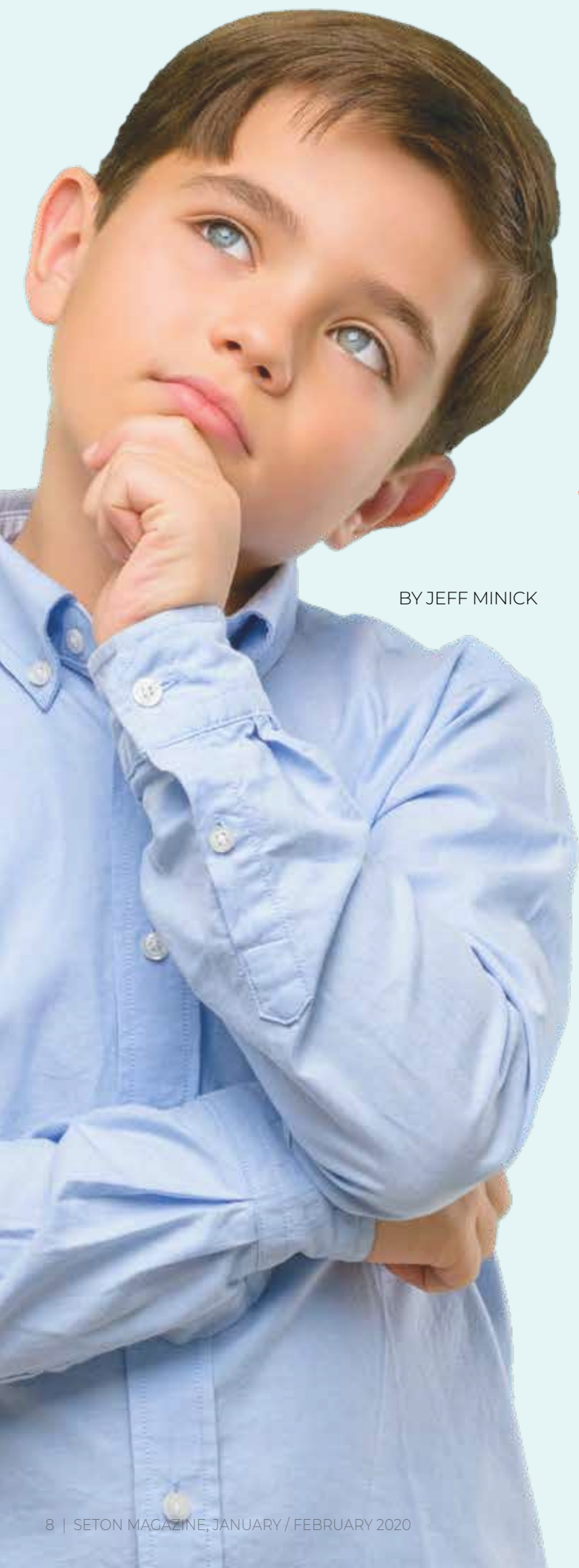


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Where Did This Kid Come From?

The Four Temperaments

God Gave Your Kids



Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, NC. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, VA.

BY JEFF MINICK

V You're a laid-back mom, a woman who takes life in stride, a good listener, an easy-going soul rarely ruffled by the hurly-burly of your children, the household duties, a change in plans.

Your husband is much like you, a patient man whose motto might be "Keep calm and carry on," good-natured, a guy who rarely raises his voice to the children and never to you. He doesn't grumble about changing the toddler in the middle of the night and watches the kids while you take that Sunday afternoon nap.

Two peace-loving, contented souls!

And then there's your oldest child, eleven-year-old Angelica. She takes charge of her siblings like a Marine Corps drill sergeant. She's competitive in games with her friends, questions everything, and could argue a Supreme Court justice into submission.

"Angelica?" you sometimes think. "Boy, did we pick the wrong name."

After some of the pitched battles with Angelica—she wants to watch another half an hour of television when you've reminded her for the fourth time that it's bath-time, she tells her brother's friend she's going to sock him in the kisser if he takes that extra cookie, she argues with you about the time you start your school day—you and your husband look at each other and wonder: "*Where did this kid come from?*"

Or maybe yours is the opposite situation. You are a homeschool mom who lives by a schedule, pushing your children to excel in school, the arts, and sports, just as you did at their age. You fill their free time with activities—dance, soccer, gymnastics for Chloe and Peter, piano for Robert—and they thrive, meeting these challenges and excelling.

Except for Jake. Eight-year-old Jake is a dreamer, the son you have to badger every day to do his schoolwork, the soccer player who just last week was watching a butterfly while a girl dribbled the ball past him and scored a goal. Jake amuses himself at home for hours, building forts out of blocks, manning them with toy soldiers, or just lounging in the hammock and gazing at the clouds.

“Don’t dawdle,” you tell him as you load everyone into the car, meanwhile thinking: “Where did this kid come from?”

Where indeed?

In *The Temperament God Gave Your Kids: Motivate, Discipline, and Love Your Children* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012, 187 pages), Laraine and Art Bennett take readers on a tour of the four temperaments: choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic. Conceived by the ancient Greeks as categories for explaining human personality types, this idea of temperaments, as the Bennetts show us, has enjoyed a comeback among some contemporary psychologists.

In an insert, “*The Four Temperaments in a Nutshell*,” the Bennetts give us this scenario as a handy explanation:

You are at church when one of your children fails to genuflect.

A sibling:

- **Punches him (Choleric);**
- **Tattles to Mom (Melancholic);**
- **Explains and demonstrates how he would do it (Sanguine);**
- **Ignores it (Phlegmatic).**

Laraine and Art Bennett contend that once we recognize the temperaments of our children as well as our own, we can use that knowledge to help our young people grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. With that deeper understanding, parents can “build on their children’s natural strengths.” The Bennetts agree with management theorist Peter Drucker, who wrote that “a person can perform only from strength. One cannot build performance on weaknesses...”

The Bennetts then take a long look at each of the four temperaments, showing parents how to nurture the strength

found in a particular temperament, and how to blunt or counter its weaknesses. Through a blend of classical wisdom, anecdotes, humor, and Catholic spiritual practices, the Bennetts teach us how to evaluate our children and ourselves.

In the chapter “*Parent-Child Temperamental Interaction*,” the authors go through all the combinations of the temperaments, such as a sanguine parent helping a melancholic child. In the section on *Melancholic Parent/Melancholic Child*, for example, they describe a melancholic dad who had high expectations and strict rules for his children. Deeply stressed, his melancholic son fell into depression and had to be hospitalized. “What was needed was a little more one-on-one time, relaxed conversations after dinner, some fun activities together, dinners out, and so forth. These would have helped create an atmosphere in which the child could feel comfortable revealing his deepest fears and anxieties.”

Are you unsure of a child’s temperament? At the end of the book is a “*Temperament Test For Kids*.” It can be found also on the Seton website.

Does familiarity with temperaments help us to better understand our children?

Yes.

As I was reading *The Temperament God Gave Your Kids*, my grandchildren kept coming to mind. All of them fit one of the temperaments—some are a blend of two—and recognition of those temperaments gave me greater insight into their strengths and weaknesses, and how I might encourage them.

Here at Seton, Dr. Mary Kay Clark has often said, “Adjust the program to fit the child, not the child to fit the program.”

A deeper acquaintance with our children’s temperaments helps us to do just that.

A Closer Look at the Temperaments

Choleric

Here, the Bennetts tell us, is a child who is “strong-willed, determined, a quick learner, and a natural leader.” Choleric are always ready to voice their opinions or debate a point, and are persistent in reaching a goal. They also can be “impatient, stubborn, interruptive, quick-tempered, and occasionally lacking in empathy.”

Melancholic

Melancholics tend toward seriousness, reflection, and solitude. They need time to think through situations, and are frequently shy and sensitive. “The weaknesses of this temperament are that he or she can be moody and withdrawn, overly self-conscious, and perfectionist.”

Sanguine

Here are children who love socializing, bringing sunshine and laughter wherever they go. Sanguines are the opposite of melancholics: extroverted, noisy, easily distracted, and often messy. Their weaknesses are a tendency toward superficiality: skimming through school assignments, attracted to social media, unable to stay motivated through a difficult chore or a long school assignment.

Phlegmatic

“Count your blessings for a phlegmatic child! He is a joy—so peaceful, quiet, cooperative, and obedient that you will be forever spoiled.” As the Bennetts point out, however, the flip side is that phlegmatics often become followers, willing to go along to get along, people pleasers who may lack initiative or the ability to stick up for themselves.

LET'S STOP MIS-DEFINING GENIUS

BY JOHN CLARK

Aesop might refer to what follows as “sour grapes,” but I’m willing to run that risk. Here it goes.

In America, there is a radical overemphasis on the relationship between academic grades and overall intelligence. Test scores—typically, the largest component of final grades—receive a hyper-focus. In many circles, whether you are deemed “smart” depends on how well you do on tests.

Here’s where the sour grapes part comes in: I never did well on tests in college. In fact, I don’t remember ever receiving an “A” on an exam. Not once. If final grades depended on quizzes and tests alone, I would have failed out of college.

How did I graduate?

Allow me to explain with a story.

One summer afternoon when I was about eight years old, my brother Kevin returned to the house after going out to the mailbox. After he opened one of the envelopes, he began cheering with excitement jumping with joy. The letter informed him an article he had submitted was going to be published in a magazine. I was excited, too; after all, this meant—at least in my mind—that my brother was going to be famous.

Maybe it was at that moment I decided to be a writer. But I knew I would have to work very hard to even come close to Kevin’s level of talent. In fact, his essays were so powerful that I couldn’t understand how anyone could disagree with his conclusions.

Sure, other people could write, but Kevin’s words leapt from the page and danced. Reading his writing, I began to realize that there was an ethereal, transformational potential in the printed word, and I wanted my words printed. Thus began my quest to learn the art of writing.

By the time I started college, I could write comparatively well, and some teachers helped me write better. In fact, by the time I was a sophomore, seniors sought me out to help with their theses.

Over the years, I was able to counter “C”s and “D”s on tests with “A” papers. To many of the teachers, I must have seemed like two different students: the student who wrote polished papers, and the student who handed in lackluster tests. For that reason, I always thought



I'd have to write at a graduate level because the teachers otherwise thought of me as a "C" student and my papers had to overcome that perception.

But my papers faced a more daunting task: they had to overcome my own perception of my intelligence. After all, my thought process went, if I regularly receive Cs and Ds on tests, how smart could I possibly be? For me, the sad part of that interrogative is not that I once asked it, but that other kids still do. That's a crying shame.

Let me be clear: I am not proposing that scoring high grades on tests does not spell intelligence. I am simply saying that tests are not the only yardstick for genius. Not even close. Yet with all the "teaching to the test" nonsense in America, we keep insisting that they are. The truth, however, is far different.

As playwright David Mamet put it, "Society functions in a way much more interesting than that multiple-choice pattern we have been rewarded for succeeding at in school. Success in life comes not from the ability to choose between the four presented answers, but from the rather more difficult and painfully acquired ability to formulate the questions."

Mamet alludes to a much broader truth: academics is not the only form of genius. Far from it. Millions of people have failed out of school or quit school, only to illuminate the world with their brilliance: inventors, artists, writers, coaches, athletes, directors, scientists, lawyers, philosophers, and mothers and fathers who have authored children.

What they had was creativity—a special form of genius that often finds no home in the classroom.

It's not simply that God has given each of us a talent; He has graced each of us with a genius. It's a pity we fail to recognize that—or worse, deny it. When others deny genius in us, it's deflating; when we deny genius in ourselves, it's stifling. Of course, it often happens in that order.

Our job as parents—in fact, our job as humans—is to recognize the unique brilliance in our children. And in each other. We need to stop pigeonholing genius to classrooms and books. We need to embrace the fact that there are countless forms of genius.

And the greatest of these is love.



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



ALUMNI PROFILE

Emma Hackett

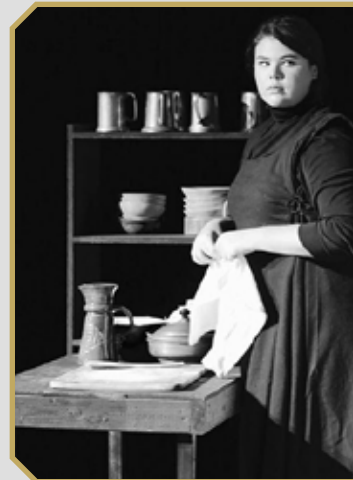
I was homeschooled through Seton Home Study School for nine years, from Third through Twelfth Grades. I loved the richness of both the academic and spiritual formation that I received through Seton.

After Seton, I attended Christendom College, majoring in English. The Seton curriculum was the best preparation I could imagine for the rigors of college academics, and it also gave me a firm foundation of knowledge and love of my Faith upon which to build.

Since graduation, I co-founded a nonprofit theatre company in Baltimore called Lumina Theatre Company, with the mission of affecting the culture and glorifying God through the arts.

I believe that the arts are one of the most powerful tools we have for affecting the minds and hearts of individuals. The ability to reach those on both sides of the curtain with stories that are thought-provoking, uplifting, and rooted in a Catholic imagination gives me such great joy and a real sense of purpose in my work.

I think the best advice I can offer a current Seton High School student is to take advantage of this time! The Seton curriculum is an irreplaceable gift, so use all of the available resources and absorb as much as you can!



Eyes Wide Open and Getting to Heaven

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNA MARTIN

It was mid-October, and I was speaking by phone with Seton homeschool mom Anna Martin of Elkton, Florida, a town just outside of Saint Augustine. In Anna's voice, laughter, and words, I detected optimism, a determination to do her best for her children, and her love for her faith.

Anna and her husband Edward are the parents of Anthony, 11; Isabelle, 10; Mateo, 5; Clara, 3; and Santiago, 1. For five years, Anna has taught her children using the Seton Home Study School curriculum.

During our conversation, Anna could remember no specific reason for wishing to homeschool other than wanting to be a part of her children's education. She and her husband particularly enjoy studying and discussing history and politics, and find the Seton history books "rich and accurate." She informed me that she had one primary academic goal for her children: "Think for themselves. Eyes wide open. Be able to debate ideas."

That interest in politics spilled over to the children. Recently, sixth-grader Anthony wrote a letter of encouragement and gratitude to President Donald Trump, and was stunned to hear back from him. Here is a part of the email Anna wrote to us at Seton telling about Anthony's exchange with President Trump:

"As part of a multifaceted school project, Anthony learned about the importance of Catholic political involvement in promoting a culture of life. In addition, he used his Seton English, cursive, handwriting and vocabulary skills to pen a letter to President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump, thanking them for their support and protection of the unborn.

Surprisingly, Anthony received a signed response from President Trump encouraging him to continue his political involvement in protecting all life as our Catholic faith dictates."

Like most homeschool families, the Martins practice a juggling act in terms of schedules, work, academics, and extracurricular activities. Edward is the assistant manager for the local animal control department, and Anna works part-time as a "float pool nurse," meaning she can pick and choose her assignments, and so perform her home and school duties as well. She also serves as the respect life coordinator for her parish.

Extracurricular activities in particular often present a challenge to large families. Getting Johnny to soccer, Mary to dance, Claire to piano, and Tim to his guitar lessons can transform homeschool moms into van-school moms. Because of the time the Martins were



spending in the car, Anna's mother bought her a special cooler just to use for carrying food and drinks while on the road.

The Beauty of One Club for All

Which is why the local 4-H club has become a real time-saver for the family. "The kids can do activities together there," Anna said, "which means less time in the car for all of us." In 4-H, her children can choose from a wide variety of activities and classes, ranging from marine biology to baking, from sewing to photography. Mateo, for example, enrolled this year in the Clover Buds program and is already engaged in different science projects.



The club also offers a leadership camp, opportunities for public service, training in debate and public speaking, and various competitions. This year, Anthony won first-place in the local photography contest, and received a blue ribbon in the state competition.

For two years, Anthony has also participated in the 4-H Tropicana Speech Contest, winning second place each time. The contest seeks to increase their public speaking skills. Students have access to videos demonstrating how to write a speech, how to dress, and how to conduct themselves while on a stage or behind a podium.

Isabel has added to this collection of ribbons. She has won recognition in cookie baking, for various arts and crafts projects, and for her community service in cleaning up a local beach. The photograph she took of her baby brother Santiago gained her local recognition and was entered in the State 4-H Photo Contest.

The Martins also belong to a local homeschooling group, the Holy Family Catholic Home School in St. Augustine. The secretary at Anna's parish told her about this organization, and here she and her family have found friendship, sustenance, and support in their homeschooling.

About forty families participate in HFCHS, which provides both recreation and fellowship for children of all ages and for their parents. The parents have organized two clubs—Little Flowers for the girls and Blue Knights for the boys—"to teach elementary school-aged children how to live their faith and lives of virtue."

Support of Friends and Family

HFCHS also sponsors a monthly support group for parents. Anna emphasized the importance of belonging to such an organization if one was available—"It's our main social group," she said—and encourages new homeschooling families in particular to seek out such support and friendship.

Anna also mentioned the help of relatives and friends in making a success of homeschooling. When Anthony expressed a desire to serve daily Mass at their small parish church, St. Ambrose, Anna was reluctant to take on that task because of the younger children and the driving. Her mother-in-law, a retired Spanish teacher who teaches Spanish to the children, stepped up and now drives Anthony to daily Mass.

When we talked about the particular value of using the Seton program, Anna brought up a benefit I had never before considered. "Because we have used Seton from the beginning, our school day goes smoother. My kids know how the program works. They know how the day is going to flow."

"Everybody's different. One thing that helps me is that I constantly remind myself that my only job is to get my children to heaven. That's a great relief. I just want them to carry on in their faith and for all of us to be in heaven someday.

Anna concluded, "Every day I struggle with something. I have to remind myself that homeschooling is worth the effort. That's my most important motivator."



“The instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated.”
-Aristotle, *Poetics*

Adding Drama to Your Homeschool

BY JULIA CLARK

One of the great things about homeschooling is finding ways to teach lessons outside of the traditional idea of “schooling.” There are many different ways of doing this. One way I would like to suggest for your consideration is having your children get involved with theatre. There are many reasons theatre is beneficial for anyone, and it can be especially so for homeschoolers.

Drama can help us better understand human nature. On the stage, we see an array of human emotions played out. Acting gives us the opportunity to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes and understand a situation with which we would otherwise be unfamiliar. This helps build empathy and compassion.

It also gives allows us to become more acquainted with good literature, and in some cases, with real historical figures. Seton high school students might appreciate some of the



theatre opportunities I’ve had recently. I was involved with starting up a young adult theatre group at my local parish, and two of the plays we have done are *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Murder in the Cathedral* (both of which are included in Seton’s English 12). Acting in these plays allows a person to immerse in great works of literature and experience them more fully.

Theatre also teaches the value of hard work. The finished product is so satisfying. You have usually spent a few months developing and working hard on it, and it involves the combined work of so many people.

Then comes that satisfying moment when, after weeks of blood, sweat, and tears, you finally get to opening night, and receive an enthusiastic response from your audience. Additionally, working so closely with a group of people for weeks builds great camaraderie and yields close friendships.

Getting Started

If you are interested in starting a homeschool theatre group, you will need a space for performances and rehearsals, a cast, a crew, and a script. Space may be the most difficult to find, particularly the performance space. Rehearsal space could simply be in someone’s house.

In the early days of our parish’s teen drama club, we would hold most rehearsals at a director’s house. Another possibility is a parish hall, which is where we now hold most of our rehearsals. The parish hall also may be a possibility for performance space, depending on the layout. You will likely need to be officially affiliated with the parish to use this space, so be sure to go through the proper channels and follow proper protocol, especially regarding chaperones.

The acoustics and layout of a parish hall will not be ideal, but, in my experience, it has been a good starting point before raising funds to rent space in an actual theater. We have been able to rent out the auditoriums of local high schools for the final presentation.



Photo Credits | Mary Fran Cherry

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...working so closely with group of people for weeks builds great camaraderie and yields close friendships.

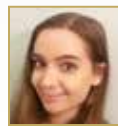
Choosing Wisely

If you are just starting, begin with a small cast show that does not require a lot of backstage and set work. Then you should have a good idea of what your limitations are, and build from there. A director who can devote a lot of time and effort to the project is essential.

Then you need a good script. Pick a show with a cast size that you know is within reach. Also, be sure that you properly obtain the rights to the show, as there is a

possibility of significant legal trouble if you do not. There are many options for public domain shows that you can perform for free, which is likely best for a first show, and you can spend more money on a show once you are established. And of course, pick a play with literary value!

Catholic promotion of the Arts can be so beneficial to young people. Theatre is a wonderful way to reach them and show what is good, true, and beautiful.



Julia Clark is the Social Media Coordinator for Seton Home Study School. She graduated from Christendom College in 2018 with a B.A. in Philosophy. Julia enjoys theatre (both watching and participating), reading, and fancy lattes, and is a life-long resident of Front Royal, Virginia.



Know and Live the Truth **BOLDLY**

How Seton Home Study School Prepared Me for John Paul the Great Catholic University

BY TERESA DOHERTY



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

John Paul the Great Catholic University
is proud to be part of
Seton Home Study School's
College Partner Program.

In Plato's famous allegory of the cave, self imprisoned individuals are kept in the dark of a cave, only able to see shadows of a false reality. For the most part, the prisoners are satisfied with this false shadow world and create fictitious realities in their minds based on only shadows of understanding.

When one prisoner finally leaves the cave, it is difficult but liberating when he adjusts to light and reality. The man in the story travels from seeing shadows of reality, to reflections, to finally being able to face the light and in turn understand actual reality and truth.

In a direct way, a good scholastic curriculum is one that teaches, readies, and prepares the student to fight for the light of the truth. This strong attitude of fearlessness is reflected especially in the often repeated words of St. John Paul the Great, "Be not afraid!"

As someone who spent 10 years fully enrolled in Seton Home Study School and then a busy two years of high school in dual enrollment, I can say with confidence that Seton prepares students to know and live out the truth boldly. As a sophomore Humanities student at John Paul the Great Catholic university, I clearly see how Seton prepared me for college.

How Seton and JPCatholic Work Together

Founded in 2003 John Paul the Great Catholic University is a unique university focusing on media arts. JPCatholic provides a place where artistic and like minded Media, Humanities, and Business majors can study while staying close to Christ.

Just as the Seton home environment encourages harmony and teamwork between siblings, parents, and students, JPCatholic has a community of students that support each other. It is a common occurrence for those of other majors to act in their friends' short films, or for film students to use the script their humanities friend wrote.

Because JPCatholic is on a quarter system, time management is crucial. Yet, to a Seton student this task is not quite as daunting as it might be to some. Indeed, Seton is already on the quarter



system, a fact that directly prepares students for the speed of learning at JPCatholic, where a quarter is just a quick ten weeks. Because it is a three year curriculum, students attain their undergraduate degree in three years.

Seton creates a strong foundation immersed in the truth of philosophy and theology. From appreciation of Church history and art, to studying the Catechism, I have found a continuation of this type of education at JPCatholic. My freshman year at JPCatholic included classes in the philosophical tradition of Aristotle, Plato, and Aquinas. Some of my favorite classes in this area have included Epistemology, Philosophy of Man, and Philosophy of Nature.

Seton certainly lives up to its reputation as preparing one through writing skill as well. Because of the confidence I gained in Seton for writing, I have been able to participate and enjoy more fully what JPCatholic offers, such as its Long Form Prose Fiction Workshop in which I wrote a seventy page novel in just ten weeks. Hand in hand with writing skills, Seton also prepared me with an appreciation of literature.

Another gift that Seton gave me was a love of poetry. At JPCatholic I have been able to take poetry classes, participate in a reading class, and even make my own poetry book as part of a class.

Hands on Opportunities

It is important to emphasize that JPCatholic is a very hands on school in which one's faith is able to flourish. In Plato's cave allegory, the man who steps out of the cave must take a hands on approach to his learning.

This approach is reminiscent of the Seton curriculum, which provides so many examples of saints who lived out the faith fully and unafraid, even when it required bravery to face the bright light of truth. For example, there is even a class at JPCatholic where students can teach Confirmation classes and receive credit for it.

In one business class, a group of four other students and I made a curriculum for a Catholic Club, that we hope to use at schools in the future. These faith-filled opportunities are also in addition to many field related programs, film shoots, and studies. The university also encourages the student's faith formation through daily Mass, adoration, and many activities.

Overall, I believe I was better prepared for JPCatholic due to Seton's immersion in reality, appreciation for art, encouragement of personal relationships, and love of the faith and the truth!



Mina | Mina wins gold and silver at the USANKF National Karate Competition. Homeschooling's flexible schedule gave her the time to train and be on the tournament team.



Zachary | Zachary was invited to attend the Virginia Aerospace Science Scholars Summer Academy program. He says Seton's writing program gave him the composition skills he needed for his application.

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

setonmagazine.com/students

FILLING THE GAPS: STAYING ENCOURAGED THROUGH HARDSHIPS

BY NICK MARMALEJO

Recently, I had the good fortune to take a workshop on traditional Appalachian log cabin building. Not only was it a refreshing change of pace from strict academics, it was fun and exciting to do something entirely new.

One of the tasks at hand was to fill in the long spaces between the cabin logs. This process is typically called “chinking” or “daubing.” For many, it is the most intimidating and perplexing part of building an old-style log cabin. The reason is that the process is exceedingly tedious and fussy. Craftsmanship needs to be precise and correct, or else water will sneak its way into the structure and eventually rot out the cabin’s logs over time.

When arriving on site, I noticed that the other participants were palpably nervous. A mixture of excitement and fear floated in and out of their expressions. Feeling similarly about my own abilities, I began to joke with the teacher that I couldn’t

wait to get started and begin ruining his fine cabin. Everyone laughed, but that was indeed my worst fear. I think we all felt that way. At least the truth was out there, I thought. Now that the teacher knew what he was in for, we could begin in earnest.

After demonstration and instruction, the students took their places and proceeded to give chinking a try, generating a buzz of activity around the worksite. I had a bit of a rough start at first. Yet it was not too long before the others and I grew in confidence and ability, and a shift occurred among the group. The tone of conversation between students became happy, jocular, and optimistic, rather than vexed and worried. By the last quarter of the day, everyone was “in the groove” and a hum of production and learning could be seen and felt among the students. It was encouraging, and even the instructor commented that he could feel the wheels in our minds turning.

Staying the Course

While I enjoy talking about cabins, I provide this workday example to illustrate several things about the process of learning.

First, it’s not unusual to be intimidated when doing something new, even before you start. When it comes to academic work, it is also not uncommon for students to feel demoralized or apprehensive, regardless of their skill level or station. Boredom with specific subjects, lack of relevance, or apathy can be typical causes.

Others may indeed care about their courses, but become discouraged when the task is either overwhelming or so daunting that success seems impossible.

Perhaps it’s none of those things—maybe it’s just the feeling that there’s an impending adventure to be had and we need to go to Mordor *right now* to set things aright.

Whatever the circumstance may be, we must learn to walk before we can run. Certain classes, at a minimum, must still be



**Chink Joint Photography courtesy of
Guidance Counselor Nick Marmalejo**

taken, and the obligation to complete class work applies even to those students who feel that they were not born for academics.

Students who find themselves frustrated and scraping by, hitting only Bs and not As, or not achieving their higher academic targets, should not give up the ship. No one student is identical to any other, and learning takes time. Setbacks are a part of the process of learning, whether it's chinking a log cabin or mastering the sequence of calculations in Algebra.

The Sweet Spot

All learners are at their own specific stage in learning. An additional lesson I took from the log cabin workshop is that sometimes you just need to get started and get moving to figure out what must be done. In my case, I began by making several mistakes, but once I accepted those efforts as problematic, I began asking myself "What am I doing wrong?" I made a few intelligent guesses, changed my approach, and soon things really started to flow along naturally.

The most enjoyable part of learning is arguably that moment we realize we're "in the groove," we arrive at a place where absorbing and learning is exciting and effortless. That is the "sweet spot" in education, even though there may have been demoralization, fear, or apathy at first. Staying in the groove does not always last a long time, but such moments are important landmarks in our growth in knowledge and skill.

One of the great benefits of homeschooling is that instruction can be tailored to a student's learning style and preferences. Some students still need to find their unique point of departure, that niche of genius or creativity that belongs particularly to them.

Nurturing the discovery of that potential over the years is critical, as it provides strength and encouragement to overcome the hurdles and hardships in life, both academic and otherwise. At Seton, we take that task seriously and are here to assist you with academic struggles. Whether you are a student or a parent, if you find yourself overwhelmed, please contact us. Your success is our success, and Seton's staff is here to help you fill in the gaps.



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.

STAFF SERIES

A chat with those who serve you!



Jim Shanley, Director of Marketing

"I loved growing up in South Florida but when Betsy and I started homeschooling our children, we began searching for a locale that met three criteria. We were looking for a four-season climate, a homeschool friendly area, and a diocese rich in vocations."

The Shanleys found those ingredients in Front Royal, Virginia, home of Seton Home Study School.

"Seton was one of my customers for the Holy Traders saint trading cards I had created. In a conversation with Seton's Purchasing Director, I was offered a job at Seton." Jim and Betsy prayed on it, said yes, and never looked back.

Now a father of nine, Jim has worked at Seton for 21 years in various capacities. As Marketing Director, he helps put together the *Seton Magazine*, catalogs, and promotional materials.

Jim is an affable man who clearly loves what he is doing. "One of the favorite parts of my job is bringing 'Featured Families' to the attention of the Seton community," he says. "Each of our families is unique and has an encouraging story to tell."

Here he pauses, and then adds, "I love helping people make what they are passionate about a reality." He gives as an example helping general counselor Cecilia Sauer, take the *Connect with Seton Families* program to a new level. The program brings together families using Seton in the same geographical area for support and help.

"With a little tweaking, we were able to automate the process for Cecilia. That allowed her to reach so many more families in short order. Over 1,000 Seton families have signed up in less than a year!"

"Cecilia had the vision for *Connect with Seton Families*, and I just helped make that happen. When people have the know-how and a good idea, sometimes it just takes someone to add a little weight to tip the scales and make their dream come true. I feel blessed when I can fill that role."





BY JEFF MINICK

Couch School:

Tips For When Your Student—Or You—Are Sick

A Wednesday morning in January, and 8-year-old John awakens pale as the sheets he slept on, complaining of a headache and cramps in his tummy. Soon he's spending most of his time in the upstairs bathroom.

Meanwhile, 10-year-old Jenny is ready to start school, but the 6-year-old twins, Bridget and Beckett, are complaining of headaches and are hacking away with coughs as well.

Worse, the kids are all up, dressed, bright-eyed, teeth brushed, bouncing around and ready for morning prayers and school, but you feel as if you've been steam-rolled by some new form of the plague. Your head is throbbing, the muscles in your shoulders and back are tight as a spring, and you're coughing away into a handful of tissue.

Your spouse has already left for work, and there you are, bleary-eyed and red-nosed as Santa Claus, with four kids awaiting your instructions. You're still in your PJs and those tattered slippers with the pictures of reindeer, and you can hardly push yourself off the sofa, much less teach math, reading, and history. Plus, you might be contagious, so close contact with the children is out of the question!

What to do?

Seton Home Study School recently asked parents that same question. Its Facebook Survey Question of the Day read: "What is your strategy for sick days in your homeschool?"

A number of Seton moms jumped to answer this question. All offered encouragement to moms with sick children or who were themselves ill. Let's look at some of these responses.

Allison wrote, "We have only had one child completely miss a day. We use "sick days" to cover work that I can read aloud, do review work, and spend a little more time with the other children. But we never cancel. I have even had days that I was sick as a dog and my kids brought their books to the couch, completed their main subjects, and I found a show on TV that reinforced lessons we were discussing."

Others seconded her strategy. Some mothers had the students who had fallen sick read a book rather than follow the normal school routine. Some suggested read-aloud stories, and others brought out videos they had intended to show for specific subjects. Jennifer recommended "Cartoons, weak Gatorade with bendy straw." Caroline wrote, "I can just read to



them. Most of the time they can still do some type of relaxing learning, even when they are sick.”

“the flexibility of homeschooling makes it easier to work around sick days.”

Abigail offered advice that my wife and I long ago followed in our own homeschooling: “Depends upon the sickness. If they’re able to work still, we work. If they just need a break for a nap, we work around it. About the only time we cancel school for sickness is if it’s high fever and can’t focus or throwing up... otherwise, they often just stay in pajamas and keep working!”

Many of the moms stressed that the flexibility of homeschooling makes it easier to work around sick days. Kerri Ann commented “This is one of the reasons we end up basically doing school year-round. We’re very flexible with our schedule and I don’t like feeling overwhelmed. If we’re sick (which isn’t often - but when we are, it’s usually pretty severe),

we rest.” Other moms wrote about “Saturday school” to make up for sick days, or simply cutting down the teaching and learning load until the illness passes.

Several moms mentioned the value of television. Michelle wrote that her children when sick “stay cuddled up watching history documentaries.” Liz wisely advised that “If mom is sick, it is a TV and make sure everyone stays alive kind of day/week.”

A few Seton moms face long-term health issues with their children that go beyond a common cold or a bout with the flu. One main reason Suzan homeschools her daughter is that she has “some big health issues” and is “immune compromised.”

Nearly all those who responded to the survey question mentioned their appreciation of the freedom to adapt the academic schedule to the child. For students in schools outside the home, that adaptability is compromised by the demands of the classroom and the schedule. In other words, if seventh-grader Amanda misses three days of public school because of some stomach bug, or ninth-grader Jeremy misses several weeks at his private academy because of pneumonia, those two students have fallen behind in their academic studies. They’ll have to play catch-up when they reenter the classroom.

Not so for homeschooling students. These young people can’t fall behind because of illness. They should catch up on the work they have missed, but they should never feel behind. They can make up that work by extending some school days, studying on Saturdays, or using some of the summer to finish up their lessons. The schedule belongs to them and their parents, to decide what is best.

This flexibility is one of the great advantages of homeschooling. As Jo wrote, “That’s the beauty of homeschooling... if your child is sick, you can take the day off until the child feels better. No brainer. Love it.”

Even Amanda, who is new to homeschooling, recognized the “blessing of homeschooling is flexibility.” As she noted, when a parent is confronted by illness, her own or that of her child, “Curl up and accomplish what you can.”

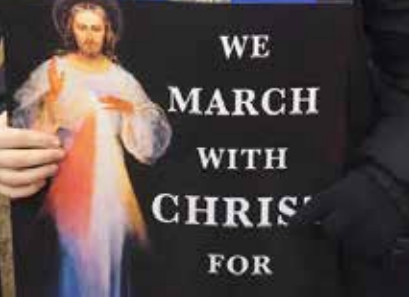
Excellent advice for all.

And special thanks to Charlotte, who provided the title here by her response: “Couch school. We do what we can those days.”



Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, NC. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, VA.

Join Seton for the March For Life 2020!



The March for Life later this month, makes for a wonderful opportunity to focus on pro-life issues in the homeschool. As Catholics, we are always concerned with pro-life causes, but the March for Life provides a tangible occasion to discuss these matters with our children.

Since it is so important to preserve our children's innocence for as long as possible, these conversations can be difficult yet the reality of the world we live in must be faced.

For a five-year-old to understand that not all mamas want their babies is a harsh reality. However, couched in the terms that all babies should be born and raised by people who love them is more gentle, satisfies the questions, and focuses on the positive.

The Papal Prayer intentions this month is that all people of goodwill promote peace and justice in the world. Since all pro-life issues start with justice, this is a good conversation opener for the children old enough to discuss such things. Is it just to decide that someone's life should end for the sake of a woman's convenience?

The pro-life movement comes from the Catholic Church's fundamental and unequivocal stand on issues pertaining to the protection of life from conception to natural death.

"Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2270

Going to the March

If going to the national March for Life or a local one is a possibility, then we urge you do so. Seton staff and students will be in Washington D.C. with a banner (*details on back cover*) and we would love for you to join us. If you are unable to join a March, then you might take your children to Mass on that day (January 24th) or on January 22nd, the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of the Unborn in the United States.



Consider involving little ones by donating baby clothes to your local Life center, by shopping for diapers and other supplies to donate, by drawing pictures and cards to send to the Sisters of Life with a small donation. Something as simple as bringing a meal to a mom of a new (or not so new)

baby is an act of love that recognizes that babies and families are to be cherished.

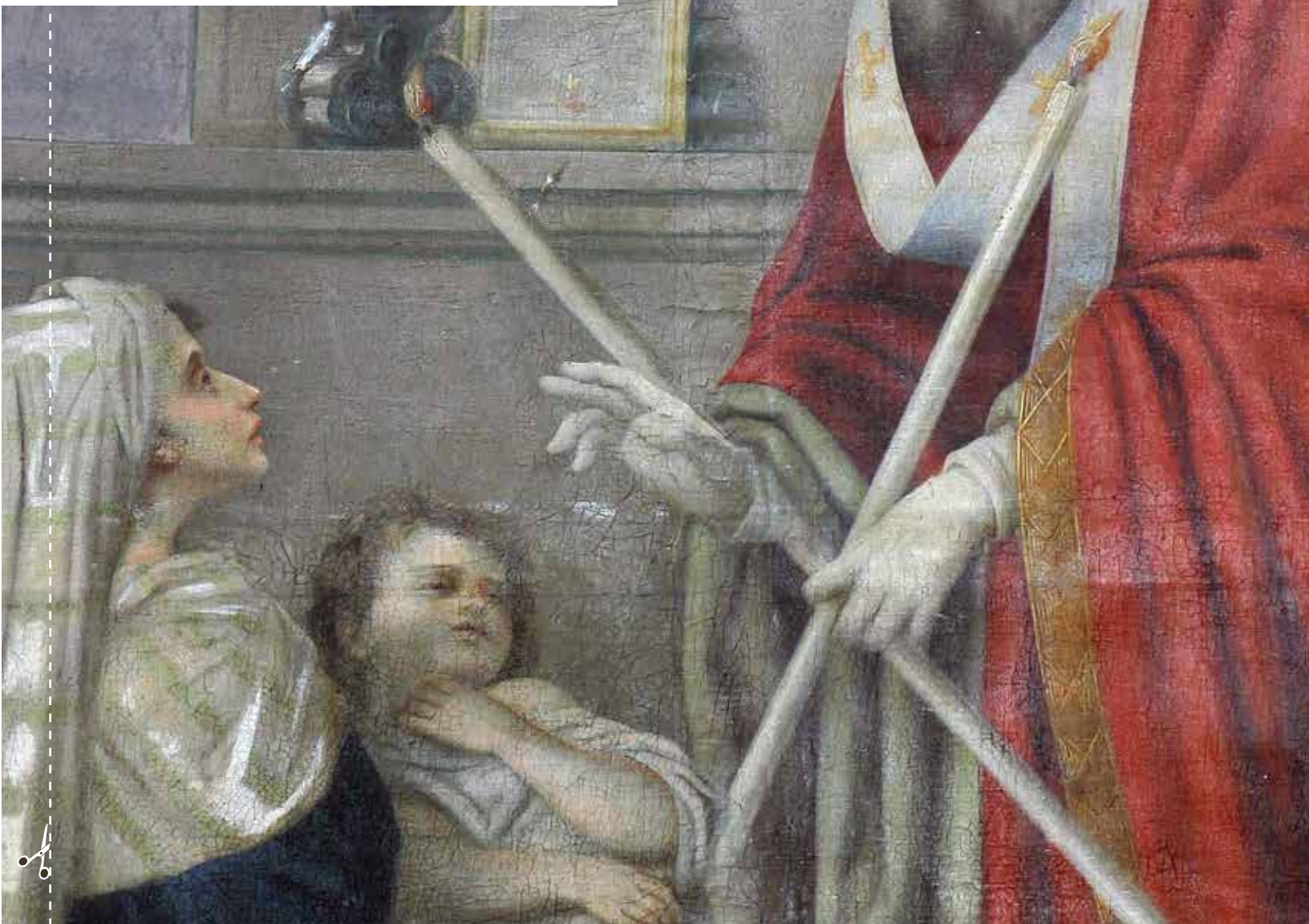
Catholic homeschoolers and Seton families in particular, are poised to change the culture. Each prayer, donation, and step along the route, brings us all closer to a world where all life is welcomed and cherished. May we live to see it.



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*.

SAINT BLAISE

FEAST DAY - FEBRUARY 3



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January 24, 2020

Details at:
[www.setonhome.org/
march-for-life](http://www.setonhome.org/march-for-life)

Believe First of All in the Family

Family, work, celebration: three of God's gifts, three dimensions of our lives that must be brought into a harmonious balance.

Harmonizing work schedules with family demands, professional life with fatherhood and motherhood, work with celebration, is important for building up a society with a human face. In this regard, always give priority to the logic of being over that of having: the first builds up, the second ends up destroying.

We must learn to believe first of all in the family, in authentic love, the kind that comes from God and unites us to him, the kind that therefore "makes us a 'we' which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is 'all in all' (1 Cor15:28)" (Deus Caritas Est, 18). Amen.

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

