

Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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"I Wish We'd Homeschooled Sooner!"

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

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



For Our Children

The Gift of Teaching the Faith

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

When Jesus met the weeping women on His Way to Calvary, Jesus said, “Weep not for Me, but weep for your children.”

Children were with their mothers in the crowd of weeping women. Though suffering on His way to Calvary, Jesus recognized the sorrow and yet also the gratitude that the weeping women showed for Him Who had worked so many miracles for children. The mothers likely remembered the time Jesus cured the possessed young man who ran around like “a lunatic,” falling often into a fire or water.

Among the weeping mothers on the Way of the Cross may have been the mother of the daughter of Jairus. When her daughter died of a sickness, this mother was deeply grateful that Jesus brought her back to life, which was seen by the group of mourners, who were friends of the mother!

There may also have been the distressed weeping mother who had followed the body of her young son in a casket as the mourners walked to the graveyard. Jesus came, stopped the crowd, and touched the casket, saying (Luke 7:14-15): “Young man, I say to thee, arise! And he that was dead, sat up and began to speak; and Jesus gave him to his mother.”

Probably present as well were Mary and Martha who walked with Jesus out to the tomb where their brother Lazarus had been buried. Once the rock was pushed back from the tomb entrance, Jesus commanded in a loud voice of authority, “Lazarus, Come Forth!” Suddenly, a living Lazarus, so wrapped in burial cloths that he had to struggle out of the dark depths of the tomb, suddenly dropped to his knees in front of Jesus. “My Lord and My God” were likely his first words in front of his astonished sisters, family, and friends.

The mother whose son, crippled from birth, lay day after day at the pool of Bethesda, may also have been present. The boy was never able to reach the miraculous



water for a cure. Suddenly Jesus came by and in an instant cured the boy as he lay alone on his cot. How grateful his parents were to be able to announce, “He was crippled and now he walks!”

Within the crowds may have been the mother of the young man born blind who was given sight by Jesus. Jesus said (John 9:5), “I am the light of the world.” Then “He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle and spread clay upon [the young man’s] eyes.” As Jesus commanded, the boy went and washed in the pool of Siloe, and “he came back seeing.”

Many of us mothers can tell stories of how Jesus has helped our children in different ways. All of us have our own ‘miraculous’ stories to tell of the great blessings that have happened in our family. All of us, as parents, certainly want to join the mothers who surrounded Jesus as He carried His cross. All of us want to join those mothers in thanksgiving as they wept in sorrow and in gratitude for the miracles that He brought to them and to their children.

Each day as we start our homeschooling, we can gaze up to Mary and Jesus in the 8th Station of the Cross and join thousands

of other mothers, thanking Jesus for the miracles He has brought into our lives. We can ask Him for the strength to bear the burdens of the day, and yet to make those burdens lighter for our children in their studies.

Let us mothers and fathers ask Jesus for the grace of patience, strength of will, and the ability to teach our children using the best methods possible. Let us ask Jesus for the gift of not only teaching our children the Faith but also for the gift of our children continuing to practice the Catholic Faith in our secular society.

Jesus, as we pray before you at the 8th Station, help us to take the time out of our busy day and say, “Thank You, Jesus, for sacrificing for me, for my spouse, and for the souls of my children.” Help us parents to teach our children that without religious education and without the Catholic Faith as the basis of all learning, all other education is of little worth for eternal life. Amen.



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*.



your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

My sister says that I cannot give the quality of education that my child could receive from professional teachers. How do I answer her?

Most Catholics choose homeschooling because we want our family to live a different kind of lifestyle, to live daily the teachings of Jesus Christ. We want to live the Catholic family life that we know God wants us to live. Children attending schools are being influenced by the secular culture, even in Catholic schools. The secular values permeate the secular textbooks being used in all schools, Catholic and otherwise, taking federal funding for their textbooks.

The highest “quality” of education is one that reflects the truth about all things. Since God is the Creator of all things, how can an education in any subject be the best, be truthful, if the courses totally ignore the existence of the Creator! What “quality” does an education have if the students ultimately ignore the existence of God and His commandments? How happy can anyone be without an education which recognizes God and His laws? How happy can “educated” professionals be if they reject God and their children live secular lifestyles?

That being said, studies consistently show that homeschooled children are receiving a better education than public school students. This is mainly due to the personalized attention that parents can give their children which is not possible in a classroom situation. A classroom teacher may be very good and knowledgeable, but the teacher may have thirty students in the classroom, with only a very few minutes for each student.

For research findings on the quality of home education, visit the National Home Education Research Institute at nheri.org.

How can I help my high school daughter keep up with her English assignments?

Before starting any course, it's a very good idea to look through the entire course and have a good grasp of everything that is required. Sometimes there are bigger assignments which take more time, and it's good to be aware, for example, that a research paper may be due in the third quarter. Suddenly in mid year, for the English courses especially, the parents and student realize they should have been preparing a little at a time for the final book analysis project or the research report.

Even in the elementary grades, the book report book should be read early in the quarter, with notes related to the assigned topics taken down on paper or written in the book margins. The report can be written later after some thought has gone into what needs to be written. Reading and writing the book analysis in the last week of the quarter will result in a quick report but little analysis.

Some families have a white board on which to write weekly assignments. It can be made interesting with happy faces & with colorful white-board pens. As assignments are completed, students can add their own artistic images to convey success.

Another good way to keep track of assignments and activities is to use an online calendar. That will quickly tell you what is coming up for today, for this week, or for this month. Parents can easily create calendars for themselves and for each of

their children. These usually tie into all your devices: laptop computer, desktop computer, tablet, or phone. One free online calendar application is Google Calendar, but others are available as well.

What do you offer to help my son with his American History course?

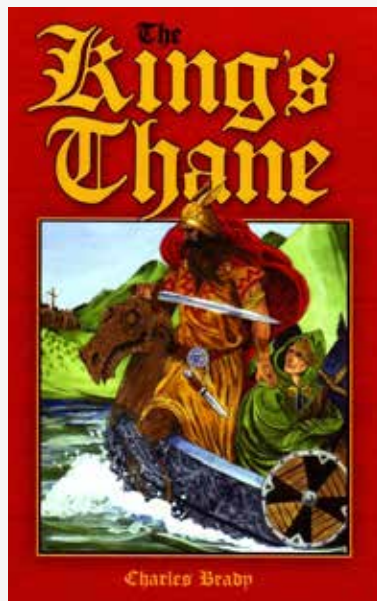
Probably our most popular high school course is American History. The lesson plans include numerous essays which give in-depth insights into some of the people and events. Students need to read those as well as the textbook. We have a lively American History Message Board for students and counselors. In addition, Mr. Bruce Clark has made about 100 audios which have become extremely popular. In addition, Mr. Clark and Mr. Nick Marmejelo are producing a series of videos, which are proving very popular. While all these additions are not required for studying for the test questions, they do encourage students to be interested and then hopefully to be concerned about studying enough and properly before taking the tests.

History is essentially a story, and as such, should be interesting and exciting for students. If your son thinks history is boring, then see if he can find any person or event in history which does interest him. If his interest can be sparked, then studying history will become much easier for him.

Can I point out to my son which answers he has wrong on his test?

Yes, as long as you don't tell him the answers but make him rethink what he has written. He should not go back through the textbook, however, and look up the answers. If you see that he has not passed the test because of so many wrong answers, take the test away from him and have him restudy the chapter, without having the questions in front of him.

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After you believe he has sufficiently studied, give him the test again.

In some subjects, such as in math or English, for which concepts build upon each other, you may need to go back more than one chapter for review. If you see a continuing lack of understanding, you may need for your son to review the material from an earlier grade level.

How can I help my 7th grade son with his assignments now that our family financial situation requires me to go back to work?

It's definitely not an easy thing to keep up homeschooling when financial realities require both parents to work. The best situation is if you can find work which you can do from home, or at least which you can do from home some days. With the advent of telecommuting and phone-service type jobs, in-home work seems to be more and more available. Employment websites, such as Monster.com, have entire sections devoted to at-home work.

If you must work outside your home, try to find a job so you can work part-time in the afternoon or evening, so that your "best" morning time is given to homeschooling your son.

Some parents have found ways to take their child to work, either in their office or in the same building, or in a college or public library nearby where they can help their child during lunch breaks. Even if you take your child with you to work only a day or two a week, it can actually be a great change of pace for the student, which can lead to the student getting more done.

Might I encounter problems by joining a homeschool group, as my friend tells me?

Sometimes a homeschooling group gets very enthusiastic about activities, such as plays, dances, and sports. While all of them may be great activities, if they keep students away from their needed studies, they may not be so great after all. Parents need to be highly selective in choosing a limited number of activities, and ones which will definitely benefit the individual child and not cause a sense of being inadequate.

Another problem might occur with a mom who is driving several children to activities and becoming so busy, she becomes tired and cannot keep up with managing the homeschooling. Stay in prayer, discuss the situation with your spouse, and you are likely to make the best decisions for your children.

I am sure my son can skip a grade in math. Why does Seton want to hold him back?

Our thirty-plus years of experience have shown that children are happy and successful when they can do the problems fairly easily. Once you place a student in a higher grade without finishing the lower grade, problems arise as new concepts are presented too soon. We believe a student should finish the normal grade level text and then go on to the next level. The age or grade levels don't matter, as long as each textbook follows the previous textbook.

If your son knows the math in his current grade level, let him prove it by working out all or most of the problems in every lesson. He should be able to finish the book in half the time, at which time you could order the next grade level. He can enroll in the next level math course in mid-year or at anytime he finishes the current grade level.



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setonhome.org/colleges



"I Wish We'd Homeschooled Sooner!"

The Whalen Family Story

When it was time for our oldest to go to school, we knew it had to be a Catholic school. At the time we lived on post in Fort Bragg, NC and we traveled 30 minutes each way so that our son could attend Catholic school.

Raising our children Catholic was of utmost importance to us, so we didn't see this as a sacrifice. It was a necessity. A couple of years later we moved to Baltimore. As more babies arrived, more children went to our local Catholic school. And then suddenly, we were constantly busy! Between afterschool activities and homework, the nights got longer and longer.

At some point after number seven started school, I started growing interested in homeschooling. I wanted our life to calm down. Our children had become involved in swimming, and as swimmers know, this is a huge time commitment.

Life became a series of running from athletics to boy scouts to everything else. Our Chevrolet Suburban, which we had

thoroughly outgrown, had become more our home than our home was.

I'm not a teacher!

As much as I contemplated homeschooling I kept coming back to the same question; how could I possibly do this? I wasn't a teacher, and I wasn't even able to make my boys bring home the right books for homework! However, each time I researched homeschooling, I would end up on the Seton website, and I'd find myself reading about another family.

One day I called. I told the counselor from Seton that I was very interested but equally unsure if I was even qualified to teach. She laughed and told me that I was already teaching my children, and that Seton would just provide the resources and support. Well, maybe I could do this. We enrolled.

My children love to receive boxes, so when the Seton boxes arrived, it felt like Christmas! Everyone was excited about the

books and the bubble wrap. I remember hoping the excitement would last. A few weeks after we got the books, our first day of homeschooling arrived.

My husband took the two youngest to the zoo and dropped the two eldest at high school. As five of my children sat at the table, it became very evident that they needed work; they were definitely behind and hadn't been prepared for the next grade level by their previous school! By the time we had fully figured ourselves out, three kids needed to go back a year in math, and two needed to go back a year in English. I was shocked! Thankfully, Seton helped us navigate the curriculum changes without any problems.

A New Day

The biggest thing you learn when you go from one to two children (or ten) is that somehow, they all will get the attention they need.

The second thing you come to realize is that every day is a new day, no matter how badly the current day is going! We quickly discovered that these principles hold true for homeschooling. Everyone needed different amounts of help with different subjects at different times, and sometimes, it didn't seem possible to keep up.

The beginning was hard! My children were not accustomed to so much reading and writing. My boys complained of cramps from writing; my daughter wanted review sheets with the answers. It took work to get everyone onboard! Many days, our only hope lay in starting over the next day.

Now, halfway through our second year, things are a lot smoother. After completing 2 Math books, my daughter aced the Math section of The High School Catholic Exam. I think this was more of a relief for me than for her! My younger kids are sailing along, and my middle-schoolers have adjusted!

We take day ski trips and visit the zoo or the science center. We are still running in the evening, but the structure of the day seems to make this easier. I am not limited to a simple awareness of what the children have to accomplish for homework anymore; now, I fully understand where they are and what they know. I know when they understand and I know when they need extra help. This has been huge!

I wish I had taken the plunge and homeschooled sooner. Our children are learning more about being Catholic than

ever before. All of the subjects at Seton are carefully intermingled with Catholic facts, history and saint stories. Our kids are not only learning the commandments and sacraments, but now understand their practical meaning for our lives. Even I am learning more, and I went to 17 years of Catholic school!

Family First

Homeschooling really fits for us in a special way because it places family first. Our children have had the privilege of growing up with many brothers and sisters. The older ones serve as role models every day to the younger ones. In turn they love and support each other. Through adoption our family has grown even closer. Our children know that the miracle of adoption is just as amazing and powerful as the miracle of birth. Each and every child reminds us of the profound grace and wonder of God.

Homeschooling has given us the privilege of more time with our children. In our quest to raise good moral people with a strong and deeply-rooted Catholic faith, we have learned that we need to talk to them and we need to lead by example. We talk all of the time about being a good person and what that means, and Seton's materials support our message.

Our children are participating in missions and outreach, and they are happier when they do! Last summer our oldest went on a mission trip to Haiti with the Archdiocese



of Baltimore; the things he learned on that trip will affect him forever. He learned what it means to be rich in spirit, no matter how poor you are. Through his pictures and stories, our younger children see his excitement, and they cannot wait until it is their turn to go.

Though no day goes as planned, we get the work done, and our children learn. To say we are fortunate is an understatement; I thank God each morning for everything that we have! I can honestly say that I love what I am doing!





HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH

at Seton Home Study School

OUR PHILOSOPHY

It takes only a short period of exposure to Seton Home Study School before it becomes evident that the curriculum is extremely focused on English. Second only to the study of religion, studying English sits at the front and center of Seton Home Study School's approach to education.

You might ask why this is so, especially given that America lags well behind the average in international math scores, and performs little better in the sciences. Isn't it part of Seton Home Study School's mission to provide an academically rigorous education that surpasses what is otherwise available to its students? Yes, that is part of Seton Home Study School's mission.

As stated in our literature, "Seton Home Study School provides a Christ-centered, academically strong program." However, our mission statement takes a step forward by acknowledging that the purpose of the education we provide is to "educate... children for eternal salvation, as well as to form good citizens in this world to influence others to live the Christian life."

In a word, that means religion and English. Evangelization and conversion are the desired legacy of Seton Home Study School, but that cannot be accomplished without communication.



At Seton Home Study School, we believe that the most fundamental skills are reading and writing, which are the building blocks of effective communication and prerequisites for success in anything else.

We prioritize learning to think and analyze, learning to organize one's thoughts, and learning to express oneself clearly because we know that without those skills, a student will find it difficult to excel in other academic disciplines, to say nothing of the workplace and the public arena.

CURRICULUM

In order to achieve the end goal of developing good communication skills in each student, Seton incorporates a carefully planned trajectory into the design of the High School English curriculum. Starting with the basics, expository writing, persuasive writing, and then high-level interpretive essay writing are each covered at length in 9th through 11th grades, respectively.

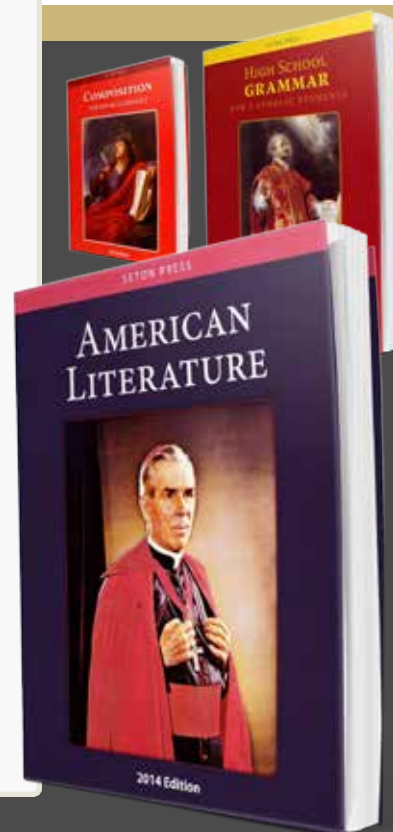
Over the course of a student's experience at Seton, he or she will have every opportunity to develop the ability to write clearly, logically, and persuasively.

An equally important part of learning to write well is reading good writing. This is why Seton emphasizes reading the classics, or the fine works of literature.

By reading high-quality literature that has stood the test of time, Seton students are exposed to the best examples of literary style, and are able to cultivate an appreciation for good writing that will filter into their own written work.

As with the writing component of the high school English curriculum, the literary component follows a carefully designed trajectory, beginning with simple classics in 9th grade.

More complex literature is introduced in 10th grade, followed by a survey course in American Literature for 11th grade, and a survey course in British Literature for 12th grade.





DR. CLARK'S ENGLISH STORIES

When I am asked why Seton puts so much emphasis on Grammar and Composition, and why Seton Home Study School demands so much in the high school English courses, I immediately think of two phone calls I received.

One mother who had several children enrolled with Seton constantly called for help from me and from the English counselors over a period of several years. She indicated that her own education had been lacking.

After about six years, she stopped phoning, even as we were beginning to see a high quality of writing in the assignments her children submitted. We finally met this mother and her children at a graduation, and were struck by how articulate and educated they were. All of the children were going to college or to other professional schools. Each one of her children told an amazing success story, a story of determination to learn and to achieve combined with a desire to be better Catholics and better people.

The mother and the children professed their conviction that the analysis and critical thinking skills, as well as

the demands of organized writing assignments at Seton helped them to become the kind of educated Catholics they wanted to be.

Another time, a father phoned to thank me for the high school English courses. He said he was a research scientist, but had always struggled with writing his research papers for peer review. One day, his high school son, who was enrolled with Seton, helped write the father's research report based on what had been covered in the Seton high school English classes.

The father and son began to work together regularly on writing the father's reports. After a while, the father was able successfully to write his own reports. It was then that he phoned me and thanked Seton for the English courses that provided such excellent writing and analysis skills that had benefited him in his occupation of scientific research.

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH COUNSELORS



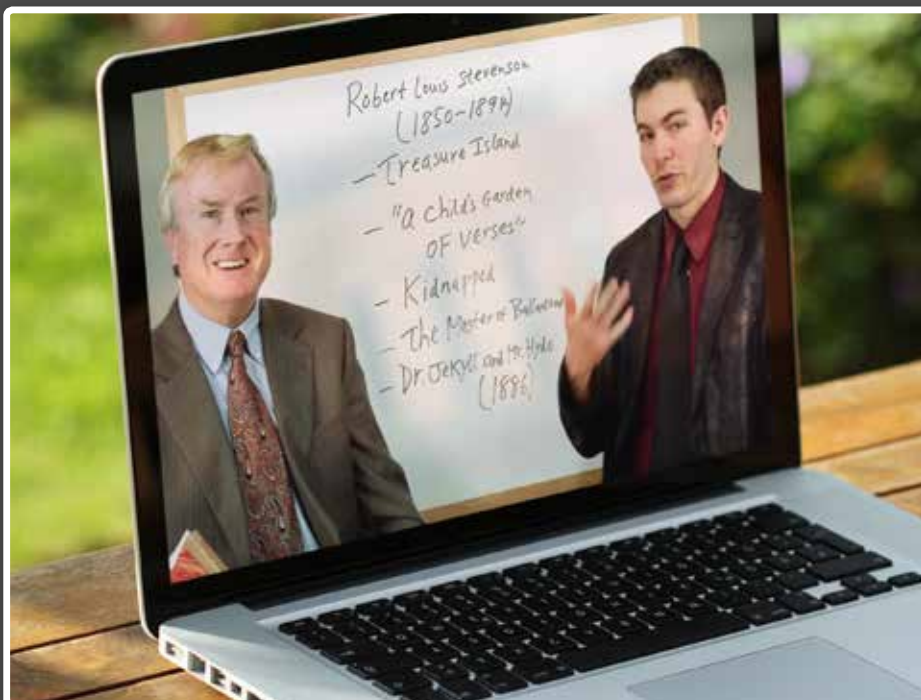
ELIZABETH WAGNER

Miss Wagner holds a degree in English from Christendom College with a concentration in literary studies.



WALKER SOLIS

Mr. Solis holds a degree in English from Franciscan University of Steubenville with a concentration in writing.



RESOURCES

Enrollment in Seton Home Study School's high school English program gives students access to two full-time English counselors, Mr. Walker Solis and Miss Elizabeth Wagner, who are available during business hours to assist students via email or phone.

In addition, Seton hosts message boards for the English students, and constantly adds to its bank of online resources: extensive video tutorials, sample essays, assignment tips, and other helpful supplements.

This wealth of resources ensures success for every student in the high school English program.

BY JOHN CLARK

SNOW BLINDNESS

(To those of you in sunny Florida or So Cal, this column is not for you. I've seen your weather report, and because of that, I have to confess the sin of envy.)

As I write this column in mid-February, I am winter-sick. (Note to reader: Before some of you write in, complaining that “winter-sick” is not a word, I already know that. But since the literary geniuses of the world have proven incapable of inventing a word that means “exhausted and/or disgusted by the very idea of abridged days, frigid weather, and the omnipresence of ice, snow, and frost” my word coinage will have to suffice as the currency of complaint.)

Like an obnoxious guest who lingers long after the others have left, this winter has worn out its welcome. Earlier this week, we had a snowstorm in Virginia. Again. By my admittedly unscientific recollection, this represented our one millionth snowfall this winter. Growing up, I seem to recall winter being a season; recently, it seems like more of a way of life.

Lately this seems to affect, among the other winter parade of horrors, my appearance. I'm not sure if anyone else has this problem, but once a winter hat touches my head, my hair is irrevocably messed up for the rest of the day. So every morning, I am faced with a choice: do I wear a winter hat outside and wreck my hair, or do I fore-go the hat and risk frostbite on my ears? Granted, having “hat-head” does serendipitously distract from my chapped lips, but it still looks weird. I usually opt for the hat, and then regret my decision when I meet with clients later for lunch.

Of course, a proper coiffure pales in comparison to the bigger problem of the

falling mercury. It's getting ridiculous.

Yesterday, I looked at the weather report for the rest of this week. The temperature on one of the days is supposed to dip down to minus 4 degrees. How cold is that? That's so cold that if I left a pint of Haagen Dazs Spiced Pecan Turtle ice cream in my Mustang, I could bring it in, and put it in my freezer to begin the thawing process. (Of course, this is a phony scenario. There's no way I'm driving my convertible until June.)

Yes, minus 4 is cold. But that doesn't even consider the “wind chill,” an understated meteorological term if ever there were one. I know this from recent experience. For Valentine's Day, Lisa and I went to Confession, followed by dinner and a little shopping. By the time we made it out of the store, it was about 10 degrees with wind gusts of over 40 MPH. Since this is an academic journal of sorts, just for fun, let me give you the following problem:

Find the solution. If John and Lisa are on a Confession/Dinner/Shopping date, and they experience a temperature of 10 degrees and wind gusts of 40 MPH, how cold does it feel to them?

It's a trick question. The solution is: move to San Diego.

I feel like blaming someone for all this cold, so I will. Here's a shout-out to Adam (from Garden of Eden fame) whose desire for forbidden fruit has made it impossible for the rest of us to grow fruit for five months of the year. Why do I blame Adam? Because surely, winter came as a consequence, not of autumn, but of the Fall. Are you going to tell me that, had Adam not fallen, he would be scraping ice

off his windshield every morning for three months? Not likely.

I have tried to see the bright side to winter, but all I get is snow blindness. Lisa, however, remains insistently cheery. On the way back from Mass yesterday, Lisa pointed out the majesty of the snowflake. Her point—although the sound of her lovely voice was muffled by my hat, so I'm not reporting this monologue verbatim—was that the snowflakes on the ground glistened like diamonds and lay gently on the ground as a reminder of God's creation.

Yes, that is true. But as I tried to regain feeling in my cheeks, I couldn't help but think of another reminder of God's creation: the Caribbean.

A long time ago, on an island far, far away, Lisa and I went to the Bahamas for our honeymoon. In the Bahamas, there is white sand that, ironically, makes you forget what white snow looks like. The warm and serene turquoise water stretches into the distance to gently kiss the azure sky at the horizon. The wind coming off the water feels like Creation softly sighing in relaxation. In other words, it's the polar opposite of the polar vortex.

So forgive me if I marvel at *that* wonder of God's creation. I may never make it back to the Caribbean, but I feel warmer knowing that a place like that exists.

Read John Clark's weekly blog at
setonmagazine.com/johnclark



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

5 Reasons to Revive the Powerful Practice of Reading Aloud to Your Children

BY CHRISTINE SMITHA

Before television and video games, books were a primary source of pleasure for human beings. Beyond the simple good of reading books to oneself, there was the added pleasure of reading aloud, a once common family activity that yielded countless benefits, now all but lost to a generation that filters life through earbuds and touchscreens.

Furthermore, hearing is actually the most natural way of learning, wired into the human way of being from the beginning. Thus, reading with one's children is an important educational tool, as well as an overlooked source of inspiration.

In light of that, here are five reasons to read aloud with your children, or five ways reading aloud will help your children for life.

1. Strengthen the Bond

First and possibly foremost, reading aloud will strengthen the bond you share with your child. Everybody knows the old saying, "the family that prays together stays together." That may be almost as true for the families that read together. The hours whiled away in family story-time are hours of relative peace and harmony, where the children learn that simply being together is a valuable thing.

The father who reads to his children suddenly gains extra command over his children's attention and affection because he is now the storyteller as well as the disciplinarian. The children used to listening for the great adventures read by their father will be that much more attuned to his voice when he speaks truth and wisdom, or demands virtue and excellence.

The mother who reads to her children becomes precious to them as the weaver of fairytales, as well as the provider of food

and comfort. Children captivated by their mother's gentle reading of treasured tales will turn to her with fondness for guidance and love even at those awkward stages when many children seem embarrassed even to have parents.

Most importantly, young men and women who have grown up within a read-aloud family will seek to perpetuate their happy experience of family life in their own futures.

2. Foster a Love of Literature

Reading aloud will foster a love of literature in your child. Children emulate their parents, and subconsciously learn to value the things they see their parents value. When fathers and mothers make a point of reading and reading aloud, children see that books are important, worthwhile, and to be cherished.

Not long ago, I heard a story from a family that loved reading-aloud. As the children grew up and moved away, they never lost their love for books. One boy had grown very fond of an antique Oxford dictionary the family had—the kind that is so big and heavy you can hardly lift it. That young man grew up and got married, and couldn't have been more thrilled to find that his parents' wedding gift was the battered old dictionary he had loved as a child.

Children who have grown up with stories being read to them learn that books can become good friends. Consequently, those who love books will never be alone; they will never be bored; they will never be at a loss, for even in hard times, they will know the comfort of books and the inspiration of the great ideas they have encountered therein.

3. Form the Imagination

Reading aloud will form your child's moral

imagination, that distinctly human ability to discern right order in what is presented to one. Children gain their foundational understanding of right and wrong from stories, whether Bible stories, saint stories, or fairy stories. From these stories, children also learn how to separate what is beautiful from what is ugly, what is wholesome from what is valueless, what is artistic from what is inept or banal, and what is substantial from what is frivolous.

Children who have grown up amidst vital, meaningful literature read by parents who are motivated to convey the truths of that literature will be better able to discern truth from error and make prudent choices regarding life's decisions.

4. Expand Mental Borders

While establishing the boundaries of a moral imagination, reading aloud will simultaneously expand the borders of your child's mind. Exposure to the great ideas, great characters, and great adventures of literature will foster an openness to new ideas as well as a creative approach to thinking that will serve your child well in problem-solving throughout life.

Furthermore, research indicates that

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Christine Smitha holds a B.A. in English and Literature from Christendom College. She has taught Literature for nine years, and enjoys dabbling in journalism when she gets a chance. She is currently Seton Magazine's Assistant Editor.





The 3 Holiest Moments of the Whole Year

BY FATHER STEPHEN MCGRAW

We stand on the threshold of the holiest week of the year. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday, when we recall both Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His Blessed Passion. The week comes to its climax with the Sacred Triduum, the three holiest moments of the whole year: Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the solemn Veneration of the Cross and Liturgy of Good Friday, and the Solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection at the Great Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday.

The first of these three moments, on Holy Thursday, recalls the last supper before Christ's Death. This was Christ's own sacred Passover, in which He gave us for the first time His own flesh to eat and blood to drink. Here, He sacramentally offered Himself as our Paschal Lamb to atone for the sins of the world, commanding His first priests, the Apostles, to continue this offering in His memory until He comes again. Here He left us all His new commandment of love as shown by the sacred gesture of washing the disciples' feet.

The second moment recalls the actual event of Christ's sacrifice in history, on that first Good Friday when He was crucified. The great liturgy of that day centers on Christ's Passion, followed by the veneration of the Cross of the Lord and Holy Communion. No Mass is said anywhere in the world on Good Friday, but enough bread is consecrated at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday so that

there will be enough to feed the faithful on Good Friday.

The third and greatest moment of the Sacred Triduum, the climax of the whole Church year, arrives after the sun goes down on Holy Saturday. It is the Church's solemn vigil of the Resurrection and it continues through the Masses of Easter Sunday until Vespers or Evening Prayer. If only we could realize the greatness of that night! Christ's Bride, the Church, is so beside herself with joy and so transported by love of her Divine Bridegroom that she exclaims, "O felix culpa!" about the sin of our first parents. The Church cries, "O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, that won for us so great a Redeemer!" because that sin brought Christ down to earth.

The Night we Live For

Last year, I was in Puerto Rico for the funeral of a fellow priest's father, and while I was there, we made a pilgrimage to the city of Caguas, to the tomb of Blessed Carlos Manuel Rodriguez. Blessed Carlos, or "Charlie" as he was called, might well be considered the patron saint of the Easter Vigil. His well known 'watchword' was: "Vivimos para esa noche"—"We live for that night!"—and he truly did. His life was illuminated by faith in the risen Christ, and he truly lived the Paschal Mystery, the mystery of Christ's saving Death and Resurrection. In his heroic labors as a catechist, despite his chronic intestinal illness that led to his death at the age of 44, he strove to share with

God's people the profound significance of the Easter mystery. He worked tirelessly to encourage the faithful to be conscious and lively participants in the Sacred Triduum as the center and goal of Catholic faith and as an inexhaustible source of grace.

In his lifetime, Blessed Carlos witnessed the revival of the Easter Vigil and Sacred Triduum during the 1950's under Pope Pius XII. His efforts prepared the church in Puerto Rico for a fruitful reception of the authentic teachings of the Second Vatican Council on the centrality of the Paschal Mystery in Christian faith, worship and life. He died in the odor of sanctity on July 13, 1963, while his brother was reciting the Easter Exsultet. In the very year of his death, the Fathers of the Council brought to fruition Blessed Carlos Manuel's vision in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2001, and we now await his canonization.

Of course, the glory of the Easter vigil continues with the morning glory of Easter Sunday, and the Sacred Triduum draws to its close on Easter Sunday evening. May we all participate in these coming holy days with the same zeal and love for God manifested by Blessed Carlos Manuel Rodriguez.

Welcome to Holy Week!



Fr. Stephen F. McGraw, graduated from Christendom College with a B.A. in History. He has been active as a Spiritual Director for the Legion of Mary and in Hispanic ministry, and has been a speaker at national home-schooling conferences.

5 Reasons to Revive the Powerful Practice of Reading Aloud to Your Children

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people who have been exposed to good literature perform much better on interpersonal skills tests than those who have not. This means that children who have encountered good literature will be better able to relate to the people around them, to empathize with others, and interact more effectively in both work and social environments.

5. Increase Academic Skill

Reading aloud will increase academic skill in your child. Obviously, this is true regarding literary analysis and critical thinking. However, literature is not just for those who “major” in English. This might surprise you, but a college math professor once told me that if he had the freedom to manage his class as he wanted, he would open every session with 15 minutes of reading fairytales to his students. Why? This professor’s opinion was that an active imagination and the ability to think creatively are absolutely necessary to doing high level math, and that these skills are developed primarily by engaging with stories.

On another level, much of what a student does in education is communicate what he has learned, particularly in written compositions. Students raised in a read-aloud household have a stronger appreciation for the sound of words, which contributes to the value and meaning of a piece of writing. This frequently causes students to read their own writings out loud. The habit of reading aloud is extremely valuable because hearing one’s words often makes the difference between catching and missing errors, between developing good or even great or only mediocre writing skills, and between arguing convincingly or unconvincingly. The sound of words influences all of these aspects of composition. Good writing, therefore, greatly depends upon good reading out loud.

Not everyone is born a natural lover of reading, however, and as mentioned before, hearing is the first way people learn. Therefore, it is vital for parents to read out loud, so as to enhance their children’s learning, to encourage their children to read, and to provide those who don’t yet read or who read less with the same benefits open to the avid readers.

Reading aloud might be one of the most important things you ever do for your child. So, in case reading aloud isn’t currently a part of your family culture, I encourage you to give it a try. You might find the practice surprises you with its power for your children, both now and for their whole lives.

The University of the UNIVERSE

“The world is charged with the grandeur of God...” So runs a line from Gerard Manley Hopkins, the great Jesuit Victorian poet. Spring is rapidly approaching, so it is a good time to plan a curriculum with our grand world itself as the text.

As much as might be learned from formal education, even to the doctoral level, there is much, much more to be learned simply by contemplating God’s grandeur in His creation. Everything that exists came into being by God’s Word, so logically speaking there is a theological message in even the smallest material particle. Everything has a great deal more to it than meets the human eye.

Seton students are competent grammarians; still even they will find their brains in a twist when contemplating a grammar beyond human language. Try this: God is the most interesting Persons you will ever know! Absolutely true, but human grammar does not quite get around the concept. Even as mundane a construct as grammar can point to a profound theology, since obviously our term for existence is not adequate to describe the existence of God.

So it goes for absolutely everything in being. God said, “Let there be duck-

billed platypus” and that exceedingly odd creature appeared. No one seems to have developed a comprehensive theology for the platypus, but there is certainly a divine message there pointing beyond the creature to the Creator.

The most abstruse problems in Calculus and the most esoteric reaches in Astrophysics still fall far short of the divine equation, and it is certain that we can never fully grasp the simple complexity that is God.

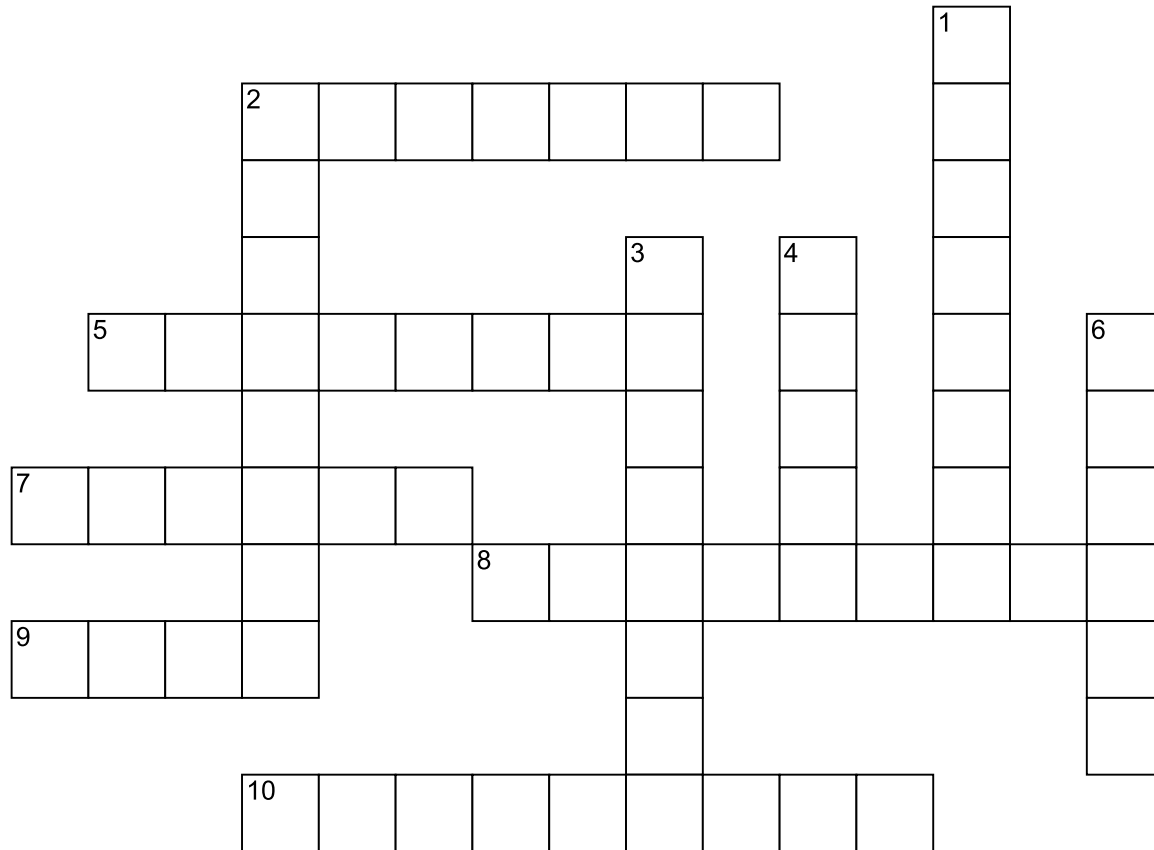
When pursuing higher education, it is all too easy to lose oneself in an ivory tower. The importance of leaving the tower and immersing oneself in “the grandeur of God” this Spring season cannot be over-stated.

Every student should keep in mind that the most interesting and most important lessons in life are to be learned well outside the classroom, in contemplating what God means by a supernova, or the Eucharist, or even a duck-billed platypus!



Bob Wiesner earned a B.A. in Philosophy from Christendom College and his M.A. in Theological Studies from Maryknoll School of Theology. His passions include classical music, iconography, and history.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS



ACROSS

- 2 "Father ___ them, for they know not what they do."
- 5 Jesus said to the good thief, "This day you will be with me in ___."
- 7 St. Simon of ___ helped Jesus carry his cross.
- 8 The first Station of the Cross is: "Jesus is ___ to death."
- 9 The name of the Apostle who stood by the Cross with Our Lady.
- 10 Jesus consoled the women of ___

DOWN

- 1 "Weep not for me, but weep for your ___."
- 2 There are ___ Stations of the Cross.
- 3 St. ___ wiped the face of Jesus with her veil.
- 4 Our Lord falls ___ times during the Stations of the Cross.
- 6 We remember Our Lord's death on Good ___.



2015 Catholic Homeschooling Conferences

The following is a list of Catholic homeschooling conferences where Seton will offer materials for preview and sale, as well as a \$30-per-child enrollment discount (grades 1-12).

MO, St. Louis March 27-28, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

2015 St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference
Cardinal Rigali Center
20 Archbishop May Drive
St. Louis, MO 63119
www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com

OH, Cincinnati April 9-11, 2015 (Thurs.-Sat.)

Midwest Homeschool Convention
Duke Energy Convention Center
525 Elm Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202
www.greathomeschoolconventions.com

LA, Covington April 11, 2015 (Sat.)

Roman Catholic Homeschool Association of Louisiana "Catholic Homeschooling: A Way of Life"
St. Peter's Catholic Church, (St. Mary's Hall)
125 E. 19th Avenue, Covington, LA 70433
www.rchal.org

AZ, Phoenix April 18, 2015 (Sat.)

Arizona Catholic Homeschool Conference
Diocesan Pastoral Center
400 E. Monroe Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004
www.shhe.org

TX, Houston April 18, 2015 (Sat.)

Houston Homeschool & Parent Conference
University of St. Thomas
Jerabek Athletic Center
3800 Montrose Boulevard
Houston, TX 77006
www.arch-homeschool.org

TN, Nashville April 18, 2015 (Sat.)

IHM Tennessee Homeschool Conference
Aquinas College – Main Building
4210 Harding Pike, Nashville, TN 37205
www.ihmconference.org

FL, Jacksonville April 24, 2015 (Fri.)

IHM Jacksonville Homeschool Conference
Embassy Suites Jacksonville – Baymeadows
9300 Baymeadows Road
Jacksonville, FL 32256
www.ihmconference.org

TX, San Antonio April 30, 2015 (Thurs.)

IHM South Texas Homeschool Conference
New Braunfels Civic Convention Center
375 South Castell Avenue
New Braunfels, TX 78130
www.ihmconference.org

MD, Mt. Airy May 8-9, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM Maryland Homeschool Conference
St. Michael's Parish
Poplar Springs
1125 St. Michael's Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771
www.ihmconference.org

WI, Milwaukee May 15, 2015 (Fri.)

IHM Wisconsin Homeschool Conference
Waukesha County Exposition Center East Hall
1000 Northview Road, Waukesha, WI 53188
www.ihmconference.org

For additional conferences, venues, vendors, and contact information, visit www.setonhome.org/conferences

Student Achievements



Caroline | I placed 2nd at Junior Olympics Cross Country Nationals in 11/12 year old division, PR of 10:24. A 13 year old from New Hampshire, I've been running for 6 years. I love snowboarding and cross-country skiing.



Catherine | I was awarded the Msgr Bukowski Award, an honors scholarship presented to those with exceptional academic achievements and leadership.



Mark | I received an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy. When I start on 25 June, all my family will be affiliated with the United States Air Force!

Share your achievement!

Visit us online at

www.setonmagazine.com/students

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

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Great books for Catholic Readers | Explore by Grade Level!

History comes alive in these books from the Seton Collection of Children's Literature. Set in different time periods and locations, these novels teach Christian virtues and life's lessons through exciting tales of adventure, adversity and fun!

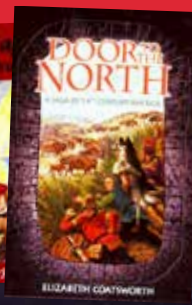
www.setonbooks.com/childrensliterature



Early Readers



Grades 3-5



Grades 6-8



In the light of God's word, I would like to ask you, dear families: Do you pray together from time to time as a family? Some of you do, I know. But so many people say to me: But how can we? ... it is clear: humbly, before God. Each one, with humility, allowing themselves to be gazed upon by the Lord and imploring his goodness, that he may visit us. ...Praying the Our Father together, around the table, is not something extraordinary: it's easy. And praying the Rosary together, as a family, is very beautiful and a source of great strength! And also praying for one another! The husband for his wife, the wife for her husband, both together for their children, the children for their grandparents, ... praying for each other.

This is what it means to pray in the family and it is what makes the family strong: prayer.

*Holy Mass for the Family Day,
Homily of Pope Francis, Sunday, 27 October 2013*