

Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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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.



Patron of Homeschooling

St. Catherine of Siena

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Easter is a celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The four Gospel writers give the details of the finding of the empty tomb, the cloths lying inside the tomb, the appearances of Jesus to Mary Magdalen and to all the Apostles. For forty days, various people saw Jesus physically alive after His crucifixion.

Easter is also a celebration of the eternal life we will all experience, and a reminder that what we do in our earthly life will have eternal consequences in the next life. Our good works, our obedience to the Laws of God, and all those activities which helped others will affect the kind of eternal life we will have with our risen and glorified bodies.

St. Catherine of Siena, whose feast day we celebrate on April 29, understood the meaning of eternal life with our glorified bodies. She was adopted as the patron saint of homeschooling Catholic leaders back in the 1980s when we gathered together in the Chicago area to discuss Catholic homeschooling issues.

A Homeschooled Saint

St. Catherine was the 24th child born to a working family in Siena in northern Italy in 1347. Her brothers grew up helping their father in his fairly prosperous wool-dyeing shop. He had workshops, a farm, and a vineyard, all bringing in money needed for his large family. The brothers helped the father, while Catherine and her sisters learned the household duties. Her “homeschooling” did not include reading or writing or arithmetic, but it did include learning and living and practicing the Catholic Faith. The family was known for their generosity and acts of mercy in the community as well as their active participation in the parish church.

Catherine loved the local St. Dominic parish where she went to daily Mass. The

Dominican priests would visit her home regularly, so she continually heard about St. Dominic. At six years old, Catherine had a vision of St. Dominic which affected her permanently. Stories in the area say that after that vision, Catherine was no longer the same.

Catherine began to lead an intensive private prayer life, often going to her little room, the size of a modern closet, to pray and meditate. She was quiet in the family, and accepted unkind remarks from her siblings and even from her mother. As a young girl, she would say many Rosaries.

In her teen years, her parents pressured her frequently to prepare herself for marriage. In response, Catherine cut off her beautiful, long, golden, brown hair, an unusual color for Italian girls, to discourage her mother.

When Catherine was twelve years old, the insistence that she marry grew so overwhelming that Catherine became sickly and had to remain in bed. Catherine begged her mother to let her join the Third Order of St. Dominic, and thus so be able to live at home and practice her prayer life. Her mother eventually gave permission, and Catherine, a young teen, began an even stronger prayer life.

Catherine spent several years in private prayer in her home and in the church, but was called by Jesus in a vision to do more for the community. She began hospital work to help the sick and the poor. The local citizens respected her and even asked for her help and opinions regarding the “politics” of the town. She tried to learn to read, but was unsuccessful until granted the ability in a miracle. She never was able to pronounce individual letters, only words. When she was older, she dictated her letters to someone who would write them for her.



Holy Influence

Catherine led an extremely holy life, and became influential in the community; so much so, that they asked her to represent Siena at a Dominican conference. She sent letters to influential people to keep the peace among the Italian cities. She dictated numerous letters to priests, to bishops, and even to Pope Gregory XI to persuade him to leave Avignon, France, and return the papacy to Rome.

Like St. Francis of Assisi, Catherine was given the blessing of the stigmata, the miraculous bleeding in her hands and feet, just as Jesus suffered in His crucifixion. However, it was not discovered until Catherine's death in Rome at the age of thirty-three. Catherine's dead body never

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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 high school daughter helps me with preparing the meals and taking care of the baby. But she is falling behind in her studies. Do you have any suggestions for me to help her with her studies?

It is difficult for us moms to “let go” of our high school sons and daughters who are so terrific in helping with family and household chores. These duties actually do help them to become good parents in the future. However, we homeschooling moms need to realize that our high schoolers need to establish a schedule for a regular amount of time each day to be devoted to for serious study.

Give your daughter a special quiet location, her own study space in the house where she can spend serious time away from the family and chores. Even if it is only the size of an oversized closet, it needs to be her own study space. If this is not possible, she could go to a local college library at least a few hours a day. College libraries are best for space, quiet, and the opportunity to observe older students and professors who are serious about their education. However, if no college library is available, then any library will do. Before your daughter starts college, she will need to establish regular study habits.

It's only a couple of months until summer. I'm concerned about finishing the school year on time.

Remember that there is no “on time” set by Seton. There is no fixed date on the calendar by which you must be finished with your homeschooling year. Families have a full twelve months to complete their

course work. If needed, the academic year can even be extended for a small fee.

It is important to give your children adequate time to learn the material. A great benefit of homeschooling is that the school “year” can and should be adjusted to accommodate the time needed for a child to learn.

Some parents find that their students move along quickly and consistently in some subjects but need more time in one or two subjects. For instance, if your child seems slow in learning his math, continue the homeschooling lessons in math during the summer.

That being said, there are certainly some ways in which you can progress more quickly. For example, you may want to do more oral work. For younger children,

you may want to cut back on some of the workbook exercises—as long as you are sure the children are learning the material adequately. It sometimes helps high school students to focus exclusively on two courses for a while.

That way those courses can quickly be completed, and the student can move on to two more courses.

There are many more ideas which might help in your situation. If you would like advice specific to your family, you might want to e-mail or call a counselor.

Are the Seton videos important for improving the student's understanding of the lessons, or are they really just a nice extra?

We believe most students will learn more or gain a deeper understanding of the lessons with the online audio lectures

and videos. However, we also believe that a student can do very well without the audios and videos. No matter how bright the student, the audios and videos likely add at least some further understanding of the lessons.

The presentations are given by college professors or high school teachers who understand which areas of the subject matter can use more explanation. We have received feedback from students regarding his-tory and English, and they believe the audios and videos generate a greater appreciation and interest in their assignments.

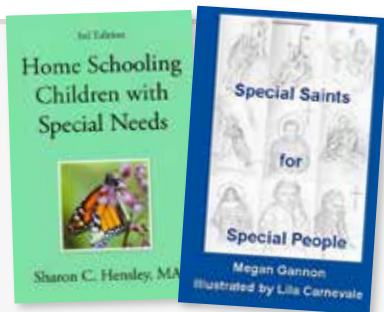
The material pre-sented in audio and video tutorials is not included directly on our tests. However, because the audio and video tutorials will provide more insights and because they review important concepts, they certainly will help the student, though likely indirectly, in taking the tests.

The audios and videos are not meant to deal with the specifics of the tests or book analyses. A student could do well on the tests without the audio and video tutorials, but likely will find the analyses and tests easier with the help of the presentations.

My 7th grade son needs more help with his book analyses than I seem to be able to give him. What can I do?

The lesson plans are fairly detailed in their presentation for helping students to write their book analyses. In the 7th grade, there are extensive explanations for paragraph writing. We recommend emailing or calling a Seton counselor for more help as well.

There are other options available to families as well. Perhaps there is a retired English teacher in your parish who might



Home Schooling Children with Special Needs

M-LDBK-02 \$18.00

This is the book to start off with if you have a child with a learning problem and you feel apprehensive about teaching him or her at home. The author, a Christian homeschooling mother of three children, with a Master's degree in Special Education will help you gain confidence to homeschool.

Special Saints for Special People - **NEW**

M-RDBK-55 \$13.00

Nine short biographies of saints who lived with challenges, highlighting gifts and abilities they used for the good of others. Meant to inspire individuals with disabilities, these stories present saints to turn to and show that everyone is an important part of the Church.

www.setonbooks.com

consider helping your son once or twice a week. You could phone a nearby Catholic school to ask if an English teacher has recently retired from full-time but would like tutoring part-time. Your homeschooling friends might know of a retired teacher.

Consider taking the time yourself to learn the book analysis skills so that you can help more in the future.

We are planning a series of videos for helping students with their composition skills.

I have a son in 5th grade and a daughter in 6th grade. May I put them both in the same grade level? How does that work?

When students are in adjacent grade levels, we encourage parents to think about which subject areas they might take together. We encourage parents to have a younger student work through the summer on a particular subject so he or she can be advanced with the older sibling in the fall. Sometimes

an older struggling student would do well to repeat a grade level with the younger sibling. The primary goal is for the student to learn the material.

Sometimes an older sibling who has not done well can be an "assistant" for Mom by helping to teach a younger sibling. This reinforces concepts for the older student, helps the younger student, and helps Mom to accomplish more herself.

My friend has a son who is not doing well in school. According to the mom, he has dyslexia. Can Seton help?

Seton can help in a variety of ways, but the best help for the student is personal interaction with his mother and father. The best help for him is patience, understanding, and encouragement. Our Special Needs counselor can help your friend with trying different methods of presentation. Seton has a series of helpful videos for students with dyslexia, presented by an experienced dyslexia teacher. Seton also has a series of videos for various methods of presentation for students with dyslexia and various other learning problems or issues. These are presented by Dr. Katherine Moran, who was a homeschooling mom and now a homeschooling grandmother. Dyslexia students can learn once they understand how to learn.

Another helpful resource for parents is *Homeschooling Children with Special Needs*, available through Seton Educational Media (www.setonbooks.com).

My son needs to do more exercises for some of his English 6 lessons. Do you have an extra practice book I can purchase?

Seton sells extra books for the various subjects and grades, which you can find through our SEM Book Catalog. Just go on our website and click on Book Catalog.

For grades 5, 6, & 8, Seton provides an extra exercise page for every grammar lesson. If you go to Course Resources for English 6, for instance, you can find these and print them out. Look carefully at the titles of the lessons so you can print out the ones you want. An answer key is provided also. Even for updated books, the topics should remain the same.



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Seton College Partners is a way to encourage our students to continue their Catholic education by attending a solidly Catholic College after high school.



AVE MARIA
UNIVERSITY



CHRISTENDOM
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY
OF DALLAS



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



NORTHEAST
CATHOLIC COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY
ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON



THOMAS AQUINAS
COLLEGE



THOMAS MORE COLLEGE
OF LIBERAL ARTS



setonhome.org/colleges



8 Active Homeschoolers

The Wersland Family Story | by Christina Wersland

Growing up the oldest of seven children, I always felt called to have a large family. My public school classmates joked that by our ten-year reunion, I would have twelve kids. I never minded the teasing. Instead of being off at social gatherings each weekend, I was booked solid with babysitting jobs.

By the time I graduated from high school, I also knew that, without question, I would be homeschooling my own children. The year I was a senior in high school was a

tough year for my siblings and myself, but it wasn't until I'd educated my own children for several years that I realized just how challenging it really was. My parents had already been using Seton's curriculum with my younger, adopted brother, and the year I graduated, they decided to bring the rest of my siblings home as well.

Being the protective older sister, I was thrilled that they would experience such an exceptional education and the security of

home, free from all the social pressures that were beginning to mount.

As I was finding my way through high school, God was preparing my future husband for these big plans as well. My husband, Keith, grew up in an Air Force family, living all over the world as they moved from base to base, eventually ending up in Idaho. This was the perfect place for him to develop his love of the outdoors, his love of hunting, fishing, and playing sports. After attending the Park Ranger Academy in Washington State, his first Ranger position, providentially enough, ended up being exactly where I worked during my summer break from nursing school. I'm not sure Keith anticipated all that was in store for him when God put this small town, farm girl in his life, I think we agree that our life is pretty amazing.

There were a few things we knew we would face with Keith working as a State Park Ranger. One would be the need to move as the opportunities for advancement came about. We also knew that Keith would have a schedule requiring him to work weekends. Homeschooling was the perfect





solution to avoid pulling the kids out of schools should there be a move (ironically, we've never had to move!), and working out a school schedule to fit Keith's would be easy if we were the ones in control.

Having not been exposed to homeschooling as I had been, Keith took a little convincing that our kids' opportunities and education could be best handled within the context of our family's lifestyle and schedule and that we could educate them as well as anyone. Eventually, though, he was convinced. As we had never considered the possibility of my having a career outside of our family, this made it all the more reasonable for us to homeschool. We agreed that we wanted to be the primary influences in our children's lives and, to be quite honest, the thought of sending my babies out the door each morning made me more than a little crazy. I didn't want to miss one minute in the lives of the eight precious gifts with whom we are now blessed.

Raised Catholic

Since Keith and I both were raised in Catholic families, it was very important to us to have our faith integrated into the daily education of our children. We wanted them to know and love and appreciate the deep traditions of the Catholic Faith, to incorporate Catholicism into our daily

life. Having both been products of secular education, we were also excited that we could learn right along with the kids and fill in the gaps of what we had missed.

It was also important for us to be able to instill in our children the wholesome values and attitudes that we were raised with and still believed in so deeply. We wanted them to know the value of hard work, of respecting others, of being charitable, and we definitely wanted them to know the objective reality of right and wrong. We wanted them to love the beauty of our earthly life, but seek the perfection of a heavenly one. Seton has helped us to accomplish these goals with our children.

Being active is ingrained in the Wersland family spirit. Both Keith and I were gifted with a love of all things outdoors, and we are both avid sports fans. Growing up with fathers who hunted and fished made it second nature for us to raise our kids with those same passions. Our love of participating in athletics has made it exciting to see our kids pursue their own love of baseball, archery, and swimming. We travel from one end of the state to the other for baseball tournaments, archery competitions, and swim meets, and as an added bonus, we are blessed to attend Mass in parishes we would never see otherwise.

Homeschooling allows us to nurture the gifts and talents of each of our children, and it encourages them to be well-rounded and well-adjusted individuals.

Mutual Support

Of course, I would love to say that our days are perfect, our house is always clean, and that because we homeschool, nothing ever falls through the cracks..... and that everyone always practices their piano. The reality is: sometimes we sleep in, most of the time there are crumbs under the table and, more times than I would like to admit, there is at least one child who has neither finished all of his or her assignments for the day nor practiced piano for maybe a couple of days.

Sometimes, our kids are each other's biggest critics, but mostly, they are each other's biggest support. We spend each day very much together, and when we are apart, we miss each other terribly. We cheer for each other's successes and cry for each other's difficulties.

We pray about everything and we continue to learn more about God's love with and through each other every single day. We are so grateful for this gift of a homeschooling, family-focused lifestyle, and we can't imagine life any other way!





The 2015 Homeschool Conference Season

The 2015 homeschool conference season is off and running, thanks to the St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference, where speakers such as Patti Maguire Armstrong and Andrew Daub discussed topics from *Why Homeschooling Works* to *What is Common Core?* to *Guiding Our Sons into Extraordinary Manhood*. There are many more conferences to come over the next several months, so check your calendars and your maps, and prepare to attend the next homeschooling conference near you. You won't regret it!



Homeschoolers Hunt for Used Books

Some conferences feature a variety of used books at bargain prices.



- Hear inspiring speakers
- Meet homeschooling families
- Get a \$30 discount on each full Grade 1-12 enrollment



Seton Home Study School has been participating in homeschooling conferences since homeschooling conferences first started in the 1980s. In fact, Dr. Mary Kay Clark was the sole presenter at a Louisiana homeschool conference back in the early 1980s. She still chuckles over her memories of speaking literally all day to the eager attendees, followed by a meal of the spicy Cajun food to which she was very unaccustomed.

Throughout the 80s and early 90s, Seton participated in numerous Christian homeschooling conferences, but on June 1st, 1991, Seton hosted the first Seton Conference, a whole conference dedicated to Catholic homeschooling. This conference took place in Chicago at what was then the Dominican Priory in River Forest, and it was there that Dr. Mary Kay and, her son Ken Clark met Ginny Seuffert, who has since become one of the most popular speakers on the Catholic homeschooling conference circuit. In 2001, Seton helped establish the IHM Coalition, and has been attending IHM conferences ever since.

Homeschool conferences have come a long way since the early days, and although the Internet and social media have done a great deal to promote homeschooling resources and communities, homeschool conferences are still one of the best ways to learn about homeschool strategies and connect with homeschool support groups. An ever-increasing roster of excellent speakers gives parents an opportunity to hear the best of homeschool and Catholic inspiration, practical wisdom, and encouragement.

Popular vendor halls at the conferences provide many services and products, as well as special discounts available only to conference attendees. Finally, there is no better place than a Catholic homeschool conference to meet hundreds of other families taking the same educational and spiritual journey you're on with your own family.



Families Meet with Admissions Counselors

Conferences provide an opportunity to enroll with Seton or get your homeschooling questions answered.

Conference Speakers



Ginny Seuffert

A mother of 12, who has homeschooled for over 20 years, Ginny is one of the most popular speakers on the Catholic homeschooling conference circuit. A regular columnist for *Seton Magazine*, her wisdom and humor can also be found in *Ginny's Gems: Home Management Essentials* and *Ginny's Gems: 10 Essentials for Teaching Your Preschooler at Home*.



Nick Marmalejo

Nick is a history counselor at Seton Home Study School. A graduate of Christendom College with a major in history, he and his wife Clare homeschool their 3 children in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Nick draws upon a wealth of personal experience and interests to help homeschooling families in the areas of motivation, discipline, and social studies.



Mary Ellen Barrett

Mother of 8 children and wife to David, Mary Ellen is a columnist for *The Long Island Catholic* and chronicles the journey of living a faithful, but imperfect, Catholic family life on her blog; *Tales from the Bonny Blue House*. She is passionate about good books and the Catholic Faith infusing and informing her family's homeschool life.



Abby Sasscer

Abby was born in the Philippines and came to the U.S. in 1986. Wife, homeschooling mother of three, and advocate on the importance of simple living, Abby's mission is to help families learn to live simply and generously even if the world says otherwise. She is the author of *Simplifying Your Domestic Church*.



Gary Zimak

Gary is a frequent speaker at parishes and conferences across the country and is well known for his talks on overcoming anxiety. He is a regular guest on *Catholic Answers Live*, EWTN's *The Son Rise Morning Show*, and *Catholic Connection* with Teresa Tomeo. Gary and Eileen have been homeschooling parents for the past 4 years and *love it!*

The Order of Operations

BY JOHN CLARK

In March of this year, Pope Francis addressed a gathering of teachers and offered the following counsel:

“Jesus would say, if you love only those who study, who are well educated, what merit have you? And there are those who do lose patience, but we must love those more. Any teacher can do well with good students. I ask you to love ‘difficult’ students more.”

Though his talk was not specifically intended for homeschooling parents, there is much we can learn from his words.

In a typical homeschooling family, some children will enjoy learning more than others, and/or find learning easier than others. Among our children, while some experience a big difficulty in keeping their attention fixed for even twenty minutes at a time, others pick up their books and do three hours worth of homeschooling before even taking a break. After just a single day of homeschooling, every parent quickly learns this lesson: that each child learns differently. Because of that fact, Lisa and I have discovered that we need nine different methods of teaching for our nine children.

Over the years, we have found that some of our children are harder to teach than others. That does not mean that they are not as smart. Not at all. It simply means that they process information uniquely, in the uniquely beautiful way that God envisioned for each of them.

We homeschooling parents tend to pat ourselves on the back for our children who seem to learn easily, yet Pope Francis makes an opposite observation. He asks “What merit have you” for teaching good students? Anyone can teach good students. But only a wonderful and loving person can teach students who have a difficult time learning. We need to meditate on these ideas.

What Pope Francis is saying is that we parents might achieve more merit and more graces in teaching the difficult learners. In a sense, we might receive a higher grade as

parents because we are teaching children who receive a lower grade on their work.

There’s another fact worth considering: the child who receives a lower grade might be achieving more merit and more graces, too. Sometimes a “C” represents much harder work and effort for one child than an “A” represents for another. It is important that we homeschooling parents recognize the hard work that often goes into a “C” grade. We need to help those children who struggle academically to understand that they, too, have made great accomplishments. If we don’t, they will feel lost.

I can relate

As a homeschooling student, and later as a college student, I often felt like this myself. While growing up, I remember hearing that the ability to learn foreign languages was an excellent indicator of intelligence. Those words had a searing effect on me as a teenager, as I always struggled mightily with languages. As I saw my brothers excel in Spanish to the point of conversing with each other in that language, and watched one of my brothers become so proficient in French that he began playing the French version of Scrabble, I wondered what was wrong with me. It seemed like the whole world was using some mysterious codes that I was unable to decipher.

Math didn’t do much for my confidence either. My father was a mathematics whiz, having excelled in advanced calculus, but I received only a fraction of his math prowess. Once math got beyond fractions, I got confused. And while some of my brothers seemed to think in equations, it took me more than two years to complete ninth grade math. For me, as far as algebra was concerned, frustration was the constant.

However, my academic perils notwithstanding, my mother never doubted my intelligence. She would often explain to me that many things I did evidenced how smart I was. She explained that, according to some of the tests I had taken, I was even smarter in some ways than my brothers. I don’t think she was trying to get my head in the clouds; I



just think she was trying to help me lift it off the floor. As Pope Francis may have put it, she was loving a difficult student more.

In the years since, I have learned that my struggle with learning is perhaps not as much a drawback as it is a gift. Maybe my difficulty then has helped me understand the academic difficulties of my children now. My struggles might have made me a difficult student, but maybe they helped me be a better and more understanding teacher. As a homeschooling father, I understand that we parents are sanctified through our difficulties. And so are our children.

What my struggles taught me is that, whether teaching languages or teaching algebra, the first order of operations is love.

Let’s try to follow the Holy Father’s guidance. If we homeschooling parents are tempted to lose patience, or feel run down, or feel lost, we must love more. Love is the most important subject we will ever teach.

Or ever learn. It’s the most important lesson of them all.

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.

The Key to Mindful Reading

BY CHRISTINE SMITHA

Do you ever wonder why you can't find the answers for a literature test? Do you find it difficult to remember the details of a story? Are you struggling to find examples for your book analyses? Are you typically at a loss when you're asked to pick out motifs, and even more so when you have to identify a theme? Do you normally fail to recognize the symbolism in a story? Do you feel hopelessly lost when it comes to analyzing what you read? Above all, have you ever wondered why other people seem to get so excited about what they read, and why they have so much to say about it? If you've answered yes to any of these questions, don't worry. Many people have done so before you. All it takes is a little adjustment to the way you read.

Reading for an assignment is not like reading to unwind before bedtime, or scanning the comic section of the newspaper, even if you enjoy "school reading" as much as "pleasure reading." When you read for an assignment, you must have a plan for your reading: a conscious, carefully-crafted method of approaching your literature. To fully grasp the material in a work of literature and to experience the fullness of its riches, you can't just plop down in a corner somewhere and start reading.

1. Be prepared.

Never read without a pen and a notebook. At the beginning of the school year, start a notebook devoted to reading. This will be a sort of literary journal that will accompany you in your quest for literary knowledge. You can record important quotes, jot down page references for essays, describe your impressions of writing styles, catalog character traits, trace significant events in the plot, and generally write anything that helps you solidify your knowledge of the works you read.

2. Know what to look for.

Read the assignment before you read the book. Review the discussion questions ahead of time, and note what they're asking you to identify and explain. If there are introductory remarks in the Lesson Plan, study them. Copy down important sections in your literary journal, so you have a reminder of ideas, motifs, symbols, and literary devices that you should expect to see. Read the chapter notes first to get a sense of the plot, so that you can free your mind to think about deeper issues as you read. Look at your assigned essay topics, and compile a list of important ideas for your essay, so that you will recognize pertinent passages as you read.

3. Mark your books!

When we were children, our parents always told us not to scribble on the family books, not to crumple them, tear them, draw in them, or otherwise mark the books on our shelves. We certainly wouldn't want to do any indiscriminate marking, but there does come a time when, as students, we really should begin to mark the books we study. So get out your highlighters in different colors. Assign a different color to each of the major ideas you are pursuing in the book, and highlight the important passages you encounter in the properly corresponding color. This makes understanding the book much easier, and it makes paper-writing immensely easier because your quotes are not difficult to find.

If you borrowed the book and are thus unable to write in it, use post-it notes or sticky tabs instead. Copy the first few words of the quote you think important onto the sticky note, and place the sticky note on the

edge of the quoted page where it will remain visible when the book is closed.

4. Follow your thoughts and write them down.

When a passage in a book sparks further meditation and reflection, use the opportunity to develop your thoughts about the literary work and its ideas. Copy your thoughts with short notations in the margin near the inspiring passage, or at greater length in your notebook. This will benefit you later when you are working on your assignments because, not only will you have developed a deeper understanding of the material, but you also will be able to retrace thought patterns that might contribute to your answers and essays.

These four rules are the key to mindful reading. If you can follow these steps, you are sure to have a much better understanding of literature, to have a great deal more to say about what you've been reading, and ultimately, to have a much easier time completing assignments. You will also begin to experience the joys and thrills of the delightful world of literature! Happy reading!

Editor's note: This article was previously run in the Seton Newsletter of December, 2007.



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 “Sacrament of Easter”

LIVED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

BY FR. EDWARD C. HATHAWAY

In His apostolic letter *Dies Domini*, Saint John Paul II reminds us that “The Lord’s Day - as Sunday was called from Apostolic times - has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery. In fact, in the weekly reckoning of time, Sunday recalls the day of Christ’s resurrection. It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ’s victory over sin and death...” (DD, 1).

In connecting Sunday with Easter, Saint John Paul II followed an ancient tradition in the Church. At the beginning of the 5th century, Pope Innocent I wrote that “[W]e celebrate Sunday because of the venerable Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and we do so not only at Easter but also at each turning of the week.” Saint Basil proclaimed “holy Sunday, honored by the Lord’s Resurrection, the first fruits of the other days,” and Saint Augustine called Sunday “a sacrament of Easter.”

The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed that “every seven days, the Church celebrates the Easter mystery. This is a tradition going back to the Apostles, taking its origin from the actual day of Christ’s resurrection – a day thus appropriately designated ‘the Lord’s Day’” (SC, 106).

If Christians in the midst of the world are to keep alive a Christian culture and the spirit of Easter throughout the year, it is essential to truly live Sunday as “the Day of the Lord.” Man is an image of God, and God is a community of persons (the Blessed Trinity). By gathering as a parish family to celebrate and receive the Holy Eucharist each Sunday and then “resting in the Lord” as a family for the remainder of the day, we become practically what we are in truth, an image of the triune God Who is love.

Certainly there are obstacles in our contemporary culture to living Sunday as

a day of worship and rest. Saint John Paul II noted in 1998 that, “Until quite recently, it was easier in Christian countries to keep Sunday holy because it was an almost universal practice and because, even in the organization of civil society, Sunday rest was considered a fixed part of the work schedule... Unfortunately, when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a ‘weekend,’ it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see ‘the heavens.’ Hence, though ready to celebrate, they are really incapable of doing so. The disciples of Christ, however, are asked to avoid any confusion between the celebration of Sunday, which should truly be a way of keeping the Lord’s Day holy, and the ‘weekend,’ understood as a time of simple rest and relaxation” (DD, 4).

THE HEART OF SUNDAY’S ACTIVITY

Saint John Paul invites us to rediscover Sunday, for “the Lord’s Day is the lord of days.” You can do this with your family in a myriad of practical ways, beginning with making Sunday Mass the heart of each Sunday’s activity. This will involve preparation that is remote, proximate, and immediate. Our remote or day-to-day preparation is living a moral life, a life of prayer and charity, and receiving the Sacrament of Penance regularly, perhaps once a month. Our proximate preparation includes going to bed at a reasonable hour the night before so that we are properly rested for our Sabbath day celebration, as well as avoiding the excesses



that we sometimes note in the area of food, drink, and late Saturday nights. Studying the readings for the week’s liturgy and discussing them as a family the night before also helps to focus attention and participation at Holy Mass. Dressing modestly and with good taste sets a tone of respect for the highlight of our week and life as Christians, as does allowing plenty of time to arrive for Holy Mass in advance of its starting time. Finally, our immediate preparation before Mass involves a recollected spirit and prayer before our Eucharistic Lord Who is present in the tabernacle.

In addition to being a day of participation at Holy Mass, Sunday also should be a day of sharing in the Creator’s joyful rest. As Saint John Paul noted, “Through Sunday rest, daily concerns and tasks can find their

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Fr. Edward C. Hathaway was born on Oakland, California, son to a naval aviator and one of seven children. He has a degree in psychology from the University of Virginia and a masters in divinity from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia. He studied in England and worked briefly as a recruiter after college. He was ordained in 1991 for the Diocese of Arlington and is currently the pastor of St. Veronica Parish, Chantilly, Virginia.

Patron of Homeschooling - St. Catherine of Siena

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deteriorated; it remains incorrupt to this day. Pope Pius II canonized St. Catherine in 1461. Pope Pius XII declared St. Catherine of Siena a Patron Saint of Italy, along with St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Catherine's writings and visits with influential people in powerful Church and political positions was extremely rare for a woman in the 1300s. Her life of prayer and dedication to those in need, and her willingness to deal with people in positions of power and influence, can be a source of inspiration to homeschooling parents and students.

The incorrupt body of St. Catherine and several other saints is a physical reminder to the world that Jesus rose with a glorified Body and that we are all someday going to rise with a physical body.

St. Catherine of Siena is an inspiration to all Seton homeschooling students and parents. Living a life of study and prayer in accord with the teachings of Jesus surely will result in our own glorious bodily resurrection and in everlasting happiness with Jesus in Heaven.

St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us.

The Sacrament of Easter

continued from page 12

proper perspective: the material things about which we worry give way to spiritual values; in a moment of encounter and less pressured exchange, we see the true face of the people with whom we live. Even the beauties of nature ... can be rediscovered and enjoyed to the full" (DD, 67).

A family brunch, celebratory meal, games and outings all help the family to rediscover what Sunday really is, a sacrament of Easter lived throughout the year.

'Sacrament' is taken from the Latin *sacrare*: to set apart as sacred, to consecrate. The word 'sacrament' as it is used here does not mean one of the seven sacraments of the Church. The word 'sacrament,' in its most general sense, means "something sacred and hidden (the Greek word is 'mystery'). We can say that the whole world is a vast sacramental system, in that material things are signs [for men] of things spiritual and sacred, even of the Divinity."

In the title of this article, the author used the word "sacrament" in this manner, and he quoted St. Augustine. Here 'Sunday,' as the Lord's Day, is a holy day, and it represents holiness to the other days of the week.



Common Core Concerns

Many parents have recently expressed concerns about how the Common Core standards might affect the college entrance tests. There is some legitimate cause for concern, but Seton families should not be unduly alarmed that their students are in danger of "failing" these tests.

A great deal of the tests will still be objective in nature; the Seton curriculum prepares students very well for these portions of the test. That really should not be altered much in the future. The biggest worry concerns the reading selections for the more analytical parts of the tests.

Truth to tell, it is inevitable that the selections chosen will tend to be more "politically correct" than in the past. The questions, too, may tend to more or less force the student into certain ideologically based answers. There is no easy solution to the problem, but as with all problems, it is best to regard the situation as a "learning opportunity."

Any well-educated Seton student should be able to read a document and discern any

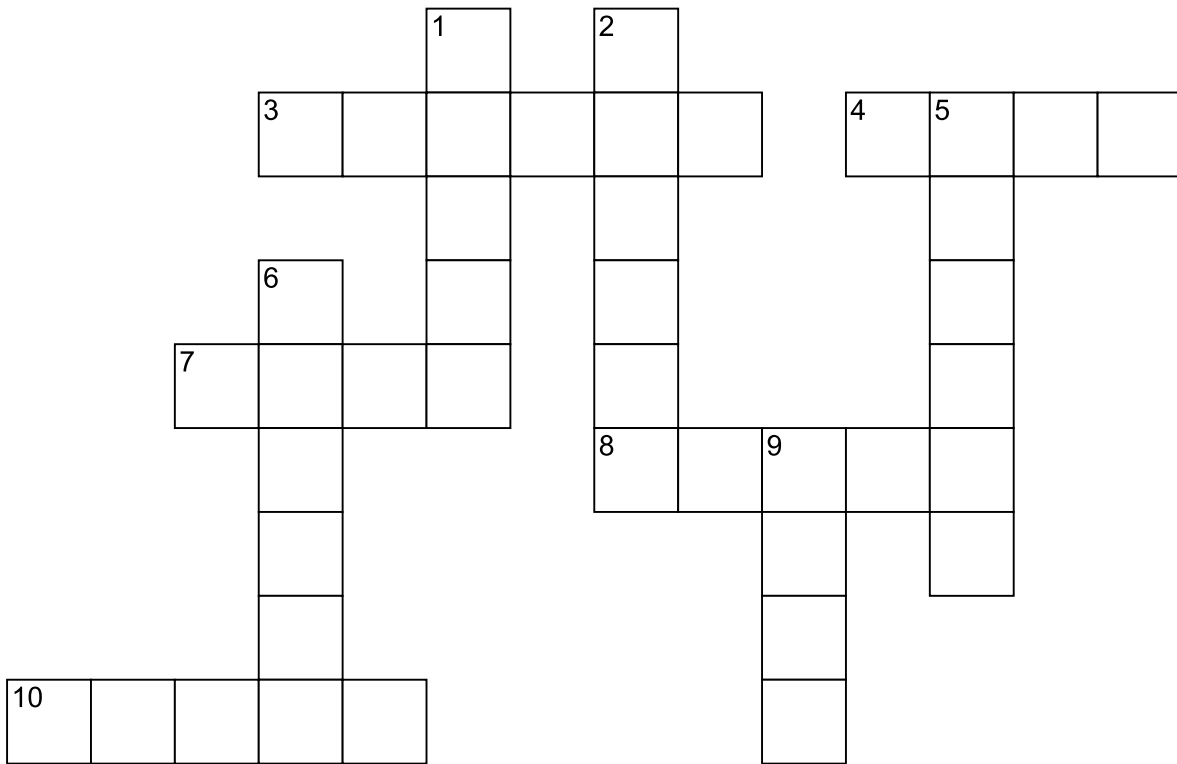
bias that colors the argument expressed. The slant may be positive or negative; a Seton student should be able to recognize an ally in C.S. Lewis, for instance, while recognizing that Margaret Sanger holds views absolutely contrary to Catholic teaching.

A little exposure to erroneous thought can act as a sort of vaccination against error. Exercising the mind in discerning the moral stance of any author can be a valuable intellectual training tool, and this is an exercise that Seton regularly uses in its own literature curriculum. In that sense, then, exposure to reading selections on the standardized tests could be a good thing. If students takes a test knowing that some material may contradict their deepest and most sacred beliefs, they will be better armed to defend their souls from any poisoned text.



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 RESURRECTION OF CHRIST



ACROSS

- 3 St. ____ wanted to see proof of Our Lord's Resurrection before he believed.
- 4 The guards ____ after seeing the stone rolled away.
- 7 The name of the two women who went to the tomb.
- 8 "He is not here, He is ____, as he said."
- 10 Our Lord rose from the dead on the ____ day.

DOWN

- 1 Our Lord remained with his disciples for ____ days after his Resurrection.
- 2 The day we celebrated Our Lord's Resurrection is called ____.
- 5 "Why seek you the ____ with the dead."
- 6 "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my ____"
- 9 The angels at the tomb were dressed in garments as white as ____.



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).

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

IN, Indianapolis May 15-16, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

2015 Quo Vadis Catholic Homeschool
Conference | Marian College
3200 Cold Spring Road
Indianapolis, IN 46222
www.hfheindy.org

NC, Charlotte

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

Student Achievements



Maile | I won the girl's state chess championship for Hawaii, sponsored by the Hawaii State Chess Federation. I play chess because it's interesting. I enjoy participating in tournaments too.



Marie & John Paul | Marie received the Silver Congressional Medal, and John Paul received the Bronze Congressional Medal from the U.S. Congress.



Danielle | I won the champion place for 3D poles at a rodeo series I have participated in all winter, recognized by the Rolling M Rodeo Company.

Share your achievement!

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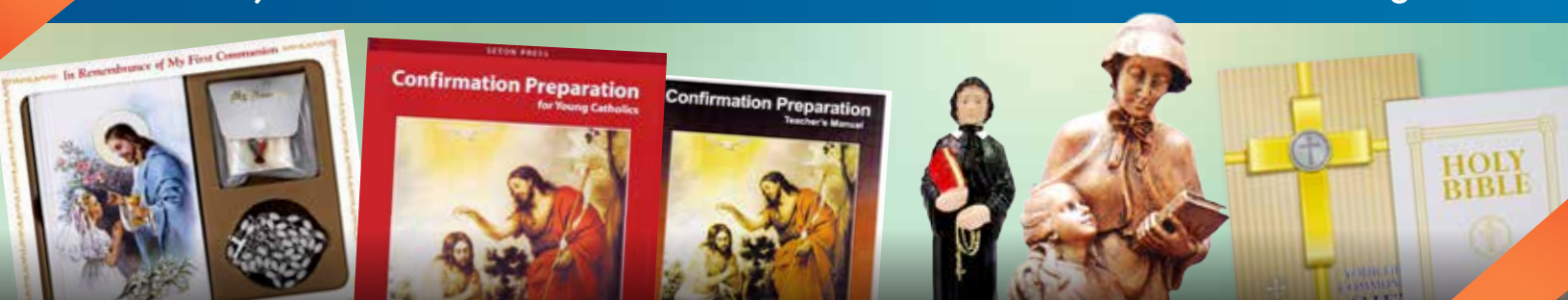
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To hear and accept God's call, to make a home for Jesus, you must be able to rest in the Lord. You must make time each day to rest in the Lord, to pray. To pray is to rest in the Lord. But you may say to me: Holy Father, I know that; I want to pray, but there is so much work to do! I must care for my children; I have chores in the home; I am too tired even to sleep well. I know. This may be true, but if we do not pray, we will not know the most important thing of all: God's will for us. And for all our activity, our busyness, without prayer we will accomplish very little.

Resting in prayer is especially important for families. It is in the family that we first learn how to pray. Don't forget: the family that prays together stays together! This is important. There we come to know God, to grow into men and women of faith, to see ourselves as members of God's greater family, the Church.

*Meeting with Families, Address of His Holiness Pope Francis,
Mall of Asia Arena, Manila, Friday, 16 January 2015*