

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.



Saint Rita

Saint of the Impossible

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

St. Rita, whose feast day is May 22, is a saint we hear of infrequently, perhaps because she had such an unusual life. However, we homeschooling mothers may consider St. Rita an inspiration because she worked unceasingly to raise her sons as good Catholics, in spite of a difficult, often anti-Christian culture. St. Rita, called the Saint of the Impossible, encourages us to be determined and faithful in living out our Catholic Faith and teaching God's Commandments to our children.

The story of St. Rita is remarkable in many ways, the first being that an angel appeared to her mother, who was past child-bearing age, and told her she would have a daughter, to be named Rita. Rita's life as a child was noted for its remarkable holiness. She prayed often in church and had a great concern to help those in need.

When she grew older, Rita wanted to enter a convent, but her elderly parents wished her to marry so she could provide for them. Her parents chose a well-to-do young man who was in no way religious. Not only was her husband completely different from Rita, but he was "her relentless persecutor," according to her biographer, Fr. Jose Sicardo.

Women in the community saw the wickedness of Rita's husband in the cruel way he treated her with angry abusive words. They also recognized Rita's holiness because she withstood her husband's abuse with humility and patience, and worked positively to provide a clean and neat house, well-made clothes for her wealthy husband, and elegant meals. In spite of his abuse, she calmly talked to him about displeasing God with his violent outbursts of anger.

After Rita and her husband had two little boys, Rita taught them their Catholic Faith and gave them daily examples of how to live the Catholic life, especially in caring for others and attending Mass. She included her boys in her daily devotions and prayers and encouraged them to accept God's will. In spite of her husband's anger, her boys grew up seeing and helping her practice the corporal works of mercy by giving time and material goods to those in need. Rita taught her sons the practice of the spiritual works of mercy as well.

After some years, Rita's husband changed and came to value his wife's patience and kindness. Shortly afterward, however, he was murdered in the street. Though devastated, Rita realized she should accept her husband's death as God's plan, and she forgave the men who killed him.

Shortly after the death of her husband and the subsequent death of her two sons, Rita joined a convent and lived a heroic life as a nun for forty years. Her life in the convent was one of prayer and sacrifice and devotion to duty. One day, after listening to a powerful sermon by a priest, she prayed that Jesus let her share His sufferings on the Cross. In an instant, Jesus gave her the pain of a thorn in her forehead, and she carried an open wound there for the rest of her life. The other nuns never saw the thorn, but the appearance of the wound alone was so difficult for the nuns to bear that Rita lived separately, spending her days alone, in her private cell, always in meditation and prayer.

Both Jesus and the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Rita when she was 76 years old, to tell her she would die shortly. The wound finally left her and St. Rita was surrounded by the nuns, who recognized she was a saint. Her



last words were, "Love God above all things." As Rita's dead body lay in the church for three days, many miracles of healing came to those who visited her coffin. Miracles continue, as thousands of people flock to the church where her incorrupt body lies peacefully, as if she were simply sleeping.

There is a National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia in Philadelphia. Its beauty is breathtaking and the holy presence of God and of St. Rita is palpable. Making the trip is an excellent spiritual pilgrimage for homeschooling families. Such a pilgrimage could be life-changing for families or persons in need of spiritual invigoration, as St. Rita along with Jesus can help make the impossible happen. Nothing is impossible with Jesus. Ask St. Rita! Ask her to pray for you and your family.



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 mother-in-law says my homeschooled children will not be able to deal with the real world.

You need to kindly let her know that the “real world,” the secular Godless culture, is what you want your children to avoid until they have the teaching and training they need to be able to “stand their ground” against the pressure of the real world. Nothing in the Bible indicates our little ones must fight the battle. We build a safe fortress and teach them how to fight for God’s teachings, and when they reach maturity, when they have the proper sword and shield of the teachings of Jesus and His Church, they can, and will, go into battle.

Beyond that, the average school bears little relation to the “real world.”

In the real world, everyone has to be able to deal with many different types of people, especially people of different ages, different interests, and different levels of maturity. Except in school, when will anyone ever be grouped simply with people of the same age?

My son is finding high school difficult, and says he wants to take the GED and go into the army. He is bright, but struggles to stay focused on his studies.

I would have him visit one of the army recruiters and find out the kinds of jobs he will get in the army without an excellent high school education. Like any business, the army will give appropriate jobs based on skills and education. We have found that when young men have at least one year of college, they obtain higher level jobs in the services.

There’s also the problem of whether the military would allow your son to join at all. All the service branches have limits on what percentage of their recruits can be GED holders, and GED holders often must score higher on aptitude and other tests.

It sounds like your son needs to improve on his study skills, which start with focusing on the job, an important requirement in the army and in life. We have a Study Skills course on our website.

Go to the Curriculum drop down menu to find the Free Study Skills Course.

A frequent problem home study students have is that they are easily distracted by the activities going on in the house. Some students have found

that going to a local library for two or three hours a day forces them to stay in their chair and do the work. Nevertheless, if your son does this, be sure you stay involved with him and his studies by asking him questions and discussing his coursework.

Your son might become more interested in his courses if he goes on the Seton Message Board and converses with other Seton students taking the same courses.

You might also want to talk to a high school counselor for some advice on how you and your son can formulate a realistic plan for him to finish high school.

My son is not interested in writing his book report. He interprets the warm weather as school is out! What should I do?

Sometimes the two can work together. Many students are “inspired” by the outdoor

weather. Try giving your son a half-hour of outside playtime as a reward if he finishes his book report. If you have a deck, tell him he can write his report outside on the deck or the porch. Some moms give their students a card table on the porch for their work, and then they can play in the yard or play cards or other educational “games” on the porch. An open porch works, but a screened in porch works better, and a porch with windows can be a favorite study area in the sunny days of winter!

I work part-time, but my daughter, an A student in 9th grade, wants to homeschool. She thinks she could do more and do better at home.

It is not unusual, actually, for some young people at about age 13 or 14 to come to understand the difference in the values of their home versus the values of the school. In addition, young people often realize that education can be more, that there are great ideas and quality literature, that the teenage culture offers little that is of lasting value. Teens who have good Christian values can be mocked and ridiculed for their traditional values, and often not just by the students. Other students just become tired of the drama and the “arms race” that is the never-ending teenage need to be accepted by the in-crowd.

If your daughter thinks she can do it, give it a try. If it doesn’t work out, she can always go back to school. It’s hard to imagine she will be worse off for having homeschooled for a year.

My oldest is going to be starting 9th grade on the Seton program. What should we be thinking about to prepare him for college?

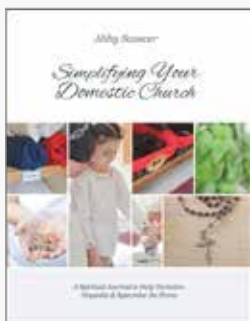
We consider Seton to be a college preparatory program, and most of our students do go on to college. Of course,



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www.setonbooks.com

a good high school education is also vital in itself, even if a student does not go to college.

The best way to prepare for getting into college is to encourage your son to do his best. Although colleges place great emphasis on the SAT or ACT test, high school grades are very important as well, especially if a student wishes to attend a selective college.

The greatest way to prepare your son for success in college is to help him with his

study skills, especially with organization and self-motivation. Once a student is in college, there is no one around every moment to tell the student to do the necessary work. When a professor assigns a paper to be due on a certain day, it is expected that the student will have it done on that day, without anyone pushing the student to complete it. Students who know how to organize and budget their time and push themselves have a huge advantage.

I am not an organized person. Do you have some tips for me?

Think about how you organize your kitchen. You want everything to have a certain place where you know you can find it at anytime you need it. Do the same with the children's books, papers, rulers, pens, pencils, notebooks, lesson plans, or whatever they need. Some parents use bookcases. Some parents buy big colorful plastic tubs, and each child keeps his own homeschooling materials in his own tub. This keeps homeschooling supplies from being scattered around the house.

Be sure to keep your own supplies organized, and even give your children responsibility for keeping the house organized. Each child should be given a responsibility for keeping a room cleaned, or helping with the dinner preparations or cleanup, and so on.

Homeschooling moms need to realize that they are not only teachers, but are also managers of a small school. To make it all work, you have to make the best use of the resources you have.

You don't necessarily need to do all the organizing and planning yourself. Your spouse and your children are part of this project as well, and it's a good idea to incorporate their ideas. The more input everyone has in formulating an organizational plan, the more all members will feel that it is "their" plan, and not something which has been imposed on them.

For more help, you might want to check out Ginny Seuffert's book *Home Management Essentials*, which is available from Seton Educational Media. You can also find lots of suggestions and organizational materials online.



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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.



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setonhome.org/colleges



Trusting Myself to Teach

How Mary led Me to Homeschooling | by Heather Hryniewiecki

Home education is becoming more attractive to people looking for an alternative to public and private school systems. With this being our second year of homeschooling, I wanted to share our experiences, challenges, and how the Blessed Mother guided us through it all.

My hope is to encourage those who are interested in teaching their children at home and to give peace to those who may be struggling with their decision to homeschool. After some mistakes in our

first year, we implemented a few changes in the second year that enabled us to be more confident and relaxed. Seton Home Study School has been essential, enabling our family to reach this point in our journey. The staff at Seton have made it possible to enjoy this fleeting time with our children and for us to grow together in our faith.

A Fully Catholic Experience

My husband, Peter, was actually the first person to suggest home education. He

was concerned that even if we spent the money to have the children attend a private Catholic school, they would not get a fully Catholic experience. In his opinion, we were able to provide everything they needed to grow into well-adjusted, educated adults.

I was terrified at the thought of being responsible for teaching our children. It never crossed my mind that a simple stay-at-home mom would have what it takes to do what the education sector has taken over. I felt under-qualified and unequipped.

Due to this lack of confidence, we sent our first two children to our local Catholic school. The school provided a welcoming Catholic atmosphere and the children enjoyed their preschool and kindergarten years there.

Shortly after our third child was born, while Peter and I were undertaking a 33 Days to Consecration to Mary retreat, the inspiration to homeschool was placed in my heart. I knew myself well enough to acknowledge that this idea did not come from me. My husband had not mentioned



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it since first enrolling our children in private school. I realized our Blessed Mother had kindled in me a desire to teach our children at home. I felt called and driven. When I asked our children what they thought of the idea, they were ecstatic. They loved the idea of not having to leave their family every day and being able to play and learn with their siblings. Everyone in our home was on board to take on the adventure of homeschooling.

I immediately started asking questions, doing research and finding out everything I could about how to get started. It didn't take long for me to come across Seton Home Study School. It was the answer I was searching for: a fully Catholic education from an accredited school, with lesson plans, workbooks, testing and counselors to help our family in any way that was needed. I plunged right in and enrolled our two oldest children for the upcoming school year.

A Father's Wisdom

The first year was so exciting, and at the same time completely overwhelming. I fumbled around trying to learn everything and did way too much. Even with the amazing Seton curriculum, I felt compelled to add more. I had the desire to prove to the naysayers that home education was a wonderful choice for our family. I overdid it. If this path had not been a calling for me,

this would have been the point at which I quit. I was burning out.

Thankfully, I have a very supportive husband. He began doing whatever he could to help. He did housework, watched the children while I took breaks and listened to all of my concerns. He encouraged me with his insight and built my confidence every chance he could. His observations of the amazing growth happening in our family gave me courage. Peter pointed out how happy and content our children were with being homeschooled. They certainly didn't want to go back to the institutional style of learning. But, most importantly, he prayed like crazy for our family. He insisted we pray the Rosary each evening together, asking God to bless our homeschool and to guide us through that bumpy time.

Trusting Our Lady

When we began our second year, I approached things much differently. I dedicated our school year to Our Lady of the Assumption, and placed her title prominently at the top of our class calendar. I grasped tightly the knowledge that Mary had called me to this challenge. She would send me the graces I needed to succeed.

My tender Mother would never forsake me. I didn't spend precious time scouring websites for mounds of extra work. I trusted Seton's material and knew that our children

were getting exactly what they needed. I followed Seton's lesson plans using their suggestions for ways to reinforce new concepts. I trusted Our Blessed Mother, the process, and myself, and found that we were able to be more relaxed.

I encouraged the children to go outside and explore each day and I regularly joined them. Impromptu art sessions with open access to supplies allowed them to expand their ideas and take pride in their experimentation. There was more time for play and creativity. Our children were thriving emotionally, spiritually, and academically. That fact negated any need I had to prove anything to anyone.

Teaching our children at home, under the loving gaze of Mary, has been such a blessing. We have grown closer as a family and we have all blossomed in our faith. None of us has any desire to go back to the old brick and mortar style of education.

We have found our freedom and the confidence we need to embrace it. I have come to realize just how much I had left up to the institutional teachers. I feel honored to have such a direct impact on our children's education and faith.

I am truly grateful to Seton for their diligence in making such a rich curriculum and for their faithfulness to the teachings of the Catholic Church.





Welcome to our Special Services Department

SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Seton's initiative to offer special services has made home-schooling possible for children challenged with learning or medical problems. With over ten years' experience adapting lesson plans, modifying assignments and creating original material, our specialist counselors have helped thousands of families make homeschooling an option.

Our goal is simple: if a student is having difficulties with home-schooling, we work to make the experience a success.

Students who come to us for help in Special Services usually have a learning disability. Sometimes the parents have received a formal diagnosis for their child and other times not. Other students need assistance due to medical problems. A small but steady group of students do not have any learning or medical problems. This is often the case in high school.

1. Adapted Lesson Plans

In order to help students be successful with Seton's program, we have created adapted lesson plans and modified assignments to go along with many of the regular courses. These adapted assignments include short objective tests in place of essay work and quarter tests, various levels of adapted book report forms to help elementary students learn the process of putting together a book report, and structured essays with an outline to help high school students continue to develop their writing skills.

Since the goal is to have the students use as much of Seton's regular curriculum as possible, the last ten years have been spent creating these adapted materials which previously did not exist. The response from parents and students has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents have been thrilled to see their students learn from challenging materials such as Seton's American History, Biology, and Religion courses, but be tested in a way that was manageable for their students.

2. Remedial Program

In some cases, of course, using a Seton book may not be a good fit, at least not yet. Prerequisite skills may need to be addressed. This is often the case with Seton's challenging English grammar books in grades 1-8. For students who are not ready to work with these, we offer a few different grammar programs that will allow the student to build up a foundation. We also have a composition program to teach writing skills to elementary and high school students in a step-by-step fashion. We carry alternate materials in other subject areas as well.

3. Dyslexia DVDs

If there is one thing that parents have heard about Special Services, it is that we have a DVD program for helping children with dyslexia learn to read and spell. That is true, but we actually have two different dyslexia programs that we have been using successfully for close to 20 years. It is a blessing to be able to offer them to students who need them, and phone calls from happy parents

whose children are finally learning to read are amongst the greatest joys we receive from being Seton counselors.

4. Customized Curriculum

If a student needs a customized curriculum, the course modifications are discussed in a phone conference call where the parents and Special Services staff agree on what is best for the student. Each course is discussed in turn and all of the options available are compared. Thus, while evaluations that have been sent to Seton (if any) are certainly consulted, the input of the parents is of the utmost importance.

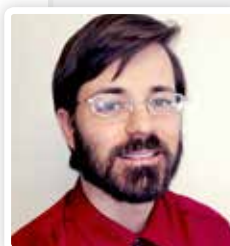
5. Four Diploma Choices

You may be wondering if working with Special Services will prevent your student from graduating or receiving a diploma. Absolutely not. Actually, we offer four different diplomas; the Basic, Vocational, General, and Academic, to assure that regardless of the student's level of achievement in grade 12, there is a diploma option for them.

6. Additional Resources

Special Services is pleased to offer a few additional resources that you may find helpful. Our website now has a number of videos recorded by Dr. Catherine Moran on differences in learning styles, recognizing learning disabilities, and ADHD. We also sell a book titled *Homeschooling Children with Special Needs* by Sharon Hensley. The book is a good introduction to numerous aspects of educating a child with special needs at home, and it provides references to further reading as well.

If you feel Special Services may be able to help you, please email or call us. We would be happy to discuss the particulars of your situation and let you know what we can do to help.



Stephen Costanzo

DIRECTOR OF THE SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

Stephen holds a Master of Teaching in Special Education and, since 2004, has designed thousands of adapted curricula for struggling Seton students of all ages. He has taught children with learning difficulties in the public school system and has experience administering and interpreting achievement tests and designing and implementing IEPs. He is married with seven young children.



Kathleen Hunt

GENERAL/ACADEMIC COUNSELOR

Kathleen's teaching career spans eighteen years and includes time spent with children in both regular and special education. Her background and B.S. in Elementary Education enable her to assist parents and students with the support and encouragement that is often needed when homeschooling a child with special needs. She is married with two children and five grandchildren.



Student Success: Tait

Tait is one of the best examples of student success that the Special Services Department has encountered.

A member of a large homeschooling family in California, he was first enrolled in Special Services for his 9th grade year in April of 2004.

Tait was diagnosed with dyslexia during his elementary school years (around grade 2), and he completed at home a remedial literacy program designed for students with dyslexia. Years later, he was enrolled in our Special Services Department so that he could begin high school. Though the literacy program had helped him improve his reading, he was still reading at only a 6th grade level at the beginning of grade 9. Consequently, his 9th grade curriculum materials were chosen accordingly.

As the years passed, Tait decided that he wanted to achieve

the same level of academic success as his older siblings, who had previously completed Seton's standard high school program. In 10th grade he asked to receive a copy of both the adapted and non-adapted versions of *A Tale of Two Cities*, the final piece of literature for the year. The regular version must have impressed him. For his junior and senior years, he decided that he did not want to use adapted/abridged literature anymore; he indicated that he would rather use standard literature as part of his customized program, even if it meant that high school would take him longer.

Tait took advantage of the flexibility that homeschooling offers and made use of adapted schedules to complete his courses. He amazed his mother and Seton counselors with the quality of the essay work he was completing at the end of high school. He ended up being accepted to several colleges and plans to study history before possibly entering the military.

Fishing with Saint Anthony

BY JOHN CLARK



Saint Anthony of Padua loved to preach about God, yet on one occasion, no one in a certain town wanted to listen to him. Sad about the fact that the people had rejected the word of God, but undeterred in a way that saints can often be, St. Anthony went to the shore of the sea and began preaching to a different audience: the fish. As Anthony began speaking, the fish lifted their heads above water—the small fish coming near the shore, the larger fish staying in deeper water, but all of them attentive to his words.

There, Anthony delivered a wonderful sermon to his audience. He marveled to them about the wonderful seas, rivers, and oceans that God had made them for an aquatic home. He spoke about the role that

sea life had played in salvation history. He told the fish of the whale that swallowed Jonas and helped serve the will of God. He spoke to them about Jesus obtaining the coin from the mouth of the fish so He could pay the tax. He spoke about the fact that Jesus ate fish with the Apostles after His Resurrection. When Anthony spoke, it was as though the fish listened in careful attention. There they remained, until he had finished his sermon.

I wonder if some Catholic parents often feel like St. Anthony felt that day before he preached to the fish. Back in the thirteenth century, Anthony wanted to teach people about the love of God, yet they were disinterested. Perhaps they felt as though they had better things to do than hear about the love of their Creator from the lips of a Doctor of the Church. Today, some Catholic parents who have devoted their lives to teaching their children about God find that their sons and daughters have become disinterested as they have grown older. Perhaps some children believe that the world offers them something richer than the promise of eternal happiness.

There's no doubt that many good Catholic parents are suffering because their children have stopped listening to them about divine things. For whatever reason, the words of the parents have not clicked in their children's minds. And so—being good parents who hunger and thirst for the salvation of their sons and daughters—they blame themselves that their words failed to reverberate in their children's souls.

Of course, children have free will. They can fail to recognize the value of “the pearl of great price.” They can listen to you or they can ignore you. They can approach the shore or they can swim away. But either way, as Saint Anthony illustrates, your job remains the same.

Keep loving. Keep communicating. Keep praying. And hope. Because as Saint Anthony quickly discovered, the fish were

instrumental in producing another miracle of sorts. As it turns out, the fish weren't the only ones listening that day. Many of those in the town heard about the miracle of the fish, heard his sermon and converted to the Catholic Faith. Saint Anthony refused to give up, and the message got through.

As many Catholics know, Saint Anthony is the patron saint of lost things, and Catholics will often ask for his intercession by praying:

*St. Anthony, St. Anthony,
Please come around.
There's something that's lost,
And needs to be found.*

Any saint who goes to the sea to preach to fish understands the pain of a Catholic parent whose child has lost his way. If your child is in that boat, Anthony is a pretty good saint to have on your side with the following prayer:


*St. Anthony, St. Anthony,
Please come around.
My child is lost,
And needs to be found.*

Some of you Catholic parents might feel like you are oceans apart from your children right now, which causes you considerable anguish. But don't lose hope. Sometimes sound waves take a long time to arrive at their destination. Be confident that they will arrive. Remember that we have a Savior Who walks on water, and if He needs to go out into that ocean to retrieve a lost sheep, He will go. Our job is to keep looking at Him, instead of looking at the waves, especially when He seems most distant. If your child is lost in a sea of confusion and sadness, confidently ask Jesus to walk on water again, and bring him home.

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.



Our
life, our
sweetness
and our
hope.

May is Mary's Month

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

Having a month that is especially dedicated to the Blessed Mother is one of the more beautiful aspects of our Catholic heritage. This devotion has been especially encouraged by many popes. Pope Paul VI wrote a short encyclical, *Mense Maio: On Prayers during May for the Preservation of Peace*.

Pope St. John Paul II also encouraged the faithful's devotion to the Blessed Virgin: "From Mary we learn to surrender to God's Will in all things. From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope seems gone. From Mary we learn to love Christ her Son and the Son of God!" (Address, Washington DC, 10/6/1979)

As a homeschooling mom I love to take time during this month to encourage my children to love their Mother in Heaven with great devotion and fervor. All of our children should take great solace in the love of the Queen of Heaven and should be taught to turn to her as a source of immeasurable grace. While we pray our Rosary and practice other devotions all year, in May I like to celebrate Our Lady in a particularly special way. Here are some ideas that you might like to try this year.

Plant a Garden

Did you know many flowers have names that honor Mary? Some have fallen

out of common use since the Protestant Reformation but many flowers originally had Marian names. Marigolds, Rose of Sharon, and Rosemary are well known but bluebells were originally called Our Lady's Thimble, Hostas were Assumption Lilies, and Monkshood was Mary's Slipper.

Visit the beautiful *Mary's Garden* website for more information and inspiration (see the link below). You can print the list of Mary plants, bring them with you to the nursery and plant your own Mary garden. In most parts of the country this is the perfect time for planting.

May Crowning

In the recent past many parishes have put aside this beautiful tradition, but there is no reason why you can't host your own May crowning whether or not your parish does one. All you need is a large enough Mary statue (Catholic bookstores are a good source for inexpensive statues) and some flowers (fakes are fine).

Invite a few families and if there are any first communicants in the crowd, ask them to don their finery for the occasion. It's traditional for a first communicant to crown Our Lady, or to have the smallest child take on the honor. It's also a nice idea to encourage the other children to wear some blue to further honor Our Lady.

You can play a Marian hymn or have the children sing and process around the yard. Keep the music going until the crowning takes place and then lead a decade of the Rosary. End the festivities with punch and cookies. Keep Mary in a place of honor in your home and/or garden for the remainder of the month.

Make a May Basket

Making Mary baskets is a lovely tradition that involves a prettily decorated basket being left anonymously on someone's door. A friend of mine, Alice Gunther, found a way to take this tradition and use it to create something beautiful for Mary. Marian May Baskets are simply square pieces of pretty scrapbook paper glued or taped into a cone shape and decorated with ribbon and flowers. When you finish decorating, fill them with holy cards, rosary beads and a sweet or two.

We have been making these for many years now and delivering them to neighbors and friends, as well as using them as favors for first Holy Communion celebrations. It's a simple, sweet craft that is very inexpensive

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Read Mary Ellen online at
setonmagazine.com/maryellen



Mary Ellen Barrett is mother of seven children and two in heaven. Mary is wife to David and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books.



Visit this article online for more ideas and inspiration!
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OUR LADY OF FATIMA AND 3 HOMESCHOOLED CHILDREN

BY FATHER FRANK PAPA, S.O.L.T., J.C.D.

On May 13, in the year 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three peasant, home-schooled children: Lucia dos Santos who was 10 years of age and two of her cousins: Francisco Marto, age 9, and his little sister Jacinta, age 7. Certainly, if our Blessed Mother would select someone to favor with an apparition, it would be someone as innocent as a child. And if she wished to impart a message to the whole world, that person, or persons, would have to be capable of understanding what Our Lady was saying to them. They would need to have some familiarity with basic spiritual terms and expressions such as: prayer, grace, virtue, sin, penance, confession, sacrifice, sacraments, Our Lord, Our Lady, Holy Father, Pope, Holiness, Blessing, Resurrection, Mysteries, Purgatory, Martyrs, Blessed Sacrament, Rosary, Saints, Devil, etc.



Many or most of these terms would only be familiar to children who are being instructed in the Catholic Faith. Such instruction is not imparted in public or government schools. It is also quite certain that you would not find a Crucifix or holy picture on the schoolhouse walls. Furthermore, there might be certain administrators and teachers hostile to the Faith. Yet, even if they were not so disposed, many or most of them would not be educated enough in the Catholic faith to be competent to teach it (you can't give what you don't have!). Thus, children educated under such circumstances, systems, or institutions would

not be conditioned to carry on a discussion or dialogue with an Angelic messenger from Heaven, followed by several conversations with the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Imagine how intellectually challenging a visit with angels and the Blessed Mother would be for the average small child—or adult—especially in our own times. The three Fatima children had an advantage, however. They were being homeschooled. Their parents took on the responsibility of educating their children, not only about how to make a living, but also about how to live, how to live a moral life, how to live in both a natural and a supernatural world. It is certain that the parents of the Fatima children had never heard of the term, 'homeschool.' But it was, in fact, a true homeschool.

Mr. Dos Santos, the father of 10 year old Lucia, and Mr. Marto, father of Lucia's two cousins Francisco and his little sister Jacinta, were, as all home-schooling fathers should be, the principals of their respective schools. They give contemporary homeschooling fathers an example to emulate. As principals, it is the role of the fathers to provide textbooks for the students. They should provide for the school lunches, extracurricular sports programs and equipment, field trips, arts and crafts materials, musical instruments, and the like. It goes without saying that a principal is the chief disciplinarian of the school. Every principal should be willing to teach at least one subject each semester. The Fathers of the Fatima Homeschool were doing just that by teaching the children how to make a living, how to be shepherds, how to tend to various animals, grow fruits and vegetables, gather firewood, weatherproof the home and maintain field and farm. In all of this, they were, as modern fathers should be, an example of what it is to be a truly Christian husband and father—faithful and true.

The Mothers, on the other hand, were the primary catechists of their children. Lucia's mother would, at times, take the opportunity



during the evening 'family gathering' to catechize her family with stories about our Lord's passion, the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, etc., etc. Young Lucia had the ability to re-tell the stories in great detail, so on occasion, Lucia was asked to teach the children what she herself had learned earlier. (However, in her memoirs, Lucia recounted that when she found herself teaching others, there were only a few things she could remember. When she was asked to teach something more, she had to admit that it was all she remembered.) The lesson is that while the older children can at times be of some assistance, the mother is the primary catechist of the family. In her role as primary catechist, the homeschool mother is of supreme importance to the family homeschool. In this role, she teaches her children not just how to make a living, but more importantly, how to live!

Nothing should be more important than the upbringing and education of children, particularly in matters of the faith. In order to make a living in this world, it is necessary to have knowledge. It is certainly necessary for the children to read, write and do arithmetic. (In fact, the Blessed Mother directed Lucia to learn how to read). But the Fatima children

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Father Papa has spent more than 25 years working with youth, including running a home for boys before becoming a priest in 1989. He earned his Doctorate in Canon Law from the Angelicum in Rome, graduated Magna Cum Laude, studied for an Advocacy Degree at the Sacred Roman Rota, and taught various courses at the Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT.

May is Mary's Month

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and quick to make.

Alice Gunther at *Marian Crafts* has many lovely May crafts online to bring further beauty and fun to your celebrations. Visit this article on SetonMagazine.com for links to her resources.

Learn the Litany of Loreto

The Litany of Loreto (approved by Pope Sixtus V in 1587) is a litany including some fifty-one titles of Mary that refer to her part in the salvation story. It is another beautiful devotion that seems to be dying away but homeschooling moms can easily include it as part of their daily prayer time with the children. Explaining the meaning behind some of the titles, such as *Mirror of Justice* or *Ark of the Covenant* makes the litany more approachable to young ones.

Tradition has it that the House of Loreto was the actual home of the Holy Family in Nazareth and during the Crusades, to save it from destruction by Muslims, angels carried the home to Loreto and a basilica was built around it in 1429. In honor of the flight of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Egypt, Our Lady of Loreto was chosen as the patron saint of pilots.

However you choose to make May Mary's month, the most important thing is to foster love for the Queen of Heaven, whose great wish is for our children to someday be with her and her Son in Heaven. A relationship with Mary will serve to cradle them in love and faith for their whole lives and is well worth our efforts. *Ad Jesum Per Mariam*.

Our Lady of Fatima

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needed something even more vital in their life; they needed, as all thinking humans do, the gift of Wisdom. Knowledge could be gained in multiple ways. But wisdom? Wisdom is a gift of God. If anyone sincerely seeks Wisdom, God will give it to him freely and ungrudgingly.

By teaching their children basic truths of the Catholic faith, the parents were unknowingly preparing those three Fatima children to receive a visit from Heaven itself, in the very person of the beautiful Lady of Fatima! She is the Seat of Wisdom! The problem is that Wisdom is Catholic, and God is more willing to give that gift to man, than man is willing to seek or accept it.

Preparing for the Finish Line

BY CHRIS SMITH

Graduation is almost upon us, an exciting moment for students and parents alike. But too often what should be a celebration of completing four rigorous years of study, becomes a panic-induced nightmare. Assignments that have been put off until the last minute become a soul-crushing burden, and many times, fall to the wayside. Don't let this happen to you! And if you already find yourself in this situation, take a breath, and make a plan.

During times of transition, organization and planning are key to keeping a level head and meeting goals. This holds true both for students entering their senior year and for those finishing up. Writing down plans, timelines, and goals allows us to visualize all that needs to be done. I keep a whiteboard in my office, which to the uninitiated, might look like the scrawling of an insane person. But it gives me a picture of what I have done and what I still need to do. A simple tool like this can be useful for planning out your senior year from the beginning, or if you find yourself scrambling to finish. Write down a list of your remaining assignments, focus on one, then check it off upon completion. You can call the counselors here at Seton to help you organize the required assignments.

The ultimate goal is to graduate, and the importance of receiving

your high school diploma should not be forgotten. Many seniors already have been accepted to colleges and may feel that they already have attained their goal. Do not forget that most colleges accept students contingent upon receiving a final transcript with a graduation date. And even for those few colleges which don't require that final transcript, not finishing high school will present problems later on.

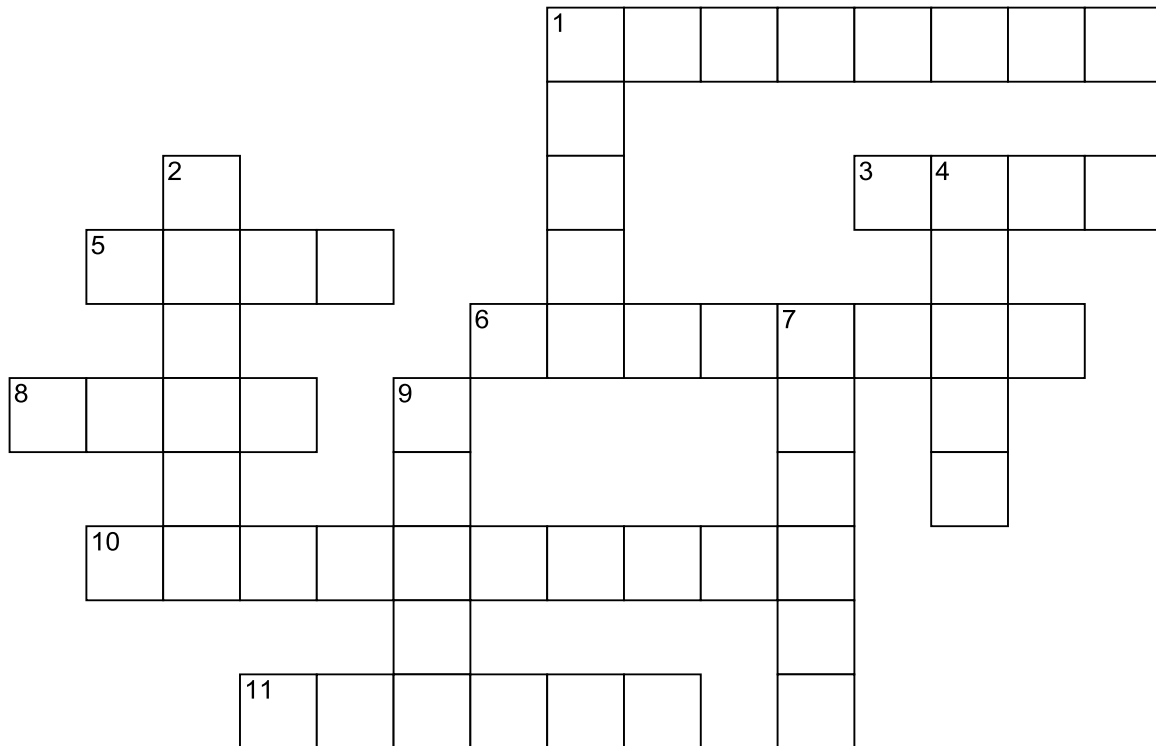
I had a student last year who called to see what he needed to finish his high school work and graduate. He had applied for a job as a college graduate, but they would not give him the job unless he could prove he had graduated from high school, regardless of the fact that he had graduated from college! Unfortunately, that was not an isolated incident.

Keep that cautionary tale in mind to focus your intentions. Take advantage of the flexibility that homeschooling allows. Work on one assignment, one subject at a time, and you will find your way out of the weeds. And always remember, call us in the Guidance Department if you need any help crossing the finish line.



Chris Smith is the Director of Guidance at Seton. He has an M.A. in National Security and Statecraft from the Institute of World Politics in Washington D.C. He has a B.A. in Philosophy from Christendom College.

MAY IS FOR MARY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Fatima is in which country?
- 3 This color honors Mary.
- 5 St. Anthony preached to ____ when men wouldn't listen.
- 6 The Holy Family's home is enshrined in a ____
- 8 In May, we celebrate Our ____
- 10 St Rita is known as the saint of the ____
- 11 St Rita was born in ____

DOWN

- 1 St. Anthony of ____
- 2 Our Lady is the Seat of ____
- 4 Our Lady of Fatima appeared to Jacinta, Francisco and ____
- 7 Pope Sixtus approved the Litany of ____ in 1587.
- 9 As she died, ____ and Mary appeared to Saint Rita.



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).

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 May 22-23, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM Carolina Homeschool Conference
Belmont Abbey College
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road
Belmont, NC 28012-1802
www.ihmconference.org

GA, Atlanta May 29, 2015 (Fri.)

IHM Georgia Homeschool Conference
Cobb Galleria Centre
2 Galleria Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339
www.ihmconference.org

MN, St. Paul May 29-30, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

17th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair
2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105
www.mnconference.org

NY, Buffalo June 4, 2015 (Thu.)

IHM Buffalo Homeschool Conference
TBD
Buffalo, NY
www.ihmconference.org

MO, Kansas City June 5-6, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

11th Annual Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers & Curriculum Fair
Location TBD
www.kccatholichomeschooler.org

LA, Lafayette June 12, 2015 (Fri.)

IHM Lafayette Homeschool Conference
Cajundome and Convention Center
444 Cajundome Boulevard
Lafayette, LA 70506
www.ihmconference.org

VA, Fredericksburg June 19-20, 2015 (Fri.-Sat.)

IHM National Homeschool Conference
Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center
2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
www.ihmconference.org

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

Student Achievements



Richard | On January 27, 2015, I was informed of my acceptance into the postulancy program with the Norbertine Fathers of St. Michael's Abbey.



Haley | I scored Summa Cum Laude on the National Latin Exam, level one. My interests include American Heritage Girls, piano lessons, competitive swim team, and math.



Anna & William | We are to be married on September 26, 2015. He works for a bicycle manufacturing company in Santa Cruz, California. Anna is interested in photography and sign language.

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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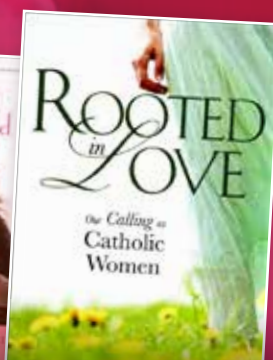
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Elizabethtown, PA

Happy, Mother's Day!



setonbooks.com/mothersday



When [Jesus] came into the world, his very life was threatened by a corrupt king. Jesus himself needed to be protected. He had an earthly protector: Saint Joseph. He had an earthly family, the Holy Family of Nazareth. So he reminds us of the importance of protecting our families, and those larger families which are the Church, God's family, and the world, our human family. Sadly, in our day, the family all too often needs to be protected against insidious attacks and programs contrary to all that we hold true and sacred, all that is most beautiful and noble in our culture.

In the Gospel, Jesus welcomes children, he embraces them and blesses them (Mk 10:16). We too need to protect, guide and encourage our young people, helping them to build a society worthy of their great spiritual and cultural heritage. Specifically, we need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected. And we need to care for our young people, not allowing them to be robbed of hope and condemned to life on the streets.

*Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis,
Rizal Park, Manila, Sunday, 18 January 2015*