

Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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Homeschooling **on the Move**

THE MCCORMICK FAMILY

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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.



Visions from the Sacred Heart

3 Saints at the Core of this Devotion

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Devotion to the Sacred Heart became popular in the Church through the visions given to St. Margaret Mary, who lived from 1647 to 1690 in France. St. Margaret Mary had four apparitions from Jesus, Who gave her messages for the world about His immense love for us, and His request for devotion to His Sacred Heart.

We can read the words of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary on the Divine Mercy website (www.thedivinemercy.org). Jesus requested a feast day in honor of His Sacred Heart to make up for the sins of the world: “Therefore I ask of you that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated as a feast in honor of My Heart, and amends made to It in an Act of Reparation offered to It and by the reception of Holy Communion on that day, to atone for the outrages It has received during the time It has been exposed on the Altars. I promise you that My Heart will open wide and pour forth lavishly the influence of Its Divine Love on all who will render and procure for It this honor.”

Another saint who was devoted to the Sacred Heart was St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, who lived from 1779 to 1865, also in France. She was well aware of the apparitions of St. Margaret Mary only 200 years before in her country. Madeleine Sophie Barat surely established her Sacred Heart convents and schools because of her knowledge of and devotion to the messages of Jesus about the sufferings and offenses to His Sacred Heart as given to St. Margaret Mary.

Sister Josefa Menendez, who was born only 25 years after St. Madeleine Sophie Barat died, also knew the messages of Jesus concerning devotion to His Sacred Heart. Sister Josefa lived from 1890 to 1923. Though she was born in Spain, she entered a French convent of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Jesus appeared to Sister Josefa frequently, and instructed her to write down every word He gave her. These messages to the world appear in the book *The Way*



of Divine Love, which received a personal approval from Pope Pius XII.

The messages of Jesus about His Sacred Heart and His love for us, and particularly His messages about His thoughts as He suffered each moment before and during His crucifixion, are life-changing for many of us ready to receive them. If you don't have time to read the whole book, read only the chapter “The Lent of 1923.” The following is a sample of the extraordinary words Jesus used to reveal His innermost thoughts.

“Crowned with thorns and clothed in the purple mantle, and amidst overwhelming insults and mockeries, I was brought back by the soldiers to Pilate ... O all ye who love Me, consider how I was compared to a thief ... or rather valued lower than a degraded criminal, one of the wickedest of men. Hear their cries of rage against Me and their vociferous clamors for My death.

“Far from seeking to escape this affront, I lovingly accepted it for love of souls, for love of you ... desirous of showing you that

My love was leading Me not only to death, but to contempt, ignominy, and hatred of those very men for whom I should shed My Blood in such profusion. I was treated as a disturber of the peace, as insane, a madman, and I accepted it all with the utmost meekness and humility.

“Do you think that in My human nature I felt no repugnance and grief? I willed to know experientially all that would have to be undergone by you, that you may draw strength from My example for all the circumstances of your life. So I did not free Myself, though that would have been easy, I accepted all lovingly, that thus fortified, you might understand how to sacrifice every repugnance in order to accomplish the holy will of God, My Father ... repair His glory, expiate the sins of the world, and win the salvation of many souls....

“Thus when you submit yourself generously to the will of God in spite of natural interior opposition to it ... the resistance of your family ... the judgments of the world ... When you have given yourself generously to the will of God, then shall you be closely united to Him and taste ineffable sweetness.

“O chosen souls, your happiness and perfection do not lie in following your attraction, nor in living known or unknown to the world, in using or hiding the talents with which you have been endowed, in being thought much of or little, in having good health or not ... but only and solely in embracing with love God's will, and being in perfect conformity with it in all it requires of you for His glory and your holiness.”



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 neighbor is interested in homeschooling, but she wonders if she can homeschool her son who has a learning disability. Can Seton help her to teach her son?

Seton long ago made a commitment to support students with learning disabilities. Our Special Services Department is led by Stephen Costanzo, who has teaching experience as well as a special education degree. He gives each parent counseling, instructions, and a modified curriculum. He continues to be available for counseling during the entire time the student is enrolled with Seton. We also have available on CDs daily lessons for teaching children with dyslexia how to read.

To read more about the special services programs we offer, please see our website: <http://setonhome.org/special-services>

Sometimes I need to go on errands or to the doctor's office. How can I keep my teens doing their work while I am gone?

Consider taking them to the library, or to a friend or relative's house where they won't have as many temptations to do something else. Libraries do have computers, so you will need to make rules about that. College libraries have more control over non-students using the computers.

The most important thing, however, is to inculcate good habits. Your children and teenagers must follow your instructions, whether you are there to supervise them or not. Obedience is one of the highest virtues, and not only for children. We are all called to respect and obey our lawful superiors, whether they are clergy or civil leaders or our employers. If, on ordinary days, you and your teens are diligent about getting work done, then they will develop a habit of doing their work and will still get it done even when you are not there to push them forward. Once they enter college or get a job, there will be no one there constantly

encouraging them to do their work. They will succeed or fail based upon the work habits which they have developed.

If you would like additional suggestions, give us a call. Our counselors are available 9 am to 5 pm EST, Monday through Friday. They can help with academics, scheduling, and general homeschooling issues.

Should I have my older children write their assignments each week in their own plan book?

If you review your children's plan book each week to make sure they are staying on track, that would be fine. Just be sure that the work is actually being done, and that your child is constantly progressing. Some children take longer to do their assignments, but they should show some progress, even if slowly.

Another option is to use the lesson plan printer from the Seton website, adjusting as necessary for sick days, vacation days, whatever. If you have a three-ring punch, the generated daily or weekly lesson plans can be kept in a three-ring binder. You may want to keep a copy of the lesson plans, at least for the current year. This serves as a reminder and a help to see where some lessons went more slowly, such as in math where review might be necessary.

We think that Seton's accreditation helps not only Seton families, but actually all homeschoolers.

How do I answer my mother-in-law who says I am overly protecting my children from the real world?

Some people may not realize that schools today are nothing like the schools of past generations. The teachers are struggling, trying to keep some semblance of order, trying to protect the children from drugs and other problems, and at the same time, accomplish some academics. Many children are coming from broken homes, some at near-poverty levels, and some have recently escaped from other lands where violence, sickness, and fear predominate, all of which affects the teaching and learning.

The best thing to do is pray for her but also to see if she would help you by listening to the children read or do their math. Some grandparents who have become involved with homeschooling have been surprised by the achievement level of their grandchildren. Some have found it rewarding and have come to be terrific teachers. Just last week, I saw two families come in with teaching grandparents to pick up their books for the year!

It is curious that people say children should go to a school to learn about the real world. In what other setting in their lives will they be thrown into a group organized solely by age? The home setting, with lots of different ages and maturity levels, is far more of a "real world" than a school.

We notice that your accreditation is from a secular organization that also accredits public schools. Can you be accredited by a Catholic association?

While we could pursue accreditation by a Catholic accreditation agency, such accreditation would likely be of limited benefit to our families. Accreditation is only as good as the reputation of the accrediting agency. Seton is currently accredited through AdvancED, which is an agency created by the merger of several



COMING SOON:

Dr. Clark and John Clark discuss Catholic education and homeschooling with Johnnette Benkovic, host of the popular 'Women of Grace' series.

Visit

www.womenofgrace.com
for airing schedule.

regional accrediting agencies (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association, and Northwest Accreditation Commission). That may sound complicated, but what it means is that we are accredited by the same agency that accredits tens of thousands of schools across the United States and internationally. For this reason, Seton's accreditation is widely accepted.

We think that Seton's accreditation helps not only Seton families, but actually all homeschoolers. Our accreditation not only shows that Seton provides a quality education, but it also shows that homeschooling itself is recognized as a valid means of educating children.

For example, our high school credits are accepted by other schools. This makes sense because a school which is accredited by the same agency that accredits us can't reasonably dispute the validity of Seton credits.

We are now in the home stretch of our re-accreditation process, which occurs every five years. We appreciate all the help that families have given us with such things as filling out surveys. The AdvancED accreditation process is not easy, but we think it is very worthwhile.

How important are the Seton message board and the videos for my high school student? I don't like him spending too much time on the computer.

The first thing to remember is that Seton provides lessons, books, other

materials, and suggestions on how to use them. However, we don't know your children and cannot know exactly how they should work as well as you do, or what materials will help them. The best thing to do would be to look at some of our message boards and videos yourself, so that you can judge how they would benefit your son, and how much time, if any, he should spend using them.

We provide the message boards and the tutorial videos because we think that they will help many students, and in fact many families attest that they get more out of Seton by using these educational aids. Many problems can be solved by getting ideas, either from other homeschooling families or from one of the Seton counselors who monitor the message boards. If a student does not understand a concept, watching one of our videos, which feature explanations by teachers, can be beneficial.

These are some of the reasons we offer online aids, but it's up to parents to decide what will help their own, unique children. We know that many parents are wary—with good reason—of children spending a great deal of time on the computer. Even though we are moving more and more toward using technology to help with learning, and toward more and more online courses, we will always also offer courses which can be done completely with books and paper.

The message boards and videos should never be used to replace the full-time God-given teachers: mom and dad!

We just started homeschooling, but the school district keeps asking for all kinds of documents and records. Should I keep trying to give them documents?

State homeschooling laws are usually pretty straightforward, but how each school district implements—or attempts to implement—these laws can be confusing and difficult. School districts sometimes try to make parents go beyond what the state law actually requires.

For this reason, we recommend parents join the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) even if they are not currently facing any problems. HSLDA was founded to provide legal assistance whenever and wherever homeschooling parents run into potential difficulties. The Association has lawyers in every state to handle local situations. HSLDA helps individual parents and state homeschooling organizations to fight troublesome laws or regulations or illegal requests at the state and county levels. They have a reduced annual fee for Seton families. Use the Seton code: 297239. Look on the HSLDA website to find your state's laws and state homeschooling organizations.

It may be tempting to think that HSLDA is not useful any longer, since the vast majority of families homeschool with no difficulties at all. However, HSLDA provides a valuable service by monitoring state laws and protecting the rights of all homeschoolers.



Homeschooling **on the Move**

THE MCCORMICK FAMILY

Who are the McCormicks?

We are a Catholic homeschooling family, currently living in Louisiana. Because my husband, Greg, is in the Army, we move around a lot, but so far, we've been stationed mostly in the southeastern states, where we both grew up. Being a homeschooling family significantly reduces the amount of stress we encounter during a move. We don't need to look for new schools or worry that the kids are missing something during a move. Without having to worry about schooling, we look forward to exploring our country as we move to different areas.

How many children do you have?

We have five children and another one on the way, due to arrive this December. Our oldest, Katie, is 16. We have a 10 year-old, Samantha; a 6 year-old, Brayden; and a 3 year-old, Liesl. Our toddler, Amelia, is 19 months old. We found out that our newest little one is a girl, and we plan to name her Ella.

Our 6 year-old son was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified, which is a type of high-functioning Autism. We've had him working with different therapies since he was 18 months old, and he still requires a few different therapies each week. His fine motor skills are not up to the level of his peers, but homeschooling enables me to adapt the lessons quickly and easily to suit his needs, such as doing a lesson orally, or writing with colored markers.

When did you begin homeschooling?

We started homeschooling soon after we had to move from Texas to Louisiana. My cousins homeschool their children, so the concept wasn't foreign to me. The schools in Louisiana weren't what we had been used to in Texas and we felt our daughter could learn better at home. We were right.

Why has homeschooling remained important for your family?

Homeschooling is critical to our family because we are interested and invested in the growth and development of our children. We are able to tailor presentation and pace to the academic needs of our individual kids. An additional benefit is filtering out some of the inappropriate influences that our kids have experienced in the public and parochial school systems.

What do you like about Seton Home Study School?

Seton provides a complete solution for lesson planning that is simple to organize and present. The materials provided coincide well with our beliefs while they lay out all the important details in the lessons.

Seton's home study program also



has a demonstrated record of performance. Our children's CCD instructors have all commented on how advanced our children are in their depth of understanding and knowledge.

Furthermore, the kids readily absorb and retain the material because it is presented in an easily digested and understood manner. In fact, the Seton program is ideally suited for both neurotypical and special needs children. The academic requirements are not monolithic and allow for adjustment to suit individual needs. In particular, our special needs student can keep up with the material because it can be presented and processed in short durations of time, allowing his attention to be retained and the material to be explored. I adapt the lessons as needed so he doesn't get too frustrated. Seton's flexibility makes that so easy!

A huge advantage offered by the religion program is that it incorporates all of the doctrinal references in a streamlined product. It enables a holistic approach to teaching that encompasses the biblical text, a Catholic and doctrinal explication of the text, the sacraments, and key lessons in biblical history.

How does the Catholic Faith inform your homeschooling endeavors?

Our Catholic faith forms the cornerstone of all of our family's activities, so it should come as no surprise that we consider faith the foundation upon which education builds. Catholicism provides not only a structure for religious beliefs, but also a prism through which the world may be viewed and interpreted. It informs ethical and secular education and allows our family to grow and mature as a whole, with each of us learning and growing at different rates and depths, but all focused on the same goals of becoming a better family and better people.

What does a typical school day in the McCormick house look like?

A typical day of home study starts with a group devotional or character development discussion. We then separate into independent subjects (e.g. religion, geography, math, music) until the baby goes down for a nap. While the baby is asleep, the older kids focus on history and science as a

group and then diverge again for language arts.

School seems to move along at the same pace whether Dad is home or not. He's at work on weekdays anyway, and we are usually done by the time he gets home. Whether or not Dad is deployed does change how we spend our weekends. When he's at home, we usually try to do a field trip or outing that just wouldn't be feasible with 5 kids and a pregnant mommy by herself.

Do you have any advice for families beginning to homeschool this year?

We'd recommend that parents considering homeschooling should always remember the reasons that led them to the choice in the first place.

Attempting to make homeschool conform to a parent's preconceived notion or memory of how school "should be" structured may be an exercise in frustration and futility. Accept that each child is different and if yours are effectively absorbing and assimilating the information, there is no need for superfluous structures that are intended to emulate a "regular school environment." It was our experience that much of the traditional school day was white space (wasted time) that does not need to exist in the home study environment.

Also, patience is still a virtue... When things are challenging or frustrating, take a breath; perhaps ask your spouse to try presenting material in a different way. Sometimes it is simply a matter of repetition.

Most importantly, remember that no one cares more about the success of your child's education and development as a healthy, productive member of society than you do. We all make mistakes, and will continue to do so—it's part of the human condition—but never give up trying to make a better life for your family through the education that is provided to its youngest members!





AdvancED is the largest educational accreditation agency in the world, accrediting over 30,000 schools in the U.S. and internationally.

Seton would like to thank everyone who helped us reach our survey goal during the AdvancED accreditation process. We learned a lot about our families and what they expect from Seton. We hope to put this information to good use moving forward.

Though our response to the survey data will be ongoing, here is some preliminary information that we can present to you.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a method of quality assurance designed to acknowledge that schools, after evaluation by an external body, operate with a high standard of educational principles and practices.

Survey Question:

What do You Like Best about our School?

5,794 people responded. These are the top five responses, in order of popularity.

Catholicism/
Religious Element

Flexibility

Academics

763

Learning
at Home

405

Counseling

335



Your Suggestions. Our Response

Many families provided great suggestions to Seton for future improvements. Given the impressive number of responses we received, it will take us some time to finish reviewing and assessing each submission.

Here are a few initial responses to your suggestions, to give you an idea of the improvements Seton has already begun to work on.



GRADING

Seton is in the first stages of a wide-ranging upgrade to the digital backbone that drives Seton's courses and coursework. This system will improve and streamline the way graders review coursework.



MATH

Math is often a tough subject for students to master. To provide more help to families in this area, Seton is in the beginning stages of investigating alternative Math texts and series. Additionally, more video tutorials will be added to the course resources for Seton's Math courses.



DIGITAL CONTENT

Seton is excited about the possibilities the internet has opened to help homeschoolers. We are presently working with experts in the field to improve and expand our online offerings, with a special focus on high school content. Nevertheless, our Catholic content is always a priority, and books will be available as an alternative.



ACADEMIC STANDARDS

While academic rigor is a point of pride for Seton, we want families and students to feel they can confidently complete and schedule their coursework. To help families, Seton is taking a close look at redistribution of work to ensure consistent and manageable daily schedules.



COMMUNITY

Seton is always looking for ways to connect with our families and to help our families stay connected. The development of this magazine came from this desire. *SetonMagazine.com* provides daily tips, humor, and inspiration for the community. We have developed a number of community-building features such as the chess club, parent reading group, student achievement page, and Facebook page, with more to come.

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WHEN ONE MOTHER DECIDED TO HOMESCHOOL HER SON, A LIGHT BULB WENT ON



In a Midwest school many years ago, a little boy sat in class asking many questions, but getting few answers. Though he was very inquisitive and had a sincere desire to learn, his teacher grew increasingly frustrated with him, which caused him to question his own intelligence. But after hearing that his teacher regarded him as a dunce, the little boy's mother decided to pull him out of school after just three months of formal education. Instead, she decided to educate him at home. Though she didn't believe in the educational methods of the school, she did believe in her child.

The little boy's name? Thomas A. Edison.

While some dream of achieving a single patent in their lifetimes, Edison is credited with over one thousand patents. Though his inventions include the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and a series of advances to the telegraph, his most notable invention was the first feasible incandescent light bulb. People sometimes comment that something "changed the world," and it is often an overstatement. Yet, in the case of Edison's light bulb, how can we conclude otherwise? There is scarcely a single area of human endeavor that failed to benefit from this invention.

Tom Philbin, author of a book entitled "The 100 Greatest Inventions of All Time," ranks the light bulb as the second greatest invention in history, second only to the wheel. Philbin pithily sums up the light bulb's significance by saying: "The light

bulb changed night, in a sense, to day."

When you look today at all the marvels of modern technology like the smartphone, the DVD, high definition television, GPS, Wi-Fi, and magnetic resonance imaging, you could certainly claim that Edison played a role in many of them. His inventions were a springboard to the creativity of others. Though he passed away in 1931, Edison's work continues to make a powerful impact that is felt every day around the world.

That observation raises some questions. How much of Thomas Edison's impact was due to his mother? How important to the equation was homeschooling? Admittedly, we will never know how far Edison would have gone if his mother had not homeschooled him. All we know for sure is this: Mrs. Edison homeschooled her son, and her son grew up to be one of the greatest inventors in the history of the world.

Looking back, I wonder if Mrs. Edison encountered many of the objections that mothers hear today. How will Thomas be socialized? How will you teach him subjects that you don't know yourself? Is it healthy for a child to spend so much time with his mother? Mrs. Edison did have a background in teaching, but it is interesting that with that background, she decided that the best place for him was at home.

Though it will always be hard to quantify the influence of his mother, Edison made a comment later in life that

speaks volumes. He reminisced: "My mother was the making of me. She was so true, so sure of me; and I felt I had something to live for, someone I must not disappoint."

As Edison suggests, his mother's belief in him was a powerful influence. Clearly, his mother's love inspired him to greatness.

It is unrealistic to think that we could go very far in life without someone who believes in us. Those who doubt us seem to be many, and their skepticism often adds to the fact that we doubt ourselves. The Edison family illustrates a central truth: homeschooling is a structure of belief. A mother's decision to homeschool is commonly born of a belief in her child, and this belief is born of love.

You Catholic homeschool moms should always remember something. Edison's greatest invention lit the world with mere lumens, but you are helping your children learn and love their Faith to become a light to the world. From a spiritual perspective, our world is very dark; we seem to be reminded of this every day. But you are making a difference. You are the ones lighting a candle rather than cursing the darkness. Your love is making all the difference, not merely for your family, but for the whole world.



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.

From Homeschooling to the Religious Life

BY A CARMELITE NUN

Once there was a beautiful princess who was born in the likeness of her father. Now, her father had many daughters and his kingdom was a glorious creation. As a young girl, the princess loved exploring the kingdom with the king; she would relate to him her every desire, and he took pleasure in making her happy.

As the princess got older, the king began to allow her more liberties, and she indulged in the goods her royal lifestyle provided: fine jewels, angelic symphonies, gorgeous stallions and delectable pastries. However, every time she obtained her desire another would attract her, so she constantly suffered from an empty and lonely feeling.

One night, her eyes welled up with tears; she ran to her father crying, "Why is there never a gown gorgeous enough or man handsome enough for me? This kingdom is perfect; my sisters are happy, but nothing makes me happy." The king planted his lips on his daughter's forehead and replied, "Your sisters are happy because they are loved and they love. Your heart is unique though, and it will only be satisfied by loving in a very special way. This kingdom is not perfect; it needs your love."

Frustrated and confused, the princess went for a long walk through the kingdom. Finally, the sun began to rise, and she realized she was very thirsty and far from civilization. Suddenly, a carpenter appeared on the outskirts of a forest, and the princess shouted, "Sir! Do you have something I could drink? I'm exhausted." As he turned around, their eyes locked, and she knew she was loved. Dazed, she whispered, "You must be thirsty. Where can I fetch water for us?" The carpenter pointed to the top of a hill and began to walk beside her.

The water was cold and refreshing, and the princess suddenly realized that her painful loneliness was gone. She looked out over the kingdom and saw villages of thirsty people. The two filled up pitchers of the life-giving water and journeyed down the hill. With her

eyes forever on the carpenter, her bridegroom, she ministered to the people and loved them. She was finally happy – eternally ever-after.

A Deep Mystery

This is a fantastical illustration of the call to religious life: a mystery that takes place in the innermost depths of a young woman's heart. Because the call comes from within, religious in every country, from every family setting and academic background, can tell the story of how the Lord called them to a special life of happiness and love. As the oldest of nine children in a homeschooling Catholic family, I can attest to the fact that my childhood environment nurtured the vocation planted on my heart.

It is difficult to discuss the actual particulars and effects of a homeschooling education because it varies from household to household and even child to child. Universally, though, I think the education requires active participation and personal responsibility from the student. Most of the learning process takes place during solitary study and then is reviewed or tested by mom or the tutor. This is a beautiful foundation for life – especially religious life. Although a young woman receives the call to become a consecrated religious, in order to persevere she must be responsible and actively participate in her discernment and formation.

Most growth in the spiritual life takes place through solitary prayer and an ever-increasing in self-knowledge, while areas of difficulty or new understanding are discussed with a spiritual director or superior. I think it may also be true to say that a special thirst for knowledge and truth is fostered in the homeschooler. The textbooks (hopefully!) are rooted in the Truth. I never had to worry about "relative truths" or a contradiction in "opinion" from teachers. As classes built on the foundations of previous classes, truth built on truth. I consider this continuity in my education



a great blessing which has given me the confidence to seek and follow the truth, even when Truth led me to the convent!

The Mother's Role

Since all women, whether married, single or consecrated religious, are ultimately called to share their feminine genius as a spouse and mother, it is very important for young girls to see women living motherhood joyfully. A homeschooling environment presupposes a stay-at-home mom. Her daughters, while receiving their education and participating in extracurricular activities, are able to observe their mother's self-sacrificing love. Oftentimes, too, the young girls are able to help their mom change diapers, entertain younger siblings, shop for groceries and cook meals. The religious vocation is one of faith: we love a spouse we cannot see, and our children, though many, do not have our eyes or nose. I feel very blessed to know what motherhood concretely entails, so I can better apply it spiritually. And, just so you know, we still have to change diapers at our daycare!

Religious life is often discussed

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as counter-cultural. Well, for the homeschooled aspirant, her entire life has been counter cultural. "So do you wear pajamas all day?" inquiring peers would ask me. "Well, God bless you!" a cashier would say as my mother tried to defend her eight gallons of milk with the jaw dropper, "I have nine kids." The world does not understand the need to homeschool when free education is down the road. As a teenager, merely going to McDonald's on vacation with my entire family was embarrassing: our family's mere size conquered the Play Place, and I thought that our anarchy was threatening the other four parents and three kids. Now I know that the world is thirsting for a witness of family life that is not based on media messages or Planned Parenthood propaganda but, rather, on the truth, goodness and beauty that is available to us on earth. The eschatological witness of religious life is equally essential: to bear witness to the truth, goodness and beauty yet to come. "So, do you wear pajamas?" curious girls will now ask me. "Yes," I reply, while thanking God for allowing them to see that I am different and praying that the witness goes a little deeper.

One does not have to look far today to see that our culture is superficial, selfish and egotistical. People still know that they want to be happy, but they look for immediate fulfillment with no commitment or suffering. I believe one of the greatest gifts the homeschooled child receives is stability and security in family life: she knows that the essence of her identity is committed love. As all fallen mankind, she is prone to the superficiality, selfishness and egoism of the world, but, hopefully, she has witnessed her parents' formula for happiness: sacrifice and self-giving love. Maybe one day, she will begin to feel a tug on her heart, a pull from her innermost depths. She will begin to spiritually understand that the committed love which has given her an identity is ultimately from a committed and faithful God who is thirsting for spousal union with her. Realizing her own unworthiness but convinced that she is being called, she will say, "Fiat! I will forever love Unconditional Love Himself!"

Lessons Learned by the Teacher from His Student

BY GEORGE J. GALLOWAY



When my daughter, Mary Kate, was in sixth grade at St. Joseph the Worker Elementary School, she presented some alarming and disturbing problems. From the outset of the school year, she had difficulty getting out of bed in the morning. Her weight had drastically increased, yet her appetite was puzzlingly disappearing. She complained of aches in her joints and itchy, sore skin.

A beautiful, long-legged, smiling, active and precocious girl had become a lethargic, unenergetic pre-teen who, for the first time in her life, lacked her natural inquisitiveness and perceptive ability to concentrate.

My wife and I were growing more concerned by the day. Of course, she had seen her pediatrician a number of times, but the doctor seemed just as perplexed as we were. Perhaps it was just a stage, we convinced ourselves. "She'll grow out of it," was our mantra.

But Mary Kate didn't. She got worse. She missed a full quarter of the school year. Things were getting precarious as our fears grew and the snow melted into the spring of 2001. Finally, Mary Kate's pediatrician wisely recognized that this unknown malady was out of her purview. She directed us to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to get some answers.

Prayers Answered

On the anticipated appointment day, we drove down to the city and entered the office of an astute, pediatric endocrinologist and an answer to our prayers. His name was Dr. Paul Thornton, a native of Dublin, Ireland. His keen, blue eyes took one look at Mary Kate and pronounced a diagnosis: "She has Hashimoto's Disease," he said quite matter-of-factly.

We trusted this man immediately. Dr. Thornton did all the requisite tests to prove his theory, and they all justified his instinctive, experienced calculations: my daughter's thyroid was being attacked by her own immune system. Her body was slowly aging and dying. Without the thyroid, her growth had been checked, possibly reversed, her cholesterol was at an amazing 580, and, within a year, without a proper diagnosis and treatment, she would have died. Praised be to God for our miracle in finding this doctor and this hospital.

God also provided us with another miracle. My wife had obtained a new job with increased income. I was a parochial school history teacher. We decided to bite the bullet, economically, and homeschool Mary Kate.

The response of some friends and family is worth noting. We were accused of depriving our precious child of social skills that could only be learned with

interaction with other children her own age. Why would we possibly put our daughter at such risk? To alienate her from her peer group would leave lasting and unforgivable scars from which she might never recover. How dare we deviate from societal norms! It was unnatural and completely unorthodox.

Yes, it was. It was also, as I learned later, breathtakingly refreshing. Taken out of the pressurized norms of the edicts and demands of the socialized cohort of modern society, a child can take wing and fly independently, pursuing individual dreams without the restraints of peer pressure. A child can develop a personal sense of self-worth and the freedom to pursue her own dreams without restraint.

Finding our Direction

After careful research, I chose Seton for our homeschooling program. As an educator, I was impressed with Seton's approach to homeschooling because I believe in incorporating spiritual learning into all facets of academic progression. I was pleased, and even surprised, that Seton shared my philosophy of education. The idea is to measure pedagogy (sorry, the art or science of education) by establishing a baseline of student understanding and then planning a progression based upon student outcomes: not just what the teacher expects to see, but what the student has learned and demonstrated based upon measurable outcomes.

Moreover, by dovetailing Catholic teaching into all academic disciplines, subjects assumed to be diverse mesh into an integrated learning strategy, producing what professors of a bygone age would call a truly liberal arts education. This is achievable even at an elementary level if done slowly, because it introduces initial aspects of philosophy and theology for inquisitive young minds to digest in God's good time. In other words, we can plant seeds without indoctrination.

But I went one step further. Using what I believe to be the greatest educational achievement of this or any age, the Socratic Method, I could allow the student, my daughter, in a one-on-one setting, to come to her own conclusions through judicious and focused question-and-answer sessions.

And then the unthinkable happened. On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, our world changed. My teaching changed. Her learning changed. We all changed.

We talked about it. We leaned on and learned from each other. She asked questions I couldn't answer. I asked questions that she could. In spite of her supposed innocence, her naiveté in matters worldly, as we adults sometimes think we all understand, at times she became the teacher and I became the student.

She gleaned from the Seton program, without my help, the morsels of wisdom on her terms. Day by day, we made progress. She grew (literally, before my very eyes) into a beautiful young woman. I grew as the father-teacher I had always wanted to be.

We made time for each other. We sang and laughed and cooked meals to surprise Mommy and chuckled with joy doing it. We took long walks in the mornings as our version of PE and didn't talk at all. We giggled as the leaves fell on us through that autumn and made snow angels when blankets of peaceful, perfect crystals fell from the heavens and crunched deliciously under our boots in December. It was the most memorable Advent of my life.

Marching Forward

Mary Kate's health improved with needed medication, which she must have for the rest of her life, like a juvenile diabetic depends upon insulin, and became sustained by a newly created faith in mankind after a terrible tragedy mutually shared with her father. After what had happened to us and to our nation, I couldn't ask for anything more than that.

If you have a child with a medical problem (notice I didn't use the word issue: problems are real; an issue can sometimes be imagined), and take upon yourself the gift of homeschooling, then my advice is to take your time. Outcomes should be based upon your children's understanding, not your expectations. Listen to their little voices. Often, pearls of wisdom come not from our compilation of knowledge, but from a divine voice that whispers only in the ears of our children. After all, wisdom and knowledge are two completely different constructs. It took a little girl to teach me that.



George J. Galloway is a retired history teacher, freelance writer, and novelist. He has written for Catholic Exchange, Catholic Land, and the St. Austin Review. He writes from his little Cape Cod in Fallsington, Pennsylvania.



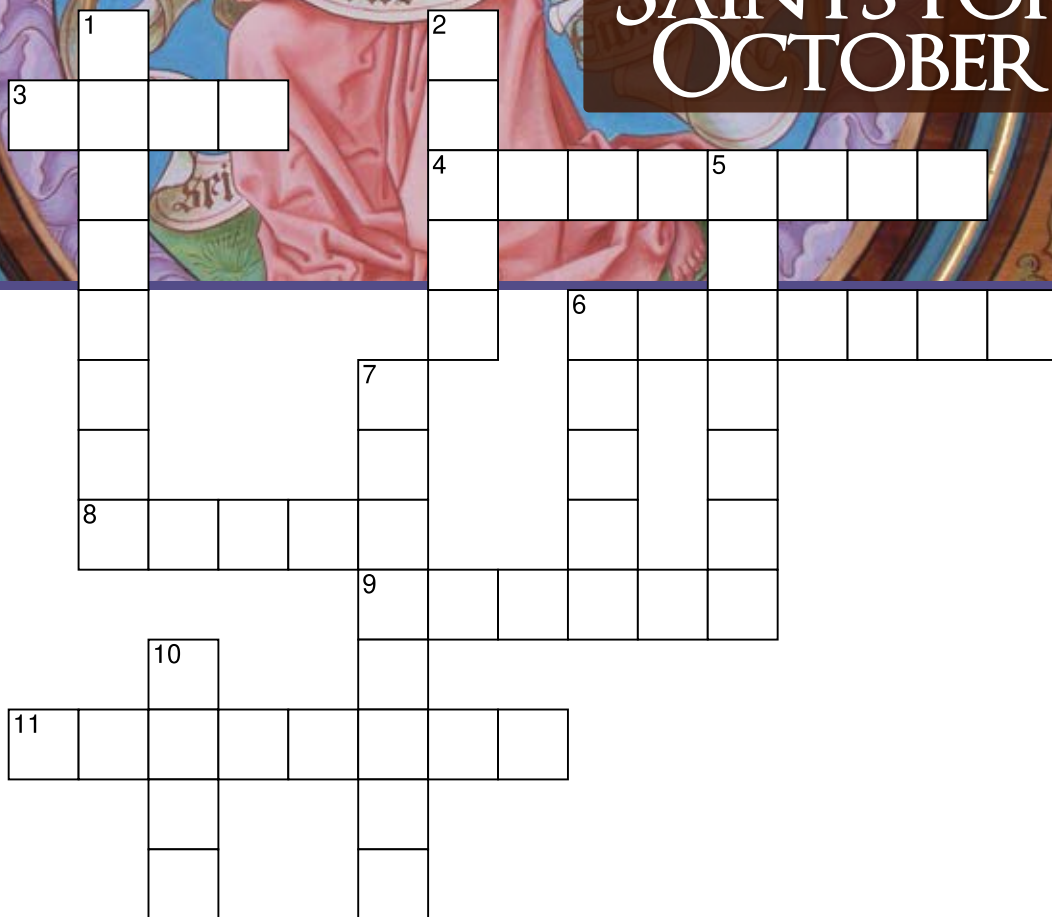
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SAINTS FOR OCTOBER

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 3 St. ____ of Capistrano joined the Franciscans after the death of his wife; his feast is October 23rd.
- 4 St. ____ Mary Alacoque spread devotion to the Sacred Heart.
- 6 St. Ignatius, bishop of ____, was martyred by being fed to wild beasts.
- 8 Our Lady of Fatima appeared to Francisco, Jacinta, and ____.
- 9 The Feast of Our Lady of the ____ is celebrated on October 7th.
- 11 Our Lord appeared to this saint; she spread the devotion of the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

DOWN

- 1 Fatima is in this country.
- 2 Known as "the Zealot," this Apostle's feast is October 28th.
- 5 St. ____ Claret founded the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; his feast is October 24th.
- 6 St. Teresa of ____ did great work in reforming the Carmelites.
- 7 The Feast of the ____ Angels is celebrated on October 2nd.
- 10 This Apostle wrote a short epistle; he shares a feast with 2 down.

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Student Achievements



Danielle | I placed first in a 2D payback class barrel race. Homeschooling gave me the flexible schedule needed to plan my riding around decent weather and attend necessary training events.



Timothy | I scored during my soccer team's Grand-Final. Homeschooling gave me the flexibility needed to practice my soccer skills.



Colby | Auditioned and was accepted into a Christian Musical at the Merrill Auditorium called "The Bus Stop Atheist". The musical debuted Sept. 19-21, 2014.

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PAPAL WISDOM



How do we keep our faith as a family? Do we keep it for ourselves, in our families, as a personal treasure like a bank account, or are we able to share it by our witness, by our acceptance of others, by our openness? We all know that families, especially young families, are often “racing” from one place to another, with lots to do. But did you ever think that this “racing” could also be the race of faith? Christian families are missionary families.

Pope Francis, Homily of Mass for Day of the Family, Oct 27, 2013