

Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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The Bissonnette Family

Daily at Seton, we gather before the altar at our noon Angelus and offer prayers for our families and friends. We encourage you also to pray for other homeschooling families, especially those suffering from illness, unemployment, or other crosses. United in the Communion of Saints, God allows us to uphold, support, and console other members of His Church through our prayers. Let us pray for one another as we walk the path of homeschooling, so that we may someday all join together in prayer in Heaven.



Letter from the Editor

Christ is risen, even as He said! Alleluia!

What a glorious time of year this is! I hope you are feeling spiritually renewed after the end of Lent, galvanized in faith, and ready for the warm weather. At Seton, we certainly are.

This issue of *Seton Magazine*, we take a close look at the value of books and reading. From a spotlight on Ginny Seuffert's new book (out last month from Seton Press) to John Clark's memories of a home library, to Fr. Wenzinger's explanation of the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*, we have some wonderful perspectives on our topic.

Our feature article is a quick journey back to the basics of reading, why Seton places such a strong focus on it throughout the curriculum, and the deep impact it can have on our children. When young readers struggle with getting through their books, or you begin to wonder if its worth all the time and effort, this issue is geared to bring you encouragement and discussion points to keep going.

We hope you'll derive food for thought, a few laughs, and some good ideas from the articles in our April issue.

Happy reading!

Christine Smitha
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Domestic Sanctification

Lessons from St. Zita of Lucca

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

On April 27, we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Zita of Lucca, the humble domestic who achieved her sainthood by zealously carrying out the minutiae of her mundane tasks. In her own way, this Italian housekeeper lived out ahead of her time the principles of the Little Way, which were expressed by St. Therese of Lisieux many centuries later.

St. Zita was born in 1218 to poor parents in a small village near Lucca in northwestern Tuscany. At the age of twelve, Zita was sent to Lucca to become a servant for the Fatinellis, a relatively affluent family involved in the textile industry. From her earliest days in service, Zita made a point of taking time each day for prayer, both attending daily Mass and getting up in the middle of the night for a period of solitary prayer. This habit remained with Zita until her death in 1278.

Her routine of prayer notwithstanding, Zita was not a contemplative, and she is known for having said that in the working classes, a piety that shied away from labor was only a “sham piety.” She placed great store in doing her job well and was known for her industrious nature. Unfortunately, in her early years as a servant, she was much maligned by her fellow servants for her piety and for her diligence, both of which were a standing reproach to the other servants’ lack of dedication. For a time, even her employers held Zita in disfavor because of the lies and backbiting of the other servants.

Nonetheless, after some time, Zita succeeded in winning over the rest of the household, and in later years, she became the trusted housekeeper in charge of all the Fatinelli family’s household affairs and goods. She managed the servants beneath her with compassion and kindness and without ever attempting revenge for their previous ill treatment of her. She kept her employers happy and in good temper, attended their children, and could always be depended upon to care for the homeless,

poor, and those otherwise in need. Upon her death in 1278, she was immediately acclaimed as a saint by the people of the surrounding countryside, and to this day, her memorial is still celebrated with a great festival in her native land.

The life of St. Zita holds many important lessons for homeschooling parents today. First is the importance of reserving some small amount of time just to focus on God. No matter how crazy or difficult our lives can become, no matter how large the mountain of tasks, or how ceaseless the needs of our children, we must never forget to dedicate some portion of our day (be it ever so small) to our own spiritual lives. Without daily time in the presence of God, we have no source to replenish the grace and strength needed in our work of caring for our families.

Second, we must remember that in serving our families, we are serving God. St. Zita firmly believed that in all her little household tasks, she was serving God, not just man. She understood that “as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me” (Matt. 25:40). Devotion to the demands of our state in life and zealous fulfillment of its duties constitutes our obedience to the will of God. Each task we undertake is an act of love for God, even as it fulfills some practical purpose within the life of our families.

Third, good stewardship should be our constant motto. Our time, our resources, and our talents should be managed with care so that they do not go to waste. Like Zita, whose zeal in fulfilling her duties and care in managing both goods and people admitted her to the confidence of her employers, we should seek always to make the most of what has been given to us to have and to do, so that in eternity we may be welcomed by Christ as “good and faithful servants.”

Finally, we must be grateful for what we’ve been given and stand ready to share



it with others when they have need. Though St. Zita was not wealthy, she always found something to give to those less fortunate than herself, whether that was the meal provided by her employers, or the money that had been given her for new clothing. If she had nothing material to share, she gave her prayers and her comfort. We all know families in worse circumstances than our own; it is our responsibility to thank God for the blessings He has afforded us, both spiritual and material, and to be generous with those same gifts to those less privileged than ourselves.

St. Zita, teach us to find Christ in our chores. Beg for us the graces we need to love our families and complete our work each day in peace and joy. Help us to cultivate gratitude and charity in ourselves and our children, so that we may one day rejoice with you at the feet of our Heavenly Father. Amen.



Dr. Mary Kay Clark has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes columns for the *Seton Magazine* and is the author of *Catholic Homeschooling: A Handbook for Parents*.

your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

We are struggling financially, and need some help, not only for tuition, but for supplemental materials as well.

Are there any retired teachers in your parish? They usually have loads of extra materials and would be delighted to give them to some children who could use them. Many libraries have an abundance of donated books, and they also tend to have huge book sales, where you might be able to find good resources very cheaply! Check with your local homeschool support group for parents who are no longer homeschooling, and who might be willing to donate their new and used materials.

Do boys learn differently than girls?

Most parents and teachers would say “All the time!” However, in reality, it is not actually all the time, but it does seem to happen frequently. In some subjects, it might be wise to have fathers teach their sons because they share the same strengths in ways of learning as well as interests in certain subject areas. However, don’t assume your daughters don’t have the same interests as your husband.

Families with several boys or several girls know that all boys and all girls are not alike. Four girls in a family may have four very different personalities and four different learning styles. Even if it is true that on the average a boy learns better this way, and a girl learns better that way, remember that you are not teaching the average. You are teaching particular children with particular needs and interests.

The beauty of homeschooling is that you can accommodate the interests, the needs, and the abilities of each student. As you and your husband work together with the children, you will quickly learn their individual interests and strengths.

How much help may I give my 9th grader for her book analysis assignments?

Review with her all the information in the Lesson Plan, and show her the resources available on our website to help her with her assignment. You can offer her clear but general instructions or comments, such as “I don’t think you are expressing your idea clearly enough,” or “You need more examples.” What you should not do is generate any of her content. Help her to think about the ideas she wants to express, help her to be clear, help her to understand that some examples are good but others do not work.

Make sure that you’re helping your daughter to think about what she has read. Though the book analyses help students to appreciate good literature and recognize great writing, their main purpose is to develop critical analysis skills that can be applied in all subjects and in personal situations throughout a lifetime.

The beauty of homeschooling is that you can accommodate the interests, the needs, and the abilities of each student.

My son seems bored with the lessons in the math book. Can you send me the next level math book?

Before moving to the next level, we recommend that you quickly review the material which will be on the tests. For instance, most books have “chapter reviews.” Go over those with your son and make sure he knows the material, and then administer the Seton tests. You may discover that he really does know the

lessons in the first five or ten chapters, but you may find that he has not learned the concepts in the last ten chapters. In such a case, it’s important for you to assign the lessons for the rest of the book.

If your son takes all the chapter tests and does well, you can contact Seton at any time of the year, and enroll him in the next grade level math book.

Some in our homeschooling group stop homeschooling for high school.

Parents usually make this decision because they don’t feel competent to teach the high school subjects. Sometimes, they make this decision because their student wants to make a change.

Statistics and anecdotal evidence both show that parents can do a great job homeschooling through high school. We have many testimonials from colleges about how well homeschooled students function in the college setting. Christendom College recently ran an ad stating that their valedictorians and salutatorians for 2014 and 2015 were all Seton Home Study School alumni. Our students tend to do very well on the SAT or ACT tests and often receive generous scholarships.

Important as academics are, we don’t think that’s the main reason to stick with homeschooling through high school. The main reason is that the pressures facing high school students in brick and mortar schools can dramatically affect their ultimate future. Homeschooled students entering a high school may change their values simply to fit in, and if they don’t, they will certainly struggle as outsiders in the increasingly dangerous high school culture. Even if the students do stay strong in their faith, it will be hard for them not to be affected in some way by the culture around them. When

NEW Selections from the Seton Summer Book Club!



Father Brown Reader: Stories from Chesterton.

Follow Father Brown as he unravels mysteries that baffle the brightest detectives! In these four adaptations for young readers, a whole new generation of children will be delighted by Chesterton's masterful story telling. 144 pp. **\$12.00**

Crossbows and Crucifixes

In this adventure for all ages, author Henry Garnett brings to life the drama of a nation where unjust laws forced good men and women to choose between their country and their Faith, and young people heard early and well the call to heroism that Christians must be ever ready to heed. 187 pp. \$14.00

Learn more about the Book Club at www.setonbooks.com/summerreading

they are told day after day that good is evil and evil is good, they may begin to mold their own opinions in the same way.

My young children have messy printing and handwriting.

Some children develop their printing and handwriting skills rather slowly. Keep your children practicing by writing short one- or two-sentence prayers. Incentivize regular handwriting drills with a small reward for neat and legible (or at least improved) handwriting. If fine motor skills are a problem, encourage activities that require finger dexterity. Encourage them by having them write thank you notes or invitations, or even simple notes to tell relatives about an event. They can even draw pictures to go with the notes. This will help your children with writing and have the added benefit of greatly pleasing grandparents, other relatives, and friends.

You may be interested in the *Early Literacy*

for *Young Catholics Pre-K Activity Book* to help little ones develop their printing and handwriting skills. Available from our book store, it is full of fun projects that will help your preschooler develop the small muscles of the hand which they need for handwriting. It will also help you teach necessary skills like the tripod grasp, the correct way to hold a pencil or crayon for the smoothest use.

My daughter is quite insistent about the college she wants to attend. I'm concerned because I don't think it will be good for her spiritually.

Which college to attend is one of the most important decisions that a student and her parents can make. It will impact the rest of her life. At college, her faith will be strengthened or weakened. At college, she will make lasting friendships that will either help or hurt her. She may very well meet her future spouse at college, and have a happy or unhappy marriage. It's important to choose wisely.

Because a choice of college is so important, Seton has a College Partner program. The colleges which are part of this program are colleges in which the solid Catholic educational foundation that your children have received already can be built upon and strengthened. Seton's college partners are listed in the column to the right.

How can I schedule more hands-on activities and keep up with the schedule?

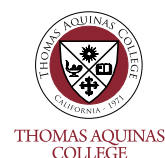
We don't schedule many hands-on activities because many families simply don't have the time or the equipment, especially when several children are being homeschooled. However, some parents join a homeschool support group that offers opportunities for various art, music, science, or history projects and activities. Some parents join local library-sponsored or church-sponsored activity programs. Local museums sometimes offer homeschooling-friendly programs, as well. Regardless of what you choose to add, make sure your children keep up with regular assignments so they understand that "outside" hands-on activities are subject to the fulfillment of primary responsibilities.



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The Seton College Partner Program is a way to encourage students to continue their Catholic education by attending solidly Catholic Colleges after high school.



setonhome.org/colleges



Prayer, Work & Play with a Homeschool Military Family

by Amy Bissonnette

"O Lord of Wisdom and Knowledge, help me be focused from grade school to college. Help me to concentrate on my studies today, so then I may finish and go out and play."

This prayer was written by our son, who just turned 12 and is a sixth grader with Seton. He wrote this prayer for one of his assignments; I like it so much that I pray it too.

Prayer and play are essential in our day as a homeschooling family. From the moment that they wake up in the morning, our five children are brimming with energy. Our oldest son is usually up first, along with his brother, who is 10 and a fourth grader. They rise before the sun to exercise and begin their daily math lesson with their dad. Our twins, who are 6 and in first grade, wake up a bit later. After getting dressed for the day, these two usually begin to play with their little sister, who is 4, until they are reminded that they have a dishwasher that needs to be emptied and a table that needs to be set. Daddy has already started the oatmeal (if our oldest son has not already made pancakes or eggs) and the morning is well on its way.

Where am I, you ask? I am upstairs preparing my heart and my mind for the day. There is a lot of prayer that is taking place, and hopefully some Bible reading too. A load of laundry is started and then down the stairs I go to face the day.

Welcome to our home! It is a busy, bustling place filled with laughter and noise from nearly the break of dawn each day. Mostly the kids want to play, but through our homeschooling journey we have all learned, "First we work and then we play." It is one of the mottos we live by. More importantly, though, we pray before we play. As we all gather around the table for our first meal of the day, my husband, Peter, reads aloud our daily Mass readings and leads us in prayer "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen..."

Throughout our homeschooling day, I continue to plead with God to give me the strength and the grace that I need to lead the children through another day. Seton helps us to stay focused on our faith in God as we delve into the academics. The role that our Catholic faith plays in our schooling and family life is central to the spiritual well-being of all of us. That is one of the reasons we chose Seton.

Not only is Seton an accredited school, but it is also an affordable Catholic school with books that teach and remind our children (and me) about what it means to be Catholic, and how we live our faith in a practical way daily. Seton's books bring to life the stories of saints who lived as Catholics in this world and the mark they made on history and this nation. Seton's books inspire us to live accordingly.

We are a family of readers. Not only do we pray and play together, we read together...every day! Throughout the winter, it is not uncommon for either my husband or me to have to ask the children to stop reading





around the fireplace in order to get them started on their lessons for the day (or to get back to their lessons)! Some of my friends have said we are lucky to have that problem. By the grace of God, we have not had any difficulties with teaching our children to read. They each began reading at the age of four and from there the love for reading grew as we created an environment conducive to reading.

My husband and I decided to stop watching television many years ago through the inspiration of Catholic author and speaker Matthew Kelly's "Building Better Families" talk, which happened to coincide with our decision to homeschool our oldest son, who was entering first grade. While on our cross country road trip from Florida to California, we made the decision that would change our lives. We became a non-television-watching Catholic homeschooling family!

Instead, we began reading classic literature to our children. I am convinced that hearing stories from *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Catholic Children's Bible* read by Daddy at night has also inspired a love of reading in our children.

Did I forget to mention that we are a military family too? My husband is an officer in the U.S. Navy and in 2012 he received orders to report to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. We packed up our family into the minivan and off we drove from Jacksonville, FL into the sunset to start our journey across our great United States of America. Our sons were 6 and 4 and our twin daughters were 1 ½ when we arrived in Monterey, where we began our homeschooling adventure. We have now homeschooled in California, Texas, and Tennessee.

Currently, we live on a Navy base and belong to a co-op for military homeschooling

families that meets once a month at the chapel on base. Homeschooling with Seton inspires our children to share their faith, just like the saints, each time they attend co-op. All the children are given time for recitation and each of our children usually chooses to recite Bible verses they have memorized to share their faith with their friends.

Seton has also helped me to grow in my own knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, as I learn alongside the children. There is always something new to discover about our Christian heritage in Seton's courses.

I hope you were encouraged by something you read about our Catholic homeschooling military family. We homeschoolers are not alone; Our Lord is with us. Remember Philippians 4:13, *we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.*

Now it's time to go outside and play!



Reading

Opening the Doors to the Rest of Education

BY SETON STAFF

It's a common refrain around Seton Home Study School that English is the basis of every other skill, that without the ability to read and write well, a human being's potential for success is severely curtailed.

As parents, we teach the ABC's with anxiety, praying that our children will catch on quickly. The primers we give our sons and daughters in kindergarten and first grade are the foundation of all our hopes and dreams for their future, because reading opens the doors to the rest of education. Though we sometimes tire of the seemingly endless quantities of reading assigned in our children's curriculum, at heart, we know all that bookwork is getting them ready for success in college and beyond.

But reading isn't just the cornerstone of success in textbook education. Reading underpins the entire development of the human person. If you want to know the real reasons we put so much emphasis on reading, here are three you don't hear every day, and they're exactly why Seton Home Study School builds its curriculum on Reading.

- Reading broadens our scope.
- Reading teaches empathy.
- Reading trains the moral imagination.

Reading broadens our scope.

Most people don't get to travel around the world; volunteer with different sorts of religious, humanitarian, and environmental missions in faraway places; visit the great architectural and geological wonders of the world; walk the streets of the most historically significant towns and cities; or experience in person all the world's great art and music. However, thanks to reading books, every single person can do all of these things vicariously.

Reading allows us to have experiences that would never be possible otherwise, and these experiences enable us to approach our own lives and circumstances within a richer framework. Thus, when we encounter a problem in our work or school day, the wisdom of the ages gained from reading may rise up to help us. When we see something remarkable in our own backyards, we can relate it to the descriptions of great natural phenomena recorded in books we borrowed from the library. We may not have seen the Mona Lisa in person, but we can converse about it because we've read biographies of the painter, and absorbed famous accounts of others' responses to the masterpiece. Reading makes us bigger and better than

we could otherwise be within the natural boundaries of our own lives.

Reading teaches empathy.

In an almost forgotten volume of letters to important literary figures, Albino Luciani (who later became Pope John Paul I) described the writing of Charles Dickens as "warm with imagination and humanity," worthy because "all of your compassion is poured out on" the oppressed. In the same letter, Luciani reminds us of Marley's words from *A Christmas Carol*: "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were all my business." These are also the business of books, and thus they are our business when we read books.

As children are caught up in the lives of the characters in their storybooks, they learn how to relate to other human beings. They also learn this skill of relating simply from homeschooling, but stories teach children how to respond to great suffering and great joy. Through stories, children open the doors to the larger human drama taking place across the globe and across history. In their reading, children learn charity and generosity toward persons in all eras, locations, states and stages of life, and

come to understand themselves as part of the greater human community.

Just as stories teach children to understand the drama of human actions on a grand scale, so stories also teach children about the bigger picture within every individual soul. Stories train children to have awareness of and respect for others. Books teach children to approach conflict from the other's point-of-view, and to acknowledge that what we see on the surface of people is only half the story. Reading stories enables children to understand the deeper motivations behind people's actions, to have compassion on those who have had hard choices to make, and to recognize that there are times when it is appropriate for us to reserve judgment.

Reading trains the moral imagination.

If anyone is concerned that stories teach sympathy at the expense of truth, let the

third point be remembered. Reading trains the moral imagination. Stories are the first place where children really understand the concepts of objective right and wrong as such, detached from what will please or offend Mom and Dad, detached from fear of punishment or desire for reward. In stories, children see the beauty of virtue and the ugliness of vice. In fairytales, they learn to associate themselves with the characters who choose good, make sacrifices, and defend honor because these characters are the heroes and heroines.

When they read stories, children develop positive emotional responses to justice, mercy, honesty, and all the other goods in human nature, while rejecting injustice, cruelty, dishonesty, and all the other evils of which men are capable for the wrongs that they are. Through reading, children learn the value of living for something higher than oneself and according to moral principles because they see the power of

such a life to bring good to oneself and to one's community.

This development of the moral imagination through books and storytelling sets the stage for effective formal training in theology and ethics. It is the foundation of the just and virtuous man's worldview and the bedrock of his aspirations. It is hardly an overstatement to say that a well-developed moral imagination is the root of the human person's eternal destiny.

So, the next time someone in the house complains about yet one more book analysis, or you feel overwhelmed by the volume of books spilling off your shelves, remember that all those books and all that reading is shaping our children into the men and women we're praying they'll become. At Seton, we know there are good reasons to read, and it's for these reasons that we build our curriculum on books.



**THE SETON
SUMMER
READING CLUB**

A fun way to keep up reading skills over the summer!

The Summer Reading Club helps parents encourage their kids to keep reading when school is out. From early elementary to high school, you'll find books for students of all ages to choose from.

Here's how it works;

1. **Register for free online** and download the Reading Club Kit.
2. Receive an email with the **list of all the books** available through Seton Educational Media.
3. Choose any **six titles** from the list (you may even own some already!).
4. Print and Sign the **Achievement Certificate** when the books are read!

The Club runs from June 1 through August 31, 2016.

More details online! Register at:
www.setonbooks.com/summerreading

Want Clear, Educated Thinking? Go Read a Book

BY JOHN CLARK



When I was growing up, in an era in which a “tablet” referred to a piece of stone rather than a little glowing handheld television, I often complained to my mom: “I’m bored.” Little did I know that all the members of my mother’s generation had apparently held a meeting of the increasingly popular Jeckyl Island/Bretton Woods/Oosterbeek secretive fashion, in which a response to this objection was universally mandated.

That response: “Go read a book.”

For many kids, that response often preceded a trip to the library; for me, it necessitated no such excursion. My mother had her own library.

The readers of this column are probably aware that the “Dr.” in Dr. Mary Kay Clark refers to education. But a lesser-known fact is that she also has a degree in library science. And that degree comprises a lot of her character. In fact, she is the only person I’ve ever known for whom the Dewey decimal system is a moral issue.

Perhaps all that time in the library—all that time honing the science of library-ing—wound up by putting many, many books in our family home. We were surrounded by them.

Looking back, I guess my father was faced with several options: trip over stacks of books, politely ask his wife to limit herself to a mere four thousand volumes, or build bookshelves. My father chose the last option. I still remember helping my Dad build these, and if the word “helping” can be

used in a pejorative, accusatory way, that’s how I mean it. The most productive thing I did was hand my dad nails or open the door to relieve some of the fumes from the wood stain. Nonetheless, when those bookcases were built, I took a little pride that I had been part of the process.

The new bookcases were filled as soon as the varnish dried. And while the bookcases may have been viewed as ornamental, the books were not. We were expected to read them. In fact, we read competitively, and here’s how that worked. One of my brothers might have read something, then discussed it with my Dad, who had already read it. If you wanted to be part of the conversation, you’d have had to read the book too, or at least enough of it to take part in the discussion.

The impetus to read books also played out in other ways. Every so often, I would mention to my Mom that I had never read a certain book or play, like *Pride and Prejudice* or *Hamlet*, to which my mother would respond: “Don’t tell anyone that. Educated people have read that.” There must be five hundred books on the educated-people-have-read-that list.

Looking back, if their goal was to raise educated children, being enveloped by books worked. It’s a trend that we have continued into adulthood. Today, I have my own library. All of my brothers do.

A few years ago, my brother was moving to another city and asked if he could store

some books at my office. After I agreed, he proceeded to bring over box after box of books: legal tomes, biographies, books of essays, famous speeches, and lots in between. I shouldn’t have expected anything less. A funny thing happened when they got there: I read them. Of course, I didn’t read all of them; but I did read enough to open some more literary doors. We all grew up with a respect for the printed word that has continued to this day.

There was a time in America during which what I have just related would have been terribly common. But the sad fact is that people do not read the classic works of fiction or nonfiction or biographies any longer. To put it kindly, that’s a sad fact. We need to return to the classics; we need to return to reading great writing. Without it, our chances to think clearly are remote. The commodity of clear thinking has been in a bear market for decades. We parents need to be part of a new bull market in meaningful education.

So, homeschooling parents, fill your home with great books. I know a guy who can help you build the shelves.

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.

Your Children Can Change the World!

BY GINNY SEUFFERT

For over a quarter of a century, I have been amazed at the fine adults our Catholic homeschools are turning out. Formidable in faith, clear in thought, and confident in attitude, without a doubt many are natural leaders. Graduates of home academies are starting strong families of their own, and just now entering business and the professions in significant numbers. That's good news in a culture where many young people seem clueless about Western Christian history and traditions, and resist entering into responsible citizenship much before the age of thirty.

Clearly the United States would benefit greatly if these home-learning alums could one day assume positions of influence and authority and bring their strong values to leadership roles. Most homeschooling families, however, rich in children but modest of means, lack the resources, and frankly the know-how, needed to assist their kids to the top rungs of the ladder of success. The question that plagued me for years was: What path do we follow to move children from less-entitled backgrounds to places where they can be a powerful force for good?

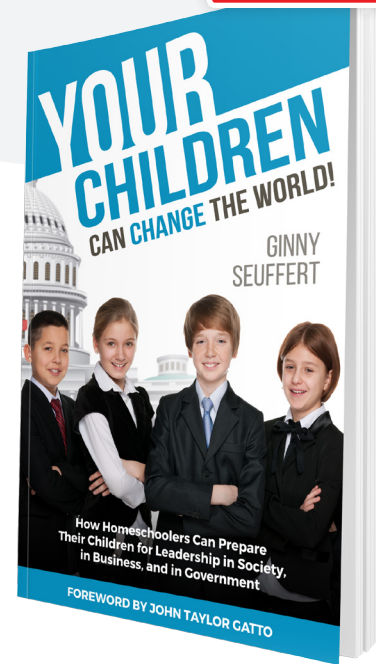
Then I learned that John Taylor Gatto had mapped out a plan.

Despite winning numerous awards as a public school teacher, Mr. Gatto became disenchanted with government education, believing that kids learned despite it, rather than from it. In his free time, he visited elite

East Coast private prep schools researching methods they used to prepare graduates to enter the finest universities, and then move to the top of their professions. His investigations revealed that, although each of these schools is quite unique in curriculum and culture, they nevertheless share fourteen important similarities, or themes. These fourteen themes make up John Taylor Gatto's plan to move students towards influential futures.

When I read the themes, I could not shake the idea that they absolutely could be tailored and adapted to our homeschools. I wrote a series of articles for *Seton Magazine*, "How to Get an Elite Prep School Education on a Homeschool Budget." The series was well received, so I added some new material and wrote a conclusion. John Taylor Gatto graciously penned an introduction, and voila, here's *Your Children Can Change the World*.

Gatto's themes certainly challenge established wisdom. For decades homeschooling parents heard how we are cheating our children by denying them classroom interaction where they can practice "cooperative" learning. In today's public schools, students are sometimes required to break into groups to solve simple math problems. After collaboration, group consensus is sought; a student team representative demonstrates the agreed upon procedure, and then class consensus is polled. All this teamwork to solve a simple problem such as 125×5 , but



necessary, we are told, because one day, as adults, our children will need to work as part of professional teams, and serve on office committees. Interestingly, Gatto found that pricey, private prep schools encourage independent learning – not collaborative. Graduates of these schools are groomed to lead the team and chair the committee, not serve on them.

Your Children Can Change the World outlines what steps teaching parents can take to ensure that their children will one day bring their well-formed values and take their places at the head of the conference table. Our nation certainly needs them there.



Ginny Seuffert has been a leading writer and speaker about homeschooling and family management for more than two decades. She has given hundreds of talks at conferences and has written scores of articles on everything from discipline to home management.



JOHN TAYLOR GATTO

In her book *Your Children Can Change the World*, Mrs. Seuffert has offered the rest of us a transformation of the 14 principles I discovered into a priceless toolkit of ideas how anyone responsible for the education of others can strive to achieve the same value for their student(s) as a wealthy kid would receive if his/her parents sent them to Episcopal High (which Sen. John McCain attended) or to Andover (which both President Bushes did).

Following Mrs. Seuffert's advice, your students will seek the same skills that history has shown leaders possess in business, politics, arts and sciences—rather than the trivializing grade and gold-star chasing, relevant to nothing significant, that public schools or common garden-variety private ones pursue as evidences of learning. Wake up! Those prizes have no lasting value, connect to nothing useful in later life, while competence in "the active literacies," one of the 14 categories Mrs. Seuffert develops, will serve you faithfully for the balance of your days, and may easily become the basis of a comfortable livelihood and high reputation.

The Practice of *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading): An Example from Psalms 1 & 2

FATHER MARK WENZINGER, O. S.B., PH.D.

Assistant Chaplain, Christendom College, Front Royal, Virginia

Reading as contemporary people know it and practice it tends to become a wholly silent affair. Reading also tends to be something that is done as speedily as possible, such that it tends to become a means to some other end of ours, rather than being an end in itself. Of course, people do still read for pleasure, but even when this still happens, the desire is to finish the book, not to savor it. Finishing a book in this way is also the killing of the book, rendering it something that we can discard in order to move onto the finishing (off!) of something else.

It is therefore important for us to recognize and to put into practice the excellence of reading slowly, doing so simply for the pleasure/excellence of reading as an end in itself. Integral to such a practice of reading is the reading of a text aloud to oneself, even if it is necessary to read aloud in a low voice. Truly worthy books are not merchandise to be finished off, but are rather treasures that are to be loved and venerated. Reading aloud and thus reading slowly greatly contributes to the development of such an attitude.

Such is uniquely the case when it comes to Sacred Scripture and our reading of the same. The manner of reading just mentioned above is precisely how the Fathers and Doctors of the Church read Scripture: slowly, aloud to themselves, doing so as an end in itself that they experienced as more pleasurable than consuming the best of bodily meals.

This ancient Christian manner of reading Scripture is called *lectio divina* (divine reading).

How does one begin the practice of *lectio*

divina? By reading a selected text—preferably of Sacred Scripture itself—slowly and aloud to oneself. The goal is not to read as much as one can in the time allotted. The goal is rather to taste and savor as deeply as one can small “bites” of the Word of God for as long as possible.

In reading the sacred text in this way, one moves quite naturally back and forth from vocal prayer and silent prayer, in which one savors the text at the levels both of the intellect and of the will.

The first two psalms of the Book of Psalms can provide us with a practical and fruitful example both of what *lectio divina* is and of the fruit that it can yield.

Psalm 1 is a Torah psalm, and psalm 2 is a Messiah psalm. The psalms are sacred songs that recapitulate the experience of all mankind in relation to God, Who has made covenant with us by the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in whose divine Person, united forever to His Sacred Humanity now risen from the dead, and in which both Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 express their fulfillment.

Psalm 1 speaks of the blessedness of the Man whose delight is in the Torah (the revelation, the instruction given to man by God) of the Lord and who murmurs this Torah to himself all day long. In truth, it is Jesus Himself who is the fulfillment of this psalm. In his Sacred Humanity, while He lived among us, Jesus was praying to the

Father continually and spontaneously in the Holy Spirit in a way that is rooted in the psalms and indeed in the entirety of the sacred texts of His People, which he had prayerfully made His own from His youth.

As we pray Psalm 1, we realize that His prayerful murmuring of the sacred text is like the sound of living water, the moving water of the sacramental stream of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. Indeed, in praying this psalm, we come to realize that Jesus is in Person both the Blessed Man and the divine Torah itself, the fullness of God’s Revelation. We are thus moved by the Holy Spirit to adore and praise and thank the God who has revealed Himself to us, and we ask for grace to respond lovingly to His invitation to enter into deeper union with Him through Christ.

Jesus is also the fulfillment of Psalm 2, which speaks of the intimate relationship between the Father and His Eternal Son,



Who is also the incarnate messiah in whom all God the Father's promises are fulfilled. Praying Psalms 1 and 2, we come to realize that in Jesus, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Messiah converge in a wonderful and previously unforeseen way by means of the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of the Only Begotten Son of the Father, Jesus, who became man without ceasing to be God.

In praying Psalms 1 and 2 in this way, our intellects are illumined and our wills are moved with greater love for God. The Holy Spirit Himself is the one who illumines our intellect and moves us to love the Father through the Son. In praying psalms 1 and 2, we thus realize that it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to recognize in Jesus the unity of the Blessed Man and God's Self-Revelation, the unity of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Messiah. By praying the psalms, then, we allow the Holy Spirit to introduce us into the eternal union of the Father and the Son, from which flows our adoration and praise of God, our thanksgiving to God, our supplication of God, and our repentance.

Such realizations as these are the fruit of *lectio divina*, in which we make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit, in whom we have access through the Son to the very depths of the Father, our life-giving Origin and our gracious End.



Seton high school students are famously creative. They're achievers, and more often than not, good at what they turn their attention to.

That's why in 2015, Seton started up the quarterly contests and challenges, to provide an outlet that encourages students to express their creativity, connect with each other and make their high school journey more enjoyable.

From short stories, to articles, to sonnets, and future contests featuring artwork and video, Seton high school students can try their skills at entering the contests. Apart from the fun of flexing mental muscles, students gain real life experiences in crafting entries according to guidelines, submitting their content and learning from counselors' feedback.

Seton counselors often provide tutorials and supplementary content to help students craft their winning entry. Finalists are featured in the *Bayley Bulletin* magazine, and awarded prize monies for their efforts. Starting in 2016, each high school grade features a 1st and 2nd place winner, so there's plenty of opportunities to win!

But most of all, we want students to enjoy high school. It's already a challenge, and through these fun contests (that will only keep getting better!), we will fill up our collective trove of inspiration for ourselves, and future high school students.



The 2016 Bayley Bulletin Sonnet Contest

Open to Seton high school students, grades 9-12. Pick one of three Easter-related topics, and start crafting your submission. Sonnets are very structured, with definite patterns and length. **Topic details and how to write sonnets are available online.** Submissions will be judged by grade level, with two finalists for each grade level (unless no entries of distinction are found).

Prizes

1st Place: \$50
2nd Place: \$35

Submissions Deadline

April 30th, 2016

bayleybulletin.com/sonnet



2016 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).

NC, Raleigh April 8, 2016 (Fri.) IHM Raleigh Homeschool Conference

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Parish
Fallon Center
2718 Overbrook Drive
Raleigh, NC 27608
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

LA, Covington April 9, 2016 (Sat.) Roman Catholic Homeschool Association of Louisiana "Catholic Homeschooling: A Way of Life"

St. Peter's Catholic Church
(St. Mary's Hall)
125 E. 19th Avenue
Covington, LA 70433
After 8:30 am Mass – 5 pm
www.rchal.org

WI, Milwaukee April 15, 2016 (Fri.) IHM Wisconsin Homeschool Conference

Clarion Hotel & Conference Center
5311 S. Howell Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53207
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

AZ, Phoenix April 16, 2016 (Sat.) Arizona Catholic Homeschool Conference

All Saints Catholic Newman Center
230 E. University Drive
Tempe, AZ 85281
9 am – 5 pm
www.azchc.net

TX, San Antonio April 22-23, 2016 (Fri.- Sat.) San Antonio Catholic Homeschool Conference

Whitley Theological Center
Oblate School of Theology
285 Oblate Drive
San Antonio, TX 78216
Fri.: 5 pm - 9 am
Sat.: 9 am to 5 pm
sacatholichomeschool.org

CA, Concord April 28, 2016 (Thu.) IHM Northern California Homeschool Conference

Centre Concord
5298 Clayton Road
Concord, CA 94521
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

TN, Nashville April 30, 2016 (Sat.) IHM Tennessee Homeschool Conference

St. Cecilia Academy
4210 Harding Pike
Nashville, TN 37205
Sat.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

NY, Buffalo May 5, 2016 (Thu.) IHM Buffalo Homeschool Conference

Millennium Hotel Buffalo
2040 Walden Avenue
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

FL, Jacksonville May 6, 2016 (Fri.) IHM Jacksonville Homeschool Conference

Adam W. Herbert University
12000 Alumni Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32224
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

OH, Toledo May 13, 2016 (Fri.) IHM Toledo Homeschool Conference

St. Jerome Catholic Church
300 Warner Street
Walbridge, OH 43465
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
www.ihmconference.org

IN, Indianapolis May 20-21, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) 2016 Quo Vadis Catholic Homeschool Conference

Marian University (Library)
3200 Cold Spring Road
Indianapolis, IN 46222
Fri.: 2 pm – 9 pm
Sat.: 9 am – 2 pm
www.hfheindy.com

NC, Charlotte May 20-21, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Charlotte Homeschool Conference

Belmont Abbey College
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road
Belmont, NC 28012-1802
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
www.ihmconference.org

GA, Atlanta May 27, 2016 (Fri.) IHM Georgia Homeschool Conference

Cobb Galleria Center
2 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
www.ihmconference.org

MN, St. Paul June 3-4, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) 18th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair

University of St. Thomas
2115 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
Fri.: 4 pm – 8:30 pm
Sat.: 8 am – 5 pm
www.mnconference.org

MD, Mt. Airy June 3-4, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Maryland Homeschool Conference

St. Michael's Parish — Poplar Springs
1125 St. Michael's Road
Mt. Airy, MD 21771
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
www.ihmconference.org

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



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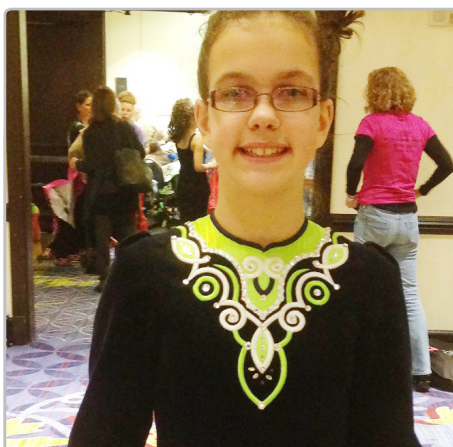


Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



Natalie & Lauren | They received the "God's Faithful Servant" award, given to select volunteers from each ministry who are "devoted to the Eucharist and the interests of the Catholic faith."



Catherine | I won first place in Irish dancing at Feis na Tara in Atlanta, GA. Homeschooling gives me the flexibility and time I need to practice.



Matthew | In April 2015, I participated in a Tae Kwon Do tournament in El Paso, TX. I competed as a brown belt and won 1st place in sparring.

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

setonmagazine.com/students

Seton Home Study School

1350 Progress Drive

Front Royal, VA 22630

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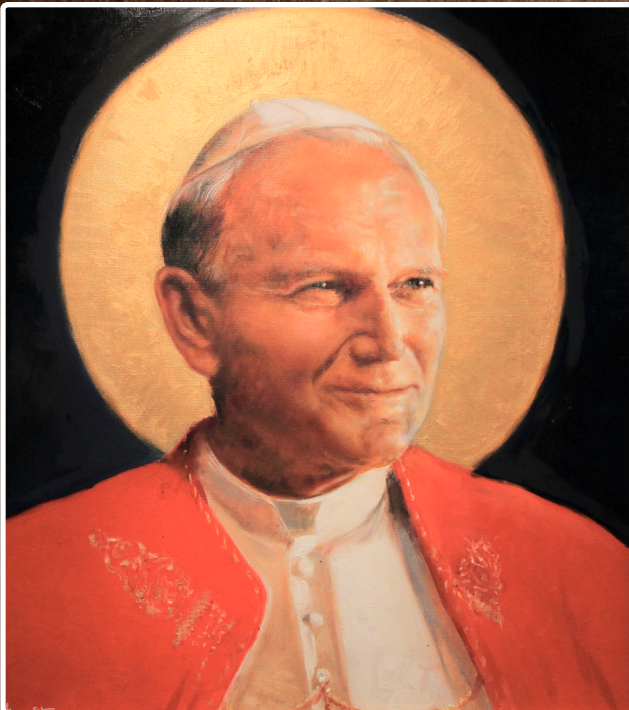
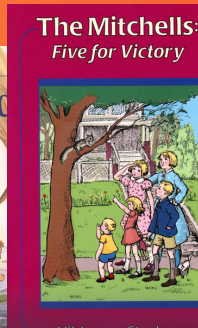
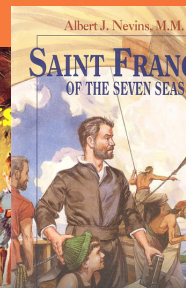
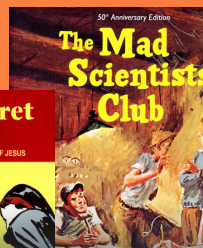
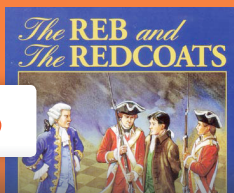
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Papal Quotes on the Family

“The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.”

Pope Saint John Paul II, 1981, 'Familiaris Consortio'

Pope Saint John Paul II CC Fr Lawrence Lew, O.P. | Flickr

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