

Seton



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Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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SETON IN THE NEW YEAR

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Letter from the Editor

For many, the turn of the calendar year is a time of mixed emotions. There's excitement at the prospect of a clean slate, new beginnings, and endless possibilities, and maybe a little fear of the unknown. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, I think it's important to remember that our Faith is based on hope and the glory of the Resurrection, and that the work we do each day in our families and our homeschools is one of the biggest reasons to have hope for the future.

Our children are our hope, and that is why Seton continues to push boundaries and chart new territory for helping parents teach their children, for enhancing the homeschool experience, and for inspiring another generation of strong Catholics. Within these pages, you'll find the latest tools of the trade, inspiration for a renewed spiritual life, and encouragement for another year of home education. May it be a blessed and joy-filled year!

Christine Smitha

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The Garver 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.

At the Foot of the Cross

with Sister Jozefa Menendez

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

While Jesus walked the long, slow journey carrying His Cross, and falling three times, the people in Jerusalem must have spread the word like wildfire among their neighbors and in outlying areas. During those three hours He hung on the Cross, people must have been arriving in droves. Many of those who recognized Him as the Son of God were surely horrified. Others who believed in Him were perhaps faint with depression.

Thousands of people had been affected by His three years of preaching and working miracles. Thousands had been cured of diseases, of blindness, of deafness, of being crippled. Thousands would never forget the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Thousands had been forgiven of their sins.

The crowds saw Jesus' sufferings and His Wounds. The gathered thousands heard His last words on the Cross, surely among the most important words He ever uttered. But what about those millions who were not present and who would learn of His words in the future? What words did He have for all of us who were yet to come?

Over the centuries, Jesus appeared to many and told them about His sufferings on the Cross. One person to whom He appeared in 1923 and revealed His sufferings was Sister Josefa Menendez, a Sacred Heart nun in France. Pope Pius XII gave his approval to her visions and to the book in which she recounts her visions of Christ and His words to her, *The Way of Divine Love*.

In *The Way of Divine Love*, Sister Josefa says, "At about six in the morning when at prayer, I saw Him as during the night, but a red mantle had been thrown over His white tunic. He seemed utterly spent. At once, He said to me, 'Josefa, My enemies are soon going to load the Cross on my shoulders. It is so heavy.... I have made my sufferings known to you...follow Me in them... accompany Me and share in My agony.'"

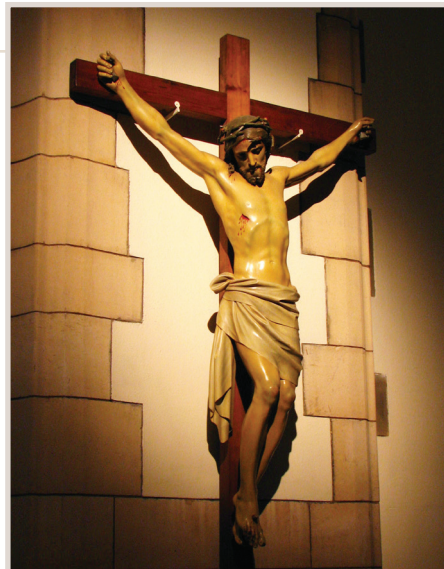
Later, Jesus reappeared to Josefa. She says, "His face was torn, His eyes swollen and filled with blood... He let me kiss His feet at the seventh, the eleventh, and the thirteenth Stations, and before leaving, He said to me, 'The hour of the crucifixion is approaching.'"

Josefa continued to write. "Towards half past twelve, I saw Him again...His tunic had been wrenched off half His Body... Then such an agonizing pain shot through my hands and feet that my whole body was shaken.... At the same time, I heard the strokes of the hammer, slow and resounding afar...In a faint and dying voice, He said these words: 'Now is the hour for the world's Redemption! They are about to lift Me up as a spectacle of derision to the crowd... but also of admiration to souls.'"

"I saw Him a few moments later. He was fastened to the Cross, and it had been lifted up erect.... The Crown of Thorns encircled His brow and great spiky thorns furrowed deep into the flesh. One longer than the rest had pierced its way through His forehead and emerged near the left eye which was much swollen. His face, covered with blood and filth, leaned forward a little to the left. Though His eyes were very swollen and bloodshot, they were open and gazed earthwards.

"All over His wounded body were to be seen the weals and welts caused by the scourges which in some parts had torn away fragments of flesh and skin. Blood flowed from His head and from His other wounds. His lips were purple and His mouth slightly twisted...The sight was so pitiful that it wrung my heart with compassion...what caused me most sorrow was that He could not use a hand to touch His face.

"I also noticed as I gazed at Him on the Cross how they had torn away His beard. It had given such majesty to His face...and His once beautiful hair, which used to add such grace to His person, was all matted,



tangled, and clotted with blood, and falling across His face."

The sight of Jesus "nailed hands and feet" greatly moved Sister Josefa and gave her "strength to leave all and to submit to His Will in everything, however costly." Jesus declared, "Peace has come to the world!... *The Cross, hitherto an instrument of torture on which criminals were made to die, is changed into the light and peace of the world, and the object of the most profound veneration.*"

"Sinners will draw pardon and life from My sacred wounds. My Blood will wash away and efface [erase] all their filth and foulness."

"Pure souls will come to My wounds, there to slake [satisfy] their thirst and kindle flames of love in their hearts... there they will find a refuge, and for ever make a home."

In addition to offering us a refuge at the foot of the Cross and in His Sacred Wounds, Jesus also addressed His Blessed Mother on our behalf. "O Mother Mine!... These are my brethren, keep them, love them." He left us with these words: "You for whom I died are no longer alone; you have a Mother to whom you can have recourse in every necessity." May we, with the Blessed Mother, abide at the foot of the Cross and gaze upon Our Crucified Lord during this holy season of Lent.



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

READ ONLINE!

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

How can I prepare my children for a quiz or test?

Look over the test yourself and explain to your student the kind of test, whether it is objective or multiple choice, or requires a paragraph to prove an answer. You can point out some things like, “You need to know the reasons for [this or that]” or “You’d better study the various battles of World War II.” It is not unusual for classroom teachers to alert the students in a general way about what they should study for a test. However, it would not be fair to give your child the specific questions.

My children resist writing paragraphs and book reports.

The reason your children resist writing paragraphs and book reports is because such writing demands mostly inductive thinking and original ideas. It is much easier to study certain facts, memorize them, and repeat them; this makes less demand on the brain than original thinking.

To determine the development of plot or character, or to show how ideas relate and develop, takes inductive thinking. To write a paragraph in a logical manner demands thinking of an important topic, understanding its development—either in a story or in your own thought process or throughout history—and then relating that idea to a sequence of events or arguments. Explain to your student that, like Sherlock Holmes, he must “investigate” a character or a situation, and come to a conclusion. Any kind of thinking about what to write to prove a point or to show examples takes an inductive “Sherlock” kind of thinking.

America has been famous for its scientists and inventors who have been inductive thinkers, primarily investigators. Explain to your children the power of inductive thinking in their own family

background and in history. Talk to them about innovations in any area, such as a family member who learned to play a musical instrument in a different way, or invented a useful new product. Help your children appreciate the discoveries they read about in their history and science books. All these people developed their products mainly because of inductive thinking.

Your children should be given responsibility to help keep the house in order.

Since my daughter has a special learning need, shouldn't I send her to a school with a Special Education class?

If you spend a week visiting a Special Education class at your local school, you may notice that different children in the classroom have different special needs. It is difficult for a teacher to be able to give each one of the children the time and special help each one needs. You might be better off hiring someone who has credentials and experience to come to your home and help you teach your child.

You might consider enrolling your daughter in our Special Needs curriculum. Mr. Stephen Costanzo, an experienced classroom special needs teacher and homeschooling father, can help you and your daughter to succeed.

I cannot seem to stay on top of the schoolwork and keep the house in order.

Your children should be given responsibility to help keep the house in order. You and your husband are the

managers of the children's housekeeping duties. Give them schooling assignments, but also make sure they accomplish their housework assignments.

Just as the children mark off their school assignments in their notebook or lesson plans, they can mark off their house assignments on a schedule chart on the refrigerator.

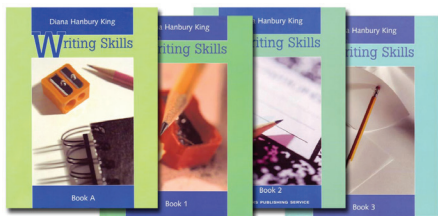
Ask your husband to join you on a Sunday afternoon as you plan the week's schoolwork and housework assignments. When the children realize that Dad supports the plan, you will find the children more attentive to getting their housework and schoolwork done before Dad comes home!

My boys did their housework assignments between their school subjects. It is good exercise for children to clean up and straighten up, wash the dishes, put things away, put laundry in the machine and dryer, put clothes away, keep their closets neat, put out the garbage, make soup and sandwiches for lunch, and so on. All the housework jobs, throughout the day and between their school assignments, keep them moving, alert, and physically refreshed to start their next school assignment.

You may also want to consider an allowance for finishing school and chores. Search for 'chores' on SetonMagazine.com for ideas from other Seton homeschooling moms.

My high school senior says he needs more quiet time.

One idea is to convert something like a walk-in closet, or even a quiet corner, into a small study area. A quiet basement corner or attached garage space might provide room for a study carrel. Consider taking your student to a local college library which has study carrels in quiet rooms. Your son



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is likely becoming anxious about college work, so being able to focus for a significant length of time is a good habit to develop before college.

My children don't always finish their assignments for the week.

If your children are not finishing but are progressing at the rate in each subject that you think is best for them, or appropriate according to their ability, then don't worry about it. Homeschooling is supposed to be adjusted to the ability of each child, subject by subject. This is the best way to learn. Putting pressure on them to arbitrarily "meet a deadline" is not good.

If you believe your children are wasting time or not focusing on their work, however, you could tell them that whatever assignments they don't finish up need to be done on

Saturday. You might remind them that the school "year" could go into the summer if they don't keep up.

Try brainstorming with your spouse to find ways to encourage or incentivize your children to finish.

Where can I find more help for paragraph writing for my children?

The Seton English and Reading lesson plans contain helps and ideas for writing skills for the assignments. As parents ask for more help, we add more to the lesson plans. In addition, we sell four *Writing Skills* workbooks; each contains more than 140 pages. Each book is written for specific grade levels, from Grade 3 to Grade 12.

In addition, Seton is producing video tutorials for Composition skills starting from Grade 2 through high school. Go to Course Resources for the particular course, and you should find the videos for your child's grade level.

Consider asking your children to carry around a small notebook and to write at least one paragraph a day about an event that happened or something that was observed during the day. They should write not only the objective facts but also what they are thinking about or learning from their experience.

My husband wants to take a couple of our boys with him on a business trip to visit relatives and see museums. I am concerned they will fall behind in their schoolwork.

First of all, spending time with their father, and seeing or coming to understand his work, is extremely valuable. Never neglect giving your children this kind of opportunity. Secondly, if you think there might be some "free time," have the boys take along some schoolbooks with them, especially their math books. They could take another book which you know they will like to have if they have time in the car or on the plane, such as a reader or history book.

When the children get back, have them give a "presentation" to the rest of the family about their adventures with Dad. Perhaps they can take pictures to enliven their presentation! You could even give them a grade for English class!



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*.



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

Horses & Homeschooling

with the Garver Family

by Susan Garver

Who are the Garvers?

My husband Lewis is a State of Ohio Lieutenant Firefighter. I drive a school bus for Canal Winchester Schools, and I am also an American Red Cross water safety instructor and lifeguard trainer for Aquatic Adventures Ohio.

John, our 18 year old son, who attends Eastland Career Center and is studying Electrical Technologies is also a lifeguard at Aquatic Adventures Ohio and was recently sworn in to the United States Marine Corp on delayed enlistment.

Danielle, our 17 year old daughter is enrolled with Seton Home Study School,

and following the family pattern, works as a water safety instructor and lifeguard at Aquatic Adventures Ohio.

My husband and I are both retired from the Air Force, which is where we met. After a few years of moving around, we settled back in Ohio to be near my family. About nine years ago, we bought Danielle a horse lesson for her birthday. She's never looked back, and since then we have owned five different horses at different times. Her current horses are one Danielle has had since the horse was 2 weeks old and a second horse just recently purchased. Now Danielle participates in rodeos all year long. John has also participated in rodeos from time to time, and has done quite well.

understand their religion better, which the Seton program has certainly accomplished.

Is there a particular challenge that Seton has helped your family overcome?

Danielle fell behind during her freshman year, but Seton counselors have been very patient with us and have suggested many options on how to help "catch her up," while also reassuring us that everyone does school at their own speed. The latter message, in particular, has been extremely good for Danielle to hear.

What other homeschooling challenges have you had and how have you overcome them?

Danielle really struggled with math, and as time went on we tried various online aides, but none of them were very successful in improving her understanding. Finally, against her will, she agreed to work with a tutor I found. As it turned out, Danielle and the tutor worked fabulously together and the tutoring was exactly what had been needed. Danielle's grades have improved significantly.

What do you like most about Seton?

As a homeschooling mother, I really like that help is only a phone call away to



a real person who is ready and willing to help me and my kids. In general, though, homeschooling has raised our children's self esteem and helped them overcome test anxiety. Plus, we have more time to cover things that do not always come easily, yet we are free to move forward when it all "clicks".

How has Seton been of particular benefit to the Garver family's lifestyle?

Seton has been a great benefit to Danielle's training schedule. The flexibility of the program allows her to go out during the day to ride when the days get shorter and the weather turns colder and school can be done in the evening. She also is able to take time off during the month of October to attend the Quarter Horse Congress held at our state fairgrounds. In essence, we end up doing more of a year round school than the traditional nine months on, three months of summer off, and that works beautifully for our family. Seton was also really valuable when John was ill and could not attend school on a daily basis.



John Swearing in as Marine

What role does your faith play in your homeschooling and family life after using the Seton program?

First, let me tell you that a few families in our parish also use Seton so we're blessed to have a network of like-minded people pursuing the same educational goals we are. We're all great resources for each other.

Second, since my daughter has been studying the *Baltimore Catechism*, we have had many family religious discussions and debates, which we thoroughly enjoy. This is especially rewarding because my husband Lewis learns new things. He converted to Catholicism eight years ago, and as we all continue to learn more about the faith through Seton's program, he provides a unique perspective that is refreshing.

How does a typical day in the Garver household look?

Danielle generally rises at 07:30, gets breakfast and greets all the animals (she plans to be a veterinarian), then does schoolwork until 11:30, takes lunch, then does more schoolwork until 3:00 if it's a day when she's scheduled to go to work. This changes if she plans to ride and she does not have to work; on these days, Danielle will take two hours out of the middle of the day to ride and then head back to the schoolbooks. There is no "season" for rodeo as there is for other sports, so the basic schedule remains the same throughout the year.



What advice can you offer other families considering the option to homeschool?

Never say never, because we do not know the plans God has for us. Above all, relax; it all works out.



Enhancing Your Homeschool Experience

Seton's Projects for 2016

READ ONLINE!

At Seton, we've always been about supporting Catholic families and Catholic education.

Part of that mission is to ensure that your homeschooling is easily accessible, up-to-date, and focused on the most important things: Faith and family. There are many exciting developments at Seton Home Study School that share these qualities.

As this new year kicks off, we are eager to share with you some of the hard work our team has done to enhance your homeschooling experience. Here are our top three projects:



Seton Online Courses

Over the past year, Seton has been actively developing new digital courses as optional upgrades to high school student enrollments.

These digital courses make full use of the latest instructional technology to help your student better learn his or her material and assist you in tracking your student's progress. Here are just a few of the exciting new features these digital courses will offer your family:

Integrated Multimedia.

Video, images, and audio are embedded throughout the course materials. Students will not need to hunt down any extra resources, or visit a separate resource web page. All the materials available to help students are delivered at the right place in the lessons just at the time it is most relevant to the students.

Interactive Lesson Plans.

Unlike printed lesson plans, course content and course instructions are integrated into one. Students simply follow the interactive instructions to complete their coursework, and are rewarded with visual cues that help them easily gauge their progress in the course.

Self-Checks

Throughout the digital courses, students have frequent opportunities to take interactive self-checks in order to reinforce materials learned and provide an idea of how well the student understands the material. These self-checks don't contribute to the overall grade, but help the student prepare for assignments that do.

Adaptive Lesson Delivery

In some courses, students have multiple study options. In English, for example, a student may choose among several books for book reports. With new digital courses, once a student indicates his or her choice, the resources and lesson material relevant to that specific student choice will be automatically integrated into the day-to-day lesson content. This can be a tremendous time saver and academic help to students.

Seton will be releasing these courses as they become available. Stay tuned to *Seton Magazine* for details and news on when the first courses will be ready for student enrollment!



How many students can truly say they are a part of a school that has global impact? At Seton, you can because this past summer, Seton Home Study School was officially launched in the Philippines!

Recently, the Philippines government enacted legislation that ushered in a more homeschooling-friendly environment. With the increased interest in homeschooling, Seton felt it was the right time to develop a support program to help educate the next generation of Catholic leaders.

Abby Sasscer, a regular contributor with Seton Magazine and a Filipina mom herself, provided critical leadership and

insightful guidance during the launch, as well as arranged for Seton to have a local presence in two of the largest Catholic areas of the Philippines. Abby was also able to coordinate Seton's presence at a nationwide homeschooling conference—the first international conference outside of North America that Seton has ever attended!

Now, for the first time, Filipino families can enjoy the benefits of homeschooling. This program:

- Delivers the same level of support to Filipino families as can be gained from our US-based program
- Provides access to counseling,

Seton in the Philippines

grading, and Catholic materials for Filipino families;

- Offers a 12th-grade curriculum to Filipino students, who will be required by law to complete a 12th year of formal education as of the 2017-2018 academic year;
- Opens the door for an expansion of local services as the Filipino homeschooling population grows.

To learn more about Seton and the Philippines, visit www.facebook.com/SetonPhilippines.



The autumn of 2015 saw a relaunch of the *Bayley Bulletin* for Seton Home Study School's high school students. Dramatically revised and expanded from the original format, the new *Bayley Bulletin* provides Seton high schoolers with their own outlet for advice, inspiration, information, and opinion, as well as a showcase for creative talents.

One of the most important features of the *Bayley Bulletin* is the way it connects Seton's College Partners with our high school students. The institutions in our College Partner Program are some of the finest Catholic colleges, and we are proud to be

affiliated with them as well as support their significant contributions both to education and to Faith Formation. For many of our students, the *Bayley Bulletin* provides their first introduction to the colleges in our partnership, and it's a great introduction because it combines:

- Brief overviews of the colleges;
- Easy access to additional information;
- Articles about life at our partner colleges from embedded Seton graduates;
- Partner College articles, written just for Seton students.

The combination of all these elements ensures that our students can come to know each college on a more personal level, even before visiting and/or applying.

Other features to enjoy in the *Bayley Bulletin* include:

- Literary contest winners;

- Seton alumni profiles;
- Seton staff articles on academics and life issues;
- Student essays on a variety of topics.

Read each issue, sound off on the articles, subscribe for free and/or contribute to our Embedded Grad series and more at bayleybulletin.com.



Great Discoveries

The Exciting Future of Seton Education

BY JOHN CLARK

Dr. Robert Ballard, the underwater archeologist who discovered the remains of the *Titanic* and the *USS Yorktown*, said that he is often asked what his greatest discovery was. Ballard answers: "My greatest discovery is the one I'm about to make."

I love this response. When you've had some achievements in your life, it's tempting to think back on them and coast a little. But Ballard's response is at once challenging and exciting. It's a way of thinking that yesterday was wonderful, but tomorrow will be even better. What a great thought to start your day!

Though I've never experienced even a small fraction of what Dr. Ballard has accomplished, in writing new online homeschool courses for Seton, I've felt just a little like Dr. Ballard lately.

Let me explain.

I began doing projects for Seton thirty years ago, when Seton consisted of one or two small rooms. I helped create Seton Educational Media and helped organize the first Seton graduation. I have typeset Dr. Clark's *Catholic Home Schooling* book, written courses and helped write books, been interviewed numerous times on Catholic radio and television, counseled many parents, written hundreds of columns and blogs, and given dozens of speeches encouraging parents to homeschool. Yet, for all this, I don't think I've ever been as excited as I am with my latest endeavor.

With the help of some exceptionally talented and dedicated people at Seton, we are working to produce online courses.

Seton's new online courses are Catholic, compelling, and technologically cutting-edge. They will make homeschooling easier

for parents and more dynamic, exciting, and interactive for students. With things like the incorporation of video lessons and other multimedia, I think Catholic homeschooling is about to experience a significant advance.

When I was homeschooled in the 1980's, being *technologically advanced* meant you owned a yellow highlighter and a fresh ribbon for your typewriter. With the help of a new learning management system called Desire2Learn, Seton's course technology will be truly advanced.

Economics and American Government are just now getting their final touches; in past columns, we've talked about these. Let me tell you a little about our Geography course.

The student will be able to take a virtual walking tour of Vatican City, with the ability to virtually stop into St. Peter's Basilica and look around. In the section on Italy, we watch a presentation about how the Ferrari sports car is produced.

When we study Malta, we look at the country's historical tie to the Catholic Faith, and we watch a production about how the Maltese militarily defended their country against its most famous siege. In the section on the Southwest United States, we watch a presentation about the miraculous staircase in the Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

We study the tools of geography, explain the limitations of maps and why few maps are very accurate. We watch a presentation explaining the difference between North and True North. We look at the development of the global positioning satellite and how it has forever changed navigation. We



investigate why countries are shaped the way they are, and examine why there is an argument about how many countries exist in the world.

This is a course I would have loved to take as a homeschooler.

But let me tell you what's exciting as a homeschooling parent. These courses are likely to get parents *more* involved in homeschooling, not *less*. Since I began writing these courses two years ago, friends have asked me what I'm working on. As I explain the courses to them, I often get a funny response. You might think they'd say: "I want to enroll my kids in that." But that's not the most common response. The typical response has been: "I want to take that course myself." In thirty years of homeschooling, I've never heard that response until now. Of course, the beauty of it is that—with the fact that the educational videos can be viewed on a monitor in their own living room—parents and children *can* "take" these courses together. In fact, the whole family can learn together.

The greatest discovery that some families will make is that they love learning together.

Dr. Ballard was right.

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



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

The Top 4 Conference Questions of 2015

BY GINNY SEUFFERT



During the warm weather months, while everyone else is on vacation, I am at airports and hotels traveling to Catholic homeschooling conferences. You won't hear me complain though, because I get so many opportunities to meet homeschooling parents, learn from them, and listen to their concerns. Here are the top five questions I heard this past year, along with, what I hope, are some helpful answers.

1. My toddler is driving me nuts! How can I homeschool my older kids while the three-year-old demands constant attention and I've got a nursing newborn. Help!

This will be an ongoing problem because, as soon as you settle this toddler into a routine, the baby will be running around the house. In big Catholic families, it never ends! Here are a few ideas.

First, in warm weather months, try to do school on a picnic table in the backyard. This allows the "littles" to run free while you work. For days when you cannot be outside, have lots of toys that can be played in place, like blocks, soldier or cowboy "guys", dolls, or a kitchen set. This might buy you an hour or so of peace.

When toys no longer do the trick, play "revolving siblings" with your school age kids. Tell your 3rd grader, "You take brother into the playroom and amuse him while I work with sister." Hopefully, that gives you a few minutes to work with your first grader. Then you tell her, "It's your turn to play with brother. Send your older brother in to do schoolwork."

Maintaining a resolute nap schedule will certainly help. Anyone younger than school age must have either a nap or a solid hour of "quiet time" when he or she must remain in one spot and not talk to anyone, and certainly not bother Mom.

Finally, during these challenging years, never forget that one of the biggest bonuses of homeschooling is our ability to work on

our own schedule. If the kids are simply impossible to control during the day, catch up at night or on weekends when Dad is home.

2. Lots of my friends are designing their own curriculum or even "unschooling." I am tempted to take some pressure off myself. Is this a good idea?

Each family must make its own decision based on many factors. The most important goal of Catholic homeschooling is to form our children in the Catholic Faith. On your own, can you locate materials that will help you in this important task? Do you know the Faith well enough yourself to be able to pass it on? Can you provide robust Faith formation without support? These are important questions that cannot be ignored.

A second essential aim of home education is to strengthen the family. Homeschooling leads to closer family life no matter what curriculum you use provided that none of your materials contain anti-family messages. This is actually a serious problem today.

TV shows, the Internet, secular textbooks, and contemporary children's literature are rife with subtle, and some not so subtle, anti-family messages. You will need to be on your guard.

Finally, a third and no less crucial purpose of Catholic home education is to prepare well-formed leaders of impeccable character for the 21st century. (My new book, on this very topic, *Your Children Can Change the World* will be available from Seton Press March 1st 2016.) This requires a rigorous academic education. Can you provide this on your own?

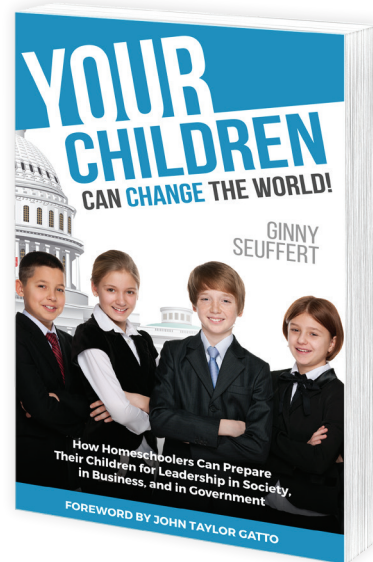
3. Are homeschool publishers aligning their materials to the Common Core State Standards?

I have not seen any Catholic educational resources specifically written for

homeschoolers that align with the Common Core. Many homeschoolers use texts and other goods that are produced for brick and mortar schools, and some of these have aligned. An excellent source of information about the CC status of various materials can be found at hsroadmap.org.

4. Some of my Catholic homeschool buddies use Protestant materials. Is there any downside?

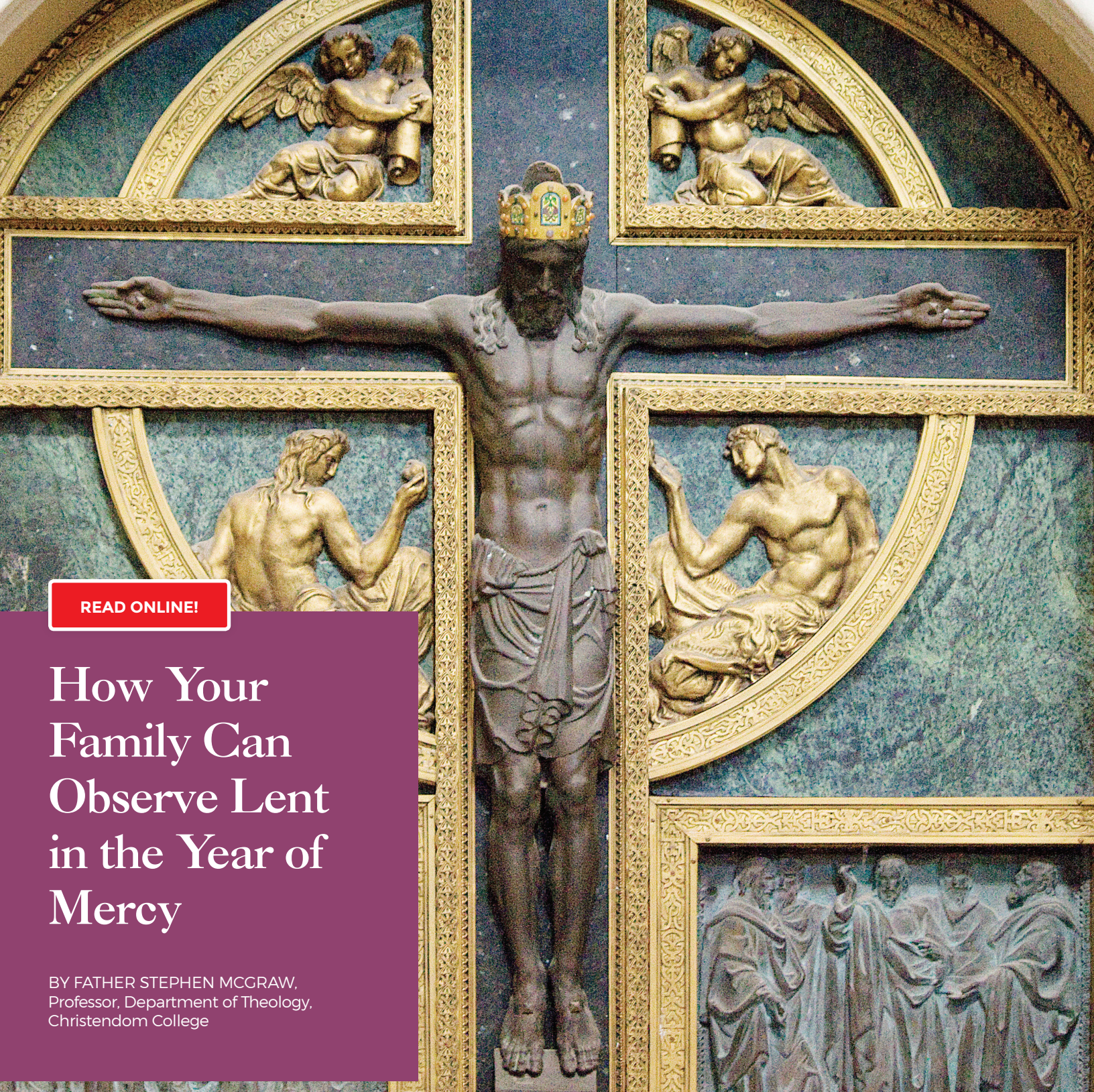
Yes! Some Protestant materials are filled with anti-Catholic sentiments. Do you have the time to read every word to make sure your children are not exposed to ideas intended to turn them away from the truth? Even if you have this time, do you really want to give money to publishing houses that would regard you leaving Holy Mother Church as a victory? Unless your children have special needs, and absolutely *nothing* else will do, pass on the Protestant publishers.



Available from Seton Press
March 1st 2016



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.



READ ONLINE!

How Your Family Can Observe Lent in the Year of Mercy

BY FATHER STEPHEN MCGRAW,
Professor, Department of Theology,
Christendom College

In union with our Catholic brethren throughout the world, we approach this holy season of Lent, heeding the Church as she urges us not to receive in vain the graces of this very acceptable time—a privileged time for drawing close to the Lord through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

It is a time when graces out of the common are bestowed in abundance, and if such is the case for Lent each and every year, all the

more is it true in this Holy Year, this once-in-a-generation Year of Favor from the Lord. This Holy Year indeed has been uniquely designated as the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, an unprecedented declaration that is truly a sign of the times, confirming our hope that, in this world where the ravages of sin abound so appallingly, grace does even now abound all the more!

So let us try to think concretely about our

plans to practice Lenten prayer, fasting (and other forms of penance), and almsgiving (and other works of mercy). In particular, I wish to focus on some suggestions for our prayer. Certainly Lent is a very opportune time for strengthening or even taking up the practice of the daily family Rosary.

The Family Rosary

My father used to recall how, growing

up as a Catholic in North Dakota, he and his siblings would be called in from play in the evenings to say the family Rosary. This Lenten practice took such hold in my father's own life of faith that when he formed his own family, he led us in praying the Rosary not only during Lent, but every night of the year.

Can I suggest a way to intensify your Lenten experience of the Rosary for those families who already pray it daily? Try the "Scriptural Rosary," which gives a Scripture verse before each Hail Mary—I will tell you that our family's praying of the Scriptural Rosary had a penetrating effect on me, a real staying power in my young life. It's also a practice I have recently returned to with the help of an audio recording from "Laudate."

Alternatively, follow Pope St. John Paul II's recommendation in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* and just give one Scripture verse or passage before each decade (for convenience, instead of using the Bible, you can use one of the Rosary leaflets that give a Scripture verse for each mystery). As Pope St. John Paul II also suggests in that letter, be sure to follow the

Scripture passage with silence, however brief, before beginning the Our Father.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet

Another wonderful practice, very fittingly undertaken in this Year of Mercy, would be the recitation of the Divine Mercy chaplet, daily or at least on Fridays. I can testify that my family and I experienced this prayer as efficacious and consoling, especially in moments of difficulty or crisis.

Sacred Scripture

Pope Francis says in his Bull of Indiction for the Year of Mercy, "How many pages of Sacred Scripture are appropriate for meditation during the weeks of Lent to help us rediscover the merciful face of the Father! We can repeat the words of the prophet Micah and make them our own: 'You, O Lord, are a God who takes away iniquity and pardons sin, who does not hold your anger forever, but are pleased to show mercy. You, Lord, will return to us and have pity on your people. You will trample down our sins and toss them into the depths of the sea.'"

For this practice, I especially recommend using the Gospels, since they are the most important part of the Bible and at the same time the easiest to understand! Saint Thérèse of Lisieux said, "But above all, it's the Gospels that occupy my mind when I'm at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful." In this Year of Mercy, we could focus on the Gospel of St. Luke, sometimes known as the Gospel of Mercy because of the special accent St. Luke seems to place on this attribute of God. *Lectio divina* is a very fruitful means of personal prayer; as Jesus says, "But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret."

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy and the coming season of Lent, let us each grasp hold of the opportunity God is giving us to experience His love through heartfelt prayer and meditation.



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

Fr Nigro's 10 Step Prayer Collation

Sacred Scripture is also the basis of a family prayer practice known sometimes by the Latin word, "collation." A saintly old Jesuit, Father Armand Nigro, now in his 90s, gives a step-by-step description of this kind of prayer that I invite you to try this Lent. The following is his list:

1. After dinner, before dishes are cleared away (or any preferable time), select a short passage from the Bible, e.g., Mark's Gospel, 4:35-40. Usually Dad is reader; others can be.
2. Dad first invites those present to listen carefully to God's Word and reminds them of Jesus' assurance: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there, too.' He begins with a short prayer such as 'Speak to us, Lord. Help us listen carefully to Your word.'
3. Then he reads the passage aloud very slowly, distinctly, with pauses, so that each phrase can sink into the listeners.
4. After the reading each in turn shares what it said to him personally: 'I felt this...' 'I heard this...' 'This struck me...' 'To me it said or meant...' Keep contributions short, personal (say 'I' not 'we'), honest, simple, not preachy, not applying lessons to others. Be careful not to make this a discussion. That will kill the prayer experience.
5. Peacefully, humbly, sensitively listen to God's word and simply share what it said and meant to you personally. Do not feel uneasy during silent gaps between readings or comments. These silent moments are golden and afford rare opportunities of letting God's message resonate and slowly deepen in us. Relax. Savor His words during the silences.
6. After the first round of sharing, Dad again reads the same passage slowly. It is a richer listening experience this time, because the remarks each one shared have enriched the passage for the others. God speaks to all through each other too.
7. A second round of sharing, usually richer than the first, follows the second reading.
8. The same passage is read slowly a third and last time.
9. After the third reading, only spontaneous prayers are spoken directly to God the Father or to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit or to our Blessed Mother –e.g., 'Thank you, Jesus, for speaking to us. Help me be more aware of your presence in me and in others.'
10. After each has spontaneously prayed, a favorite hymn can be sung and the clean-up in the kitchen begins (or whatever else follows).

Kids Lost the Faith?

3 Sinners-Turned-Saints to Encourage You

BY BOB WIESNER



Counselors here at Seton deal with some amazingly difficult calls, but the calls which cause us the most anguish are those in which parents tell us that their children have ceased practicing their faith. Despite parents' best efforts, their earnest prayers, their hard work in teaching and living Catholicism in the family, at times children simply seem to walk away from it.

In a great many cases, those who lose their faith are attending secular colleges; the social and moral temptations encountered in such a hostile environment are too great. Thus, Seton has always advocated sending graduates only to colleges with a strong Catholic atmosphere; the stakes are just too high to gamble with young souls.

Still, for various reasons, some of our students do find themselves in serious difficulties concerning the faith. There is no magic or easy remedy, unfortunately. Such a situation calls for a great deal of prayer, our continuing love for the straying, an open heart to receive their repentance, and our willingness to encourage their return to faith.

Prayer is the absolute essential in this situation. Fortunately, there are a number of saints whose help would be invaluable in retrieving a lost sheep. St. Monica comes to mind immediately, of course. When young Augustine went off the rails, she spent many difficult years praying and working for his return. Her son went through many an intellectual problem, toying with various heretical and pagan ideas. There was a corresponding collapse of morals, almost always an accompaniment to a loss of faith. Yet, St. Monica won through in the end and her son became one of the greatest saints in Church history.

St. Mary of Egypt was raised in a Christian environment, but was evidently a bit flighty. She grew to be quite wild, and was notorious in her native Egypt for her immorality. While sailing to Palestine among wicked company, she decided to see the sights of the Holy Land as a tourist. God and His Mother saw to it that that her visit turned into a pilgrimage.

Some unseen force prevented her from entering a famous shrine, so that she rather impetuously promised to reform her life if she were allowed to pay her visit. Immediately she was allowed to enter. Under the impulse of strong graces, she then retired to the Palestinian desert and lived a hermit's life for the next forty years, utterly forgotten by her evil companions and unknown to anyone in Palestine. She was eventually discovered by a fasting monk, who was able to bring her the sacraments shortly before her death. She is greatly revered by Christians throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

Then there is Bartolo Longo. He was raised in a good Catholic family, but went to a university which had largely abandoned a Christian approach to education. Young Bartolo quickly descended into a disorderly life involving the usual moral lapses, but also some rather more arcane activities such as dueling and drugs. Finally, he even went about as far wrong as possible: he began to dabble in Satanism!

His family never ceased praying for him and even physically dragged him to various devotions in their efforts to reclaim him. Finally, a preacher wakened his conscience and he made his way back to the life of faith. He became a famous advocate for the Rosary and spent a great deal of time exhorting young students to have a serious regard for their state of soul.

These three individuals were far gone from faith, but are proof positive that there is always hope for even the most hardened of sinners. For those families suffering a wayward child, we urge you to make these three your special friends and advocates before the throne of God. They have been there and done that, and certainly know the ropes about finding the way back.



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

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— DR. MARY KAY CLARK

”



Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



Mary | I competed in Irish dance against 4 adults and 2 people my age on November 15 2015, and won 1st place dancing my Light Jig.



Daniel | Daniel was ordained a Transitional Deacon, on Oct. 1, 2015 and is being vested by Deacon Robert Clay Adams who was ordained in his Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky in May 2015.



Makena | I entered the Scholastic Art and Writing contest and placed in three categories, recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers.

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Papal Quotes on the Family

Dear Married couples, in living out your marriage you are not giving each other any particular thing or activity, but your whole lives. And your love is fruitful first and foremost for yourselves, because you desire and accomplish one another's good, you experience the joy of receiving and giving. It is also fruitful in your generous and responsible procreation of children, in your attentive care for them, and in their vigilant and wise education.

Pope Benedict XVI, Homily
at the 7th World Meeting of Families,
June 3rd, 2012



Pope Benedict XVI CC The Papal Visit | Flickr