

# Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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## God First, Then Family Being a Homeschooling Father

by Peter Campbell | pg 6

## Why You Are a Great Homeschooling Dad

pg 8

When Dad Homeschools

John Clark | pg 10

Imitating God's Paternity

Dom Alban Baker | pg 12



'CELEBRATING FATHERS' ISSUE



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*Cover photo:*  
The Campbell Family

**D**aily 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

Of everyone in society today, fathers are among the least appreciated. If not ignored, then they're ridiculed. Homeschooling fathers seem to get the worst of it - John Clark delves into more detail on that struggle.

At Seton, however, we are exceedingly grateful for the quiet heroism of your daily lives, the sacrifices you make for your families, and the strong leadership you show in raising up souls for Christ.

This June issue of *Seton Magazine* focuses on fatherhood. It's filled with encouragement, advice, a story or two that will make you chuckle, and certainly a great deal of gratitude, love, and prayer from the staff. We hope you'll draw inspiration and strength from these pages.

Our center article showcases the things you're already doing right, and lists some simple ideas to keep going. It's not about doing more. It's about doing what you can do with more heart.

In a particular way, I commend all you fathers to the care and protection of St. Joseph, who is patron and exemplar of fatherhood. May he guide and guard you and yours even as he sheltered Our Lady and the Christ-Child. Happy Fathers' Day, Seton dads. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Christine Smitha

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# St. John Bosco

## An Inspiration for Fathers

St. John Bosco is an inspiration for parents in general, and a particularly good example for fathers, who understand the value of practical training and physical work. Though St. John Bosco lived in Italy from 1815 to 1888, he can give parents today valuable guidance on teaching children in such a way that they become and feel useful in the family and in society while simultaneously being educated in the Catholic Faith.

John Bosco was born into a very poor farm family. His father died when he was only two years old, and his mother and two older brothers struggled daily to keep the family farm going. Though none of the boys went to school, and their mother never learned to read, she had learned and memorized the catechism. She taught the Faith to her three sons every day and kept them saying their daily prayers along with working the farm. John quickly grew to love learning about his faith, memorized the catechism, and became a pious son.

As a young boy, John was able to spend some time away from the farm with people in the nearest town. He enjoyed running and jumping, climbing trees, and playing various physical games and tricks with the local boys. Whenever there were any performers or entertainers in town, he would learn the methods of acrobats, dancers, jugglers, and magicians. Soon he was so “entertaining” himself that he attracted a group of boys who followed him regularly.

As he grew older and grew in the practice of his Catholic Faith, John would encourage the town boys to join him in prayers, such as the rosary, promising to perform his stunts or tricks for them afterward. The boys looked forward to whatever activity John had prepared, and never objected to the prayers he taught them before the fun.

From a very young age, John wanted to become a priest, but he could not even read. His mother always encouraged him in his prayers and in memorizing what he learned in church.

Through his mother’s determination to help him, and her wisdom in sending him to live in town where he could receive daily religious instruction from a parish priest, John was able to learn how to read and to learn more about his Catholic Faith. He also learned various trades as he worked to make enough money to pay his rent.

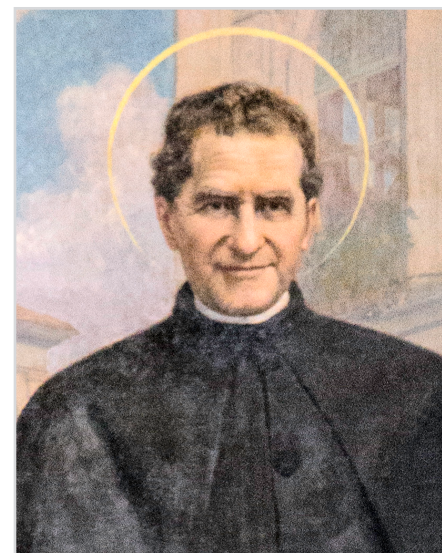
At the age of twenty, John Bosco entered the seminary. Because he had not been able to read for many years, he had developed an amazing memory, which helped him overcome the great difficulties of his studies. Continuing to work to pay his tuition, he finally graduated from the seminary six years later.

Almost immediately, Father John Bosco started organizing older boys to be leaders of a group of younger boys, for the purpose of teaching them the Catholic Faith. In order to help more boys, he started the unusual practice of walking the streets after dark, when the poor and uneducated boys and girls were gathering in the streets to rob people or businesses.

It was clear to John Bosco that boys and girls became criminals because they were poor, uneducated, and untrained to do any work. Determined to save poor boys, and eventually, poor girls, he would entertain them in the streets with various juggling or magic tricks that he had learned when he was younger, and then take them home to give them food, clothing, and a clean place to sleep. Once Father Bosco had provided for their immediate material needs, he would then start teaching them a trade.

Father John Bosco knew that boys and young men want to work and want to live a good life. He recognized that if the wayward boys could be trained in some trade, this would give him their attention, so that they would listen to his teaching about the Catholic Faith. They would become good citizens and good practicing Catholics.

He began asking employers to hire his boys. He asked citizens to help train his



boys in operating equipment, in repairing and building, and even in sewing, as tailors were in great demand. Father Bosco was so successful with pulling boys off the streets that donations poured in. Many miracles happened as the local business owners provided land, equipment, and buildings in which to teach the boys and to house them, and citizens donated money and clothes to provide for the boys’ needs until they could begin working at a paying job. Father said Mass for the boys every day, and gently led them to the practice of the Catholic Faith.

Father Bosco’s story reminds us homeschooling parents how important it is to provide physical education and practical work for our children. My boys had time outside for football and baseball with their dad. In bad weather, they spent time with indoor physical activities such as jump-rope tricks, and helped with the laundry and other active jobs around the house. We should never forget the importance of physical activity, even while we work to instruct our children’s minds and hearts.

*St. John Bosco, pray for us parents to help our children be good citizens of our community as well as good citizens of Heaven. Amen.*

Seton sells a book for 3rd to 5th graders called *A Story of St. John Bosco*, and a book for 5th grade through high school students called *Saint John Bosco*. Details on pg 5.



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

# your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

## **My 5th grade son is doing well in his courses, but he does not want to write book reports.**

Book reports, essays, paragraphs, and compositions demand inductive thinking. This means coming up with a main idea and writing examples or proofs for the main idea. It is one of the most important lessons or assignments that our students should do. Some students may think it is boring or unimportant. They would rather do hands-on activities or quick fill-in answers.

Have a talk with your son about scientists, explorers, and inventors who need to write down their ideas before they do their experiments or investigations, to write down the details as they proceed, and to write a coherent conclusion about the results. Perhaps if you assign your son to write up these kinds of scientific presentation paragraphs in a logical fashion, he will understand how to approach writing a book report in a "scientific" fashion.

## **I have phoned the 9th grade math counselor three times for his advice. Is there any limit to how many times I can phone to ask for help?**

While we do not put a limit on the number of times you may phone a counselor for help, you might check out some other resources first. For instance, often the answer is in the lesson plans, if not in the weekly assignment. It might be at the beginning or in the back of the lesson plans; there might be an addendum section. Take the time to browse through the lesson plans to see if you can find the answer to your question.

Be sure to check our website. Go to your My Seton page, then click on All Course Resources, then scroll down to

the particular course to see what helps are available.

Most important, don't let a problem go unresolved for long. Contact a counselor if your child seems to have a problem that is not going away! Contact information is on page 2 of this issue.

*Don't let a problem go unresolved for long. Contact a counselor if your child seems to have a problem that is not going away!*

## **You're now offering several different standardized achievement tests. Which one should I choose?**

For detailed information, go to our website and click on the 'Testing' tab.

Because different states have different requirements or want different tests, we are offering a variety of end-of-year tests. You might contact your own state homeschooling organization or check the Homeschool Legal Defense Association website to find out if any particular standardized test is required for homeschoolers. The HSLDA website lists such requirements for each state.

Many states don't require a standardized test for homeschooling students, but we think it is valuable for children to have the practice of a standardized test, or to have an objective test to show relatives or a potential college. Sometimes serious high school students like knowing how they are achieving in comparison with other American students.

Seton has its own Placement Tests for new incoming students. These help determine whether or not it's possible for homeschooled students to take courses on different grade levels, based on the student's ability subject by subject.

However, Seton placement tests do no fulfill state testing requirements.

## **When will Seton be offering high school courses online?**

Our first course with our new learning management system, Economics for high school students, is currently online. We started with a one semester course in order to beta test the system. We have been pleased with its success. Students are engaging with the course and seem to be moving through it without questions or problems. We have nearly one hundred students for this trial period.

The second online course will be American Government, a full year's course, which should be up and available at the time of this publication. The *Roe v Wade* paper section was put up for high school students even before the full course was ready, in order to give students the opportunity to access the information as soon as possible. If your student has not yet finished that assignment, it can be accessed under Course Resources for American Government.

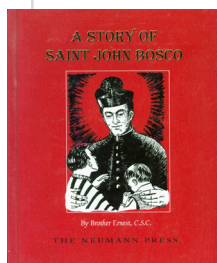
## **Does Seton offer summer school courses? And if so, may someone not enrolled full time during the year take a summer course?**

We do offer summer courses, mainly for high school students, whether they are enrolled during the regular school year or not. Often students who need extra



# ST JOHN BOSCO

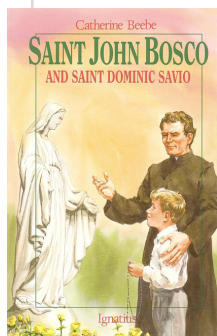
St. John Bosco is a great role model for fathers and a favorite saint of all Catholic youth, especially of boys.



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[setonbooks.com/bosco](http://setonbooks.com/bosco)

credits or who failed a course during the year like to take a summer school course through homeschooling. Public school course offerings often are limited, and often inconvenient for a student working during the summer. Sometimes a student ready to attend college in the fall needs to take a summer course to earn an extra credit or two. Interested students are encouraged to phone Seton's high school counselor at 540-636-9990, Ext. 125.

### Do all of your students go on to college? I am not sure my children will be attending college.

About 80% of our students go to college. That is not to say that our program is too difficult for non-college-bound students. One of the biggest benefits to all students is learning to learn. Whatever graduates do in life, they will find their homeschooling a huge asset in being successful.

### We need to be doing some schooling in June, which will make my children unhappy. Do you have any tips for keeping the schooling moving ahead during the year?

For the future, I would advise doing schoolwork on Saturday mornings if the kids start to fall behind the schedule you prepared for them. That might even be worthwhile this year. Remind your kids that next summer will be better if they finish up their weekly assignments on Saturdays during the year.

Sometimes parents have children take a favorite workbook or reader with them when they are traveling in the car, either during the year or even during the summer.

Talk to your husband about helping motivate the children, or maybe even teaching them a little on an evening or two each week. Your husband should help you emphasize the importance of being on schedule and doing things in a timely manner. Perhaps he can take the kids to work, at least once, and he can teach them about the importance of his job being done in the appropriate time frame.

### I started my son in Seton kindergarten when he was five, but now that he is six in first grade, he seems to be struggling.

Let's not forget that home schooling is about teaching a child according to the student's ability subject by subject. How many of us can discuss diagramming as well as discussing the motion of planets or as well as discussing exponents in multiplication problems as well as writing an excellent letter to our senator about the waste of government spending?

Homeschooling is about individualized learning. Seton has written books in all subjects for each grade level. We try to write them for the average children in that grade level. But of course, there is no average child.

If one subject seems too easy for your child, order the next level when he finishes the easy book. If a subject seems too difficult for your child, put the book away until next year, and order the book for the previous grade level.

This individualized approach is why home schooling is so successful. Group education inevitably means some children will be bored in some subjects while other children will struggle to learn certain subjects.



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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.



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[setonhome.org/colleges](http://setonhome.org/colleges)



# God First, Then Family: Being a Homeschooling Father



READ ONLINE

## Peter Campbell



Life's not easy, but with God anything is possible. This is how my wife and I started our relationship and marriage; we were focused on God and not on each other.

Evelyn and I met while volunteering in youth ministry at Immaculate Conception church in Salem, MA. At that time, her brother was one of the volunteer young adults and introduced us. We were married in May of 2000, which means we've been married sixteen years, during which time God has blessed us with 8 children (and 3 in Heaven).

Becoming a father changed my life, as I believe it does for most men. Being a father has given me a renewed sense of purpose and direction in my life, and has been a driving motivator for me to push myself further and further in my professional career and income growth. I approach my work in a completely different way because I have a family to support and protect.

In 2001 God inspired me to begin organizing Proud2BCatholic Music Festivals, which continued annually through 2008 as well as other Catholic events until 2010. Since then, I have been blessed with a career in web development

and then UX Design. God has been good to us.

I first became intrigued with homeschooling through my work with youth newspaper carriers. Two of them were homeschooled, and I could just tell they were different - a good different - from the other youth carriers. Later, I worked with *Apostle Advertising* and became familiar with Seton Home Study School as one of our top print advertisers.

### Keeping the Faith

When our children were approaching kindergarten age, we checked out a few private schools, but were unimpressed with the curriculum and the teachers' lack of understanding of the Catholic faith, not to mention the high price. We wanted a solidly Catholic education and a good education at a reasonable price, and we wanted to build a strong family unit. Seton provides an affordable but rigorous curriculum that challenges our kids, fosters the faith in all of us, and helps us stay close. Plus, the routines and consistency that Seton provides work best for our family.

No one is perfect, and I'm a perfect



example of that. But I try. Living our faith is important to us, so we do things that help keep us on track. As a family, we make a point to get to confession at least once a month, and faithfully attend Mass week in and week out. Although there was a time when we only said a decade of the Rosary at a time, over the past few years we've been able to remain consistent saying a family Rosary and bedtime prayers together every night. At the end, I bless everyone with holy water. Putting our faith first keeps us strong as a family.

## Activities & Interests

Prioritizing time together and pursuing the same activities and interests together also keeps us strong. Every night we eat dinner together as a family. While Evelyn is the educational leader in our home, I reinforce what she's doing by asking the kids what they did today, what they learned, etc. while we're at the dinner table. I also make sure to help the kids understand politics and our rights and liberties as Americans. It's important to me that they understand their country and know the power for good they can be in society.

Many of my children enjoy sports, especially soccer, so we play together at home and cheer one another on at their teams' games. I make a serious effort to be around for the kids' playtime, and to do something with them, whether it's playing 1-on-1 basketball or soccer, or reading a story. At the end of each day, I make a point of tucking kids in bed, which means a lot to them. They won't go to bed unless dad tucks them in first, and I love that my being there makes the difference.

## A Tight Ship

I have to point out that my wife, Evelyn, is definitely the engine behind our family routines and our active faith life. She is the driving force behind me, because everything she does frees me up to do my

work and focus on larger projects around the house. Her effort and focus are spent on the kids' daily homeschooling regimen, our finances, and our family life, and what she does is truly amazing. I could never do what she does. (I might also add that she also organizes a monthly "Teen Night" for the teens in our Catholic homeschool community.)

Evelyn runs a tight ship in the mornings, having the kids ready for the day, teeth brushed and morning prayers underway by the time I leave the house for work. When I come home from work, I'm always impressed to see the kids still working on their studies. I'm amazed at how diligently they work, and at how well my wife manages them and the house. I always say she is exceptional at doing the ordinary.

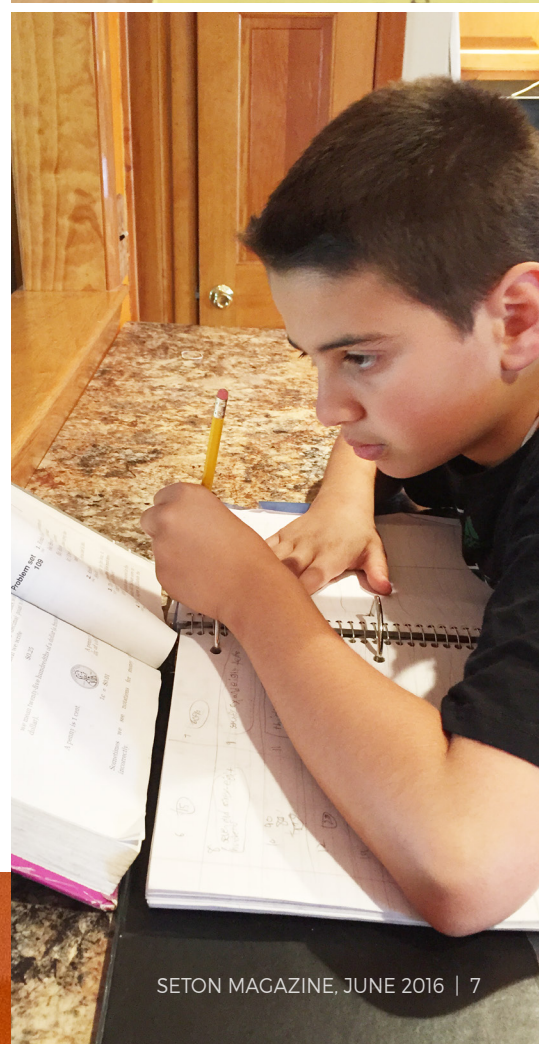
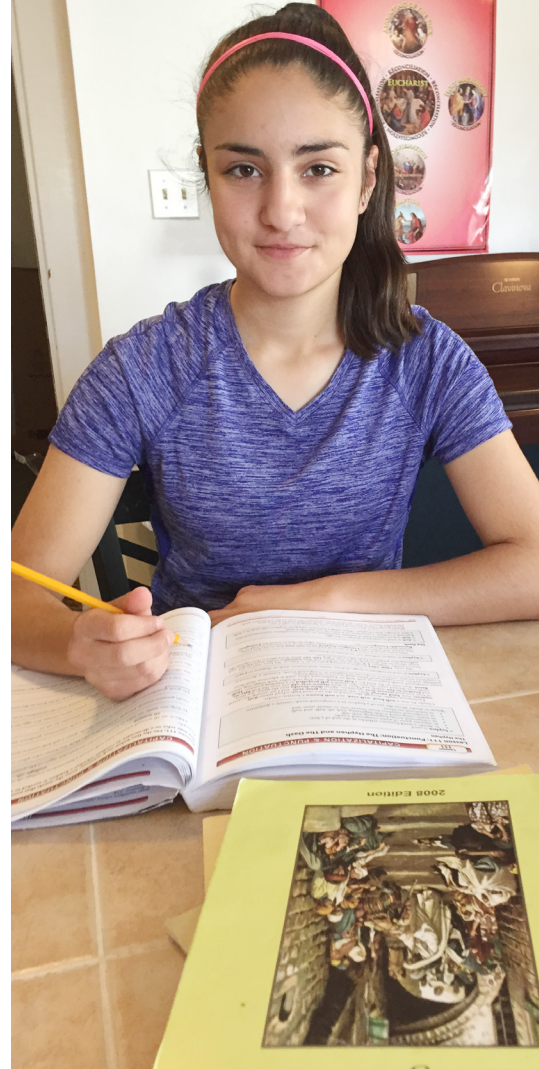
Because of God's love, there has been hope, peace and purpose in my life. Being active in the Catholic Church, being married and then having a family has completed the circle for me, and strengthened our faith.

## God First, then Family

Life is about our children, and I recommend to a family if they begin to feel overwhelmed, they should take a step back from things outside the house and immerse themselves more completely in their family. God first, then family. That's my rule. (From my past volunteering experiences, I've learned not to overcommit because something always comes up that requires more of our time.)

These days, I love nothing more than coming home from work and being greeted by a swarm of kids' hugs and shouts of, "Daddy, daddy, daddy!"

God has been good to us, even though we're not deserving. We pray every single day that God will continue to bless us in every way, and for His will to be done in our family always.



"When Pete leaves for work in the mornings, he makes a point to find each person in the house, give him or her a hug and/or kiss on the cheek, and say 'Have a great day. See you later.' I love that he does that."

*Evelyn Campbell*



# WHY YOU ARE A GREAT HOMESCHOOLING DAD

BY CHRISTINE SMITHA



You're not necessarily home all day long, teaching Mary fractions, doing science experiments with the twins, and correcting Eddie's English paragraphs—although some of you assuredly are.

Most of you are working long hours in an office or workplace somewhere, probably a long drive from home, getting home late in the evening, with only an hour or two to spare before the children are in bed.

You might be wondering whether you're really contributing anything to the homeschooling of your family, and wishing you were a better homeschooling dad.

Here's a little secret: *you're a great homeschooling dad.*

The most significant contribution you can make to the homeschooling effort is support. Your support has a value at least as essential as the actual teaching itself, and this is because that teaching couldn't happen without your willingness and encouragement. The fact that homeschooling is happening in your household means that you put some serious thought into the welfare of your children and, along with your wife, chose a form of education that would protect your children, enrich your children, and build them up in the Faith, all while challenging their minds for a successful future. Essentially, it means that you care.

*"But I'm not contributing anything*

*practical. My wife does all the work. I'm gone all day, and the kids are finished with school by the time I get home."*

Do you work long hours and accept personal sacrifices so that your wife can stay home and teach your children? Do you affirm your wife in the work she is doing to educate your children, and do you ensure that your children remain respectful and obedient toward her? Do you ask your children about what they learned during the day, and do you encourage them to talk about the interesting facts in their books or the school projects they're finishing? Do you praise the efforts your children are making, and do you encourage them when they struggle? Do your children come to you when they have questions and insecurities? Do they come to you when they want to show off their accomplishments? You answered yes to most of those questions, if not all of them, didn't you?

Again, the value lies in the fact that you care, and that you demonstrate as much with your steady presence and regular reinforcement of the good that is happening in your family.

*"Is there something I can do to step up my game as a homeschooling father?"*

No matter who we are or where we are in life, we can and should always be working to become better in the roles we are meant

to fulfill. There are many things you can do to become an even better homeschooling father than you already are.

## 1. RELY ON PROVIDENCE

Keep building your relationship with God the Father, His Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph. The more we can come to understand the loving Providence of our Creator, the better we will become at channeling that through our own parenting. Every boy's first love after his own mother is the Blessed Mother, and she remains our best intercessor in all things. St. Joseph is the human prototype of good fatherhood, and as many of the other saints have testified, continues to exercise prudential care for those who seek his aid. Regularly appealing to God the Father, the Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph for help with parenting, homeschooling, and family needs will keep the grace flowing into your home.

## 2. CHERISH YOUR WIFE

Cherish your wife and your marriage. It's an oft-repeated saying that, "The best gift a father can give his children is to love their mother." Your marriage is the bedrock of your children's future; its stability provides them shelter and security. Your wife should come first for the sake of your children, who will feel safer when they see that you and she are a single unit, bound together by mutual



love and respect.

In *Father, The Family Protector*, James Stenson points out that, “A man permits no one to threaten or upset his wife—and this includes their own children... A man will allow no one to disrespect his wife, including—and even especially—at home.”

Your children will heed your authority in other matters much more quickly when they see that you are a man of your word who consistently stands by their mother. They will also heed her more quickly because they know you stand behind her. As Dave Steele, a Seton father, put it, “When fathers support and love their wives, the two become one of the most beautiful and strongest teams for educating children.”

### 3. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Get to know your children as individuals and let them be themselves. Find out what each child really loves and help that child develop confidence and a love of learning through a pursuit of that interest or activity.

Roy Shaw, another Seton father, says it is important to remember as well “the carefree and whimsical stages of childhood so as not to scorn or crush the joys and innocence of childhood.” Children are sensitive and much in need of encouragement. Although

everyone is different, in general boys wish to be praised by their fathers for their strength and bravery, their inventiveness and problem-solving skills. Girls wish to be admired for their loveliness, sweetness, femininity, and yes, their talents and differences. So, take time to sit down and play Legos with the child who likes to build. Go fishing with your daughter. Play baseball with your son. Be humble enough to have tea with your little girl’s stuffed animals and race matchbox cars with your little boy. Have ice cream dates with each child on the back porch. Let them work alongside you, and praise them for their efforts while guiding them toward greater skill. Talk to your kids about the important things, and listen to them speak about what matters to them. Love each child unconditionally, exactly for who that child is, and you will find that he or she will never stray too far.

### 4. STRATEGIC APPROACH

Have a strategic approach. Again in *Father, the Family Protector*, James Stenson says, “If you want to be an effective father, you need to start with this clear idea: with the way our society is today, your children really are threatened by disastrous problems later in life—and it is your greatest challenge as a man to save them.” He also says that

effective fathers, “Think strategically. They project ahead, twenty or more years into the future,” and “act now, intelligently and urgently, to save their kids from disaster.” With your wife, be sure that your parenting choices are geared to long-lasting effects that will endow your children with strength of character, good habits, strong faith, thoughtfulness, and competency in life skills. Be consistent and forward-thinking, and take the time to address problems when they arise to keep your children on the straight and narrow track.

In the end, the value of supporting the homeschooling effort “goes far beyond just helping educate our children; it affects how they live their lives through adulthood,” as Dave Steele says. Thank you for making the choice to homeschool, and thank you for supporting your family as they pursue the path of home education. You’ve committed yourself to the path of greatness with this choice, and your children will undoubtedly “esteem you all their lives as a great father and a great man.”



Christine Smitha holds a B.A. in English and Literature from Christendom College. She has taught Literature for nine years, and enjoys dabbling in journalism when she gets a chance. She is currently *Seton Magazine’s* Assistant Editor.



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

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[setonbooks.com/summerreading](http://setonbooks.com/summerreading)

# When Dad Homeschools

BY JOHN CLARK

During this past academic year, for a host of financial, medical, and work-related reasons, I have become the primary homeschooling parent in the Clark house. From this perspective as a homeschooling Dad, I thought that looking back on what I have learned over this past year might benefit you readers, especially fathers.

## People don't believe you.

I'm still working full-time, but as a writer, which is something that I can mostly do at home. I have found that if I organize things moderately well, I can homeschool simultaneously. But here's the funny thing: when homeschooling fathers tell people that they homeschool, they are often disbelieved. Or they conclude that we homeschooling fathers must be unemployed or unemployable. Or that, while we claim to be homeschooling, we are actually sitting at home watching *Quincy* reruns on Netflix.

I wonder how many homeschooling fathers just stop telling people that they are the primary educators in the family.

The Catholic homeschooling community doesn't give enough thanks, or even recognition, to these fathers. We need to change that.

Every homeschool family has a system; whether Mom or Dad primarily runs the show, the right system is the one that works.

## It has been the most rewarding year of my life.

As I write this, I am sitting at my breakfast table with Bonaventure (10) who is doing his handwriting. Tarcisius (16) is finishing his lunch before he reads *Tom Sawyer*. But he has to move something before he sits down to begin his work—it is an acceptance letter

to Christendom College that arrived for his older brother today. I want to get it framed for him because it represents the promise of a wonderful future; it also represents the fulfillment of a wonderful past.

Some fathers and sons work on crafts together such as building model airplanes. For the past few months, Demetrius and I have worked together to get him ready for the ACT Exam, and partially because of his success on that test, his soul can take flight at a great Catholic college.

Enjoy these moments. Celebrate these victories. Embrace these triumphs. It is a wonderful thing to see your children experience success, made even sweeter when you know that you helped.

## Teach God's love every day.

We live in an age in which some children are often praised for everything. That's not fair; nor is it honest. Yet, errors are frequently answered with their opposites, and this is no exception. We now have parenting "experts" who suggest not praising your children.

One example of this thinking occurs in a 2009 book called *NurtureShock: New Thinking About Children*.

Chapter One is titled: "The Inverse Power of Praise."

It begins with these words: "Sure, he's special. But new research suggests if you tell him that, you'll ruin him. It's a neurobiological fact."

That is nonsense.

Every single day, I attempt to teach my children in various ways that God loves them. The brilliant Franciscan theologian, Blessed John Duns Scotus, began his theology with this awesome fact; we begin

our day with it. This fact permeates and influences every lesson, every day.

Every day, I try to find a new and more powerful way to illustrate God's love for them. We fathers need to teach our children that they are special because there has never been a time when they were not loved by God. Moreover, those in the state of sanctifying grace have a friendship with God. If friendship with God doesn't make you special, would someone care to tell me what does?

## Never give up.

Churchill may not have said it first, but he certainly said it best: "Never give up." "Never give in."

One of the most popular talks on the homeschooling circuit is "Avoiding Burnout." After a year, I can see why. The biggest problem is not that your son is tired of learning math; the biggest problem is that you are tired of teaching Math.

You have to find those things that motivate you. Maybe it's a scriptural passage, maybe it's a scene from *Rocky IV*, maybe it's a motivation speech by Churchill. For me, I like to start my day with ten minutes of motivational speeches before I even get out of bed in the morning. I'm guessing that this is different for everybody. Whatever it is, find that thing. And never give up.

Read John Clark's weekly blog at [setonmagazine.com/johnclark](http://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 Value of English Courses

BY DR. ROBERT C. RICE

Why are English courses, stressing writing and analytical skills, an essential part of a sound high school education? If students are planning on going into jobs relating to math, engineering or other sciences for their careers, they may wish to hurry through their English courses, not realizing how crucial the skills they can acquire there are for true success in any field of endeavor. Even homeschooling parents sometimes fail to grasp the value of well-developed writing skills acquired in “English” classes, finding the task of leading their children in the study of literature and writing somewhat daunting. It is, however, well worth the effort, for the rewards, personal and financial, are great.

The fact of the matter is, Fortune 500 CEOs and employers across the spectrum of professional disciplines place a high premium on a good command of the English language, critical thinking skills and the ability to express oneself orally and in writing. These are precisely the skills that your English courses are designed to teach you. Furthermore, the better you are in communicating your thinking clearly and persuasively, both orally and in formal writing, the greater your lifetime income is likely to be.

Study of the elements of grammar, logic, and rhetoric is foundational for a truly educated understanding of language—any language, not least our Mother Tongue. Without such study, we will speak and write at a level of discourse not reflecting a well-

educated person. Such speech and writing may be good enough for our close friends and family perhaps, but not for leaders in the professions. Students who focus only on courses relating directly to the field in which they intend to work, to the exclusion of English, may find their dreams shattered if they fail to develop a good writing style, or neglect the study of grammar and spelling. For a poorly written letter of application is not likely to procure them an interview—or acceptance into the college or university of their choice.

Understanding of the best organizing principles of essay writing is a key to good composition. Furthermore, understanding how to develop expository, argumentative, and analytical essays is important, not only for those intending to go into the law or politics, but also for anyone who needs to clearly explain “in plain English” the operations of a scientific experiment or to write a proposal for the funding of a new project.

Literary studies and analysis, part of the English curriculum, furnish additional benefits. The study of imaginative literature is, in the words of the literary scholar Marion Montgomery, “a long journey in pursuit of the human heart and mind.” In literature one discovers more deeply what it means to be human. The student of literature, vicariously experiences many lives in the comfort of his own home: he is able to know the trials and the triumphs of mankind in a multitude

and variety of forms otherwise impossible for one person to experience on his own. Wisdom comes from profound experiences deeply pondered, and great literature is the gateway to the wisdom of the ages.

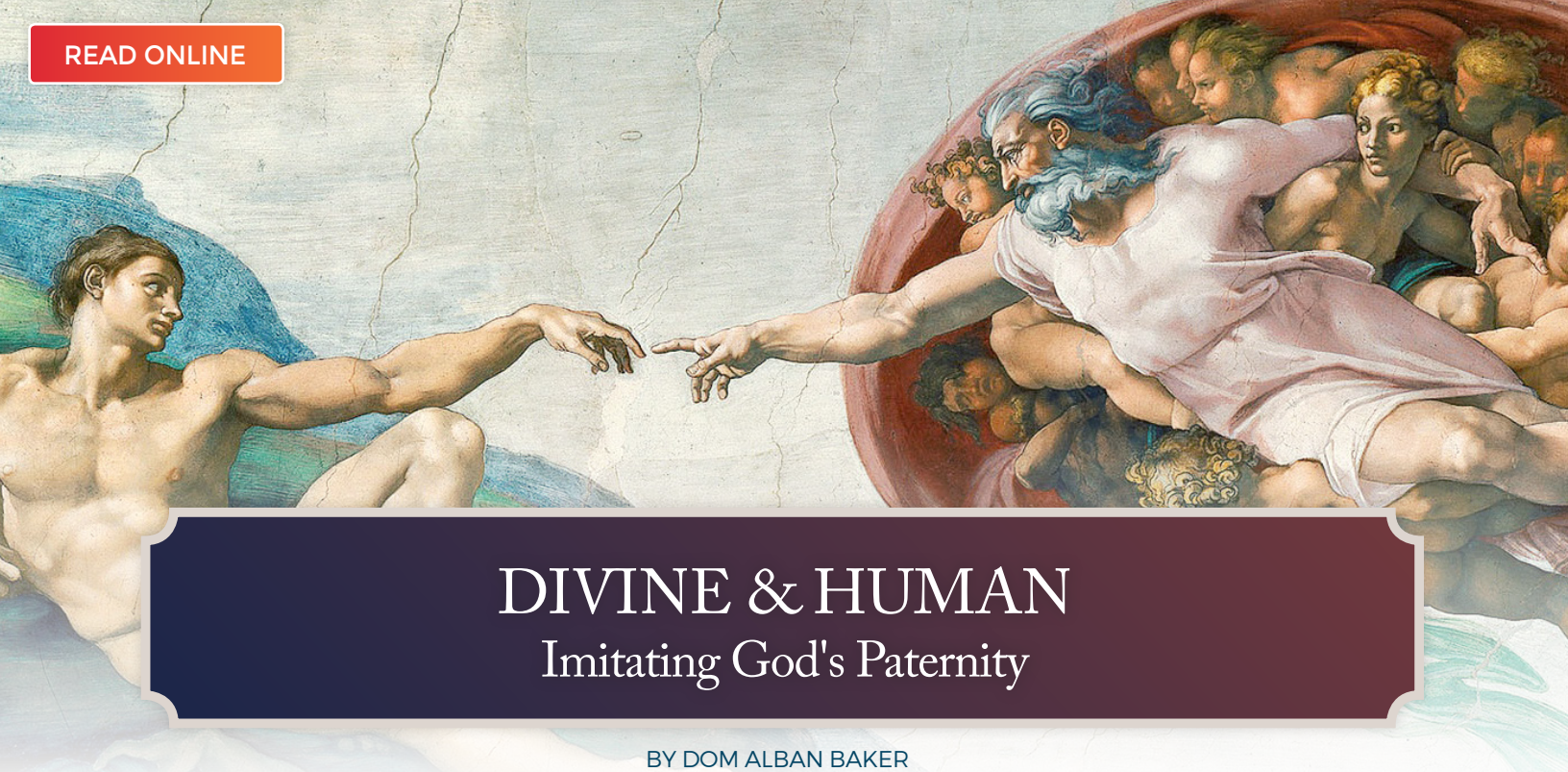
Moreover, from reading great literature, one gains a better sense of the standard idioms and rhythms of the English language and a more copious vocabulary. The language one learns from modern movies, radio, and television is generally substandard, not to mention vulgar or obscene. Great literature, especially great Catholic literature, is the best antidote to the trendy drivel spouted by today’s media.

To conclude, the English courses in your Seton Home Study program are among the most valuable you will be able to take. They will help you become clear and persuasive writers and speakers, and as such, you will have a head start in achieving your career goals. Furthermore, as well educated persons, knowing and understanding great literature, you will have minds filled with more valuable knowledge conducive to happiness than those lacking this kind of knowledge and intellectual experience. You will be rich before you receive your first paycheck.



**Dr. Robert C. Rice** received his B.A. from U.C.L.A. and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Oregon. He was Associate Editor of the Middle English Dictionary at the University of Michigan, 1976-1981. He is Professor Emeritus of English Language and Literature at Christendom College in Front Royal, VA.





# DIVINE & HUMAN

## Imitating God's Paternity

BY DOM ALBAN BAKER

Freud believed that belief in God was a displaced desire for a loving human father. In his *The Future of an Illusion*, the Catholic professor of psychology Paul Vitz wrote, “the terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—for protection through love—which was provided by the father... Thus the benevolent rule of divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life.” Freud’s claim, as Vitz relates, was that “the oldest and most urgent wishes of mankind are for the loving protection and guidance of a powerful father.”

We know from St. Paul that “all paternity in heaven and on earth is named” with reference to God the Father (Eph 3.15). Therefore, Freud had something right—that is, he connected paternity on earth to God. However, he reversed the order. All human fatherhood derives from God the Father, not the other way around. Our deepest desires are for God as Father, but in His great wisdom, He has willed that creatures participate in His goodness, and one of those participations is paternity: every human father participates in the fatherhood of the first person of the Holy Trinity. Thus it is important that earthly fathers imitate their heavenly Father in the way in which they care for their children.

In considering this calling, it is fitting to meditate on passages from the Gospels

which indicate the qualities of the Father. First, we find that He loves His Son and makes that clear to the Son and to others. In both the Baptism and the Transfiguration, the Father speaks, the only two times in Jesus’ earthly life in which He does so (it would seem the taciturnity of a human father has a precedent). He says very little, but what He does say is of immense significance: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

### A Vocation to Encourage

God the Father says this to encourage faith in His Son (for Christ has no need to be reminded of His Father’s love), while the human father says it to encourage his children. Just as a mother’s love tells the child he or she is fundamentally lovable, the father’s reassurance tells the child he or she is loved in fact. Children who doubt their father’s love are sure to be uncertain of themselves, which translates to an inability to cope. In contrast, the Cross was possible to Christ because of His knowledge that He was loved. What this means practically is that love must be expressed in words and gestures with frequency; a man must not allow his tendency toward silence to keep him from assuring his children that he is well pleased with them.

The second instance is from Luke’s Gospel, this time not the Father acting, but

Jesus’ parable about what the Father is like. Somewhat misleading in name, the parable of “The Prodigal Son,” is less about the son than the father. The father sadly lets his son separate from him, knowing that it will do more harm than good, but trusting him to divine Providence. Thus human fathers must be ever devoted to the wisdom of God, believing with a lively faith that the evils that befall their children are unto their eternal good, and praying fervently that this be the case.

Even with devout, homeschooling families, the threat of falling away from the faith is very real. It is the father’s role to trust that, as Paul writes, “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.” But the father in the parable not only trusts—he also watches: “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” This applies to every sin—it is the father’s role to punish bad behavior, and it is also his role to reconcile to God, so to speak, when sorrow is expressed and resolve to change is present. He is called to be just in his punishments but quick to forgive, quick to rejoice in the goodness of his child.

The final example is related in all the Synoptics: the Father’s silence at the death of



Christ. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The Son's cry is to His Father. Augustine says that in saying this Christ cries out both for Himself as our Head and for us as His members, knowing that we so often experience abandonment by our fathers, either really or emotionally. As a Dominican professor once put it, "My parents messed me up. Join the club!" In a fallen world, parents fail. Given the burden that they bear as head of the family, fathers seem to fail most of all, or so they often feel. It is good to have perspective—this is the norm after the Fall. Fathers should not lose heart when they are not sure what to do next, or how best to respond to their children's needs. Above all what is needed is prayer to be a good, perceptive, loving father, and then to discern God's will as best we can. There will be times when children think they are abandoned by their father, neglected, unappreciated. But with daily prayer for each child and attentive care, God the Father will make up for the sins and failures of those who participate in His paternity on earth.

Freud's vision of religion (and human fatherhood) was fatalistic and flawed. But he did hit upon something very true: divine paternity and human paternity are intimately related. It is by imitating God the Father in His love and forgiveness and by trusting that same Father to have mercy that fathers excel in their providential role.



**Dom Alban Baker, CRNJ**, received his Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L.) from the Dominican House of Studies in Washington DC. He is a member of the Canons Regular of the New Jerusalem, a monastic community serving the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in West Virginia.

## NOSTALGIA OVERCOMING THE PULL OF THE PAST

There are many times I find myself giving into a strong feeling of nostalgia. How common this is, I do not know, but there seems to be evidence that this sentiment is particularly strong in the much talked about "millennial" generation, the generation in which most of our graduating seniors find themselves categorized. We're all aware of the phenomenon of time seeming to go faster as one gets older. I am sure there is some law of Quantum Physics which explains why this is so, but even with that scientific reassurance, there is a tendency to let the acceleration of time lead to a state of melancholy.

It is not uncommon for graduating students to experience these feelings; I know that I did. I have spoken with multiple students in the past few months who have expressed a mix of excitement and fear about graduating high school. This is completely understandable. You are standing at a point of transition, and the magnetizing pull of the past can seem comforting over the unknowns of the future. And while I am not saying you should all go out and buy "carpe Diem" coffee mugs, or join some Epicurean drum circle, I would propose that the graduates



take time this summer to reflect on both the good of the past and the promise of the future.

The virtue of Hope is "the desire of something together with the expectation of attaining it." And while it is a forward facing virtue, I believe that our capacity to hope is informed by the experiences of our past. This is a beautiful thing about being Catholic. We are allowed to look back and look forward at the same time, and by doing so, are able to more clearly see our path to Christ, Who is the Beginning and the End.



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

## SETON SUMMER QUARTER CONTEST

DEADLINE AUGUST 31ST, 2016

Open to Seton high school students, grades 9-12. Select one of the novels you are reading this year for your high school curriculum, and **create a short story around one of the characters**. All submissions will be judged by grade level, with the potential for first and second place finalists for each grade. More details and free registration available online.

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BULLETIN

# 2016 Catholic Homeschooling Conferences



The following is a list of Catholic homeschooling conferences during May and June where Seton will offer materials for preview and sale, as well as a \$30-per-child enrollment discount (grades 1-12).

## **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](http://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](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **LA, Lafayette June 10, 2016 (Fri.) IHM Lafayette Homeschool Conference**

Cajundome and Convention Center  
444 Cajundome Boulevard  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
Fri.: 12 pm – 6 pm

[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **TX, Houston June 10-11, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) Houston ARCH Homeschool & Parent Conference**

University of St. Thomas  
Jerabek Athletic Center  
3800 Montrose Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77006  
Fri.: 1 pm – 7 pm  
Sat.: 9 am – 5 pm  
[www.homeschool-life.com/2034](http://www.homeschool-life.com/2034)

## **KS, Kansas City June 17-18, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) 12th Annual Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers & Curriculum Fair**

Divine Mercy Parish  
555 W. Main Street  
Gardner, KS 66030  
Fri.: 2 pm – 9 pm  
Sat.: 9 am – 4 pm  
[www.kccatholichomeschooler.org](http://www.kccatholichomeschooler.org)

## **MI, Lansing June 17-18, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Michigan Homeschool Conference**

Lansing Catholic High School  
501 N. Marshall Street  
Lansing, MI 48912  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **CA, Costa Mesa June 18, 2016 (Sat.) Southern California Catholic Home Educators (SCCHE) 16th Annual Conference & Curriculum Fair**

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
1015 Baker Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
Sat.: 8 am – 4 pm  
[www.southerncaliforniacatholichomeeducators.org](http://www.southerncaliforniacatholichomeeducators.org)

## **VA, Fredericksburg June 24-25, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM National Homeschool Conference**

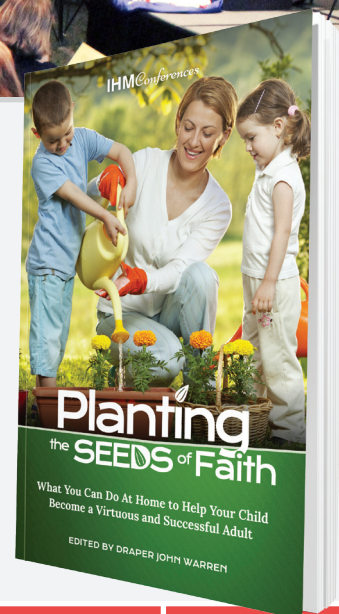
Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center  
2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
Fri.: 9 am – 9 pm  
Sat.: 9 am – 4:30 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **FL, Tampa July 7-8, 2016 (Thu.-Fri.) IHM Tampa Homeschool Conference**

St. Lawrence Church – Higgins Hall  
5225 North Himes Avenue  
Tampa, FL 33614  
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Fri.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

## **OH, Cleveland July 8-9, 2016 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Cleveland Homeschool Conference**

St. Adalbert's Parish — Keller Center  
66 Adalbert Street  
Berea, OH 44017  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)



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For additional contact information, conferences, venues, and vendors, visit [www.setonhome.org/conferences](http://www.setonhome.org/conferences)





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**Christian & Sebastian** | On May 1, 2016, we won the State of Florida BASS Nation High School Team of the Year award, surpassing 70+ high school teams.



**Rachel** | Rachel won highest honors, Silver Medal, in Division 3, Jr.VASE Region 7 Contest with graphite self portrait.



**William** | I earned the Rank of Eagle Scout June 10, 2014 and celebrated my Eagle Scout Court of Honor January 10, 2016 with my best friend and fellow Eagle Scout, Thomas.

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# Seton Home Study School

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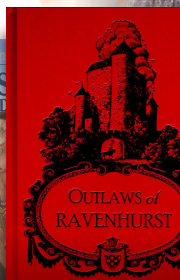
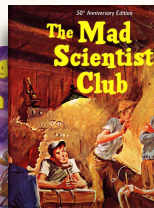
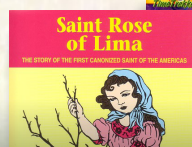
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## THE SETON SUMMER READING CLUB

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## Papal Quotes on the Family

*I ask for you the grace to be ever closer to your children, allow them to grow, but be close, close! They need you, your presence, your closeness, your love.*

*May you be for them as St. Joseph was: guardians of their growth in age, wisdom and grace. May you guard them on their journey: be educators and walk with them.*

*And by this closeness you will be true educators. Thank you for all you do for your children: thank you. Best wishes to you, and a happy fathers' day to all fathers here, and to all fathers. May St. Joseph bless you and accompany you.*

Pope Francis, General Audience, Saint Peter's Square  
Wednesday, 19th March 2014