

Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

SETONMAGAZINE.COM | OCTOBER 2016



Our 7 Pillars of Homeschooling Success

The Sanico Family - pg 6



The Success of the Seton Summer Reading Club!

Seton Staff - pg 8

An Ancient Soul in a Modern World

John Clark - pg 10

Homeschool Guardians

Dom Alban Baker - pg 12

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Vol. 10, No. 4, October 2016
www.setonmagazine.com

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Subscription Information:

Subscription is included with your enrollment.

Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year or \$25 for two years.

Cover photo:
Sanico Family

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



Letter from the Editor

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all had personal superheroes at our beck and call, able to help us through our every crisis as we go about the business of being Catholic homeschooling families in today's culture? Well, we do. In fact, we have something better than superheroes; we have guardian angels.

This month, we take some time to reflect on the gift of our guardian angels, whether the actual angels themselves, or our fellow men and women who do the work of the angels in difficult moments. Dr. Clark leads us in considering the ways our angels assist us in this life. Amy Pawlusiak compares motherhood with the work of the angels. Father Alban Baker recounts the wisdom of the Bible and Church Fathers on guardian angels and gives advice for increasing our devotion to the angels. John Clark reminisces on conversations with one of Seton's earthly guardians, our own Father Constantine.

As you read this month's issue, may you grow in appreciation for the work of the angels and find renewed hope in the knowledge that we are none of us alone in our work of educating the next generation.

Blessings!

Christine Smitha

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Holy Guardian Angels

Ever this Day My Homeschool Guide

On October 2, the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels. Angels appear in the Bible about 300 times, and many of them are guardian angels! St. Luke tells us in the Bible that our guardian angels can act as channels of grace from God. God gives us the graces we need when we ask for our guardian angel to help us to choose the good and to overcome any sinful desires.

One of the most amazing accounts in the Bible is the appearance of an angel to console Jesus. When Jesus was experiencing His sweating of Blood, His Agony in the Garden, we read “And there appeared to Him an angel from Heaven, strengthening Him” [Luke 22:43]. Angels visited Jesus in the garden to console Him in His human nature, to strengthen His human nature to overcome the fear and dread of the pain and agony of the crucifixion. In Father Hardon’s book *Meditations on the Angels*, he writes: “The angels are not only messengers of God’s wisdom; they are also powers sent by God to strengthen our human wills.”

Our guardian angels are holy messengers of God’s wisdom and of His power to strengthen our human wills!

Most people don’t think much about the protection of their guardian angel until, in a dangerous occasion, they suddenly exclaim, “My guardian angel was protecting me!” How many times in a dangerous situation does our guardian angel help us? Even when we don’t ask for the help of our guardian angel, how many of us are able to report that our “guardian angel was looking out for us” by protecting us from danger? Do we remember our guardian angel only when we are in danger? Perhaps Jesus is reminding us through dangerous occasions that we must rely on Him to help us, that we have a guardian angel to protect us, and that consequently we must thank our guardian angel as His helper.

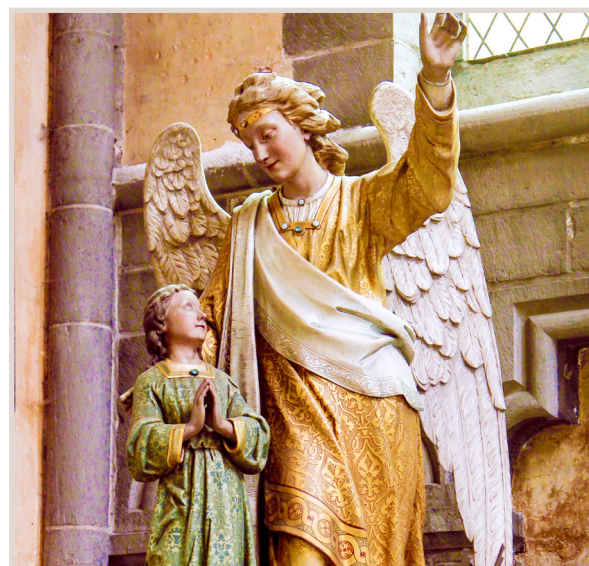
While we emphasize the fact that our guardian angel guards us, the primary function of our guardian angel is to guide

us, to point us in the right direction, and to help us make the right decisions for good and not evil. It is the teaching of the Church that guardian angels constantly see the Face of God! It is not a one-way communication. Father Hardon wrote in *Meditations on the Angels* that guardian angels are “communicators from God to human minds to enlighten them on the Mind and Will of God,” and that these good angels are “divine agents in transmitting to us the Will of God.”

It has long been a tradition for Catholic families to include a bedtime prayer to their guardian angels. “Angel of God, My Guardian Dear, to whom God’s love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to light, to guard, to rule, to guide. Amen.” Those two small words, “to light” can be translated by us homeschooling moms to include “enlightening” us parents in the best way to teach each child, and “enlightening” each child to understand the lessons.

As homeschooling parents, recognizing that our guardian angels stand by our sides to guide us with our teaching, let us ask them to enlighten us about how to teach each child each subject. And since our guardian angels guide us with raising our children in the Faith of Jesus Christ, we and our children need to pray together daily to our angels for guidance in learning the Faith as well as protection from dangers, especially dangers which may arise from something read or studied.

St. Michael the Archangel was not a guardian angel. However, since God sent an archangel to cast Satan to Hell, it would seem that God uses good angels to fight against bad angels. God intends for our guardian angel to help rid us of temptations which can arise from bad angels “seeking the ruin of souls.” We should ask our guardian angel to help us and our children in the battles



against temptation to sin, which can come from bad angels.

There are many stories in the Bible about God sending angels to guide, to guard, and to protect people in their travels, in making decisions about marriage, or about finding cures, as in the case of Tobias. These hundreds of miraculous helps and cures have resulted in the Church teaching us in the Catechism that guardian angels are given to each one of us, to guard and to guide us in every single step, every single day. The Catholic Church teaches that our guardian angel guides us from the second we are conceived to the last second we breathe on Earth. Perhaps our angels will continue to be with us in Heaven for all eternity.

*“Almighty and everlasting God, Who in the counsel of Thy ineffable goodness has appointed to all the Faithful, from their mother’s womb, a special Angel guardian of their body and soul, grant that I may so love and honor him whom Thou has so mercifully given me, that protected by the bounty of Thy grace and by his assistance, I may merit to behold with him and all the angelic hosts, the glory of Thy countenance in the heavenly country. Thou Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen.”**

*A Prayerbook of Favorite Litanies, Father Albert J. Hebert



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

your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

What do I say to my son who says “I already learned this last year!”

“Okay, Tommy. You are right, you already know how to do the math problems on this page. But as your parent-teacher, I need to check it out. Tell you what! For every page you figure you already know it all, do all the problems as a review, and for every page you obtain a 100% correct, I will give you a dollar! How’s that?”

He will be trying harder than ever before! Let me know how much you lost!

My husband does not want to be involved in helping with the homeschooling.

That may seem like a real problem, and you definitely want to have some discussions with him about helping, even if it means only listening to a reading assignment, or reading a chapter in the history or science book.

Survey Says— Your Expertise Needed!

Seton is pursuing a second accreditation to bolster its recognition as an accredited school.

In order to do this, however, Seton needs your input!

Surveys for parents and students will be emailed to all Seton families in mid-October.

Your feedback is an essential part of the accreditation outcomes for our school, so we truly do need your help.

Please check your email or MySeton page after October 13th for details.

One thing you might try is to have your husband do some activities with the children that he likes, such as playing baseball or football. Whatever it is, encourage these kinds of activities that he likes to do with the children. That strengthens his caring for the children, and strengthens their respect and love for him.

Eventually, that caring and respect and love will develop an instinct and interest for helping to listen to a child read, to help with a math assignment, or to show how to take measurements for building a dog house.

The benefit of homeschooling is not in the textbooks, though those are important. The benefit is in the caring and loving of each family member for the others and for the family as a whole, as they all live the Faith together.

My son seems to have a learning problem in math. Any suggestions?

It is important to distinguish between an actual learning problem and mere lack of readiness. Public school educators are required to focus on grade level based benchmarks that reflect broad averages, but which have very little to do with understanding how individuals differ in learning styles, paces, etc. Your son may have a learning problem, but he also may just not be ready for certain concepts, or perhaps has not had enough practice with a particular foundation skill. Tell him that we each learn at different rates in different subjects.

If you seriously believe your son is struggling more than he should, please do contact our Special Needs department. Stephen can talk with you and determine if your son really needs to be taught by a different method. However, even in the event that a different methodology or

presentation is required, it is not necessarily the case that a learning problem is involved.

Do you have any videos for paragraph writing for lower grade levels?

We are in the process of producing videos for students [and for moms] regarding paragraph writing for each elementary grade level. The videos we have done for grades one, two, three, and four are online now. Visit 'Course Resources for English' to access them. Grade five is in process now; grades six, seven, and eight should be up soon. However, all those enrolled in any elementary grade can access all of the elementary grades' composition videos.

I feel like I am running a race and struggling to keep up!

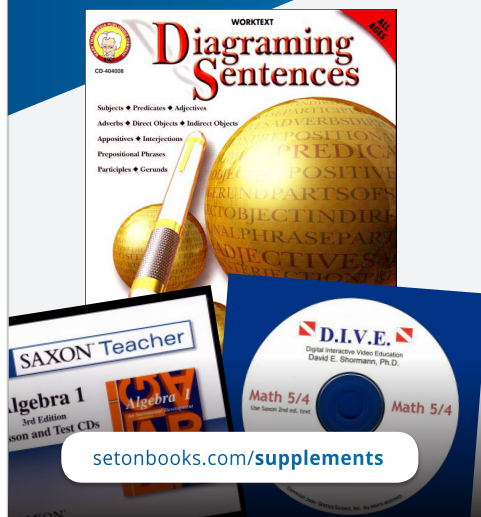
From the beginning of time, life has been a race and a struggle. In today's world, we are all in the same race and struggle. Homeschooling definitely changes the daily schedule but there is an inner peace because we are keeping our children away from the dangers and struggles of school classrooms and playgrounds.

The most important key to keep up, or to reasonably keep up, is to pray with your children every day. Start every morning with Mass if possible, but if not with Mass, then with some other form of prayer. Pray throughout the day with your children. Pray every time there is a “bump” in the road! Train your children to pray every time they struggle with writing a paragraph, solving a math problem, or translating a sentence. Train them to ask you questions or to search for the answers. Train your older children to use supplementary resources to find answers.

Looking at what many Catholic families

Supplemental Studies

Whether you are struggling with Math or English, or just looking for something new, Seton Educational Media has a great selection.



setonbooks.com/supplements

are suffering, in our own country and in other countries, we realize that our struggles are small indeed. Keep running the race! The pot of gold at the end of the race is the eternal salvation of your children!

Do I need to follow the lesson plans exactly?

Certainly not. Each child is different. Our lesson plans are arranged in ways which have worked for most children, but that does not guarantee they will work perfectly for your child. Try following the lesson plans, but then adapt them, slow down or move more quickly, subject by subject, as you learn more about your own child's strengths and weaknesses. You will find that after some time, like yourself, they will learn more quickly in some subjects and less quickly in others.

The beauty of homeschooling is that your children can learn at the pace that is best for them, subject by subject! That can never be done in a classroom in a school where teachers are forced to cover certain material or pages every day, no matter how slow that is for some, or how fast it is for others. God has given us parents a great blessing: the opportunity to teach our children ourselves at home. And in the Sacrament of Matrimony, God gave us the special graces to fulfill this obligation.

My children seem unenthusiastic as we start our fifth year homeschooling. How can I get them excited about homeschooling again?

Change the schedule: Talk to the children about scheduling their courses at a different time of the day than last year. Reassign their chores at different times and with different children. Schedule more active classes between more reading-intensive classes. Ask each child to help decide which classes he would like at which times.

Change/redesign the locations: Consider having some outside classes, on the porch, on the picnic table, in the sunroom. Repaint the classrooms, relocate their desks, even if in the same room. Change the furniture in other rooms, such as the dining room, the living room, their bedrooms. Allow a high school student two or three afternoons to do schoolwork at the local public library or college library.

Change tools: use a blackboard to give your children some standing time. Purchase a cork board or move your cork board where you put up their schoolwork. Build or repaint or relocate bookcases, tables, and desks.

Combine classes: Have two children work together whenever possible, such as with music, art, perhaps with science or history.

Will the new high school online courses be the same as the textbooks?

It depends on the course. Some of the high school books, such as Economics and American Government, are Christian but not Catholic. Also, they don't necessarily deal with the issues of the day. So, while the Latin and English courses, for example, will be the same, Economics and American Government will be different because they will be our own Catholic courses. We are currently developing an online Nutrition course with all-new Catholic content, which is a change from our previous Nutrition course that was built on a Christian text. A Catholic online Spanish course and a Catholic online French course are also in progress, being written and proofed by native Spanish and French Catholics. Please keep Seton and our writers in your prayers.



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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.



AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY



BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE
THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED



CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE



FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY OF STEUBENVILLE



NORTHEAST CATHOLIC COLLEGE



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



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Our 7 Pillars of Homeschooling Success

BY MERIDETH SANICO

We have homeschooled our son and daughter since Kindergarten and we have every reason to believe that they are happy being homeschooled. They have never joined any traditional classes, except for certain summer courses in sports, music, and their regular dance classes and piano lessons. My son, John David (Jod), is currently enrolled in Grade 7 with Seton. Dara Monica (Dara) is in Grade 4.

For our family, success in homeschooling is seeing our children develop the habit of learning – learning not only their academics but more importantly, the lessons of life.



Seeing them develop a joy of learning is an achievement in itself, as far as my husband and I are concerned. We watch them pursue the things that interest them and develop their God-given talents, knowing that these children are God's blessings and that doing these things will help them fulfill their primary aim, which is to pursue God's will for their lives. In our family, we believe that homeschooling success equals love of learning, and we have seven pillars on which this success is built.

Planning

As a parent-teacher, I try as much as possible to use Seton's Teacher's Plan Book. There, I write the student's daily goals for each subject every day. For Dara (my 9-year old daughter), we cover almost all of the subjects daily, except for Music, Arts, and PE. My son Jod prefers to do specific subjects on certain days (let me explain this arrangement later). The goals I set for each day depend on the pace of the student. Fridays are our Music and P.E. day. On that day, we shrink the goals for some subjects and do not set any goal at all for other

subjects. This allows us to travel to the kids' piano lessons and ballet classes.

Following a Schedule

We go through the school day in the order of the subjects I laid out in the Teacher's Plan Book. This order is either agreed to between the parent and the student (as is the case with my son who is in junior high, or as my husband and I deem appropriate (as is the case with our elementary student, Dara).

In both cases, the first subject of the day is the most interesting one for the student. For example, Dara loves to read, so we start our day with Reading, then follow it with Spelling (a challenging subject for her). Then, we spread the other subjects, putting the easiest subject in the last period. Normally, Handwriting is the last subject, but sometimes, we forgo Handwriting when other goals for the day require her to do "heavy" writing.

As a junior high school student, Jod is allowed to decide how he approaches each course. This year, he has divided his subjects into two groups. There are subjects that

he does on Tuesdays and Thursdays only and there are subjects that he does only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. This arrangement allows Jod to accomplish more in each subject. For example, he can finish a chapter for History or Science in one day, highlight important notes in the book, and review and prepare for the quiz all in the same day. To be clear, there are certain subjects, like English and Math, that he does every day because we believe that daily practice is needed for success in these subjects. These arrangements are the basis for preparing the daily goals in the Teacher's Plan book.

Start time depends on the activities of the family the night before.

We attend a Catholic prayer meeting on Mondays, so I am a little bit lenient on Tuesdays. However, we have an unwritten rule: Each student must finish his/her study goals first, before he/she can have a privilege (for Dara, playing outside and watching a video; for Jod, playing his favorite video game or practicing his piano pieces). We always ensure that any computer/video activity for the day is limited to an hour.

Prayer

We start each school day with prayer. We usually pray the "Morning Offering." It is our way of giving to Our Lord our entire day – offering to Him our prayers, works, joys, sufferings, our studies to Him. Spontaneous prayers are added when we deem it necessary.

National Anthem

After the prayer, we sing "Lupang Hinirang," our Philippine National Anthem, followed by the "Panunumpa Sa Watawat" (pledge of allegiance to the flag). We hope that by including these practices, we can instill in our children a love for country patriotism. Practicing this daily also helps our children shift from "relaxed mode" to "learning mode".

Contentment

We believe that whatever the kids have learned for the day is what the Lord wants them to learn that day. What is important is that they have learned to discipline themselves by following the daily goals. However, when the student experiences some difficulties along the way, we adjust our approach.

We also believe that learning is not just limited to academics, so we incorporate the house chores, such as washing the dishes after lunch and dinner, hanging washed clothes, folding clean clothes, sweeping the floor, watering the plants or cleaning up our respective work areas. These are times when we can talk with the children about life lessons, which is one of the great goods of homeschooling. We get the chance to talk with our children about the more important things in life.

Sacraments and More Prayers

As a parent, I have my personal daily devotions. One of them is the prayer for my

children, which I do daily using the prayers in the book, "Power of a Praying Parent" by Stormie Omartian. These prayers cover nearly all my concerns for my children. During the day, especially when I feel overwhelmed, I pray the "Parents' Prayer for Their Children" by Pope Francis. Aside from the Sunday Masses that we go to as a family, my husband and I attend Masses during the weekdays, when possible. We also schedule and go to our monthly confessions as a family to encourage our children to embrace the sacrament.

Love and lots of love

Finally, we believe that children cooperate better, learn better, and mature more confidently when they feel loved, so we take care to show them this constantly throughout the day. Different children have different love languages, so we work hard to demonstrate our love based on each child's own love language.

I am blessed to be working from home and am able to actively involve myself with my children's homeschooling. In doing so, I learn along with them, recall what I have learned before and discover new things. I thank God for this wonderful opportunity to do what He has called me to do – live my vocation as mother to the children He has given us.





THE SETON SUMMER READING CLUB

Everyone knows how much of an emphasis we place on reading here at Seton Home Study School. We believe in the lasting value of reading skills and loving books. Each year, we make a point of reminding families not to let this essential part of their education slip by the wayside during all of summer's fun and games. However, this year, we wanted to provide students with a platform for continuing their reading over summer break by turning it into a collaborative and community-building activity. Enter the Seton Home Study School Summer Reading Club.

We were thrilled with your response! 500 families registered and

based on a survey we did of the families who participated in the summer reading club, here's a report on our first year with some projections for the future.

Did families enjoy the club?

Yes, they did. The families that reported in via the survey indicated excitement over the opportunity. Parents were pleased to have a structured summer reading program for their kids, while students were happy to be recognized for their reading accomplishments. Paula from Ohio stated that "Our family really



enjoyed the reading club. I appreciated the incentive to complete the program that the certificate provided, as well as the recommended titles from which we could select.”

Most common compliment?

The most common praise participating families offered was that the Seton Summer Reading Club was better than the local libraries’ reading clubs.

Christina from California said, “We have always participated in our local library’s summer reading program. Because we didn’t go into the library but instead chose books from the Seton lesson plans, the quality of my daughter’s summer reading material was much better.” Abigail from Oklahoma agreed: “The reading club is a wonderful idea, particularly as an alternative to the library’s reading program, which hasn’t been very interesting or productive.” Amy from Virginia liked the focus on quality literature as well. She commented that “I particularly appreciated the list of worthwhile literature. My goal for my children is not just to read in great quantity as community libraries typically set for the goal, but also to read good literature.”

Most common suggestion?

The most common suggestion parents registered was that there wasn’t enough variety in the reading choices.

Millie from Washington wrote that her children “were excited in the beginning but

were disappointed with the book list given. They found the options restricting...all alike and no books for those with special interests and hobbies.” Another parent opined that her sons might have been more interested had the list been longer, while another mentioned that given the inadequacy of the local library, a longer, more varied list would have made it more possible to find quality books, supposing the library had one classic while lacking another.

Most encouraging comments?

The reading list reinforced family reading. Siblings enjoyed reading together or in competition, and parents made time to encourage reading aloud. One parent told us she set aside time in the afternoons so that her daughter could read books from the reading list to her. Another mentioned that her oldest son decided to read aloud a book she had previously read to him, and when choosing other books from the list, chose some that interested his younger brother so that both could enjoy them as one read and the other listened.

How was the list implemented?

Almost universally parents mentioned that they allowed their children to choose from the list Seton provided and create their own summer reading list, giving the students ownership and responsibility. This also allowed for creativity on the part of the students, and gave them freedom to pursue

their own interests within the bounds of the list.

Incentives were also key: for some, the certificate Seton provided was motivation enough, with special pride in being awarded the title “Reading Champion” as due recognition for hard work. For others, additional incentive was provided. As one mother wrote, “I incentivized my sons’ reaching their goal by offering a small reward for completing three books and a larger prize for completing all six.” Another simple incentive was the joy of anticipating the arrival of a new book ordered to fill out the family library!

Besides better reading skills, what other educational goods were achieved?

One good was advancement in writing: Marie from Florida said that her “son was motivated to write book summaries, which is an area in which he needed improvement.” Another was contemplation of the material read; as one parent wrote, “It gave my children the opportunity to think more about the books they read.” And more than one parent commented upon the value of the list in encouraging reading not just as an exercise for school, but as an ongoing trait of life. Marianne loved that the list “kept the reading going, which is so important.” And Paula wrote, “I have a love of classic literature and wish to instill that in my girls, too... Seton gave us a solid list of age appropriate classic selections which I appreciated.”



Fernando had a great time reading this summer! It was a fun family time!



Madison found the summer reading club to be a fun and challenging experience.



The Seton summer reading club is fun! Kira loved reading these books!

An Ancient Soul in a Modern World

Fr. Constantine Belisarius

BY JOHN CLARK

As some of you already know, Father Constantine Belisarius, the chaplain of Seton Home Study School, was very sick lately. Without going into his medical history, suffice it to say that we weren't sure whether Father was going to make it. But with the help of many prayers and penances of friends and family, he is, by God's grace, on the road to recovery. The word "miraculous" has been used by medical personnel, but if you know something about God and you know something about Father Constantine, this series of medically remarkable events was perhaps foreseeable, if not outright predictable.

Our Faith teaches us that God always brings something good out of something bad. Speaking for myself and perhaps many others, part of the "*something good*" was our chance for reflection and thanksgiving for Father. In life's dramatic dramas, we seem to lack the time to center on things that matter. But as I sat in the waiting room, waiting for a miracle, I had the chance to reflect a bit. And if you readers will indulge me, I want to express a few thoughts about Father Constantine.

That should be easy to do. It isn't.

You see, Father Constantine Belisarius is more unique than his name. He is a priest, confessor, theologian, counselor, confidant, scholar, teacher, and spiritual warrior. And yet, when I think about Father Constantine, one quality pervades: he is my friend. And that is no mere footnote.

As C. S. Lewis wrote, "Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art... It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival."

Father Constantine gives life to those words. When you are Catholic, a friend is one who reminds you of the beauty of the True Faith; Father does that in a majestically Byzantine way. Obviously, I never knew a Father of the Church—I missed out on that privilege by about sixteen hundred years.

And yet, after a quarter-century friendship with Father Constantine, I sometimes feel as though I do know one of them; after all, in his research and reading, Father Constantine spends so much time with the Church fathers. He quotes St. Basil and Saint Athanasius off-the-cuff as though they are his contemporaries—as though he is theirs. The calendar might say 2016, but for Father Constantine, for all intents and purposes it is 313, when his namesake walked the earth. When he talks about the Council of Nicea, for instance, he speaks like a paperboy announcing the headline on a street corner. That's cool, and it's a reminder of the timelessness of truth.

Father is orthodox and by-the-book, but also wonderfully aware of God's mercy, and is gifted to communicate that mercy in a magnificent way. Father Constantine once delivered a sermon about the sacrament of Penance and its relation to divine judgment. He said that the devil will be at our final, personal judgement and say: "Look at everything this man has done. He has committed that sin and these sins and those sins."

And God will remind the devil: "He told Me about all those. What else do you have?" And the devil will fall silent.

In a world that's not too funny sometimes, friends also make you laugh. I wonder if Father Constantine ever realizes how great his sense of humor is—and not always when he's trying to have one. Having been weaned on the Western Canon, I consider myself pretty well-read; however, Father presumes a working knowledge of an immense swath of data. Over the years, Father and I will be talking about history, theology or literature, and he will mention some nearly unknown fact and is bewildered that I am not aware of it. He'll refer to some esoteric historical character and say something like: "Of course, she was a cousin by marriage to Cicero's second secretary." Hearing something like this, I'll draw a blank stare and shake my



head as if to say: "I didn't know that." At which point, Father will deepen his voice and say something like: "John, how could you not be aware of this?!" That's hilarious.

When times get tough, I seek Father's advice. He defends me when I am right; he tells me when I am wrong. That's what friends do.

Years ago, as I was recounting the names of my children (which include Athanasius, Demetrius, and Tarcisius), I asked Father if those name choices meant I was crazy. He paused for moment and assured me: "No. It means you're a man of faith."

When Father Constantine—a man with a Dantean aversion to idle praise—says those words, you remember them. Much more importantly, you strive the rest of your life to live up to them.

For those of you on the Seton Home Study program, you may already know that Father Constantine is a counselor to the parents and the students. Perhaps you have already spoken with him by phone. But whether you need some help with Latin, the advice of a wise priest, or some words of encouragement, you will discover a friend on the other end of the phone.

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.

Angel of God, My Guardian Dear

How Parents Work with the Angels as God's Guardians

BY AMY PAWLUSIAK



At the park the other day, I was pushing my son on the swing while talking to another mom pushing her daughter one swing over. All of a sudden, I saw a little girl run right in the path of my son's swing, about to be knocked down when he swung backward. I quickly grabbed both of his feet to stop him, and almost fell forward stopping his momentum. We all breathed a sigh of relief that the little girl didn't get knocked over. It made me realize how many times a day we do little things like this or sometimes much bigger things to guard our children? Parents, our jobs are not for the faint-hearted! When we pray the Guardian Angel prayer with our children, we need to remember that we are the hands and feet of God's angels, because we are parents.

To Whom His Love Commits Me Here

God's love made us, and God's love brought us our children. Our paths to holiness are now closely intertwined with theirs. The struggles of parenthood and life often come from the struggles our children are currently facing. If they are having problems with a school subject, have been diagnosed with a learning disability, are living with a physical or mental condition, or any other difficulty, it becomes our struggle too. God's love flows through us to commit us to our children and to their growth. Whenever we care for them, guard them from harm, or guide them to make good choices, we are acting in accord with their guardian angels. Conversely, these children also grow us in holiness. I've often thought that I could have easily been a self-absorbed

individual had it not been for my children. I can't be everything for them, but I can give them what I have, my faith and myself.

Ever to Stay, Be at My Side

Every day, I sit at the kitchen table with my children as we start our work. We usually start by reading the saint of the day, and then move into prayer for our family and friends or whatever intentions are on our hearts. We always finish with either the Angel of God prayer, or the St. Michael prayer because sometimes it seems that we are in a constant battle just doing our daily work. We need those angels! As I sit and watch my children struggle with math and science, I am also praying for my children's spiritual battles in a world that is no longer Christian. I know that these days sitting with them are short, even though at times they seem long. What we do at home; our discussions, our light-hearted talks, our teasing, and our daily family life are all going to shape our children's desires and intentions for the future. I'm praying that being at their side now, and guarding their natural curiosities and need for knowledge with good curriculum and God's truths, will be enough to root them in a future that corresponds with God's will for them.

To Light, To Guard, To Rule and Guide

As many Mothers do, I turn on the lights each morning before dawn and turn off the lights each night, since I am usually the last to go to bed. Before I turn in, I walk around the house, cleaning, or putting out the things needed for the next day. I have a

white board where I write out the schedule each day, so the kids have an idea of what their day will look like. I know where each child needs to be, and have prayed and discerned with my husband what activities each child will be doing to grow in his or her talents and abilities. It's just the routine life of a parent, yet we are so much more. The daily guidance we give as parents works hand in hand with God's goals for our children. How God needs parents today, more than ever, to listen to Him, to offer our children rules rooted in love, and the light of truth while giving guidance as they learn how to navigate the maze of life.

Angels All Around

Imagine how crowded our houses must be! In my home, with seven of us living here, and seven guardian angels hovering around us at all times, I imagine the heavenly host must be bumping into each other. If I could see them, I think I would be shocked at the level of God's love for us manifested through His angels. I know that God's guardians work with us and through us to do God's divine will each day, however broken each of us might be. As parents, we can know that God has given us a truly special task of spreading his love through our sometimes mundane, but never fruitless work as parents, just like God's glorious angels do.



Amy Pawlusiak lives in Florida raising and homeschooling her 5 very active children, from high school to preschool. She has a masters in Education from Wayne State University in Detroit, and worked for Catholic talk-show host and writer Teresa Tomeo before devoting herself to homeschooling.



Homeschool Guardians

3 Ways to Honor the Angels

BY DOM ALBAN BAKER

*"High dignity of souls, that each from its birth
has an Angel set in charge over it!"*

ST. JEROME

In the opening verses of the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, Our Lord speaks about children and the kingdom of heaven. After noting the importance of becoming children on the spiritual plane, Jesus praises receiving children in His name while condemning those who cause them scandal.

For a reason why we should always protect and honor children, He gives as evidence their guardian angels. *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea... See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”* It is no coincidence that the locus for the Church’s teaching on guardian angels is also a powerful testimony to the value of homeschooling. This aspect of Our Lord’s teaching ought to motivate us, in this month dedicated to the angels, to increase our personal and familial devotion to them.

Thomas Aquinas, in union with the Fathers of the Church, especially Jerome, teaches that each human being has his/her personal guardian angel from birth. Thomas says this is because God has ordained that variable beings be moved and guided by invariable beings; we as humans can and do change as regards our fidelity to truth and goodness, while the good angels never waver. Therefore God appoints them to guide us to beatitude, since they already behold His face, which as Augustine explains, should be understood as “the manifestation of Himself.”

Natural Guidance

The angels’ guidance of us has two aspects, both in line with our nature: the one is on the intellectual plane, the other on the moral plane. Aquinas notes that whereas we as humans have the principles of reality (such as non-contradiction) firmly in our mental grasp, we often differ regarding the conclusions we draw from such principles. All may agree that something cannot be and not be in the same way at the same time, but when that must be applied to a controversial topic such as the nature of God, man’s duty of religion, societal norms, or marriage, to

name a few, humans vary greatly in their inferences.

Hence the value of guardian angels. Gregory the Great writes, *“The Angels always behold the face of the Father, and yet they come to us; for by a spiritual presence they come forth to us, and yet by internal contemplation keep themselves there whence they come forth; for they do not come forth from the divine vision, as to hinder the joys of inward contemplation.”* The angels that watch over us from our birth always see the face of God, meaning they see His essence and see all reality in His essence. Does this sound like a useful resource for homeschooling? Yes! Our angels can help guide the minds of both the teacher and the students, moving them to helpful insights, keeping perspective, ordering all things to higher levels of reality, ultimately to God. It is the mark of a wise mind that all intellectual subjects are seen in relation to others, and the angels excel at this, given that they see all things in God, the source of all things.

Moral Guidance

As for the moral plane, it’s obvious that we waver constantly. We make firm resolutions not to sin again, and then when a temptation arises or an unexpected event occurs, we’re fatigued or downcast, we fall into sin again. Our intellectual commitment to God is strong; our moral commitment is less so. Again, the guardian angels assist us here. Thomas teaches that for us to do good actions, we must first be inclined toward good, which is accomplished by grace and the infused virtues, and second, we must “discover the proper methods to make perfect the good of virtue.” It is the latter that our appointed helpers do for us: God teaches us through the angels how to make good on our moral resolutions. St. Paul teaches that the ten commandments came to Moses through the ministry of angels; our angels help us to take those commandments that we know so well in theory, together with the precepts of the Church and the teachings of the Gospel, and put them into action with consistency and ever greater charity.

Aquinas uses the analogy of traveling on a road: while we are on earth, we are going towards heaven, but the path is wrought

with danger, both from within and without. “And therefore as guardians are appointed for men who have to pass by an unsafe road, so an angel guardian is assigned to each man as long as he is a wayfarer.” The angels, then, help guide the homeschooling family to heaven by directing each member along the right path, reminding him or her of the divine precepts and counsels when the time is appropriate, when the mind needs illumination, when the will needs strengthening, when the passions need to be quenched. And since a good homeschooling family is more concerned about producing saints than scholars, the moral aspect should be especially treasured.

Three Practices

How can these truths be put into practice? Three simple ways: first, formally pray to your family’s guardian angels each day when beginning school and encourage students and teachers alike to silently invoke them throughout the day, especially when insight is needed or emotions are threatening.

Second, devote each Tuesday or one Tuesday a month to the guardian angels. In the Roman Missal, the votive Mass in honor of the angels is suggested on Tuesday, so that’s a fitting day to honor them. Think of a fun way to do so, perhaps reading the biblical stories that feature angels and then acting them out or having the children comment on what they like about the stories.

Third, read more about the angels from solid theological writers, whether Aquinas or Benedict Ashley, and if possible, incorporate this reading into the children’s curriculum.

By contemplating the role of the guardian angels and making some small effort to honor them and acknowledge and increase the important role they are already playing in your homeschooling endeavor, those who always look upon the face of the Father will lead us to gaze upon His face as well.



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.

What Do Colleges Look At?

BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH

I often speak with families who are exasperated by the whole college application process. Putting together dozens of college applications can sometimes seem like a Sisyphean exercise in futility. And because of the sheer magnitude of this process, worries can creep in and frustrations explode.

One of the frustrations I hear is that Seton students are at a disadvantage for acceptance and scholarships because our school is so difficult, and our grade scale unfair. The thought is that since Seton has a grade scale for our courses that is less than ten points, our students have a smaller window to achieve higher grades. Coupled with the rigorous content, how are Seton students supposed to compete?

To begin with, let me assure you that our students do compete. They are being accepted into some of the best schools in the country and receiving large scholarships, judged on the same standards as everyone else.

The question has been asked whether changing from a seven point grade scale to a ten point grade scale would help Seton students be more competitive when applying for college acceptance and/or scholarships. First, it must be noted that there is no standard grading scale. Grading scales vary from 6 points up to 15 points per letter grade. Moreover, GPAs can be inflated by whether schools offer AP, IB, or dual credit courses.

There has been a great deal of research on the topic of grading scales in recent years. This research has found that a high school's grading scale has little or no impact on college acceptance. Because high school grading scales vary so widely, colleges cannot use them as the primary basis for acceptance. A study done by the Salem Virginia City School Administration found that some of the more important factors colleges take into account are standardized test scores, rigor of course-work, and humanitarian activities. These things help

students stand out in an ever more diverse pool of applicants.

Of course, a student's GPA is still important. A student with a 72.65 GPA is going to struggle to get into Yale, regardless of how many Habitat for Humanity houses he or she has constructed. Seton recognizes the importance of GPA and we are always looking at ways to help students raise their GPAs without lowering standards. One of these ways is by offering more Honors level courses which allow students to raise their GPA by taking a more rigorous course.

But all things being equal, students and parents need to make sure that their resume for college is well rounded and exceptional. We here at Seton will do our best to help you obtain that goal.



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 FALL QUARTER CONTEST DEADLINE: OCTOBER 31ST, 2016

Open to Seton high school students, grades 9-12. Research and write about an obscure Christmas tradition. All submissions will be judged by grade level, with the potential for first and second place finalists for each grade. All students interested in entering must register for free by September 31st. More details available online.

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Bridget | I was the lead pitcher with my Little League fastpitch 10 and under team and I helped my team get to the district finals. I pitched my first no-hitter during an All-Star game, winning the game 16-2.



Nicholas | I competed in the Indiana Age Group State Swimming Championships and became the Indiana State Runner-Up in the 1500 Meter Freestyle event with a time of 17:05.86.



Genevieve | I won first place for grooming, first place for showmanship, first place for obedience, and I also won the high point award at the county fair.

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

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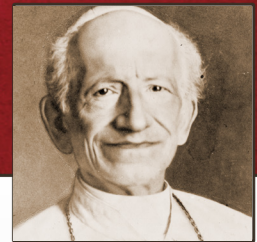
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PAPAL WISDOM



The Family: Cradle of Civil Society

The family may be regarded as the cradle of civil society, and it is in great measure within the circle of family life that the destiny of the State is fostered. Consequently, they who would break away from Christian discipline are working to corrupt family life, and to destroy it utterly, root and branch. From such an unholy purpose, they are not deterred by the fact that they are inflicting a cruel outrage on parents, who have the right from nature to educate those whom they begot, a right to which is joined the duty of harmonizing instruction and education with the end [purpose] for which they were given their children by the goodness of God....

Where the right education of youth is concerned, no amount of trouble and labor is too much.... However, let everyone be firmly convinced, first of all, that the minds of children are best trained above all by the teaching they receive at home. If in their growing years, they find in their homes the rule of an upright life, and the exercise of Christian virtue, the salvation of society will be in great part assured.

Sapientiae Christianae, Pope Leo XIII