

# Seton



# MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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## Yes, They're All Ours

Homeschooling  
with 9 Children

The Owen  
Family  
pg 6



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**American  
Literature**  
Fostering a Love  
of Our Nation

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**Seton**  
*Educational Media*

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CHRISTMAS SPECIALS



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Cover photo:  
Owen 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

It is true that these are hard times in the United States in a socio-political and moral sense. However, while there's life, there's hope, and I think the pages of this month's issue are evidence of that. With a focus on patriotism, the articles of the November issue show us how to put that hope into practice by encouraging us to raise a well-adjusted new generation, recalling reasons to be proud of our country, and reminding us of our permanent and eternal home.

In a particular way, we'd like to welcome our Seton Educational Media customers to this issue. Most of you do not receive *Seton Magazine* by subscription, so we hope you enjoy this issue that is delivering your expected holiday sale flier.

Also, for you readers who are not American citizens, we recognize this issue may not seem as relevant to you as usual. We know you will understand why, at such a crucial time in our country, we believe it valuable to reinforce the virtues of patriotism, love of country, and gratitude among our readership. As Pius X said in 1909, "Yes, it is worthy not only of love but of predilection that country whose sacred name awakens in your mind the most cherished memories and makes quiver every fiber of your soul, that common country which has cradled you, to which you are bound by bonds of blood and by still nobler bonds of affection and tradition." However, we happily join the entire Seton family in praying for the welfare and virtue of all leaders everywhere!

God bless America.

Christine Smitha

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## All Souls Day

### *Ways We Can Honor and Help Them*

On November 2, the day after All Saints Day, the Church celebrates All Souls Day as a time to pray for the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

From the teachings of the Church, and from visions of the saints, we know that God has provided Purgatory as the place of cleansing for those in need of final purification before they may enter Heaven. Those Poor Souls are aware of their just punishment and desire to stay there to make restitution for their sins, and then be ready to receive the blessings of Heaven.

I imagine that our Guardian Angel will be by our side when we are in Purgatory. He will be reminding us, “He was hungry, but you gave him no food. He was thirsty, but you gave him no drink. He was a stranger in need, but you did not take him in. He was naked, but you did not clothe him. He was sick, but you did not visit him. He was in prison, but you did not stop to see Him.”

Feeding the hungry can and should involve monetary donations and giving our time to help with soup kitchens. As parents, however, we know that our responsibilities start at home. We know that the hungry are our own children, whom we must take the time to “feed” with the knowledge of Jesus and His Commandments. Every day that we bring our children to Mass, they are fed with the Body of Christ.

When Jesus from the Cross said, “I thirst,” He was thirsting for our love. We parents know our children too are “thirsty” for knowing about the love and forgiveness of

Jesus Who loves us like no other ever could.

We must teach our children to pray daily so they stay close to Jesus and never become “strangers” to Him or His Blessed Mother.

Parents clothe their children every day. Maintaining modesty in clothing can be difficult with today’s fashions, but it is essential to inculcate purity and self-respect. In addition to physical clothes, we want to clothe our children with the spiritual clothing of the virtues: faith, hope, love, patience, obedience, humility, etc. The Poor Souls in Purgatory know they are not yet properly attired with these virtues, and thus are not worthy to enter the Wedding Feast of Heaven.

There are many different kinds of sickness. We can help alleviate suffering by visiting hospitals and nursing homes, and by caring patiently for a sick spouse or child. The worst sickness, however, is sin. The Poor Souls in Purgatory realize they are sick with the mark of sins, even sins of omission. According to some revelations, the Blessed Mother visits those suffering souls who omitted or neglected to help the poor and the ignorant. The sick are not always those in a sickbed but also those who reject the healing mercy of Christ. We can minister to these sick by practicing and encouraging frequent reception of the Sacrament of Confession.

Jesus asked us to visit may not be in a physical prison, but in the mental prison of denying Jesus and His teachings. The

“prison” that so many suffer today is the mental iron door closed to listening to the truth! Hopefully, our children are not in this prison.

To guard against our children losing their faith in their college or young adult years, we can keep harmful influences, such as excessive television and media, out of our homes. With our children, we can frequently practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to keep their faith alive. Above all, children learn how to relate to God their Father and the Church their Mother through the relationship they have with their parents. So a loving, peaceful home is a beautiful safeguard against the prison of denying Jesus and the Faith.

The Poor Souls in Purgatory are happy in the realization they are on the path to eternal salvation in Heaven. The truly poor souls are those innocent children who seldom if ever hear the teachings of Jesus. May we always provide our children with the “food and drink” of salvation.

*Blessed Souls [in Purgatory], I have prayed for thee; I entreat thee, who are so dear to God, and who are secure of never losing Him, to pray for me. Amen. (St. Alphonsus Liguori)*



**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

## **As we head into the holiday season, how can I keep my children on their homeschooling schedule?**

One thing some parents do is provide a “reward” at the end of each day, (or at the end of each half-day), but only when the children finish their scheduled assignments. For instance, one reward can be to start working on the home-made Advent wreath or Christmas wreath. Another reward might be making Christmas cards, or decorations for the Christmas tree, or helping to bake and decorate cookies!

There are many homeschooling families who have all kinds of after-school activities. Your children must realize that the activities are after the schooling, after the assigned work is done, and not before. If they miss just one activity due to not finishing their schoolwork, you can bet they won’t make the same mistake again. However, if you allow them to have their “reward” when they did not finish their work, you will have a daily battle on your hands, and you won’t be the winner. Nor will they.

## **What is the best way to reach a counselor regarding questions about course assignments or teaching methods?**

For most questions, the best way to contact a counselor is by email. The email addresses of all our counselors are listed on the inside cover page of our monthly magazine. You can also check the Message Boards on the Seton website, which are monitored by counselors. If you have a question regarding a complicated situation, we have several counselors available by phone every day from 9 am to 6 pm, Eastern Standard Time. If the phone line is busy, leave a message and the counselor will return your call shortly. Be sure to repeat clearly your first and last

name and the phone number.

For questions about course assignments, check the lesson plans first; they are pretty thorough. Be sure you have read the whole introduction, which gives an overview of the course for the year. Skim through the lesson plans, especially the English lessons. Some specific ideas may be within the daily lesson. There might also be some aids in the back of the lesson plans, especially for high school English. The lesson plans are reviewed and updated each year for the purpose of answering any incoming questions from the previous year.

Be sure to look into the tutorial videos on our website. We now have hundreds of curriculum videos available, mostly for the high school courses. Composition videos are now available for grades one through four.

*Our religion books are Catholic and teach more Catholic material than is found in most other school’s religion textbooks.*

## **My friend wants to enroll her daughter for only half the year when they will be out of town. Can she do that?**

Parents certainly can enroll their children for only a half year. One thing you might tell your friend is to enroll her daughter in our religion course, even if for only half of the year. Our religion books are Catholic and teach more Catholic material than is found in most other school’s religion textbooks.

## **Will you soon be offering new courses online for French and Spanish?**

A new Seton French I course will be available online soon, we hope by Spring of 2017. It is going through final proofing. We also have Spanish teachers working on a new online Seton Spanish course. We don’t have a date yet for when the new Spanish will be available, but we will inform enrolled families as soon as we have a release date.

## **My daughter seems to have a different way of learning. How can I find out more about different learning styles?**

If you go to the *My Seton* page for any one of your enrolled children, you can find an icon called Learning Styles. If you click on that icon, you can find about 10 videos by Dr. Katie Moran on “How to Teach Children with Different Learning Styles”. Each of us can learn, but we learn in different ways. Dr. Moran helps us to recognize different traits in learning styles, and how to teach a student with a particular dominant learning style. They are very helpful videos for everyone. In addition, Seton sells a book by Sharon Hensley, a homeschooling mom with a Master’s Degree in Special Education, called “Home Schooling Children with Special Needs.” Some of her ideas can be helpful for all children, not just those who have a learning problem.

## **Do you have any suggestions for me to learn more writing skills so I can teach my children?**

Our one-semester Composition course in 9th grade is excellent. Dr. Patrick Keats from Christendom College has been teaching the college students composition for many years and he has now produced a number of Composition videos for the Composition 9th grade course, but they are valuable for any high

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school grade level. You and your children will never find better information to learn composition skills.

### 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.

### What do you offer to help me and my son learn Latin?

We have Latin videos for our high school Latin I and Latin II courses. The videos feature our new Latin teacher/counselor, Jeff Minick. Mr. Minick has more than twenty years experience teaching the Henle Latin course to homeschooling students. He sent out an email to all our Latin students, encouraging students to send emails with their questions. If anyone has not received the email from Mr. Minick, please send an email to Kevin Clark and we will send it to you. Mr. Minick is planning to start a Latin Club, and believes our students should take the National Latin Test. Some of his students achieve perfect scores every year. His video tutorials are already online. The Latin lessons will be available online very soon, though we will continue to use the Henle textbook.

For Elementary and Junior High students we also offer *Latina Christiana* and the *First Form Latin Series*.

### I find myself getting frustrated with the household chores and the constant demand for doing the homeschooling.

Home schooling is a way of life. It can be a truly wonderful experience and wonderful way of life. Like marriage, home schooling has its ups and downs, some days not as good as others. Like marriage, some home schooling days can be truly wonderful and special, and will never be forgotten. Like marriage, don't ever give up on homeschooling. Years from now, you will look back and realize that after marriage, it was the best decision you ever made.

### My son really likes your new science book for Grade 5. Thank you.

A Catholic 5th grade science teacher in California wrote that book for our Seton students. A Catholic 6th grade science book is in progress. Keep that in your prayers; we hope to have it available by summer of 2017.



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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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# Yes, They're All Ours.

Homeschooling with 9 Children!

BY CHRISTA OWEN

*"Yes, they're all ours."*

*"No, we're not like the Brady Bunch."*

*"Yes, we know. how it happened."*

*"No, we're not done, at least I don't think."*

*"Yes, my hands are full but it sure beats the alternative."*

I have spouted off these responses more often than I could count. I imagine enduring people's comments over and over again must be similar to how Arnold Schwarzenegger feels each time someone thinks they are the first to say to him, "Hasta la vista, baby" while attempting an Austrian accent. People tend to think large families can't be done well these days. They are missing that with God, all things are possible.

## How Big is Big

Strange as it sounds, my husband and I didn't feel like we were a big family until we had our eighth child. God thought we could benefit from another one two years later and so we have nine. Our children came in quick

succession. We don't have more than a 24 month gap. It was clear right away that we were a very big family to the society at large when we announced we were expecting our fifth baby. Now as a family of eleven, we are considered over the top crazy and that is okay with me. In our family's own day-in and day-out routine, we feel like a normal family doing normal things. I can't imagine mothering any differently. However, when I consider that we have had a toddler for 14 years or I see my grocery cart next to any other in the grocery store, I am reminded, we are not normal. Choosing to be a disciple of Christ is also not normal and we choose that too. So why not go large and grow many disciples?

## It's a Parade

There is no way around it. Our family cannot leave our home without being on parade. We attract attention while driving around town in our 9 foot tall, 12 foot long bright white van with purposely dark tinted windows. We attract attention as

we exit our van pushing and shoving. We attract attention as we walk into Costco in a gaggle while simultaneously taking up the entire driving lane. We think we can blend into the crowds while entering church on busy Sundays but alas, we attract attention there as well. I make the best of our parade. When I see people looking, I smile and wave a hello. I know that more than looking at our children, they are looking at me. When they look at me, who do they see? Do they see a crazy lady or a lady who chooses to live a crazy life? It's my moment to show them Christ.

## No Staying Still

As an active duty military family, we move frequently. Uncle Sam sees fit that we only leave a footprint and move on. The joke is on him as we now leave 22 footprints. We recently moved our family 2,300 miles across the country. The frequent moves out of state enable my husband and me a unique opportunity to example our sacrificial life and outward Catholic faith to great

multitudes. We are not only a large family by today's standards, but also a transient large family.

## Let's Throw in Homeschooling for Good Measure.

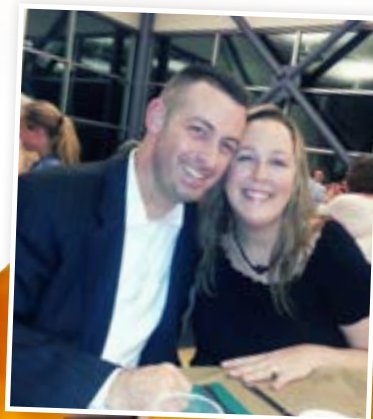
Now it's true there are some people our family did not provide shock and awe; but we acquired their attention quickly when we suddenly announced we would be homeschooling our 7 school-aged children. That definitely got those heads to turn--mine included. Once our family seemed to have hit the "large stage," I was asked time and again if I homeschooled. I would quickly answer, "only morality and theology." I honestly couldn't fathom homeschooling. It just wasn't for me. With another move fast approaching and a high schooler this time, the idea hit me to homeschool and to my own shock and awe, it sounded like a good idea. Instead of running screaming from the idea, I became very excited. My excitement was contagious and before I knew it, our children were enjoying the idea

as well. Now that we are well into our first year of homeschooling, friends and family are admitting they didn't think I could do it, considering it was so many all at once. Why do they doubt what God can do?

Discovering Seton's rich Catholic curriculum and using the gifts of structure and organization God gave me early on, I am a very happy homeschool Mama. In Catholic school, our children delved into their faith in Religion class. With Seton Home Study, our children read about our Catholic heritage and our Catholic faith in every subject and that is unique and beautiful. I have learned a lot, as well, simply by sitting alongside the younger ones as well as older ones coming to me and saying, "Mama, did you know...?" It's fun and real to say, "No, I didn't. Cool." I trust every bit of everything they read. I have really appreciated the Seton phone counselors so ready to help me on this new journey. They have been encouraging and helpful. I couldn't be happier with where we are as a family building His kingdom one diaper at a time.

## Who Gets the Credit?

Jesus Christ, of course. I want to give credit where credit is due. My husband and I could not do a single bit of what we do in any given day without the immense grace and beautiful faith God gives us. When people hear of our family size they often state how they wouldn't have the patience for it. Now, when people hear of us homeschooling they often state how they wouldn't have the patience for it. The truth is, without my love for Jesus, I wouldn't either. I recognize that as with all the virtues, the virtue of patience is one to be strived for, practiced and chosen. Prayer, perseverance and patience are just a few of the tools we use to maneuver through our not-so-common life. It's our deep love for the Lord and His Church that motivates us to do what most don't. Love like that is contagious. Can you join us in spreading it?





## American Literature: *Fostering a Love of our Country*

Anti-Americanism is an all too familiar refrain these days, nowhere more rampant than in the textbooks and classrooms of the average American school. But here at Seton, we're not average. Though we recognize the problems that are all too real in today's society, we also recognize that we are still a blessed nation in many respects, that there is much to be proud of and thankful for in America's history, and that we have a duty to love and honor the country we call home.

A robust American heritage curriculum seeks to instill this love and honor in Seton students beginning in first grade with their first exposure to American history. It culminates in high school with a course in American Government, the students' final course of American History, and an essential survey course in American Literature.

In some ways, it is this last course that may best accomplish our aim of developing thankfulness for our country because it is this course that most fully captures all that there is to appreciate about being an American. One cannot complete Seton's American Literature course without coming to understand the national character of the American people, marveling at the beauty

of the country's landscape, and honoring the founding principles upon which our nation was established and nurtured.

In today's interest of celebrating diversity, the national character of the American people has lost focus. What we miss in the process is the identity forged by the fusion of these disparate cultures. From its inception, the United States has been a conglomerate, but over time, its people have taken on the best characteristics of each tradition until a wholly unique and unmistakable disposition has been formed, recognizable anywhere and distinguishable from the character of any other nationality.

The national character has been fashioned by courageous, hard-working, and inventive people from around the world who have dared to start over in a foreign land. They have been industrious dreamers, for as Captain John Smith said, "What so truly suits with honor and honesty as the discovering things unknown, erecting towns, peopling countries, informing the ignorant, reforming things unjust, teaching virtue." They have been a God-fearing and religious people, as evidenced by the writings of the early Spanish settlers, the

Pilgrim fathers, and the English Catholics of Maryland. They have been a people self-sufficient, independent, and hard-working, in the words of the 'American Farmer' de Crevecoeur, "a people of cultivators... animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself." But while working for themselves, Americans have ever been generous and helpful toward others, as so often described in the memorable characters of American novels such as *Shane*, *Tom Sawyer*, and *The Virginian*. This is our heritage, and this is the blood that still runs in our veins.

Seldom is it the case that one country combines within itself such varied and beautiful landscapes as can be seen in the United States. Yet here, in one land can be found mountains to rival the European Alps, coastline as beautiful as the fjords of Northern Europe, sandy beaches not unlike the famed Caribbean, wild desert lands akin to certain parts of Africa and Australia, forests deep as those of Germany, and vast plains such as are found in Canada and Russia. America's first author of renown, the much-admired Washington Irving, captured this well in *The Sketch Book*, where

he catalogued America's

"mighty lakes, like oceans of liquid silver; her mountains, with their bright aerial tints; her valleys, teeming with wild fertility; her tremendous cataracts, thundering in their solitudes; her boundless plains, waving with spontaneous verdure; her broad, deep rivers, rolling in solemn silence to the ocean; her trackless forests, where vegetation puts forth all its magnificence; her skies kindling with the magic of summer clouds and glorious sunshine—no, never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery."

Is it any wonder that the world's people still flock to this country to admire her land?

But Irving was not the only one to capture the wonder of America's vast lands. The landscape of the United States figures as a character in its own right time and again throughout American literature, so that we come to love the land of the early settlers from James Fenimore Cooper's writing, and the quiet loveliness of New England in Robert Frost's poetry. The high plains capture our imaginations in Willa Cather's novels, and we cannot help being moved by her apt portrait of the American southwest in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, where

"cloud formations seemed to be always there, however hot and blue the sky. Sometimes they were flat terraces, ledges of vapour; sometimes they

were dome-shaped, or fantastic, like the tops of silvery pagodas, rising one above another, as if an oriental city lay directly behind the rock. The great tables of granite set down in an empty plain were inconceivable without their attendant clouds, which were a part of them, as the smoke is part of the censer, or the foam of the wave."

The beauties of the American landscape have been immortalized in the words of America's great authors, so that those with an ear to hear and an eye to see cannot help but love America a little better for having read her literature.

What of those famous principles upon which this country was founded? They are woven through America's literature as the very glue that holds both it and this nation together. From the writings of the explorers to the *Declaration of Independence* to the literature of the World Wars, we continually hear of dedication to duty, pursuit of honor, love for freedom, and belief in a Providence Who rewards a virtuous people.

Our very first president laid out America's first principle of greatness, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness." Along with the majority of our founding fathers, Washington recognized that a nation cannot hope to flourish without a commitment to faith and

morals. And in terms of morals, honorable discharge of duty and doing a job well have ever been close to the American heart. Ralph Waldo Emerson, our great essayist, stated that "God will not have His work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said and done otherwise shall give him no peace." This is a sentiment embodied in the life of George Washington Carver, for instance, and in the novels of Louisa May Alcott, and it inspired many men in wartime, who like Captain John Shea told their sons that it was their duty to be, "Defending our country, ideals, homes, and honor" so that their child might become "a great priest, a statesman, a doctor, a soldier, or a businessman."

While such words can still be read and appreciated, this country is not completely without hope. American Literature has an important role to play in that hope. May it be a source of inspiration for the future and for our ever-increasing commitment to love of country and love of freedom.

"For there's a buried thing in all of us,  
Deeper than all the noise of the parade,  
The thing the haters never understand  
And never will, the habit of the free."

—Stephen Vincent Benet



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.





# PRAY FOR OUR LEADERS

BY JOHN CLARK

In the dawning days of the Catholic Church, Tertullian, the great father of the Church, argued that one of the reasons that Christians make good citizens is that Christians pray for the rulers of the nation, writing: “We pray, too, for the emperors, for their ministers and for all in authority...” And with the pivotal presidential election so recently behind us, it’s a message of which we must remind ourselves: *we Catholics must make ourselves good citizens by praying for our leaders, whoever they may be.*

I’m guessing that some of you reading this have never actually prayed for your political leaders.

Let’s face it, at the end the day, is your mayor or senator really in your family’s night prayers? For that matter, many Catholics not only fail to pray for their leaders, but couldn’t name them on a multiple choice exam. That’s a sad commentary—sad not for reasons of civics, but for reasons of grace.

We have a duty to pray for our leaders that emanates from the fourth commandment; the Catechism makes that much clear. We pray for our leaders not just for the sake of the governed—although we are certainly justified in doing that—but for the souls of the leaders. History has illustrated either or both of the following: one, that politics is the favorite profession of evil men; two, that political power, once attained, often has a powerfully corrupting influence.

Either way, political temptations prove very strong and there is little doubt that these temptations originate from Lucifer himself. Jesus tells us that the devil was a liar from the beginning; the devil was also a political opportunist from the beginning. In the *Mystical City of God*, Venerable Mary of Agreda describes the scene at which Lucifer refuses obedience to God:

“To this command all the obedient and holy angels, submitted themselves and they gave their full assent and acknowledgment with a humble and loving subjection of the will. But Lucifer, full of envy and pride, resisted and induced his followers to resist likewise, as they in reality did, preferring to follow him and disobey the divine command. This wicked prince persuaded them, that he would be their chief and that he would set up a government independent and separate from Christ.”

At the very moment that Lucifer was falling, he announced the formation of a new totalitarian government—one that would separate not only church and state, but God and state. Rejecting the wedding feast of Heaven, Lucifer made a persuasive argument to form a new party, asking only one requirement for constituency: an eternal rejection of God. It must have been a great speech, because perhaps one-third of the angels fell “like lightning” to Hell. And Lucifer would not be content to merely rule from Hell; he would seek to establish shadow governments, pulling the strings of puppet governments in various parts of the Earth.

Has the devil been successful at establishing his earthly kingdom? How else can one explain the brutal, global, two-hundred-decade attack on Christianity? From the kangaroo Roman courts of Nero to the bloodthirsty French guillotines of Robespierre to the Soviet-forced starvation of Ukraine by Stalin, there is little need to dust history for fingerprints—the forensic imprint of Lucifer endlessly abounds at every anti-Christian crime scene. Wanton wickedness witnesses the fact that some leaders have not only deafened their inner voice, but have undergone an amputation of conscience of which their subjects

are left to feel the phantom pains of that missing organ.

The devil does not cease these political temptations. When Our Lord walked the earth, the devil (not knowing the identity of Jesus at the time) tempted Jesus with the notion that if He would worship the devil, Jesus could gain the kingdoms of the earth. Is there any wonder as to whether this is Lucifer’s standard political pitch to this day?

Lucifer does not consider his earthly work complete. Lucifer does not believe in term limits; he still seeks to influence governments and leaders. And that is why we must pray for our leaders and for all the political powers of earth.

When I hear about an immoral ordinance being passed, especially those ordinances that persecute Christianity, I feel a sense of sadness for Christians and Christianity. But I also feel a sense of sadness for those who voted in favor of that ordinance. Each politician will have to appear at the judgment seat of Christ and answer for that vote.

But it’s worth remembering that we may be called to account as well: Did we pray for our leaders? Did we fast for them? Did we prove to be good citizens of our nation? Did we work hard to further the reign of Christ on Earth—to further the noble aspirations of Christendom? Or did we look the other way and refuse to do anything?

May we all answers these questions well.

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.

# How Patriotism Begins in the Home

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

It has been said that the strongest weapon we have, as a country, is patriotic Americans. The freedoms that we enjoy have been purchased with the lives of countless men and women committed to a cause greater than themselves. The fact is extremely humbling to consider and begs us to teach our children why those who made that choice did so and what makes America a country worth loving and respecting.

I love this country and making sure my children love their country and know how to show that love and respect is extremely important to me. Unfortunately, the news is full of stories of prominent people using their celebrity to call attention to their particular political causes (which is their right) in ways that are also disrespectful to our nation (which is disgraceful).

Instilling a love of country will translate into better citizens and homeschool moms and dads have a unique opportunity to teach their children these values. We don't have to be fearful to do so nor are we encumbered by the politically correct nonsense that has paralyzed school districts. Here are three ways to instill a love of country and a natural instinct toward patriotism in your children.

**1. Teach actual history.** Stay away from materials that minimize America's contribution to the world. Teach the history of our country using as many primary resources as possible and teach it from a Catholic point of view. Primary sources may be any of the following: an artifact, a document, diary, manuscript, autobiography, a recording, or other source of information that was created at the time under study. Most of our founding fathers, while not Catholic, were God fearing men who used Biblical principles to craft the seminal documents that guide our nation. You will not, unfortunately, find that information in most history books these days. You won't even find it in movies,

documentaries, podcasts or historic fiction. Teach your children history as it actually took place. This means that you also teach that, as a country, we have often made mistakes, egregious mistakes, and we have paid the price for those mistakes, but our core principles must always remain the same.

Reading actual diaries and documents written by the founding fathers as well as visiting the various battlefields upon which our freedom was won is a very moving and effective way of instilling a reverence for the kind of sacrifice that has led to the freedoms we hold so dear. Try making a field trip or including this in one of your summer vacations.

**2. Teach the children respect for the symbols of our nation, the flag in particular.** People who believe that they are helping their cause by desecrating or disrespecting our flag as a form of protest are sadly mistaken. Those who fought under that flag and the families of those who died in its service are deeply offended, as well they should be, by these protests. It's our right to protest but disrespecting the flag is the wrong thing to do. Flag etiquette used to be fairly common knowledge but that is no longer the case. The website, [www.usflag.org](http://www.usflag.org) is very helpful, but a more interesting way to learn about the proper handling of our flag is to contact your local American Legion and ask for a demonstration. The men and women involved in this organization are delighted to pass on this kind of knowledge.

**3. Teach the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.** It is astonishing how many people do not know the words to either of these. Nor do people seem to realize the proper posture to assume when reciting or singing them. Watch any sports event that begins with the anthem and likely you will see many hats on heads, people checking

their phones, talking and laughing throughout the entirety of the song. To this phenomenon is now added the almost daily protests by professional and collegiate athletes who kneel or lock arms to draw attention to injustice. This should concern us greatly. [www.starspangledflags.com](http://www.starspangledflags.com) has a list of the proper etiquette for the National Anthem.

To teach my children the song, I enlisted the help of my piano playing daughter. She taught the younger children the National Anthem, "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and "This Land is Your Land". Even if you don't have a piano playing daughter, you can certainly learn the tunes via iTunes, YouTube or, if your children are young, the *Wee Sing America* CDs are great fun. **Try to begin your day with the pledge and a patriotic song,** and if there is a homeschool group event, endeavor to make this a part of the program.

These are just the most obvious ways to instill patriotism in our children, and as with most things the lessons really begin with us, the parents. Speaking respectfully, behaving reverently and keeping our political rhetoric polite will go a long way towards our children not only respecting their country but also those who live in it that don't agree with us. To maintain those basic freedoms, to speak, to gather, and worship as we wish we must carefully guard the rights of those who don't agree with us as well as our own, because then we are all free.

Read Mary Ellen online at  
[setonmagazine.com/maryellen](http://setonmagazine.com/maryellen)



Mary Ellen Barrett is mother of seven children and two in heaven. Mary is wife to David and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books.

*I like to see a man proud of the country in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his country will be proud of him.*

Abraham Lincoln





# Providence, Politics & Patriotism

How God Works  
to Redeem Us

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

Assistant Chaplain, Christendom College,  
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November is a difficult month for Catholics who take seriously their duty to vote and participate in the American political process. From the standpoint of Catholic dogmatic and moral teaching, both major political parties take public stances relative to critical moral issues that are either ambiguous or else fundamentally at odds with truths of the natural law. For us Americans who are Catholics, the question thus arises with renewed urgency as to how to participate in the American political and electoral process, especially at the national level, and even more so if the outcome of the elections is less than desirable or distressing.

## NEVER GIVE UP

I would first say in response to those who are tempted to cease playing any part in American politics, please do not give in to this temptation! Behind this is another and more fundamental temptation: to assume that things are worse now in every respect than they have ever been before. This assumption has its origins with the Evil One, who proposes to us what is at best a half-truth in order to lure us into throwing up our hands in discouragement and defeat, a defective stance on our part, to be sure, and one that precisely serves his own malign purposes.

Of course it is the case that the current electoral processes and legislative bodies are mired in corruption, both personal and systemic. However, such a state of affairs has almost always been the case, far more often the rule than the exception, throughout the course of human history. Humanly speaking, everything is actually always on the verge of collapse. And frequently enough whole political communities and political orders *do* collapse under the weight of the corruption that permeates them. We do well to remember that all sinful actions and attitudes carry within themselves *temporal punishment*, ordered mercifully by God to the restoration of the order of justice between man and God and thus ordered mercifully also to the renewal of human life both individually and communally. It is thus always the case that we need now to be asking both personally and communally as Christ's Body and Bride for the grace to bear

our share of the hardship that the Gospel entails for the sake of the ultimate triumph of God's Kingdom in Christ.

## DOING THE BEST WE CAN

For many decades, faithful Catholics have already been making the best decisions that we can, both as Catholics and as citizens, in the context of a political order that is as inherently sinful, rebellious, and disordered as is sinful human nature itself apart from God's grace. We are not to be surprised that such is the case, and we are not to be discouraged that such is the case.

In thus working with a profoundly flawed political system, we are not doing anything that God Himself has not deigned to do in the working out of His Providence over the whole course of salvation history. God chose Abraham to be the father of the Chosen People, through whom God would reconcile all of fallen humanity to Himself. But Abraham and his descendants were often profoundly sinful in their dealings with one another and with God. Sacred Scripture attests, however, that God worked precisely in and through their sinfulness to accomplish the unfolding of His Providence. The history of the Chosen People of God is, on the one hand, a vividly narrated tale of human sinfulness, cowardice, treachery, and idolatry. However, it is also the triumphant story of God's Providence and of how God continually brings good out of the evil that originates in ourselves.

As members of Christ's Mystical Body, we likewise can positively influence the political order in which we find ourselves, no matter how corrupt it is, even if we must suffer unjust civil punishment up to and including death in the process in order to do so. It is precisely in the worst possible circumstances, humanly and naturally speaking, that we can have the greatest spiritual impact on the world and that we can experience the greatest spiritual growth. Though there are many reasons to be pessimistic about human prospects when we consider our finitude and sinfulness, there is always much greater reason for resolute hope and courageous action when we consider the victory that God has won for us through the Cross of Christ.

## TRUST & FAITH

Thus, in participating in the political and electoral process, we do so not as people placing our trust primarily in flawed and imperfect persons and political structures that belong to the old order of things that is passing away. Rather we do so as people who trust in God's goodness and omnipotence and who know that He can work precisely with and through the most unlikely of human agents and human situations in order to show all people that it is He, and not we ourselves, who is the primary cause at work in human flourishing and in the furthering of the human common good. If we really have faith in God's Providence and in His definitive victory over sin by means of Christ's Death and Resurrection, neither may we fret unduly over the sinfulness of even the most corrupt of human agents, nor may we place inordinate hope and trust even in the best of them. As Psalm 46, verses 1-3 remind us, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its water roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult."

## ENGAGED IN DIALOG

The final words of the Bible, uttered in light of Christ's Paschal Victory, are these: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him who hears say, 'Come.' . . . And He who testifies to these things says in reply, 'Surely I am coming soon.' . . . To which His Church can and must reply 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!'" This is the eucharistic and ecclesial dialog in which we are primarily to be engaged and which is to structure and enliven our actions and endeavors in the political order. If we order our political endeavors to the hope-filled eucharistic and ecclesial vocation that is proper to us in these "latter days," we will secure for ourselves the greatest equilibrium and peace of mind and heart, and we will be the most effective at securing the common good of mankind in both the natural and the supernatural orders.

# Patriotism as Virtue

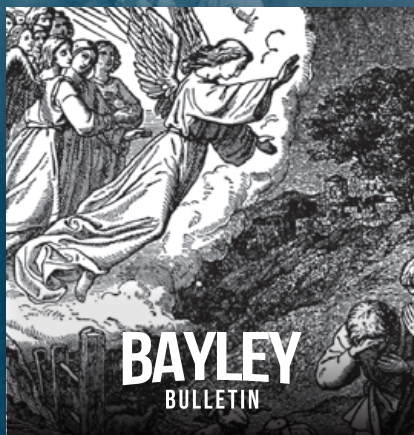
BY BOB WIESNER

The Founding Fathers of our nation were virtually unanimous in their belief that a strong nation depended upon a virtuous citizenry. Most of them would find a slogan such as “My country, right or wrong!” a bit problematic; love for one’s homeland, after all, would demand that a good citizen should make every effort to ensure that the nation was indeed right in its activities. Certainly personal responsibility on the part of each citizen is a sacred duty, but there is also the larger accountability for all of one’s neighbors, to ensure that all might live in a free and just society.

Developing the virtue of Patriotism properly consists not only in becoming personally upright, but also in being able to perform the basic civic duties of ensuring that justice is served, innocence preserved and injustice opposed. Seton students must then be fully aware of how closely connected are their courses in Religion and Government. Duty to God and duty to the nation are two necessary sides to growing into the full practice of the crown of all virtues, charity toward all.



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



## WINTER QUARTER ART CHALLENGE DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15TH, 2016

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[bayleybulletin.com/challenge](http://bayleybulletin.com/challenge) ▶

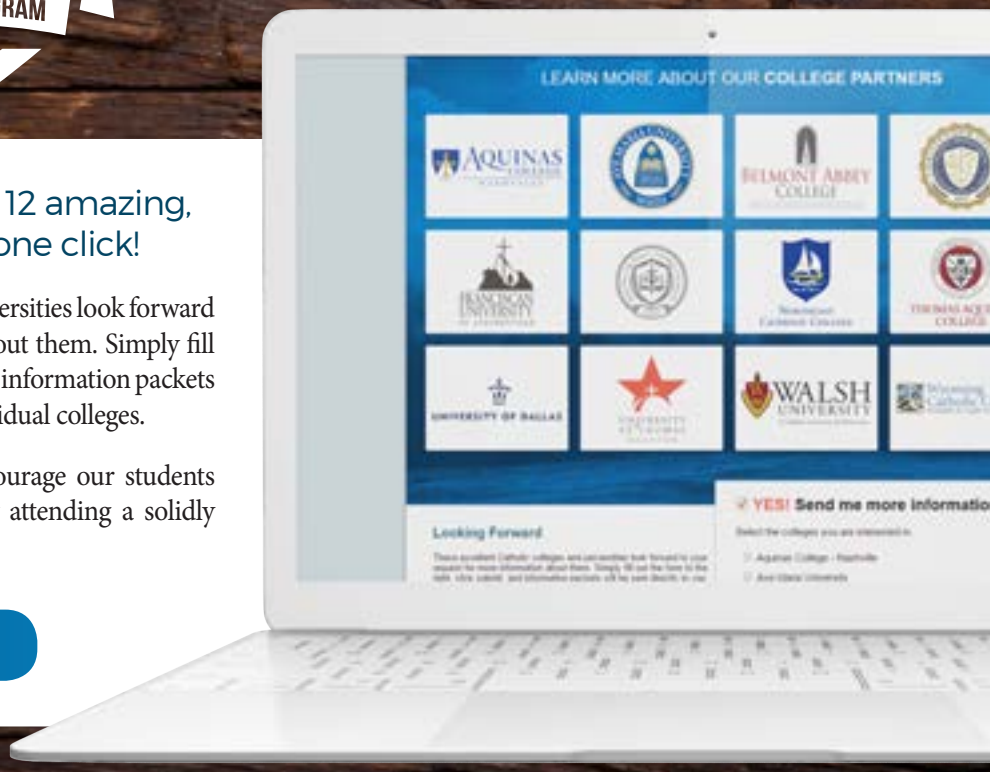


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SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



**Zach & Emma** | This fall, along with my friend and fellow Seton student, I competed with the Walk In Truth Home Educators team on Battle of the Brains.



**Ingrid** | I earned ribbons on my 5 entries in the Kentucky State Fair. 4th place on a dress, 2nd place on a skirt, another 2nd place on a pair of pajamas, and 1st place on a drawstring, crochet bag.



**John** | I played the lead role of Ebenezer Scrooge in the production of *A Christmas Carol* in December, 2015 to over 100 members of my parish.

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Pope St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*



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