

Seton MAGAZINE

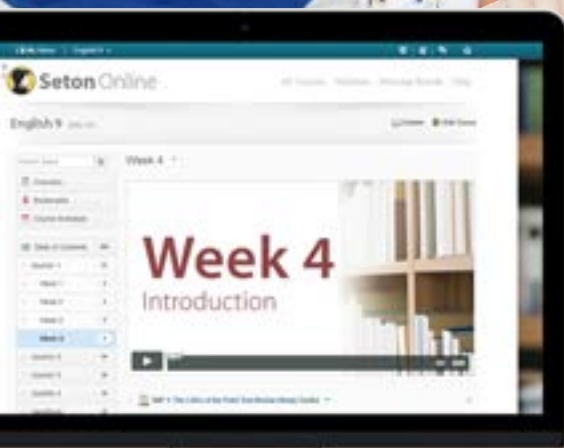
Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

SETONMAGAZINE.COM | FEBRUARY 2017



Homeschooling in South America

THE RIVERA CHAVARRO FAMILY, PG 8



What's New at Seton

SETON IN REVIEW & PREVIEW

pg 6

10 Helpful (& Fun) Replies to Anti-Homeschooling Comments

Mary Ellen Barrett - pg 11

The Role of Catholic Education in the New Evangelization

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke - pg 12

Executive Editor

Dr. Mary Kay Clark

Editors

Kevin Clark
Christine Smitha

Marketing Director

Jim Shanley

Design & Layout

Dominic de Souza

Special Article

Raymond Cardinal Burke

Contributing Writers

Mary Ellen Barrett
John Clark
Nick Marmalejo
Juan Carlos & Carolina
Rivera Chararro

Vol. 5, No. 1, Feb 2017

www.setonmagazine.com

Seton Home Study School
1350 Progress Dr.
Front Royal, VA 22630

Phone: (540) 636-9990

Fax: (540) 636-1602

info@setonhome.org

www.setonhome.org

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:
Rivera Chavarro 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

Thank goodness for new beginnings, right? Though we regret the passing of the Christmas season, it feels good to dig back in to the routine of life, the joy of learning, and all the promise that a new year brings.

February's issue of *Seton Magazine* should keep the energy going with inspiration from St. John Neumann, stirring words from Cardinal Burke reminding us why we make the educational choices we do, and some comic relief and useful ammunition from Mary Ellen Barrett.

This month's feature article opens a window on what's new and upcoming here at Seton Home Study School. John Clark provides his usually unusual perspective on all matters Catholic, family, and education. As always, we lead with advice from Dr. Clark about real life problems that homeschooling families occasionally face.

If I can make one recommendation before this year passes too far along, it would be to seek help when you need it. Don't forget to check in with your counselors this year. They are always ready and happy to answer questions and guide our families onto steady ground. Make use of the Seton Message Boards too. No one has to homeschool alone. You have a wide network of families just like yours, a staff committed to assisting you, and a suite of educational tools ready to use.

Make use of these assets, and have the best educational year you've ever had!

God bless you,
Christine Smitha



GENERAL SETON DIRECTORY

SETON HOME STUDY
SCHOOL
866-280-1930

SETON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA
866-241-8819

STANDARDIZED TESTING
800-542-1066

ADMISSIONS
866-280-1930
Draper Warren
Darin Byrne
John Thorp
Joseph Clark
Jason Sparks

TRANSCRIPTS, RECORDS,
& EXTENSIONS
540-635-1937
Mary Kerstiens

GENERAL COUNSELING
540-622-5526
Cecilia Sauer

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING
540-636-1429
Sharon Hassett
Carin Delancey
Lisa Clark
Catherine Higginbottom

ELEMENTARY GRADING
540-622-5563
Bruce Hacker
Jacinta Black

SACRAMENTAL
PREPARATION
540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

SPECIAL SERVICES
540-622-5576
Stephen Costanzo
Kathleen Hunt
Therese Zepeda



SETON EMAILS

CUSTOMER SERVICE
custserv@setonhome.org

COUNSELORS
counselors@setonhome.org

ADMISSIONS
admissions@setonhome.org

GRADING
grading@setonhome.org

GENERAL INFORMATION
info@setonhome.org

MY SETON
myseton@setonhome.org

STANDARDIZED TESTING
testing@setonhome.org

SPECIAL SERVICES
SSDept@setonhome.org

St. John Neuman

A Surprising Example of Catholic Homeschool Family Life

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

On January 5th, we celebrated the Feast of John Nepomucene Neumann, the first male American citizen and first American bishop to be canonized.

John Neumann was born March 28, 1811, to a respected middle-class family in the small town of Prachatitz in the southwestern regions of what is now the Czech Republic. As a child, he developed a reputation for diligence and understanding at the local village school. At twelve, he entered a six-year course in the nearby city of Budweis. He evinced a keen delight in the humanities, and distinguished himself in the sciences, particularly botany and astronomy. At 20, he entered the seminary for the diocese of Budweis, where he excelled in Scripture studies. He also pursued the study of languages, far beyond what was required from the curriculum.

Soon after entering the seminary, a combination of the preaching of a missionary and his study of the Pauline epistles inflamed in Neumann a strong desire to be a missionary. To prepare for such hardship, he began to deny himself food, sleep, and material comforts.

Determined to put even more effort into languages, he transferred to a seminary in Prague in order to study both French

and English. Unfortunately, since neither French nor English classes were available, he turned to conversing with immigrant factory workers, studying dictionaries, and reading familiar or useful texts in translation. After a year, Neumann was able to pass a French examination and write his journal in English.

This journal is really an examination of conscience, and one which Neumann never dreamed would be seen by others, but it details how much like anyone else Neumann was in personal weakness, self-doubt, and temptation. However, it is notable for its simultaneous demonstration of Neumann's faith, radical dependence on God, extreme humility (though he considered pride his besetting sin), and commitment to seeking perfection and doing the will of God.

Expecting to be ordained in the summer of 1835, Neumann was sorely disappointed that it did not happen. He traveled to America without ordination. On the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1836, St. John Neumann set foot on land in New York City. Bishop John Dubois, needing a German-speaking pastor for several outlying parishes, agreed to ordain Neumann to the priesthood immediately. Seventeen days after his arrival in America, Neumann was a priest.

From 1836-1840, Neumann worked tirelessly in the Buffalo district of the New York diocese. Regardless of weather, he travelled on foot among small and extremely poor country parishes, ministering to the faithful, helping erect churches, teaching children, and ensuring the transmission of faith. In the midst of this, he continued to grow in personal fervor and discipline, writing himself a rule of life and committing to more prayer and sacrifice.

These inclinations of his interior life inspired Neumann to seek entry into the Redemptorist novitiate in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1842, he made his profession, and was sent to help the Redemptorists' mission work in Baltimore. After distinguishing himself by hard work and perfect obedience for two years, he was sent back to Pittsburgh to become the new superior of the Redemptorist foundation in that city.

As superior, Neumann took all the most mundane, humble, and/or difficult tasks upon himself to the point of destroying his health, so that at the end of his three-year term, he was sent back to Baltimore to recover. However, he was almost immediately made the superior general for the entire order in the United States.



Photo CC keyps100 | Wikimedia Commons

Though Neumann was an effective and holy leader, the problems of a growing congregation in a sometimes hostile and rapidly changing environment were frequently overwhelming for him, and he never felt at ease in his role. He petitioned for removal from the post, and was relieved in 1849.

In 1851, the archbishop of Baltimore, Francis Patrick Kenrick, made Neumann his confessor. Kenrick was soon convinced that Neumann would make a good bishop for what was now the empty diocese of Philadelphia. Upon Kenrick's recommendation and favorable input of other American bishops, Neumann was appointed by Pope Pius IX.

Though he never relished his office, Neumann worked tirelessly from 1852 until his death in 1860. During that time he taught himself Spanish and Gaelic so that he could minister to all the people in his charge; daily visited the seminary to encourage vocations; oversaw the building of 65 churches, including the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul which stands to this day; instituted the Forty Hours' Devotion throughout his diocese, thus enshrining it as an American tradition; and inaugurated the Catholic parochial school system.

A born catechist, Neumann held dearer than anything sound instruction in the faith, and to ensure it, he established a diocesan-wide Central Board of Education, of which he himself was the president. To ensure consistency and longevity for the work of the Board, Neumann invited seven different teaching orders to take charge of the schools in his diocese. The example of his work in this regard became the foundation and example for parochial schools throughout the land. It is precisely this tradition of devotion to truth and faithful religious teaching that Catholic homeschoolers today carry on within their own homes.

In his declaration of Neumann as Venerable in December 1921, Pope Benedict XV stated the following: *"We shall not pause to remark that works, even the most simple, performed with constant perfection in the midst of inevitable difficulties, spell heroism in any servant of God. Just because of the simplicity of his works, we find in them a strong argument for saying to the faithful of whatever age, sex, or condition; you are all bound to imitate the Venerable Neumann."*



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*.

READ ONLINE

your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

We are half-way through the school year but not half-way through the lessons. How can I prepare now so we can be finished with the lessons by June?

By this time of the year, you are pretty much aware of the courses in which your child is doing very well. What you might consider is moving along more quickly in those courses. For instance, if your daughter is obtaining perfect scores in spelling every week, consider having her do two spelling chapters each week. Take a look at other areas which can be adjusted to move along more quickly.

Another idea is to assign some work on a weekend. One year when we had moved and lost some time, my boys were very agreeable to doing schoolwork on Saturday mornings so they could be finished by June. Ask your husband if he might be able to take over a class to help move it along more quickly. If a student is moving slowly in a subject, perhaps ask a high school student from your parish to come in two or three times a week and help with the history or science class.

If you have any further questions, or want ideas for a specific subject area, please call one of our elementary counselors.

I am a single mom and must work, but I want to homeschool my young daughter. How can I find someone to help me?

We receive a number of calls like yours. The main priority is to pray to find someone to help you. A relative would be best. Have you thought about an older woman as a nanny and tutor? Might there be a single woman at church who is out of work and may be happy to have room and board in exchange for helping you homeschool?

Try to find a local Catholic homeschooling support group, and attend a few of their meetings, and make some friends there. Tell some of the moms that you need help, that perhaps one or two of them might help by taking your daughter along with their children. They may know of someone, such as a retired teacher, who may be willing to help.

However, remember that you must be in charge, you must direct the learning, and you must do review or whatever else you can with your daughter. Try to work your hours in the afternoon and evening so you can be home with your daughter in the morning when you both are at your “brightest.” You might ask your company if it would be possible to telecommute a couple of days a week. Consider using the work-free weekends as your best “schooling” days. If you cannot sufficiently cover all the necessary core subjects during the regular school calendar, then you may need to homeschool all year, doing perhaps three or four days a week. If you can work this out, focus on the primary subjects of religion, math, English, reading, and phonics. History and science can be done in a more casual manner, such as reading history before going to sleep or discussing science over Sunday dinner. Spelling and handwriting can be combined, shortening the lessons to two or three days a week.

How important are hands-on activities?

It depends on the subject and on the student. Hands-on activities reinforce concepts, so they are especially important in the area of science, for which many concepts are not clear until and unless the student “sees” them. Seton sells science kits for homeschooling families, and they are very popular.

We also have a large number of Mr. Wizard DVDs which teach children how to do many, many different science projects. Some of these projects the children can do on their own, or with Dad on a weekend! We also have lab manuals for students taking high school biology, chemistry, or physics courses. Please call Gene McGuirk for further information about this, or visit our SEM book catalog (setonbooks.com).

It is beneficial for children to learn to play a musical instrument, an important hands-on activity which helps develop the brain for math and reading skills. Studies have shown that children, even high school students, who learn a musical instrument—which demands attention to several details at once—do much

better in all their subjects. Learning an instrument and hence playing music teaches many things including: the use of many parts of the brain at once, memory, communication, coordination, concentration, critical thinking, team and social skills, imagination and creativity, improvisation and composition, cooperation and commitment through lessons and group playing, the development of self-esteem and confidence (*Source: EzineArticles.com - 11 Reasons Why You Should Learn a Musical Instrument*).

Students at a younger age, from birth through the first three or four grade levels, learn best by hands-on activities. Everyone, at every age, can add to their learning through hands-on activities.

What do I do about my 4th grade son who does not want to do his math? He does his other work, but fools around for hours and won't do his math, though he has no problem understanding the math.

First, ask your son why he does not want to do his math. Is he bored? Is it too easy? Does it seem like there are too many problems on the page? Is there something else he wants to do instead, like read a mystery story? Is this an opportunity to be defiant about something? Have you tried other math books and had the same reaction? Are you using a textbook, such as the Saxon for which the problems need to be rewritten, or are you using a workbook? Some boys hate rewriting the problems!

Second, try telling him that if he does the end-of-section review pages, for example, and he answers all the problems correctly, he would not be required to do the previous lessons related to the review pages. In such a case, he obviously knows the math!

Third, tell your son that he could go on to 5th grade math just as soon as he passes all his 4th grade levels.

Fourth, I would look online and try to find colorful interactive math activities for the 4th and 5th grade levels. Fifth, explain how important math is for astronauts, explorers, doctors, computer technicians, and carpenters. Find children's books



Explore our exciting and diverse assortment of Science kits and DVDs

MR. WIZARD'S WORLD

Each volume contains 4 Episodes of over 100 minutes of pure mystery and magic of discovering everyday science with Mr. Wizard. Over 35 separate experiments on each DVD!

P-SCDV-31 \$17.95 3 Book Set

setonbooks.com/ScienceFun

at the library about famous men whose success involved knowing math.

Encourage conversation about things around the house and outside the house which involve math and measuring. When you put gas in the car, ask him how many gallons you can buy with \$10. He needs to see the importance of math in daily life, his own life, your life, and your family's life.



What's New at Seton

SETON IN REVIEW & PREVIEW

Welcome to a glimpse inside Seton's projects for the new year, and what we've been working on to share with you soon! We hope you'll be as excited as we are. As busy as things get with the school year, there are many wonderful projects brewing here at Seton Home Study School.

Enjoy upcoming details on these projects and other news on setonmagazine.com.

A NEW ENGLISH 5

At the elementary level, we're preparing to publish a new edition of *English 5 for Young Catholics*. In 2009, Seton's curriculum department undertook the project of revising the elementary English text-workbooks. With the publication of *English 5 for Young Catholics* this spring, the project will be completed.

In this new edition, the rules of grammar, capitalization, and punctuation have been easily identified for the student. Explanations are clearer and reinforced by examples. Throughout the lessons, sentence diagrams are a visual presentation that show the functions of words in sentences.

Charts make memorization easy. More white space on the page enables better focusing, while formatting transitions to what students will see in grades 6 through 8. Sequencing of chapters and topics follows suit with grades 4 through 8, so students who have been enrolled with Seton year after year can appreciate the continuity of terminology and format.

TWO NOVELS REPUBLISHED

At the middle school level, Seton Press is pleased to be publishing our own editions of two of our families' favorite book report novels.

This means that in the summer of 2017, you will be seeing brand new editions of *Men of Iron* and *Outlaws of Ravenhurst* at Seton Educational Media.

Look to add these great stories to your collection in the near future.

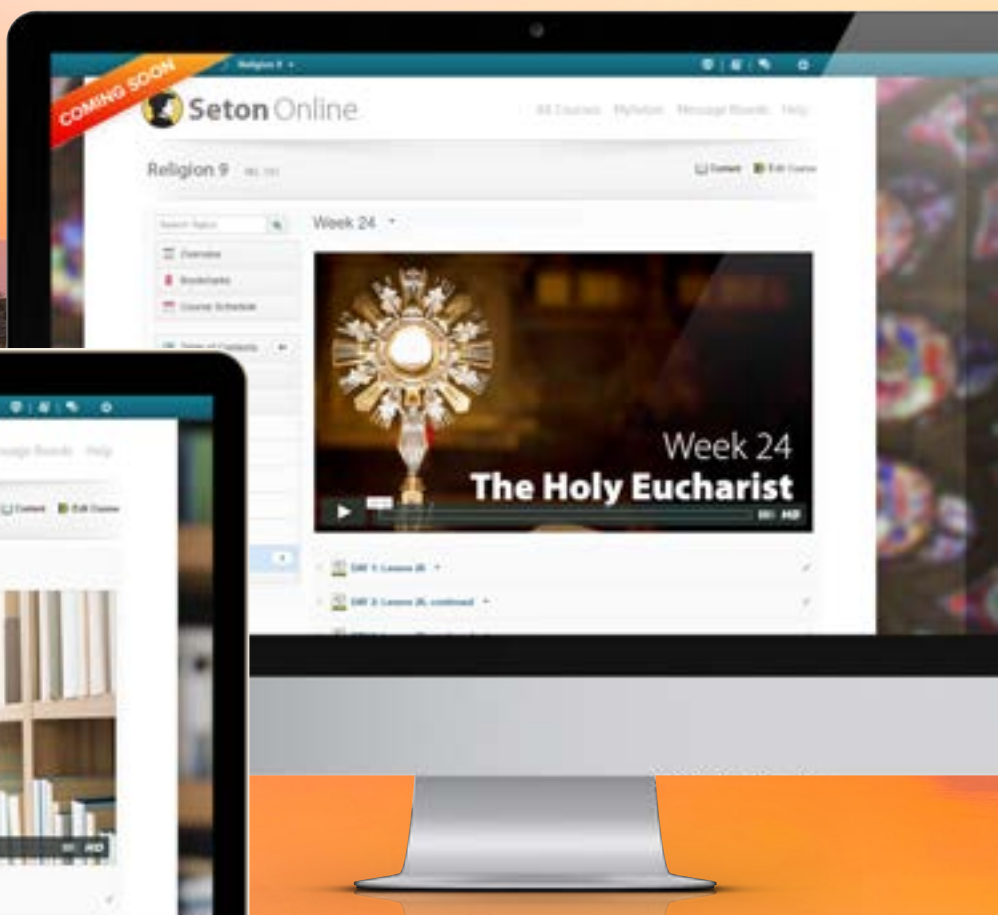


A NEW COUNSELOR

High school level developments are particularly exciting.

There is a new counselor at the helm in the guidance department. Many of you may know Mr. Nicholas Marmalejo from the history department, and we're thrilled to announce that he has agreed to take over the high-school guidance department. He is ready, willing, and able to help high school students with all their academic planning needs.

A history major, Nicholas graduated from Christendom College in 2001. He holds a Virginia Teacher Certification and lives in the Shenandoah Valley with his wife and three children.



MORE ONLINE COURSES

Last year in 2016, Seton began launching all-new online courses. Many students have already started participating in the online program, and we've been thrilled by the very positive response we've had from these students so far!

We are grateful for all the helpful feedback we have received from parents and students who have participated in the three initial course offerings: Economics, American Government, and Computer Programming. This feedback has proven incredibly helpful to us as we prepare the next batch of online courses for release.

Looking forward into 2017, Seton is working towards a robust release of courses across all high school grade levels. The next course slated for public availability is English 9. The online edition of the course follows the same academic model as the existing print course, but seamlessly integrates videos, helpful resources, and interactive exercises to help engage the students and allow them to more easily master the content. Families currently

enrolled in the print edition of the course will soon receive email invitations allowing them the opportunity to participate in the online program for the remainder of their school year.

Many other courses are in development, so stay tuned to the *Seton Magazine* for news about these upcoming online offerings!

BAYLEY BULLETIN IN PRINT

Finally, the *Bayley Bulletin* is coming to a mailbox near you. After the rousing success of our digital trial in 2016, we are delighted to be printing and mailing this teen quarterly to all our high school students. The *Bayley Bulletin* is an incredible testament to the talents, creativity, and hard work of Seton's high schoolers, who provide roughly 90% of the content published in the *Bayley Bulletin*. These students should be proud of their work, and we are proud to be able to share it with our families.

See more articles and information online at bayleybulletin.com





Homeschooling in South America

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. JUAN CARLOS RIVERA CHAVARRO
AND HIS WIFE CAROLINA PENA PORTILLA DE RIVERA BY PEDRO
MORENO GIRALDO. TRANSLATED BY MANUEL VICENTE.

Please introduce yourselves. What is your background and what are your professions?

Carolina: My name is Carolina. I actually graduated as a bacteriologist, but for some time now, I've been working very proudly as a housewife. I am in charge of the education of our children.

Juan Carlos: I am an ophthalmologist. We currently live in Circasia, which is in the Department of Quindio in Colombia. We have been here for three years now, having previously lived in the city of Cali for thirteen years. After so many years in

town, surrounded by city influences, we decided to move to the countryside, where we could live a more rural life devoted to giving everything to God with and for our children.

How did you decide to begin homeschooling?

Juan Carlos: First of all, we were impressed by the example of a large homeschooling family we know, who showed us what it is and how it can be. Admittedly, I was against homeschooling at first because I thought that "formal" schooling (brick and mortar

schooling) was the best. I didn't think it was possible to achieve a complete education at home. However, my wife, who was more or less immediately convinced, kept praying for me to be enlightened. Through the influence of those prayers, I ended up deciding to investigate homeschooling more closely without telling her.

I looked at education statistics coming from Spain and other European countries. The statistics gave testimony to the value of homeschooling, showing that homeschooled children in those countries routinely performed at a higher academic level (typically 30-35% higher) than their public-schooled counterparts. More importantly, homeschooled children in these countries demonstrated stronger values and more advanced communication and social skills. Those who were against homeschooling frequently raised a question that resonated with me, which was, "How can you take children out of the schools? How will they become socialized?" But again, the statistics were striking. Homeschooled children communicated better not only with other children, but also



with their parents and with other adults by comparison with children in other school settings. Homeschooled children were seen to communicate with greater completeness, with more sincerity, and in more complex ways. Reading this information, I was immediately convinced, and told my wife, "I'm ready. Let's homeschool!" She said, "O.k. Let's start in two months." So, it actually happened rather quickly in the end.

By way of an addition, I'd like to comment about Seton Home Study School. When we first began, we knew nothing about Seton. There were other homeschooling programs in Colombia, but unfortunately, they did not really provide the level of academics we were seeking. When we discovered Seton, it was immediately apparent that they were the best. There was no reasonable alternative to choosing them. Seton's curriculum is complete, academically robust, and unequivocally faithful. I am certain that with Seton, we are ahead of other schools on all fronts.

How did you find out about Seton Home Study School?

Carolina: We learned about Seton through another Seton father, who was living in Colombia at the time. He told us of his great satisfaction with the programs offered by the school, and in particular by the academic support provided by Seton. Our own experience has fulfilled everything he led us to expect.

What are the most significant ways in which homeschooling differs from standard brick and mortar schooling?

Carolina: First of all, our children are much more relaxed; they are definitely living a happier life. They have time for



family activities and pursuing things that build up a family, such as beginning the day with prayer. They can take the time to begin their day with God's blessing by kneeling at our home altar.

Secondly, our children are protected from the contrary values and worldly mindsets that are rampant throughout society nowadays. We have never wanted our children to be like the society in general, and have always sought to eliminate the influence of such attitudes in our children's education. In homeschooling, with God's help, we are able to impart to our children exactly what is best for them.

Thirdly, our children are performing at a much more advanced academic level. They research much more than would be asked of them in the public schools, where they would be taught a very limited base of knowledge. In addition, because of homeschooling, the children are able to progress much further in areas that interest them, since there is much more time left for such marvelous pursuits as music (which definitely provides a nice ambience in our home). Both our children are budding musicians, and they are avid readers as well.

Do you have any advice for other homeschooling parents?

Carolina: I think it is important for parents to remember why they chose homeschooling, so that they will remain motivated when it gets hard. In the difficult current times, homeschooling really is the best option. We not only protect our children from the many prevalent errors that others seek to imprint upon the souls and consciences of our children, but we also give them much stronger academic foundations, thanks to more efficient study time and the ability to tailor the programs to the individual capacities of our children. Plus, family ties are much stronger, and children are able to develop better domestic skills and relations. If you remember these things and put your trust in God, you will experience the wonder of homeschooling.



Grades, Intelligence, & the Gold Star that Got Away

BY JOHN CLARK

When I was in the Fifth Grade (the last year that I went to a day school—I would homeschool henceforth), my best subject was Spelling. Luckily for my ego, everyone knew I was a great speller because my teacher had a chart on the front wall that had each student's name on it along with their weekly spelling grades beside. If you were one of the fortunate few who received a perfect score, you were awarded the proverbial "gold star" by your name. After twenty weeks or so, I had about twenty gold stars—the hottest streak of my academic career, before or since. A veritable hat trick of orthography.

Alas, like most of my (five or six) academic highlights, it was fleeting. Around Week 21, I used the wrong preposition in my spelling workbook and received a 98%.

There's a lot we can observe about a 98%: it's a pretty good score, it's an "A+," nobody ever failed out of school for getting 98's. But for all its admirable qualities, a 98% is not a 100%.

Years later, I came across these words of William Shakespeare: "All that glitters isn't gold." Later in life, some of the students in my English Literature class—mere neophytes to the art and science of literary criticism—may not have fully understood what Shakespeare meant with those immortal words. But I knew darn well what he meant: clearly, Shakespeare was illustrating, in no uncertain terms, that a 98% does not get a gold star in Fifth Grade spelling class.

My chart at the front of the room contained twenty little boxes with shiny gold stars in them, and one box with a surprisingly-clearly handwritten "98%" in it. Guess which one I stared at every day?

Maybe the fact that I obsessed over this grade made me unique; on the other hand, maybe it made me just like everyone else.

All kidding aside, maybe many of us—maybe all of us—are tempted to define ourselves not by our academic successes, but by our academic failures. (By the way,

although I somewhat humorously highlight a 98% grade, I had a string of academic failures in college that were legendary. I had a lot more C's on my report cards than the one in my name.)

You can claim that this type of thinking is ridiculous. You can claim that a person should not define himself by any grade, let alone his worst grade. And you'd be right. The problem is that this concept can be a hard thing to accept, or even understand, when you are eleven years old. After all, for all life's facets, for all life's endeavors, most of us are graded on academics and academics alone. And that can be a bit ridiculous, too.

Even later in life, many adults tend to define themselves by the grades they received decades prior. They may have been deemed "poor students," and they believed it. But in some of these cases, it was not that the students were unintelligent; it was that the teachers failed to recognize intelligence. Pigeonholing the divine design of human intelligence, some educators failed to understand the nature of intelligence; some failed to understand the creativity of human intelligence; and some failed to understand the genius of a loving God. Because as cognitive psychology and neuroscience has increasingly illustrated over the past few decades, many of those who were once considered terribly unintelligent were actually geniuses.

Though not all of them translate into great grades, there are a multitude of types of intelligence. Howard Gardner, Harvard psychologist and author of *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, argues that there is "linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence," "musical intelligence," "spatial intelligence," "bodily-kinesthetic intelligence," and "two forms of personal intelligence, one directed toward other persons, one directed toward oneself."

But while there are many manifestations of intelligence and of genius, much of academia tends to reward exactly one: book smarts. And even "book smarts" tends to



be narrowly defined due to its emphasis on mathematics. Sadly, the vast majority of genius remains academically untested and thus, ungraded, unnoticed, and unrewarded. I understand the need for grades, but I also believe that each of our children's unique manifestations of intelligence should be acknowledged and encouraged.

Gardner argues that intelligence is "a property of all human beings." That's not a bad message to your children who are struggling with mere academic learning. It's also a reminder that God loves them uniquely.

The lesson for parents here is simple. We need to disallow our children to define themselves by grades and tests. We need to recognize and encourage the intelligence and genius of all their activities, and not just the academic ones. Above all else, remember that loving God is the greatest genius of them all.

Oh, and one last thing. Please remember to help them with their Spelling homework.

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.

10 Helpful (& Fun) Replies to Anti-Homeschooling Comments

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

Many of us are familiar with the looks of horror on people's faces when they discover that you homeschool. It can be disconcerting to feel like you are constantly defending yourself to people, some of whose opinions matter to you and some you don't care a fig about. The remarks one hears range from silly to insulting. I'm not referring to those who ask in a real effort to understand, or who are simply interested and curious about something unfamiliar, rather those who just want to make you feel badly about your decision.

I've been at this homeschooling lifestyle thing for a while now. I have been subjected to many such questions and statements, so I'd like to share with you some retorts that may help bring these conversations to a speedier conclusion.

1. Homeschooling? Is that even legal?

The real reply is that, yes, of course it is legal in all fifty states. Homeschooling, thanks to some brave mothers and fathers, Dr. Mary Kay Clark among them, is legal and even commonplace in the United States. The sillier reply could be, "Why yes it is, I gave up living outside the law several years ago." Let them make of that what they will.

2. Aren't you concerned that your children will have no friends; what about socialization?

That this question continues to be asked astonishes me. Study after study shows homeschooled children do as well or better in social situations than children who attend brick and mortar schools. The retort I have found most helpful is, "I'd be delighted to have you drive my children to their various social and educational activities during the week. You will have to keep the hours from 3:00pm until 8:00pm free, but I'm sure it will put your mind to rest as to their social development."

3. You must be so patient.

I have a little secret to tell you. I lack patience. I lack it so much that it comes up quite often in the confessional. To those who try to put you on some kind of patience

pedestal only to look for signs you are slipping off, an excellent reply is "I have more patience for my own children than I would have for thirty children in a classroom." That usually stops the conversation.

4. Your children will know nothing of the world or of pop culture.

When this has been said to me, as if it is a bad thing that rap music isn't part of my household, I am often taken aback. Your reply to this silly question can simply be, "Which R-rated movie would you suggest my ten year old see to bring him up to speed?"

5. How will you teach calculus?

I still get asked this in spite of having launched one child into college and having another one ready to go next year. Clearly they are learning everything they need. I was first asked this question when my eldest, who has special needs, was in third grade and I have to say that calculus was not my foremost concern. When people ask what I am going to do about calculus, ancient Greek or organic chemistry I generally say, "Well, I thought I might ask you to tutor them. After all, you went to public school so you must be qualified."

6. What about the prom? How can you deny your child a prom?

Sigh. Making a life changing decision about how your child should be educated based upon an overpriced, overhyped dance seems silly to me but it comes up pretty often. The fact is many homeschool groups hold proms for their high school kids because if a homeschooled kid wants a prom, he/she will plan and execute one with a little guidance from an adult. Homeschooled kids are like that; they get stuff done.

7. I could never homeschool; I want my kids to have a life.

You want them to have a life so you lock them in the same room everyday with the same twenty-five people listening to the same person day after day, whereas my children are out in the world, meeting

people, taking classes and having the freedom to try new things. Tell me again, who is lacking life experiences?

8. Why would you want your kids around all day, don't they drive you crazy?

Here's the thing, I actually like my kids. I'm glad I have them. They are funny and smart and their presence fills me with joy and gratitude. That's not to say that they don't drive me crazy sometimes but so do people who ask silly questions.

9. How will your children learn how to line up?

I'm not kidding. This is a real question homeschool mothers get asked. It seems to stem from some kind of post cafeteria stress syndrome people have. The response, of course, is to call your children to you and ask them to line up. It's easier for certain people to have a visual. Then laugh. Seriously, laugh your head off.

10. What is your child going to do for a high school diploma?

Well, if my kid graduates with Seton, then they get an accredited diploma. Otherwise, they're going to work hard and fulfill all of the requirements. Then I am going to do what high schools all over America do: print one off of the computer, put it in a fancy folder and hand it to the graduate. There will be more hoopla involved but you get the idea.

These mostly tongue in cheek replies are meant to give you a jumping off point to reply to the various things people will say to you. The point is to not let anyone question your motives or desire to homeschool your children, but rather, let them know that you are equal to the task and unwavering in your commitment. And if you can get a giggle out of it, why not?



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.

The Role of Catholic Education in a New Evangelization

Excerpts from an address by Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke delivered at Northeast Catholic College's Courage and Fidelity Dinner on April 4, 2016.

For the sake of our young people, we must give particular attention to the fundamental expression of our culture which is education. Good parents and good citizens must be attentive to the curriculum which schools are following and to life in the schools, to assure that our children are being formed in the human and Christian virtues and are not being deformed by the error concerning the most fundamental truths of human life and of the family, which will lead to their slavery to sin and, therefore, profound unhappiness, and to the destruction of culture. Today, for example, we sadly find the need to speak about “traditional marriage,” as if there were another kind of marriage. There is only one kind of marriage as God has given it to us at the Creation and as Christ has redeemed it by His saving Passion and Death.

Dignity & Beauty

At the heart of a solid curriculum is both respect for the dignity of the human person and for the tradition of beauty, truth and goodness in the arts and the sciences. Today, tolerance of ways of thinking and acting contrary to the moral law seems to be the interpretative key for many Christians. According to this approach, one can no longer distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly, the true and the false, and the good and the evil. We end up claiming to be Christian while tolerating ways of thinking and acting which are diametrically opposed to the moral law revealed to us in nature and in the Sacred Scriptures. [We become] so relativistic and subjective that we do not even observe the fundamental logical principle of non-contradiction, that a thing cannot both be and not be, in the same respect, at the same time. In other words, certain actions cannot at the same time be both true to the moral law and not true to it.

Charity alone must be the interpretative key of our thoughts and actions. In the context of charity, tolerance means unconditional love of the person involved in evil but firm abhorrence of the evil into which the person has fallen. All education should be directed to forming the students in the charity by which the mind and heart respond to the beautiful, the true, and the good, as God has created us to do.

At the heart of the deplorable cultural situation in which we find ourselves is the loss of a sense of nature and of



conscience. Pope Benedict XVI addressed this, with respect to the foundations of law, in his address to the Bundestag during his Pastoral Visit to Germany in September of 2011. Taking leave from the story of the young King Solomon on his accession to the throne, he recalled to political leaders the teaching of the Holy Scriptures regarding the work of politics. God asked King Solomon what request he wished to make as he began to rule God's holy people. The Holy Father commented:

What will the young ruler ask for at this important moment? Success – wealth – long life – destruction of his enemies? He chooses none of these things. Instead, he asks for a listening heart so that he may govern God's people, and discern between good and evil (cf. 1 Kg 3:9).

The Goal of Politics

The story of King Solomon, as Pope Benedict XVI observed, teaches what must be the end of political activity and, therefore, of government. He declared: *"Politics must be a striving for justice, and hence it has to establish the fundamental preconditions for peace.... To serve right and to fight against the dominion of wrong is and remains the fundamental task of the politician."*

Pope Benedict XVI asked how we know the good and right which the political order and specifically the law are to safeguard and promote. While he acknowledged that in many matters "the support of the majority can serve as a sufficient criterion," he observed that such a principle is not sufficient "for the fundamental issues of law, in which the dignity of man and of humanity is at stake." Regarding the very foundations of the life of society, positive civil law must respect "nature and reason as the true sources of law." In other words, one must have recourse to the natural moral law which God has inscribed upon every human heart.

Referring to a text of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans regarding the natural moral law and its primary witness, the conscience, Pope Benedict XVI declared: "Here we see the two fundamental concepts of nature and conscience, where conscience is nothing other than Solomon's listening heart, reason that is open to the language of being." Further illustrating the sources of law in

nature and reason by making reference to the popular interest in ecology as a means of respecting nature, he observed:

Yet I would like to underline a point that seems to me to be neglected, today as in the past: there is also an ecology of man. Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will. Man is not merely self-creating freedom. . . He is intellect and will, but he is also nature, and his will is rightly ordered if he respects nature, listens to it and accepts himself for who he is, as one who did not create himself. In this way, and in no other, is true human freedom fulfilled.

Reflecting upon European culture which developed "from the encounter between Jerusalem, Athens and Rome—from Israel's faith in God, the philosophical reason of the Greeks and Roman legal thought," he concluded: "In the awareness of man's responsibility before God and in the acknowledgment of the inviolable dignity of every single human person, it [European culture] has established criteria of law: it is these criteria that we are called to defend at this moment in our history." While Pope Benedict XVI's reflection is inspired by a concern for the state of law in the European culture, his conclusions regarding the foundations of law and, therefore, of order in society are clearly universal in application.

The Listening Heart

What Pope Benedict XVI observed regarding the foundations of law in the concepts of nature and conscience points to the fundamental work of education, namely, to develop in students "the listening heart" which strives to know the law of God and to respect it by development in the life of the virtues. The arts and sciences are most fully taught to students within the context of the divine order which they ponder and express.

As Christians, we must help society to recognize a certain order which permits the individual to pursue his own good, while at the same time respecting the good of others who form a community with him. The good is defined by the order found in the nature of persons and things, by which the same persons and things are directed to objective ends. In truth, the individual must understand that his own good cannot be served while the good of others and the

order of creation are violated. The individual cannot achieve his proper end—and, therefore, happiness—apart from respect for the proper end and ultimate happiness of his neighbor, and for the proper end of the things with which he interacts. Life in common is otherwise reduced to the tyranny of whatever group is able to prevail by winning the support of a majority.

Without the recognition of the common good, to which the individual good is essentially related and which it serves, society breaks down and is soon beset by the violence and destruction which are the inevitable fruits of unbridled individualism and self-pursuit.

Pursuing the Good

In his Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI takes up the question of the common good which, in his words, "is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it."

Dedication to the common good, as Pope Benedict XVI makes clear, is an obligation imposed by both justice and charity. He concludes: "The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them."

Education which takes place first in the home and is enriched and supplemented by truly Catholic schools is directed fundamentally to the formation of good citizens and good members of the Church. Ultimately it is directed to the happiness of the individual which is found in right relationships and has its fulfilment in eternal life. It presupposes the objective nature of things to which the human heart is directed, if it is trained to be a "listening heart." It seeks an ever deeper knowledge and love of the true, the good, and the beautiful. It forms the individual to this fundamental pursuit throughout his or her lifetime. May God inspire and strengthen [all] in the work of forming "listening hearts" in the students who are the hope of our future.

Tests for College

For many of us, the word “test” evokes numerous emotions, everything from excitement to all-out dread. Because of this, the great tests of our lives, whether personal or academic, stand out starkly in our memory. Yet regardless of our feelings about testing, or the worth of a particular exam, much stock is placed upon them by the great multitude, so it is worthwhile to discuss the real import of exams for the homeschooling student aspiring to college.

As students prepare for life after Seton, some common questions that we receive in the Guidance Department are, “What tests should I take in preparation for college?” and “When should I take them?”

At a minimum, we recommend that students take both the SAT and the ACT, sometime in their junior year. If time is an issue (When is it not?), we recommend consulting the admissions office of the particular college to which one may be applying. While many accept both test scores, some schools prefer one over the other. Furthermore, students sometimes simply do better on one of the two and choose to submit only that score in their application process.

In an ideal situation, a student should prepare for these tests by studying or attending a class on ‘cracking their code’ early, as these tests can be taken more than one time. In many instances, a standardized test does not simply test what one knows, but also how one knows a thing or how one is able to work through a specific problem

in a timely manner. Learning the thought process behind the questions that designed the exam, or specific ways the tests want you to think in answering a question, can go a long way to boost one’s score.

To take the SAT and find out more about the exam, please visit collegeboard.org, the institution responsible for developing and grading the exam. For the ACT, visit the ACT website, act.org. Consult your library, school district, or local college for further information on taking local classes to prepare for the exam.

Additionally, many brick and mortar schools also offer the PSAT, (or Pre-SAT), which gives the student an opportunity to earn a National Merit Scholarship. However, in order to sit for this exam, a homeschooling student will have to ask permission from the specific institution that administers the test.

Seton offers resources through its Educational Media department to help study for the SAT and PSAT, which include practice tests.

As always, if you have further questions about taking these tests, please don’t hesitate to call the Seton Guidance Department at 540-636-2238.



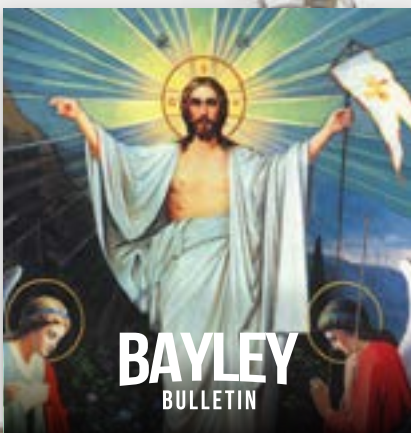
Nicholas Marmalejo, a history major, graduated from Christendom College in 2001. He holds a Virginia Teacher Certification and lives in the Shenandoah Valley with his wife and three children.

EASTER ART CHALLENGE

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 28TH, 2017

Open to Seton high school students, grades 9-12. The theme is the Resurrection of Christ. Use any medium you like – painting, sketch, pencil, charcoals. Judging will be on composition, proportion, realism and attention to detail/artistic technique, and how the spirit of the scene is depicted. If sufficient entries of note, first and second place finalists will be selected. The best remaining will be published online.

Register for free: bayleybulletin.com/challenge ▶





EXPERIENCE CHRISTENDOM SUMMER PROGRAM

The Best Week Ever.

If you're going to attend a pre-college summer program, why not attend the best? Experience it for yourself.

> SPACE IS LIMITED
REGISTER TODAY



**CHRISTENDOM
COLLEGE**

christendom.edu/experience

**30%
OFF**

EACH ONE-WEEK SESSION IS ONLY \$350 FOR **SETON HOME STUDY STUDENTS**. THAT'S 30% OFF THE NORMAL \$500! USE PROMO CODE: **SETONHS**



Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



Audrey | In June I was in a clogging duet that won first place in our division in a national dance competition. Our duet was titled "Bailando." My friend and I worked the entire season to master our dance.



Robert | My Robotics Competitive Team, hosted by RoboKnights, came in 2nd place at our second and first meet.



Victoria | I was cast as Clara for my dance studio's performance of The Nutcracker, by the University Performing Arts Center of Oviedo and Dance Minors.

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

setonmagazine.com/students

Seton Home Study School

1350 Progress Drive

Front Royal, VA 22630

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 19
Elizabethtown, PA



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

setonhome.org/colleges ▶



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

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



Pope Benedict XVI CC The Papal Visit | Flickr

www.setonmagazine.com

866-280-1930