

# Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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## Free to be Flexible

**Homeschooling  
with a Disability**

THE BERKEN FAMILY, PG 8



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## Letter from the Editor

This year, April is split exactly down the middle, the first half still in Lent, the second half celebrating Easter. April's issue begins soberly enough with a meditation on the sufferings of Christ by Dr. Clark, as inspired by Josefa Menendez, yet Dr. Clark reminds us that these very sufferings are cause for our hope.

The Berken family share the miracle of Faith, John Clark gives us a clever lesson on defending the cause of Christian joy, and Amy Pawlusiak shows us how to keep Easter alive in our homes. We also share a beautiful meditation on what it means to live the Resurrection by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and last but not least, we hear from Ben Hatke—Seton artist and NY Times best-selling author—on the power and joy of art.

In difficult times, it is important for Christians to remember that our faith is essentially a joyful faith. Christ died for us, and then He rose from the dead for us, and that truth is our light.

I'd like to leave you with a quote from Caryll Houselander, who tells us what that means for us. *"Our Lord has told us how we are to lead the Risen Life, and he has shown it to us. . . . It is to be a life of love, love that creates, love that fills up the measure of each life with joy. Love that is light and peace. Love that forgives and heals and sustains, that makes us one. Love that gives life to the world and gives beauty to life."* May your Easter be beautiful and glorious as the Risen Christ!

God bless you,

Christine Smitha



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# A Few Precious Moments

## 'The Way of Divine Love' & Homeschool Parents

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

With all our parental duties and responsibilities, like homeschooling, shopping trips, doctors' appointments, sporting events, plays, and music recitals, it is difficult to find time for reflection with Jesus. Despite our frantic schedules, however, many of us homeschooling parents and grandparents try to attend daily Mass, contemplate the Gospel readings, and spend time reflecting on the mysteries of the Rosary. Especially during Holy Week, we also search for opportunities to deepen our relationship with Jesus. There may be no better way to obtain an inside look at the Heart of Jesus than in contemplating the thoughts of Jesus as He suffered His crucifixion.

One such source for contemplation comes to us from a religious sister named Sister Josefa Menendez, a Sacred Heart nun who lived in a French convent in the 1920s. It was there and then that she obediently transcribed messages from Jesus, Who appeared to her frequently during the Holy Week of 1923. Pope Pius XII believed her visions to be heavenly visions and the messages to be from Jesus, and gave his approval for the publication of the book *The Way of Divine Love*.

*The Way of Divine Love* is a life-changing book for anyone who reads it with care and patience. It is not simply a story by Jesus about His sufferings as He carried His cross, but rather His thoughts and desires for those who wish to attain eternal life and happiness in Heaven with Him.

There are two parallel streams of thought expressed by Jesus as He dictated to Sister Josefa His concerns for souls during each aspect of His crucifixion. The first describes the incredible graces that flow to those who love Jesus and reflect on His sufferings, and the second conveys the heartbreak He suffers for those who do not love Him and those who ignore Him. Jesus relates each aspect of His crucifixion, what He was thinking at the time, and His reflections

about different kinds of sinners. He explains the kinds of sins for which He suffered, but also how those in temptation can escape sin by reflecting on a particular aspect of His crucifixion.

While I encourage homeschooling parents to read the book, I understand how hard it is to even consider reading something other than what directly relates to the homeschooling of your children. Consequently, I encourage homeschooling moms and dads to read just the single chapter "The Lent of 1923." It is about 80 pages, and it is not for the faint of heart. However, you will find yourself underlining passage after passage, and you will end by wishing to keep this book on your bedside table, with you when you do a Holy Hour, and for reflection on Good Friday afternoon.

A few of my favorite quotes include:

"My Cross will strengthen you and I will support you... When a soul comes to Me for strength, I do not leave her to herself; I hold her up, and if in her weakness she stumbles, I will raise her."

"When an occasion of conquering human respect and accepting bravely either humiliation or suffering presents itself, a soul should answer 'My Kingdom is not of this world, for that reason I do not seek human favor; ...I will do my duty faithfully and make no account of the opinion of the world...I will listen to the voice of grace...'"

"You will not find peace and joy in a position more or less brilliant in the eyes of men, but only in the accomplishment of God's will, and in entire submission to all He may require of you."

"Hasten to My heart and be without fear for the past; all has been swallowed up in the abyss of My mercy, and My love is preparing new graces for you. The memory of your lapses will be an incentive to humility and a source of merit, and you cannot give Me a greater proof of affection than to count on My full pardon and to



believe that your sins will never be as great as My mercy, which is infinite."

"Adore the power and majesty of your God, but do not forget that if He is infinitely just and powerful, He is also infinitely merciful."

Like the rest of the year, Holy Week is a busy time for many of you parents who work so admirably to teach your children. This year, ask God to help you find a few precious moments that you can spend together to deepen your love for Him. Try to spend at least a few moments to contemplate how much Jesus loves you. And pass that joy on to your children!



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

## How do I grade my son's paragraphs?

Instructions are given in the lesson plans. Paragraphs cannot be graded with strict point instruction. However, the directions in the lesson plans should be the focus for grading. We have videos available for paragraph instruction for grades one, two, three, and four. Videos for other grades will be available soon. We encourage parents and students to watch them, not only for the grade level of the student, but for the earlier grades as well.

## Are the Seton online tests timed?

None of our tests are timed. However, parents should give their children a reasonable time, and not allow tests to be taken over several hours or days. One or two hours should be sufficient. Many children will complete tests in less than an hour. Keep in mind that when students take

SAT or ACT tests, or other standardized tests, and when they attend college, tests will be timed. In fact, college professors have told Seton that homeschool students often have problems taking tests within a certain amount of time. We encourage parents of high school students especially to have their children take tests within a reasonable time frame.

## Does my son need to take handwriting? Why can he not print or use the computer, as I have done even with legal documents?

There are many situations in which a person must write by hand, instead of using a computer. Many schools and colleges still use paper tests, and many workplaces make use of hand-written applications and other documents. In addition, handwriting improves brain development, hand-eye coordination,

and memory. Students are more likely to remember something they have written than something they have typed on the computer.

We believe the schools will start teaching handwriting again, since the state of New York recently declared that handwriting must be taught in elementary schools. If you look on the internet, you will see studies showing that people need to learn to write and not be limited to the computer.

## Can my son take some tests on paper for an online course?

The online courses are not all going to be the same. Some courses will allow tests on paper, but some may not. Tests for the online Economics course, for example, are designed to be taken online.

Assignments for the English courses



## Father Belisarius Constantine

Called home to Our Lord on November 27, 2016.

Due to Thanksgiving, and the Christmas and New Year's holy days, many of our families may not yet be aware of his passing.

He was our high school religion, French, and Latin counselor, as well as a spiritual father to many of our families.

Father Constantine will be missed by many in the Seton family. Please pray for him, and ask him to intercede for us, and for you and your children.

## Note to Students

Latin, French & Religion Counselors

While Fr. Constantine can never really be replaced, Seton must adjust to God's Holy Will. Bob Wiesner will be the new high school religion counselor. Manuel Vicente adds French counseling to his Spanish counseling duties, and the new Latin counselor is Mr. Jeff Minick. Mr. Wiesner and Mr. Vicente are located at Seton, and their contact information is on the website under Staff. Mr. Minick does not have an office at Seton. For Latin counseling, he can be reached at [ashevillelatin@gmail.com](mailto:ashevillelatin@gmail.com), or at (828) 400-8132.



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may be done on the computer and may be sent by email for grading. It will be clear to students which assignments or tests may be online or may be sent by email or by regular mail.

**My student is having trouble reading. He may have a reading problem.**

We have a Special Needs department with three people ready to help answer your questions. Check our website under Curriculum, Special Learning Needs, for information and to speak to one of our counselors. Some students may need only a

few such courses. We also have a number of videos for parents of special needs students, freely available. The video presenter has a degree for teaching special needs students. The head of the department, Stephen Costanzo, has a Master's Degree in Special Education and teaching experience with special needs students.

**My son received good grades for his book reports in his former school. Why did he receive an "incomplete" from Seton?**

Seton graders give an "incomplete" whenever an element of the assignment has not been turned in, or when the directions were not followed. For example, if a book report is only one or two paragraphs long, when the assignment was to write a five-paragraph report, the student will receive an incomplete. Seton provides special directions for the book reports in the lesson plans for the first and second quarters. In the third and fourth quarters, there are no specific directions. However, students are expected to follow the same style as taught in the first two quarters.

The directions need to be explicitly followed for each assignment. Be sure to help your son to follow the directions as he writes his report. Discuss the book with him after you have read the directions for the report. Help your son to follow the directions as he writes his topic sentence and middle sentences.

**My son in 5th grade struggles with re-writing the math problems clearly and correctly on paper. Will you be offering any math text-workbooks for grades 5 and 6?**

In addition to the Saxon textbook, Seton offers a math text-workbook for 5th grade and another one for 6th grade, published by MCP. When you enroll, you can choose MCP Math. Seton has available a 5th grade math text/workbook which we are making available in limited quantities as a beta test. If you are interested in testing the Seton 5th grade math text/workbook, please email Cecilia at [csauer@setonhome.org](mailto:csauer@setonhome.org).



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*.



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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*"I'm out there to pass  
along a sense of wonder.  
And grand adventure.  
And endless possibility."*



## A Closer Look at Art with Ben Hatke, Seton Home Study School Artist.

### What was the first art project you did for Seton Home Study School?

That's a tough one! It's been such a long time and I've done so many different projects. I started doing illustrated odds and ends when I was also grading English. My first real project, though, was the phonics series. Those books were a dream project for a just-starting-out illustrator. The books required hundreds of little pictures.

### What's your favorite Seton project?

Hands down, that would be *Early Literacy for Young Catholics*. Not only was it a blast to illustrate, but I got to work with the wonderful Jim Shanley. I lived pretty near Jim at the time, so it was always fun to stop in and talk to him in person about the project. Illustrating the book gave me the chance to be colorful and fun and make every page different.

### What makes you want to create?

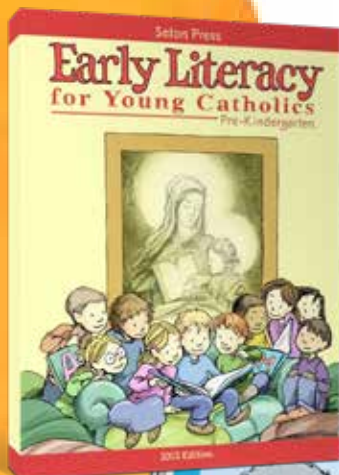
Once the creative impulse becomes a habit, it's hard to find something that doesn't inspire art. I

draw a lot of inspiration from the natural world and human-made things that are a little ground down and lived in. Old houses, wrecked cars, abandoned factories... I'm very serious about the idea that creativity needs to be fed. It needs new experiences and new ideas. Art and invention comes along when you combine things in new ways, so it's good to have a large internal library of things to try combining.

### How does being an artist influence your faith?

Most days it's in how I view the world, which is with a sense of responsibility. I have a real sense of vocation from my work as an artist.

When I was studying in Italy I got really excited about the artist Pontormo. His drawings are just amazing. One day that summer I was late for a lecture and running through the streets of Florence, trying to keep up with my friend Lynn (Lynn was a teacher at the studio and a really gifted painter). We were rushing from the





portrait studio back to the main studio but she suddenly ducked into a little church and said “I want to show you something.” What I saw there was Pontormo’s beautiful *Deposition from the Cross*.

It’s a swirling, but masterfully-composed mass of interconnected bodies, but what struck me most was the colors. It’s a riot of pastel tones like a pile of those springtime Easter M&Ms. It was so great. We only stayed a few minutes before rushing to the lecture, but it left a deep impression on me.

I don’t know if the painting changed the way I see the world exactly, but it is a piece of sacred art that depicts maybe the lowest point of Christianity (Christ being taken down from the cross, apparently dead and gone) but it is in no way grim. There’s an important message there.

#### How has the art of others influenced your faith?

I’ve been fortunate to have many amazing artists cross my path and touch my life, through friendship and/or mentorship. I’ve gotten to meet, in real life, artists and writers whose work I grew up with.

One of my earliest artistic mentors was my Latin and etymology teacher, the

late Bob Butz, the roaring lion. He was a tremendous draftsman, a stoneworker and a sculptor, and a man of deep faith. He went to Lourdes every year to lower the sick into the water. He did this even after having both his knees replaced. That was a powerful witness for me.

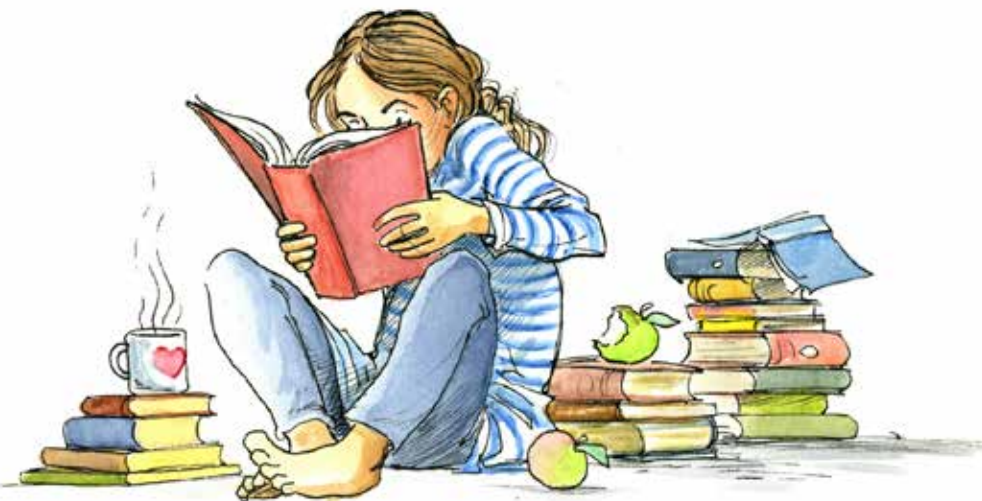
However, other artists I have known and loved are committed atheists. Each one has influenced me in some way, either by showing me beauty, giving me a different perspective, or causing me to reflect on what might be lacking. Faith is a constant journey and struggle.

#### What are some current projects?

Ha! Well, you can find my graphic novels and picture books online and in bookstores. The main ones are the *Zita the Spacegirl* series, *Mighty Jack*, *Little Robot* (a good one for very early readers) and *Nobody Likes a Goblin*. The project I’m working on now is a Young Adult prose novel called *The Princess in the Piazza*.

#### How can people connect with you?

You can keep up with my work at [benhatke.com](http://benhatke.com). I also post lots of daily art on Instagram where I am @heybenhatke.



#### How important is art for education?

I think having the tools to create available to kids is essential. It’s empowering. Alongside providing those tools I think it’s tremendously helpful to look at the world’s great art and really come to understand that someone made that. Art enriches life.

#### How important is art for faith?

Faith and tradition are passed down, in part, through art and stories. I’ve been thinking about the intersection of faith and art quite a lot these days. Working as a “visual storyteller” is such a powerful thing. It becomes an enormous responsibility, because stories are so central to mankind. One of my favorite books right now is *Walking on Water* by the wonderful Madeleine

L’Engle. In it she says: “If it’s bad art, it’s bad religion, no matter how pious the subject.” I want to make good art.

#### Any advice for parents on encouraging creativity for their kids?

The Italian masters had this idea that the capacity to draw your ideas was a mark of genius. I think the main thing is to just make the tools available. Lots of paper, lots of pencils. Just giving kids a sense that they can, at any time, pick up a piece of paper and draw is an important thing. It’s much more important than formal art instruction because every child draws instinctively. It’s more natural than writing. For younger children, I think it’s best to provide the tools and then get out of the way!





## Free to be Flexible

### *Homeschooling with a Disability*

BY KAYLA BERKEN



After homeschooling our 5 children with a different homeschooling program for 7 years, we prayerfully decided to enroll our family in the Seton Home Study program in 2015. We had gone to a Catholic Homeschooling Conference, and we knew that Seton was a good, solid Catholic curriculum, and so our adventure with Seton began!

But in September of that same year, we were faced with a heartbreaking challenge. Pregnant with our sixth child, my water broke prematurely at 17 weeks gestation, in what turned out to be the beginning of our “Faith journey.” After multiple visits with specialists, and having been given very little hope, I had to deliver by an emergency C-section at only 24 weeks gestation. Our daughter, whom we named Faith, weighed in at only one pound ten ounces, and eleven

inches long, but she became a testament to our family’s Catholic faith. My husband, Jason, and I had to leave our very premature newborn in the NICU, and pray like we had never prayed before.

For nearly eight months, I drove over an hour one way every day to be with our daughter. We managed to be faithful to our school work in spite of this. I would manage our schooling during the day, and Jason would take over in the evenings with all the responsibilities of the family life, i.e., supper, baths, and bedtime.

After being at the same hospital for eight months without making sufficient progress, Faith was transferred to a higher level of care hospital, three hours away from home. I stayed day and night for three long months with Faith, educating myself on what it





would be like to take care of our baby at home. While we remained three hours from home, the children were able to continue their studies because of the lesson plans that are provided by Seton.

### The Blessing of Flexibility

Homeschooling our children throughout this NICU experience has truly been a blessing. I called Seton and told them about our situation, and they were so compassionate; they showed us just how flexible they really are. Seton Home Study allowed our family to push our original start date back so that I wouldn't have to be so concerned about getting the children's school work turned in by a particular date, during an already stressful time. "I cannot even begin to imagine going through what we were going through, trying to get the children to and from school, much less worry about getting homework done on time, while you were away with the baby," my husband told me.

After an eleven month NICU stay, Faith was finally able to come home. She is home with a trach that helps her to breathe, on a home ventilator, as well as a feeding tube. Homeschooling has given us the freedom and flexibility that we need to be able to function as a family with a child that has a disability.

Faith receives different therapies throughout the month, and those services provided to her are allowing the other children to learn things that they otherwise might not be taught. Being homeschooled, the children are present for so much more than would typically be possible. Stephen, Andrew, Kathryne, Melanie, and Gianna, ranging in ages from 13 to 5, have stood

in the NICU and witnessed all its miracles, giving them the opportunity to experience medical technology firsthand. The NICU nurses and doctors at both hospitals were very enthusiastic about involving the children and teaching them about X-rays, IV pumps, feeding tubes, medicines, ventilators and all other types of machines that they use on a daily basis. My children, at such a young age, know so much about the respiratory system, as much as I do at this point!

### Finding a New Normal

Our family will be forever grateful to the Seton staff for the love and support that they have shown us. They were so amazing, reassuring me that we needed to take the time and get through it all. They put us in their prayer intentions there at the school, so that we would be remembered during daily Mass and prayer, and my husband and I have no doubt that God heard the prayers of the faithful!

As we continue to homeschool, we are trying to find a new normal. The older children help the younger children, the younger children entertain Faith while the older children are spending time on their lessons with me. But I wouldn't have it any other way. We are so blessed that Faith is finally home with us.

Eventually Faith will not need all the medical equipment that she has currently, those things that she needed in order to be able to get home. It could take three to four years doctors say, but it really is all in Faith's time. She needs to have time to grow, so that her lungs, which are severely underdeveloped will mature enough so as not to need all of her equipment.

We have realized throughout this journey, that God has his own plan, we just have to trust that he will get us through. So while we wait on Faith to grow, we continue to homeschool with Seton Home Study. We are so blessed to be a part of this amazing school. When we enrolled over a year ago, we never would have imagined that our family would be caught up in such a whirlwind, but it happened.

And Seton and its staff have gone above and beyond for us, and for that we are thankful to have them on this journey of Faith.





# Defending the Resurrection

BY JOHN CLARK

I can't believe I'm saying this as a parent who is raising his sixth teenager, but we need to teach our children to argue.

In lots of different ways, we Catholic parents teach our children the Faith every day, and much of our time is spent discussing official Church teaching. Yet, there will come a day for our children when that Faith is questioned. And when it is, they cannot respond: "Because the Baltimore Catechism said it." Chances are, our children's questioners will be unaware, indifferent, or antagonistic toward the Baltimore Catechism. Worse, they will be mocked. Worse yet, they may question their own beliefs.

That is where apologetics comes in handy. Apologetics does not typically seek to "prove" things; instead, it seeks to illustrate why something is reasonable to believe. Over the years, I have discovered that when someone questions my beliefs, it is helpful to counter by questioning theirs. When I was studying apologetics in college, I was taught that apologetics meant illustrating the reasonableness of what I believe, but now I recognize that much of apologetics is illustrating the unreasonableness of non-Christian beliefs. For instance, if someone is questioning my belief in the Resurrection, it would likely go like this:

Me: "You like asking questions? That's lovely. So do I. Here's one: Where is Jesus buried?"

Questioner (Q): "How would I know? You're the Christian. You tell me!"

Me: "Well, here's why I ask. In the history of the world, no one—no people, no religious followers, no culture—has cared for their dead like Christianity cares for their dead. Seems like his burial place would be a pretty big deal, right?"

Q: "Right. So?"

Me: With this in mind, where did they bury Jesus?"

Q: "I don't understand. I thought you Catholics believe that Jesus died and was buried."

Me: "Right, and that He rose again on the

third day."

Q: "Yes. That's ridiculous! You really believe some far-fetched things!"

Me: "Yes, I believe in the Resurrection of Jesus. But for a moment, *let's talk about what you believe instead.*

"You believe that men who were deathly afraid to even be at the Crucifixion just two days earlier—one of whom was afraid to admit that he even knew Jesus—overpowered armed guards who were stationed at the tomb of Jesus. This would have meant immediate execution, so that's pretty brave.

"Then, they rolled back a massive tombstone and stole the body of Jesus without anyone noticing.

"Then they marched through the countryside with a body without anyone recognizing them, or finding it strange that they were carrying the crucified body of the most recognizable person in the entire nation.

"Then, they hid the body somewhere.

"Then, they all lied about it.

"Then, Christians were tortured in an effort to get somebody to talk about where the body was hidden, but no one talked. No one. Ever. It turned out to be an incredibly good hiding place because no one located the body either then, or for the past two thousand years.

"Then, they were all willing to be tortured and executed, keeping their secret about where the body was hidden, and their lie, to the grave.

"It seems like you have a lot more faith in the Apostles than even I do.

"But, would you care to tell me what the Apostles' motivation might have been?"

At that point, Q will usually mumble something, say that he has to be somewhere else.

Parents, those who oppose the Catholic Faith will question your children, and try to get them to doubt. It's both literally and metaphorically the oldest trick in the



book—the devil used it in the Garden of Eden and little has changed since then. Your children need more than mere knowledge of the Faith; they need to know how to defend it. That means learning how to argue. Why? Because the world will argue with them. We need to help them prepare a defense of truth, so that when the world doubts and questions, they will be ready.

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.



# Easter Joy in the Homeschool

BY AMY PAWLUSIAK

When I was a little girl growing up in Michigan, Easter was my favorite holiday. To me, it spoke of spring, which was the only thing I wanted after months of cold, dark, and miserable weather. There was so much hope in sun, warmth, and new life. Easter also meant a new dress, and special traditions that brought our family together. Now, I share these traditions with my children. Even though we now live in Florida, we are still doing these traditions together, and it makes Easter special, memorable, and holy.

## Easter is About Jesus

The modern world tries to take over Easter by pushing the concept of an “Easter Bunny” and tells us that we need to buy lots of candy and treats for Easter baskets. We can’t go anywhere without seeing what the world says Easter “should” be. Yet, Easter is about Jesus. To me, Easter is not a holiday that can really lose its meaning since it’s all about the Resurrection of Him who died on the Cross. No matter what the world does, it all comes down to Him. How to really celebrate this is another matter. So, I want to invite you into my childhood. My mother is Polish, so growing up we followed many of the traditions of the Polish Catholics.

## Easter Traditions

In our family, Holy Week meant preparation! Many people buy Easter baskets for their children filled with toys and candy for Easter morning, but our Easter basket was different. In our family, we filled our own baskets with things we made or special store-bought items. Each thing in the basket had meaning, and we would take our baskets to church on Holy Saturday to be blessed. The blessed food then became the Easter breakfast we ate together as a family. You can add whatever you want, but here is a sample of the things we would add and their meanings:

- Butter, shaped like a lamb or cross. The lamb would have a red collar (red ribbon) shaped into a cross to remind us of Christ. If you don’t have a butter lamb, it’s also easy to shape it into a cross. I bought a lamb mold online to make my own, and

now I make 3-5 lambs a year to share with friends and family.

- Easter bread (homemade or bought). I still have my mother’s Easter bread recipe that I make every year. I encourage you to make some special Easter bread with your family if you can. Many people have special recipes or will shape the bread into a braid (three strands recalling the Trinity), or cut a cross in the center of it before baking.
- Kielbasa (Sausage). Often, people give up meat for Lent, and having a special meat on Easter Sunday reminds us of God’s generosity and goodness.
- Horseradish. This reminds us of Jesus’ Passion and death, still fresh in our minds from Good Friday (also tastes good on Kielbasa!)
- Eggs. Beyond dying eggs, we also decorate them with symbols of life, like flowers and chicks, or a cross. Eggs always symbolize new life!
- Ham, to remind us also of God’s abundance.
- Cheese, which symbolizes the moderation we should continue to keep at all times.
- Salt and Pepper. I have pretty little salt and pepper shakers that I use every year for the basket blessing. Salt and pepper are the spices of life, and remind us that we, as Christians, are the flavor of the earth.
- Candle to light, to remind us that Christ is our light!
- Chocolate, because God is good, and His sweetness is our joy!

Finally, we decorate the baskets with ribbons and sprigs of greenery, and when we bring it for a blessing, we put pretty linen cloths on them to cover our food for the trip to and from church. We are blessed that our church offers a basket blessing on Holy Saturday, but if you live in an area that does not offer it, just ask your priest to bless your food with holy water, or to give a simple blessing. Every year, I make a small loaf of bread just for the priest who blesses our food. It is good to let our priests know we

love and appreciate them! The food is then set aside to be eaten on Easter morning, or as a brunch. Sometimes we go to Mass first, then have our breakfast, but most often, I set the table the night before (with nice, Easter plates and decorations) for us to enjoy the breakfast as a family before Mass. The children really enjoy sitting down to eat this breakfast together, because most often they have helped to make the bread (the older ones), or have decorated the eggs and baskets (the younger ones). Everyone has something to contribute! Once the food is blessed, however, try to be careful to use all of it to give respect to the blessing given by our church.

## Share the Easter Joy!

Another Easter tradition my family keeps is to remember other people. First of all, we visit the cemetery and put flowers on the graves of family members gone to their own resurrection in Heaven. We pray for them, or ask for their prayers if they have reached eternal joy. Also, I like to make extra bread or have extra food on hand to give to a friend or neighbor. You never know who might not know how to celebrate Easter, and by giving them something special to enjoy, it reminds them that Jesus loves them, and that He died for them too. Easter is for everyone, and is a great way to evangelize.

Easter traditions are different for each family, but for ours, we have learned that the most important tradition is to be together as a family, to thank Jesus for all He did, and to never forget that He saved us. In addition, we all do the Divine Mercy Novena together, and continue to celebrate Easter by planting a garden and flowers, and remembering that all life is from God.

Whatever you decide to do with your family, know that God’s greatest joys come when you are together, and remembering Him!



**Amy Pawlusiak** is originally from suburban Detroit, MI, and now lives in Tampa, FL. She raises and homeschools 5 children from high school to preschool. Amy has a masters in Education from Wayne State University. She worked for Teresa Tomeo before devoting herself to homeschooling.



# *The Light of the Resurrection*

BY POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI

Excerpts from the Easter Vigil Homily of Pope Benedict XVI, Saint Peter's Basilica, Holy Saturday, 11 April 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Saint Mark tells us in his Gospel that as the disciples came down from the Mount of the Transfiguration, they were discussing among themselves what “rising from the dead” could mean (cf. Mk 9:10). A little earlier, the Lord had foretold his passion and his resurrection after three days. Peter had protested against this prediction of death. But now, they were wondering what could be meant by the word “resurrection”.

Could it be that we find ourselves in a similar situation?

Christmas, the birth of the divine Infant, we can somehow immediately comprehend. We can love the child, we can imagine that night in Bethlehem, Mary's joy, the joy of Saint Joseph and the shepherds, the exultation of the angels. But what is resurrection? It does not form part of our experience, and so the message often remains to some degree beyond our understanding, a thing of the past. The Church tries to help us understand it, by expressing this mysterious event in the language of symbols in which we can somehow contemplate this astonishing event. [Particularly] during the Easter Vigil, the Church points out the significance of this day. . . through the symbol of light.

## *Let there be Light*

God's creation – which has just been proclaimed to us in the Biblical narrative – begins with the command: “Let there be light!” (Gen 1:3). Where there is light, life is born, chaos can be transformed into cosmos. In the Biblical message, light is the most immediate image of God: He is total Radiance, Life, Truth, Light. During the Easter Vigil, the Church reads the account of creation as a prophecy.

In the resurrection, we see the most sublime fulfilment of what this text describes as the beginning of all things. God says once again: “Let there be light!” The resurrection of Jesus is an eruption of light. Death is conquered, the tomb is thrown open. The Risen One himself is Light, the Light of the world. With the resurrection, the Lord's day enters the nights of history. Beginning with the resurrection, God's light spreads throughout the world and throughout history. Day

dawns. This Light alone – Jesus Christ – is the true light, something more than the physical phenomenon of light. He is pure Light: God himself, who causes a new creation to be born in the midst of the old, transforming chaos into cosmos.

Let us try to understand this a little better. Why is Christ Light? In the Old Testament, the Torah was considered to be like the light coming from God for the world and for humanity. The Torah separates light from darkness within creation, that is to say, good from evil. It points out to humanity the right path to true life. It points out the good, it demonstrates the truth and it leads us towards love, which is the deepest meaning contained in the Torah. It is a “lamp” for our steps and a “light” for our path (cf. Ps 119:105). Christians, then, knew that in Christ, the Torah is present, the Word of God is present in him as Person. The Word of God is the true light that humanity needs. This Word is present in him, in the Son. Psalm 19 had compared the Torah to the sun which manifests God's glory as it rises, for all the world to see.

Christians understand: yes indeed, in the resurrection, the Son of God has emerged as the Light of the world. Christ is the great Light from which all life originates. He enables us to recognize the glory of God from one end of the earth to the other. He points out our path. He is the Lord's day which, as it grows, is gradually spreading throughout the earth. Now, living with him and for him, we can live in the light.

## *The Paschal Candle*

At the Easter Vigil, the Church represents the mystery of the light of Christ in the sign of the Paschal candle, whose flame is both light and heat. The symbolism of light is connected with that of fire: radiance and heat, radiance and the transforming energy contained in the fire – truth and love go together. The Paschal candle burns, and is thereby consumed: Cross and resurrection are inseparable. From the Cross, from the Son's self-giving, light is born, true radiance comes into the world. From the Paschal candle we all light our own candles, especially the newly baptized, for whom the light of Christ enters deeply into their hearts in this Sacrament.



The early Church described Baptism as *photismos*, as the Sacrament of illumination, as a communication of light, and linked it inseparably with the resurrection of Christ. In Baptism, God says to the candidate: "Let there be light!" The candidate is brought into the light of Christ. Christ now divides the light from the darkness. In Him we recognize what is true and what is false, what is radiance and what is darkness. With him, there wells up within us the light of truth, and we begin to understand.

### The Light of the World

On one occasion when Christ looked upon the people who had come to listen to him, seeking some guidance from him, he felt compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mk 6:34). Amid the contradictory messages of that time, they did not know which way to turn. What great compassion he must feel in our own time too – on account of all the endless talk that people hide behind, while in reality they are totally confused. Where must we go?

What are the values by which we can order our lives? The values by which we can educate our young, without giving them norms they may be unable to resist, or demanding of them things that perhaps should not be imposed upon them? He is the Light. The baptismal candle is the symbol of enlightenment that is given to us in Baptism. Thus at this hour, Saint Paul speaks to us with great immediacy. In the Letter to the Philippians, he says that, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, Christians should shine as lights in the world (cf. Phil 2:15).

Let us pray to the Lord that the fragile flame of the candle he has lit in us, the delicate light of his word and his love amid the confusions of this age, will not be extinguished in us, but will become ever stronger and brighter, so that we, with him, can be people of the day, bright stars lighting up our time.





# How Advanced Do You Need to Be?

## *The Scoop on Seton's Advanced Academic Diploma*



Seton's Advanced Academic Diploma was designed to give the most enterprising and ambitious students the option to take the most rigorous coursework available to them through Seton. Specifically, it was designed with students whose strengths and interests are in the areas of Math and Science and who desire to attend the most competitive universities in those fields.

However, when many parents see Advanced Academic Diploma in the diploma tracks of the High School catalogue, most instinctively desire to place their child on this track to give them the greatest edge in life and, hopefully, at college. This desire is natural, but not always the best choice for most students. Why? Because the fact is Seton's standard diploma, also known as the "Academic Diploma," has the subject and credit requirements built into it that most universities desire of their applicants. To Seton's college partners, not to mention other institutions familiar with Seton's curriculum, the standard diploma is a highly respected accomplishment. If a student makes the grade at Seton, college acceptance letters are all but ensured to follow.

While that is the case, the Advanced Academic Diploma track is considerably more demanding in terms of time and effort

for both the student and family pursuing it. In going this route, a student will be taking the toughest classes in every subject Seton has to offer. When parents call the guidance office for advice about this track to see if it is right for them, my standard response is that unless their student wants to be in absolutely the most competitive college or university in the math and science fields, or in the service academies, generally speaking, the Standard Diploma is the correct choice.

An impressive transcript with all of the Advanced Academic Diploma coursework requirements is swell, but preventing unnecessary academic burn-out in a promising student is perhaps even more laudable. Finding the right balance for your particular student—while still giving him or her a competitive edge—is the real key to success in learning and achievement. Fortunately, this is an approach that works well in any of Seton's diploma tracks and in the life beyond.



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.

## SUMMER QUARTER ESSAY CONTEST

**DEADLINE: MAY 31, 2017**

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**Gianna, Joshua, Marianna**

We participated in the Science Fair and Expo organized by John Paul the Great Home Educators, Dayton Ohio, Feb 4 2017.



**Trevor** | He graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Science Degree for two majors: Business Administration and Business Information Systems.

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MEETING WITH FAMILIES, ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS  
POPE FRANCIS, MALL OF ASIA ARENA, MANILA,  
FRIDAY, 16 JANUARY, 2015

To hear and accept God's call, to make a home for Jesus, you must be able to rest in the Lord. You must make time each day to rest in the Lord, to pray. To pray is to rest in the Lord...

Resting in prayer is especially important for families. It is in the family that we first learn how to pray. Don't forget: the family that prays together stays together! This is important. There we come to know God, to grow into men and women of faith, to see ourselves as members of God's greater family, the Church.

