

# Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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Seuffert Family



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## Letter from the Editor

"I feel that in the heavens above, the angels whispering to one another can find among their burning terms of love, none so devotional as that of 'mother.'"  
—Edgar Allan Poe

What a beautiful tribute to motherhood, a role so precious, so inherently holy, so perfectly established by God that even the angels are astonished by it. This month, Seton Magazine celebrates mothers with an issue dedicated to motherhood, beginning with a reflection from Dr. Clark on our inspirational patron, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Patrice Fagnant-MacArthur provides encouragement and good advice to busy moms, while Mary Ellen Barrett delves into Seton's religion program, a subject close to the heart of every Seton mom. Along those lines, Dom Alban Baker uses the example of a 16th century Blessed to help mothers teach their children about the faith. John Clark presents a touching tribute that will cause us all to stop and thank our own mothers.

This issue also introduces Mary Ellen Barrett as Seton Magazine's new Editor. Mary Ellen has been a Seton mom for many years, and will be recognized by many of you as a regular contributor both to this magazine and to the homeschooling conference speaking circuit. Check the IHM conference schedules to see where you might meet her in person this summer.

To all Seton mothers, grandmothers, and godmothers, I wish you a most blessed month, and I pray that God grant you the fulfillment of all your prayers through the intercession of His Most Holy Mother. Happy Mothers' Day!

God bless you,

Christine Smitha



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# Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton on Education

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Elizabeth Ann Seton grew up taking Christianity to heart. Her grandfather was an Episcopalian minister, and her mother was a devout Christian who often read Bible stories to little Elizabeth. Though she lost her mother at the age of three, the Christian influence remained, and as she grew older, Elizabeth kept reading those Bible stories. Because her widower father spent many hours caring for his medical patients, Elizabeth's faithful companion was Scripture.

Elizabeth married a wealthy businessman, and the young couple was blessed with five children. The young mother taught them as she had been taught: with a love for learning and a love for Scripture. When Elizabeth's husband became seriously ill, they went to Italy where they lived with a Catholic family and where they attended Mass in the family chapel. After her husband had died, Elizabeth learned more about the Catholic Faith as she attended daily Mass. The idea of receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist was especially consoling to Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth returned to the United States, she attended classes to learn more about the Catholic Faith, and was eventually baptized along with her children. Inspired by the Catholic Faith, and recognizing the importance of a good Catholic education, she began to homeschool her children and started teaching other children as well.

Elizabeth's new Catholic friends quickly witnessed a strong dedication to teaching her children, and began sending their children to her as she taught her own. In the years that followed, Elizabeth started an order of teaching sisters under the authority of the Bishop of Baltimore, who gave her land with a tiny chapel and a stone farmhouse for teaching girls.

In the wonderful and beautiful Providence of God, Elizabeth Seton was both a biological mother and a spiritual mother: Mother Seton's three daughters, and two sisters-in-law, became religious

sisters and helped her teach Catholic girls in the little school.

Mother Seton's pedagogic method for the students was simple. Recognizing that different children learn differently, she would explain concepts in several ways until each child understood them. In helping the children understand, she often used scripture references and Gospel parables.

## Curriculum of Love and Care

Like many of the Catholic homeschooling mothers of today, Elizabeth had no training as a teacher; no training, that is, outside the natural gifts and supernatural graces that God gives Catholic mothers which enable them to teach their children according to their needs and abilities. Like many Catholic homeschooling mothers of today, love and caring were the essence of her curriculum.

One great virtue of Mother Seton was her reliance on Jesus despite terrific difficulties. The little community of nuns experienced frequent sicknesses and deaths. Elizabeth was often sick herself, and one of her daughters became seriously ill and died. Meals were often infrequent, as the sisters waited until local families donated food. The nuns were constantly cold in the winters. Yet, young women continued to join their community. They were warmed by the love of God, and their sustenance was the Eucharist. All the while, Mother Seton endured.

The story of Elizabeth Ann Seton and her sisters should encourage us in our own struggles. They accepted their hardships as the way of the Cross. They had confidence that no problem would be too great to overcome if they sought the truth and kept and practiced their Faith.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us homeschooling mothers who want to give our children the spiritual weapons they need in a society confused about the boundaries between good and evil, or even worse, a society insistent that no such boundaries



exist. Help our Catholic children to desire a good Catholic education, not only for their own eternal welfare, but also for the welfare of the Church.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us homeschooling families to recognize our responsibility to keep the Catholic Faith strong in America. Pray for us that we may understand the importance of helping our children recognize the need to keep Christian values in our local, state, and national governments. Help our children to revive Christian values in our nation, to care for the poor and the weak, to be their brother's keeper, and to protect human persons at all stages of life.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us.



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

**Can I teach some subjects to two children, even if one is not in the “correct” grade level?**

Remember that when school authorities choose the grade level for students, it is based on the student's age, not the student's ability. The schools assume the individual student is on the same grade level in all subjects, which is evidently not true!

In home schooling, children can and should be placed on the grade level best for the student in each subject. Some subjects can be done with a lower or higher grade level sibling. For instance, a higher-level student in math could help a lower-level sibling, or an older student could help a younger sibling in a subject in which the older student needs repetition.

In addition, some subjects could be taught to two siblings simply to make it easier on the parent, such as art, music, religion, history, and science. In high school, a student in 9th grade could take a foreign language or a science course with an older sibling if the parent believes the younger student would succeed.

**I am not interested in having my high school student take online courses. Will you continue to have non-online courses?**

Very definitely! We also intend to make some online materials available to students not enrolled in online courses. For instance, the English professors' presentations on book reports will continue to be available to all students. We are currently recording video presentations for our Religion 11 Bible course. We believe this will become a very popular presentation.

**My son struggles with remembering past lessons. How can we help him do better on tests?**

Students at any grade level must review past lessons daily. Some subjects may need review of facts the student has learned over the years, such as basic addition and subtraction facts or the definition of a noun. When a student in high school is taking a foreign language or geometry or biology, for example, it is possible that nearly every lesson contains a new concept. In these subjects, especially in high school, students should spend the first 10 minutes of class time reviewing past lessons. Perhaps, not every past lesson must be reviewed every day, but every past lesson should be reviewed at least once a week.

*"Children can and should be placed on the grade level for each subject that is best for the student."*

**Every May, my children get “spring fever.” What can I do to encourage them to do their school assignments?**

This is true even in regular school classrooms. Some families take the children outside in the yard at a picnic table, go outside on the deck or porch, or even have class in a bright sunroom. As your children finish an assignment, you can give them a 10 minute “recess” break. However, you will need to be firm and enforce the rules regarding time for study and time for recreation.

**Where might I find more ideas for teaching my children?**

Seton has online Message Boards for parents to share ideas with other parents. Go to your MySeton page and then go to Resources. You will see the Message Board is the first listing. Just click to enter.

**Can you help my son with his 6th grade math problems?**

We want to help parents teach their children. However, we have been receiving calls from students asking for help with their daily math or science assignments. Students in fifth grade and up often need help from their parents to explain the process for their math problems, such as when to add, subtract, multiply, or divide. Our counselors can help parents, but we do not offer private tutoring lessons to students. If students need ongoing help with their math, parents should find tutors, retired teachers, or college students to help the student. There are also online tutoring services.

This is where parents share their ideas or ask other moms for help. For other ideas, check Seton's Parent Handbook and my book, Catholic Home Schooling, which are sent to every newly enrolled family.

**I am so busy with the family, the household chores, the little ones, and teaching lessons, how can I help my high school students?**

In many families, Dad is in charge of the high school students. He does not necessarily “teach” every lesson, but he oversees that the work is being done and helps where and when it is necessary. Also, many families have two students taking the same course or courses, so the students can help each other, quiz each other, and discuss the problems.

When Dad is not available, sometimes another relative, a grandparent, an uncle or aunt, or an older sibling can help. Sometimes, a tutor can come by once or twice a week, such as a math or science major in college, for a small fee. It is important to oversee or be aware of

the teaching situation when a non-family member is involved.

Some home schooling groups find a college professor to teach or advise a group of high school home schooling students once or twice a week for an advanced math, science, or foreign language course. This often can be done at the local parish. We notice some college professors offer classes to prepare for the SAT, ACT, or other college entrance-admissions tests. Being confident under pressure and keeping calm in taking timed tests is an important goal for home schooling students.

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### Do you sell extra books for my son who needs help learning Latin?

Don't forget the excellent Latin videos available, which present chapter lessons by the long-time Latin teacher Jeff Minick. These are available under Latin Course Resources. We also sell various books from our Seton Educational Media bookstore to help learn Latin at both elementary and high school levels. Go to our website and click on Book Catalog. Type in Latin, and you will find 80 Latin items listed for sale!

### Do you have suggestions for my high school son, who is having trouble taking six subjects in one day?

Some parents arrange for their high school student to do the work for only two courses at a time, for two or three months. This works better for some students. However, for a subject like math or a foreign language, your son would find it difficult to continue with the second year course months later. If you want this schedule, have him do his first-year Latin, for example, the last two months of the first year, and then immediately follow it with the first two months of the second year. This would be best for any foreign language and math courses.

Another schedule to consider is for your son to take high school courses over five years. Some students do this because they are concerned about obtaining the highest grades to win financial scholarships for college. Many students aiming for military academies or entering a seminary also take five years.

### Who can advise me about my son's high school courses for Seton graduation?

Nick Marmalejo at Ext. 125, Gene McGuirk at Ext. 117, and Bob Wiesner at Ext. 197 are Seton high school counselors available to help parents and students make decisions regarding required and optional high school courses. Parents should consult our counselors about optional courses. It is important for students to take courses geared toward the areas in which they are considering for majoring in college.



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.



AVE MARIA  
UNIVERSITY

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



AVE MARIA  
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BELMONT ABBEY  
COLLEGE



CHRISTENDOM  
COLLEGE



FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY  
OF STEUBENVILLE



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



NORTHEAST  
CATHOLIC COLLEGE



THOMAS AQUINAS  
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY  
OF DALLAS



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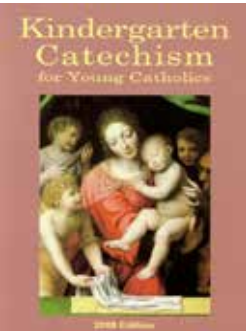
# The Seton Religion Program

Seton's entire curriculum is infused with the Catholic faith but in particular its religion books.

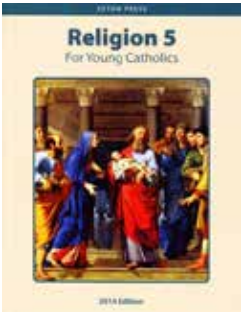
At each stage of their education, your children receive a solid foundation in the pillars of the Catholic faith. The catechism forms them and Holy Scripture and the Seton lesson plans give parents more information, suggestions, and activities to share with the children, and as always, counselors are available to answer questions and provide other support you may need.

## Primary Grades

In the primary grades (kindergarten through third) Seton religion focuses on teaching the child the very basics of the faith. Acquainting them with the life of Our Lord and exposing them to the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments, the story of creation, and preparing them for First Holy Communion.



The Seton religion books present the material in a story-telling way which is very appealing to children and helpful to mothers who may have read it several times with several children. When coupled with the supplemental materials St. Joseph's Catechism, various saint stories, Holy Trader Cards, and the Heroes of Grace program, a parent can delve more deeply into the truths of our faith at an appropriate age level. These resources will continue to bless your family, even as the children grow older. In the younger grades, the Religion program familiarizes them with the tenets of the faith while inspiring a love for Holy Mother Church.

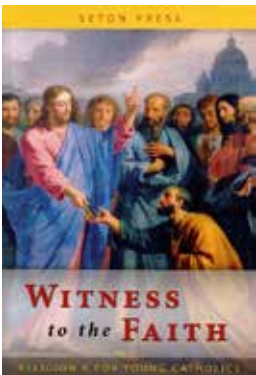


## Elementary Grades

In the elementary grades (fourth through sixth), Seton's religion program brings greater depth to the subject matter previously covered. The questions at the end of each chapter require more critical thinking and challenge children to not only memorize the facts but see them as a way of following Our Lord and living God's will for their lives. Also included in the curriculum are Bible history books that take the children step by step through salvation history. Quarterly tests help parents know how well the children are learning the material.

## Middle School Grades

Young people in the middle school years (seventh and eighth grades) are helped in preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation by rounding out their knowledge of the catechism and taking on the full 2000-year history of our church. In seventh grade the workbook, *Confirmation Preparation for Young Catholics*, is provided, written according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Roman Catechism, and the Baltimore Catechism which provides chapter review questions and the prayers that should be memorized to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. *Witness to the Faith*, Seton's eighth-grade text, is a comprehensive but highly readable book detailing the beginning with the struggles of the Hebrews and ending in the modern era. From this text, the young men and women will learn that God provides wondrously to the faithful.



*"Our son who is a freshman in college told me recently to never take his younger siblings out of the Seton Home Study School because the religion and English programs have given him the tools to not only succeed in his classes, but to stay firm in his faith, all while being super busy as a student athlete."*

— KARLA B. NEBRASKA

## High School

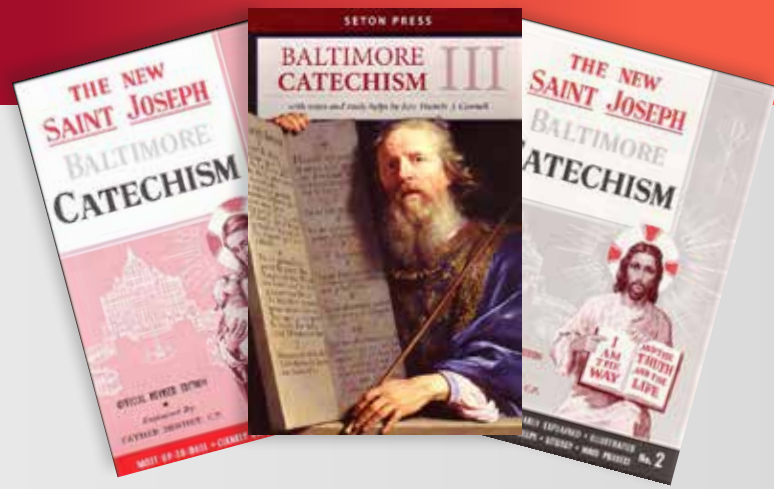
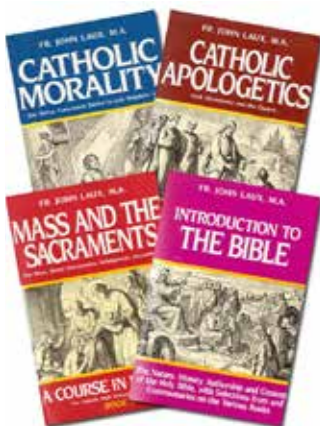
Seton's high school religion program makes sure your students not only fully know their faith, but also can defend it. We are well aware that children graduating and going forth in the world to colleges and jobs will necessarily be called upon to explain or defend their beliefs.

Over the course of the four years, students will commit to memory the Baltimore Catechism #3. They will delve deeply into the sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Bible (both doctrinally and spiritually). Supplemental information in the lesson plans covers, apologetics, the Incarnation, Suffering Servant, types of Christ and the Catholic philosophy about war, marriage, and family, pro-life issues, and social justice. At the end of four years of Seton's high school religion program, your graduate will be well versed in all aspects of Catholic teaching and can defend his or her faith should it become necessary.

In creating the religion program, Seton's authors and counselors paid particular attention to developing the child and, in doing so, sought to foster a great love of not only our faith, but also the accompanying traditions and devotions that are part of our heritage as Catholics. We encourage all Seton families to enjoy the religious studies and pay particular attention to the supplemental material available in the lesson plans.

The Seton counselors very much enjoy receiving emails containing pictures of All Saints' Day parties, First Holy Communicants, Confirmandi and, Advent and Lenten

observances, Christmas and Easter celebrations and, of course, all manner of devotion to Our Blessed Mother. Older students will leave their homeschool experience armed with a solid pro-life, theologically sound, magisterium-based education we believe will properly prepare them for life in this world and that which is to come.



## In Defense of the Baltimore Catechism

The Baltimore Catechism was, from 1885 to the 1960's, the gold standard for handing down the faith for parents and Catholic school teachers. Many generations learned the doctrine of Holy Mother Church backward and forward through very teachable format of the Catechism. Its simplicity was deceptive because it was a deep and full teaching of the faith. Those who spent the time and learned their catechism were well prepared to receive the sacraments, defend the teachings and pass it down to the next generation.

Unfortunately, the value and beauty of the Baltimore Catechism, and particularly the Baltimore Three Catechism, have been largely discounted in recent modern times and cast aside for less weighty works that seek less to inform than to engage. Parents can trust the Baltimore Catechism to teach the correct doctrine and never to lead their children astray. Unlike science, which is constantly evolving, or literature, which is a discipline constantly being added to, our faith and the precepts therein never alter. It is already perfect, and since it was handed down from Our Lord, it cannot be "improved upon".

Those that dismiss the Baltimore Catechism as dry and unappealing to young people would look foolish if they dismissed the teaching of multiplication facts or verb conjugations for the same reason. Educating does not always need to be entertaining and, while not hip and trendy, the Catechism allows young people, - especially high school students, - to encounter Christ fully through the perfection and beauty of His established Church.

To cast aside such a resource in favor of cartoon-laden light reading is to cast aside that beauty and, in doing so, deprive children of intimacy with the faith that will serve them well here on Earth and for all eternity.



**Mary Ellen Barrett** 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. She is a columnist for *The Long Island Catholic* and the new editor of the *Seton Magazine*.





# Carrying Forth a Family Tradition

BY ELIZABETH SEUFFERT

When Chris and Elizabeth Seuffert decided to homeschool their children, they were following a family tradition established by Chris' mother, Ginny Seuffert. Ginny is well-known to Seton moms as a homeschooling mother of twelve, an author, a speaker at homeschool conferences, and now, as a grandmother, who pitches in to help homeschool the grandkids.

Liz and Chris have been homeschooling since the beginning and are carrying forth the family tradition with their six children.

**Why is homeschooling important to your family?**

Homeschooling has helped us to hand down the important values that are part of our faith and our lives as a family. We can teach our children the values that come with being Catholics that they would not get if they were in school all day. Times

have changed, and the values outside our home have changed, too.

We also love the flexibility that comes with homeschooling. Getting six kids out the door early in the morning and driving them to school, I just can't imagine it, and, if you add keeping track of uniforms and lunches, it's even worse. Now we have time to begin our day calmly, and if we want to take a day off to join a fun field trip or have an outing, we can do that.

Also homeschooling is much more affordable than the Catholic schools in our area. Now we have room in the budget for the extra-curricular activities and sports we enjoy.

**What made you choose Seton Home Study School?**

Although I was not homeschooled, two of my sisters were, and my mother used Seton. My mother-in-law encouraged me to look at the materials and see how organized and thought-out they were. I went to a few conferences and looked at a lot of things, curricula and book choices, and Seton was so much easier for a mom to use. The work is organized, so that I could just open the lesson plans and start. Once you've finished the work for one quarter, you just move on to the next at your own pace. The fact there was no Common Core involved also made me very happy.

**How has Seton helped you with educational challenges?**

Homeschooling helped us discover that our daughter Isabella is dyslexic. We were able to find the help she needed early because of the individual attention she receives in homeschooling. She's doing great now, and I don't think things would have been as easy to diagnose and deal with if she had been in a large classroom of children, each with their own difficulties.

Our oldest child, Edward, is bright and is two grades ahead in math. We can suit the curriculum to his math abilities, whereas in a traditional school setting, he wouldn't be able to work at this advanced pace.

Another benefit is that our six-year-old, Christopher, would rather run and jump than sitting still. That's a very common situation in six-year-olds. Homeschooling allows us to have shorter lessons, so he gets plenty of play time and lots of opportunities to run around, so he can focus better when doing his work.

**What role does your Catholic faith play in your schooling and family life?**

It's central to our homeschooling and family life. We begin each day with Mass, which is right down the block, and when we get home, we are filled with grace to get started on our school time. Seton provides such beautiful Catholic materials





in all subjects, so it's easy to make the faith a big part of the day.

### How does a typical day go in your home?

I get up before the kids to get ready and fix breakfast. Everyone is dressed and fed, and we walk down the block to eight-thirty Mass. When Mass is over, we come home and get right to work, usually by nine o'clock. We work straight through until eleven-thirty, and then we break until about one. I try to get us out in the afternoons, if we can, and then we finish up anything that remains to be done. Children do better when there is a good schedule to follow.

### What advice would you give to other homeschooling families?

Having an organized workspace makes a big difference. De-clutter and make sure you have a nice place to do the work every day. Homeschooling gets messy, and staying on top of that really helps.

A little structure helps your day to be productive. Getting dressed shows kids that what we are doing is important, and having set times for things lets them know what to expect.

Another important thing I would advise is to schedule time to get out once in a while. Go to the park, meet other moms, see people. It's important to make time to socialize and see friends, so you don't feel lonely.

### Has your mother-in-law been part of your homeschooling?

She's been a huge help! When we started, our children were so close in age, I was overwhelmed at the idea of homeschooling. Having someone show you how it's done was so helpful. She taught Eddie first grade and taught him and Bella how to read. Her support and encouragement were such a big help. I'm very grateful.



## Grandma's Perspective

BY GINNY SEUFFERT

### Why should families choose to homeschool their children these days?

I am convinced there are no alternatives for most people other than to homeschool. Even if there are good Catholic schools in the area, they are unaffordable for most families. Homeschooling ensures young couples can teach their children all their subjects, ensuring the faith is handed down, without it costing tens of thousands of dollars each year.

### How was it jumping back into homeschooling to help your son's family?

It was really no sacrifice to help my son and daughter-in-law when the time came to begin homeschooling their children. I missed teaching the young years, and there is nothing better than sitting next to a small child as they are reading to you. I love it. So many young mothers have to have a job to pay back student loans or because property taxes are so high. I think it's important for grandmas to pitch in and give support.

### What Seton benefits do you highlight for those new to homeschooling?

Seton makes it easy for families to cover all the subjects and get an excellent education, since all the planning is done for them. When families keep switching learning programs, mothers are always re-inventing the wheel and learning the new program. The consistency of Seton and sticking with it ensures Mom and Dad are never overwhelmed, always have the right books on the shelves, and know what to teach and when. Seton provides so much support that, if there is a problem, you can just call and receive all the help you need.

### Do you have any other advice?

I saw my own grandmother every day when I was growing up. She lived on the same block and was a large part of our lives, always helping, always supporting. It was a very family-oriented culture, which we need to get back to. Grandparents must stop moving away from their children and help out when the grandkids come, so the family can thrive.





## Why Homeschool Moms Need a Sabbath Rest (and How to Get One)

BY PATRICE FAGNANT-MACARTHUR

Moms are on duty 24/7. Depending on the ages of one's children, it can be both a physically and mentally exhausting vocation. For homeschooling moms, the duty is magnified. After all, the children don't leave for six hours a day, five days a week. They are at home with us, and while most of us who have chosen or been chosen for this lifestyle would acknowledge all the blessings that accompany it, we also might acknowledge the challenges, such as lack of time for ourselves. A Sabbath rest may seem laughable. I live in the same world as you do. No one is volunteering to give me a full day off from my responsibilities on a weekly, or even a monthly basis. However, the commandment to "Keep Holy the Sabbath" doesn't have an asterisk after it saying it applies to everyone but homeschool moms. God calls us to rest as well.



When I started my mothering journey, the Sabbath rest wasn't something I gave much thought. I went to Mass every Sunday and figured that about covered it. After all, the kids still needed to be fed and washed and played with, and the food would not cook itself. With the very important exception of attending Mass, Sunday was a lot like any other day.

Then, a few years ago, I read Sabbath by Dan Allender. He invited readers to reclaim the Sabbath as a day dedicated to joy, to treat it as a feast day. "The Sabbath is a feast day that remembers our leisure in Eden and anticipates our play in the new heaven and earth with family, friends, and strangers for the sake of the glory of God." So, a few years ago, I began to make some changes. Here are some ideas to bring more Sabbath rest into your busy homeschooling life.

### 1. Take a break from technology

I use the computer for work and social purposes six days a week. From Saturday night at 6 pm to Sunday night at 6 pm, I shut it off. While I admit to occasionally using Facebook on Sundays to send a friend birthday wishes, mostly, I am unavailable. I don't check email. I don't scroll my social media feeds. I don't have a smartphone, so the temptation to compulsively check is less, but taking that break from the online world gives my brain a chance to rest. The online world goes on without me, and when I return to it, I am refreshed.

### 2. Try to do chores on other days

Yes, there will be dinner to be cooked and dishes to do and an accident may require some laundry to be done, but make a concerted effort to do the household tasks on other days. Set up a schedule if you must and then do all you can to stick with it so your Sundays give more time for relaxation and recreation.

### 3. Do something you enjoy

What brings you joy? Is there a hobby you relish but can never seem to make the time for because there is always so much that needs to get done? Make time for it on Sunday. For me, this includes a Saturday evening quilting session while we watch our family movie and doing some leisure reading on Sunday (as opposed to reading the books I have to read for work or for preparing our homeschool lessons). Your list will no doubt look different, but even if you can find only a half-hour or an hour of time to do something that has

been missing in your life, you will feel more refreshed and invigorated for the week to come.

You also can eat something you enjoy. Sunday is by definition a feast day. Save a special treat for that day, so you have something to look forward to and indulge in on the Sabbath day.

### 4. Take advantage of Sabbath moments

Priests usually have a very busy work day on Sundays. One priest I know takes Tuesday as his day of rest. That reinforced for me that a Sabbath rest doesn't always have to be on a Sunday, especially because Moms aren't likely to get a full day off. Instead, we can take advantage of a few minutes of rest throughout the week whenever we can find them. I often have taken advantage of the time while waiting for children at their activities to pray, do something I enjoy, or simply to get a much-needed mental break.

There are also ways for mom to get a break without having to pay a babysitter. Play dates can be arranged at either your own house or a friend's house. When children have friends over, they are usually occupied, giving moms a little time to themselves. This can be a blessing for both moms involved – the one hosting and the one whose child or children have left for a little while.

Maybe you are an early riser and able to get in some solitude for prayer and a cup of tea or coffee before the kids get up. By the same token, maybe your evenings after the young children are in bed can be an opportunity for relaxation.

### 5. Attend Mass or Adoration alone

Sunday Mass is of vital importance, but is not always a spiritually enriching experience when you attend with children. If you can attend Mass or Adoration alone during the week, you can nurture your own soul in a special way.

We homeschool moms work hard. It's important for us to take the time to rest, be refreshed, and celebrate life. Each Sunday is a feast day worth embracing. What are some ways you like to relax on Sundays?



Patrice Fagnant-MacArthur is a life-long Roman Catholic, homeschooling mom of two boys and an adopted young girl. The editor of Today's Catholic Homeschooling, she is also the author of "The Catholic Baby Name Book" and "Letters to Mary from a Young Mother," and has a Master's Degree in Applied Theology.

# Happy Mother's Day

It's never easy for anyone to write about his mother, but perhaps it is easier for me than for most. You see, if I had to describe Mary Kay Clark in a single word, it would be an easy task. That word is Catholic.

The oldest in a family of nine, Mary Kay Lynch had the responsibility of almost being a second mother to lots of her brothers and sisters. To this day, when she and her brothers and sisters get together, they stand when she comes in the room and then sit back down a little straighter in their chairs. Funny thing is, I doubt they even notice they're doing it, but I notice. They instinctively respect her, and I think what they respect more than any other quality is her unwavering Catholicity. Over the years, they're not the only ones to have noticed.

In the 1950's, when my mother was dating my father, Bruce Clark, they went on exactly two dates before she discovered that he was not Catholic, and so she informed him that she could not date him anymore. My mother must have expected that this would end the relationship; however, that's when the relationship really began. To her astonishment, my father responded: "OK. How can I become Catholic?" and quickly began taking RCIA classes. My father might have been the easiest conversion story in ecclesiastical history.

In the 1960's, when some renegade Catholic parishes decided that they would change their form of worship in defiance of Rome, my mother decided that it was time to breathe with the other lung, and she and Dad began taking their family to the Byzantine Catholic Church.

In the 1970's, when many schools decided they would no longer teach the authentic Catholic Faith in the classroom, she brought her children home. In the 1980's, she helped inaugurate the biggest shift in Catholic education since the introduction of the parochial school, as she helped Catholic families across the world bring their own children home, too. At Seton, my mother was—and remains—insistent on one thing: whether it's math or literature or science or art, every subject must be Catholic.

Of course, she was insistent on another

universal: every one of her children must be Catholic. And that Faith—that love of the Faith and that sense of the Faith—was her greatest gift to her children. When I was very young, Mom often brought me to weekday liturgies, when it was easier to help me understand what was taking place. She was careful to tell me about the moment of Consecration and how important that was. I still remember.

Growing up, our homeschool day involved lots of prayer. After breakfast, we said our Morning Offering, followed by Mom's famous litany of saints. And when I say "litany," I mean that in its fullest sense. She would name a saint, and we would respond, "Pray for us." Saint Joseph, pray for us. Saint Philomena, pray for us. Saint John the Baptist, pray for us, and so on, with the list including dozens of saints. With so many saints on her list, my brother once joked that my mom will be in charge of Heaven's morning roll call. Of course, part of the reason for this is that my mother had relics of a lot of these saints. As a poor Catholic family, we had very little wealth, but my mother had one treasure that adorned our mantle: reliquaries. And we prayed in front of them every day. At the middle of our homeschool day, she knelt and led us in the Rosary, with each of us getting a chance to lead a decade. My mom also loved novenas. When I was about seven-years-old, my father lost his job so my mother led us in a nine-hour novena, during which she woke us up a few times during the night—praying, on the hour, that Dad would find another job soon.

My mom taught us to turn to God in our "prayers, works, joys, and sufferings." And never to turn away.

Motherhood is a gift—not a loan. And so, we children could not and cannot pay back our mothers. But I know that the first great gift that I can give my mother is to stay true to the Catholic Faith—to stay true to truth. And the second gift I can offer is to pass along that Faith to my own children. That is proper and fitting. As Emerson put it: "In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we



receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody."

In my mom's case, those "somebodies" are her grandchildren. And I hope she realizes that, with all her grandchildren, there is not a single one who does not, in some way, owe his or her love of the Catholic Faith to their grandmother. Just as her own children do.

Happy Mother's Day, Mom!

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.



# Gleam of Brightness

BY DOM ALBAN BAKER



Described as a “gleam of brightness” by her biographer, Barbara Acarie (1566 - 1618) serves as a welcome consolation and inspiration to mothers, whose sacrificial and life-giving love we celebrate in a special way on May 14. Barbara raised six children in her home, training them in supernatural and natural virtue in such a way that she offers homeschooling mothers much to consider. In particular, Barbara was a model of a woman who took her children’s upbringing seriously, striving to help children love virtue, and most importantly, love God.

Barbara was married at a very young age and had given birth to her six children, Nicholas, Marie, Pierre, Jehan, Marguerite, and Genevieve, by the time she was 28. Her program was simple—“My one ambition,” she was heard to say, “is that my children should be good”—but her execution of that plan revealed a very prudent mind and generous, sacrificial heart. Of the many aspects of her maternal wisdom and love that could be spoken of, her love of truth, her desire for obedience and her method of teaching religion stand out. Above all, Barbara sought that her children should internalize the virtues she valued most, and she helped them to do so by helping them love what she loved.

Honesty is the mark of a mature morality because a person who speaks the truth no matter the circumstances knows that truth is more important than punishment. It is a remarkable child (and adult!) who tells the truth even when it incriminates him or her. Barbara knew of this, and to teach her children to love truth above all else, especially the mere façade of goodness and holiness, she encouraged them to adhere to truth even in difficult circumstances. “You may lose all your own things, and break everything that belongs to me in the house,” she would say, “and if you come honestly and tell me, I will forgive you most readily; but I will never pass over the slightest lapse in truth.”

One remarkable way she brought this to bear on her household was the daily custom, before the children went to bed, of having each review his or her day with her, including a confession of sins. Since this confession was invariably accompanied by her loving presence and support, the children learned that their sins were not as grave as their hiding of them or acting as if they could be overcome without exposing them to the light. Barbara’s sons and daughters learned to assimilate her love of truth in a living manner.

If unflinching honesty is rare in a child, more so is happy obedience, and yet Barbara strove to foster that in her children as well. It is written of her that “she required of them, invariably, prompt and willing obedience; but she never rested till her children gave her that hearty, cheerful, affectionate obedience out of which love has cast all fear.” The goal was not obedience for its own sake, just as the goal was not the chimera of honesty, but the cheerful obedience St. Paul praises when he says, “God loves a cheerful giver.” Barbara encouraged this first by her generosity with the children. During their illnesses, she would care for them for the entire duration (a novelty given her social status); she made sure their periods of play were carefree and happy, playing with them even when she was tired or occupied with more pressing concerns; she would attend to them first even when habitual illness overtook her in middle age. These displays of affection made it evident to the children that their mother loved them very much, and made them more open to her requests, even when challenging or contrary to their will, for they noticed she did things for them even when she was not up to it. Also, when they obeyed, especially with the right spirit, she showed her satisfaction so clearly that they were spurred on to further generosity of heart.

Beyond her special love of honesty and obedience, Barbara was notable for her way of passing on the faith. As already mentioned,

she required her children to confess their daily sins to her in the evening of each day, and she used these moments to form their consciences: to awaken them to unseen faults or deeper reasons for their behavior, and to thwart scrupulosity. Daily Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, readings from saints’ lives, and devotion to the Mother of God were daily portions of the house’s routine. However, her most extraordinary practice was that of having her older children visit her in her room each afternoon to speak of holy things.

Her biographer writes, “This admirable mother knew well that, unless their thoughts were very early turned heavenward, this world and outward things would wholly engross their minds and veil eternity from them.” Barbara would converse with them about what they had learned from their daily catechism and encourage them to further and deeper consideration by asking them to teach one another while she listened attentively to their answers and ideas. Once again, her loving devotion to them and their maturation led them to greater and more lasting love of God, as well as whatever is holy and good.

In her later years, Barbara assisted greatly in the founding of significant Carmelite convents in her native France, and entered one of those convents when her husband died in 1613, five years before her death. Her own daughter, a fellow Carmelite, said that “she had never learned anything more perfect in the convent than she had practiced long before in her own mother’s house.” May this amazing mother, beatified in 1791, be a shining example to all homeschooling mothers and accompany and console them by her holy prayers.



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



# Truth is the Way

The other day, a prominent Churchman made the startling assertion that Christ's teaching on marriage was rather murky, gray, and indeterminate in character. It is not clear just what part of "Let no man put asunder!" can be interpreted loosely; the good Father left that point unexplained. By recent coincidence, a young lady enrolled in Seton called with Religion 10 questions regarding some of the finer points of moral teaching. Her questions were probing, intelligent, and obviously geared toward actually grasping the real truth about moral determination. The difference between the two was striking.

Our young lady has grasped the essential point of all education, that ultimately, Truth is One. Although it is true that there are many questions left open to personal interpretation, there are matters which have long since been settled by both Church and society. Jesus Christ IS Truth, after all, as well as Life and Light. There is no place in God's Light for murkiness, or grayness, or a lack of clarity; all is illuminated. We are told that in the final analysis, there is indeed a sharp distinction between sheep and goats. There are no sheep-goat hybrids, no muddling of species, no murkiness, and no gray areas between the two.

Grayness and murkiness can lead only to dithering, indecision, and confusion, and we are, on the contrary, bidden to be bold in our proclamation and defense of truth. Like this young lady, let us be relentless in our pursuit of Truth and decisively set aside that lazy tendency to regard truth as murky, gray, and indeterminate.



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



## SUMMER QUARTER ESSAY CONTEST DEADLINE: MAY 31, 2017

Registration open to enrolled Seton high school students, grades 9-12. **Theme: My Favorite Seton Course.** Word count should be no more than 800 words. Judging will focus on clarity of thought, use of the essay format, and adherence to the topic theme. Winners from each grade may be selected. First place prize: \$100. Second place: \$50. More details online.

[bayleybulletin.com/contest](http://bayleybulletin.com/contest)





# 2017 Catholic Homeschooling Conferences

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

## **NC, Charlotte, May 19-20, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Carolina Homeschool Conference**

Belmont Abbey College – Student Commons  
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road  
Belmont, NC 28012  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

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

## **GA, Atlanta, May 26, 2017 (Fri.) IHM Georgia Homeschool Conference**

St. Andrew Catholic Church – Family Center  
675 Riverside Road  
Roswell, GA 30075  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm

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

## **FL, Jacksonville June 2, 2017 (Fri.) IHM Jacksonville Homeschool Conference**

Adam W. Herbert University Center  
12000 Alumni Drive  
Jacksonville, FL 32224  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm

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

## **MN, St. Paul, June 2-3, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) 19th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair**

University of St. Thomas  
2115 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105  
Fri.: 4 pm – 8:30 pm  
Sat.: 8 am – 5 pm

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

## **FL, Tampa, June 8-9, 2017 (Thu.-Fri.) IHM Tampa Homeschool Conference**

St. Lawrence Church – Higgins Hall  
5225 North Himes Avenue  
Tampa, FL 33614  
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Fri.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

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

## **MO, Kansas City, June 9-10, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) 13th Annual Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers & Curriculum Fair**

St. Charles Borromeo Parish  
900 NE Shady Lane Drive  
Kansas City, MO 64118  
Fri.: 2 pm – 9 pm  
Sat.: 9 am – 4 pm

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

## **TX, Houston, June 9-10, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) Houston ARCH Homeschool & Parent Conference**

University of St. Thomas — Jerabeck Athletic Center  
3800 Montrose Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77006  
Fri.: 1 pm – 7 pm Sat.: 9 am – 5 pm

[www.homeschool-life.com/2034](http://www.homeschool-life.com/2034)

## **LA, Lafayette, June 16, 2017 (Fri.) IHM Lafayette Homeschool Conference**

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

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

## **MI, Lansing, June 16-17, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Michigan Homeschool Conference**

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

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

## **VA, Fredericksburg, June 23-24, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM National Homeschool Conference**

Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center  
2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
Fri.: 9 am – 9 pm Sat.: 9 am – 4:30 pm

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

## **CA, Costa Mesa, June 24, 2017 (Sat.) Southern California Catholic Home Educators (SCCHE) 17th Annual Conference & Curriculum Fair**

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
1015 Baker Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
Sat.: 8 am – 4 pm

[sccheregistration-rita@yahoo.com](mailto:sccheregistration-rita@yahoo.com)

## **CO, Denver, June 29, 2017 (Thu.) IHM Colorado Homeschool Conference**

St. Mary Catholic Parish – Marian Hall  
6853 S. Prince Street  
Littleton, CO 80210  
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm

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

## **IL, Chicago, July 6-7, 2017 (Thu.-Fri.) IHM Chicago Homeschool Conference**

Bobak's Signature Events & Conference Center  
6440 Double Eagle Drive  
Woodridge, IL 60517  
Thu.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Fri.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

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

## **OH, Dayton, July 14-15, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Dayton Homeschool Conference**

St. Peter's Catholic Church – Family Life Center  
6161 Chambersburg Road  
Huber Heights, OH 45424  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

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

## **OH, Cleveland, July 21-22, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM Cleveland Homeschool Conference**

St. Adalbert's Parish — Keller Center  
66 Adalbert Street  
Berea, OH 44017  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

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

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POPE FRANCIS

GENERAL AUDIENCE

WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2015

A society without mothers would be a dehumanized society, for mothers are always, even in the worst moments, witnesses of tenderness, dedication and moral strength. Mothers often pass on the deepest sense of religious practice: in a human being's life, the value of faith is inscribed in the first prayers, the first acts of devotion that a child learns.

It is a message that believing mothers are able to pass on without much explanation: these come later, but the seed of faith is those early precious moments.

Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth.