

# Seton



# MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

SETONMAGAZINE.COM | JULY 2017



## Called to Homeschool

Building Priceless Faith Traditions

pg 10



## Seton's 2017 Graduation

PAGES 6-9

### **You Can Make A Difference**

Dr. Mary Kay Clark - pg 3

### **Seton Summer Reading Club**

Details - pg 4

### **Graduating from Ourselves**

John Clark - pg 12

Executive Editor

Dr. Mary Kay Clark

Editors

Kevin Clark  
Mary Ellen Barrett

Marketing Director

Jim Shanley

Design & Layout

Joe Sparks  
Emily Prause

Contributing Writers

Mary Ellen Barrett  
Fr. Vincent Bork  
John Clark  
Jeff Minick  
Therese Steinel

Vol. 5, No. 6, July 2017

[www.setonmagazine.com](http://www.setonmagazine.com)

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

Phone: (540) 636-9990

Fax: (540) 636-1602

[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

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

Subscription Information:

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

Cover photo:

Therese, Rebecca, and Richard Steinel



SETON EMAILS

CUSTOMER SERVICE

[custserv@setonhome.org](mailto:custserv@setonhome.org)

COUNSELORS

[counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org)

ADMISSIONS

[admissions@setonhome.org](mailto:admissions@setonhome.org)

GRADING

[grading@setonhome.org](mailto:grading@setonhome.org)

GENERAL INFORMATION

[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

MY SETON

[myseton@setonhome.org](mailto:myseton@setonhome.org)

STANDARDIZED TESTING

[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)

SPECIAL SERVICES

[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)



Letter from the Editor

Since early May, it's been all graduation, all the time, at Seton Home Study School. We held the 2017 Seton graduation ceremony here in Front Royal at the end of May. As you can imagine, an extraordinary amount of work goes into making that weekend as special and memorable as possible for the students and their families.

When the weekend ends, photos and stories are gathered for this Graduation issue which we are so happy to share with you. It's a busy, happy time. If you are sharing pictures of the graduation on social media, use the hashtag #setonhomegrad so we can all share the joy!

In this issue, Mrs. Therese Steinel, a longtime Seton mom, shares the story of how her family came to homeschool and the great benefits they have reaped as a result. Daughter Rebecca, Seton Class of 2017, joins Sara, Class of 2015, as a Seton grad. Check out the pictures of their home aviary. It's amazing!

Also in this issue, in addition to her timely Q & A, Dr. Clark shares highlights of her commencement speech. John Clark addresses a truth that all our graduates must face and I have an idea to share with you about a faculty meeting you could schedule this summer. It's a teacher/principal summit, if you will, otherwise known as a date night.

Enjoy your long and pleasant summer days! I hope parents are finding time to refresh and renew their commitment to homeschooling their children. Gray and cold winter days will be upon us before we can blink an eye, so enjoy the warm weather. May God shower blessings upon your families!

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Barrett



SETON PHONE DIRECTORY

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL  
866-280-1930

SETON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA  
866-241-8819

STANDARDIZED TESTING  
800-542-1066

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

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

GENERAL COUNSELING  
540-622-5526  
Cecilia Sauer

ELEMENTARY GRADING  
540-622-5563  
Bruce Hacker  
Jacinta Black

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

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION  
540-635-4728  
Deacon Gene McGuirk

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

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC COUNSELING  
540-635-4728  
Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING  
540-622-5525  
Rhonda Way

HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY & AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
540-622-5571  
Bruce Clark

HIGH SCHOOL RELIGION  
540-622-8478  
Bob Wiesner

HIGH SCHOOL MATH & SCIENCE  
540-622-5557  
Tom Herlihy

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH & LITERATURE  
540-622-5560  
Walker Solis  
Elizabeth Wagner

HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH & FRENCH  
540-622-5537  
Manuel Vicente

HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER COURSES  
540-622-5536  
Kevin Clark

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE, COURSE APPROVAL, INDEPENDENT STUDIES  
540-636-2238  
Nick Marmalejo  
540-622-8478  
Bob Wiesner

# You Can Make A Difference

## 2017 Graduation Speech

I am sure you families recognize that each of the students on this stage has accomplished something exceptional. Graduating from Seton is a great academic achievement, but most importantly, it is a spiritual accomplishment.

Graduation from Seton is also a challenge for the future. Because now, you Seton graduates are expected to take what you have learned at home, and go out into a world that is hostile to Christianity.

I hope that some of you graduates choose to work in political life in order to change that hostility in our nation. There is no doubt, politics today has a bad name. That's a shame. But if politics can be defined as governing with concern for the eternal welfare of others, politics can be called an apostolate.

Your history and government classes have taught you that political rulers can be good, they can be great, they can be caring for the poor and the needy. Many political rulers were saints, rulers who cared about the poor and disadvantaged, such as Saint King Louis IX, Saint King Edward the Confessor, and Saint Queen Margaret of Scotland. The good rulers in history had this one thing in common: they loved and served the people of their nations.

Working in politics is not easy; it may not be comfortable; but working in politics can help people, children of God who often cannot help themselves. I can tell you this first hand.

I have worked or volunteered in politics since I was in grade school, helping my mom and dad in political campaigns. I have been involved in American politics for more than a quarter of our nation's history. And I can assure you this: you can change things for the better; you can make a difference. You can make a difference for good in your town, in your county, in your state, and even in your country.

As Pope Francis recently wrote, politics is a lofty calling. The purpose of government



is to promote the common good. Graduates, consider getting involved in politics and remind our leaders in government ...what they are supposed to be doing: protecting citizens' rights to practice their Faith, and especially protecting the unborn citizens.

Seton Graduates, there is no one better than you to serve the American people! As some of you go on to higher education, to college, and perhaps to graduate school, you will discover that the courses you took at Seton gave you a better grasp of the concepts of justice, human rights, and the natural law.

Graduates, we need you to be involved in making America a Christian nation again. If you have the opportunity, be involved in your community, promoting truth and honesty and justice.

If you can, run for office and enter politics. Listen to Pope Francis as he would phrase it in English: make politics lofty again, promoting truth and the right to life.

### The Father's Role

Today gives me the opportunity to recognize some important people who are responsible for you graduates being here today. Every year, we talk about the Moms in the homeschooling process. And no doubt, the homeschooling Moms in this audience are heroes.

But so often when we talk about homeschooling, we forget about the Dads. We hand a diploma to the students, we congratulate the Moms, but so often, we forget Dads. The truth is that Dads are

happy that their wives and children receive all the credit. But today I want to take the time to thank the Dads.

Let me tell you that over the years, I have spoken to thousands of Catholic homeschooling families. And homeschooling is most successful with the support of Dads, in lots of different ways.

When I think of homeschooling fathers, I think of Saint Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. Lest we forget, Saint Joseph was a homeschool Dad, too!

Saint Joseph was the protector and provider of Jesus and Mary. Saint Joseph was the guardian of the King and Queen of Heaven. Yet none of the four Gospels includes a single word spoken by St. Joseph. However, Joseph listened; Joseph provided; Joseph supported; Joseph loved; Joseph served.

We sometimes forget how important Saint Joseph is to salvation history. And sometimes people forget how important homeschool Dads are, too. Dads, don't forget: you are heroes too.

In closing, on behalf of everyone at Seton: congratulations to you MOMS, too, and Congratulations to you GRADUATES! AND Congratulations to all others in your family who helped you graduates reach this important graduation day! And thank you for letting us at Seton be a part of your lives. THANK YOU, and God Bless you all.

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

# your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

## **My children still have not finished their work for this past year. They want a vacation. What do you recommend?**

As a parent, you should decide what is best. You might impress on your children, however, that if they don't finish up now, they will feel more pressure next year. Consider having them do the math and any subject which may be difficult for your children to "catch up" in the fall.

## **Can my high school daughter take a Seton course over the summer?**

Yes, Seton offers individual or single course enrollments for all grade levels throughout the year. Summer is a good time to take any subject that needs continuing practice, such as a math or foreign language course.

## **My son wants a break from the schooling over the summer. Is there a problem if he finishes up his grade work in the fall?**

There is no problem with Seton for whatever you choose for your son in the summer. However, some subjects may be difficult for him if he takes off three months, especially in math and reading if he is still in a lower grade level.

Some families encourage the children to take along some of their books when they are traveling in the car. You can encourage your son by asking questions about the topics or even treating him for doing an assignment.

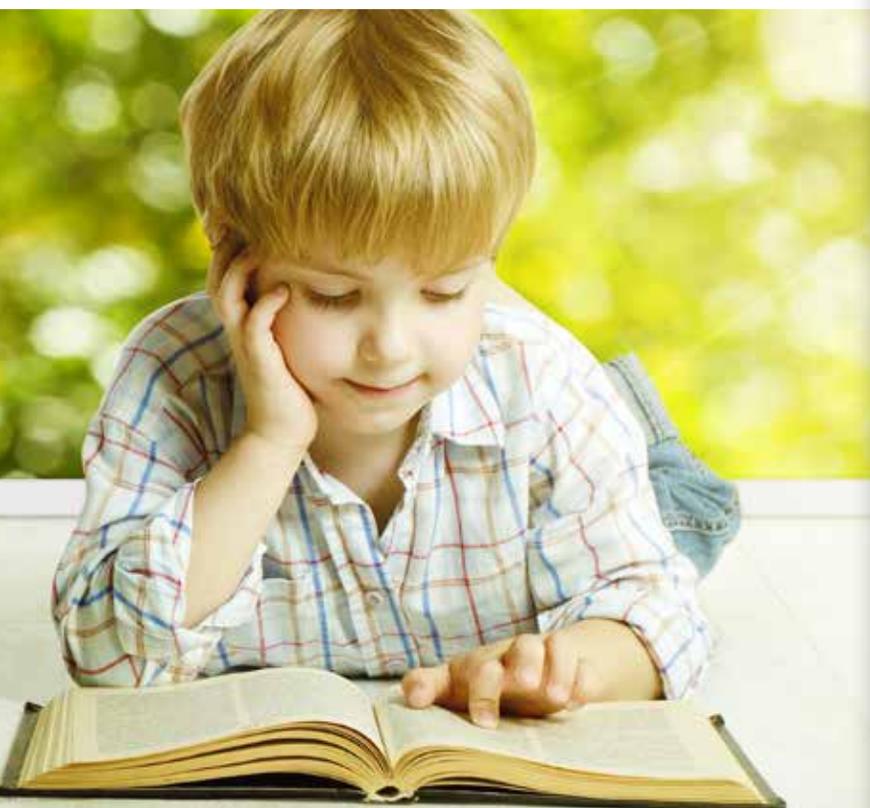
## **Should I insist my children do some reading over the summertime?**

A good approach might be to encourage them to join a library reading club over the

summer. The library allows the children to read the books of their choice, and usually gives a "reward" of some kind.

Otherwise, you might want to give a reward for every book read over the summer. Be sure to review any fiction as these days, they tend to deal with unpleasant situations. You might give your children a dollar to read non-fiction, such as biographies or history or science books.

I encourage you to check the Seton Summer Book Club as a way to keep up reading skills over the summer. You will find a wide selection of literature from early elementary to high school that the Seton bookstore and our Academic Counselors have gathered. You can register in the Club for free and we will send you an email with your Book List.



## *The Seton Summer Reading Club*

**A fun way to keep up reading skills over the summer!**

The Summer Reading Club helps parents encourage their kids to keep reading when school is out. From early elementary to high school, you'll find books for students of all ages to choose from. The Club runs until August 31, 2017.

More details online!

[setonbooks.com/summerreading](http://setonbooks.com/summerreading)

### **My son can do all the math in the math book for his grade level. Can he skip to the next level math book?**

Usually students struggle if they skip a grade level in math. You might have your son take all the end-of-chapter tests at the lower level, and if he has perfect or nearly perfect scores, then you may advance him to the next level.

*In later years, you will be rewarded with children who love you because you cared and made sacrifices to strengthen their Faith in a secular society.*

### **My son wants to attend a technical school after graduation. Is there any disadvantage with taking the General Diploma track?**

Seton has three high school diploma options to meet the needs of our entire student body. All adhere to the high standard Seton has always expected of our students. These diploma tracks are General, Academic, and Advanced.

The General Diploma is an option for students that might not necessarily be looking to attend four year university or college immediately out of high school, or might be considering going to local community colleges or vocational schools.

The overall credit requirement is the same as the Academic diploma, 22 credits, but the foreign language requirement is dropped.

The English requirement for the General track is four English or literature courses rather than the five required in the Academic track. Grammar and Composition is considered a separate type of course and is required in both tracks.

The Academic Diploma is the standard diploma that the great majority of our students seek and which is in line with the requirements for most colleges or universities.

In this track, Seton requires three years of math and three years of Science and a half credit of Economics. Otherwise, everything else is the same as our past diploma requirements.

The Advanced Academic diploma is a new program Seton instituted in 2014 in an attempt to offer an organized path towards taking Seton's more rigorous courses while

rewarding students for that extra work. Many states have Advanced Diplomas, and Seton's is based on the Virginia version.

With added Math, Science, and Language requirements, this diploma is meant for students who might be trying to get into programs related to those fields, such as engineering, or into upper echelon schools such as Ivy Leagues or Military Academies.

Remember that you are not locked into a diploma option. If a student is enrolled for the Advanced Diploma and wants to switch over to either the Academic or General Diploma, that is perfectly acceptable.

You will find more about choosing a Diploma track on the Seton website or in the high school catalog. If you have further questions, contact Mr. Nick Marmalejo, our high school counselor, at 540-636-2238 or nmarmalejo@setonhome.org.

### **My children are in 6th and 3rd grade. Can they work on their own with your lessons plans so I can take care of the baby?**

It is rare for children to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic entirely on their own. Perhaps a relative would come to your home to help with the schooling and/or with babysitting. Some moms have learned to keep the babies nearby, and to have the older ones help with the younger ones. It takes patience.

Focus on the essential subjects, and perhaps Dad can help in the evenings and on weekends with other subjects. You may not appreciate these years as much as you hoped, but in later years, you will be rewarded with children who love you because you cared and made sacrifices to strengthen their Faith in a secular society.

### **Can my son pick his own book for a book report?**

Because our graders need to be familiar with the books for the reports they are grading, we need the students to write reports on the books we have listed, or sent to the student. You can check our Elementary Catalog for the Book Report Choices. The complete list for grades 4 – 8 is on page 31.



Dr. Mary Kay Clark has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes columns for the *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.



CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS



BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE

TRUST IN ALL THINGS GOD HAS BE SOVEREIGN



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



NORTHEAST CATHOLIC COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS HOUSTON



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE



# Congratulations

Seton Graduates of 2017





"Seton Graduates, there is no one better than you to serve the American people! We need you to be involved in making America a Christian nation again. If you have the opportunity, be involved in your community, promoting truth and honesty and justice."

*Dr. Mary Kay Clark  
2017 Graduation Speech*

# What Next?

## A Look at This Year's Graduates

BY JEFF MINICK



Stiff winds, rain-soaked grass, and a grey sky were no match for the exuberance of the 130 Seton Home Study graduates and their families and friends who gathered in Front Royal the last weekend in May to celebrate commencement.

On Friday, the graduates attended a Family Fest at Seton, where they took guided tours of the facilities, met counselors and administrators, and visited on the lawn while enjoying pizza, soft drinks, and other treats. The younger set delighted in the pony rides and the inflatable bounce houses while the older students kicked soccer balls, passed footballs, and tried their hand at cornhole.

On Saturday, the graduates and their families—the crowd ran to over 1,000 people—filled the auditorium of Skyline High School. Following a moment of silence for Father Constantine, who served Seton for over twenty years before passing away this fall, Father Vincent Bork offered the invocation. Rich Walker, a Seton Board member, delivered the opening remarks and acted as master of ceremonies for the event.

Dr. Mary Kay Clark spoke to the graduates and their families about the importance of carrying their Catholic faith into the world, encouraging them to become more involved politically in their communities.

In his commencement address, Joseph Pearce, biographer of such Catholic writers as J.R.R. Tolkien and G.K. Chesterton, reminded his listeners of the importance of the humanities in our lives, stating that “a good education is health food for the mind and soul” and that continuing such an education should be a life-long ambition. Deacon Gene McGuirk, head of Seton’s counseling department, awarded the diplomas and gave the closing benediction.

The festivities celebrating the end of high school for these students





## Seton alumni. Bright flames of hope in a sometimes dark world.

concluded with a catered reception and a family dance in the Skyline gymnasium.

But commencement, of course, means not an ending but a beginning, and the plans and dreams of these students were as varied as their personalities.

I had the pleasure of speaking with several of the graduates at the Graduation weekend and was inspired by their future plans.

Sebastian Ohmer, for example, son of Marc and Michele of New York and oldest brother of five younger siblings, is off to Binghamton University to study neuroscience. He credits Seton's math and science courses for preparing him for this challenge.

Peter Wilson, son of Larry and Michelle and the oldest brother of seven siblings, will enter Franciscan University, where he hopes to double major in economics and finance.

Michelina Eng, daughter of Marcellina and John of New Windsor, New York, first enrolled in Seton as a kindergartener. She has her eye on the fashion world. When asked whether she had designed any clothing, she laughed. "I made this dress," she said, pointing to her lovely, purple swirled outfit.

In contrast to Michelina, who spent her entire elementary and secondary education with Seton, homeschooler Olivia Asso-Gonzalez entered the Seton program as a senior, looking for more structure and accreditation. Olivia is working for a year before entering school to become a physical therapist.

Kathryn Moore of Illinois, daughter of Don and Nancy and the oldest of four girls, is off to Texas A&M University to study architecture. She considered a number of colleges, all of which, she said, knew and spoke highly of Seton. "I chose Texas A&M for several reasons," she said. "It's more conservative than some of the other schools. It has a great Catholic center, one of the top-ranked in the nation, and an extensive alumni network."

After granting her admission, Miss Moore further explained, Texas A&M informed her she must pay out-of-state tuition, an amount beyond her means. She called the head of the architecture school, explained her situation and why she wanted to attend Texas A&M, and received a return call a week later offering her admittance as an in-state student along with other financial

help. Persistence and grit are byproducts of a Seton education.

Many other graduates are off to Catholic colleges and universities, institutions such as Christendom, Franciscan, Thomas Aquinas, and Belmont Abby. Joseph Gerardi will attend the United States Military Academy. Others intend to study subjects as varied as herpetology, kinesiology, and graphic design. Finally, five of the graduates in attendance plan to enter the priesthood or religious life.

The written program for the commencement exercises included brief biographies of the students, listing their plans and their accomplishments. With their dreams and their dizzying array of talents, these young people and the many graduates unable to attend the ceremony offer wonderful gifts to a fallen world.



**Jeff Minick** is the Latin Counselor at Seton Home Study School. He has spent the last twenty-five years teaching Henle Latin to hundreds of Home-educated students. He is the father of four, all of whom were homeschooled, and grandfather to twenty-one, three of whom he homeschools.



# Called to Homeschool

## Building Priceless Faith Traditions

BY THERESA STEINEL

We have just completed our twelfth year of homeschooling, and what a wonderful ride it has been! Before we knew about homeschooling, our two oldest children were attending Catholic school. After a tragedy struck my husband and his family, I prayed for the Lord to direct us to a better, more peaceful way of life. I clearly felt God's call to homeschool our children.

Since homeschooling was not something we ever knew or spoke about, you can imagine my husband's surprise and skepticism as I bravely exclaimed to him at 5:00 a.m. one summer morning that "I think the Lord is calling us to homeschool our kids!" After ten days of intense prayer and investigation into homeschooling, we wrote an eight page list of pros and cons. On day eleven, as we sat down in a coffee shop and reviewed the pros and cons, it became clear

to us that homeschooling was the choice for our family.

The next step was to choose a curriculum. Somehow, the Lord put us on the path to a Catholic homeschooling mom who stressed the importance of using a Catholic curriculum - she advocated strongly for the Seton Home Study School. We loved the fact that everything we needed in order to give our children a complete education was included under one umbrella. We also loved the fact that Seton is accredited and comes complete with grading and a transcript. There is also the comfort and confidence in the fact that Seton is available by phone for help in any subject.

Over the years, Seton has not just been there for me academically, but also spiritually and emotionally. Several of the staff members have become friends and confidants that I have turned to in difficult times. I was also blessed to have enjoyed many a conversation with our beloved Father Constantine, God rest his soul. So not only is the Seton staff there for my kids, but at times they are my sanity check as well!

Homeschooling is a wonderful way of life. Academics aside, how truly magnificent it is that my kids have been able to attend daily

Mass and pray at random times throughout the day; that is just priceless. My first and foremost goal in life is to raise saints for God and homeschooling is making it easier for me to accomplish that goal.

### Unexpected Benefits

Homeschooling has allowed me to show my faith and teach the faith to my children in a way that I never could have if they were in a school. Homeschooling has also blessed us with the privilege of doing special things like attending the annual March for Life in Washington DC, and going on field trips and vacations at off-times when most other kids are in school! We have the flexibility to reach out to those in need. We have our very own aviary and watched a dozen birds hatch right in our very own home!

Homeschooling makes it easier for the children to delve deeply into their unique talents they may not have had the time to fully explore until college, like Sara's directing of the children's choir, Rebecca's extensive piano rehearsals, Hannah's theater and stepping up at just 15 years old to direct the church choir, and little Ricky's amazing repertoire of card tricks and memorization of Pi to 40 digits!

My husband and I both received Masters Degrees in Engineering and Computer Science, so it is very important to us that the





kids excel in math. After hearing such great success stories with Saxon Math, we decided to do Saxon from the start. We purchased the Saxon disks for each class and our children use the disks for their math lesson. We have learned that math is something that needs to be done first thing in the morning while the kids are the most alert. It has paid off, as our oldest daughter is now majoring in Computer Science and, thankfully, is excelling in her college math classes with no problem!

### The Beauty of Flexibility

I would like to share with you a couple of different versions of how a typical homeschool day goes for our family. It is my hope that you may be inspired to try some of these techniques for an even better homeschool experience! When the kids were in elementary school we had a wonderful routine of school from 7:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. We began our day by lighting a candle and praying the Morning Offering and Act of Consecration of our family to Jesus and our dear Mother Mary.

When our youngest, Ricky, was just a toddler, the other three children would each take a half-hour time slot from their day to spend with Ricky (puzzles, reading, trampoline etc.). At 11:15 a.m. we would stop our work, have a snack, and jump in the car for noon Mass. After that we were free to do lots of fun stuff! Shortly before 3:00 p.m. we would tidy the house and pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. We prayed the Rosary at bedtime.

As the bigger kids got older and four hours was not enough school time, we changed our schedule to better meet our needs. The new routine consisted of morning Mass, and then

school from 8:30 a.m. until 2p.m. Many days we do school at our local library, which has the entire downstairs dedicated to a children's room that is usually empty!

It is amazing how productive we are at the library; this is due to the fact that there are zero distractions! When we arrive home from the library, it is chore time: we walk together through every room and do a quick cleanup, and then meet in the living room at 3:00 for the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. After that, the rest of the day is free time until dinner.

It is hard to believe that we have finished homeschooling two of our children! Even though we know that they received a top-notch education, it feels really good to see that reflected in our eldest child's post-Seton accomplishments; after earning her Associates Degree, she has a 3.8 GPA, is the President of the STEM club, has been admitted to two honor societies, and was hired by the college to give speeches and work in the Computer Science Tutoring Center. More importantly, on her very secular campus, she has defended her Catholic Faith and has introduced it to others. As we see the success of our older children, we are confident that our younger children, having their roots in homeschooling with Seton, have a bright future to look forward to as well!

If I could just offer parents one piece of advice, it would be this: the Morning Prayer, daily Mass, Chaplet, and Rosary are the things that I hold dearest to my heart. They are my fondest memories of the homeschooling years thus far with my children and I encourage parents to hold tight to these priceless faith-building traditions.

*Over the years, Seton has not just been there for me academically, but also spiritually and emotionally.*



# Graduating From Ourselves

BY JOHN CLARK

Graduation ceremonies are typically laudatory exercises: graduates are congratulated for the many things they have learned, how much progress they have made, and how hard they worked to receive their diplomas. They are certainly due congratulations, but like all accolades, this can create something of a paradox for the Christian; because while ceremonies often encourage graduates to focus on themselves and their achievements, it is an inescapable fact that the most important graduation you will ever make is the one you make from yourself.

When we complain about our new iPhone not working or about having to wait an extra day for a package to arrive from Amazon.com, it is said that we are suffering from “first-world problems.” This saying is meant to be a reminder that we—who live in the technologically-advanced first-world—should not complain of our problems while those in “third-world” countries are lacking the basic necessities of life.

There is certainly much truth in that, but the greater truth is that it is not first-world problems that primarily afflict us; it is the first-person problem. It is the problem of “I.” It is the inability to see things from another’s point-of-view, because we are far too busy and too absorbed with our own. It is hard to know if social media is the cause or effect (*Do we post selfies to Facebook because we’re self-absorbed or are we self-absorbed because of Facebook?*), but it’s probably a bit of both, like a cat endlessly chasing its tail. One thing is sure: with each frenetic movement, the cat grows hungrier.

This society encourages us to be self-centered; it encourages the culture of “I.” But from a first-person perspective, how could we possibly help other people? Even prior to helping, how can we even understand other people? As it turns out, the “I” is a terrible lens from which to view others. In fact, perhaps more than anything else, the “I” distorts our vision. This happens in lots of different ways, but perhaps the worst is

that we tend to judge and criticize others based on our advantages, our blessings, and our gifts—not on theirs, or on the lack thereof. As F. Scott Fitzgerald advised in his opus, “*In my younger and more venerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since. ‘Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone,’ he told me, ‘just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had.’*”

Problem is, we don’t remember.

Since we humans are born into a school of concupiscence that requires mandatory attendance, what is the answer? Simply put: We must deny ourselves those things that keep us apart from virtue; we must graduate from ourselves and refocus on others. We must follow the precept of Our Lord: “Love one another.” We all need to do that better.

Many of us seem to be waiting for someone else to love one another, but love is the calling of every Christian. We are taught that the priest acts *in persona Christi*, in the person of Christ. But it is not just priests who must act in His place; it is each of us who has the audacity to call himself a “Christian.” In the school of Christianity, love is the ultimate student identification.

*We must graduate from ourselves  
and refocus on others.*

We can illustrate that love in many ways, and some are very simple. Every authentic smile, whether toward kin or stranger, says “I love you.” For the Christian, that smile says something else: “God loves you.” And if you think we Christians are saying it enough, you’re wrong. The world is in pain. The best way to ease that pain is to help people realize that they are passionately and affectionately loved by their Creator, Whose



love is inexhaustible and incomprehensible in either time or eternity. We need to tell the world that, for all the bad news, there is the good news of the Gospel. While we’re reminding the world of that, we need to remind ourselves that we cannot “know, love, and serve God in this world” until we “know, love, and serve” others in this world.

Graduates, as you look at the words printed on your diploma, be thankful to God and to all who helped you arrive at this moment. Remember that it is not what is written on that parchment that tells who you are; it is that which is written on your heart. May your graduation be a reminder that God calls each of us to graduate from ourselves and to be a reminder of His love to a desolate planet. Good works, kindness, compassion, sympathy, empathy, a generosity of time and attention, cheerfulness toward others—these are the things that sculpt our souls. These are the things that sculpt the world.



**John Clark** is a homeschooling father, a speechwriter, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for The National Catholic Register. His latest book is “How to be a Superman Dad in a Kryponite World, Even When You Can’t Afford a Decent Cape.”

# Summer Faculty Meetings

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT



July is an almost magical month for many homeschooling mothers. Especially for those with young children who are not yet at the stage of life when they need to be constantly shuttled to and from activities. In July, the school work is over, and if it's not, at least most families take a more relaxed approach to learning.

Since the tempo now is *andante*, this is a perfect time of the year for some all-important faculty team-building activities. What's that you say? Faculty? Team building? I'm speaking of you and your spouse. The principal and the teacher. You need some time together to relax, talk, reconnect, and plan.

Faculty team building is a real thing (just Google it), and I truly believe that its value for homeschooling parents is immeasurable. To take some of this glorious free summer time to focus on the person with whom you are sharing the joys and burdens (yes, it can be burdensome) of this homeschooling lifestyle, will refresh you and renew your joint commitment to educating your children.

The primary relationship in your home is your marriage. God himself is the author of marriage and "the well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life" (CCC 2210). This means that your spouse comes directly after your relationship with God and because of that, it's important to make that a priority. The health of your whole family, and in a broader sense, that of society, depends upon healthy marriages.

Scheduling this time can be very difficult in the busy days of the school year when so much attention is given to lesson plans, spelling tests, driving commitments, earning a living, and a million other things. When the opportunity presents itself to spend some time enjoying each other's company

and, yes, sparking a bit, as the more relaxed schedule of summer gives us, then all married couples must make an effort to take advantage of this.

This July and August, commit to a few dates with your spouse. Schedule it. The same way the children's important dates are firmly scheduled in the calendar, then these, just as important dates, must be firmly inked on the calendar. That way, should something else come up, you know that you are unavailable and can decline with thanks.

This time together is a time to support and encourage mom (or dad, if he's the primary teacher) in her homeschool mom career. Discussions regarding each child, their needs, their development, workloads, and family issues - all of those things can be shared, hashed out and resolved, or at least you can get on the same page about them.

How to manage all of this on a tight budget or if you have small children? I'm glad you asked because, for many years, I was in this exact situation. If family members are unavailable to help with childcare, then one solution is to barter with a friend who also has children.

We would often switch with a family friend who had children the ages that ours were for a night and once or twice a year for a whole weekend. The kids would get a fun sleepover, and we would get some valuable couple times. When it was our turn to host our friend's children, we were happy to provide them with the same couple times.

Another idea is to wait until the children are in bed and have an at-home date. Some special food, candles, and quiet conversation need very little prep and is an inexpensive date night.

Check out the local papers for other fun and thrifty ideas for things to do this summer. Any time you spend planning and coordinating time away with your spouse is

time well spent. It can seem like too much effort, to make child care arrangements, or even if you have adult kids living at home, to coordinate schedules and meals so that things continue to hum along while you are away. Yes, it is an awful lot of work; however, the sacrament of marriage is one that needs lots of care.

To spend this time alone as a couple will benefit your children by strengthening your marriage and your commitment to each other. It is not selfish nor is it foolish to take this time, but rather, it's necessary and good that you should do so.

So get out the calendar and a pen (permanent ink!), and schedule some "faculty meetings" for this summer and enjoy some quiet time with the person God chose for you!

## Some other budget-friendly ideas are:

- Take a walk, hike, or a bike ride together
- Step into a nice coffee shop and linger over coffee and sweets
- Drive to the beach and watch the sunset
- Browse in the library or the bookstore together
- Pursue a common hobby; tennis, golf, chess, cooking, wine tasting...
- Visit a shrine or basilica together
- Go to a museum



**Mary Ellen Barrett** is mother of seven children and two in heaven, 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 editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.

## GRADUATION INVOCATION

*Father Vincent Bork  
Seton Graduation, May 27, 2017*

We pray especially for the kids graduating today. As I watched them process in today, they look like they are very clean in mind and body and we ask that they keep a holy purity, a cleanness throughout their life to receive God's Word in their hearts and express that through their whole being.

I will just give here a prayer from St. Faustina, her own prayer to Jesus. She had an eighth grade education and offered this prayer for her intellect. It's a beautiful prayer and here is how it goes.

**"Jesus, give me an intellect, a great intellect, for this only, that I may understand You better; because the better I get to know You, the more ardently will I love You. Jesus, I ask You for a powerful intellect, that I may understand divine and lofty matters. Jesus, give me a keen intellect with which I will get to know Your Divine Essence and Your indwelling, Triune life. Give my intellect these capacities and aptitudes by means of Your special grace. Although I know that there is a capability through grace which the Church gives me, there is still a treasure of graces which You give us, O Lord, when we ask You for them. But if my request is not pleasing to You, then I beg You, do not give me the inclination to pray thus."**

*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina 1474*



Visit us online for more photos and information about the 2017 Graduation Ceremonies!

[setonmagazine.com/graduation2017](http://setonmagazine.com/graduation2017)

# 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).

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

St. Adalbert Parish — Keller Center  
66 Adalbert Street  
Berea, OH 44017  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 12:00 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org/cleveland](http://www.ihmconference.org/cleveland)

## **MA, Lowell July 28, 2017 (Fri.) IHM New England Homeschool Conference**

UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center  
50 Warren Street  
Lowell, MA 01852  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org/newengland](http://www.ihmconference.org/newengland)

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

St. Peter 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)

## **TX, Arlington July 21-22, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM North Texas Homeschool Conference**

Arlington Convention Center  
1200 Ballpark Way  
Arlington, TX 76011  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org/northtexas](http://www.ihmconference.org/northtexas)

## **NJ, Mahwah July 28-29, 2017 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM New York Homeschool Conference**

Ramapo College of New Jersey – Robert A. Scott  
Student Center  
505 Ramapo Valley Road  
Mahwah, NJ 07430  
Fri.: 12 noon – 6 pm  
Sat.: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
[www.ihmconference.org/newyork](http://www.ihmconference.org/newyork)

For updates on all Seton Conferences go to: [Setonhome.org/conferences](http://Setonhome.org/conferences)



## *Seton Student Achievements*

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



**John** | I participated in the Run and Ride with the Wind 5-K and Duathlon, in the 5K portion. I placed 8th overall, and 1st in my age group. My time was 26 minutes and 36 seconds.



**Maude** | I won First Place in the 2017 Young Artist Competition, Junior Division (musicians through age 13). As a result, I performed a solo for violin in the Hilbert Circle Theater in Indianapolis, Indiana.



**Maria** | I won the Totem Head national short story writing contest for the second year in a row. It is run by Adventure Write, and this year, my story was chosen as best overall!

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

[setonmagazine.com/students](http://setonmagazine.com/students)

# Seton Home Study School

1350 Progress Drive

Front Royal, VA 22630

Change Service Requested

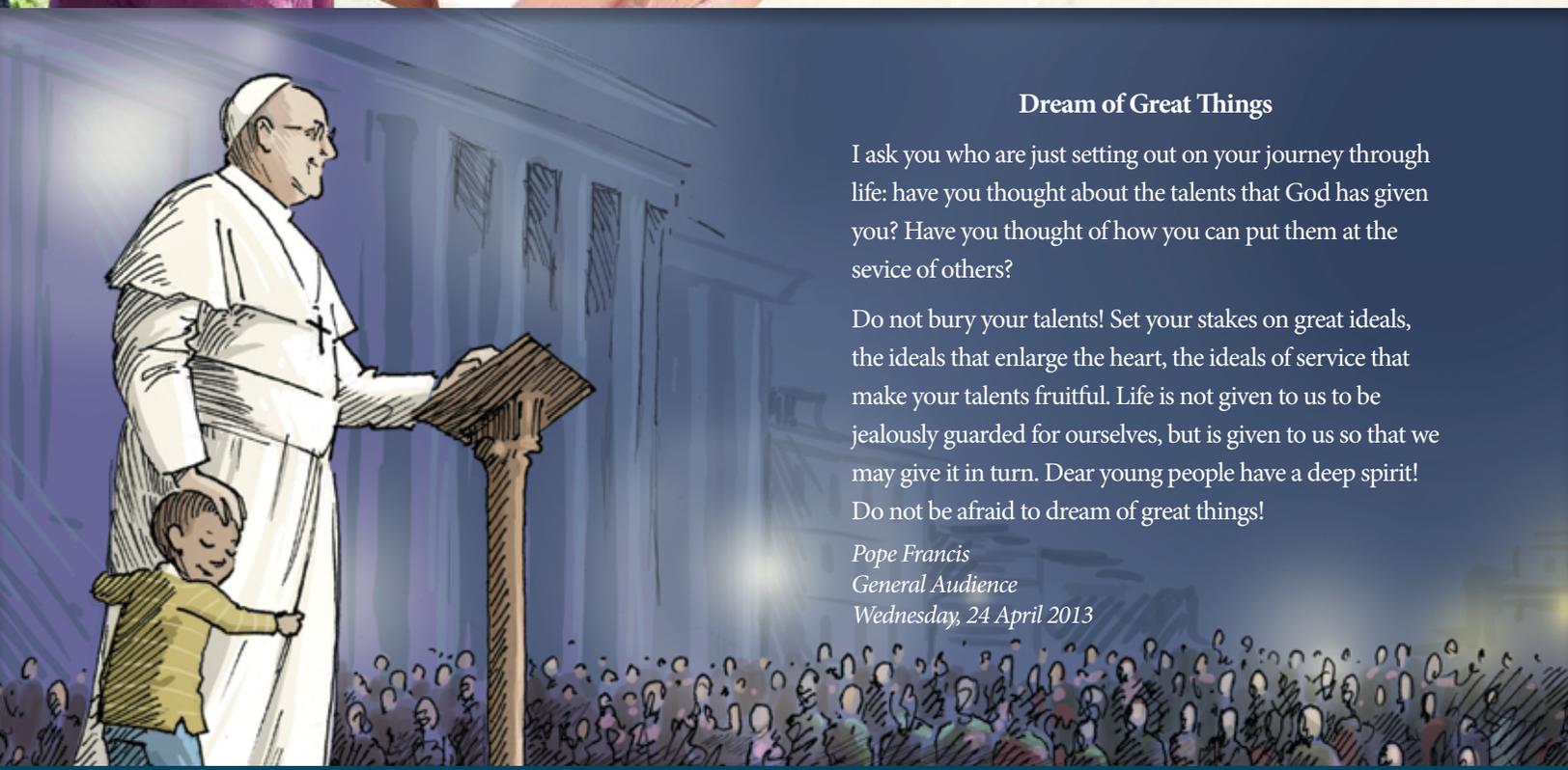
Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 19  
Elizabethtown, PA



## The Seton Summer Reading Club

A fun way to keep up reading skills over the summer!

[setonbooks.com/summerreading](http://setonbooks.com/summerreading)



### Dream of Great Things

I ask you who are just setting out on your journey through life: have you thought about the talents that God has given you? Have you thought of how you can put them at the service of others?

Do not bury your talents! Set your stakes on great ideals, the ideals that enlarge the heart, the ideals of service that make your talents fruitful. Life is not given to us to be jealously guarded for ourselves, but is given to us so that we may give it in turn. Dear young people have a deep spirit! Do not be afraid to dream of great things!

*Pope Francis  
General Audience  
Wednesday, 24 April 2013*