

Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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The End of an Era

BY MARY STUTZMAN



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

If you are anything like me, you landed in the month of July exhausted but grateful for the beauty and joy of May and June. But, my goodness, it was so busy. Plays, tournaments, recitals, sacraments, and yes, graduation.

At Seton, the month of May is filled with providing the best possible experience for our graduating class and their families. The many details and hard work are labors of love to make the whole weekend as lovely and joy-filled as possible.

And each year, the graduation issue is such a pleasure to put together because, whether attending the graduation or not, we get to show how much pride we have in every Seton student.

If I had to pick a theme for this issue it would be hope. It swells within us as we watch so many beautiful, faith-filled young people go forward with all the confidence that the love of their families and a solid Catholic education can provide. They are the promise of a brighter, kinder, and happier world. May God bless and keep them all.

Blessings,
Mary Ellen Barrett

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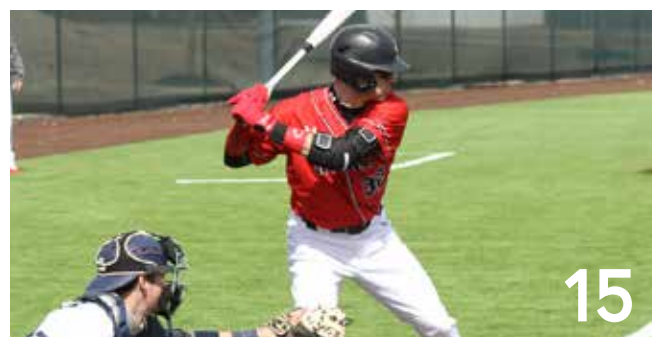
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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Seton Home Study School, an international Catholic institution, is to ensure that all of its students thrive intellectually and spiritually using a Christ-centered, educational program that empowers them to live the Catholic Faith while embracing the academic and vocational challenges of the twenty-first century.

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THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



Photo Courtesy: Ahrens Family

“

Homeschooling with Seton Home Study School is a major blessing to our family. It has allowed us the freedom to grow stronger as a family and deepen our knowledge and love for our Catholic Faith. Our children appreciate the chances homeschooling provides them for their hobbies after their academic work is done.

- Jerry and Abigail Ahrens

”



SHARE YOUR WHY WE HOMESCHOOL ON **FACEBOOK**

Graduates — Be Fearless!

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

*Good afternoon, Seton Families!
And Congratulations, Seton graduates!*

Seton graduation day has become one of my favorite days. I see families gather together as a witness to the power of love and the power of God's grace and generosity.

So thank you for being here today.

You graduates have done something wonderful. You may not have realized it at the time when you turned in your quarterly work, but you inspired us at Seton. We all are very proud of you!

And congratulations to you Moms and Dads! Your commitment to homeschool your children...your dedication to homeschool... has strengthened your family, has strengthened our nation, and has strengthened the Catholic Church. You are heroes! Never doubt this! You are heroes.

I'd like to tell you about another hero. He is a French priest. And his name is Father John Fournier.

On Monday night of Holy Week, just last month, Father Fournier was on his way to dinner in Paris. But his plans quickly changed.

Father suddenly saw that fire had erupted in the Notre Dame Cathedral! Without any concern for his safety, he quickly made his way over to the Cathedral and raced into the burning church.

His mission was simple: to save the Blessed Sacrament.

As Father went inside with a team of courageous firefighters, he saw a terrible sight: enormous and flaming wooden beams that had fallen from above, causing hot blazing embers on the floor.

It was literally raining fire from above, as flaming sections of the roof began their descent through the air and crashed with flying sparks when they hit the floor. Drops of searing-hot lead were falling from the ceiling, as the intense heat turned solid into liquid.



Moving as quickly as possible, Father made his way carefully through the hot and dangerous fire to the altar stairs, where he stepped up to the altar and opened the tabernacle and rescued the Sacred Hosts.

"Moms and Dads... You Are Heroes!"

Father said later that two things went through his mind in those precious moments. First, he felt deep sorrow for the damage the fire was causing to the beautiful historic Notre Dame Cathedral and its historic altar. But he said that he also experienced "an indescribable joy linked to the hope of the Resurrection."

Even though he knew that he was risking his life, Father Fournier reported later that he was not fearful.

He knew he was accompanied by Jesus Himself. He continually prayed to Jesus to preserve this ancient cathedral dedicated to His heavenly mother.

Father lovingly protected the Blessed Sacrament inside his jacket, and then picked up the Cathedral's unique relic, the Crown of Thorns. Carefully carrying the Crown of Thorns and the Body of Christ, Father cautiously stepped his way among the burning timbers on the floor of the cathedral, making his way to safety...untouched by fire.

In the history of Christendom, Father Fournier could make a rather unique claim: he saved the Blessed Sacrament and the Crown of Thorns.

There are many lessons we homeschooling families can learn from Father Fournier.

The lesson of Faith here is clear and inspiring.

There are those in the Church today who seem afraid to profess their Faith. But Father Fournier's Faith is a powerful witness to the world. No man would have run into a burning building with flaming roof shingles flying down in the air...unless he had a powerful faith in God. Father's courage and faith should make us realize that Jesus



waits for us to visit Him in every Catholic Church. That fact should inspire us to attend Mass as often as possible.

The second lesson here is a lesson of Hope.

Some people, even some Catholics, believe that the Catholic Church has become irrelevant in today's society. People who think this have not only failed to study the assuring words of Jesus—they have failed to study their history.

But Father Fournier has studied history. And commenting on the events of the fire, Father looked back in church history and made this observation:

"In the history of Western Christendom, buildings were burned, collapsed, and were attacked. Then what happened? Everyone [meaning Catholics] rolled up their sleeves and rebuilt."

It wasn't just physical buildings the Catholics rebuilt. It was the kind of rebuilding that Saint Athanasius accomplished, that Saint Francis of Assisi accomplished, that Saint John Vianney accomplished. They helped rebuild the Mystical Body of Christ and made the Church stronger.

Rebuilding the Mystical Body of Christ, His Church, is what you graduates can do and are called to do, to help rebuild the Mystical Body of Christ in a difficult time.

"We are All Very Proud of You!"

Do not fear, Graduates! Church History is a lesson of hope. Church history is the story of people like you, rebuilding the Church when the Church "seems" to be destroyed by some kind of fire.

Father Fournier's third lesson is one of love.

Father's decision to face the falling timbers of fire in the great Notre Dame cathedral was a re-affirmation of love between Jesus and those who love Him. At the Cathedral that evening, Father Fournier was physically carrying the Eucharist. In a much deeper sense, however, the Eucharist was carrying him.

Graduates, whatever fiery challenges you face in your life, they can all be overcome by the reception of Jesus in Holy Communion.



Jesus, the Son of God, has given Himself to the world, but don't forget. . . . He has given himself to you.

Graduates, continue living a life in which the Blessed Sacrament is the center of your life.

"Rebuilding the Mystical Body of Christ, His Church is what you graduates...are called to do."

Keep the Catholic Faith... often saved for us by others. No matter what fires seem to be burning around you, don't hesitate to run to the altar and receive Jesus Christ into your heart and soul. Keep your heart on fire to carry on the work of Jesus by living the Catholic life as all we Catholics are called to do.

Parents, God bless you. . . for the work you have done in raising your children to be practicing Catholics!

With great joy and appreciation, we at Seton thank you for letting us be part of your lives. And on behalf of everyone at Seton Home Study School, God bless you and your family.

Thank you!



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

If we change our minds about a course for my daughter, can I exchange or upgrade it?

If the materials have not been used within 90 days, parents can exchange or upgrade a course by returning the materials they have and paying a shipping fee for the new materials.

If the materials have been used or more than 90 days have elapsed, the student must be re-enrolled in a single course at the price of a single course.

Do I return our lesson plans to Seton at the end of the year?

Yes, so that families have the most current version, we ask that the lesson plans are returned at the end of the year.

Seton is constantly revising and improving its curricula, often in response to your conversations and emails with our Academic Counselors. Throughout the year, we take notes on what works or doesn't work for families and make changes accordingly.

However, during your school year, you may certainly highlight or write in your lesson plans as much as you want, as they will not be reused after you return them.

How do you recommend I use the *Teacher Plan Book* for planning our school?

Use the *Teacher Plan Book* to write daily assignments, scheduling, etc. After reviewing the Lesson Plans, fill out two or three weeks in the Plan Book at a time. This will provide you with structure but also flexibility to deal with the unexpected. Use individual Plan Books for each child.

The Plan Book is clear evidence of daily work assigned by the teacher and completed by the student—it's the official record of attendance and work completed.

What is Seton's redo policy for tests or written assignments?

The redo policy for the elementary level is that any test or written assignment, such as a book report, may be redone if the student receives an unsatisfactory grade. The new grade will replace the original grade.

Only the questions marked wrong need to be redone. Of course, questions which have only two choices (T & F, for example) may not be redone – for obvious reasons.

To retake a test submitted on paper, attach a separate sheet of paper with the corrected answers to the original test, without changing anything on the original. Attach both of them to the Quarter Report Form and mail them to Seton.

If you uploaded your test, you can upload your redo. If you took the test online, you can take your redo test online through your MySeton page.

The redo policy for high school courses is that written assignments and many tests can be retaken. The procedures are similar to those above for elementary tests. However, in high school, the original and redo grades will be averaged.

It is best though, to check the full explanation on your MySeton page that the grading department has written for you. Go to your MySeton page, click on Resources, and scroll down to "How to Redo an Assignment."

If you have any questions, call or email grading@setonhome.org.

How do I know when my son's assignments are due?

Technically, assignments don't have a due date. The parent makes the schedule; Seton has no yearly calendar.

Our oldest enjoyed your online Biology course. Will that be available as a textbook?

Yes, it will. We're happy to announce that Seton has published the text of the very popular online Biology course. This new hard cover textbook is beautifully illustrated in full-color and has been sent to our printer. We look forward to announcing its delivery in the near future.

The online course, and now this book, concentrates on human biology, which is important for students who are entering young adulthood. Seton created the online Biology course because Biology is the one science that can touch on areas with moral implications. We want a Biology course to reflect the Catholic positions on those areas, or at least not present any non-Catholic positions.

The online course has been a great success with families and now this new Biology textbook will allow us to make the online course a fully integrated aligned course.

Seton's aligned courses coordinate the online course material with the paper lesson plans. This gives you the flexibility to move back and forth between paper lesson plans and online courses as needs may arise.

Aligning the paper lesson plans with the online content also has provided the opportunity to colorize and enhance the paper lesson plans which we are doing in many of our high school courses.



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 Summer Reading Club

THE CLUB IS OPEN FROM

June 1 - August 31, 2019.

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

See more:
setonbooks.com/summerreading →

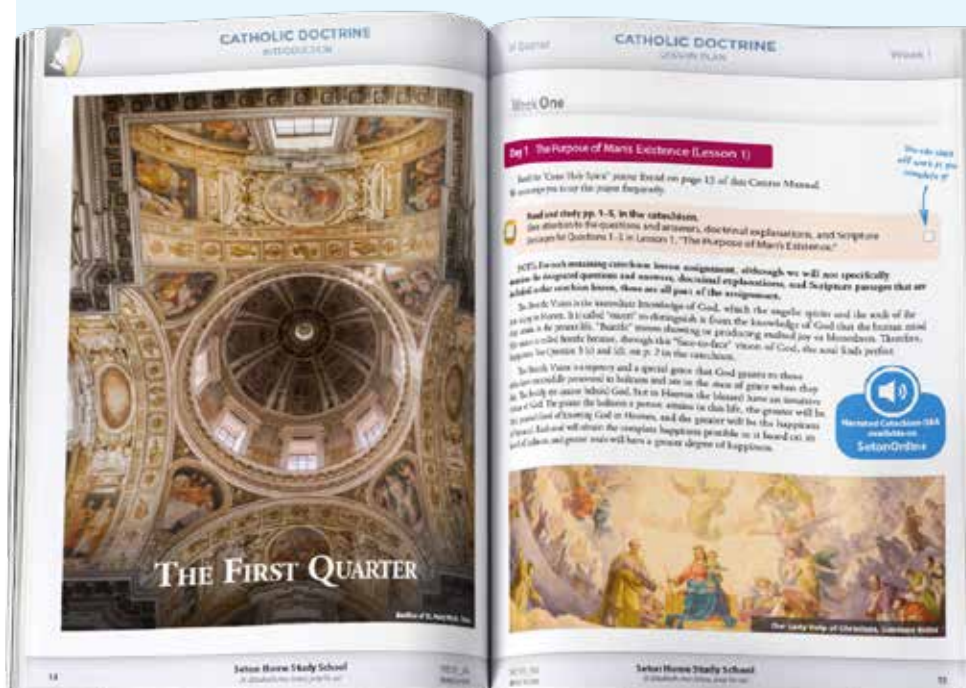


NEW CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT

COLOR HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLANS

This year, Seton has rolled out more full-color enhanced lesson plans! Now available in over ten of our core high school courses, these lesson plans feature color-coded course instructions, easy-to-understand icons that alert students to multimedia resources available at SetonOnline, and other additions designed to make using a course manual simpler more intuitive than ever. Additionally, each course manual is filled high resolution photographs and beautiful Catholic art.

Over the next year, we are working to colorize and enhance even more of our high school course manuals. We hope parents and students enjoy these new enhanced lesson plans.



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



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



NORTHEAST
CATHOLIC COLLEGE



AVE MARIA
UNIVERSITY



THOMAS AQUINAS
COLLEGE



OUR LADY
SEAT OF WISDOM
COLLEGE

setonhome.org/colleges

Seton Families' Festival 2019

BY SETON STAFF



It's the Friday before Memorial Day Weekend, and the weather is smiling on the Virginia countryside. Here are blue skies dotted with clouds, a bright sun, and a wind from the west strong enough to carry the heat away.

On this day, dozens of families, all sporting at least one high school senior, have gathered for the annual pre-graduation party at the headquarters of the Seton Home Study School. It's the first event of a weekend in which Seton plays host and pays homage to all its graduates and their families, both those present and those unable to attend the celebration.



Here are pony rides and bouncy tents for the little ones, wide fields for throwing footballs or playing soccer, canopy tents offering shade, a popcorn stand, a Sno-Kone machine, coolers filled with soda, juice, and water, and tables holding 180 pizzas (vegetarian, of course, since it's Friday). Here are Seton representatives visiting with parents and students, answering questions and conducting tours of the Seton building from Admissions to the Shipping Department. Here are friends meeting friends face to face for the first time, links forged on Catholic Harbor, Seton's social network for students.

We thought you would enjoy this sampling of comments from the attending graduates about their future plans.

Mark May of Middletown, Delaware, was enrolled with Seton from kindergarten through graduation. He will begin classes in the fall at the University of Delaware, where he plans to double major in accounting and finance. Eventually Mark hopes to work as a forensic accountant, a position that involves tracking criminal behavior through financial records.

Next up is **Veronica Wick** of Stockton, Missouri, who will attend the College of the Ozarks, where she currently plans to study nursing. Veronica spent five years with Seton.



Katie Ahrens, another K-12 student from Austin, Texas, is taking a gap year after graduation while she sorts out her plans. She will continue to work as a cashier at HEB, part of a grocery store chain in Texas. When prompted by her mother, Katie explained she was taking the gap year because she was graduating from Seton at the age of sixteen. Her mother then explained that Katie had already earned 59 college credit hours from her local community college, which she first entered at age 13 as a dual-enrollment student. Here Katie interjected, "Seton is much tougher than those community college courses."

Joseph Scarlata of Mechanicsville, Maryland, a student at Seton since third grade, will be stepping through the gates of Christendom College in the fall. After eleven years with Seton, **Emily Libertella** of Rome, New York, will enter Herkimer Community College. Emily hopes someday to become a marine veterinarian, and will continue to sing, dance, and act in the plays and musicals of her local community theater.

With Seton since eighth grade, **Mary Schwartz** of West Hartford, Connecticut, will attend the Catholic University of America where she hopes to study philosophy, an interest that rose in part from her study of Catholic doctrine in the Seton program. **Anthony Burkhard** of Cleveland, Wisconsin, will join the first class of the eastern branch campus of Thomas Aquinas College, opening in Northfield, Massachusetts, this fall.

At least two Seton graduates plan to pursue classical studies. **Isabella Colombo** of Mahwah, New Jersey, is entering Hofstra University to study classics, with the intention of eventually becoming a philologist. **Emma Palmer** of Fort Benning, Georgia—her father is in the Army, and the family will soon be stationed in California—will be at the University of Dallas studying

English and Classics. Emma pointed out that the Seton program was particularly beneficial to military families "because my dad moved so much, and we could take Seton with us."

The **Rembadt family** of Sturgis, Michigan, will use this Seton graduation in a special way. Though Cecilia and Andy



have technically graduated from Seton, they were unable to participate in the Seton ceremony the year of their graduation. Now they will march across the stage and receive their diplomas along with their brother Joseph to honor their father, who died this past year. Cecilia is a student at Glen Oaks Community College, Joseph is taking a gap year and hopes to discern his future while keeping up his songwriting, and Andy, who also is discerning his future plans and is interested in agriculture, will continue working for a large farm.

When asked how Seton had helped them prepare for further education and for life, all of these young people gave nearly identical answers. They were grateful for their religious education, which will, they said, help them defend their faith both in college and the workplace. All of them praised the rigorous Seton writing program. Finally, all of them stressed how Seton and homeschooling in general had made them independent learners, to become, as Emma Palmer put it, "pro-active in our education."

Talking to these graduates, listening to their dreams and ambitions, seeing them and the other graduates taking pleasure in this day with their friends and family, all of whom are beaming with pride at their students' achievements, brings a sense of great hope for the future. These young people are the leaven, the mustard seeds, from which good things will grow.

God bless all of you graduates.





Seton Graduation: A Reason For Hope

BY JEFF MINICK

It's Saturday, May 25, 2019, and the gym of Skyline High School in Front Royal, Virginia, is jammed with the parents, siblings, relatives, and friends of the 144 seniors who today will receive their high school diploma from the Seton Home Study School. Present are two families from the Philippines, a several students from Canada, and students from 32 states, including Marianne Garcia and her family from Hawaii.

Though organizers moved the ceremony this year from the Skyline High auditorium across the hall into the gymnasium to gain more space, the gym was filled to capacity — a far cry from the 35 students who attended the first such Seton graduation thirteen years ago.

The ceremony began with an homage to Father Frank Papa, who went to his eternal reward in September of 2018. Father Papa had served on the Seton board and had given tremendous support to homeschooling over the years.

Mr. Rich Walker, Seton board member and MC, then remarked that the occasion was a “day of celebration for all of us” and that the graduates were “a reason for hope” in the world, words that would form the overriding theme of all the evening's speakers.

The first speaker was Retired Colonel Todd Counts. Colonel Counts called graduating senior Corin Mellone to the stage and presented him with a certificate honoring his admission to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Next up to the microphone was Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Seton's Founder and Director, who gave a rousing address encouraging graduates to carry their Faith into the world and praising their

mothers and fathers. “You parents are heroes,” she said, “and your commitment has strengthened our families, our nation, and our Catholic Church.”

Dr. Clark then brought up Father Fournier as an example of a heroic Catholic in action. Father Fournier was the priest who, when he saw the Notre Dame Cathedral on fire this spring, raced into the church to rescue the Crown of Thorns and the Blessed Sacrament with burning debris and melting lead from the rooftop falling around him.

According to Dr. Clark, the priest's bravery and the rebuilding of the cathedral after the fire are lessons that the graduates must take to heart. She urged them to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the center of their lives, be fearless in difficult times, and work always, to help “rebuild the mystical Body of Christ,” the Church.

DO NOT LOSE THE BATTLE

Dr. Timothy O'Donnell, President of Christendom College, stepped next to the podium. Dr. O'Donnell opened with a quote from G.K. Chesterton: “...the one perfectly divine thing, the one glimpse of God's paradise given on Earth, is to fight a losing battle—and not lose it.” He reminded graduates that we are all involved in a great war with three principal enemies, “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” He pointed out that some people today believe nothing is worth dying for and that consequently nothing is worth living for. He exhorted the graduates to defend and live out their Catholic faith, and to always “act with a brave heart. Strive to be brave. Strive to be noble.”

Mary Schwartz and Abigail Curran, representing the Class of 2019, then presented their speeches which had been chosen by staff as the most outstanding.



Then came the moment everyone was waiting for. One by one, the graduates lined up, walked across the stage when their name, hometown, and state were called, and received their diplomas from Deacon Gene McGuirk. Seven score of graduates took diploma in hand and marched back to their seats, where as a group they moved the gold tassels from left to right on their mortarboards.

Following the closing benediction and mealtime prayer by Father Thomas Szczepanczyk, graduates and their families feasted on sandwiches, shrimp, and delicious desserts. Many graduates and their families also took advantage of the “photography studio” set up in one of the school’s lobbies. A dance for the families followed this supper.

One personal note here: While munching on the wonderful food, I spoke with the Robbins family of Ormond Beach, Florida. Graduate Maia will attend Stetson University in the fall, where she wants to study digital arts and creative writing. Her sister Darbi is a rising sophomore with Seton. Mrs. Robbins informed me that when Maia spoke with an admissions recruiter at Stetson, who often visited exclusive private schools in New England to seek out prospects, the recruiter had not only heard of Seton, but also placed it on a par academically with the best private schools she visited.

A thumbs up for Seton.

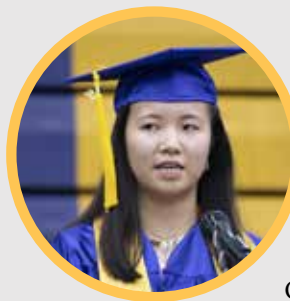
And a double thumbs up for all our graduates.

You are our reason for hope.



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 homeschoools.

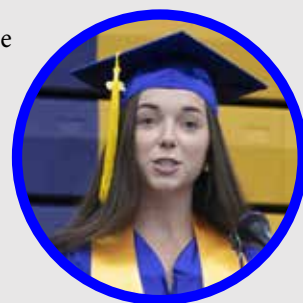
Class of 2019 Chosen Speakers: Mary Schwartz and Abigail Curran



Following a practice instituted at last year’s graduation ceremony, two Seton students addressed the crowd. **Mary Schwartz** explained that she was born in Communist China and put into an orphanage. After much prayer, the Schwartz family adopted Mary and brought her into their home in Connecticut. Through her remarkable

journey from an officially atheistic country into the Catholic Faith, Mary came to believe in the providence of God in her life.

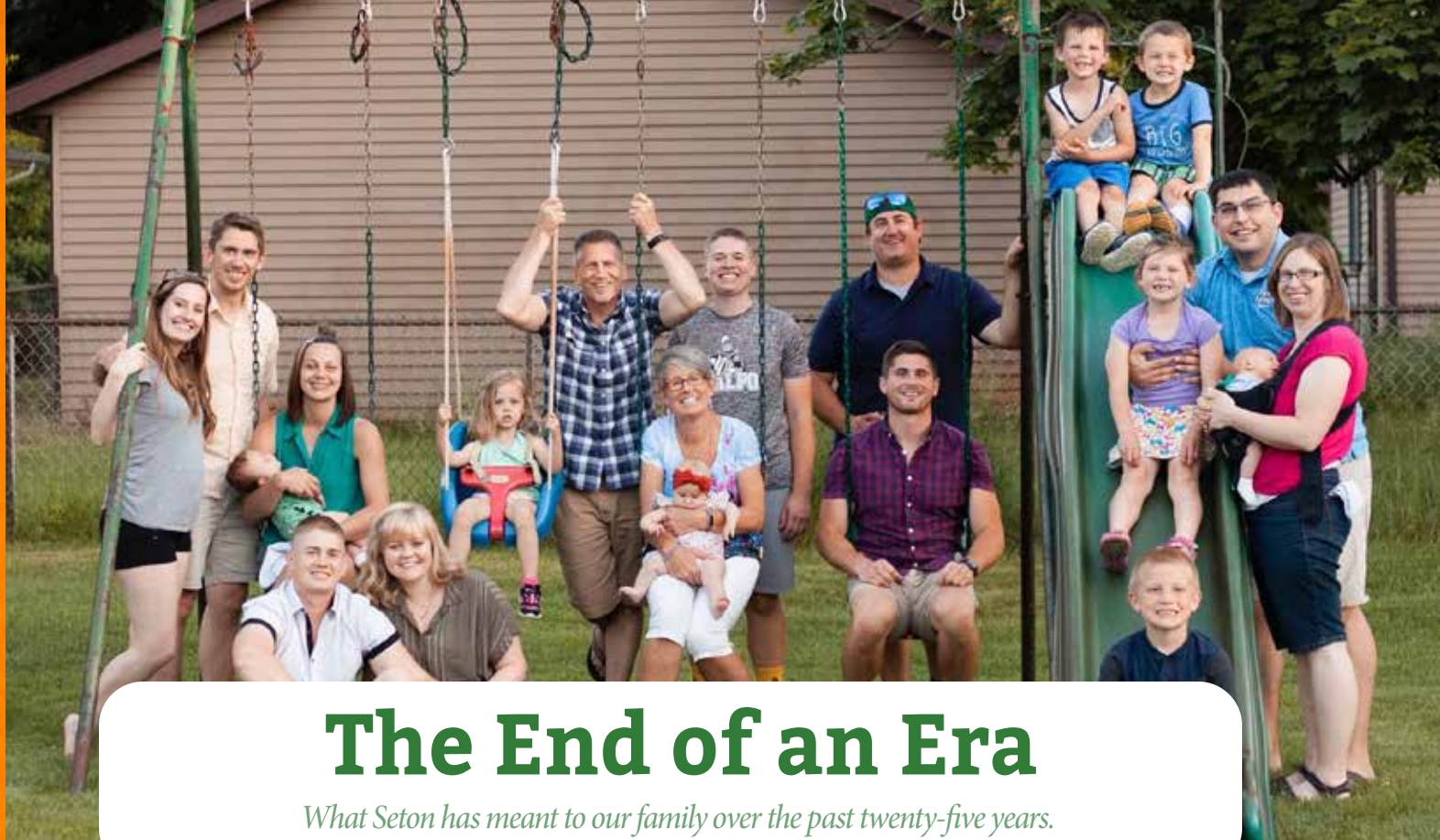
Abigail Curran of Leesburg, Virginia, reminded graduates that though they came from all over the country and from other nations, “we all walk under the same sun created by our Creator” and “all of us graduates share something important, and that is our love for Jesus Christ.” She ended by using the sun as a metaphor for Christ, a shining light around which Christians gather.



Dr. Clark Receives Catherine of Siena Award

After his commencement speech, Dr. O’Donnell resumed his place at the podium to present Dr. Clark with Christendom College’s prestigious Catherine of Siena Award, an annual recognition of work done by an outstanding Catholic woman. He recounted the history of Dr. Clark and her work at Seton, pointing out that Seton currently served 12,000 students world wide and had, over the years, provided help and instructional material to more than 90,000 students.





The End of an Era

What Seton has meant to our family over the past twenty-five years.

BY MARY STUTZMAN

It was 1994, the year I embarked on my homeschooling adventure. Those were days when curious strangers would ask my kids at the grocery store, “Home school—what’s that?!” What used to be confused shock has become awe-inspired admiration now by most people. Well, now that I am approaching the end of this homeschooling era, I wanted to pause and reflect on what Seton has meant to our family over the past twenty-five years.

I sit here with a *Baltimore Catechism* on my computer desk, and I recall so fondly the hours spent curled up on the couch with a child or two, quizzing them on their weekly memorization. And here is a book on the lives of the saints. Ah, yes, those dear, heavenly friends whom we came to know and love through reading the “saint of the day” at morning prayers; we also got to know them through the quarterly book reports and the many stories that were woven into the textbooks. Do you know how St. Josaphat was martyred, for example? I won’t spoil it for you, but we learned about him in the 3rd grade English workbook. A map of the world hangs on the

wall above me, the colors faded over the years from the sunshine that streams into our schoolroom. And of course, there is Jesus on the crucifix, looking down on this homeschooling momma of six, telling her heart not to be sad. It aches just a little knowing that an important chapter in my life is coming to an end.

Like most homeschooling families, the years have been full of ups and downs, but in my pondering, the joys far outweigh the pains. Here is where my meandering thoughts take me: I loved the leisurely mornings spent in our pajamas on a snowy day. I loved watching my boys serve at daily Mass, something they still do, even as college students. I loved bringing home a laundry basket full of library books and then digging in and reading them one by one, waiting for the one that would be their favorite and must be read 14 times.

I loved teaching them how to sound out words and then watching the amazed look on their faces when they realized they had just read their first sentence! I loved watching them take breaks outside together and become the very best of friends. I loved the beautiful, traditional families that were portrayed in the Faith and Freedom readers, books out of print but somehow miraculously in the hands of my children.

I loved the feeling of relief after talking to a Seton counselor, knowing that I was not in this alone. I loved watching the light bulb turn on when a child finally figured out a math concept. I loved having the support of my wonderful husband and the quiet time spent with him after the kids went to bed, both of us tackling together the teetering stack on my desk that needed to be graded before the next morning. I loved the smell that wafted out of the boxes of new books that arrived from Seton each fall.



I loved living close enough to our parents that they could be part of our homeschooling adventure by helping with the grading, reading to little ones, or snatching a kid or two away to go make cookies at Grandma's house. I loved grading essays and watching them all become excellent writers. Jacob once got an A on a college essay, and the professor wrote on the top of the paper, "You are an excellent writer. Tell your High School English teacher, 'Thank you.'" He called me that night from college, told me that story, and then said, "Thanks, Mom." I loved teaching them to sew and then watching them create quilts for their beds. I loved listening to them practice their musical instruments and then shine at a concert or recital, Greg and Adam both performing in High School with All-State Honor Bands. I loved talking to other moms who were nervous about giving homeschooling a try and then seeing their families excel and thrive with Seton. I loved sharpening pencils and dusting off the cobwebs in my mind on math concepts that were long-ago forgotten but shone again with use. I loved reliving great literary works every couple of years and enjoying each child's different perspectives on classics like *Pride and Prejudice* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. I loved the satisfaction of watching them rip open big important envelopes from colleges and universities, envelopes filled with dreams and promises but also generous scholarships—rewards for their hard work. Mostly, I loved knowing that I was doing something to change the world, creating Godly people filled with integrity and virtue and kindness and strength.

LAST THINGS...AND FIRST THINGS

This end of an era comes with its share of "last things." For example, this past weekend, I just put the last period at the end of the last sentence at the end of the last lesson plan that I will ever draft. Then there's Philip, who was the last of our high schoolers to take the Right to Life bus trip to Washington DC this year; and he will be the last of many other things...recipient of the last graded paper and the last Seton diploma, and he'll be the last child we send off to college. I mentioned this to our daughter, Sarah, this week, and she said, "Mom, instead of thinking of all the 'lasts,'



think of all of the 'firsts' that are coming up—like your first grandchild to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation!" And of course, she is right! I need to shift my focus and think of all of the adventures that lie ahead. There does come a day when our children are wiser than we are. I would like to think that Seton had a big part to play in the wisdom of all six of our children, four of whom have all graduated from college, are well-established and thriving, and are living their Catholic faith. Our two youngest have bright futures before them as well, as Matthew pauses his Engineering degree to pursue his dream of becoming a soldier and Philip wraps up his senior year and starts packing his bags to begin his college career this fall.

I had wondered what God would have in store for me in this next chapter of my life that could possibly be as rewarding as 25 years of homeschooling has been. My pastor recently offered me the part-time job of Director of Religious Education at our parish, so now I have 200 children to love! The years spent as a homeschooling mom with Seton have prepared me well to inspire and guide these little souls. In addition, as of this writing, we await the birth of grandbabies 6, 7 and 8. So as one era ends, another begins. Will there be a future generation of homeschooling Stutzmans? Time will tell. And if I am called upon, I still have that laundry basket waiting to be filled to the brim again with library books.



OLYMPIC VIRTUE



BY JOHN CLARK

Last year in this space, I wrote a column about Father Frank Papa, a good friend who passed from this life far too soon. If Father Papa had lived to be 100, it still would have been too soon for those who knew and loved him. There was just so much more wisdom he could impart—so much more wisdom that I needed to hear. A few weeks ago, as I was making my weekly Holy Hour, I was thinking about some of his wisdom. It was something he used to advise his penitents. Especially for you graduates, and all of you who are moving on to new phases of your life, I wanted to pass that wisdom on to you—because it can change your life.

Father Papa's advice was to get better at your best virtue.

This requires some explanation. For reasons that are often unclear, many of us have one virtue—whether it's chastity, charity, empathy, faith, patience, kindness, hope, forgiveness, or humility—that seems incredibly hard to practice. Happily, on the flip side, many of us have one virtue that is more easily practiced than the other virtues.

Some combination of nature, nurture, temperament—and of course, grace—combine to make that one virtue achievable without tremendous difficulty. Father's advice was to get better at that one.

It seems a bit counterintuitive to work on what you are already good at, and the logic of it took me a while to figure out myself. But I think what Father was saying was this: if you can take your strongest virtue to an Olympic level, it radiates outward to positively influence all the other virtues. For instance, if you excel at kindness, the virtue of chastity becomes easier to practice. If you excel at chastity, kindness becomes easier. In fact, all the virtues become easier—including that stubborn one you've found difficult to practice your whole life.

Father Papa believed we all had that one special virtue that we should foster.

Try to determine your strongest virtue. This is a spiritually healthy exercise. Making a daily examination of conscience is good and helpful, but sometimes you need to focus not only on what you're doing wrong, but what you're doing right. It's good to think about the fact that your practice of that virtue makes you very wonderful.

Be honest with yourself when you think of this virtue. Pick the one you are truly best at—not the one you'd like to be best at. Remember, you'll get better at that one, too; that's the point. You might even consider asking your husband or wife which virtue that is. They will give you an honest answer—even if it's not the one you are expecting.

Then, with that virtue in mind, get better at it—like gold medal better. And don't just try to get better. Hunger, thirst, reach, strive, will, work, crave, and desperately desire to get better

at it. Father Papa will be proud of you, which is pretty cool, since he's either in Heaven right now or in Purgatory passing out M&Ms ("Melts in your mouth, not in Purgatory") on his way to Heaven.

As I said, I was in the Eucharistic chapel a few weeks ago thinking about Father Papa's advice, and the following thoughts came to me like a whisper from an old friend.

Perhaps these ideas will help us get started in the process:

If you are kind, be kinder. *In an envious world, rejoice in the true happiness of others.*

If your strength is listening, listen closer. *Hear not only the words, but the heart who speaks them.*

If you are good at alleviating pain, heal more. *Adopt the pain of another and suffer together as brothers and sisters in Christ.*

If your strength is forgiveness, forgive more. *Teach others to forgive and forget. And to remember the mercy of God.*

If you are good at giving away money and material possessions, give more. *Don't give till it hurts. Go beyond that—give till it doesn't.*

If you are good at devoting your time, give away your watch. *Anticipate a place where there are no timepieces.*

If you are good at making Holy Hours, make more hours holy. *Grow in intimacy with Jesus and bring others to Him.*

If the only strength you have is the will to get up again today, get up again tomorrow. *And keep going. And in the process, help everyone else get up again, too.*

Thanks Father!



Fr. Papa handing out candy to children after daily Mass



John Clark is a homeschooling father, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for The National Catholic Register.

How Seton Prepared Me For College

BY MICHAEL SLATEN

Michael Slaten is a graduate of Seton Home Study School and is currently a junior attending Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, where he is majoring in Business Management and playing for the Raven Baseball team.

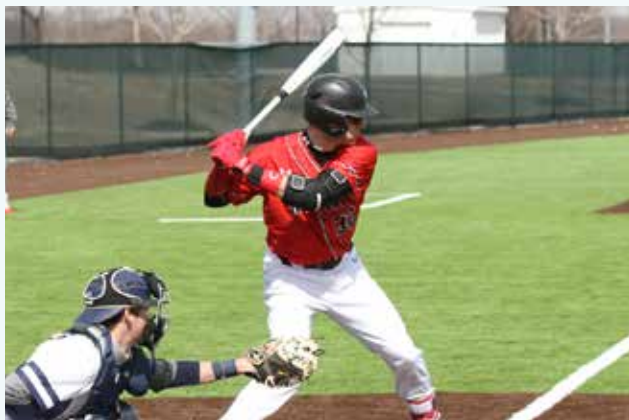


THE SETON EXPERIENCE

I was enrolled in the Seton curriculum for 10 years. What I really liked about Seton was how it prepared me for the writing aspect of school, particularly for college. I feel like a lot of my classmates aren't prepared in the area of writing, but it's something Seton hits heavily on, so I was definitely well-prepared. I'm the third of five and all five kids have gone through the Seton curriculum all the way through high school. My parents did a lot of research. They went through all the books and the entire curriculum and found that Seton was strong in the Catholic faith, which was paramount to us, plus it's a good, solid education. We've all had a really good experience with Seton. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I think it has helped me grow as a Catholic and as a student.

PREPARED FOR COLLEGE

I chose to go to Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, an authentically Catholic college that is highly recommended in the Newman Guide. Seton and Benedictine are perfect complements to each other. The faith, family atmosphere, and genuine friendships fostered by Seton are strong points at Benedictine College. Plus, Benedictine allowed me to continue playing baseball, which I've done since I was a little kid and I have always loved the game. Most of the smaller Catholic colleges don't have a baseball program, so that was a great bonus.



"My Advice...Stick to your faith! Keep the faith as your number one priority."

One thing about Seton, they have everything scheduled and planned out. Going through that structured curriculum helped my siblings and me learn how to develop a schedule, develop a work plan, and stick to a routine. That is great preparation for college, where if you don't have a schedule or work plan, you can get swept away pretty quickly. So that made the adjustment from homeschool to college pretty easy. Being able to set a schedule and stick to it really takes off a lot of stress. You're just in more control of that aspect of your life.

PASSION FOR FAITH AND LEARNING

I enjoy Benedictine's Catholic atmosphere. The Seton program helped cultivate my faith and made me realize that Catholicism was a faith that I truly possess. It gives me a lot more purpose in general and Benedictine has really helped me grow both academically and spiritually. The Catholic faith is even present in athletics at Benedictine College and that's important. It is definitely intentional. Often in athletics we see people falling away from the faith. They lose a sense of who they are and who they were brought up to be, and once they deviate from that path, they don't do as well in either academics or athletics.





Creating Space for Success in Life's Travels and Education

BY NICK MARMALEJO

Planning for success in any enterprise begins with the end or goal in mind. In this article, Seton Guidance Counselor Nicholas Marmalejo discusses severely underestimating one of his own deadlines and offers some perspective on how to create a better pathway for one's future, whether it is in education or on a cross-country drive. Continue reading for some reflections on the road ahead.

Last fall, my family and I began the road trip of a lifetime: a trek from the East Coast to visit my brother-in-law in Western Montana and Yellowstone National Park. The journey included stops to visit additional family and friends on the way there and on the way back. It was nothing short of an adventure, and at times, a kind of enduro. This not being my first long road trip, but the first one in many years, I began mentally preparing myself, my vehicle, and my accouterments months in advance. When the day finally arrived to leave and head West, it was almost hard to believe. With coffee firmly in hand, I seemed to see a new and exciting future beckoning on the horizon. Our departure was the culmination of many, many moments of preparation.

In life, there are significant events that act as sign posts of sorts. They are usually so significant that if you had not experienced them, you would be poorer for it. This trip was one such time. The farther and farther we drove from home, the more the hectic cares of daily life receded in importance. In their place, somewhere between our final destination and the "Corn Palace," pranced seemingly endless pronghorn sheep on the open prairie. The vastness of that space is at once overwhelming and freeing. If you are looking for some reflection time, a drive on I-90 may do the trick. Some may find the landscapes depressing, but I digress.

Among the many thoughts I pondered was the idea of deadlines. I was, in fact, on a tight timeline. To my dismay, I

realized as the day wore on that I had seriously underestimated how much driving time would be required to cross the 1000 miles from Chicago to our hotel in Rapid City. (I know, bad move.) The Internet said 14 hours. With frequent stops for life's necessities for myself and the family, however, as well as the obligatory check-in at Wall Drugs and the opportunity to watch the sun set and moon rise over the Badlands, it took about 19 hours. I chastised myself, thinking that had I planned better, I would have created more space in my schedule to get to our destination and enjoy the overland journey.

SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

All of this is a circuitous route to bring you to reflection about the benefits and challenges of deadlines. Unfortunately, they are necessary. Especially as we prepare for the next big thing in life—whether it be college, a trade, a vocation, or anything—we will face deadlines. As we do so, the best approach is to create for ourselves as much as it is within our power to do so, the space to succeed. This means accounting in our planning for things unforeseen and for items that are not within our control.

When applying to college, for example, the bureaucratic process and all of its vagaries come to mind. Plan to give yourself much more time than you think you will need, and then stick to the plan. Do not wait to the last minute or try to squeeze too much academic or logistical work into a small amount of time.

For sending transcripts and college applications, plan to have everything submitted six weeks in advance of the school's deadline. This may sound like a lot, but it gives you plenty of breathing room to be as sure as possible that all of your requirements have been met. Not only will you look like a superstar, you will feel much better and more confident about the process, your place in it, and the results. That, and you will not have given yourself a stress disorder by the time you arrive at your destination.



PARCHMENT

Seton's New Transcript Request Service

All of Seton's transcript requests (K-12) are now done via Parchment, a simple and secure way to send documents.

Parchment makes requesting your transcript easy. You will find details on your MySeton page under the Resources tab.

Allow a week for your first Parchment request to be processed.

FINAL TRANSCRIPTS FOR COLLEGES

- Once you have graduated from Seton and have chosen a college use Parchment to have your final transcript sent to the school.
- Final transcripts are not sent automatically for you. Request your transcript in a timely manner to avoid unpleasant surprises from your intended college.
- Completing this important step on your college application checklist will help smooth the way ahead.



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

SETON STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those
who serve you!*



Darin Byrne Admission Counselor

It's mid-afternoon, a Thursday in late May, and Darin Byrne sits at his desk, projecting confidence and affability when discussing his position as an Admissions Counselor for the Seton Home Study School. He has just returned from a trip to Alaska—"I've now visited all fifty states," he says—and is ready to dig back into work.

Darin is one of the go-to folks in the Admissions Department. "After fifteen years of answering phone calls from parents about the Seton program and admissions," Darin says with a smile, "I wonder if there's a scenario I haven't come across."

Darin, who grew up in New Jersey, graduated from the Franciscan University of Steubenville with a degree in Business Management, and holds an MA in Theology from Mt. St. Mary's University, fervently believes in the value of a Catholic education. He has lived the last twenty-eight years in Winchester, Virginia.

CALLED TO COUNSEL FAMILIES

Fifteen years ago, while working for the federal government, Darin learned about Seton from two of his sisters, who were using the program to homeschool their children. Having taught religious education over the years from kindergarten through high school, he wanted the chance to work for a Catholic company and a good cause.

In his time at Seton, Darin has worked on conferences and on Seton Educational Media, and presently serves on Seton's Accreditation Committee.

Darin's primary work is faithfully manning the phone and answering emails for the Admissions Department, so many of our readers will have spoken with him. In his role as Admissions Counselor, he recommends courses, gives advice about the curriculum, and makes certain that parents and students understand the basic requirements of each course and every grade level.

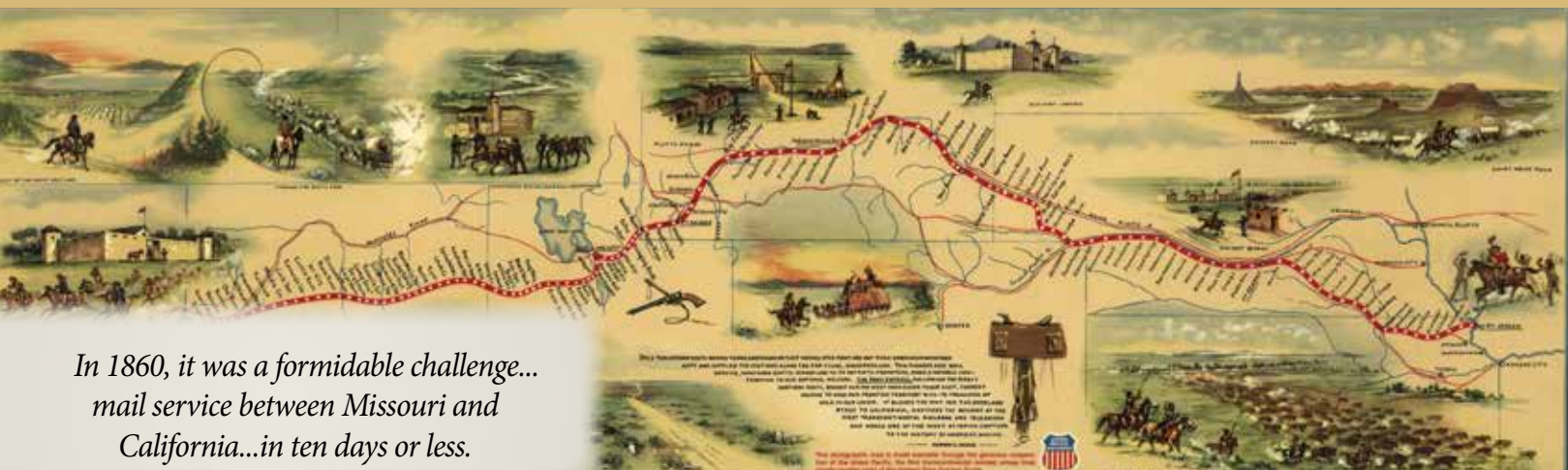
"I believe in Seton and I love to explain how we can help a family successfully homeschool. After all, a big part of my work is encouraging them," he says by way of explanation of his job. "When we finish our conversations, I want to make sure the parents can say to themselves, 'I can do this.'"

When asked what brought him the greatest satisfaction in his work, Darin paused a moment, then replied: "My greatest joy comes from hearing those words, 'Thank you. You've answered all my questions.' That's what I live for at the end of a conversation."

The Pony Express

—History That Defines Us

BY BRUCE CLARK



*In 1860, it was a formidable challenge...
mail service between Missouri and
California...in ten days or less.*

In the modern push-button world in which we live, we can ask a computer almost any question, and receive a nearly instantaneous response. Today, we are able to send and to receive e-mail messages from around the world in seconds. We tend to forget that only a century and a half ago, the fastest and most reliable method of communication was riders on horseback.

"The Average Pony Express rider was in his teens."

On April 3, 1860, in St. Joseph, Missouri, a young fellow named Johnny Frey leaped astride his horse and galloped off on the first leg of an arduous journey of 1,966 miles. Johnny was the first Pony Express rider to ride westward. A little later that day, in Sacramento, California, a young man named Billy Hamilton jumped into the saddle, and became the first eastbound Pony Express rider.

The Pony Express was the brainchild of William Russell, a partner in the firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell. Russell hoped to provide a mail delivery service between St. Joseph and Sacramento in ten days or less. Each ounce of mail cost \$10.00 to send.

The average Pony Express rider was in his teens, and he weighed no more than 120 pounds. Riders had to be strong and wiry, and willing to risk riding through dangerous

territory – and willing to work for \$100 per month. In the nineteen months of the Pony Express operation, over 180 pony express riders were hired.

There were about 160 "stations" along the route where horses were kept by station keepers. Each horse carried the mailman and his mail between 10 to 15 miles. The time and distance depended on the difficulty of the terrain. The riders averaged about 75 miles as their part of the route, so they needed to switch horses about five times during their trip.

The mail was carried in a mochila, a leather blanket that fit over the saddle. The mochila had four pouches. One of the four was for "local" mail. Station keepers had a key for that pouch. The other three pouches were opened at the end of the route. Each rider had a "home station" where he stayed between rides. The riders were supplied with a rifle and a pair of pistols, which testify to the dangers the riders could expect along the way.

One of the famous rides was when several riders carried a copy of Lincoln's Inauguration Address across the wind-blistered plains, across rushing rivers, through snow-clogged mountain passes, and yet reached California in less than ten days.

The last ride was made on October 26, 1861. A telegraph line which connected East and West American cities was

finally completed. The memorable rides of the Pony Express suddenly were over. Nevertheless, the nineteen months of the Pony Express symbolize the ingenuity, courage, and determination common to Americans during that growing era of the United States.

"Riders were supplied with a rifle and a pair of pistols."

Pony Express riders were heroes to be sure; but so were Russell, Majors, and Waddell. They lost over a million dollars in their heroic monetary venture to do what was a huge service and consolation for communication for American families. Those adventurous days of sturdy young men, many of whom were only teenagers, thundering across the plains, braving countless dangers, have been immortalized in hundreds of novels and short stories which whisk us back to the magical moments of yesteryear.

Amazingly, despite a dozen forms of danger, the Pony Express riders never lost a letter.



Bruce T. Clark, has been the Seton Historian since 1989. A homeschooling father of seven, Mr. Clark served as a Green Beret Captain in U.S. Special Forces and is the author of five historical novels: *The Custer Legacy*, *The Castro Conspiracy*, *The Blood-Red Flag*, *Redcoats and Rebels*, and *The American Renegade*.

Flying the Coop

BY CHERYL HERNANDEZ

We have a couple dozen chickens, and some — no matter what barriers we put up, or how often we clip their wings — will find a way to fly the coop. Apparently, the grass is just greener on the other side, and they are willing to risk being chased by the dog just for a taste of that sweet grass. Sometimes I look outside and laugh as I watch my youngest son chase a bird around the yard, trying to catch it and throw it over the fence — back to where it belongs. Then once he turns his back, it flies over again, and once more the chase is on.

BY GOD'S DESIGN

What does this have to do with our children and homeschooling? Well, perhaps I'm in a reflective mood, as my sixth child has just graduated from high school and is now ready to "fly" on her own. My heart longs to keep her close to home — but God has other plans. In her case, she has chosen to pursue the religious life, our second daughter who has answered this call. My other children who have "flown the coop" are studying in college and going into fields of civil engineering, law, political science, and business.

Each one of our nine children is so distinctly unique, precious in His eyes. Each one needs to find what God has in store for him or her — and He alone has the perfect plan. Our job is to raise them so that they are willing to seek, listen, and then pursue that path... for His glory. We all know that only in doing the Will of God will we have peace and be truly happy.

But sometimes — and I speak from my own experience as well as from listening to so many parents — we have to watch



our older children as they struggle with this. Sometimes they may be like the rogue hens in our coop, not just in setting out on their own, but in being determined to do things their own way. They fight against His will, saying, as St. Augustine did, "Make me holy, Lord... but not yet." This can be a time of heartache and worry for the parent. But God is asking us to pray harder and trust completely in Him. They are being formed, and some clay is harder to smooth than others.

Years ago, my pastor gave this advice when I asked him what was the best way to guide our young son if he wanted to pursue the religious life. "Teach him to be a man of virtue! The same virtues apply whether God calls him to the religious or married life!" Great advice, and that has been our goal in homeschooling each of our children, and will continue to be with the three still at home.

So if I can humbly offer any advice to help in your homeschooling journey, it would be this: teach your children virtue above all else, and the rest will take care of itself. Instill in them a desire to seek God's Will and the courage to follow it.

IF PLANS GO AWRY

If, as they fly the coop, they get stuck in one of the thorny trees or lose a few feathers being chased — like our crazy hens — then get on your knees. I look at my older children and realize that as much as I love them, God loves them even more! He has a beautiful plan for each and every one. A friend recently gave me the *Surrender Novena*, and I have since prayed this every morning: "O Jesus, I surrender myself to You. Take care of everything." And He will.

We have a poster in our school room with a quote from one of my favorite saints, St. Josemaría Escrivá: "Don't flutter about like a hen, when you can soar to the heights of an eagle." So don't be afraid to let them fly!



Cheryl Hernandez and her husband live in Florida, and have homeschooled their nine children for over 23 years using the Seton curriculum. Born in California and raised in Europe, Cheryl has a BFA in Graphic Design and is a convert to our wonderful Catholic Faith.



Tough Times, Tough Moms: Homeschooling and the Working Mother

BY JEFF MINICK

It's May, and you race home from a day of teaching homeschool seminars in Asheville to whisk two sons off to soccer practice—or somewhere. Later you won't remember that detail. You go upstairs to tell your wife you'll take the boys to practice, and you find her collapsed on the bedroom floor, unconscious but still breathing. Then come the ambulances, hospitals, doctors, nurses, your other children driving home all night from college, the neurosurgeon's verdict, and a bishop's advice about Church teaching on care for the dying, and five days later your wife is dead. The funeral, the burial, and the summer remain only as a blur of memory.

And now it's fall and your sixteen-year-old and nine-year-old, who have homeschooled their entire lives, require your help.

How do you keep homeschooling and still earn a living?

The scenario above is not fictional. I wish more than anything else in this world it was.

My wife died of a brain aneurysm in 2004. My two sons, like their older siblings, were always educated at home. And I was determined to keep homeschooling them, because I believed

in home education—I had done much of the teaching—and because my wife would have wanted it that way.

"How do you keep homeschooling and still earn a living?"

I was blessed with help: a sister living in nearby Asheville, the donations of food, money, and childcare from the homeschooling community, the co-ops and other educational opportunities available to my boys outside of the home. Because I needed to make money as well as teach my sons, I closed my bookstore, sold my house, moved into an apartment, and expanded my seminars for homeschoolers. In this way, I could earn a living wage as a teacher and bring my youngest son to my classes, an arrangement that allowed him to make many friends and to take most of my courses.

Like me, albeit for many different reasons, some homeschooling parents must both teach at home and work a job. How do they make that work?

Let's find out.

HOW WORKING MOM'S MAKE IT WORK

Many moms who work seek help from grandparents, aunts and uncles, and even older siblings. With today's technology, even distance learning with relatives is a possibility. Grandkids can learn history or math via Skype from their grandparents, an arrangement that not only helps with the academics, but also strengthens the bonds of an extended family.

"Look Around for Help. Be Creative."

When an option, home education co-ops also offer assistance to working mothers. In Front Royal, Virginia, for example, the Padre Pio Academy operates Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the academic year at the local Catholic church. The K-12 students enrolled at Padre Pio use books and supplies from Seton Home Study School, and do additional schoolwork at home on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Now let's visit four Front Royal moms who use the Seton curriculum for their children while working outside the home.

All four working moms cited finances as the primary reason for working outside of the home: unexpected medical costs, the need to repair a house, the costs of college education. "Ideally," says Elizabeth H., "I don't think women should be working out of the home. But our house needed major repairs, and we were struggling to help our older kids with college." To this same question, Anne S., a mother of ten with four children still in the home, says, "Necessity, purely. I would never do it if I didn't have to help support my family." Catherine T.A., a mother of six homeschooling children, simply said, "We needed the money."

Mary B., a single mother of six, responds with one word as to why she is working: "Survival." She laughs, and then adds, "Food and electricity." Without the support of a husband, Mary has no choice other than to work full-time.

So how do these working moms juggle the obligations of a job with their homeschooling?

Two of them depend first and foremost on relatives and older children for support. Elizabeth has the help of her daughter, Katie, who lives in the house with her husband, a graduate student, and her small children. Katie drives her younger siblings to activities like soccer and helps them with their schoolwork. Anne likewise has help from an older daughter and has also enrolled her children at the Padre Pio co-op. She stresses the importance of organization and keeping a balance between work and family. She encourages other working moms to seek out relatives, friends, or older homeschoolers who might help with the children's homeschooling. "Look around for help. Be creative." Catherine's teenagers pitch in and help teach their younger siblings.

ONLINE IDEAS AND ADVICE

As you might suspect, you can find many online articles about working moms who homeschool their children. At Intellectual Takeout, for example, Annie Holmquist's article "Can A Parent Hold Down A Job And Homeschool At The Same Time?" reminds parents there is no perfect homeschooling scenario and offers several encouraging tips for working homeschool moms. Google "homeschool working moms," and you'll find several sites supportive of homeschooling mothers in the workplace. So if you're in a position where you are balancing work and homeschooling, explore online for some ideas and advice.

Mary's son, a high school senior, still homeschools, but lacking help outside the home, she was forced to enroll her younger children in Catholic and public schools.

All four women mentioned that both a schedule and flexibility within that schedule are important in juggling their obligations at work and in the home. Mary's son, for example, must sometimes leave school and go to a local coffee shop to read or study until his mom can pick him up. Anne and Catherine work part-time and in jobs with flexible hours. Both women can do some of their work at home.

All of these moms agreed that their situation is not ideal. All regret the time given to work and taken from their families. Mary found that one huge drawback to working full-time and raising children is missing out on certain occasions like school parties or sports events. In an email, Anne wrote some advice that applies to all homeschooling moms:

"Accept the inevitable sacrifices of your personal time and preferences with grace and good cheer. However, you can't give what you don't have, so every mom needs to find some time somewhere each week to recharge batteries and stay healthy... exercise, alone time, friends time, music, good reading, quiet prayer... think carefully about your routine and how you can change it to fit in time for these things too. You want to avoid being an unhappy, frazzled mom (and wife)."

Finally, all these women stressed the importance of prayer and faith in their busy days. As Anne says, "Finally, I would say, work always on beefing up your prayer life. Entrust your family to the Lord, with confidence in His love and care."

(The women in this article and their comments are real. For a variety of reasons, I have changed their names.)



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.

in the **Schoolroom**

Where We Share Our Best Tips for Homeschooling with Seton



Making Math Fun in the Summer

In the summer, it is easy to cast aside academics and let the good times roll; but come September, when those pesky math facts are hard to remember and the beginning of the new math book seems like a foreign language, you might wish there had been a little practice here and there.

But it doesn't have to be "schoolish." Summer is a great time to introduce some fun new ways to learn and practice what your children have been working on for the whole of the academic year.

Ready for Rain or Rides

Math games (but don't call them that) are great fun and perfect for rainy days, long car rides and picnic blanket lunches. Games such as Fish Stix (by Peaceable Kingdom), Sum Swamp (Learning Resources) and Sums in Space (daVinci's Room) are great fun for your younger crowd, math specific without seeming so. Also, don't forget that a good game of Chutes and Ladders or Candyland gives your young students the opportunity to count and add the dice.

Older kids may enjoy Multiplication and Division Bingo, Mobi (a tile game similar to Bananagrams) or Absolute Zero. Card games such as Pyramid Solitaire, Gin Rummy, Crazy Eights, War and Speed are all useful for number recognition, quick mental math and score keeping.

As the kids get older, real life applications of math become competitive fun with games like Monopoly and Life.

Field Trips Happen

Have you ever considered a math field trip? Don't worry, it can be fun. In New York City, there is a Museum of Mathematics (MoMath), which is a great idea if you happen to be nearby, but the real fun would be to use the math you've learned in real life ways.

"Math...doesn't have to be 'schoolish'."

For example, a visit to a ball park gives you the opportunity to calculate the statistics of the players on the field. Visiting a city? How tall are those buildings and how short are they compared to Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world? Going on a hike? What's the distance, how long did it take, and how fast did you walk? Compare your stats to other hikes and see your progress.

Math can be one of those subjects that ejects groans, anxiety and angst, so summer is the perfect time to take the ugh out of equation and inject some ahhh. Happy calculating!



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*.



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Founder of the Dominicans

August 8

Patron Saint of Astronomers and the Falsely Accused



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"It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and the office of the sacrament of Matrimony, that from the earliest years children should be taught, according to the faith received in Baptism, to have a knowledge of God, to worship Him and to love their neighbor."

*Familiaris Consortio,
Pope St. John Paul II
22 November 1981*