

Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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The Evans Family

Take A Deep Breath...and Pray Pg 12

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See inside for
CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

Pg 15

For This I am Grateful
Mary Ellen Barrett pg 4

St. Thomas More
John Clark pg 8

Ask the Experts...
Seton Panel of Moms pg 10

First Day of Homeschool
Seton Families pg 24

Difficulties can be Stepping Stones
Nick Marmalejo pg 28

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Dr. Mary Kay Clark

EDITORS
Mary Ellen Barrett
Kevin Clark

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Jim Shanley

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Robin Hibl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Mary Ellen Barrett
John Clark
Michelle Evans
Nick Marmalejo
Jeff Minick

COVER PHOTO
The Evans Family

ADDRESS

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

CONTACT INFO

Phone: (866) 280-1930
Fax: (540) 636-1602
info@setonhome.org
www.setonhome.org
www.setonmagazine.com

SETON EMAILS

CUSTOMER SERVICE
custserv@setonhome.org
COUNSELORS
counselors@setonhome.org
ADMISSIONS
admissions@setonhome.org
GRADING
grading@setonhome.org
GENERAL INFORMATION
info@setonhome.org
MY SETON
myseton@setonhome.org
STANDARDIZED TESTING
testing@setonhome.org
SPECIAL SERVICES
SSDept@setonhome.org

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Dear Readers,

"I'd rather eat ramen noodles and keep my kids at home". This quote from Michele Evans delighted me. She is the mom of our beautiful featured family and she is faithful, feisty, and fun. I hope you get as much encouragement from their story as I have.

It is true that we homeschooling parents make many sacrifices to home educate our children: loss of income, less freedom to come and go, a much larger workload in the home, but the rewards are extraordinary. We recognize those gifts but sometimes it is hard to remember and be grateful, especially now with the stressful conditions prevailing in the world. This issue aims to encourage you to see how blessed we all are and to be grateful.

This month Jeff Minick winds up his series on the four temperaments. I have learned so much in Jeff's series about the temperaments of my children and how this can help guide them through their formative years. You can find the entire series at SetonMagazine.com.

My favorite space in this issue is, without a doubt, the photos so generously shared by so many of you. Not only did we have a lot to put in here, but there are many more on the website. Thank you so much for your willingness to show us your lovely children.

This is our last issue of 2020, and we here at Seton wish you all a happy Thanksgiving, and a blessed and holy Advent and Christmas season. We look forward to meeting you here again in this space in the new year.

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett



SETON PHONE DIRECTORY

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Draper Warren
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Joseph Strickland

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION
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Deacon Gene McGuirk

SPECIAL SERVICES
540-622-5576
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Karen Eriksson-Lee
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GENERAL COUNSELING
540-622-5526
Cecilia Sauer

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540-636-1429

Cecilia Sauer
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Heather Hibl

ELEMENTARY GRADING
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Jacinta Black

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC
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Deacon Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING
540-622-5525
Rhonda Way

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE,
COURSE APPROVAL,
INDEPENDENT STUDIES
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Nick Marmalejo

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Bob Wiesner
540-635-4728
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540-622-5536
Kevin Clark



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.

- 4** For This I am Grateful
Mary Ellen Barrett
- 6** Questions and Answers
Dr. Mary Kay Clark
- 7** Dual Enrollment
Nick Marmalejo
- 8** St. Thomas More
John Clark
- 10** Ask the Experts
Seton Panel of Moms
- 12** Take a Deep Breath...and Pray
Michelle Evans
- 14** Seton Book Reports
Seton Staff
- 15** Christmas Catalog
Seton Educational Media
- 23** The Four Temperaments: Tools of Love and Discovery
Jeff Minick
- 24** First Day of HomeSchool
Seton Families
- 26** Gratitude, Thanksgiving, and the Christmas Gift of Self
John Clark
- 28** Difficulties can be Stepping Stones to Success
Nick Marmalejo
- 30** In the School Room
Mary Ellen Barrett
- 31** Saint Cecilia
Saint Poster



THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



Why Do We Homeschool?

We love the ability that we can have a fantastic and rigorous curriculum wherever we might be sent to next.

We were in quarantine and needed a way to continue our children's schooling.

We also were searching for a solid and complete Catholic traditional education. It was important that we could educate our children at home during this pandemic!

The Tolsma Family



SHARE YOUR "WHY WE HOMESCHOOL" ON **FACEBOOK**



For This I Am Grateful

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

November is a favorite month of mine, the late fall color and briskness appeal to me much more than does the blistering humidity of summer, and the bitter cold of winter has not yet settled in to make me miserable. November is also my birthday month, which is finally becoming a thing again since I have older children now and they seem to enjoy celebrating their old mom. November is the month of my wedding day, the day I forever become one with this wonderful man God chose for me. All these things inspire gratitude. The Thanksgiving holiday, celebrated this month in America, calls upon us to reflect on those things for which we are grateful and share the celebration of them with family, friends, and feasting.

In many ways, Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. To me, it's a no pressure holiday that requires only good food and gathering with friends and family. There is no insistence on anything else, and our traditions for this holiday are simple. We eat turkey, we invite a crowd, we welcome all, and we do not sweat any kitchen mishaps.

Then Came 2020

This year of everything we know about hospitality and shared experiences seemed to go away. It became the year that gratitude was suddenly a little harder to find. In my case it began early in the year with my father's diagnosis of terminal cancer, a shocking turn since he had been perfectly healthy—until he was not. While he was with us in home hospice, a five-dollar piece of equipment broke off the water heater, resulting in a flood causing thousands of dollars in damage.

Soon after my dad passed away and there was no wake or funeral to celebrate his life, months of construction started, until my contractor had a heart attack and that held up repairs while he recovered. Hurricane Isaias took down three trees and a shed in my yard, again resulting in several thousand dollars in cleanup and damage. All this while living under the quarantine that will not end. To say gratitude is difficult to come by is an understatement. In fact, each morning is approached with trepidation, “What is going to go wrong today?” being the first thought that pops into one's head.

“All this while living under the quarantine that will not end.”

This year may require some deep digging to find gratitude. We have all been challenged and stretched in ways we have never been before. Yes, historically this pandemic has been less significant than others (the bubonic plague wiped out half the

population of Europe in the Middle Ages), and people have suffered greatly in other ways (invasions, famine, holocausts), which puts into perspective not being able to go eat at the corner bistro or to hang out at homeschool co-op drinking coffee with other moms. However, that doesn't mean that the loss of these things has not been significant to us and to our culture. To be unable to have funerals or weddings, to have missed Mass for months, all sports on hold and a million other things that make our lives our lives—these things are to be properly mourned and celebrated when they return.

“...let us focus on what we can be grateful for.”

In the meantime, let us focus on what we can be grateful for. Homeschooling is now cool. No longer are we the crazy moms who are harming their children by keeping them out of government run schools. The world suddenly sees the advantages of keeping children close their parents and siblings by homeschooling, and the hard work and sacrifice made by homeschooling parents is now given the proper due.

Seton, long at the forefront of the Catholic homeschooling movement has stretched to accommodate thousands of new families and sought to help them navigate these unknown waters as easily and efficiently as possible. I know I am grateful for our new Seton Support Community.

A Springtime of Family Time

As difficult as it was, I am immensely grateful for a spring that focused entirely on family time. Our usual spring schedule is chaotic with travel, performances, and family commitments. This past spring was quietly filled with backyard barbecues, 1000 piece puzzles, board games, movie nights, lingering over meals and, yes, sleeping in. Truly things to be grateful for.

The bonds my family forged during this time together will remain forever part of us, and I'm grateful for the time we've had to slow down and enjoy each other's company. God truly used this time to draw us closer, and this Thanksgiving my prayer will be that those bonds hold us tightly together as we look toward a new year, new challenges, and bright beginnings.



Mary Ellen Barrett is a 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 the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.

your Questions ANSWERED

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Do I have to do everything that is in the lesson plans?

No, the only things you absolutely have to do in order for your student to receive a grade from Seton are the things that Seton grades (part B on the Quarter Report Forms).

However, the lesson plans are our best method to enable your student to be able to do well on those things. Obviously, every child is different and comes from a different learning background.

If there's something that you know your child already knows, you can certainly either skim through the lesson or skip entirely. If there is a concept your child hasn't mastered yet, you may want to spend some additional time on that or use some outside resources.

My kindergarten student is through the lesson plans in about 90 minutes. Do I have to come up with more things for him to do to fill up the time?

No. Remember, if your child were in a brick and mortar school for kindergarten, much of that time would be spent playing, listening to stories, or even taking naps! Also, traveling to and from school, waiting in lines, waiting for all the other students to finish their work, putting things away, etc. Enjoy the extra time together. Pre-K and K should always be fun!

Do I have to do the book reports on books you sent me?

With thousands of students enrolled in our reading program, it would be impossible for the graders to be familiar with so many different books.

Seton students get to choose from four historical novels for their first and second quarter reports. They choose from nine saint biographies for their third and fourth quarter reports. These choices are for book reports in the Fourth through Eighth Grade.

You may have selected your book report books when you enrolled. If not, we chose them for you when your enrollment was packed. If you notice that one of the other options in the lesson plans is a book that interests your student, you may order that book from Seton's bookstore.

I am finishing up the 1st quarter in some of my subjects, but not others. Do I have to submit everything at the same time?

If you are mailing elementary grade items to Seton, you may find it easier to keep track of things if you mail in all the work for a quarter at the same time, together with all the necessary Quarterly Report Forms.

If you are mailing high school items, send us completed subjects each quarter.

However, if you using your online MySeton account to enter grades and upload assignments, for either elementary or high school, we ask that you submit them as you finish them.

Of course you can submit any work at any time but if a subject or two are significantly behind the others, you should probably send in what you have rather than holding on to it.



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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



MAGDALEN COLLEGE
OF THE LIBERAL ARTS



AVE MARIA
UNIVERSITY



THOMAS AQUINAS
COLLEGE



OUR LADY
SEAT OF WISDOM
COLLEGE

Nick Marmalejo, Guidance Counselor on Dual Enrollment

"Some of the most frequently asked questions from high school families are about dual enrollment in college courses. I hope this helps. - Nick M."

Will Seton accept transfer credits from a college or university?

Yes. This is considered Dual Enrollment.

To receive credit for college or university courses, Seton requires an official transcript.

A print-off from the school's website with courses and grades does not meet this requirement.

Can any course be done as a Dual Enrollment course?

No. Not all courses or activities will qualify. For example, once enrolled, diploma-seeking Seton students are required to take Seton's English, Theology, Biology, and Social Studies courses.

However, many math, science, foreign language, electives and fine arts can be done as a dual enrollment.

Are grades received for Dual Enrollment courses part of the GPA?

No. Because Seton does not grade the work, dual enrollment credit grades are not a part of the Seton GPA.

How much credit does a Dual Enrollment course receive?

All one semester, 3 credit college courses receive a full credit, rather than a half credit, in Seton's system.

For example, Spanish 101, a one semester college course will be credited as one full year of high school Spanish.

Do I need to tell Seton I intend to do a Dual Enrollment course?

Yes, please do! Seton's Guidance Department wants to ensure that you are on track for a Seton diploma, if that's your plan, and will record your intention to Dual Enroll in your profile. In this way, we will know to expect a transcript from you for the courses in which you choose to dual enroll.

setonhome.org/colleges



SAINT THOMAS MORE

BY JOHN CLARK

Born into some of the most tumultuous times in the entire history of the Catholic Church, the brilliant Saint Thomas More has been hailed with many accolades: patriot, genius, statesman, martyr, saint. But to a group of children in the 16th Century, he was simply “father.”

The legacy of Saint Thomas More is so powerful that even today, centuries later, he inspires those who may not agree with his political and religious positions; for good reasons. They respect the fortitude that he exhibited all the way to his Earthly end, but if they know only his public life, they are missing much of the character of this great man.

In 1505, Thomas More married Jane Colt, who tragically died in childbirth only six years after their wedding. But their marriage produced one son, John, and three daughters, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Cicely. Thomas also became a father to his second wife’s child and a foster father to others. These children brought great fulfillment into this life, and Thomas referred to his children as “my joys.” His biographers paint a picture of Thomas as a playful, affectionate, and happy father.

A GREAT HOMESCHOOL DAD

Thomas More also proved to be a great homeschool Dad, and the evidence of that is seen throughout his writings. When away on business in the year 1521, Thomas sent a letter to his children that began, “Thomas More, to his whole school, greeting.” Thomas realized the importance of learning and of making learning a happy experience.

The British custom at the time was to academically teach only the boys, as education was deemed unimportant and even detrimental for girls. Yet Thomas saw the nonsense of that, so he taught his daughters on his own. He taught them subjects such as science and literature, and he seemed to have a unique love and ability for teaching Latin. Thomas taught his daughters Latin so well that they seemed equally at ease with Latin or English, translating it back and forth to each other as part of their homeschool regimen.

When meeting with a bishop one day, Thomas dropped a letter from his pocket that his daughter had written to him in Latin. The bishop picked it up and glanced at it, and saw that it had been written in perfect Latin. The bishop was astounded that it was written by a woman.

LIVING IN A VIRTUOUS TIME

But it was virtue and the central importance of the Catholic faith that Thomas most desired to convey to his children. One of his biographers recounts that Thomas told his young children that they were fortunate to live at a time when people were happy and holy and virtuous—men and women whose lives were wonderful examples of Christianity.

But he also warned them that there may be a time coming when virtue was punished and sin was rewarded. And he urged them, when that time arrived, to hold fast to almighty God, Who loves them. As he reminded them, the only lasting comfort and consolation comes from God alone.

Of course, that time arrived when King Henry VIII persecuted Thomas for his refusal to endorse the king’s divorce. Thomas’ position was clear: King Henry VIII was sacramentally married, and a divorce and remarriage was sacramentally impossible. Thomas More let King Henry know that this was no small matter; Thomas would not bear witness to the king’s lie. For his refusal to go along with the king’s new “marriage,” Thomas More was put in prison and eventually beheaded after he proved unwavering in his resolve.

DEFENDER OF MARRIAGE AND FATHERHOOD

We can look back at his life and death, and observe that

Thomas More was one of the most ardent champions of the Sacrament of Matrimony in ecclesiastical history. And we would be correct in doing so. But it’s also worth noting that, in defending marriage, Thomas was defending fatherhood. Because if matrimony can be put asunder, so can fatherhood.

When Thomas More famously climbed that scaffold, he was laying down his life for God, for truth, and for his friends. But

he was also laying down his life for the rights of fathers and the rights of children.

If sacramental matrimony can be terminated with the stroke of a pen or the pronouncement of a tyrant, the family is in mortal danger, and children are left in a position in which the real seems pretend and the pretend seems real. In the end, the Sacrament of Matrimony—and the mothers and fathers and children who are nurtured by this glorious sacrament instituted by Jesus—must be defended by all means possible. Thomas More understood this, and in the end, it was the hill he died on.

INSPIRATION FOR HOMESCHOOL FATHERS

Saint Thomas More’s life was one of learning, love, and sacrifice. So when you homeschool fathers need some inspiration to keep going, think of Saint Thomas More’s indelible love and unshakable perseverance. Ask him to pray for your marriage: that it be strong and fulfilling and full of joy—that you may be “God’s good servant” by living a beautiful life of love and sacrifice for your family.

Saint Thomas More—statesman, martyr, homeschool father—pray for us!

Thomas realized the importance of learning and of making learning a happy experience.



John Clark is a homeschooling father, author of *Who's Got You* and *How to be a Superman Dad*, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for *The National Catholic Register*.



“

I am concerned about my role as teacher. When I patiently try to explain a concept, my children often turn to crying. How do we learn to work with each other?

- Rachel C., Mount Airy, MD

”



Cheryl Hernandez

Your children may be lacking trust in you as a teacher because you may be lacking trust and confidence in yourself.

But that can actually be a good thing, since where we really need to put our trust and confidence is in God. Our Lord told St. Faustina, “Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to Me, because I pour all the treasure of My graces into them.”

*“You are, in fact,
educating them for Heaven!”*

Be not afraid! Our beloved St. John Paul II is telling you Our Lord is with you every step of the way. God has put the desire to homeschool your children into your heart, and you have already made that first most important step of answering His call.

The Church says a parent is not only their child’s teacher — but their *most important and indispensable teacher*. You are, in fact,

educating them for Heaven! Have confidence in your God-given role, ask for the graces daily, and they will be freely and generously given.

Having order in your day will help you to gain confidence and your children to be less anxious.

*“Soon, you will find days
flowing more smoothly...”*

Children thrive within the security of boundaries. It helps them to relax and focus, without the worry and stress of the unknown. So make sure you put some order into your day, and try to be consistent.

Wake up before the children so you have time to yourself (to shower, have a cup of coffee, pray, and do some spiritual reading). Then have set times for waking up the children, morning prayers, breakfast, school time, lunch time, chore time, and outside play time. Especially in these first few months, try to keep the same schedule each day.

Soon, you will find the days flowing more smoothly, and you and your children relaxing and enjoying this new adventure together.

Ask the Experts...

Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Speak to a New Mom's Concern

"Helping your children learn good work habits...sets your children on the road to future success.."



Ginny Seuffert

Do your children cry when you ask them to turn off the TV, clear the table, and load the dishwasher? If so, you have a discipline issue that must be addressed.

Simply expressed, school age children should not cry during lessons. That kind of behavior likely wouldn't happen in a brick and mortar school so it's really more of a delay tactic.

"Remind the child that his or her own actions created the consequence."

At the first sign of tears, stop the lesson and assign a chore. "Go take a break and sweep the kitchen floor, until you feel like you can get back to work." As this will set the school day back, unfinished work must be completed before playtime, or snack time, or TV time. This may bring more tears.

Remind the child that his or her own actions created the consequence. "Perhaps tomorrow you will remember how you were doing school-work when everyone else was playing."

It may take as long as several weeks to end the waterworks, but end them you must. Crying over having to do a lesson is behavior that should not be tolerated, because it also has long term implications.

Children who use these tactics to avoid work will suffer in their personal and professional relationships. Helping your children learn good work habits and the ability to control their emotions now is a great benefit to them, and sets your children on the road to future success.



Tara Brelinsky

Homeschooling, like the rest of parenthood, takes time to navigate. Think back to when you brought your firstborn home. You felt prepared for the basics of diaper changes and rocking, but you had some doubts after those first sleepless nights and cluster nursing sessions. In time, you and baby developed a routine. You learned his individual needs and you met them. New homeschoolers can experience this same settling-in period.

My advice to help you through this adjustment period is: start with prayer, stick with a set schedule, know your priorities for the day, and focus on the eternal goal.

Always begin the school day with prayer. Don't skip this step, even if it means starting a few minutes later. Everyone needs the grace of time spent in prayer (yes, there's grace even if your toddler is standing on her head during the rosary).

Stick with a schedule so that everyone knows what to expect throughout the day. Privileges should come after schoolwork and chores have been completed. If children understand, free time is at 3pm after they've finished their lessons without fussing, then they'll be more inclined to cooperate.

"Homeschooling is really about more than ABC's and 123's"

Know your priorities for the day and hold to them. Occasionally, there may be interruptions (doctor's appointments, business calls) or a child may have a difficult day. On those days, skip the extras and channel your time and energy into completing the subjects which are priorities.

Just like the rest of parenting, homeschooling has an eternal goal. God has called you to train up your sons and daughters to know, love, and serve Him. You are best suited to fulfill that vocation because homeschooling is really about more than ABC's and 123's. Homeschooling is about teaching children how to live. And staying the course through this settling-in period is teaching your children that life sometimes requires patient perseverance in order to reach the bigger goal.

The Evans Family



Take a Deep Breath...and Pray

Someone once encouraged Michele Evans to put her children in school and go to work.

"I'd rather eat ramen noodles," she replied, "and keep my kids at home."

Let's pay a visit to this stouthearted and determined mom with a gift for laughter, her husband Tristan, and her children 11th-grader Owen, 8th-grader Janelle, and 4th-grader Ian, all of whom have been enrolled with the Seton Home Study School since kindergarten.

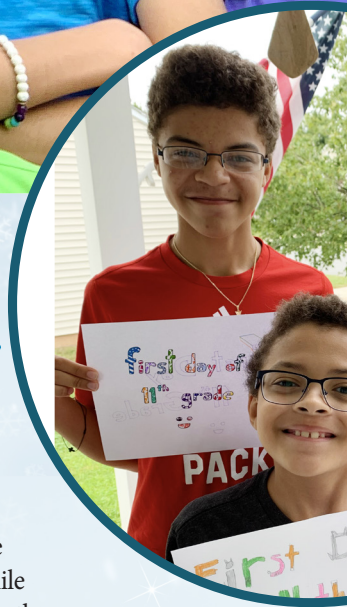
Inspired by some fathers he'd met in a Catholic men's group, it was Tristan who first suggested they try homeschooling, an idea utterly foreign to Michele. He designed a pre-school program for Owen, and when kindergarten rolled around, Michele asked a friend what they should do next. Nancy, a mother of six who later died of cancer, recommended Seton. "She was an inspiration to me," Michele says, "and when I pray, I ask for her help."

In early 2012, shortly after Ian's birth, disaster struck. Tristan was diagnosed with advanced Stage 3 colon cancer. After months of treatment, he recovered, but as Michele says, "If we hadn't caught it when we did, he probably wouldn't be here today." While she was with him in the hospital and at chemotherapy, family and friends pitched in and helped with the two older children's education, guided by Seton's lesson plans.

At about this same time, Michele and Tristan founded an online Catholic bookstore, TKC Catholic Bookstores at www.tkcus.com. They had originally planned to open a brick-and-mortar store as well, but with Tristan's illness they put those ambitions aside.

Each of the Evans children has a special interest. Owen is fascinated with drawing and recently won third place in the Rush Revere T-Shirt Design contest, which is connected to Rush and Kathryn Limbaugh's Rush Revere books. Janelle loves baking, and Ian is a "Minecraft fanatic and Lego maniac who could also play board games all day long."

The family belongs to the Association of Roman Catholic Homeschoolers, or ARCH, where the three young people visit with friends, take field trips, and engage in all sorts of other social activities.



The Evans generally begin their homeschooling day between 8:30 and 9:00, work on their lessons for three or four hours, break for lunch, and finish up their schoolwork in the afternoon. Their 78-year-old aunt, Marcy Veccity, who lives with them, helps with this schooling, working for the most part with Ian.

FLEXIBILITY, BENEFITS, AND FREEDOM

When asked what advantages she'd found in homeschooling, Michele had some ready answers. First up was the flexibility "that allows us to move at our own pace." She adds, "I love the freedom to be able to do things that have nothing to do with school," and cites as an example the burial of a great-uncle, a veteran of World War II, in Arlington National Cemetery, a unique and moving experience which the family was able to attend.

"I'm not sure we could have gone if the kids were in a regular school. That flexibility is just amazing, and my kids are getting an excellent education as well."

Next up on her list of the benefits of teaching in the home was independence of outside circumstances. When a friend asked her how the pandemic had affected her life, Michele responded, "Mmmm...I have to wear a mask in the grocery store." Unlike so many parents during the lockdown, homeschooling meant no disruption in her children's education.

Finally, Michele stressed that homeschooling allows her children greater freedom in learning. "Each of my children learns uniquely."

Once I determined their learning styles, I was able to tailor the lessons to their needs. They would not get this type of attention in traditional schools." As an example, she mentions her daughter Janelle, who had difficulty with spelling until Michele figured out her daughter was an auditory learner.

Janelle now learns spelling by listening to words on tape at night before bedtime.

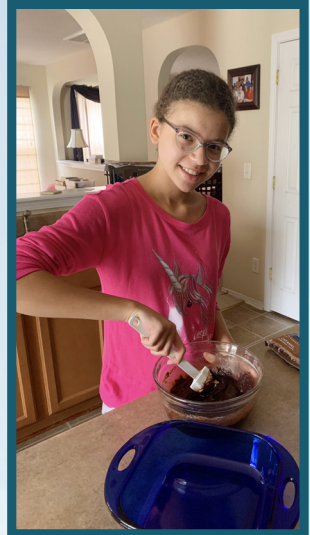
In her response to a Seton survey asking "What do you love most about Seton Home Study School?" Michele wrote "The authentic Catholic education which Seton provides weaves the beauty of Catholicism throughout ALL subjects."

TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND PRAY

Her advice to those new to homeschooling, especially with the younger set, is two-fold: "you can't mess up your child's early education" and "always pray." She often gets calls from new homeschooling moms of kindergarteners who ask "My daughter took only an hour to do her lessons today. What's wrong?" to which Michelle answers with a smile "Nothing." In other words, the younger set from kindergarten to third or fourth grade require much less time learning at home than in regular schools.

Michele also reminds new families who contact her to "trust that God will take care of you. Take a deep breath and pray, and everything will work out."

In these times in which we live, that's sound advice, not just for new or old homeschoolers, but also for Catholics everywhere.



Seton Book Reports

BY SETON STAFF

A Simple System to Build Better Writers

“Ugh!” “Arghh” or “Please, please, no” are some of the emotions felt by elementary school students when they hear the words “book report.”

Never fear, students. Seton is here to help you.

At Seton, the book report for the elementary grades is not intended to be mere proof that students have done the reading. In other words, students don’t just repeat the plot of the story. Instead, a book analysis, in essence a review, incorporates all that students have learned in their language arts classes. Writing a book report requires reading comprehension skills, thinking and analysis skills, and composition and mechanics skills.

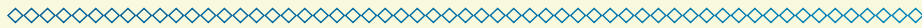
And here is where Seton comes to the rescue. The staff has prepared questions about the content of the book and developed a worksheet to guide students and help them successfully write their reports. As they read a book, they can fill in information on the worksheet. Once they’ve

finished the book, they can then draw information from the worksheet, complete an outline based on the worksheet, and move from the outline to writing paragraphs for the report.

Simple, yes?

To help these students, Seton has prepared the opening paragraphs for books read in the first and second quarters. This introductory paragraph includes the title, author, the time and place of the story, and the main character. The final sentence of that paragraph delivers the theme of the report. Here we find the characteristics, attitudes, and values of the main character. In the following paragraphs, young reviewers address these traits along with evidence from the book. In the third and fourth quarters, students write their own introductions to these reports.

These steps lead to a well-written analysis of the book.



The Book Report Workbook, a Remarkable Tool



One of the academic skills learned by fourth graders is the art of writing a book report. To assist these students, Seton has developed a Book Report Workbook, a tutorial designed to guide them step-by-step through the process of writing a report about *The Small War of Sergeant Donkey*, the assigned book for the First Quarter.

Step-by-Step Simplicity

We’ve provided a specific worksheet for this report, with chapter-by-chapter comprehension questions as well as interesting historical facts and vocabulary words. This tutorial is an excellent tool for learning how to analyze a character or characters in a book. The book report for *The Small War of Sergeant Donkey* is not sent to Seton nor is it graded.

In the Book Report Workbook, we’ve provided a Parent Supplement to assist with the report, which includes a Worksheet Answer Key, a Simplified First Draft of the Book Report, and a Sample Completed Book Report.

Good writing, everyone!



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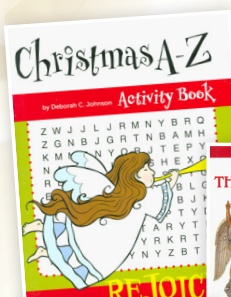
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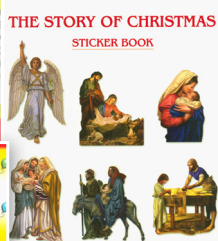


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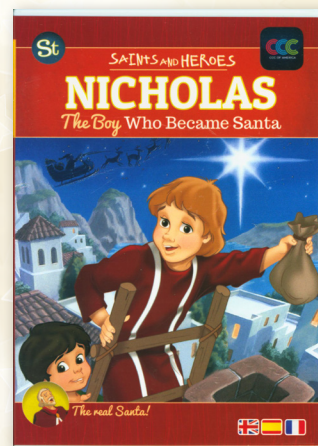
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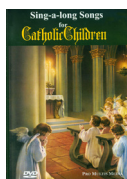
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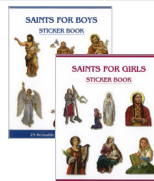
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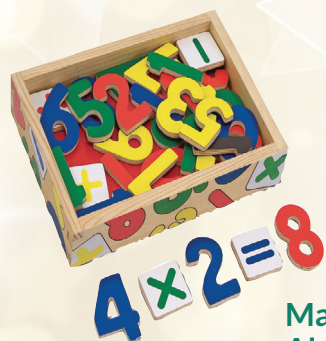
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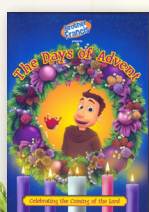
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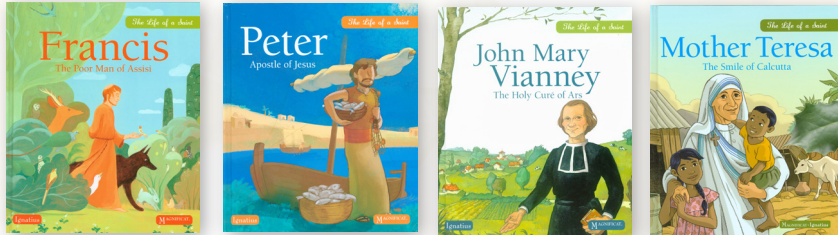
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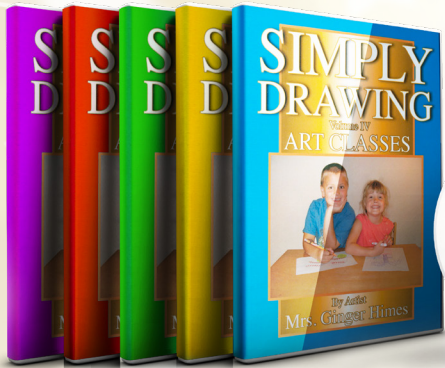
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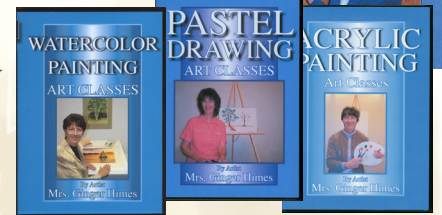
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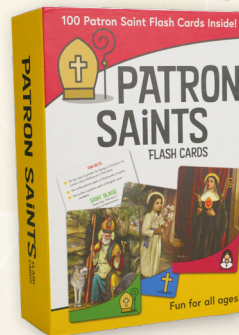
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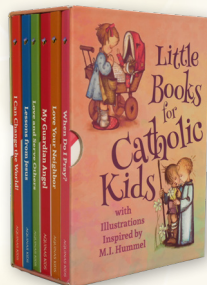
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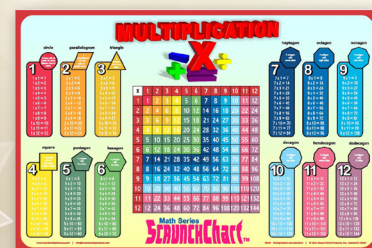


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The Four Temperaments: Tools of Love and Discovery

BY JEFF MINICK



For the last five issues of the *Seton Magazine*, we have looked at the four temperaments—choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic—and how recognition of these temperaments in ourselves and in our children can assist us in the education and character development of our young people. How, for example, can the melancholic mom best guide her choleric son? How can the sanguine dad best encourage his phlegmatic daughter?

During these explorations we have relied heavily on *The Temperament God Gave Your Kids: Motivate, Discipline, and Love Your Children*. The authors of this book, husband and wife team Art and Laraine Bennett, raised four children—“one each of the four temperament types!”—and have written two other books on this subject: *The Temperament God Gave You* and *The Temperament God Gave Your Spouse*.

For Seton families, the Bennetts have proven ideal guides for this study of the four temperaments. Married for over forty years, devoutly Catholic, and familiar with homeschooling, they possess the expertise, the map and compass, to help us deepen our understanding of this ancient way of thinking about personality development. In prose affable in tone and reader-friendly, they explain that by identifying our children’s temperaments, we may then better educate them, help them grow in virtue, and come closer to Christ and His Church.

Rather than once again review these temperaments, let’s play along with the Bennetts, who use quotations from characters in A.A. Milne’s *Winnie-the-Pooh* to introduce each chapter on a specific temperament.

Your Conquering Choleric Child kicks off with Rabbit: It was going to be one of Rabbit’s busy days. As soon as he woke up he felt important, as if everything depended on him. It was just the day for Organizing Something... a Captainish sort of day, when everybody said, “Yes, Rabbit,” and “No, Rabbit,” and waited until he had told them.

In *Your Moody Melancholic Moppet*, the donkey Eeyore is a natural choice: “I might have known,” said Eeyore. “After all, one

can’t complain. I have my friends. Somebody spoke to me only yesterday. And was it last week or the week before that Rabbit bumped into me and said ‘Bother!’ The Social Round. Always something going on.”

Of all the creatures in the Hundred Acre Wood, *Your Spirited Sanguine Sprout* may best resemble Tigger: “Tiggers never go on being Sad,” explained Rabbit. “They get over it with Astonishing Rapidity.”

As for *Your Peaceful Phlegmatic Progeny*, Winnie-the-Pooh may fit that description: “It is more fun to talk with someone who doesn’t use long, difficult words but rather short, easy words like, ‘What about lunch?’”

Near the end of their book, the Bennetts write “We discussed that parents have two roles: to establish a relationship with their children and to lead their children so that they might become the persons Christ wants them to be. Most of us (by temperament) lean one way or the other: toward relating or toward leading. But our children need us to be both: good at relating to them and good at leading them. This is not easy, but it is necessary for their growth, and for our own growth as parents. This is taking up our own cross daily, and it is a part of how our children help us to become holy.”

Understanding the temperaments provides a richer understanding of our children and how we may best guide them to adulthood. As the Bennetts tell us, “Ultimately, our home can become, as Pope St. John Paul II said, a ‘community of life and love,’ the Domestic Church, the place where each person (no matter how small) is respected and valued, where his or her gifts flourish, and where love is discovered and shared.”



Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, NC. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, VA.

First Day of Homeschool

BY SETON FAMILIES

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The Roxanne Williams Family



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Gratitude, Thanksgiving, and the Christmas Gift of Self

BY JOHN CLARK

For many of us, 2020 has shaped up to be a year we would happily forget. Illness and paralyzing fear jockeyed for position as to which was the more damaging pandemic. Churches were locked and the sacraments were made unavailable for weeks. Elderly people were left terribly alone. Many people lost their jobs or businesses, and many others worried about losing theirs, too. As we look back on the year after all this, our first reaction may not be gratitude. But as we travel down the path of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, gratitude must lead the way.

Let's begin by recognizing that gratitude is a virtue, a point made by Saint Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*. You might presume that gratitude would be listed under the heading of "Charity," but it isn't. Instead, Aquinas lists gratitude under the heading of "Justice."

Why?

Part of the reason lies in the fact that gratitude is about God. We can confidently say that God is directly due our thanks. But that obligation translates to thanks toward others. The ability of any of us to give—the ability of any of us to receive—would be impossible without a prior and sustaining gift of life from God.

*"...even prior to the events of 2020,
we had largely forgotten how to offer thanks."*

Romano Guardini, one of the favorite theologians of Pope Benedict XVI, writes that "Giving and thanking, which lift man above the functioning of a machine or the instinct of animals, are really the echo of something divine." Guardini makes a powerful statement, but one that is backed by Scripture. Consider the institution of the Eucharist. As Luke 22:19 reads, "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" Jesus gives thanks and then gives Himself.

Both in giving and in thanksgiving, we must imitate Christ.

And that brings us back to the current mixed-up world in which we find ourselves. Some might say that it's easy to give thanks when times are good, but it is tough to give thanks now, when things seem so bad. But let's be honest: even prior to the events of 2020, we had largely forgotten how to offer thanks. Guardini points out that gratitude has been largely replaced with acknowledgement, a fact evident even at Christmastime:

"We need only think of the mad rush of giving and receiving at Christmastime....(W)hat determines the general sentiment is not asking and giving but the announcement of rights and their

satisfaction by means of organized associations. And the response is not gratitude but a receipt; then, the matter is properly settled."

We need to do better than this.

Many years ago, Socrates pointed out that teaching and learning—if properly performed—were essentially indistinguishable activities. And this makes me think that giving and receiving—if done properly—are also indistinguishable. To give the gift of

*The real gift was a gift of self:
it was gift of gratitude.*

oneself is to offer thanks; to offer thanks is to give the gift of oneself. Isn't that what the Magi were doing as they encountered Baby Jesus? Their gifts and thanks were present in the very same act.

This was a point not missed by a writer named William Sydney Porter, more commonly known as O. Henry. His short story, *The Gift of the Magi*, tells the story of a young husband and wife, Jim and Della, who love each other very much but lack the financial resources to buy each other a material gift. On Christmas Eve, the idea comes to Della that she can sell her long, beautiful hair, and buy her husband a last-minute gift. With the \$20 she earns from the sale, she buys Jim a chain for his pocket-watch. What she doesn't know, but soon discovers, is that Jim has sold his watch to buy his beloved Della combs for her long hair.

The cynic might say that each was given a useless gift by the other, but the romantic knows better. And so does the Christian. Because the real gift was neither combs nor chains, just as the real gift was neither gold nor frankincense nor myrrh. The real gift was a gift of self; it was the gift of gratitude.

At the end of this difficult year—a year in which God has watched over us more carefully than we could ever know—we need to present the gift of gratitude toward the Infant King and toward each other. If we can do that, then we are the Magi.

Dear Seton friends and families, thank you for reading my columns again this year! Your kind comments have been a wonderful gift. Please keep me and my family in your prayers, and be confident that you remain in ours. And here's to a healthy and happy 2021.



John Clark is a homeschooling father, author of *Who's Got You* and *How to be a Superman Dad*, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for *The National Catholic Register*.



Difficulties can be Stepping Stones to Success

When I was growing up in the Midwest, gray wintry days provided fertile ground for introspection and boredom. I vividly recall such a time in the 7th grade, wherein I found myself staring at the classroom wall of the Catholic school I attended, reading all of the laminated signs with their typically bland inspirational slogans and aphorisms.

As a student in those days, I was more focused on the realms of imagination than listening to my teacher drone on in the manner of adults to the Peanuts gang. My personal thoughts and observations seemed far more important, not to mention more interesting, than the daily blather issuing forth from the front of the room.

Yet one of those signs caught my attention. It had a winding road on it, with the words *"Difficulties are Stepping Stones to Success."* I laughed inwardly when first reading it, musing at the time that some hapless adventurer hanging off the side of a mountain would hardly view his situation as "a stepping stone to success." Of course, that thought generated an entire slew of imagined scenarios wherein a difficulty was, in fact, a real, life-threatening peril, and the main character in each is about to meet his doom.

Perhaps it is because the sign captured my imagination that its message stuck. I am confident that its author would have never imagined it as the subject of a magazine article decades after it was silly-puttied to the wall, but I digress. Despite its inherent irony, the message denotes the importance of mindset in tackling problems. It has been said that "timing is everything," but so, too, is attitude.

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Eventually I would reform my ways as a student and pay attention in class, aspiring to the work of a scholar. After college I found employment as a technical writer and then editor, and as it happened, I also found a new friend named Bob.

Bob was a spry, newly-minted retiree who had been a high-ranking brake-test engineer in his prime for one of the "Big Three" auto companies. We met on the streets in Alexandria, Virginia on a sunny weekend afternoon while casually discussing an impromptu musical performance on a street corner. The next thing I knew, I became the principal editor of his personal memoirs.

Bob had a great deal to teach from his life experience, and our weekly evening editorial meetings at Panera Bread frequently included discussion of the life lessons he learned along the way. One of the recurring themes from his work was to embrace life's problems as they come. In fact, one day he showed up with a photo-copied article from a business periodical that emphasized this particular theme. Whether in the workplace or the classroom, positively embracing difficulties and pro-actively solving problems adds value to one's work and positions one for further success down the road. It was compelling.

HOMESCHOOLING DIFFICULTIES

Bob would eventually move on to greener pastures from his Northern Virginia home, but time under his tutelage has continued to prove itself valuable, particularly as a homeschooling parent as well as a counselor in the Seton Guidance Department.



BY NICK MARMALEJO

There is typically a great deal of optimism and excitement in the Fall for families just getting started with the new academic year. This feeling is often mixed with a bit of trepidation, especially for families new to homeschooling and those preparing to send their child to college. However, in the thick of the school year, often an obstacle or series of obstacles present themselves, making the entire homeschooling endeavor seem bleak and gray. They can even make us question whether or not we made the right decision to homeschool, or if homeschooling should be abandoned altogether.

“Embrace life's problems as they come.”

As parents and teachers, we must prepare for these moments. They are inevitable. They are also natural to the process. If we embrace them with a can-do attitude, we will find that most problems have a solution that we can work towards. Not every academic problem can be solved in a day, and some problems require outside help.

At Seton, we are an email or phone call away to help you when you encounter such a road block. We aim to make your difficulties a stepping stone to success.



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.



Earl | Earl's flexible homeschooling routine allows him to balance classes, and gymnastics, and to compete with Tumbling & Trampoline (TNT) and Dare to Soar competitions.



Gabrielle | Music is an important part of Gabrielle's life not only because she loves creating new songs, but because music is a way to express the beauty of God.

Submit your photo, your achievement, and how homeschooling has helped you succeed!

setonmagazine.com/students

in the **Schoolroom**

Where We Share Our Best Tips for Homeschooling with Seton

Advent will begin shortly and being prepared is the best way to enjoy this most beautiful of liturgical seasons. It can seem daunting, which is why it is so important to begin to prayerfully discern how you want this Advent to look for your family

Take some time (perhaps at Adoration) to take stock of your situation and see how you and your family can really live the Advent season this year. Some things to consider...

1. If you are pregnant or nursing your time and energy levels are bound to be limited, and your Advent should be less hustle and bustle and should reflect your need to rest and take care of your baby. Limit your outings and plan for some fun, easy indoor activities and devotions with the children. Seton sells some enjoyable sticker books, activity books, and puzzle books that will engage the young ones while giving mom some time to take care of herself.

2. If you are out of the baby stage, this may be the year you can finally get to some of the more time-consuming activities that you have had to pass on in years past. Do not give into the temptation to do everything you've longed to do, that's a good way to make

yourself and anyone else nuts. Rather, focus instead on doing one thing really well. Maybe this is your year to do a Jesse Tree or observe the Ember Days, or perhaps you will take time to learn about the *O Antiphons*. Do one thing as well as you can and enjoy it.

3. If you have teens or students returning from college, this could be a way to draw them further into the practice of their faith. You might be able to commit to daily Mass, a spiritual study of some kind, or travel to visit a shrine.

Whatever your plans, remember that the end goal is an Advent that creates an atmosphere in the home that welcomes the Christ child, one that furthers the faith of your children and settles your own mind and heart so as to be prepared to welcome the King of Kings.

Please join us in the Seton Support Community as we journey through Advent together.



Mary Ellen Barrett is a 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 the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.




“Let us come close to the crib. If you love riches, you will find the gold that the kings brought;

if you are looking for the smoke of honors, you will find that in the incense; and if you take delight in the delicacies of the senses, you will find the delicate perfume of myrrh that pervades the stable.

Be rich in love for this adorable Saviour, respectful in the familiarity with which you relate to Him, and delight in the joy of experiencing in your soul so many inspirations and affections because you look exclusively to Him.”

~ *St. Frances de Sales*



saint Cecilia

Patron Saint of Musicians



Feast Day - November 22

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See inside for CHRISTMAS SPECIALS



Homily of Pope Benedict XVI to Families

Dear married couples,

Watch over your children and, in a world dominated by technology, transmit to them, with serenity and trust, reasons for living, the strength of faith, pointing them towards high goals and supporting them in their fragility.

And let me add a word to the children here: be sure that you always maintain a relationship of deep affection and attentive care for your parents, and see that your relationships with your brothers and sisters are opportunities to grow in love.

Dear families, pray often for the help of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, that they may teach you to receive God's love as they did. Your vocation is not easy to live, especially today, but the vocation to love is a wonderful thing, it is the only force that can truly transform the cosmos, the world.

*Pope Benedict XVI – World Meeting of Families
June 3, 2012*