

Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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**"START EARLY,
FINISH SCHOOL,
THEN GET TO
THE FUN STUFF"**

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MAY/JUNE 2020

Vol. 9, No. 3

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
Tara Brelinsky
Bruce Clark
John Clark
Dr. Mary Kay Clark
Nick Marmalejo
Jeff Minick
Katie Summers

COVER PHOTO

The Viles Family



Dear Readers,

As I sit here on day 3,876 of quarantine (or maybe it's day 28 and just feels longer) reviewing this issue, I have a great deal of peace in my heart. The last month has been extremely rough on many of us, but some things remain the same. God has us in His care, and His mercy is infinite.

When reading Dr. Clark's article about Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi, I was struck by the words of the Blessed Mother to Anna-Maria, "every individual must be able to convince himself that it is possible to serve God in all states and conditions of life without the performance of great exterior penances, provided only one fights vigorously against one's passions and conforms oneself in all things to the holy will of God."

It's amazing how Our Lady's words apply to us now. We can serve God by just attending to our children and our homes, nothing more is needed other than to do God's will. What peace this brings.

Also, in this issue is the delightful Viles family, whose story brings a lot of joy to these pages. Please don't miss Mrs. Brelinsky's article about the unsung heroes of homeschooling, the dads. We couldn't do it without them! I would be remiss if I didn't point you towards Deacon McGuirk's explanation of the differences in the Academic and Advanced Academic diplomas. It's very helpful to have the pros and cons of each stated so clearly.

On behalf of all of us here at Seton, I want you all to know, dear families, that our prayers for your health and safety are at the forefront of our hearts and minds. Please keep safe and let us know if we can serve you in any way.

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett
Mary Ellen Barrett

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

SUBSCRIPTION INFO:

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SETON PHONE DIRECTORY

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL
866-280-1930

SETON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA
866-241-8819

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800-542-1066

ADMISSIONS
866-280-1930

Draper Warren
Darin Byrne
John Thorp
Jason Sparks

TRANSCRIPTS, RECORDS, &
EXTENSIONS
540-636-1324
Joseph Strickland

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION
540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

SPECIAL SERVICES
540-622-5576
Stephen Costanzo
Karen Eriksson-Lee
Kathleen Hunt

GENERAL COUNSELING
540-622-5526
Cecilia Sauer

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING
540-636-1429

Cecilia Sauer
Katie Summers

ELEMENTARY GRADING
540-622-5563
Jacinta Black
Bruce Hacker

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC
COUNSELING
540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING
540-622-5525
Rhonda Way

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE,
COURSE APPROVAL,
INDEPENDENT STUDIES
540-636-2238
Nick Marmalejo

540-622-8478
Bob Wiesner
540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

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

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH
540-622-5560

Walker Solis
Sean O'Connor

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

540-692-7023
Aidan Callegari

HIGH SCHOOL RELIGION
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Bob Wiesner
Deacon Gene McGuirk
Aidan Callegari

HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH
540-622-5537
Manuel Vicente

HIGH SCHOOL LATIN
540-692-1956
Aidan Callegari

HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER
COURSES
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.

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THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



Why Do We Homeschool?

To share more time with my son and have time to go to the daily Mass.

My son Pablo loves to play the piano, it is his passion, and by homeschooling, we can better organize the time for his classes and his practice schedule.

- Patricia Martinez



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

Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Patron of Housewives and Mothers

**Blessed Anna-Maria, Pray
for My Family to Dedicate
Our Lives to Following
Jesus and Mary.**



Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi was born in Siena, France, on May 29, 1769. When she was six years old, her very poor family moved to Rome. Anna-Maria received the sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and First Communion in France, and later received Confirmation in the church of St. John Lateran in Rome.

Anna-Maria attended a school in Rome only briefly due to a smallpox epidemic. Though she learned to read, she never learned to write. As a member of a very poor family, instead of continuing school, young Anna-Maria went to work in a shop, sewing clothes for the wealthy ladies of Rome. She worked long hours at the sewing shop. After work, at home, she washed clothes and prepared the meals for her family until her parents returned from their jobs. However, nothing kept her from her daily prayers nor from her almost-daily Mass, and her Sunday Mass obligation.

When Anna-Maria was twenty years old, a twenty-eight-year-old Italian man asked her parents for her hand in marriage. It is believed that she married him because it was the usual thing to do. The new family lived in a very poor home, where eventually Anna-Maria raised her six children, caring for them and for her husband, as well as continuing to work at her sewing job to help provide for the family. They lived as a very poor family in Rome.

Since Anna-Maria's work was making and repairing the fancy dresses of the rich Roman ladies, she liked the pretty clothes and jewelry of the wealthy ladies. She sometimes was offered dresses and jewelry as gifts from the wealthy ladies, which she liked to wear. One of the priests who knew her at that time said, "She was given to vanity and loved pretty clothes." Her husband recorded that she liked to stand in front of her mirror, put flowers into her dark hair, and put a pearl necklace around her neck.

A Change of Heart

After her first baby was born, however, Anna-Maria suddenly had some thoughts and ideas which she could not understand. The thoughts seemed to be mystical experiences which made her think more about God. She suddenly felt disturbed about her life style. She sought out priests to help her understand herself and her strange thoughts. Over time she changed her concern for her beauty, for her pretty clothes, for pretty jewelry, and for wearing clothes given to her by the wealthy ladies.

Anna-Maria was confused. She suddenly wanted to make sacrifices for Jesus. She did not know where to turn for help. She could not understand herself. She became distressed. Her husband and her parents thought she was sick. Priests could

not understand her concerns. She was a simple person who could not express her mental religious “disturbances.” Neither her parents nor her husband could understand her or help her.

Anna-Maria finally found one priest, who later became a cardinal, who believed that Anna-Maria was experiencing messages from heaven. Since she could not write, the priest began writing down her words regarding her “messages.”

Our Lady's Message

According to the documents presented to the papal experts who were considering giving Anna-Maria the Decree of Beatification after her death, the Blessed Virgin appeared to Anna-Maria several times with messages for those who wanted to follow Jesus. In one of her visits, the Blessed Mother said the following:

“...you must be like My Son Jesus. You must be devoted above all to doing His will and submitting your own constantly to His in the state of life to which it has pleased Him to call you; therein lies your special vocation....every individual must be able to convince himself that it is possible to serve God in all states and conditions of life without the performance of great exterior penances, provided only one fights vigorously against one's passions and conforms oneself in all things to the holy will of God. Remember, it is far more meritorious to renounce one's own will and submit oneself entirely to the will of God, than to perform the greatest bodily mortifications.”

Soon people, especially the many ladies she knew from the sewing shop, would come to Anna-Maria Taigi for advice about

their personal problems. They would bring food and gifts for her family, but what she did not need for that day she would give away to others. She believed that God would provide what her family needed when they needed it. She told others about

trusting that God would provide for each day, and not to worry about the following days.

We Catholic homeschooling mothers and fathers, children and grandparents, can pray to Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi with confidence that Jesus will help us to accept the responsibilities of our family, to attend Mass as often as possible, to go to Confession frequently, to study our Catholic Faith, to study our Catholic homeschooling lessons. Blessed Anna-

Maria can inspire us to gather our family members together for daily family prayers, and to follow the inspiration of Jesus and Mary every day.

Blessed Anna-Maria, pray for my family to dedicate our lives to following Jesus and Mary.

If you want to learn more about her, Seton Educational Media sells a book about the messages from the Holy Mother of Jesus to Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi: *Wife, Mother, & Mystic: Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi*, by Albert Bessieres.

Blessed Anna-Maria can inspire us to gather our family members together for daily family prayers, and to follow the inspiration of Jesus and Mary every day.



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*.

Anna Maria Taigi at San Crisogono in Rome





ARE YOU CALLED TO BE A MENTORING MOM?

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

THE world has changed in incredible ways since our last issue. At this writing, I've been in quarantine for ten days with nine other people, and while the rest of the world has slowed down in terms of work and being busy, I've been inundated in requests for help from moms who suddenly find themselves homeschooling due to the shutting down of the entire school system in the United States. It's both gratifying and overwhelming.

As homeschool moms, we can shine and be a beacon of light to those moms who are finding out that homeschooling is a great choice but are afraid to make the leap. We are in the position to guide and encourage families thrust into this lifestyle and share with them the freedom and joy that comes with homeschooling.

**IF YOU ARE WHAT YOU SHOULD BE,
YOU WILL SET THE WHOLE WORLD ABLAZE!
-ST. CATHERINE OF SIENNA**

Those words of St. Catherine's should serve as a beacon for us to gently and carefully set the world on fire for homeschooling.

The families who are suddenly faced with the loss of the only academic structure they know, can be shown that homeschooling is not only the best way to educate children but is very doable, even under stressful circumstances. In fact, the freedom

offered by homeschooling allows for great flexibility in different family situations. Those moms who believed that they could not homeschool because they work outside the home or that they do not possess a teaching degree, are finding out that these issues can be worked around and children can and do learn better from those who love them best.

How do we guide these families and provide the right amount of support and encouragement without coming across as preachy or, heaven forbid, pompous? Here are a few ideas.

1. SYMPATHY

Nothing inclines people to listen more than acknowledging their pain. Recognize that, at least at first, this is not what they chose. School at home and homeschooling are very different things, and to transition from that mindset is difficult.

Those of us who desired to homeschool planned for it, researched it, and attended conferences and meet-ups. We invested a lot of time before we began. These recent homeschool moms are diving into the middle of third quarter without that investment in time and without the planning for a lifestyle change.

These new homeschooling moms don't have the materials, spaces, and set-ups that we have spent years developing. We should be sympathetic and positive. Let them know that they are doing the best they can do. No one expects perfection right out of the gate. Or ever. Treat them like the superheroes they are.

2. CURRICULUM

Long ago when I first contemplated homeschooling, there were few options available to Catholics. Seton was the most time-tested and solid (still is). Now there are many options available, and it's overwhelming. Clearly though, Seton provides moms who are new, with everything they need right out of the box.

Make sure that they know that Seton will meet them right where they are in their education journey and accommodate any situation. Special needs, half a semester, multiple grade levels, testing, all in one place from one company with people passionately devoted to making sure each family is successful.

3. INVITE THEM IN

When things return to normal and we can have people visit again, invite the new-to-homeschool mom into your home and let her see how this works day to day. Have her "shadow" you as you teach lessons, clean the kitchen, and supervise the mayhem. Show her the realness of your day, that it is possible to do laundry, cook a meal, and teach math, all in one day.

I think one of the stumbling blocks that people run into when considering homeschooling is that they are so busy now, they feel that having the kids home all day will make them even busier and result in a breakdown of their home and of their sanity.

By inviting her in, you can show this mom that it can be easier because the kids are working right along with you. The extraneous nonsense that parents find stressful about school (long hours of homework, permission slips, volunteer hours, extra "fees") all disappear. Kids learn to help with the house as a matter of course, they learn to work and think independently, and they learn that God and family come first.

Prayerfully consider if you are called to be a mentoring mom, and if you are, reach out gently to your friends, neighbors and relatives who may be considering adopting the homeschool lifestyle. Make sure they know that you are available for them and make sure they know Seton is available as well.

I've included Counselor Cecilia's and my email addresses below. We are available to help you mentor your new-to-homeschooling friends.

HELP FOR MENTORING MOMS

We Look Forward to Helping You Mentor
Your New-to-Homeschooling Friends

Counselor Cecilia Sauer:
counselors@setonhome.org

Mary Ellen Barrett:
magazineeditor@setonhome.org

10 WAYS YOU CAN BE A MENTORING MOM

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

1. Be sympathetic and positive. (*Remember, she didn't choose this.*)
2. Assure her that she is doing the best she can do. (*Aren't we all?*)
3. Treat her like the superhero that she is. (*No capes to give out, but she really is...*)
4. Reassure her that Seton provides everything she needs. (*Books, lesson plans, counselors are included.*)
5. Explain that Seton will accommodate any situation. (*Extra help for special needs and time extensions are available.*)

WHEN THINGS RETURN TO NORMAL

6. Invite her in to "shadow" you as you teach lessons. (*Come on in and see how we do it.*)
7. Show her the realness of your day. (*Sometimes it's a mess.*)
8. ...and how kids learn to help with the house. (*It's called home-ec and it's essential.*)
9. ...and how kids learn to think independently. (*Let me know if you need help on this one.*)
10. ...and how kids learn that God and family come first. (*We begin each day with prayer.*)



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

When do I need to re-enroll for the next grade level?

Because we are a homeschooling program, we are not bound by the calendar of the public or private schools. We believe the lessons, subject-by-subject, should be geared for the abilities of the individual student. Therefore, Seton parents may enroll their children at any time.

Seton's online enrollment system allows families to choose any future shipping date on which we will send their materials. So, a family might enroll in June but choose to receive their books at the beginning of September. Setting a future shipping date is also helpful when a student has finished a grade level but siblings are still working. Having the ability to set a future shipping date for a student's books means that all students can be re-enrolled on the same earlier date (ensuring the largest multiple-child discount), but allow some students to receive their books at a later date when they are closer to completing their current level.

My daughter wants to take Spanish with a local teacher. Can she get credit from Seton?

The first way is that you would enroll in our regular Spanish course (either the online course or the book-based course) and have the local teacher act as a tutor for your daughter. The local teacher can go over all the lessons with your daughter, explain any points of confusion, and then advise your daughter when she is ready to take the Seton tests. After your daughter's test is graded, the tutor could review any areas in which your daughter struggled on the test. Having such a tutor could certainly be valuable for many students.

The second way you could use a tutor is if your daughter took the Spanish course as Independent Study. In this case, you would not enroll in the Seton Spanish course but would instead have your tutor design the course and choose the materials used. To do this,

you would need to fill out a Request for Independent Study form (which can be found on your MySeton page, under the Resource tab). After your request is approved, you or your tutor would send us a quarterly report form with your grades, which Seton would record. Your course would count as a regular high school credit acceptable toward meeting Seton graduation requirements.

Can you tell me what is going on with this year's graduation?

We regret to announce that the Seton high school graduation, which was scheduled for May 23rd, has been postponed. The graduation was to take place at a local high school, but since all Virginia public schools are closed for the remainder of the school year, it will not be possible to hold the graduation as scheduled. Our intention is to reschedule the graduation for a weekend at the end of July. Any 2020 graduate who is unable to attend this year's graduation will be eligible to attend the 2021 graduation.

I have two students in high school. May I enroll them in the same foreign language course?

Yes, you may enroll them in the same foreign language course. This permits them to study together and help each other to prepare for their tests. They can "talk" the foreign language with each other. In fact, we encourage you to enroll them together in as many classes as possible. Other subject areas for them to take together would be history, science, and religion.

Can my child write a book report on a book not on the Seton book report list?

Students must write a book report on the Seton assigned books because these are the books the graders are prepared to grade. It's not realistic to expect our graders to have read all the books the students might like to read. The book report assignment and its grading is geared for the books which the students are assigned to read. In addition, we have chosen books which have been recognized by Christian educators as appropriate for Christian students.



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 Parents*.



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Seton Home Study School 2020 Scholarships

WHAT YOU CAN WIN?

On August 15, 2020, Seton is awarding ten \$1,500 Scholarships to Seton high school students graduating in 2020.

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE?

August 1, 2020 is the deadline for applications.

WHICH COLLEGES QUALIFY?

Newman Guide Recommended Colleges or Universities including Seton College Partners featured below.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

You have completed or will have completed by August 1, 2020, Seton Home Study School for grades 9-12.

You plan to attend a Newman Guide Recommended College or University in the upcoming fall semester.

You have submitted your completed Seton Scholarship application with college letter of acceptance.

Details, applications, and a complete list of Newman Guide Recommended Colleges can be found at

setonhome.org/scholarship



Encouraging students to continue their Catholic education by attending solidly Catholic Colleges after high school.

setonhome.org/colleges



Dear Homeschooling Dad: **YOU** Matter Too

BY TARA BRELINSKY

While accompanying my son to his college orientation, I met the deacon in charge of campus ministry. We'd chatted for a few minutes when he disclosed that he is the father of six and they homeschool. Naturally, I shared that we're a big homeschooling family, too. Then I asked the next logical question, "What curriculum do you use?"

After a few fumbled attempts to construct an answer, he smiled and admitted that he didn't actually know. His wife, he explained, was in charge of the schooling.

Is Homeschooling Woman's Work?

Of course, the deacon is busy providing for his family, so it is reasonable that he leaves his wife to the job of teaching. Comparatively speaking, my own household mirrors this same

delegation of duties. And judging by the sea of female faces at homeschool conferences, co-ops, and field trips, it is fair to say that most homeschool education is facilitated by mothers.

No one person possesses all gifts. For that reason, we need each other in every avenue of life: in the Church, in the workplace, in the family. The same holds for homeschooling. While mothers tend to be the ones who are responsible for the primary duties of schooling in the home, a father's role is no less valuable.

Dad's Role in Homeschooling

While the deacon may not know all the details about the curriculum his children utilize, there are a few details that he would do well to know. And there are a few areas where his leadership, and yours, is absolutely crucial.

1. Know Your Mission

Companies craft mission statements to articulate their corporate goals. The statements offer employees a clear picture of why they do what they do. For the same reason, the homeschool family needs an individual mission statement.

It can be written or simply agreed upon, but both mother and father should, together, form the family mission statement. Set the goals you are hoping to achieve in your Catholic home education. Identify any child/children who have special needs or specific interests which will affect your goals (or the strategies it will require to meet them). Settle on a unified plan and desired outcome. Then, on the days when the teacher is ready to "resign", you'll be able to remind her why she made the commitment to homeschool.

2. Wear the Principal's Hat

Rarely was I sent to the principal's office during my school career, but I still remember having a healthy sense of fear about that prospect. Your homeschoolers also need a higher authority when it comes to discipline. The proverbial warning "wait 'til your father gets home" hasn't lost its relevance.

When a child of mine (especially a son) instigates an educational power struggle, a phone call to dad is most often the best tactic for diffusing the situation. Typically, my husband listens to the child's defense, gives a stern admonishment, and advises the student on how to amend the problem.

3. Solve Problems

Juggling the day-to-day chores of the household, managing personalities in the homeschool, and maintaining some semblance of sanity, can sometimes leave a mother/teacher feeling overwhelmed. And like a hiker lost in the woods, she can lose sight of the way out of her dilemma.

There are instances when you have a better vantage point than mom. More distanced from the emotions, anxiety, and weariness, you can detect the root of a problem and map a solution.

Years ago, when my husband was temporarily out-of-work, he spent several weeks at home during schooling hours. It was then that he noticed a problem. Lunchtime was regularly chaotic because each of our children demanded a different menu item. Honestly, I'd become so accustomed to the routine that I simply accepted the discord as normal. My husband saw it as a problem and enacted the solution. From that day to this, everyone in our household is required to eat the same lunch and dinner menu.

4. Date the Teacher

Dad, in your case, it's okay to stand close to the teacher. In fact, being romantic with the teacher is not only okay, it's advisable when you're married to her. Make date nights a priority at least once a month (even if date night is a bowl of popcorn, snuggles on the couch, and a movie in your livingroom, sans children.)

The heart of schooling in the home has to do with teaching children how to live. The students in your homeschool are learning how to love by following your example. Let them catch

you admiring their mother and hear you praising her talents. Teach them to respect your marriage by guarding your privacy as a couple and setting aside spouse-only time each day.

5. Teach Manliness 101

Our culture has a masculinity problem. Namely, feminism has disenfranchised males, especially in the education setting. It's no surprise why more young boys than girls are labeled as hyperactive or problem students. Energetic boys were not created to sit still for long periods of time poring over subjects which they find uninspiring.

Homeschoolers can fall into the same trap since it is largely women who direct the schooling, co-ops, field trips, play dates, Sunday school classes, etc. When my oldest three boys were small, I was completely baffled by their near-constant activity (wrestling, kicking, racing), perpetual noise-making (vroom-vroom, beep-beep, pop-pop), and endless competitions (who could eat faster, run farther, score higher). I initially tried to quell their natural inclinations until I learned better.

My husband, on the other hand, was happy to throw them high in the air, fight them in a Daddy War, and challenge their resolve. And they loved him for it!

6. Go to Church

A 1994 survey in Switzerland found that the religious practices of a father decide the future attendance habits (or absence) of his children. No matter how devout the mother, if dad skips Mass, then only 2% of their children will be regular Mass-goers as adults. Sadly, more than 60% of their offspring will leave the Church.

Our children's image of God as Father is directly linked to their Earthly father. If they witness you actively worshipping the Lord, they will understand the need to worship Him. If they regularly watch you enter the confessional, they will recognize the need for repentance and experience the power of God's mercy. No book, curriculum choice, or homeschool class can teach your children how to know, love, and serve God better than your example as Dad teaches them.

Not Just a Dad, But a Homeschooling Dad

Like the deacon, most homeschool fathers may not stay up-to-speed on every detail of their children's education. You may rely on your wife's skills for selecting the curriculum, orchestrating the lessons, and managing the daily schedules. But your contribution as a homeschooling dad is equally essential, especially as you show your appreciation for their studies and...for their mother.



Tara Brelinksy is a homeschooling mother of a eight living children, with six more heavenly ones. Married to her childhood sweetheart, they make their home in North Carolina where they teach Natural Family Planning, grow a garden, raise two dogs, a cat, hamster, ducks, roosters and a flock of hens, in addition to all those wonderful kids. Tara studied Journalism a lifetime ago in college, but now she writes simply for the glory of God. You can read her musings and inspirations on her blog, *Blessings in Brelinksyville*.

"START EARLY, FINISH SCHOOL, THEN GET TO THE FUN STUFF"



BY JEFF MINICK

One of the great pleasures of writing Seton's Family Life column are my encounters with moms who love their families, homeschooling, their faith, and their lives in general.

As soon as I received her answers to some questions I'd sent by email, I knew that speaking with Mandy Viles (rhymes with files) was going to be fun.

And I was right.

Let's meet the Viles family.

There's Mandy, of course, and her husband Joe, a West Point graduate who was a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot for 20 years. Now retired from military service, Joe works for the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). The family resides in northern Virginia.

Mandy and Joe are the parents of nine children ranging in age from 17 years to 9 months, and grades 11 to preschool. The family has used the Seton curriculum for 11 years.

Mandy first heard of Seton when her husband was stationed in Germany, and she was teaching voice lessons to a Seton family. She enthusiastically described her musical background to this writer.

"My undergrad degree is in Music from Anderson University, Indiana. Before all my babies came along, I was a professional opera singer and did many performances in this country and overseas when we were stationed there. I have always taught private voice lessons. My kids have all dabbled in piano and singing and usually with a different teacher. Because I teach pretty much everything else, I think it's good for them to have a different setting in which

to explore other interests. After a 15-year hiatus from the stage, I went back to perform in local musicals at a nearby Catholic Church and I have loved it! It's a very high caliber theater and has such an amazingly unique atmosphere. Not at all the cut-throat competition that I was used to!"

Like most homeschooling families, the Viles clan follows a routine suitable to their schedule. On Mondays and Wednesdays, the older children head off to co-op, driven by 11th Grader Elise. On those days, Mandy buckles down and does "meat-and-potatoes" schooling with the "littles:" phonics, math, writing. Tuesdays and Thursdays, she tells me by phone, are "our sacred homeschooling days" when all her children work very hard on their schoolwork. Those days are devoted strictly to schooling, with no outside appointments allowed. Friday is a school day, but is also the time they often head out to a museum or the public library.

Homeschooling, as it does for so many families, allows the Viles flexibility in scheduling vacations and additional educational opportunities. They do "light schooling" through the summer and often take vacations in May or September when seasonal rates have fallen. Recently, the family took a month



to make a coast-to-coast trip. Mandy also mentioned the importance of her family's birthday breakfasts, when they celebrate each birthday with a large breakfast complete with decorations meaningful to the celebrant. It's a festive occasion that would be impossible if the children were in school outside the home.

A Giant Homeschool Community

"We belong to Holy Trinity church in Gainesville, Virginia, and we have a homeschool ministry of around 130 families. There is the Domestic Church whereby we celebrate Saint of the Month, Liturgical Feasts, and Holy Days, and in so doing, inculcate these traditions in our own homes. We come together as a community of folks who are all raising our kids in the Catholic tradition and culture. We have an elementary co-op which offers supplemental (and usually very fun) classes for kids in pre-K through 5th grade. Lastly, we have academic classes which meet once a week for the junior high and high school kids. And we're super fortunate that our priests have volunteered to teach classes as well!"

The Viles children also participate in many other activities. Elise will soon be Cadet Commander of her 140-cadet squadron in the Civil Air Patrol. She is president of St. Gianna Life Defenders, serves as a Virginia representative in Students for Life, and rides a unicycle with a troupe called Unistars. Having completed the Seton Latin program, Elise now takes an online course in Russian.

Ninth grader Madelyn sings with her mother in various places, and she and seventh grader Lydia run cross country and track with the Northern Virginia Homeschool Association. The highschoolers are in the National Honor Society through another co-op, the boys participate in Scouting and play basketball, and, in the summers, the seven oldest children swim for a neighborhood team, the Piedmont Tsunamis.

When asked what she liked in particular about Seton, Mandy had this to say:

"What we love about the Seton curriculum: I love that it's so rigorous! And I love that it's accredited. That means a lot to us. That all their academics are looked over by Seton makes me relax and helps keep me on track. And when I talk to people, I can honestly tell them, 'I don't just hand out A's because I think my kids are smart. Someone else grades their tests!' It's supremely Catholic and very, very thorough. Without a doubt, a good, quality, Catholic education."



When asked for any advice she might offer to new homeschool moms, Mandy said, "Start early in the day, finish the school work, and then get to the fun stuff."

For this writer, the "fun stuff" came, as usual, with the inspiration and joy provided by yet another glimpse into the lives of Seton homeschoolers.



Keep The Flame Burning: Your Conquering Choleric Child

BY JEFF MINICK

When I was in seventh grade at a military academy, a friend of mine used to walk the hallways bellowing “I am the king! Who dares defy me?”

That rowdy proclamation might serve as the motto of a choleric personality.

The Ancient Greeks once classified everything according to four elements—earth, wind, water, and fire—and extended those classifications to personality types. Choleric were fire, living flames burning with energy and ambitions, easily inspired, quick to learn, to lead, and to dominate.

Let’s visit this fictional homeschool household.

Nine-year-old Johnny takes charge of his gentle sister, eleven-year-old Maggie, and their younger siblings, as if he were Napoleon on a battlefield, dictating what games they will play and what books Maggie may read to them. In school, he is goal-oriented, whipping through his daily lesson of Saxon math—he’s a year ahead of his grade level—while sweet Maggie is still getting her books together and arranging paper and pencils on her desk.

Johnny asks lots of questions—he doesn’t like tackling a task without knowing its meaning and import—he becomes impatient when things don’t go as planned, which often means when things don’t go his way, and he loves competing against others on the soccer field and in the swimming pool.

Like Maggie, Johnny’s mother is easy-going, loves peace and harmony, dislikes confrontation, and tends to be reticent at parties, all elements of the phlegmatic personality.

Though she treasures Johnny’s drive and his eagerness to achieve, Johnny’s mother also worries about the way he bosses around his sister and his friends, his flare-ups of temper when something goes amiss, and his constant questioning of her authority. “The kid’s going to be a great lawyer,” husband Sam cracks, but Sam doesn’t bear the brunt of Johnny’s day-long interrogations.

What to Do?

In *The Temperament God Gave Your Kids: Motivate, Discipline, and Love Your Children* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012, 187 pages), Laraine and Art Bennett advance these personality traits as characteristic of choleric: born to lead, goal-oriented, bossy, always right, to the point, impatient, practical and drama-free, and a “just do it” attitude.

The Bennetts, who are Catholic and former homeschooling parents, spend the first part of Chapter 2, “*The Conquering Choleric Child*”, looking at these different parts of the choleric personality, and then suggest the learning style best fitted to these bundles of energy.

The best sort of situation for choleric is one in which they feel they have at least some control over their learning material and environment. Wise homeschool parents should involve these students in planning their school year, their choice of subjects, or their daily schedule, depending on their age.

A program that allows the student to progress at her own rate affords her the opportunity to speed ahead, quickly mastering the introductory topics so as to delve into the more challenging modules. Other temperaments might lose motivation with nonstructured, independent learning, but not the self-motivated, competitive cholereric student.

The Secret to Discipline

Next, the Bennetts give advice on disciplining the cholereric child. Choleric, they contend, respond best to reason and competition. Instead of ordering that strong-willed four-year-old to pick up his toys, they suggest making a contest of it: "Let's see if you can pick up ten toys before the timer goes off." Parents can teach even young choleric patience and perseverance, two qualities they often lack, by words of encouragement and by modeling such behavior themselves.

As they grow older, cholereric children perform best when given logical reasons for certain tasks. If Xavier doesn't want to eat that fruit salad, explain the benefits of a healthy diet. If Annie fights with you about bedtime—"My friends all stay up till eleven on school nights!"—give her evidence of the importance of a good night's sleep. "Overbearing and controlling parenting is never optimal," the Bennetts write, "and it is more likely to provoke the cholereric child to angry rebellion than any other temperament."

In "*Discipline for Choleric*," the Bennetts offer this interesting thought regarding older choleric: "Punishment (grounding, taking away privileges) is not always effective: choleric can outlast you. They are strong-willed and often dig in deeper. Allowing them to suffer natural consequences is often more effective."

To allow our children "to suffer natural consequences" can be tough and sometimes impractical. When five-year-old James whacks his little sister, the natural consequences may be time standing with his face in a corner of the kitchen. But when our teenager forgets to bring his lunch to a summer camp, perhaps the best approach is to let him go hungry that day rather than making another drive into the countryside.

Remain Calm and Reasonable

In another section of Chapter 2, "*Cooling Off*," the Bennetts explain the importance of responding calmly and reasonably to the cholereric. "The cholereric child has a naturally strong sense of self, which is often manifested in stubbornness and pride." Often, as the Bennetts point out, choleric have trouble controlling their tempers and react strongly to criticism or failure.

Because they are head-strong and sometimes rush into situations, choleric also need training in prudence, in making wise decisions. Parents must teach them by way of faith and the virtues how to choose a worthy goal.

Insight from a Seton Mom

When I started homeschooling, it became clear I had a different temperament than my children. I am a phlegmatic/melancholic and teach children who are cholereric/sanguine.

As a phlegmatic, I am calm and easy-going, an advantage in homeschooling because I am patient and diplomatic when conflicts arise between my children. I am willing to look for solutions to things that are not working and can change course as well as try new approaches to teaching. This flexible attitude is perhaps the strongest virtue of the phlegmatic temperament, because when something fails, we do not dwell on it, but find ways to move forward.

However, being phlegmatic also means I tend to withdraw and internalize conflicts I cannot easily solve, which can lead to a loss of temper later. I must be careful about being too sensitive and have to guard against taking conflicts personally, or getting my feelings hurt.

Homeschooling children with different temperaments can be challenging, but also brings many blessings. My children are fun, and funny, and we often have delightful conversations around the school table. I am blessed to be able to teach smart, passionate, and driven children and am grateful for the opportunity God has given me.

Seton Mom - Katharine E.

At the end of "*Your Conquering Cholereric Child*," the Bennetts sum up with these helpful "Keys:"

- Hard-wired to debate, quick temper: *Help him fight the good fight.*
- Strong will: *guide his will to accomplish the good.*
- Needs to have his accomplishments acknowledged.
- Needs rational arguments and reasons.
- Needs a sense of control: *give him age-appropriate choices.*

Good advice for stoking the fires of our cholereric children.

All our children are a mix of the four temperaments—cholereric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic—yet usually one of these temperaments dominates a personality. Recognizing a child's temperament can enhance his education and his growth in character.

Are you unsure of a child's temperament? At the end of the Bennett's book is a "*Temperament Test For Kids*." They also have a free online quiz at **TemperamentQuiz.com** where you can discover your own temperament.



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.

A photograph of three children running away from the camera through a field of tall grass at sunset. The sky is a warm, golden orange, and the children are silhouetted against the bright light. The child in the middle is holding a string, possibly for a kite. The child on the right is wearing a striped shirt and suspenders. The child on the left is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

BY JOHN CLARK

Let Children Have Summer

As summer approaches, many parents will note that their children are a few days/weeks/months behind in their lesson plans. And they will be tempted to keep homeschooling until all thirty-six weeks are finished—even if it takes until August. My advice: try to fight the urge. Let children have summer.

When I was growing up, our school year finished around Memorial Day and didn't start up until Labor Day. My family spent a large portion of every summer vacationing at my grandparents' house in Cleveland.

During those summers, we slept late and watched game shows like *The Price is Right* and *Press Your Luck* when we got up in the morning. My grandmother—a late sleeper herself—would make a dramatic, Scarlett O'Hara-type entrance into the living room every morning. She'd go around the room and hug and kiss each one of us, hold our faces in her hands, and—bringing our eyes to hers—greet each one of us by name, as though she hadn't seen us in years. I still remember—and desperately miss—her hands, her eyes, her smile, and her words, “Johnny, I'm so glad you are here with me!” (Of course, my faith and my hope tell me that the next time we see each other, the grand entrance will be mine. But I have no doubt that she will be waiting with that same wonderful greeting.)

After the morning sun had a chance to warm the water, we swam in the pool behind our grandparent's house in the afternoon. We cooked hot dogs on the grill for lunch, and then dove right back into the pool. After swimming wore us out, we went inside and played charades or Monopoly with our grandmother. We helped my Aunt Annie fish the fallen leaves out of the swimming

pool. We listened to my Uncle Bob (a man who was physically paralyzed very young, but remains one of the strongest men I have ever known) tell funny anecdotes.

At dinnertime, we would all sit down at a huge dining room table and hear our grandfather teach us about politics, law, and the American legal system. The man raised nine children, seven of whom became attorneys—and they didn't mind arguing their cases at the dinner table. My grandfather, who sat at the end of the table, was happy to adjudicate their disagreements. From the other end of the table, my grandmother would wax eloquent about then-President Ronald Reagan and the recently-departed Padre Pio—two of her contemporary heroes.

Sometimes after dinner, we'd stay up late and play cards with our Dad as my Mom watched an old movie with our grandfather. For my father, a game of cards—whether we played Whist, or Pinochle, or Hearts—was a multi-hour marathon. As the night wore on, every so often, my mom would come into the room in the middle of a hand of cards and say, “Bruce, these kids have to go to bed!” My Dad would respond, “Kay (my father's favorite nickname for his wife), they can sleep all day tomorrow!” Twenty minutes later, the conversation repeated with the exact same words and the exact same inflection, as though both of them had practiced this verbal exchange a thousand times before—which they had.

On nights we didn't play cards, we listened to my Uncle David tell ghost stories before bedtime, and we listened to E. G. Marshall's *CBS Radio Mystery Theater* as we drifted off to sleep. To this day, I often turn on that same show at night and think back to those moments.



A Summer Well Spent

Over the summers, we went to ceramics classes, fireworks shows, botany exhibits, softball games, and an occasional wedding. We played Space Invaders on the Atari and watched the hapless Cleveland Indians lose almost every night—despite my father’s assurances that “This was their year!” We visited our cousins, told jokes, and made cookies. If there was a favorable exchange rate with the Canadian dollar that year, we’d go to Canada for a week-long fishing trip.

And very little of this would have happened if my parents had decided to homeschool us year-round—if we had spent summer “catching up.” Maybe we’d all be smarter if they had; maybe we’d be more educated; maybe I’d be better at reading, writing, or arithmetic. Maybe. But I doubt I’d be a better person without those carefree and joyful summers spent with my family, during which I learned lessons I didn’t even know I was learning.

The American education system’s push to conduct year-round schooling strikes me as a uniquely awful idea which suggests that learning is something done only in a classroom. You homeschooling parents already know that’s not true.

So please, take it from me. Let children have summer.



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

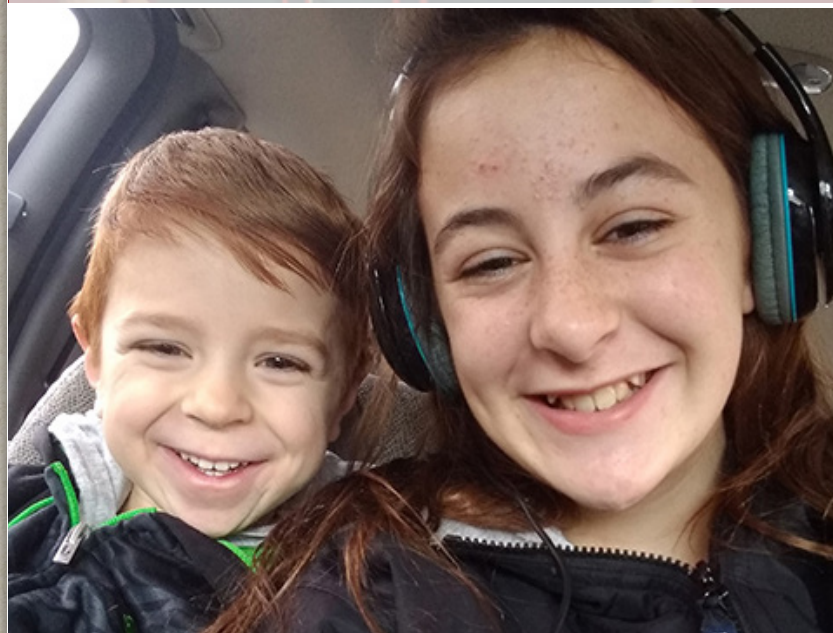


Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



Samia | Samia, a senior at Seton Home Study, recently achieved her second-degree blackbelt. She is headed to Christendom College after graduating from Seton in May.



Maggie | Her flexible homeschooling schedule allows sixth-grader Maggie to volunteer as a babysitter so young moms and dads can attend weekly parenting classes. Maggie is pictured here with her brother, Peter.

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

setonmagazine.com/students

Quo Vadis? Which Seton Diploma is Right for You?

BY GENE MCGUIRK

Recently, the father of a Seton high school senior called to see if his daughter could switch to the Advanced Academic Diploma program and still graduate in May. After looking at the records, we determined this move was impossible, given that it required the student to take a new math course and meet other additional requirements. During our discussion, I told my caller that many students go the other way at the last minute after realizing that the extra work is hurting their GPA and extending the date of their graduation.

Before Seton developed this program, approximately five Seton students each year entered the various academies with our standard Academic diploma. We thought the new program might make acceptance easier, but have found that the academies still admit only about five Seton students per year. (By the way, our graduates do very well in the academies. I have never heard of one of our students finishing any lower than in the top quarter of his or her academy class.)



By leaving the Advanced track and moving to the Academic Diploma (AD) track, these students often reduce their levels of stress, improve their GPA, and graduate on time.

The Advanced Academic Diploma (AAD) track was developed specifically for students who wished to apply to one of our country's military academies. After reviewing the "what we expect from a high school applicant" documents of the five academies—Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine—Seton developed a program that would meet the expectations of all five academies. This program was in line with the state of Virginia's Advanced Studies Diploma requirements. Further research revealed that most states had advanced diploma requirements similar to the ones developed by Seton.

Students could expect the AAD also to help them with applications to other top schools, like the Ivy League colleges, and top tier state schools. As college tuitions increased, and as more and more students have decided to apply to more tuition-friendly state schools, those universities and college have in turn become more selective, so the AAD could help boost a student's chances of admission.

Many parents and students gravitate to the AAD for the prestige of being "Advanced," but such a move can actually do more harm than good.

The first things a college admissions officer looks at on an application are the GPA and the SAT or ACT scores. If the extra work required for the AAD leads to a lower GPA, the admissions officer is put off immediately.

Students Moving to the Academic Diploma Track May.....

- Reduce Their Levels of Stress
- Improve Their GPA
- Graduate on Time

If the student's GPA meets the institution's requirements, then the admissions officer looks deeper at the courses studied. The Seton Academic Diploma has no "fat," no extra credits for Art, Music, Physical Education, and Shop. All the credits earned by our students are truly academic, so in many cases, the "lower" Seton diploma is equivalent to the advanced academic diplomas awarded by most public schools.



For most students, therefore, the best strategy is to follow the Academic Diploma track and push hard for good grades, generating a high GPA. Students of exceptional ability who enroll in the Advanced program and who have a high GPA may receive a boost in their chances of admission to a top university—one where the admission rate is between 5 and 10 percent—but for most students, the Academic Diploma and a high GPA should be the goals.



Deacon Eugene McGuirk directs the Academic Counseling Department at Seton Home Study School. Married for over 30 years, he is the father of children homeschooled through Seton. He was ordained a deacon in 1988.

STAFF SERIES

A chat with those who serve you!



Katie Summers

Elementary Language Arts Counselor

Katie Summers, Seton's Elementary Language Arts Counselor, was homeschooled since kindergarten.

The oldest of three sisters, Katie grew up in rural North Carolina north of Raleigh. While in high school, Katie entered the dual enrollment program at her local community college. Her demeanor and academic achievements won her a position as a peer tutor at age 17.

After graduation from high school, Katie attended Christendom College in Virginia, where she majored in philosophy, minored in political science, and graduated Summa Cum Laude. While there, she had charge of the team who cleaned the chapel, and was an active member of the Christendom debate team.

Following her commencement from Christendom, Katie worked for a year for a diocesan school in Centreville, Virginia, and then spent a year employed in the Diocese of Arlington Central Office. In April, 2019, she married Matthew Summers, another Christendom graduate who was homeschooled and who now works as a Search Engine Optimization strategist.



Katie's responsibilities at Seton include answering emails and phone calls from parents and elementary students seeking help, helping newly enrolled families begin their academic journey, and offering practical tips to both newcomers and veterans of homeschooling. She particularly enjoys talking to those occasional parents worried about their children's future should they choose to homeschool, reassuring them by way of her own example that homeschooled students can not only gain admission to colleges, but can excel there.

When asked about the greatest satisfaction she found in her work, Katie thought for a moment, then smiled and said, "That comes when a mother or student tells me after I've explained something, 'Wow, this clicks for us!'" She also treasures the grateful "thank you" she receives from many students and parents.



Seton Student Achievements

Madeline's Fundraising Brings Clean Water to 2,000 Families

Madeline worked with her family to raise money to build a well in a remote farming village in Kenya without access to clean water. The villagers were walking miles each day to find clean water, sometimes spending a third of their day obtaining water. There were increasing cases of typhoid fever and cholera.

Madeline fund-raised in local parishes and coordinated with the Pope's Mission Society as a donation platform. She designed and built her first website, which allowed people to learn more about the water project and make online donations. The site was viewed over 2,400 times from 18 different countries during the four months of fund-raising.

FOUR STEPS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

1. Find a Need
2. Organize Your Efforts
3. Enlist Helpers
4. See it to the End

The over 2,000 donations vastly exceeded the original goal. They allowed for the construction of a well, an electric pump, solar panels to power the pump, a large water storage tank, and an ongoing maintenance fund. Only nine months after beginning this project, the well was completed in January 2020, providing accessible, clean water to the entire village of 2,000 families.

The Archdiocese of Dallas recognized this project and provided it with missionary status, allowing fund-raising after Masses. The Archdiocese of Nyeri also recognized the project and supervised the building of the well and water reservoir.

The President of the Pope's Mission Society, MISSIO, took a personal interest in this project due to its scope and success. In honor of Madeline's family, the community of Nyeri dedicated a plaque to them at the site of the well.

HOW HOMESCHOOLING HELPED

Homeschooling allows Madeline to attend daily Mass with a wonderful Kenyan priest, who, over the years, has become a part of the family. It was this priest talking about the urgent need for a well in Nyeri, the village in which he grew up, that inspired Madeline to begin this project.

Homeschooling also allowed Madeline to spend over 100 hours working on this project: fund-raising, learning to build a website, and making necessary and time-sensitive updates to the site.

Madeline is interested in learning about her Catholic faith, praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*, cooking for her family and the parish priests, and helping teach her younger brothers and sister.

Her favorite subjects this year are Religion and Honors World Literature. When asked what she is inspired to do with her life she said she wants to become a saint.



missio

WHEN DO WE SEE THIRSTY

The people of the K for the intercession patron saint of water crisis that the continue to get wo

Children walk miles farmlands are im risks because of epidemic of typh

With your help, steel pipes that community.



MISSIO, the Pope's Mission Society, accepted my project and became our donation platform.

MISSIO was so excited about this project and our local efforts to fundraise. They surprised us by highlighting our project twice in emails to their contributors and contacts! These are the MISSIO emails (below) and a photo of the completed project.

~ Madeline



the Kenyan village Nyeri continue to ask
 session of St. John Nepomucene, the
 of water. There is no end in sight to the
 that they are facing; in fact, things
 get worse daily.

walk miles a day to access clean water,
 are impossible to irrigate, and the health
 use of the unclean water are causing an
 of typhoid fever and cholera.

help, Nyeri can drill a borehole and install
 es that will allow for clean water in their
 ty.

DONATE NOW TO MAKE CLEAN WATER A REALITY!



to doubt you've heard about the water crisis in
 nya. You've heard about the women and children
 o walk miles and miles each day to get water.
 ve heard about the dried up farmlands that are
 ssible to irrigate. You've heard that the lack of
 water has increased cases of typhoid fever and
 .

ow the story and now it's time to drill.

ge of Nyeri has been asking the patron saint
 St. John Nepomucene, to intercede on their
 that they may raise enough money to drill a
 establish a sustainable water reservoir.

he answer to their prayers? You CAN do
 out this water crisis. A donation of any
 ke a difference.



An Old Promise

BY BRUCE CLARK



As I write historical novels, I often have been fascinated by various authors' reasons behind writing a novel about that particular time in history. Many of my readers have the same curiosity. So for all you curious readers, here is the genesis of my historical adventure novel *The Blood-Red Flag*.

In the foreword of his novel *Texas*, James A. Michener, for many years the dean of American storytellers, observed that there have been more books written about Texas than all of the other states combined. He added that books about Texas outnumber those about California by a whopping margin of six to one. A fair question is Why? Fair answers are "glamour" and "mystery."

I was celebrating my sixth birthday the day Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor. For the next forty-four months, Americans lived under black war clouds. Fathers, brothers, uncles, and neighbors went off to fight the war in regions which, before December 7th, were nothing but obscure places with strange names on world maps.

Kids of that World War II era were drawn into the conflict in very personal ways, mainly because of relatives serving overseas and because of the nightly war news on the radio, which at the war's beginning was pretty grim. We all became familiar with Ration Books, which we needed to buy scarce foods and goods. We became familiar with Victory Stamps, which students across America purchased every Friday at their schools for a dime or a quarter. American families started and maintained their own Victory Gardens. Children helped gather newspapers and old tin cans in "scrap drives to help the war effort."

We young ones were submerged in the war drama for six days each week, Monday through Friday in schools, and in church on Sundays, praying for our soldiers and for victory. But every Saturday, we could "escape" the war.

Saturday morning movies, double features, were a way of life for youngsters who grew up during the war years. Admission was a dime, and, for a quarter, if you had a quarter, you could buy enough stale popcorn to guarantee a three-day bellyache.

Movie cowboy stars, such as Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, and John Wayne, were bigger than life in those days for all of us rootin', tootin', cap-gun shootin', ring-tailed buckaroo saddle pals. Each week, a sagebrush hero galloped across the silver screen, providing us with an afternoon of guileless glitter and gleam, as well as the determination to be straight-shooting, clean-living winners just like them.

The fact that the big four, Rogers, Autry, Wayne, and Cassidy, were born in Ohio, Oklahoma, Iowa, and New York City, really didn't matter. They convinced us that the heroes who wore white hats always won. We sat glued to our theater seats, sometimes by discarded chewing gum, but mostly by visions of the Lone Star state's vast prairies in deepening twilight.

"I Made a Promise to Give Something Back..."

As the blue-black velvet of darkness descended on cowboys' chuck wagons, a glow of flickering flames gave evidence of saddle-weary cowboys shivering in the cold and moving as close to the dying embers of their branding fires as they dared. Living legends, those young cowboys were lulled to sleep by their lowing cattle, too tired to stir as a lonely coyote's mournful howl rang across the stillness in a magical world of mesquite, tumbleweed, and adventure called Texas. These cowboys provided the glamour and mystery that young people yearned for, especially during the difficult years of the Second World War.

I learned to love the glamour and mystery of the Old West on those long-ago Saturday afternoons, and for a few hours, I forgot the war. One special Saturday, I made a promise to give something back to those American heroes. My novel, *The Blood-Red Flag*, is my fulfillment of that promise.

Hopefully, this tale of heroes Bowie, Austin, Travis, Crockett, and Houston will convince young readers to learn more about American history, and inspire them to give something back to our country. Knowledge of America's past and our heroes not only teaches us about our great history, but it also makes us more optimistic about America's future.



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*, all available from Seton.



FEAST DAY - JUNE 13

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PATRON SAINT OF LOST THINGS, AND THE POOR



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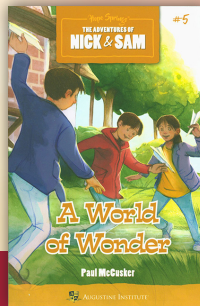
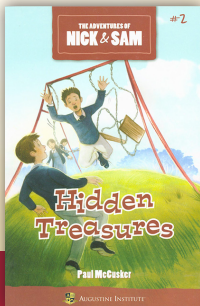
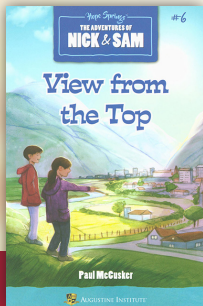
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*Pope Benedict XVI
Address to the Pontifical Council for the Family,
December 1, 2011*