Seton MAZINE 2021

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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Homeschooling With Our Special Friends the Saints

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The Sanborn Family

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Dear Readers,

May and June are here, things are blooming, and I am finally packing away the woolens.

This month we are celebrating your beautiful families via an Easter photo spread. Please send your family photos to rhibl@setonhome.org because we love to see and share your family celebrations!

I have great memories of celebrating all things Blessed Mother with my children, so I was thrilled to share our Mary Garden ideas with you in this issue. Again, send us pictures of your gardens.

When putting together the magazine we are often surprised at how the Holy Spirit works to arrange the stories and features into a certain theme. It is always a delightful surprise. In this issue we meet the Sanborn family and hear Mrs. Sanborn's words about homeschooling giving her the opportunity to grow in virtue. Then Jeff Minick's article regarding the virtues of optimism and gratitude provides one of those happy "theme" moments. Mrs. Sanborn's enthusiasm was infectious!

Did you see John Clark on EWTN recently? He wrote an article based upon his interview with Johnette Benkovic Williams and it is an important read.

We hope that your spring is a beautiful one. The last eighteen months have been difficult for so many, but spring is always hopeful and, as the world begins to open, we hope that you have a beautiful season!

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett

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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



•

SHARE YOUR "WHY WE HOMESCHOOL" ON FACEBOOK

Why Do We Homeschool?

The greatest benefit of homeschooling for us is being able to spend more time with our children.

Homeschooling also helps them become more independent with their work while allowing me to be there for them when needed.

They also can do more activities after finishing their school work!

The Salazar Family - Chicago, Illinois



St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

Thérèse of the Child Jesus is her official title, but St. Thérèse is commonly known and loved by her popular title "St. Thérèse the Little Flower." St. Thérèse was declared a saint when I was in 8th grade, the year Catholic School children were confirmed. The majority of us girls took "Thérèse" as our Confirmation name; most of us wanted to be nuns like St. Thérèse.

The life of St. Thérèse appealed to me as a young Catholic schoolgirl, not because she saved a nation or achieved some great feat, but because she proved that one can be a saint by living a quiet prayerful life. Years ago at my Catholic elementary school, the children attended Mass every day as a class and went to confession every month as a class. Our teachers were nuns who inspired us in many different ways, but definitely represented to us a life of holiness and self-giving, such as lived by St. Thérèse.

At the end of each school day, our teacher-nun would take the last fifteen minutes to have a student read from a biography of a saint, just like the book Seton is selling: "Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus" by Father Raymond.

The Little Way of the Cross

We students listened intently as we all wanted to be a saint, "just like the one in the book." It was obvious to us that we did not need to be an important person, a king, or a president, but we needed only to live a normal good Catholic life. We needed to attend daily Mass, as we were doing, to say our daily rosary, as we were doing, and to remember the sacrifices of the saints, as we were encouraged to do. St. Thérèse reminded us of the famous statement, and which our nun-teachers daily repeated to us: "the little way of the cross."

That phrase, "the little way of the cross," convinced many of us children to accept the normal little difficulties of daily life. Those were years of foreign wars, with dads, brothers, and other relatives going off to fight in a faraway land.

Those were the years when women worked in factories to provide whatever the soldiers needed. Those were years when American families often had very little in material goods and parents depended upon their children to help at home. As the oldest in my family, I can remember washing diapers, ironing clothes, and standing on a stool to wash the dishes in the kitchen sink! Nevertheless, I remember reading books in the evening and doing my homework in a quiet corner.

St. Thérèse promised that when she entered Heaven, she would "spend Heaven doing good on Earth, and let fall from Heaven a shower of roses." For this reason, she is lovingly called "The Little Flower."

At this difficult time in our American history, we need to remember that there never has been, nor ever will be, a perfect time on this Earthly planet. The perfect time will be in Heaven. Keeping this in mind, we need to stay in continuing prayer, attending mass frequently, and being sure to include our children in our prayer life.

Show Your Power

Only with prayer, with the help of the Blessed Mother and her Son Jesus, can we achieve a healthy spiritual life, like the life of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

For many years I have said the short prayer "Little Flower, in this hour, show your power." I am convinced that my life has been miraculous, in part because St. Thérèse has been pleading for me in Heaven, ever since my Confirmation.

With the Blessed Mother Mary and St. Katherine joining St. Thérèse, I have been given an amazing and a miraculous life. Not because I am special, but because Jesus knows how much I can do, but only with His help and the help of His mother and His saints.

A Carmelite prayer asking St. Thérèse for help includes these words: "St. Thérèse, Flower of fervor and love, please intercede for us. . . . Instill in us your little way of doing ordinary things with extra-ordinary love." Little Flower, in this hour, show your power. Amen.

I first became devoted to St. Thérèse as a young schoolgirl, but I know that she is not merely an example for the young. She is also a great example for homeschooling parents.

The world tries to tell us that we can only feel fulfilled in life by accomplishing great things out in the world. But homeschooling moms and dads should know that most of the truly lasting things are those things which are accomplished in the quiet stillness of home.

Someday, when all secrets are made know and we see things as they truly are, we will realize that the little ones of the world are the great ones of the Kingdom. We call the example of St. Thérèse the Little Way, but it's really the Great Way.

Little Flower, in this hour, show your power.



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 Home Schooling*.



FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

How do I fill out the Attendance Record that you sent me? Where do I upload it?

We send these to you as a courtesy; we do not actually require them, so there is no place to upload it. This only needs to be used for students in a state where there are a required number of days of attendance.

It's easy enough to just check off a day that you are "in school". However, if your state has no such requirement and you don't care to use the form, toss it! If you do want us to keep the record, you can send it to us separately from your quarter work. Put "Attn: Records" on the envelope. If you send the record to us we will keep a copy in our student files.

My son is already finished with some of his classes. Should we order the next grade up and begin that now? And should we keep working throughout the summer?

It's entirely up to you. One thing to remember is that it costs less to enroll for a whole year at once than to enroll in multiple single courses at the elementary level. So if your child finishes his Spelling or Vocabulary book, you probably don't want to enroll him in the next level of the course as a single subject.

You could purchase the next book, and work in it until you enroll for the next year, then give the tests when you receive them and submit the grades. You could also supplement with other materials that you might find at a local bookstore or online, or you might just enjoy the fact that he has one less subject to do!

If, however, he finishes Math, and he is already behind a grade level in math and you want him to catch up, that might be a case where you could find it helpful to re-enroll him right away in the next level, depending on how long it will be until you re-enroll for the next grade. Only you can decide if you want to continue working through the summer or if you are taking a break.

Many families use the summer to finish up the subjects that aren't done, or get a jump start on the next year's work. Some families have their kids read the book report books over the summer. Others do a little bit of math each day. Others continue the full course load, taking shorter breaks throughout the year. There's no wrong way to do it!.

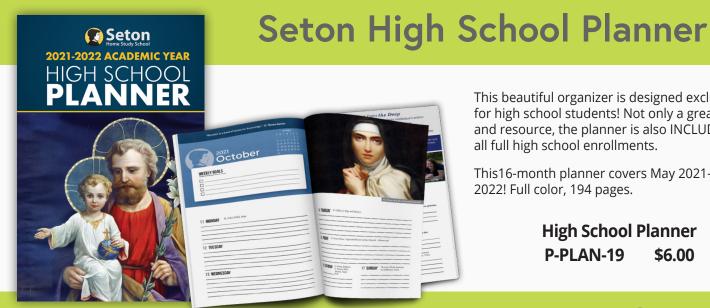
What if I need more time to finish? We aren't done with all our books vet.

Seton gives you a full calendar year to finish the course work. However, if you need more time you can get an extension. Call us to find out when your ending date is if you're not sure, and to get the extension if you need more time to finish.

On the other hand, there are ways of finishing faster in some courses. Remember that the only things you need to turn in in order to get a grade are the things listed as "Seton Graded" on your MySeton page, or the Seton-graded items (Part B) on your Quarter report forms.

If you think your child can get a good grade on those assignments, you do not have to do all the daily work. You can guide him to study those things that will be covered on the test, or to learn the things for doing an assigned paragraph or paper.

While we don't necessarily recommend doing this for all the subjects in all four quarters, as you're approaching the end of the year, finishing some while still working on others, this may be a way to finish up and get that summer break you need. Remember that those in brick and mortar schools don't always finish every single one of their books either.



This beautiful organizer is designed exclusively for high school students! Not only a great tool and resource, the planner is also INCLUDED with all full high school enrollments.

This16-month planner covers May 2021-August 2022! Full color, 194 pages.

> **High School Planner** P-PLAN-19 \$6.00



Seton Home Study School 2021 Scholarships

WHAT YOU CAN WIN?

On August 15, 2021, Seton is awarding ten \$1,500 Scholarships to Seton high school students graduating in 2021.

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE?

August 1, 2021 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, 2021, 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.



BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

This January, my youngest son turned twelve. As his gift, my husband and I gave him a guitar. We had long suspected he had musical ability (as does his older sister, who is a gifted musician) but he had not really expressed a desire for an instrument or lessons. We decided to make the rather expensive purchase and see if he responded with enthusiasm. When he unwrapped the gift, the look in his eyes told me we had done well. It was the spark.

When people think of their children having a gift, often it is academic excellence or some great talent such as art and music that comes to mind. And yes, those are gifts and should be cultivated; however, your child does not necessarily have to be a scholar to have a gift. The traditional definition of a "gifted child" has been linked to high test scores and academic excellence, which is certainly important, but there are many other ways a child can be gifted. "Today's intelligence researchers emphasize

that nearly all children—not just the celebrated 5 percent—have special talents," says David G. Myers, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. Studies at Harvard University bear this out, suggesting that kids can display intelligence in many different ways—through words, numbers, music, pictures, athletic or "hands-on" abilities, and social or emotional development."

The school year can be hectic between schoolwork and other obligations. It can be hard to muster the enthusiasm for outside interests but during the summer, when the load is lighter it can be fun to see where enthusiasm takes your child. It may lead to an absorbing hobby or possibly a career. At the very least it could lead to some family fun and relaxation and that is a laudable goal.

So how does a parent help their child find that spark? Here are a few suggestions to make your summer of spark happen.

Free Time Sparks the Imagination

In the beginning it may be as simple as not scheduling anything for a week or so and letting the children explore how to occupy their time. I am an advocate of turning off the screens to allow imaginations to develop, but in this case some screen time might be helpful. My son (the newly minted guitar player) loves to fish. He will spend all his computer time researching fishing areas in our area and what kinds of bait attract what kind of fish. His library stack always includes fish books and nature guides, but he finds a lot of good information from some excellent websites. He also enjoys watching videos of fisherman tying flies and waxing poetic about lures.

Unscheduled time might find your child building forts, coding in Minecraft, watching videos of robotics projects, puttering around in the garden, biking, playing card games or redecorating their room. All these activities could spark enthusiasm for a hobby or profession. Pay close attention to how they spend their free time both onscreen and off. If too much time is being spent onscreen in a useless way, turn it all off and this is when you will generally find them picking up a sketch pad or shooting hoops in the driveway.

It also bears mentioning that if your child perseveres in building a skill or working on a project, even after a failed attempt or two, this is an indicator that there is a spark for that endeavor. Lend a hand, without taking over, suggest an idea or resource and back away and let the project unfold.

Varied Experiences Spark Interest

With life starting to return to normal in many areas, it is time to consider providing a variety of experiences for the children to pique interest or expose them to new opportunities. With community activities opening, you might be able to find a local summer program in theater or dance, a summer sports team, or swim lessons. This is where community Facebook pages and local newspapers come in handy; they generally list new activities in a timely manner.

Try hiking in an area unfamiliar to you all, bring field guides, a magnifying glass, and some sketch pads. My friend's oldest son became fascinated with fish as a young boy during their many visits to a local lake. They encouraged his desire to know all about fish by getting him an aquarium for Christmas, visiting aquariums in every place they visited, buying him copious amounts of books about marine life, and signing him up for classes whenever they could. He is now in a marine biology program with a full scholarship, so these many efforts certainly paid off.

The library is also an excellent resource for experiences. In addition to books about different places to visit and things to do, there are usually resources such as museum and aquarium passes and information about volunteering opportunities in the area.

Speaking of volunteering, many people find their vocations/ careers/hobbies through volunteer work. In both the religious and secular worlds, volunteering is a great way to get your feet wet in meaningful work that can change the world and provide great experience, as well as looking great on a college or job application. Checking with your diocese might find you a position in a Bible camp this summer or reading to the elderly (maybe via Zoom) in a nursing home. In your community there are likely many places where you can serve, collecting food for food pantries, tutoring younger children, beautification efforts in your town, and many others. Your child may discover a passion for teaching or a desire to become a nurse or social worker. A future landscape designer might find their gifts planting spring flowers in town flower beds.

Shared Knowledge Sparks Curiosity

When I was young my father, a New York City detective, was only at the dinner table two or three times a week because he often worked nights. When he was there, he would ask my brother and me about our studies and then quiz us about his favorite subject, history— American military history in particular, but general history on. He would ask all kinds of probing questions and quiz us on facts and dates.

His enthusiasm for sharing his knowledge went largely unappreciated for years by my brother and myself but it did, eventually, impart a great love of history (as well as an ability to beat anyone in the history questions in Trivial Pursuit and Jeopardy) to us. In my case it resulted in a lifelong love of all things ancient. I follow archeologists on social media, subscribe to a few journals, and watch all the documentaries. I wish I had been encouraged to pursue that field of study when I was younger, but I do love it now as a hobby. My brother majored in history in college and, although he did not homeschool his children, he similarly quizzed them and imparted his love of it to them.

The point of this is that we should never stop learning and we should encourage our children to learn alongside of us. Our hobbies and interests may not end up being theirs, but the modeling of a learning, curious parent is so unbelievably valuable when trying to raise up children with a lifelong love of learning and a fearless desire to explore everything about which they are curious.

All your children have gifts. Regardless of academic success or test scores, God sees your child as a gift to the world with much to give. That world is rife with opportunity not only to shine personally but also to bring the Gospel to all we encounter. Faithful Catholics are needed in every field, competition, hobby group, and community. To encourage our children in their interests not only allows them to use the gifts a loving God bestowed upon them, but also blesses that world and could, eventually, bring more souls to heaven. The world needs your children, their gifts, talents, and enthusiasm, and that is all the reason you need to add some spark to the summer!



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 number of books. She is the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor

to The Long Island Catholic.



Meekness in Education

When I began my classes to obtain a Virginia teaching license years ago, I was exposed to a variety of veteran leaders from the public school system.

After a brief introduction one the most captivating instructors, Dr. Jim, a fellow hockey fan and county level administrator, asked us all some rhetorical questions: "Why are you here? Why do you want to be a teacher? Why are you in education?"

Before anyone could respond, he stated, "If it's not because of the kids, then get out [now]!"

The class looked at each other. He was serious. Dr. Jim explained how kids and even adults have enough bad things with which to deal than to have another egotistical, self-seeking educator added to the mix.

The class was memorable and an edifying reminder that being a teacher, at least to the mind of this public official, was more about serving others' educational needs than an educator's self-interest.

On Mechness

I am sure there are others (aka saints) more qualified than me to talk about meekness. To my mind, meekness really gets a bad rap as a virtue.

At a glance it just doesn't seem attractive—it rhymes with weakness and brings to mind images of a mouse cowering in a corner or running from a cat. St. Joseph, as we know, is celebrated as being meek yet one of his titles is also "Terror of Demons."

This invites some reflection.

Perhaps one way to look at the virtue of meekness, when we think of Jesus and the saints, is to consider it as active non self-aggrandizement.

66 Meekness really gets a bad rap as a virtue.

An apt analogy might be that of the quiet professional. He has no need to sell himself as great to anyone. He just is. He goes about his business, knowing his place in the world, the scheme of things, and gets the job done, whatever that might be. This kind of confidence is compelling.

Relate this sort of steadfastness to living the life of faith and truth, and the title "Terror of Demons," when applied to St. Joseph begins to take on greater color and context. He is indomitable, self-possessed, and completely guided by God.

That sounds like a good recipe for "Terror of Demons" to me.

A Culture of Hatred

It may not come as any surprise to you that meekness is not particularly popular as a virtue right now in our culture. Instead, being with the times means reacting quickly with anger and seeking to overcome one's enemies with hatred. This abandonment of right reason is now being taken to extreme after extreme. Frankly, it is alarming.

The rub is that schools and universities are now actively implementing anti-religious policies and narratives. Faith, reason, and, common sense are under assault in various ways. Speech is no longer free and Christian symbols of Faith are now besieged due to being considered "offensive." Take the recent example of the University of Turin telling students they cannot have the cross on their wall or statues of the Virgin Mary nearby when on camera in their homes because they are deemed offensive.

Directives such as this replace the interest of the student with the self-interest of Dr. Jim's overreaching educators. The days of pluralism and tolerance for differing views in mainstream higher education are seemingly over. Students have several options when faced with these mandates if and when they come: Fly under the radar, resist, leave, or comply.

A Clarian Call

Seton's education is designed to build your understanding of Catholicism and Catholic identity. As noted above, however, secular colleges and schools will increasingly contest this identity in the post-Covid world.

So dear students, especially those of you attending secular schools, recognize that you are going to be increasingly challenged. Many adherents to worldy ideology are not willing to engage in an open conversation. This means you will need to use all of your knowledge, skills, and abilities to sidestep the traps so cleverly laid out for you by the Dark One. You must be equally clever, choose your battles wisely, and live by your wits even as you remain steadfast in your Faith and prayer.

Understanding the philosophy of how the pieces are laid on this new chess board gives you an edge in your position and how to move forward. The better news is that we have the Christ and the truth on our side. Being meek like St. Joseph, the quiet and confident professional of Faith, is but one way to be a living witness for Christ in the world. Let us actively call upon his protection and guidance as we consider our futures, in education or otherwise, as we take up the cross of his Son.



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.



Ask the Experts: -

znexpected gifts

Four Veteran Homeschooling Moms Counsel for a New Mom

Think Outside the Box

Last August, we moved. Prior to the lock-down, we already found ourselves somewhat isolated. Years ago, as new homeschoolers, we participated in co-ops, had weekly play dates, and went on regular field trips.

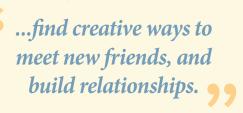
Unfortunately, that has changed in time, owing mostly to our location (we lived in the country) and our work schedule (we bought a restaurant). So, when COVID restrictions were enacted, we

found ourselves even more separated from family and friends.
Then came our big move onto a cul-de-sac in a neighborhood.
The isolation was hurting us, so I made it my mission to find creative ways to meet new friends and build relationships. Two

We agreed to meet-up in a driveway every Thursday evening. Initially, the kids played, and parents talked. Then, one family bought a projector, and we offered the side of our house as the screen. Hence, Thursday Movie Nights was born.

neighbors were in a similar boat (isolated with children).

Having a standing date with neighbors has been a blessing. It kept us on track with making friendships a priority and it has given us the freedom to live in communion with our neighbors. Thursday Movie Nights has fostered "old-fashioned" community that led to a cul-de-sac BBQ, Dad Nights, Mom Nights, street hockey games, sledding, and more.



The restrictions turned out to be a blessing in disguise, in some regards. They reminded us of our real need for connection. The removal of our old habits fostered new ones. We worked harder to establish and nurture relationships and we continue to do so. Thursday Movie Nights is a keeper in our book.

Tara Brelinsky - Wake Forest, North Carolina

Make Life Intentional



A habit I would like to keep after the world goes back to "normal" I call intentional family time, especially in the evenings. I know, we are homeschoolers, we are together ALL THE TIME right? Well, yes and no. We are together physically, but too often we are doing our own things.

My teens would be online, either for their classes or for scout work. My younger ones watching videos, drawing, or out in the back yard. I would be finishing that day's tasks, preparing for tomorrow's, or, my guilty pleasure, cooking games on my iPad. (Does art imitate life or what?!) My husband, exhausted from an early commute in DC traffic, would be helping kids or making fantasy sports teams deals.

66 We set aside one evening a week.

During quarantine that changed. We set aside one evening a week without electronics or distractions. We got some of those escape rooms in a box, we did a paint night, we built Legos, and took turns telling each other about our creations.

We read aloud from James Herriot's wonderful "All Creatures Great and Small" books. It was amazing. No matter what your family does, make it intentional and involve everyone. Let it draw you closer together and remind you of the joy and love of our Creator. Find out what makes your family unique and wonderful and celebrate it!

Kristin Brown – Woodbridge, Virginia

Enjoy the God-Given Day



During these unprecedented times, we have taken the time to be in nature more and appreciate God's goodness. We have been going on family hikes through the woods or in some of our local parks. We have been able to explore many different areas that we have been meaning to visit.

When we go on our family adventures, we think about all of the good that God has given us in the world. We take in the scents of the forest; the songs of the birds; the sounds of the rivers and streams, all of them in perfect symphony by one grand Creator.

66 There is a great, big world out there just waiting for us.

It may not seem like a grand gesture, but it has reminded us of ways to find peace, to seek grace, and to just enjoy the day that God has given us. We are also reminded that sometimes we may seek solace in our electronics, but there is a great, big world out there just waiting for us.

We are also reminded that we need to take care of our bodies to give ourselves strength, in all parts: spiritually, mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. God and nature provide food for every part of that wellbeing.

We plan to continue our family adventures, and maybe as we are able, we will invite friends along to enjoy the strength and good in nature as we nurture our relationship with the Lord.

Marianna Kasprzak – Middletown, Delaware

Be Not Afraid to Thrive

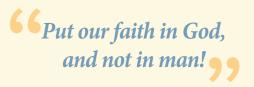


Is it possible to thrive during a pandemic? Is it possible to choose faith over fear? Yes, it is possible, and our family is proof of it. From the beginning of the COVID pandemic I chose to not be afraid, and to keep our lives as normal as possible, and to not listen to the fear that the media was trying to sell us.

We already were into our 20th year of homeschooling, and my husband was already working from home, so our lives did not change at all in that respect. But seeing how the world was reacting, we chose to increase our prayer life by adding the Divine Mercy Chaplet to our daily devotions.

Our family has also become more politically active during 2020 and will continue by supporting pro-life candidates, and those striving to get life back to pre-COVID standards.

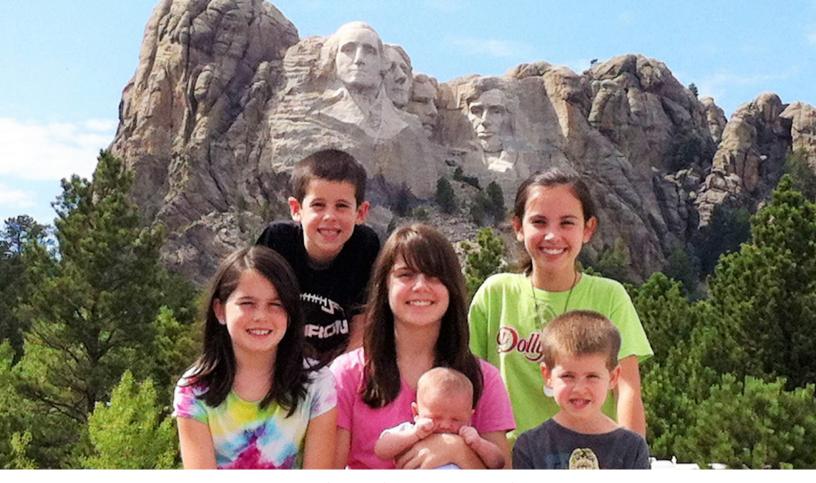
The kids have also benefited from some of the stricter regulations, which opened the doors to more creative ways of homeschooling. Our co-op lost its space at a community center, but we were welcomed at an outdoor wedding venue, which has allowed our kids to keep up social activities.



God has even blessed us with good weather on co-op days! A woman in our neighborhood offered outdoor PE classes for homeschoolers, but discontinued because of COVID fears, so we homeschool moms regrouped and stepped in as teachers, so our kids could continue their outdoor weekly classes. We only had to cancel one class in the winter because it was too cold. We hope to continue the classes for as long as needed.

Can people thrive in a pandemic? Yes, because we chose faith over fear, and when we put our faith in God, and not in man, He blesses us beyond measure.

Susan Brock - Charlotte, North Carolina



Homeschooling With Our Special Friends the Saints

- A Visit With the Sanborn Family

was the week after Easter when I journeyed to the Deep South, via my cell phone, and had the pleasure of meeting the Sanborn family of Covington, Louisiana.

Here on Lake Pontchartrain's North Shore, Mark and Lauren Sanborn began raising and educating their children, using Seton from the very beginning. After their high school graduation, the

> their parents' footsteps and now attend Franciscan

University of Steubenville. Cathleen sang

in the youth choir in Covington's St. Peter Catholic Church, where a

wonderful

music director helped inspire her to pursue a university degree in sacred music. "She has one more semester to go," Lauren tells me. "And believe it or not, sacred music at Franciscan is really a tough major."

Kourtney, a junior, is enrolled in Franciscan's nursing program. Her mother tells me that in high school Kourtney attended "a bunch of art classes" and for several years has designed the family's Christmas cards.

First-year student Caroline is a freshman who in high school was very involved with her church's youth group and enjoys photography. Caroline, Lauren said, "loves her time and doesn't want to overcommit to anything." That expression—"loves her time"—rang a bell with me, as I often feel that way.

The Sanborn's three sons have equally diverse interests. Luke, a high school junior, "has a wonderful job that allows him to work three days a week at a feed and seed store. Homeschooling allows him the flexibility to hold a job and go to school." He also enjoys playing volleyball, and was on a homeschooling basketball team for several years.



Seventh-grader Ronan plays football for a park and recreation team, and is, like Luke, active in St. Peter's youth group. Both boys are altar servers and "treasure that privilege."

Third-grader Dominic's extracurricular passion is flag football. Lauren adds that Dominic is fascinated by the pictures featured in Seton Magazine, asking about the various saints and if they can look up their biographies online.

66 Seton has delivered the fullness of the truth to our family.

Lauren also tells me the family has traveled through all 48 states of the continental United States. "We used to have a 15-passenger van and took these massive road trips to places like Mount Rushmore, the Grand Canyon, and Canada."

These are the bare-bone details of this Seton family.

But Lauren Sanborn, a woman of insight with a sense of humor and an infectious laugh, had much more to say about home education and faith.

Growing in Virtue

When asked what she thought were some of the outstanding benefits of homeschooling, Lauren replied I "appreciated that my kids have been able to grow and develop without being faced with labels and agendas, and without exposure to a culture that is busy removing God. It's wonderful to see my children's confidence in themselves and the knowledge they have of their faith."

She mentioned another gift of homeschooling that often goes unremarked: "We often hear about benefits for the kids and families, but I feel like I've received benefits as a mom. It's a 'growing in virtue' program for me. Homeschooling is a real refining process in the virtues, helping moms to practice patience, fortitude, perseverance, and all the other virtues."

Regarding the value of the Seton program, Lauren told me, "Seton is a solid curriculum that I let do its job. Having the lesson plans and all the materials are especially beneficial for a large family such as ours. It allows our older students to self-teach while I help the younger ones."

As all of us know, we are living in a dark and confusing time where deception and disorientation are commonplace in our society. For Lauren Sanborn, however, the Catholic faith has the power to keep us on the straight path. "I tell my sons we have a superpower as Catholics. We know the fullness of the truth, and we don't need to be confused or afraid, even of death."

She paused, and then added, "Over the years, Seton has delivered the fullness of the truth to our family, almost on a platter. All the beautiful artwork, for example, is a constant reminder that all the people who have gone before us, the saints, have lived in the world but are not of the world."

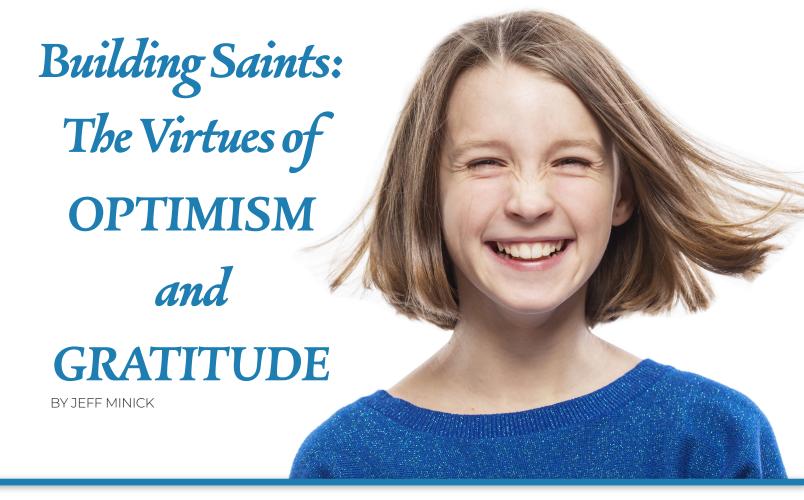






Near the end of our conversation, Lauren told me, "Our morning offering and our litany of saints personal to our family is a really great way to start the day. Our special friends, the saints, we ask for intercession."

Lauren's words—"our special friends, the saints"—hit home with me. Here in the Sanborn family is that sort of living, breathing faith all of us pray for, points of light and hope in the shadows of this world.



This New Year's I resolved to read at least six old classics unfamiliar to me. I started with Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe which, after I'd grown accustomed to the somewhat archaic language, proved both fun and inspirational.

Next up on my list was Fyodor Dostoevsky's Devils. I'd read several of his novels and taught Crime and Punishment in several of my AP Literature homeschooling seminars, but as I was hacking my way through the thicket of Devils, I wondered what had possessed me to choose a novel nearly a thousand pages long and filled with a myriad of characters and confusing names. Written 150 years ago, this novel about Russian radicals and revolutionaries has much to say to our own time, but the story isn't exactly a walk on the sunny side of the street.

Meanwhile, I daily look at various online news sites for ideas for articles I write for other publications. Two hours or so a day, I read about the mess and ugliness in our political and cultural realms. Not much sunshine in this endeavor either.

I needed a change, some sort of reading to brush away the dark clouds and brighten my spirit.

And that's when I met Pollyanna Whittier.

The Girl and the Glad Game

I was reading Rachel Hollis's self-help book, Didn't See That Coming: Putting Life Back Together When Your World Falls Apart, for review for the Smoky Mountain News. At one point, Hollis is talking to a friend, Greg, and apologizes for sounding "a bit like Pollyanna."

Greg asks if she's read Pollyanna, and when she says no, Greg explains that he has overheard his wife reading it to their children. He then says, "Pollyanna turns a negative into a positive at least a hundred times in that book. That's not something to be ashamed of, that's something to be proud of."

"As Catholics, we are surely meant to be glass-half-full people."

And so I went in search of Eleanor Porter's Pollyanna and added a third previously unopened classic to my list of conquests.

Reading about this orphan girl who comes to live with her Aunt Polly and who brings with her the Glad Game, which Pollyanna introduces to an entire town, gave me some much-needed good cheer. No matter

what their circumstances—loneliness, illness, severe disappointments—players of this game must think of something to be glad about. By the story's end, even the hard-hearted Aunt Polly has a conversion, telling Pollyanna, "The whole town is playing the game, and the whole town is wonderfully happier..."

I'd always heard "Pollyanna" used as a derogatory term applied to someone who is blindly optimistic, but as I explored this novel I began to wonder whether many of us don't possibly qualify as blindly pessimistic.

Maybe we need a new pair of glasses.

Realistic Optimism

As Catholics, we are surely meant to be glass-half-full people, believers who trust in the ultimate mercy and love of God, and His plan for each one of us.

Of course, we are also called to practice the virtue of prudence, a concept we might roughly sum up with that old adage, "Expect the best, prepare for the worst." The man driving around on four bald tires may believe his car will get him to work no matter what, but sooner or later one of those tires is going to blow. We need to take some sort of realistic and prudent approach to all situations.

Nevertheless, optimism accompanied by realism beats pessimism hands-down. As David Isaacs writes in *Character Building* about optimism: "It means concentrating on the positive aspects of a situation rather than on its defects.

We must stress, however, that permanent optimism is possible only when we realize that God expects from each one of us something that no other individual can do, and provided we ask his help, everything can work to our advantage."

Solzhenitsyn's Glad Game

Sometimes we play Pollyanna's game in retrospect. We look back at our lives and realize that a period of suffering—a failed business venture, the death of a loved one, the betrayal of a friend—has made us stronger and better than we were.

Here is Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn reminiscing about the time he spent in the Soviet Gulag:

"Bless you prison, bless you for being in my life. For there, lying upon the rotting prison straw, I came to realize that the object of life is not prosperity as we are made to believe, but the maturity of the human soul."

What is that reflection if not an example of Pollyanna's Glad Game?

Thanksgiving

Undergirding optimism is gratitude.

Offering thanks, even in the midst of tribulation, acts as a bulwark against pessimism. That appreciation may be for something big like a promotion at work or for something small, like a glass of wine that rounds out the day. Whatever the case, feeling grateful can act as a tonic to optimism.

For whatever reason, about six months ago I began offering up a prayer of gratitude every morning, usually while drinking my first cup of coffee. It's pretty informal. I just thank God for another day, for my children and grandchildren, for other members of my family and for my friends, and for allowing me to be a part of this whirling miracle we call Planet Earth.

"God expects from each one of us something that no other individual can do."

I live alone and usually say my gratitude prayer aloud, and every day the words of the prayer are different, but I'm grateful for the mysterious entrance of this prayer into my life. That time of prayer and remembering the names and faces of those I love kicks off the day with an upbeat mood. I only regret that I developed this habit so late in life.

The Saints and Optimism

Saints like Joan of Arc, Father Damien, Bernadette Soubirous, and Pope John Paul II all suffered trials here on earth. All the saints underwent some kind of hardship and pain, physical or spiritual. And each brought unique personalities to these battles. Just like the rest of us, our wonderful saints could be kind or querulous, charming or abrupt, humorous or sour.

But all of them had at least one trait in common: hope in heaven and a risen Lord. And what is hope if not another name for optimism combined with realism?

A final note: It happens that I am writing these words on Easter Sunday. Surely the great miracle of this day, the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His promises to us, is in itself a wondrous reason for optimism.



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.

The Hope of the World

The great gift of Easter is hope and our beautiful Seton families give us great hope for a better world! He is Risen, Indeed!



Thank you to the generous families who shared their Eastertime photos with us!

Find more photos at www.setonmagazine.com and on Seton's Facebook and Instagram pages!



From Left to Right, and Clockwise from Top:
The Pennington Family,
The Grub Family,
The DeThomas Family,











The Tolson Family, The Tripper-Krintz Family, and The Von Stultz Familyz



The Most Important Lesson You Will Ever Teach

everal years ago, I wrote an article for the National Catholic Register about Saint Dismas, the good thief who converted while he hung on his cross next to Jesus. A few days after the article appeared, an acquaintance came up to me while I was writing, and very kindly told me how much she had liked the column. I casually thanked her and then went back to writing. But she continued, saying, "No, you don't understand."

She continued to tell me that she had given my column to a friend who had fallen away from the Catholic Church several decades prior. "Oh, thanks. That was nice of you," I assured her, and went back to my writing. She said again, "No, you don't understand."

The Greater Currency

She told me that after her friend read my column, he came back to the Catholic Church and to the sacraments the very next day.

We Catholic apologists typically make very few dollars in our chosen profession, but our payment sometimes comes in ways that surpass all the currencies on Earth. Incidents like these help me realize that—for all my weaknesses and faults and sins—I have the

remarkable privilege of acting as a conduit of God's grace. With my books, articles, and online courses, I have helped people draw closer to Mary and Jesus. It's an honor I could never deserve, but only attempt to appreciate.

At this point, I'd like to inform you that I struggled with mathematics as a teenager. It took me over two years to finish Algebra I. I didn't fair any better with Algebra II. Geometry? Forget about it. On a good day, I could tell you what a circle was, but little more. And since our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) focused society has deemed mathematics as one of the most reliable determinants of overall intelligence, I felt dumb.

In college, I took the lowest-level math course that fulfilled the graduation requirement: College Algebra. When I opened the book cover for the first time, it was like staring at my old archenemy. All these numbers and letters and brackets and parentheses and graphs and charts were still reminding me how unintelligent I truly was.

I could have taken the course as a freshman, but I put it off until the last possible moment—the second semester of my senior year. The freshmen must have wondered why a senior was in the class. But there I was, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning—showing my work and mercilessly wearing down pencil erasers in the process. I wound up passing the course, but just barely. If memory serves, I received a hard-fought "C."

At this point, you might be wondering what apologetics has to do with Algebra. What does leading people back to the Catholic Faith have to do with solving for X? The answer? Nothing. Call it sour grapes, but the fact remains: Algebra has nothing to do with apologetics.

The Greatest Lesson

When it comes time to send in Quarter Report Forms or take tests, it becomes easy—all too easy—to forget that. But notwithstanding her lifelong focus on education achievements, my mother never forgot. When we were being homeschooled in the 1980s, my mother would gather us together to say the Morning Offering after breakfast, Rosary after lunch, and the Memorare at the end of the school day.

My mother never panicked about my failures in Algebra—largely because she didn't view them as failures. She probably never said, "Johnny, life's not about the Algebra. Life's not about the classes. It's about what we do outside class that matters." She probably never said, "It's not about grades. It's about grace."

"Loving God and loving one another is — the only lesson that really matters."

She probably never said, "Loving God and loving one another is—at the beginning of our days and at end of our days—the only lesson that really matters." She didn't need to tell us any of these things. She did something better. She showed us.

In the homeschool world, we parents can paradoxically become overly fixated on the academics of our children, and forget why we began homeschooling in the first place. We become so focused on STEM that we lose sight of the rose. We can worry that our sons and daughters are "behind" in school.

But as a homeschooling father of nine, please let me assure you: if your daughter understands that God loves her, she is anything but behind. If your son loves God, he is a star student in the only class that matters. If your sons and daughters become discouraged academically, please remind them of this.

What really matters is the promise that Jesus made to Dismas—the same promise that He makes to all who love Him: one day, we will walk with Jesus in Paradise.



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*.

Being a Superman Dad in a Kryptonite World



It's no secret that fatherhood gets a bad rap. In this culture, we fathers are often portrayed as extraneous morons, whose function in society is unnecessary.

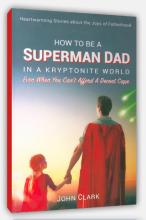
As society divorces itself from the need for Dads, we are coming close to becoming a fatherless nation. The really sad and tragic part of all this is that fatherhood—and the moral leadership of caring fathers—is needed in society more than ever.

A Guide for Fatherhood in a Hostile World

Of course, being a virtuous husband and father are tough enough in a world that celebrates these relationships; fatherhood in a hostile world is uniquely challenging. Yet, there are those men who embrace

the challenge. In my mind, these men are superheroes.

I've been writing and speaking about this topic for years, and recently appeared on Johnnette Benkovic's EWTN show *Women of Grace* to talk about it. I had a lot of fun making the show, which was filmed in part in my dining room. It was a welcome opportunity to examine these topics in some more detail.



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I think the readers of my class columns will enjoy these programs. And if you would really like to delve into this topic, you will enjoy my latest book, *How to Be a Superman Dad in a Kryptonite World*, Even you can't afford a decent Cape.

Thanks for watching. And thanks for reading.

STAFF SERIES

A chat with those who serve you!



Chip Hibl

Director of Seton Educational Media and Customer Service

For the past 32 years, Charles "Chip" Hibl has observed first-hand both the growth of Catholic homeschooling and the expansion of the programs and services offered to families by Seton Home Study School.

A native of Virginia and one of 11 children, in high school Chip attended Seton School in Manassas, Virginia. While there, he witnessed the enrollment of Catholic homeschoolers under the umbrella of the school, with a dozen or so such students joining the program.

Chip's mother, a pioneer in the Catholic homeschooling movement in Virginia, later served on Seton Home Study School's board of directors. "I have seen the growth of Seton Home Study School since its beginning," Chip says.

After graduation from high school, he entered Christendom College, where he met his wife Susan. He majored in history, studying under the school's founding father, Dr. Warren Carroll. As a senior in 1989, Chip worked over his spring break for Seton and was offered a full-time job once he'd graduated from the college.

For 20 years, Chip managed Seton's shipping department, often dealing with customer service issues, which came to be the primary focus of his job.

In 2010, Seton made him the Director of Seton Educational Media and Customer Service. The duties of this department also include overseeing the Seton bookstore, updating the catalogue website, and searching for new products.

The Greatest Satisfaction

Asked what brings him the greatest satisfaction working for Seton, Chip pauses for a moment and then replies that that he is happiest when he and his staff "solve a customer service problem or find a new product that helps Seton families."

When asked about special interests or hobbies, "I have 13 kids and 3 grandchildren and we love to travel the U.S., camping as we go. Two recent weddings of our children gave us the chance to camp coast-to-coast! Susan and I have taken the kids to 36 of the United States and we look forward to seeing more." When asked the family's favorite place to visit he said without hesitation, "Sequoia National Park."

At the end of our conversation, Chip adds this thought: "In my department we keep our eyes open for new books and resources that might benefit our families. You might mention in your article that parents should contact me at **chibl@setonhome.org** if they have suggestions for something we should carry."

So here it is: If you are using a program or a book that you think might be a great addition to Seton's inventory, or if you yourself have devised such a program or written a book that might find a home here, the person to contact is Seton's Chip Hibl.



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choolroom



Plant a Mary Garden

rior to the Reformation most of the beautiful flowers in the gardens of medieval Europe had names honoring Our Blessed Mother. Legend has it that when the Apostles opened Our Lady's tomb, they found it filled with flowers, confirming that Mary taken directly to heaven by Jesus



so that no corruption could ever besmirch the perfection of the first tabernacle.

Many of those flowers became symbols of Our Lady's purity and beauty and are often depicted in art to symbolize her spiritual gifts. The names given to even some of the most common flowers were lovely and it is a shame that they have fallen out of use

but homeschool families can bring the old tradition back by planting a Mary garden this spring to honor our lady.

I began this tradition in my own home a few years ago when my children purchased a garden statue of the Blessed Mother for Mother's Day. I planted a few Our Lady of Guadalupe roses around here and some Assumption Lilies (Hostas) for greenery and Our Lady's Thimbles (Bluebells) because I love them.

This year our Mary Garden needed to be moved and replanted due to some extensive storm damage from a noreaster this past fall. This presented an opportunity to add something new. I noticed stepping stone kits were inexpensive on Amazon, so I

ordered one to try and it was quite easy. I used some glass beads in a pretty blue color and a plastic rosary as well as a couple of miraculous medals I had. This is a quick project that could easily be accomplished by young children if they decorate the stone quickly, it dries and hardens in a truly short time.

We have, as a society, been deprived of so much beauty in recent years, the world has become ever crasser and cruder, eschewing beauty and truth for the sordid and dreary so why not spend some time this year creating a little beauty in a corner of your yard using some plaster and flowers to honor Our Lady.







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 number of books. She is the editor of the Seton Magazine and also a contributor

to The Long Island Catholic.

Marian Names for Common Flowers

Bleeding Heart - Mary's Heart Daisy - Mary's Flower Forget-me-not - Eyes of Mary Geranium - Beautiful Lady Foxglove / Honeysuckle - Our Lady's Fingers Maidenhair Fern - Our Lady's Hair Thistle - Our Lady's Milk Drops Morning Glory - Our Lady's Mantle Fuchsia - Our Lady's Eardrops Parsley - Our Lady's Lace Columbine - Our Lady's Shoes Caladium - Queen's Mantle Larkspur - Our Lady's Spurs Bluebell - Our Lady's Thimble Geranium - Madonna's Pins Marigold - Mary's Gold Thrift - Our Lady's Cushion Lily of the Valley - Our Lady's Tears English Daisy - Mary's Loves Bachelor Buttons - Mary's Crown







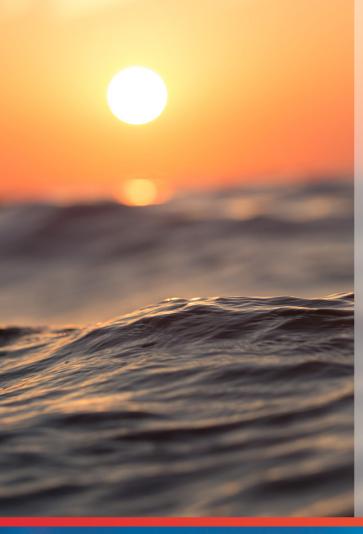
Zoe | Second-grader Zoe challenged herself to work daily for her spelling bee and credits her success to God's grace and help from her parents and her tutor Naia.



Joshua | Homeschooling has helped Joshua follow instructions and work independently. His interests? Football, baseball, and computer games. Favorite subject? Math!

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

setonmagazine.com/**students**



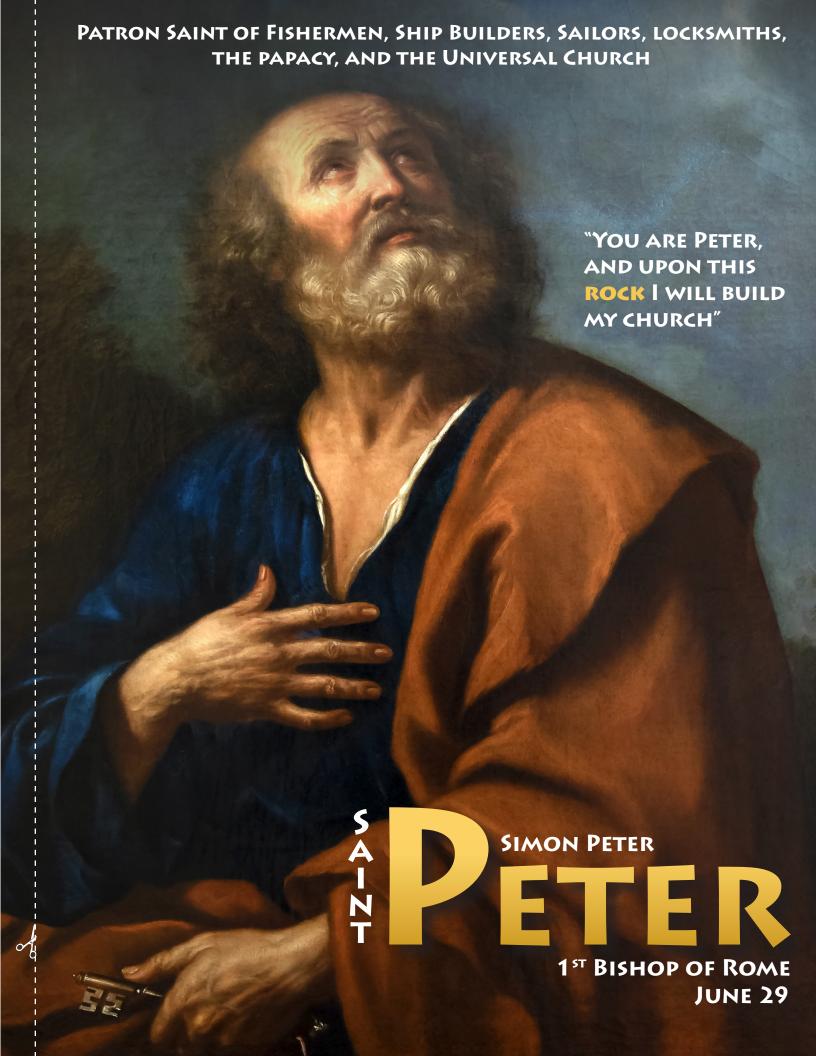


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Like St. Joseph, Embrace All Things with Hope and Courage

Just as God told Joseph: "Son of David, do not be afraid!" (Mt 1:20), so he seems to tell us: "Do not be afraid!" We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with mere resignation but with hope and courage.

In this way, we become open to a deeper meaning. Our lives can be miraculously reborn if we find the courage to live them in accordance with the Gospel. It does not matter if everything seems to have gone wrong or some things can no longer be fixed. God can make flowers spring up from stony ground. Even if our heart condemns us, "God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (1 Jn 3:20).

From Patris Corde: With a Father's Heart
Pope Francis - Apostolic Letter - December 8, 2020

