

# Seton



# MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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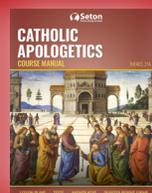
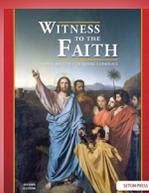
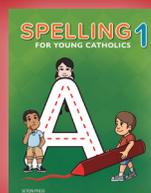
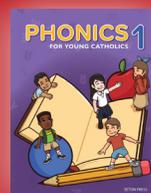
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**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
Dr. Mary Kay Clark

**EDITORS**  
Mary Ellen Barrett  
Kevin Clark

**MARKETING DIRECTOR**  
Jim Shanley

**DESIGN & LAYOUT**  
Robin Hibl

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Mary Ellen Barrett  
Tara Brelinsky  
Susan Brock  
Kristin Brown  
Patrick Caughron  
John Clark  
Dr. Mary Kay Clark  
Jon Daly  
Nick Marmalejo  
Jeff Minick  
Emily Prause  
Draper Warren

**COVER PHOTO**  
The Brown Family



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](mailto:rhibl@setonhome.org) because we love to see your family celebrations!

I have great memories of celebrating all things Blessed Mother with my children, so I was so 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 to a certain theme. It is a delightful surprise. This issue meeting the Sanborn family and hearing Mrs. Sanborn's words about homeschooling giving her the opportunity to grow in virtue and then Jeff Minick's article regarding the virtues of optimism and gratitude seems to be one of those happy 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 on 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*

Mary Ellen Barrett

**SETON PHONE DIRECTORY**

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL  
540-636-9990

SETON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA  
540-636-9996

STANDARDIZED TESTING  
540-636-1250

ADMISSIONS  
540-636-9990, ext. 1

GENERAL COUNSELING  
540-622-5526  
*Cecilia Sauer*

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING  
540-636-1429  
*Cecilia Sauer*  
*Christina Nutt*  
*Teresa English*  
*Laura Clark*  
*Heather Hibl*  
*Laura Fusto*

ELEMENTARY GRADING  
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*Jacinta Black*

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SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION  
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*Deacon Gene McGuirk*

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540-635-4728  
*Deacon Gene McGuirk*

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540-622-5536  
*Kevin Clark*

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH  
540-622-5560  
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*MaryRita Gies*

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING  
540-622-5525  
*Rhonda Way*

HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY, AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & GEOGRAPHY  
540-692-7023  
*Aidan Callegari*

540-622-5571  
*Bruce Clark*

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 LATIN  
540-692-7023  
*Aidan Callegari*

HIGH SCHOOL MATH  
540-622-5557  
*Tom Herlihy*  
*Vasily Vasilyev*  
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*Aidan Callegari*  
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540-635-4728  
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*Manuel Vicente*  
*Tom Herlihy (Physics)*  
*Deacon Gene McGuirk*

HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH  
540-622-5537  
*Manuel Vicente*

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

**ADDRESS**

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

**CONTACT INFO**

Phone: (540) 636-9990  
Fax: (540) 636-1602  
[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)  
[www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)  
[www.setonmagazine.com](http://www.setonmagazine.com)

**SETON EMAILS**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**  
[custserv@setonhome.org](mailto:custserv@setonhome.org)

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

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

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

**GENERAL INFORMATION**  
[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

**MY SETON**  
[myseton@setonhome.org](mailto:myseton@setonhome.org)

**STANDARDIZED TESTING**  
[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)

**SPECIAL SERVICES**  
[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)

**SUBSCRIPTION INFO:**

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

**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?**

*“What I love the most about homeschooling is sharing the love for our faith and family with my boys.*

*We have the flexibility to speed up or slow down as my boys need it or take a break when that's needed.*

*Homeschooling gave us the ability to be there for loved ones as their life ended and celebrating with them because sometimes learning our faith comes in other forms.*”

*The Seiffertt Family - Jonesville, MI*



# Congratulations Seton Graduates!

**Your** hours of study, of taking tests, and of writing essays, have paid off with your high school graduation today!

Congratulations too, to your parents and others who helped you along the way. Your graduation is a milestone in all your lives.

Seton Graduates; today is a day of celebration, to celebrate your graduation from Seton Home Study School. I wish you and your families the very best of God's blessings in the coming years.

## **Our Lady as Our Model**

In the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 1, we read about the amazing and miraculous event called The Annunciation, when an angel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary to tell her she would miraculously "bring forth a Son and call Him Jesus."

In addition, the angel revealed to Mary that her elderly cousin Elizabeth was also miraculously pregnant. Mary clearly understood that Elizabeth would need her help. However, Elizabeth lived some distance from Mary's home.

As I thought about you graduates and your family's concerns about potential difficulties related to safe travel, I thought about the Blessed Virgin Mary's travel plans. She was surely aware of the dangers and the physical discomfort of making such a difficult trip to visit her cousin.

We moms can easily believe that Mary would have liked to spend her pregnancy in quiet prayer in the comfort of her own home.

However, Mary trusted that God would protect her on the difficult journey. She trusted that God would give her the strength to withstand the problems associated with the journey to visit her cousin.

Trusting in God for her health and safe travel, the Blessed Virgin Mary decided to make the distant journey to help her cousin Elizabeth.

Sometimes in life, we find ourselves in a situation when we must make a decision to do something which will bring us discomfort or difficulties, but which will be helpful to someone in need.

When we help someone because we care and because we know Jesus wants us to help those in need, positive results often come our way.

## **Called to Help Others**

Our Lord Jesus wants us to give our time and effort to help others, especially our children, spouse, parents, and other family members. And because the ultimate goal for all of us is eternal life in Heaven, as followers of Jesus, we must think about helping others, even those outside our family.

Jesus, the Son of God, could have stayed in His comfortable home we call Heaven, but instead, He came to us on Earth and showed us how to live a life of prayer, and how to sacrifice to help others.



What we soon discover on our earthly journey is that Jesus and Mary take care of us, most especially when we are helping others in need.

There are many examples throughout history about people who took the time to help someone in need, and found a grateful friend. These various ways of helping others, of showing concern, can seem very small to us, but are very large in the eyes of Jesus. When we take those small daily opportunities, to make the effort to help others, we give great pleasure to Jesus and His Blessed Mother. Even a single kind word at the right time might be a great encouragement to someone. Christian life can be like that, helping others in need and having others help you when you are in need.

We Christians should help each other, especially through prayer for someone in need. Helping someone in need is part of being in the Mystical Body of Christ. That is how Jesus and Mary want all of us to live.

Graduates, when you receive your diploma in a few minutes, make a decision to always remember this day. Remember it not only for your graduation and not only for the school work that you have done over the past four years. Make a decision to always remember those who helped you to receive your diploma: your parents and other relatives, your friends, and your Seton counselors. But most of all, remember to thank the Blessed Mother and her Son Jesus, both of Whom not only helped you to accomplish your high school work, but will continue to provide for your needs.

## Daily Spiritual Support

It is also very important to stay in constant daily prayer, asking Jesus and Mary to guide you. Constant daily prayer does not mean only formal prayers, but constant awareness of the presence of Jesus and of His Blessed Mother. Also, have a constant awareness of your patron saints, one of whom was

named at your Baptism and the other whose name you chose at Confirmation. These saints are waiting for you to ask for their help. Don't neglect to stay in touch with them.

Graduates, many Catholics have found a wonderful way to stay in touch with the spiritual aspect of life by attending daily Mass and receiving Holy Communion.

Try to attend Mass every day. No prayers or religious practices can be greater than attendance at Mass and receiving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. If it is impossible to attend Mass in person, at least say the Mass prayers with a televised Mass.

Recitation of the Rosary every day is essential for the Catholic spiritual life, especially if you cannot attend Mass every day. Say the Rosary every day in appreciation for all the past, present, and future gifts from the Blessed Mother and her Son Jesus. Many of us join others in praying the daily Rosary on EWTN, which occurs several times during the day.

With every day having so many concerns and being so hectic with important activities, it's easy to lose sight of the permanent things, such as the Mass and the Rosary. The Rosary can help you step back from temporary concerns, and, like the sister of Lazarus in the Gospels, help you focus on "the better part."

Saying the daily Rosary can and will bring miracles into your life, as evidenced by so many saints, as well as by many homeschooling parents.

The daily Rosary truthfully could be called the daily miraculous Rosary. Jesus and Mary listen carefully to our Rosary prayers. And they will answer your prayers in the way that is best for you.

## Source of Special Graces

The Blessed Mother is "in our corner," so to speak, because she loves us. With her Son Jesus, Our Lady is dedicated to helping us. We know from her many apparitions, especially at Fatima and Lourdes, that she goes to her Son and asks Him to help those of us in need. As we petition her for help while saying the Rosary, she petitions her Son Jesus for us.

When Our Lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, she told Bernadette that she wants to give out graces, but people don't ask for the graces. Praying the Rosary every day is a good way to make sure that you ask for the graces which the Blessed Mother wants to give us.

Congratulations Graduates! And congratulations to your parents who have worked so hard to help you succeed in your academic lessons along with the Catholic Faith.

May Jesus and His Blessed Mother bless you students, you parents, and all your family members.



**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*.



# your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

## **Why do our students have to do book reports?**

We feel that the book reports are a great way to introduce thematic writing to students, especially since we give them so much help in the first and second quarters. They get a sense of how 4 or 5 paragraph essays are done, and that they aren't too overwhelming.

It's a great way to help prepare them for the writing they will be doing in high school. They also get the student thinking about how we can learn things from even fictional reading.

## **My student just cannot get into any of the books listed for the book reports. Can he do a different book? What books can we choose from?**

This varies by grade and quarter, but you actually have a lot of choices. For the first two quarters of 2nd and 3rd Grade, the books are sent to you, and the help in the lesson plans is specifically tied to those books. It is the same for 4th Grade, first quarter.

For 3rd and 4th quarters, in grades 2 and 3, at the end of the reading lesson plans, there is a supplemental reading list. You may choose any book from this list, but if none suit you, you can actually choose ANY book. We prefer if you do a saint biography, but any book is fine, as long as it is on grade level for your student. If you are unsure, please contact the grading department at Seton.

For our 4th Grade reading students, the first quarter book report is on the novel *The Small War of Sergeant Donkey*. Your student is given very detailed instructions throughout the quarter for how to write a book report from our Book Report Handbook. You will not be turning this report in to us, but there is a test on writing the report. For the second

quarter of 4th, and the first and second quarters of Grades 5-8, you have a choice of novels for those two quarters.

This year we added two more novels to each grade, bringing the total to 6 choices for each grade. You can pick which books you want when enrolling. When you receive your books, if you find one of them doesn't suit the student, you may choose any of the remaining books. You can either order it from us, or find it at your local library.

For 4th-8th, in the 3rd and 4th quarters, the book does need to be a saint biography. There are nine titles to choose from when you enroll. However, if none suit your student, you are free to choose another saint biography from a different series if you wish – just make sure it is at the appropriate grade level. If you have any questions about this, you may call or email either the counselors or the graders.

It is worth noting that in high school and college, the students will often be required to read books that they have not chosen themselves, or even enjoy reading, and write essays on them. We are giving you some choices in your books, and hopefully you will find it to be a good selection.

## **Do you have any suggestions for actually writing the book reports? We always leave it for last, and it feels like they are always looming over us.**

The lesson plans for 4th-8th now include a separate Book Report Handbook, which should be very helpful when your student is writing their book report. The other grades include all the book report information in the reading lesson plans.

There is a brief overview of each book within these pages. Take the time to read that, and then also read the introductory

paragraph that you will be using to write the book report. This will give you an idea of what you're writing about, and what you should be looking for when reading. For example, in *Heidi*, the book report talks about ways the characters in the book exhibit Christian values.

While reading the book, keep a sticky note or other piece of paper in the book and have the child mark the page number whenever he sees a character showing Christian virtues. Also, if you look at the resources on your MySeton page, there are review questions for each chapter. Usually these questions lead the student to think about the themes in the book. Go over these questions with him as he is reading the book, and the examples for his writing just may jump out at him!

## **Can I still get a grade for reading if we don't do the book reports?**

Unfortunately not. We feel that they are so important and an integral part of our reading curriculum. If you do not turn in the book reports, you will not receive a grade for reading.

## **We've done all these things, and still not overly excited about reading and writing book reports. Do you have any suggestions for the summer?**

Yes! Consider taking part in Seton's Summer Reading Club! There is a recommended book list, but you can also choose any books you like. Your child gives a brief presentation to you, the parent, and you keep track of the books read. When he gets to a certain number, just click to request a certificate. If you want to add prizes or incentives like the library does, that's entirely up to you. You might even suggest that your child read some of the books that he will be doing for his book report next year to get a jump on them!



# Seton Home Study School Catholic College Scholarships

**DEADLINE TO APPLY IS  
AUGUST 1, 2021**

## WHAT YOU CAN WIN?

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

## 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](https://setonhome.org/scholarship)



AVE MARIA  
UNIVERSITY



CHRISTENDOM  
COLLEGE



Belmont **Abbey**  
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY  
OF DALLAS



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



MAGDALEN COLLEGE  
OF THE LIBERAL ARTS



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE  
*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*



FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY  
OF STEUBENVILLE



BENEDICTINE  
COLLEGE



OUR LADY  
SEAT OF WISDOM  
COLLEGE



WALSH  
UNIVERSITY  
*A Catholic University of Distinction*



Wyoming  
Catholic College  
*Wisdom in God's Country*



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

# A Helping Hand: Seton's Special Services



Several years ago, a student mistook the meaning of Seton Home Study School's Special Services Department and called to ask if she could enroll in the program and learn how to parachute from airplanes.

The Special Services Department doesn't teach skydiving, but it does help students soar in their academics.

As the Seton website tells readers, "this department works to help children with a range of difficulties, such as ADHD, Down syndrome, and dyslexia." Special Services also works with students who come from a different educational experience, like public school, and who are unprepared to tackle such assignments as book reports and essays.

## Helping Your Child Succeed

The director of this department, Stephen Costanzo, wants parents and students to know that he and his staff can help children succeed academically by working with them and by making modifications in the courses.

"Many of these students needing this help are those in the elementary grades who have trouble writing book reports," Costanzo says. "A lot of kids coming to Seton have read little and

written almost nothing. They lack the skills to take on the reports. We work with them, adjusting the reading levels and adapting the book review forms and requirements to their level."

## Changes for the Better

Costanzo brings 20 years of experience to this task. He double majored in religion and psychology at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

After graduating in 2000, he entered the University of Virginia and in 2002 earned his master's in special education. For two years, he worked in Richmond in the public school system, and in August 2004 joined the staff at Seton.

Since then, Costanzo has seen several changes in the Special Services Department. When he first came on board, Seton was mostly using outside publishers for the texts and workbooks used by students in the program.

Gradually, Costanzo and his colleagues have made it possible for these students to use Seton materials. A high school student weak in composition, for example, would today read *A Tale of Two Cities*, which is a part of the Seton curriculum, but would then receive a modified writing assignment regarding the book.

Costanzo also notes that the number of students with dyslexia has increased over the years. He attributes some of this increase to better diagnostic tests and also wonders whether the reading programs in some schools have failed some of these young people.

This fall the extra fee required for those enrolled full-time in the Seton program will increase \$35, bringing the additional charge to grades K-5 students to \$185 and grades 6-12 students to \$260.

## An Extra Value

Costanzo also points out that all students, fully enrolled in the Seton program, may, at no additional charge, take one of the modified courses offered by his department. A student doing battle with book reports in a literature class, for instance, can enroll in that course while following the regular Seton syllabus in her other classes.

Because of the surge in enrollments caused by this past year's pandemic, Costanzo and his fellow workers in special services have encouraged parents to upload or mail tests and other work.

To find out more about Seton's Special Education Services, please visit the website.

**One tip:** Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page and read over "Frequently Asked Questions," where you'll find information on such topics as enrollment, grades, and independent study for special needs students.



**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.

## Grateful for A Helping Hand

**E**ven after all these years of homeschooling—nineteen I think—I can still panic about things. This time last year was one of those times.



You see my son Sean was starting high school, and Sean has special needs. He is on the autism spectrum and his IQ tests on the low side, so the regular Seton ninth grade curriculum was not going to be possible.

In grammar school I had adjusted for him and his twin sister worked alongside him so that he did well enough, but high school feels so much more important. Sean is not going to have a brilliant academic career, nor will he attend college. He will probably never learn to drive, and he will always live

with us or one of his siblings. They argue about who gets him; he is in popular demand with everyone, which is further confirmation that homeschooling them was the right thing to do to properly socialize them.

It is not my first time in this situation. My oldest son Ryan, had autism, and was not able to work at grade level ever. We used Seton's Special Services with great success, but he died before he started high school so special needs high school, was making me extremely nervous. You would think since I work for the company, I would be more confident; but when we are choosing what is best to do for our children, my husband and I are just nervous parents trying to make good decisions.

When I finally made the call and had a session with Karen Erickson-Lee, my apprehension and anxiety settled down within a few minutes. Karen spent a lot of time listening to my concerns for Sean.

We talked about his gifts and his challenges and our hopes for his high school career. I hung up well over an hour later with a clear plan and a new ally in helping my Sean find God's plan for his life.

Navigating a plan for your child with different academic needs is stressful. Seton has always believed that all children should have the best Catholic education possible.

While their typical curriculum is not suited for everyone, there is an entire staff of people who will put their whole heart into helping you educate the student who does not fit the mold, so they have the chance to become everything God created them to be. After all, that's the whole point of education anyway.



**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*.



## Ask the Experts:

# What is Your Summer Schedule Like?

*Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Counsel for a New Mom*

### *Structured Flexibility*



Since my homeschooling career began with three energetic students (aka boys), I crafted a summer schedule with sanity in mind. Experience taught me that too much free-time led to boredom and boredom led to stress (mostly for me as I tried to conjure up activities to appease the inevitable cries of, “I’m bored.”) Structure and flexible were my goals. So, summer in my household includes a year-round school schedule, but with intentional flexibility that allows for spur-of-the-moment field trips, daily playtime, and vacation get-aways.

“Sleeping until noon is not really an option.”

Mornings are our most productive time for schooling. Additionally, I find we are more inclined to get the most out of the day when the children wake-up at 7:30am and take care of their chores.

Also, with a menagerie of animals under our care, sleeping until noon is not really an option therefore, we continue to rise early most weekdays. We work on school from about 9am until noon and then we break for the day.

Having spent the morning at the school table, the kids are eager to go outside to play with friends, roam the yard, or splash in some source of water.

Lesson plans are written for nine-week semesters, but during the summer we often stretch them out.

For example, we may take two weeks to complete the Week 1 assignments. I have found it easiest to focus on completing each semester without worrying about setting a firm end date.

Of course, all work and no play, as the cliché goes, makes for an imbalance overall. So, summer always includes a family vacation. Some years the budget meant it was a stay-cation full of day trips, but every year we plan one full week of rest, relaxation, and fun activities as a family.

***Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina***

## Hiking, Camping, and Finishing!



Summer in DC brings endless free time... and crowds and heat and more crowds.

We usually do not take many trips to the museums and monuments in the city (a regular occurrence during the school year), since in non-Covid times there are way too many people. We walk every single morning, the kids playing and talking and I try to get my rosary prayed. (I hope Our Lady does not mind interruptions!)

Every child must do thirty minutes of reading and thirty minutes of math games on their tablet. For reading they usually start on next year's books for their book reports and for math I buy them an app of learning games for their grade level. We are very involved in American Heritage Girls and Trail Life, and summer is prime time for badge work. This summer my oldest is finishing

up his physical fitness badge and starting the money management one, which requires completion of a high school level home school finance course.

“We walk every single morning.”

My oldest daughter is going to work on her Catholic religious emblem, and my other children have mentioned cake decorating and space exploration as possibilities.

If the weather is not quite hot enough to make Dante proud, we all enjoy hiking and camping. Every May we finish our school year and go on a three-night campout for Memorial Day. In addition, we belong to an HOA and take advantage of the pool, and usually take one to three long weekend trips to visit family and friends.

*Kristin Brown, Virginia*

## On Schedule—by Necessity



We live in the South where summer can be intense, so out of necessity of keeping eight kids occupied in the hot months I keep my kids on a schedule. We still do daily Mass every morning, and then leave the day open for other activities that we do not get to do during the regular school year.

We go swimming and try to take a daily walk. We do art, and last year I did VBS for my kids at home and we did a literature study as a read-aloud, and will continue with it this summer. By July or August at the latest, I get my kids back to their Seton schoolwork, because it is so hot, and we know we will need a few extra weeks to get it all done by May.

*Susan Brock, Charlotte, NC*

## “CONNECT WITH SETON FAMILIES” OVER 1,500 JOIN IN OPENING MONTHS



Families often ask if there are other Seton living families in their area. Since so many families use the Seton program, the likelihood is high that there are other Seton families nearby. Seton Home Study School shares contact information about our families with other Seton homeschooling families—or with prospective homeschooling families—only when given permission to do so.

Academic Counselor Cecilia Sauer, who directs *Connect With Seton Families*, invites you to join too. Cecilia explains that these connections allow parents to trade questions and answers about their homeschooling, and to offer one another support and guidance. In addition, this support system allows families to discuss the homeschooling laws in their state.

Whether or not you decide to add your family to the contact list, we can generate a list for you of other Seton families in your area.

**Seton Families:** You can learn more about the program on your MySeton page. Simply click on the box on the right-hand side of the page titled “Want to Meet Seton Families in Your Area?”



BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

# Chatting All Things Homeschool: A Visit With the Brown Family

The first thing one notices about Kristin Brown is her infectious enthusiasm for speaking about homeschooling, her family, and Seton.

Living about an hour and a half from Seton's offices in Front Royal, Virginia, Kristin and Rob Brown began using Seton to raise and educate their children from the very beginning. Both graduates of Christendom College with degrees in history. Kristin spent the summer of her sophomore year working part time for Seton as a grader for sixth grade. It was then that she became so impressed with the focus on writing and the encouragement of critical thinking. "When the students are taught to write a book report, they are not just summarizing the book, they are thinking about why characters did what they did and the results of their actions." She loved what she was seeing.

## An Education Centered on the Whole Person

Kristin has definite ideas about what the purpose of education is. "I believe that education should be for forming the whole person, not just the subjects in the curriculum. Children should know what truth and beauty looks like and a government school will not show them that."

Matthew Brown, tenth grade, is on the autism spectrum. He is able to do his schoolwork because of the support of the counselors, the structure of the program and the environment of home. "He isn't subjected to noisy hallways, slamming lockers and loud bells, all of which would be challenging for him. When he has trouble, he calls a counselor and when he gives our family number something pops up so that they know he has autism,





and it may take extra time to help him. They are so great with him and because of that he has been able to, so far, complete the standard curriculum.” After graduating from Seton, Matthew has plans to live at home and study engineering locally.

Elizabeth (9th grade), Sara (6th grade), Lauren (4th grade) and Matthew (2nd grade) also benefit from the structure and accountability Seton provides.

## Schedules are the Key to a Happy Home

Another appeal of Seton for Kristin is that she thrives on a schedule. “I meal plan out the whole month in advance making sure to always have sandwich fixings, fruit and chips on hand for nights that I just can’t cook or that are crazy busy.

I also have a house keeping schedule. Some tasks are every day, (cleaning kitchen, making beds, sweeping the floor) and others once a week; Monday, deep clean bathroom, Tuesday, strip and wash all linens and towels, Wednesday mop and vacuum all floors, Thursday, clean out the fridge and grocery shop, Friday, lesson plan for the next week. I also have a quarterly housekeeping schedule. I REALLY like schedules.” This mindset helps keep her house tidy, the work organized, and the school day humming along.

When I asked if she had been born organized or had it been thrust upon her, she was amused. “It was thrust upon me, it was either get organized or die in the chaos!”

## Days Begin with Coffee and Prayer

A typical day in the Brown home starts with Rob bringing Kristin her morning coffee and them praying together. After Rob leaves Kristin has some quiet time for herself to pray and spend some time with her Bible. The children are up by 7:00, dressed and out the door for a half-hour morning walk, which they make time for every day. Kristin prays her rosary while the children enjoy the flora and fauna of the neighborhood.

After returning home it is time to begin with morning prayer and the saint of the day, and by 8:30 school is starting.

## Service and Scouting are Family Affairs

“Our schedule leaves a lot of room for outside activities. We are in Trail Life and American Heritage Girls. Rob and I and leaders and the kids are all involved. We love to hike and camp, and we do that often. We celebrate the end of the school year with a three-day-long Memorial Day weekend camping trip. We also do lots of service work. My oldest daughter just led the Catholic female religious vocations for younger girls to get their



patch for her level award. We love bringing our Catholicism into our scouting. Between all the kids in scouts, there is not time to do much else. We are active in our church. All seven of us sanitized the church after Mass during these COVID times, and Rob is in the Knights of Columbus. I am a catechist for first and second grade. My teens also serve in the parish food pantry.”

These service activities fuel Kristin for her work as a homeschool mom. “Getting out and helping in my community refreshes me and gives me what I need to keep going every day.” The family charism certainly is to give and to give selflessly.

As our conversation wrapped up, I was able to meet young Sara over Zoom, which was great fun. I then asked Kristin what advice she would give to homeschooling mothers based upon her experience. Again, her enthusiasm was evident. “If it is on your heart, it is there for a reason, as Saint John Paul II said, ‘Be Not Afraid.’ Do not let the daunting task of home schooling your children overwhelm you. Is it hard? Yes. Will there be joy and laughter and tears and frustration? Definitely yes. But every day do the next right thing. One step at a time over and over, never give up and never be afraid. The same Christ who called you to this will help you see it through.” Wise words from a lovely Seton mom.



# Jeeps, Not Regrets - A Summer Reflection

BY NICK MARMALEJO



**I**t is difficult to understate the impact made by the Internet on the way we interact (or don't interact) socially. There is an enthusiast group for just about everything under the sun somewhere online, and if you want to know about a subject, there is always an expert available and willing to offer free advice. (Note: Free doesn't always mean valuable.)

While finishing daily rituals before leaving for Seton one morning, I recently took note of a particular inquiry to the world wide web at large: the seeker, a college student who self-identified as “broke, ‘emphasis broke” and asked his fellow Jeep fans if he should sell his carefully modified Jeep Wrangler to purchase a more responsible, fuel-efficient vehicle and make ends meet.

He was met with a flurry of funny and insightful responses, everything from, “If you sell your Jeep and don't miss it, you

deserve a Prius” and “How much do you want for it?” to “Work harder to keep your Jeep.” Many others stated that they had once sold their beloved Wrangler only to “feel a hole in their soul they could never fill by anything other than buying another Jeep.”

To be honest, the latter sentence pretty much describes my own previous experience.

## **Making Room for the Things that Matter**

Years ago, I drove home a new-to-me black 2001 Jeep Wrangler on the brightly lit streets of Washington, DC. I worked for a car dealership at the time, and if you enjoy working with cars, you know how easy it can be to be consumed by them. Earlier that day I was handed a customer interested in buying one of the two Jeep Wranglers we had on the lot. He was given rock bottom pricing on both—he just had to choose which one.



I had always thought Jeeps were cool, but during the customer's test drives, I decided that I absolutely had to have one. It helped that my wife always wanted a Jeep Wrangler, too.

After a small scene at the manager's desk, the customer walked out. My manager turned to me and shook his head, stating, "That really was a good deal."

I knew it to be true. "I'll take that deal!" I responded.

"Are you serious?"

"Yes!"

I filled out my credit application and an hour later sped away into the night, wondering ever so slightly if I had made the right financial choice but basking nonetheless in the exhilaration of my newfound ride.

Many great moments and memories were filled in that Jeep. Vacations, scenic vistas, and an emergency transport of our unconscious dog Leia, a then-recent Siberian Husky rescue, to a neurological specialist in hot mid-summer.

**"I knew what I had to do.  
Buy another Jeep."**

Leia recovered and was featured in a clinical veterinary journal regarding her sickness. She spent a lot of time in the Jeep and would go on to become a great family dog. The irony is that the Wrangler's prior owner placed a sticker inside of it that said, "No Fur!"

Years passed, our family grew, and I found myself in similar shoes to those of the self-described "emphasis-broke" college student. I sold my beloved Jeep, telling myself it was the best for an array of practical reasons.

Eventually, I realized my mistake. It is strange how attached we can become to the physical things that fill our lives. It was not just the Jeep that went over the curb and out of my life when I sold it—a part of me also left. It took me years to realize, but when I recognized this and then started picturing myself driving a Jeep again rather than an economy car, I knew what I had to do.

Buy another Jeep.

## **Values-Oriented Education**

There are many roads we can go down in life. Regret does not have to be one of them, and certainly traveling does not have to be done in a Jeep.

Whether you are a recent graduate, current Seton student, or Seton parent, my main point is to recognize and make room for the things or experiences that bring joy to you. Do not lose sight of them and their importance. They should be considered integral to both your education and your life.

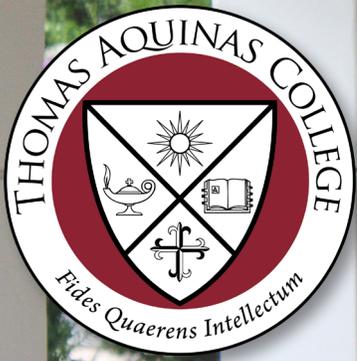
Of course, practical considerations cannot be entirely escaped, especially when we know that we are accountable for outcomes. Yet too much responsibility, if not balanced with healthy doses of fun, can actually produce in us the habit of denying that fun does us any good. This thought calls to mind words once spoken to me by a kind and holy priest in my youth: "Grow up, but don't ever grow old!"

Homeschooling affords us a great many opportunities for reflection regarding our experiences and what it means to be a whole person, especially since the more mature learners become, the more they are in charge of their own time.

At Seton, we want you to make use of all of your time well. Even if you are working through the summer, take some intervals for recreation and to enjoy the outdoors. We hope and pray for your health and that you will return to your school work recharged and refreshed. In the meantime, happy trails and Godspeed!



**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.



## Thomas Aquinas College to Offer High School Program on BOTH Coasts this Summer!

Rising high school seniors from around the country and the world gather each summer on the campuses of Thomas Aquinas College for its beloved High School Great Books Program. There they read and discuss works from the masters of the Western intellectual tradition, including Sophocles, Plato, Euclid, Boethius, Kierkegaard, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

“We offer our High School Program, both in California and New England, as a way for students to get a taste of the academic, social, and spiritual life of the College,” says Admissions Director Jon Daly. “For students looking to read great books, deepen their faith, and make lifelong friendships, there’s no better way to spend two weeks.”

Outside the classroom, there are daily sports, nightly socials, an open-mic night, and a farewell dance. Mass is offered twice daily by chaplains who are also available to students for spiritual direction.

The **California Summer Program** takes place on the College’s Santa Paula campus, 70 miles north of Los Angeles in the foothills of the Topatopa mountain range. It features afternoon competitions on the athletic fields and in the soon-to-be-completed athletic center, as well as swimming in the pool and spring-fed ponds, plus running and hiking along the hillside trails surrounding campus. Off-campus outings include trips to the Getty Center museum, Santa Barbara and the beach, and a concert at the Hollywood Bowl.

Just 90 miles west of Boston in Northfield, Massachusetts, students at the **New England Summer Program** live and study in the campus’ historic red-brick buildings and the newly restored gymnasium, with its swimming pool, basketball courts, dance studio, and workout facilities. The nearby Connecticut River is the site of the annual Summer Program kayak trip, one of several outings, which include visits to Boston, the Freedom Trail, and Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

**“There’s no better way to spend two weeks.”**

The program is open to students between their junior and senior years of high school. Cost is \$975, which includes tuition, housing, meals, books, and organized activities.

**For more information, see [thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram](http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram).**



# Alumni Profile: Patrick Caughron



I am the oldest of 14 children, born and raised in the Midwest as a Catholic country boy. My parents and all my aunts and uncles graduated from Thomas Aquinas College, so I always took for granted that I would finish my homeschooling, start TAC, and that would

be the way that life would go. Reflecting on my journey, I realize that this complacency led me to have an understanding of myself and of the curriculum which was incomplete and immature.

Growing up, I fancied myself a philosopher, and I greatly enjoyed reading. As a result, I came to TAC with a high opinion of myself and a determination to show other people how great I was. I once commented in Natural Science that I enjoyed catching other people in error. One time after Euclid class, I told a girl whom I liked — after she had just perfectly demonstrated a Euclidean proposition — how she could have improved it, how she stumbled in the presentation, and other such things. For some reason she didn't enjoy my comments. But the story has a happy ending, don't worry: We're getting married this summer!

Not everything ended up so well. Bluntly put, I was an obnoxious know-it-all. Fortunately, freshman year knocked that out of me.

The beating really began with the first philosophy class, when we read Plato's Meno and talked about Socrates' dialogue about virtue. I exited that discussion shaking, realizing a question that I had considered simple was in fact more complicated than I had ever imagined.

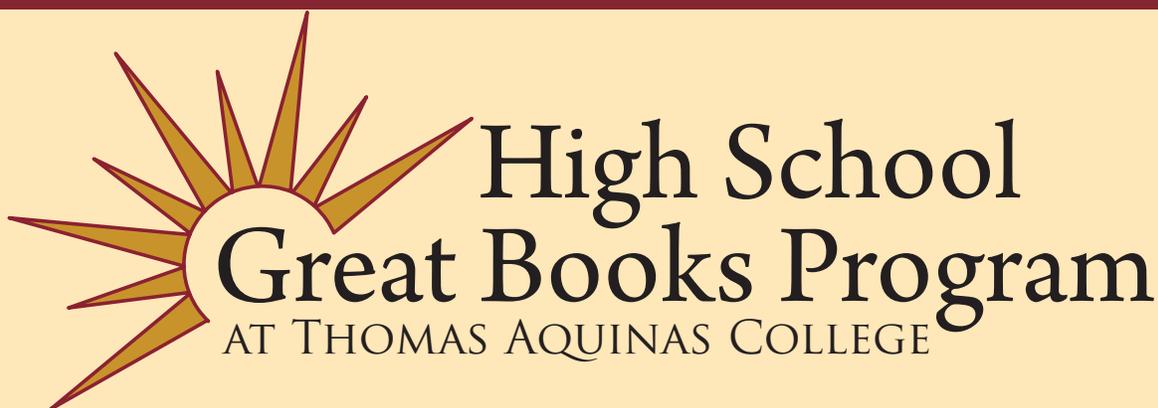
I was humbled, and slowly began to have a new disposition, a disposition of true humility. I no longer fought to be always right. I allowed the truth to speak to me rather than attempting to make it conform to my own opinions.

My growth was not limited to academics, however. Once I had been made humble, God was able to more fully enter my life. It became easier to surrender to His will. Having easy access to the sacraments was an incredible blessing, and more and more I came to appreciate my faith and, especially, the Eucharist. I can truly say, never before have I been so close to Christ.

TAC has prepared me well, but preparation is only the beginning. I fully intend to take the blessings of my college experience and apply them to the two huge endeavors which I will undertake next: marriage and medical school.

One of modern science's most ignored questions is: "Now that we are able to do this thing, should we do this thing?" Before, I doubted my own ability to satisfactorily answer this question. However, now I am confident — when the time comes — I will be able to answer that question and make the right decision.

*Patrick Caughron - Seton Class of 2017, TAC Class of 2021*



California: July 10–23, 2022 | New England: July 24–August 6, 2022

[thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram](http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram)



# History and Heroes

Some claim that the main reason to learn history is to avoid the past mistakes of others. While there is admittedly some benefit to learning history for that reason, this is nevertheless a merely negative prohibition. But from a Catholic perspective—from a human perspective—the main reason to study history has a superlatively positive motivation. It is to learn virtue.

As all the Seton students know, my father has a great love of history. As we grew up, my father regaled my brothers and me with stories of great military commanders, epic battles, and good political leaders. Whether or not he was intending to teach us heroism, the point was made. As a child, I probably could not have offered a textbook definition of the virtues of justice, fortitude, chastity, truthfulness, prudence, or faithfulness, but I could have described all these virtues with stories my dad had told me. In fact, I could have described all these virtues with stories about my dad.

## *Choosing the Right Heroes*

From my father's perspective, there was no heroism—or true leadership, for that matter—without virtue. And how could there be? To reject virtue is to invite vice: the stuff of which villains are made. Of course, there are those men who are devoid of virtue but nevertheless go through the motions of leadership; however, when vicious men lead, misery follows. My father used to warn us about this sort of man.

Years prior, my dad had fought against an army of villains in the steamy, evergreen jungles of southeast Asia. On one night in particular, my father parachuted into a hot landing zone and noticed that Viet Cong troops were shooting at him as he floated to the ground. My father—always the mathematician—counted the bullets he could hear rip through his parachute above: “one, two, three, four...” And so—well aware of the saying that any soldier who dies in a just war while saying a prayer, will finish that prayer in Heaven—my father prayed. Had those prayers not been answered, had one of those bullets hit its intended target, you would not be reading this column.

When your father is a decorated Green Beret, you need not conduct a search for heroes; rather, you are privileged to be a student in the “Show, Don't Tell” classroom of virtue. Over the years, as I have tried to foster and nourish virtue in my own children, I have come to realize the blessing that my father gave me.

I have also increasingly come to appreciate the importance of choosing the right heroes; as a father, I am likely to form my children's definition of 'hero' with my own. For instance, if I view Saint Thomas More as a hero in consideration of all his virtues, my children will be influenced by that viewpoint. And just as a parent must help a child nourish and inform his conscience, so must a parent help a child nourish his concept of hero. For, in various ways and measures, it is heroes that we parents wish our children to become.





Problem is, choosing heroes from among the saints is often viewed as anachronistic. Even many Catholics have come to think that the performance of virtue is almost impossible, or completely impossible.

But simultaneously, we pick and choose heroes. That means we have virtue-less heroes. And rather than choosing our heroes from the communion of saints, we pick them from among the communion of sinners. We elevate public sinners to hero status.

*“A Child watches his father’s eyes.”*

That is not to say that we fathers should haughtily look down on those persons who publicly commit objectively serious sins, but neither should we look up to them. A child watches his father’s eyes. A child takes note of those who earn the admiration of his father—and very often, the child wants to join the ranks of the admired. That’s a thought to take seriously.

If we fathers idolize a man who publicly endorses pornography, we shouldn’t be surprised if our sons grow up to watch pornography.

If we fathers exalt a woman who is crass and crude, we shouldn’t be surprised if our daughters grow up to be crass and crude.

If we fathers applaud a man who commits adultery, we shouldn’t be surprised if our children grow up to commit adultery.

Simply put, fathers, do not make heroes of men and women unless you want your children to grow up to be exactly like these particular men and women.

Saint Augustine tells us that history is the conflict between the City of God and the City of Man. That conflict has highlighted the virtues of men and women like Saint Paul, Saint Thomas More, Saint Veronica, Saint Tarcisius, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Joan of Arc, Saint Francis Xavier, Pope Saint John Paul II, and many other men and women.

The beauty of history is that it is not confined to our present world in which to find heroes. The history books that Seton has produced—and continues to produce—highlight that reality. They highlight virtue and heroism.

Don’t our children deserve true heroes?



**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*.



**Raydient** | Raydient is going to accept his appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy and study aeronautical engineering. He plans on becoming a pilot for the Navy.



**Maura** | Homeschooling helped Maura attend Band daily and have enough practice time to achieve her goal of auditioning and earning a seat in the All-Suburban Band.

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

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

# *Building Saints: The Virtues of* **PATRIOTISM and CHARACTER**

BY JEFF MINICK



Am I missing something or has the word patriotism gone out of vogue these days?

We rarely hear of a public figure—a senator, a general or admiral, some private sector mogul—described as a

***“Has the word patriotism gone out of vogue these days?”***

great patriot, though certainly some of these people are devoted to their country. Many in our military also revere their country, and many of us who are civilians would call ourselves patriots as well.

Perhaps we have become shy about usage of this word because some people conflate patriotism with nationalism,

yet the two are quite different in meaning. Derived from patria, Latin for country, patriotism implies a deep affection for our native land, for wishing to contribute to its common good, and for accepting certain obligations as its citizens.

On the other hand, nationalism, a phenomenon of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is patriotism carried to an extreme, where we believe our country superior to others and act accordingly.

By now, some readers may be asking: “All well and good, but what does patriotism have to do with building saints?”

Let’s take a look.

## Love of Place, People, and Custom

In *Character Building: A Guide for Parents and Teachers*, Catholic author David Isaacs offers a course in the virtues, moral goods like patience, friendship, and modesty.

Isaacs devotes the final chapter of his book to “Patriotism,” lauding the piety we should show toward the

***“Kids I knew took pride  
in being American.”***

place of our birth and nurture, and citing Saint Thomas Aquinas: “On the basis of birth and upbringing, parents and country are the closest sources of all our existence and development; as a consequence everyone is indebted first of all under God to his parents and fatherland.”

Patriotism for me, and I suspect for many of us, was inculcated in childhood by the place where I lived. Boonville, North Carolina was then a town of about 600 souls, and we children knew our neighbors, their backyards, and the small town itself as intimately as we knew our own household routines.

My elementary school teachers taught the history of America and North Carolina with affection for our country and state, and even the other kids I knew took pride in being Americans. “It’s a free country, isn’t it?” was a playground brag I heard many times growing up.

That little town forever captured my heart. We moved away before I entered high school, but when someone asks me, “So where are you from?” even today the first answer that pops to mind is Boonville. I loved that town, and love it still. It doubtless sounds sentimental and mawkish, but to this day, were it ever necessary, I would die defending Boonville, North Carolina.

That’s the essence of patriotism.

## Patriotic Catholics

American history offers us millions of examples of men and women who were at the same time staunch Catholics and ardent patriots. Catholics, for instance, filled the ranks of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Regiment, also known as “The Fighting Irish,” from the Civil War through World War I.

Some saints also qualify as patriots who dearly loved their homelands. Here John Paul II comes immediately to mind, the priest who became supreme pontiff of the Church but never lost his attachment to Poland.

The best known of these patriot-saints is Joan of Arc. Mark Twain, who wrote a novel about Saint Joan, was fascinated by her and regarded her as one of the most amazing figures in human history. If we look at the story of her short life, we must surely agree with him.

Here was a teenage girl who, having heard voices and experienced visions, went to the king’s court to try and rouse the French to oppose the English during the Hundred Years War.

Here was a girl who today would be playing soccer in high school but who instead donned men’s clothing, who commanded soldiers in combat—she frequently chided them for their rough language—and who was ultimately martyred. Here was the girl whose example helped the French to throw off the English yoke and is today a patron saint of France.

## Fighters for God and Country

Now let’s fast-forward 500 years to Nazi Germany and a band of anti-fascist students, the White Rose. Several members of this resistance group were devout Protestants and Catholics who loved their country and their religious faith, and abhorred Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party.

They resisted the Nazi dictatorship non-violently, printing and distributing leaflets calling for an end to the war and for a return to real German values. Several of them were arrested and martyred, others were imprisoned, and the group was eventually crushed.

In the film *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days*, which I highly recommend, we meet three participants in this underground band of freedom fighters: Sophie Scholl, her brother Hans, and their friend, Christoph Probst. In taking actions that will eventually cost them their lives, they display incredible courage and play the part of true patriots.

At one point in the film, her Nazi interrogator tells Sophie he would have brought her up differently than did her parents. She tells him of an incident reported to her by friends of her mother, of children with mental problems being taken away for execution.

She says, “Trucks came to pick up the children at the mental hospital. The other children asked where they were going. ‘They’re going to heaven,’ said the nurses. So the children got on the trucks singing. You think I wasn’t raised right, because I felt pity for them?”

***Continued on next page...***

In part for their love of country, in part because of their religious faith, Sophie, Hans, and Christoph fight against these dark forces of evil aiming to radically transform the world.

## Pietas

In his first book of essays, *The Defendant*, G.K. Chesterton wrote, “My country, right or wrong, is a thing that no patriot would think of saying. It’s like saying, ‘My mother, drunk or sober.’”

In that first sentence, Chesterton is correct. No true patriot would say, “My country, right or wrong.” But the comparison to motherhood doesn’t quite work. Just as we can love our mother, whatever her state of inebriation, so too can we love our country, even when its government makes mistakes or engages in wrong behavior. A government may represent the citizens of a country, but we must never mistake it for the country itself.

We see this distinction in the Ancient Roman practice of pietas, or piety, which included devotion to the gods, to the family and community, and to Rome. Governments

came and went in the Roman Republic, but pietas remained. We Americans can practice this same piety in our own lives.

***“Let’s resolve anew to ask for God’s blessings on our nation.”***

So wherever we happen to celebrate Independence Day this year—a backyard barbeque, the beach, the fairgrounds for fireworks—let’s pause and think hard on what America means to us.

Let’s resolve anew to ask for God’s blessings on our nation, to strive for the common good, to regard our fellow citizens as our brothers and sisters, and to try and preserve the traditions, practices, and virtues that should bind us together.



**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.



# Seton Special Services Department

SUCCESS

FOR ALL

LEARNERS



# STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those who serve you!*



**Joshua Butek**  
Special Services Assistant

“What I love first and foremost about my work is that everything here is centered on the Catholic faith,” says 25-year-old Joshua Butek, Special Services Assistant Counselor and one of the newer employees at Seton Home Study School.

Born in Wisconsin and the third of five children, Joshua, along with his siblings, was homeschooled from grades K-12.

“I had a positive view of homeschooling from the beginning,” he says, “and knew that if I worked for Seton I’d be in a field I truly appreciated.” He describes his upbringing as “very devout,” participated in a large homeschooling group, and was a member of an Irish step-dancing team for ten years. “My friends and I also enjoyed medieval warfare. We made our own swords and shields, and sometimes 40 of us would be running around doing battle with each other.”

Today Joshua still pulls out his wooden weaponry on occasion, but he enjoys wielding a pen even more, writing poetry, fiction, and songs whenever he has a few spare moments.

After graduating with a degree in philosophy from Christendom College in 2019, Joshua returned briefly to Wisconsin, where he worked in religious education at a parish in Eau Claire and enjoyed helping young people deepen their understanding and love of their faith.

## A New Direction

But his heart was back in Virginia. At Christendom, he’d fallen in love with Therese, a theology major. Though both of them were discerning a religious vocation when they first became acquainted, God led them in a different direction, and Therese and Joshua were married just before her senior year.

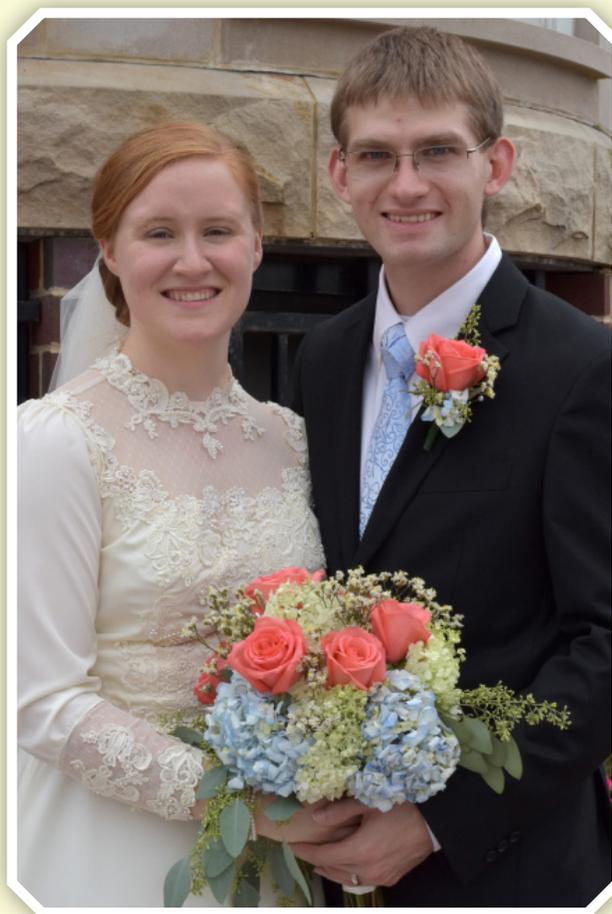
This was the summer of 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic was at its height, and Joshua applied for work at Seton, which urgently needed men and women to help with the overwhelming numbers of families looking to register for the fall.

Seton hired Joshua, and he has worked since then in Special Services, where he answers the phone and helps arrange appointments with counselors. Lately, he has spent a good deal of time reformatting and editing lesson plans for Special Services. “I like bringing order to things, so that is a lot of fun for me,” he remarks.

He also gets a great deal of satisfaction from speaking occasionally with parents.

“Listening to parents and the trials they are dealing with, that to me is to be a light of Christ to them,” Joshua says. “I end up being a willing ear for them. I know where they’re coming from, and that helps me speak to them with confidence.”

He pauses, and then says, “Those are some of my favorite moments on the job.”





BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

# Summer Reading

According to my mother, my love affair with reading began as a toddler. I was well known for walking into a room, slapping a picture book upon the lap of the nearest seated person, and hopping up there with the command “read”.

The first book I remember loving was “The Hidden Staircase” one of the first Nancy Drew mysteries written and the first one I read the summer I was eight years old. This led to my passion for anything written by Agatha Christie, Josephine Tey, Ngaio Marsh, Patricia Wentworth, G.K. Chesterton, Mary Roberts Rhinehart, Edmund Crispin, Dorothy Sayers, and many other writers of the Golden Age.

Dorothy Sayer’s detective Lord Peter Wimsey introduced me to the inner workings of the early twentieth-century British aristocracy but also to his favorite poet John Donne, whose poetry I still often read.

This love of poetry inspired my pursuing a degree in English literature with a concentration in Romantic poets so you might justifiably say that my ability to quote Keats is a direct result of summer afternoons spent with Nancy Drew.

Summer reading is about lazy days in a cool house, on a hot beach, or swaying gently in a backyard hammock. It’s about entering worlds previously unknown and becoming acquainted with characters that become a part of you. And isn’t that what we wish for all children? To be lifelong readers, which is to be lifelong learners, and a summer of stories can accomplish this.

There is a kind of magic in opening a new book. It is the beginning of a journey that might change a child forever. Anyone who considers themselves a reader can describe characters from their favorite novel as if they

*“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you go.”*

*- Dr. Suess*

were describing an old friend because that is what those characters become: Old friends.

By providing your children the incentive to spend time reading and opening the doors to different kinds of fiction you are inviting them to make new friends who will be with them forever.

Reading for pleasure also has many benefits beyond the obvious. Not every book a person reads needs to be an important work of literature to have a beneficial effect. Reading fiction

has been shown to increase empathy in children. They become better listeners, they have a wider vocabulary, and gain a better understanding of other cultures.

According to recent surveys (Harris Poll and Kindle) adults who read for even fifteen minutes a day are happier, healthier, and have better relationships than those who spend those minutes on a streaming app. These polls

just prove what bibliophiles have always known; reading makes you happy.

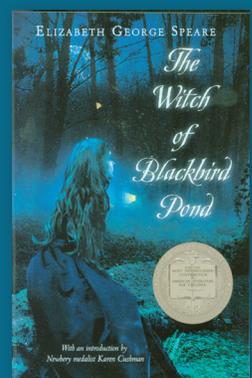
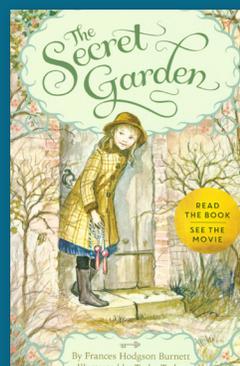
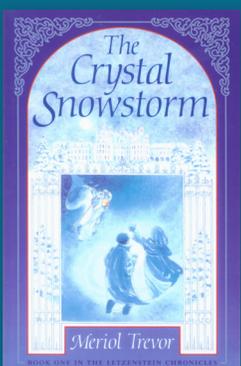
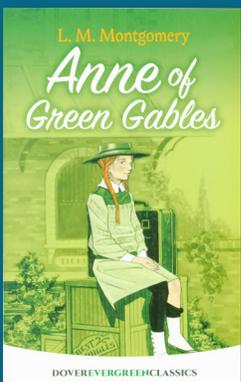
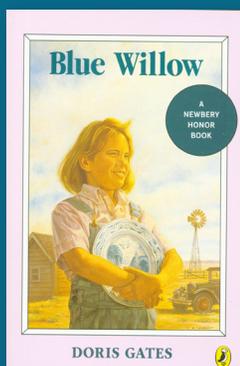
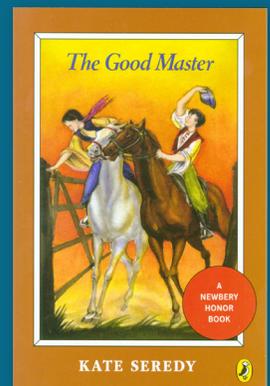
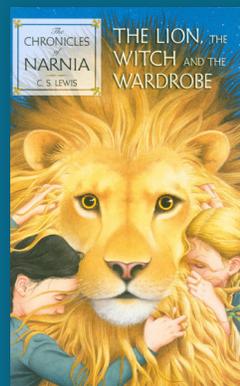
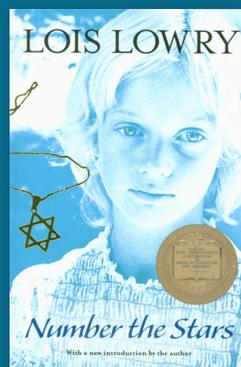
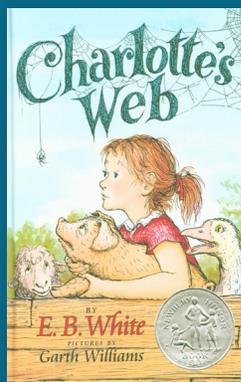
This brings us to Seton's *Summer Reading Club*.

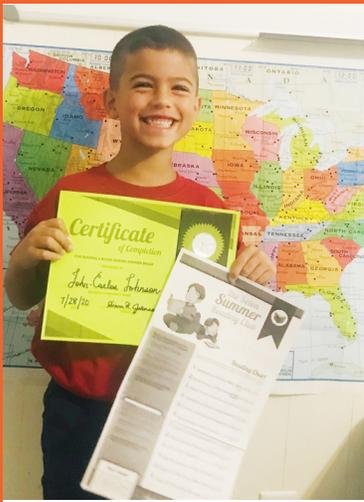
***“Reading is my favorite occupation, when I have leisure for it and books to read.”***  
***- Ann Brontë***

# New Readers for our Curriculum

*In Grades 4-8, we have added two book report options to the Classic Novels category. The goal of this project was to add more selections featuring a female protagonist as many parents felt we needed better options for girls.*

## NEWS ABOUT MORE CURRICULUM CHANGES BEGINS ON PG 27.





Some of Last Years  
Reading Club Champions!



# The Seton Summer Reading Club

Seton's *Summer Reading Club* hopes to inspire your children to spend time this summer getting acquainted with some of literature's favorite characters.

Unlike many schools, Seton does not assign summer reading but rather encourages parents and students to read for the sheer delight in reading. We want your children to encounter villains and heroes, to fight orcs and dragons, and to walk alongside soldiers and saints.

We to send them off to travel the world on a plane, ship, or train, to solve mysteries, and to climb mountains, all from the comfort of their homes.

Seton provides a book list but children are free to, with their parent's direction, choose any book they like.

Visit Seton's *Summer Reading Club* webpage to print your reading checklist and look at the booklists: <https://www.setonmagazine.com/seton-summer-reading-club>

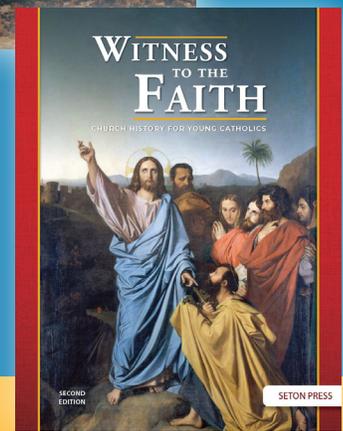
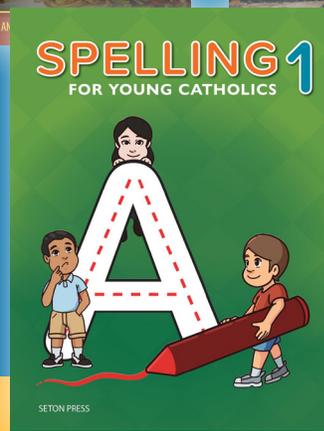
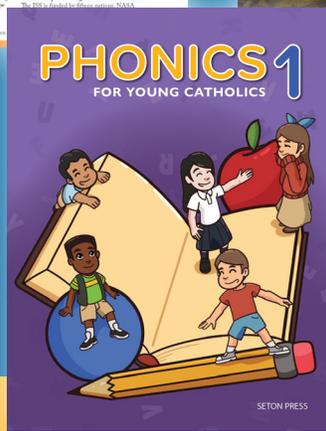
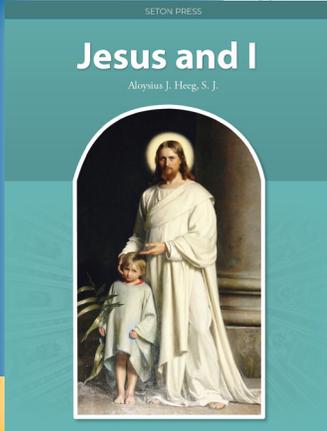
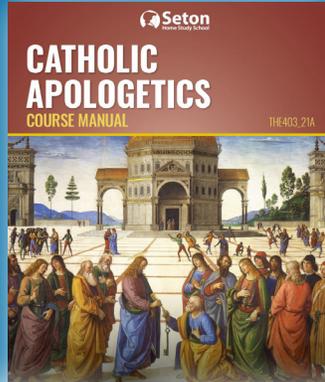
After each book have your child either write a summary or give an oral report to mom or dad.

When they have read six books send the checklist to Seton to receive your certificate. We would love to see photos of your child with their certificate and there is a place on the website to submit those photos. There are also suggestions for small projects to do in conjunction with their reading if that is something that is of interest.

We hope that you enjoy helping your child choose a few books to spend the summer with and that the whole family gets involved in a summer of stories!

# The Excitement Builds...

## Curriculum Changes for the Upcoming School Year



BY DRAPER WARREN

**Seton** spends very little money on advertising. We run a few ads on Catholic radio because of strong personal endorsements from show hosts like Dr. Ray Guarendi and we run a few targeted ads online.

Historically, over 90% of all of our new families have joined Seton as the result of a personal recommendation from another Seton family like yours.

We believe the best way to attract new families to Seton is to continuously improve our program and the satisfaction of our existing families.

As the Director of Admissions, instead of focusing on flashy ad campaigns, I end up devoting

most of my time to improving our curriculum and student experience. If you, our enrolled families, love our curriculum, I know that others will follow.

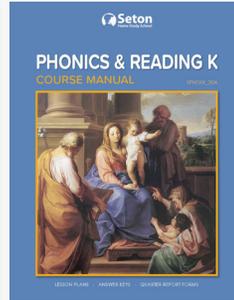
As we have more curriculum changes this year than in any previous year I can remember, I wanted to put together this list for you. Not only can you find out the precise changes to expect the next time you re-enroll your students, but I think seeing the entire list really gives you a sense of Seton's commitment to making the best curriculum in the country even better.

Pre-K is one of the only grade levels that didn't really have a change, so I will jump to Kindergarten.

# Elementary

## KINDERGARTEN

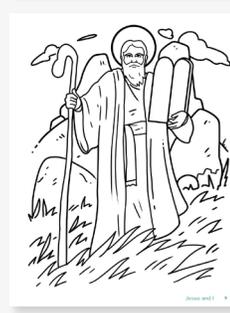
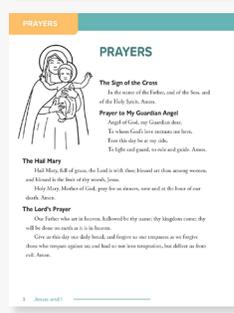
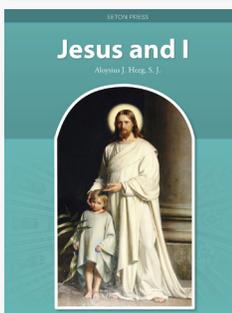
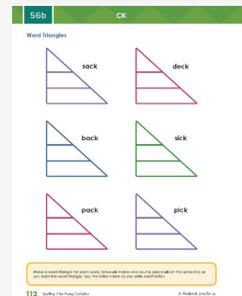
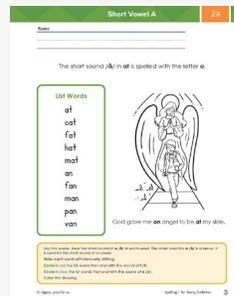
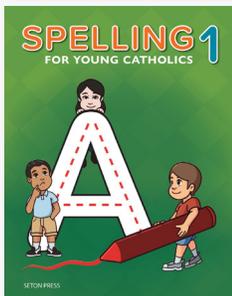
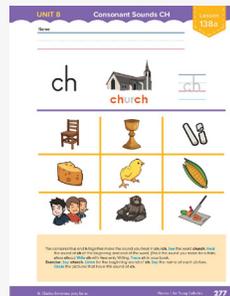
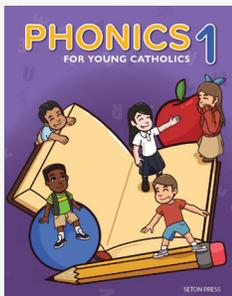
Last year, Kindergarten received a completely new Phonics and Reading program which introduced reading earlier and made dramatic improvements in both teaching methods and presentation while keeping all of the great Catholic content. One of the changes was also a newly formatted color lesson plan for Phonics. This year, all of the rest of the Kindergarten lesson plans were given the new color format as well, so Kindergarten now has our first fully colorized lesson plan.



## FIRST GRADE

This year, the new Phonics program which began in Kindergarten has been continued into First Grade. We will have a new Phonics workbook, a new reader, 4 new little booklets, and games. While our team was working on the new course, they also realized that the Spelling 1 book should be redesigned to coordinate with the Phonics, so we also have a new Spelling 1 book. The new courses also have colorized lesson plans.

The only other change in First is that we have a new printing of Jesus and I. While the text is the same as it has always been, Seton now has a license to reprint this book and redesign it, so our in-house artist, Nathan Puray, has added images and color to make it a more enjoyable experience for students.



## SECOND GRADE

None of the Second Grade books have changed, and the only thing to mention here is the colorization of the Phonics, History, and Art lesson plans.

## THIRD GRADE

This grade had the colorization of Phonics, English, History, Vocabulary, and Physical Education lesson plans and there were two books changed in Reading 3. We used to use two St. Joseph Picture Books, one on St. Pio and the other on St. Therese, as included book report books. We have replaced those with two books from the In the *Footsteps of the Saints* series which have a more appropriate reading level for students to be able to read without as much assistance. The new books are on St. Bernadette and St. Joseph.

## FIFTH GRADE

The book report options added to Fifth Grade are *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. Reading 5 Lesson Plan has been optimized, and the Phonics Lesson Plan has been colorized.

## SIXTH GRADE

A completely new and amazing Science 6 has just been completed. There are two brand new Seton Press books for this course. *Earth Science for Young Catholics* will be used in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarters and *Space Science for Young Catholics* will be used in the latter part of 3rd Quarter and in the 4th. Even while dealing with the topic of Earth Science itself, this course is very careful to not take a position on the controversial topic of the precise age of the Earth. Modern scientific theories are presented without making any definitive conclusions on that topic.

This appears to be one of the best courses Seton has ever made. The Space Science book even covers current SpaceX projects, going into detail about the Crew Dragon launch last year. The Apologia alternate option using the Swimming Creatures book will remain an option, but we will go back to charging extra for that book (we had started including it at no additional cost last year when the older *Gods Marvelous Works* book went out of print).

The Reading 6 LP has been optimized, and the new Science 6 Lesson Plan has been colorized. The two new book report options are *The Good Master* by Kate Seredy and *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates. *The Good Master*, incidentally, is the prequel to *The Singing Tree*, which is a book we have used as a Seventh Grade book report for more than two decades.

## FOURTH GRADE

In Grades 4-8, we have added two book report options to the Classic Novels category.

The goal of this project was to add more selections featuring a female protagonist as many parents felt we needed better options for girls. Especially in the higher grades, we have a lot of adventure and sword fighting type stories with which some students had a difficult time connecting.



The two new options for the 2nd Quarter of Fourth Grade are *Charlotte's Web* by EB White and *The Cabin Faced West* by Jean Fritz.

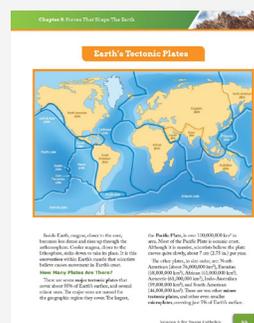
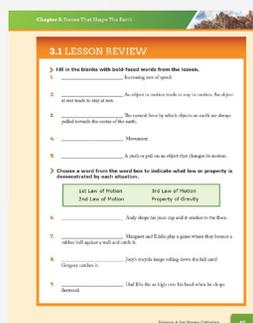
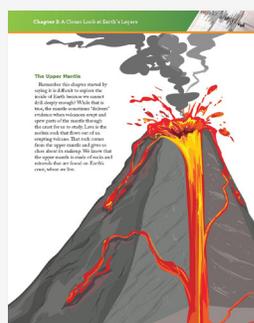
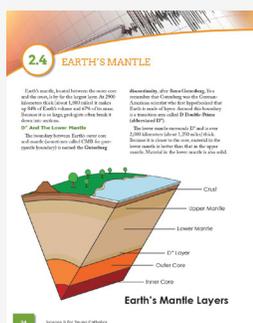


In Grades 4-8, we are also going through a process of reviewing our Reading lesson plans and improving both their clarity and their daily balance.

Internally, we have been referring to this as an "optimization" of the Reading lesson plans. Part of this optimization also included accounting and scheduling for the time it takes students to actually read the four book report books (though this wasn't as much an issue for Fourth Grade in specific).

Colorized lesson plans for Phonics, Art, Spelling, and Vocabulary have been designed, but no other significant changes for the year.

*Earth Science for Young Catholics* will be used in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarters and *Space Science for Young Catholics* will be used in the latter part of 3rd Quarter and in the 4th. Even while dealing with the topic of Earth Science itself, this course is very careful to not take a position on the controversial topic of the precise age of the Earth. Modern scientific theories are presented without making any definitive conclusions on that topic.



# Elementary

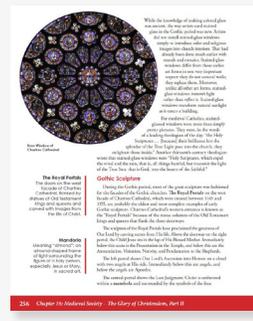
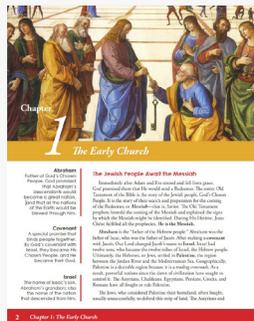
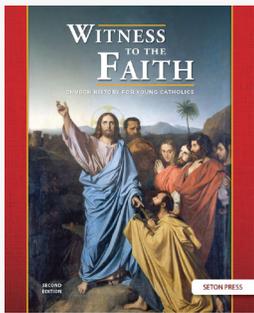
## SEVENTH GRADE

Reading 7 has been optimized and the additional book report options are *Anne of Green Gables* by LM Montgomery and *The Crystal Snowstorm* by Mariol Trevor. One subject lesson plan has been colorized [as this article is being written, it hasn't been determined if it will be Religion or History].

## EIGHTH GRADE

Religion 8 has a new Second Edition of *Witness to the Faith*. The main text has been heavily improved and several entirely new chapters have been added. The book is now printed as a hardback text. The new layout is a work of art. Given the amount and significance of the improvements, the older edition of the book is no longer compatible with the new course.

Reading 8 has been optimized and the additional book report options are *The Secret Garden* by Francis Hodgson Burnett and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare. For those unfamiliar with the book, Elizabeth George Speare is also the author of *The Bronze Bow* which we use in our first year of High School English, and the story is not about an actual witch, but rather a false accusation of witchcraft in 17th century New England.



## LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

I think this change is one of the most important we have done, so I asked Walker Solis who was our English specialist on the project to explain.



“Seton has begun a process of renaming our core high school English courses to clarify their essential content. The first of these is English 9, which is being reissued this year as Literature and Composition. More than just a renaming, though, the course has also been substantially reworked to optimize its effectiveness as our foundational high school English course.

The literature covered in the course remains the same as English 9, with new helps, including improved study guides. The biggest changes are in the way composition is taught. We found that some of our best writing lessons were in our underutilized elective Mechanics of Composition. We moved several days of

these lessons, along with many sample paragraphs, from this course into Literature and Composition. As a result, Mechanics will be retired from our course offerings, although it will remain available for admissions to give to students in select cases.

The amount of writing has been reduced in the new course, but the mindset was not simple cutting, but reorganizing, so that the assignments would be sequential—from sentence quizzes to paragraphs to full essays—and prioritizing, so that a reduction in quantity would be balanced with increased standards of quality. Thus, instead of two essays per book analysis, we now assign one, but with each analysis, we raise the minimum word count and provide more precise content objectives. The same is true of the research report, which is now a shorter research essay, but with a meticulous focus on quality sources of research, careful note-taking, and accurate outlining, citation, and formatting. The student is given more tools, with samples for all compositions, and more time to make thoughtful, more confident choices in their writing.

The student of Literature and Composition has a carefully-charted, incremental path toward mastery of literary analysis and high school composition.”

## SPANISH III

We have a new textbook version of Spanish III which replaces our previous textbook version. This new Spanish III uses the same AMSCO series that we use for the textbook Spanish II course.

## CALCULUS

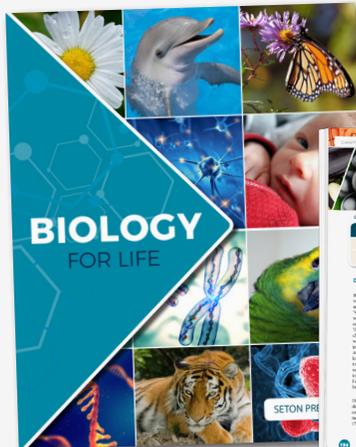
Saxon has switched from a 1st Edition to a 2nd Edition. We have now written new tests for the new 2nd Edition book.

## PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Apologia has a new 3rd Edition of the Physical Science book. However, we are happy with the 2nd Edition and wish to continue with it as our default option as long as we can.

To that end, we have purchased enough 2nd Editions to last us through this academic year, but we have also designed a course for the new 3rd Edition. The 2nd Edition will remain as the default for this year, but the 3rd Edition will be available as an alternate option. We expect this new course will be available sometime in August.

## BIOLOGY FOR LIFE



We are going through and adding extensive study guides to the lesson plans and updating our tests. The new revision probably won't be available until August or even September.



We are also working on a physical lab manual that would be available as a supplemental item for those looking to get lab designation for the course but I don't have a precise ETA on that item. Our current policies allow experiments from any appropriate source, however, it would be nice to have a product specifically designed for our text.

# High School

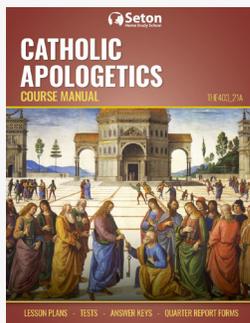
## WORLD HISTORY

Although we have not finished writing our new world history text, we do have testing changes which should help both parents and students with the existing Anne Carroll World History text. About half of the world history tests had formerly been written parent-graded tests. It is considerably difficult for most parents to find the time to grade written tests on their own. The course already has many written tests which are Seton-graded, so we decided to change the parent-graded tests into Seton-graded multiple choice tests. A few changes and improvements have also been made to the existing Seton-graded tests.

## PERSONAL FINANCE ONLINE

This is a new half-credit online-only course written by John Clark. It is a perfect complement to our half-credit Economics Online course, also written by John Clark. This course is highly practical for students and covers skills like setting up a checking account, paying taxes, buying a car, buying a home, and setting up a retirement account. It covers how investments work in such things as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. There are many videos used in the course, and in addition to being practical, it should be fairly fun and not too difficult for students.

## AMERICAN HISTORY



We are unveiling an entirely new American History course using the brand new Seton Press two-volume *America: Forge of Freedom*. This text is written by Bruce T. Clark and Ken Clark and has been many years in the making. I myself have done the historical content review, so I am intimately familiar with the text and lesson plans. The content of this book is certainly the best and most

comprehensive work Seton has ever done.

The page count is about twice the size of the older Anne Carroll book, but unlike the Carroll text, *America: Forge of Freedom* has almost 800 historical maps, paintings, and photos. Of course, as with any Seton Press book, the defining feature of our approach to history is our Catholic perspective.



About one-tenth of the text is specifically dedicated to the history of the Catholic Church in America, and of course, the moral teachings of the Faith guide our approach to such topics as slavery, just war, or the internment of Japanese Americans. Students are getting the full gamut of the events and social movements covered in a secular history. The introduction of Catholic content feels natural—largely occurring in three discrete chapters—not adopting a polemical tone, but rather focusing on the great figures in Church history.

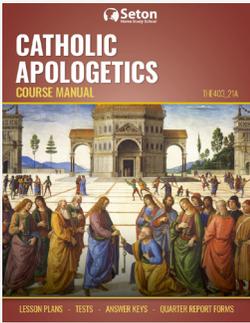
The testing for this course also uses a new format with tests roughly every week with multiple choice questions and two short written answers. Comprehensive chapter reviews perfectly prepare students for the material covered on each test.

Gone are the days of American history tests being stumbling blocks for students with each test requiring long written sections which were difficult to complete within a single class period. The testing changes alone, even though there are four times as many tests, should increase student enjoyment and completion rates of the course. The far superior text and robust content should improve student learning and retention overall.

The course rollout, however, is complicated. We are printing the text in two volumes. The first half of the course should be available by the time this Magazine arrives in homes. The second half would then most likely be on backorder until September. Of course, the existing Anne Carroll course would still be available as an option.



## CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

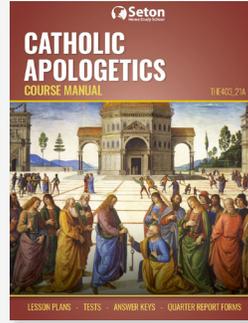


The text and course manual for this course is unchanged, but we have re-vamped the way we do testing for this course.

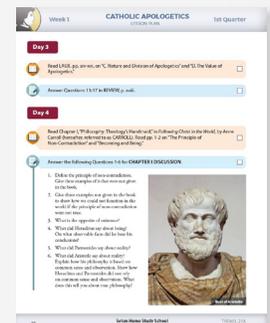
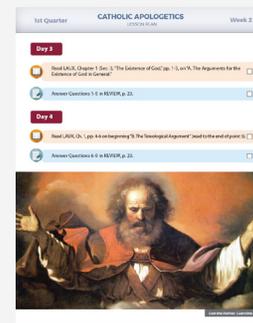
We formerly had one test each quarter. There were some balance of work issues with those as the very first one had three essays, which was really far too much for a student to do in a single class period.

We have changed the model to three tests each quarter, two that are multiple choice and one that is written. The written tests are being balanced so that they can easily be done in a single class period. Students have really loved this course, especially since it was made into an aligned course with a layout in SetonOnline. This change should make it even better.

## CATHOLIC DOCTRINE



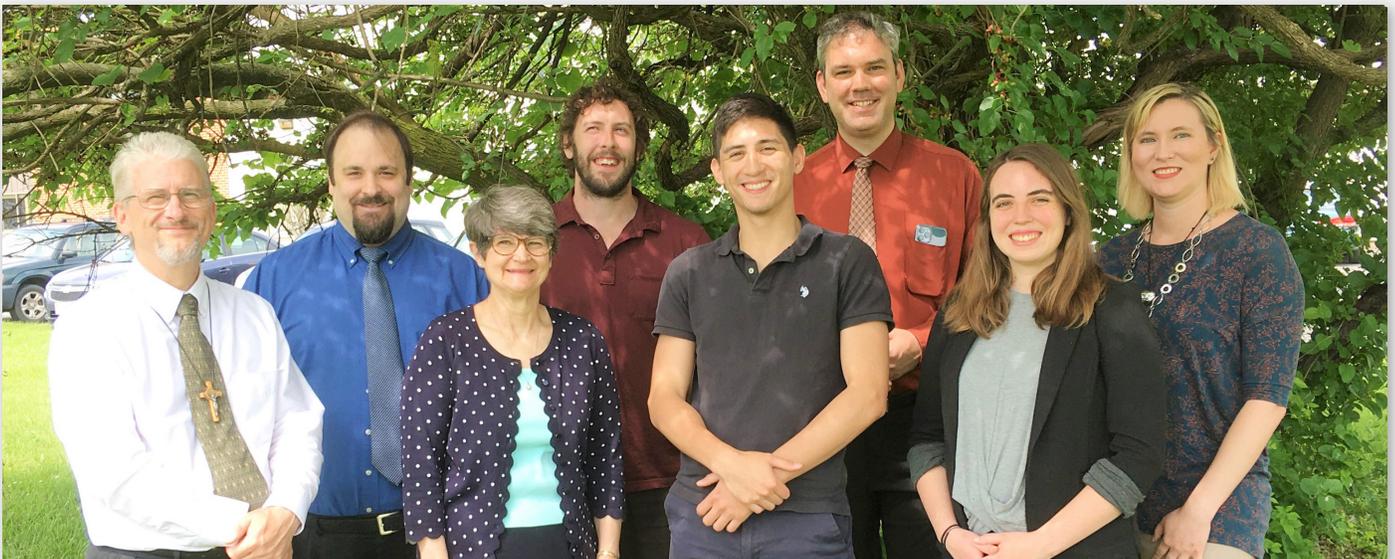
Apologetics is now an aligned course with color lesson plans and a layout in SetonOnline. The content of the course also had some minor improvements, specifically with the addition of study guides which students can use to better prepare for tests.



## SPECIAL THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS...

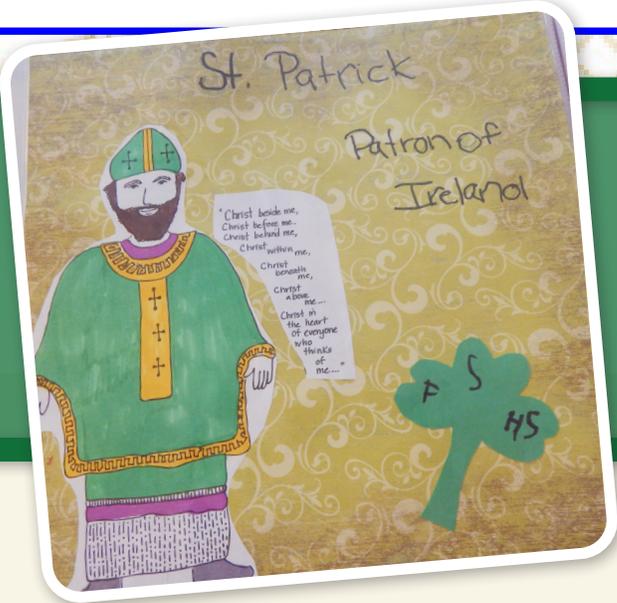
I really want to give special thanks to John Adams and his Curriculum Development team and to Joe Sparks and his Visual Arts and Online Courses team. This has been the most ambitious year for curriculum improvement projects of any year in our history, and we have many more projects in progress for next year. Seton is absolutely committed to producing the best possible experience for our students and their families, and nowhere has

that been more apparent to me than when assembling this long list of curriculum improvements and being familiar with all of the work that has gone on behind the scenes to make this possible. All of these changes help us in our mission to empower our students to live out their Catholic Faith while they face all of the academic and vocational challenges of the modern world.



in  
the

# Schoolroom



## LITURGICAL NOTEBOOKS

From there I would have the children create a page based upon what we were learning about the Mass and receiving their first penance and holy communion. The children each have some different pages in their books, but they all have some standard ones I wanted to include. In no particular order they are:

- Parish
- Baptism
- First Confession
- Patron Saint
- Pope
- The Seven Sacraments
- An Irish Saint

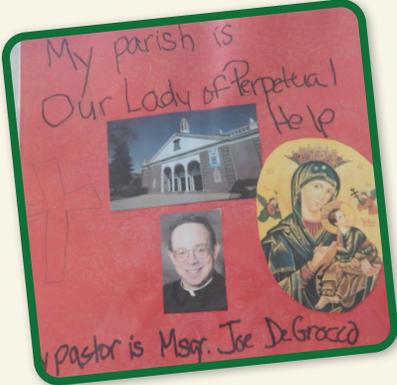
I have always felt that hands on learning is more meaningful to young children, therefore, I have always included lapbooks, projects and notebooking in our homeschool, to connect the children to the material and to allow their natural creativity to enhance their lessons.



Never did this work as well as when preparing for First Holy Communion. For each of the children I had them create a special notebook of their studies beginning at the start of the school year.

When our studies were completed, a few days prior to First Holy Communion day, I would insert all the pages into the book, and it would make a nice display at our party after Mass along with any of the other projects we created.

These notebooks became treasured keepsakes for all the kids and created some wonderful memories for all of us.

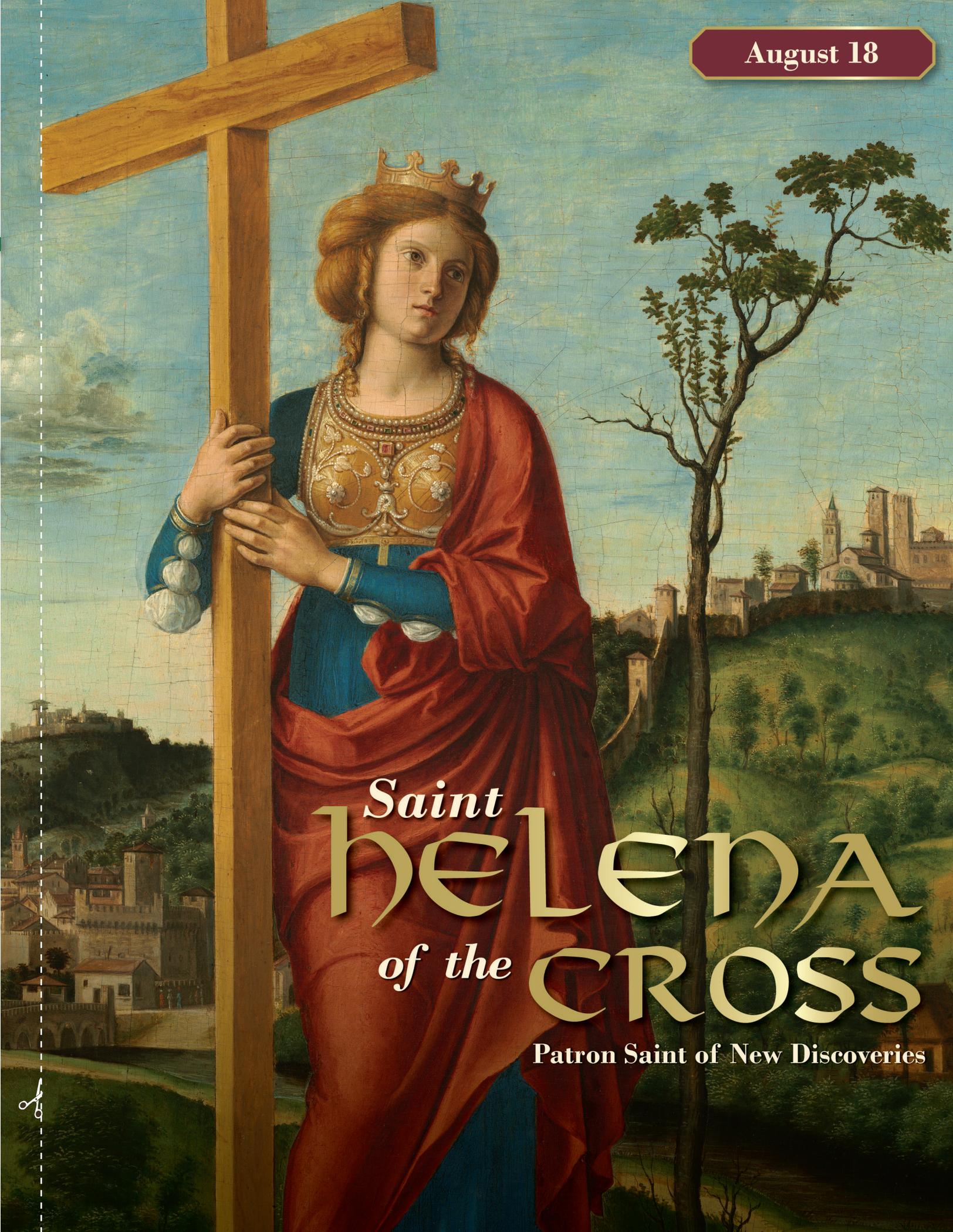


For each of the the girls I purchased a 12x12 scrapbook and lots of pretty paper, stickers, glue, and glitter. The boys were happier with a plain binder into which you can insert a cover page and a box of page protectors, some marker, colored pencils, and paper.



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*.

August 18



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**See Details on Page 7**

### *Returning from Exile*

How many astounding examples we have of Christian parents filled with human wisdom! They show that a good family upbringing is the backbone of humanity.

... If family education rediscovers the pride of its leadership, many things will change for the better, for uncertain parents and for disappointed children. It is time for fathers and mothers to return from their exile — for they have exiled themselves from their children's upbringing — and to fully resume their educational role.

We hope that the Lord gives this grace to parents: to not exile themselves from the education of their children. And this can only be done with love, tenderness and patience.

*Pope Francis - General Audience - May 20, 2015*

