

# Seton



# MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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**“We Never  
Looked Back”  
THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY**

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# MISSION STATEMENT

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

**LETTER FROM  
THE EDITOR**

*Dear Readers,*

In this issue we celebrate the virtue of patriotism and the love of country.

Seton Home Study School has students in more than 50 countries around the world. Almost all these countries celebrate Independence Day, Founding Day, or National Day. These days are celebrations of shared history and celebrations of homes, neighbors, and the soil under our feet.

Later in this issue, John Clark writes about reverence for mothers and fathers. Reverence for a country is not so different a virtue. Love for one's country is love for all the mothers and fathers who bequeathed a culture, a land, and a place that we now call our own. This reverence for a country is a universal impulse in the human heart, going across all places and all times.

This time of year is when we wind up the academic work, reflect and prepare for the upcoming year, and indulge in some much-needed downtime for many of our families. As you lean into the summer months, we hope that you enjoy some time together as a family and let the blessings that come with that bring you peace.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ellen Barrett". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Mary Ellen Barrett

***St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Pray for us!***



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The Partridge Family

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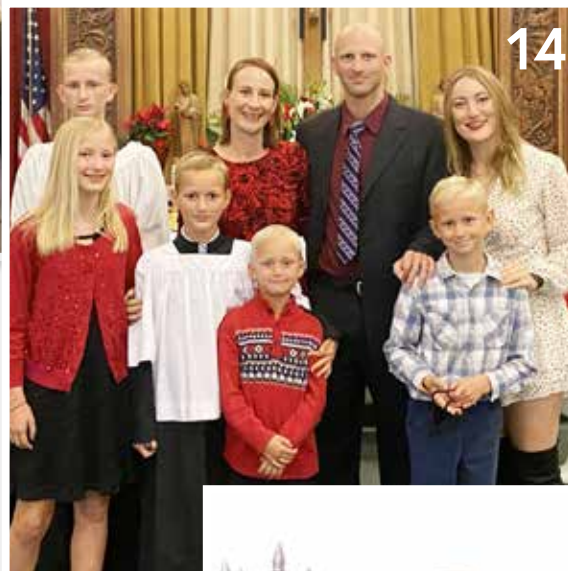
# Exciting News!



The Seton College Partner Program is  
proud to welcome the University of Mary!



setonhome.org/colleges



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# your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

## How long does it take for Seton to grade my student's work?

Seton grades assignments in the order they are received. Allow two weeks for grading under normal circumstances. During peak grading season (May-July), it may take longer. You can speed things up by submitting assignments as soon as they are completed rather than at the end of the year. *—Theresa English, Academic Counselor.*

## I need my student's grades. Can I order rush grading?

Yes. The fee is \$25 per course per quarter. So, if you need 3rd and 4th quarters for both English 10 and Geometry graded, for example, you will pay \$100. To order a rush on high school grading, contact Rhonda Way at [rway@setonhome.org](mailto:rway@setonhome.org).

If you need to place an order for rush elementary (K-8) grading, contact Jacinta Black at [jblack@setonhome.org](mailto:jblack@setonhome.org). The fee for rushing K-8th grading is \$25 per quarter only. So, if you need any number of courses graded for the 3rd and 4th quarters, you will pay \$50. Rush grading guarantees you will have the work graded within 2-3 business days. *—Theresa English, Academic Counselor.*

## I am struggling to teach my daughter to read. We have almost finished first grade and plan to continue reading through the summer. What else can I do?

Generally, students do not read fluently until the end of second grade. It takes a few years of practice and incrementally advancing phonics lessons before reading “clicks” for students. I have taught my eight children with Seton’s program and have been amazed every time to witness the process. You think they won’t get it, that maybe it isn’t working, but then it clicks seemingly all at once. After that, reading is far less of a struggle and much more enjoyable.

If you stick with Seton’s lessons, your student will learn to read by moving at the pace set out for them. Also, reading through the summer with your student is a great idea to keep concepts fresh in her mind. Choose books that appeal to her curiosity and interests. This will help encourage her to read willingly. No worries, though. You’ve got this. It just takes time. *—Heather Hibl, Elementary Counselor*

## How do I order my student's grade report or transcript?

Grade reports are issued for pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade upon request. Once all of your student's required work has been submitted and graded, contact Jacinta Black at [jblack@setonhome.org](mailto:jblack@setonhome.org) to request an official grade report. You can always print an unofficial grade report from your student's MySeton page by going to the “Courses” tab and clicking on the grade report icon. This icon looks like a printer and can be found above the course list.

High school transcripts are issued for students by our records office. Once all required assignments have been submitted and graded, please contact [transcripts@setonhome.org](mailto:transcripts@setonhome.org) to request an official copy of your student's transcript. There is a small fee. An unofficial cumulative grade report, similar to a transcript, can be printed from his/her MySeton page. Click on the “Courses” tab and then on the records icons. The icon looks like a test and is located above the list of courses. For any question regarding your student's records, please contact [records@setonhome.org](mailto:records@setonhome.org). *—Theresa English, Academic Counselor.*

## Can Seton fill out a letter of recommendation for my student?

Yes. Please send your requests and any forms to [counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org).

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## Seton Home Study School 2022 Scholarship

### WHAT CAN YOU WIN?

On August 15, 2022, Seton is awarding ten \$1,500 Scholarships to Seton high school students graduating in 2022.

### WHEN IS THE DEADLINE?

August 1, 2022 is the deadline for applications.

### WHICH COLLEGES QUALIFY?

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

### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

You have completed or will have completed by August 1, 2022, 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)



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

[setonhome.org/colleges](https://setonhome.org/colleges)

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# Parents' Days & the Fourth Commandment

As every Catechism student can tell you, the Fourth Commandment is “Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother.” It’s one of the easiest commandments to memorize; what proves difficult is explaining the commandment’s central importance to the Christian life.

In the second part of the Decalogue, it occupies the very first position. And just as there are cardinal virtues, this seems to be a cardinal commandment—upon which the rest of the commandments hinge.

Saint Thomas Aquinas illustrates the uniqueness of this commandment. Whereas the second part of the Decalogue is a series of shalt nots, this commandment contains a positive precept.

Aquinas observes, “The Decalogue does not prescribe deeds of kindness or service to be done to anyone except to one’s parents.”

## Mother’s Day

One Sunday in May and another in June, we can pause to reflect on this commandment—as we help our fathers and mothers enjoy their appointed days. This year will be a particularly poignant Father’s Day for me, and I’ll explain why in a moment.

To begin, let me say that while there are those parents who make the Fourth Commandment very difficult to follow, I’ve been blessed with parents who’ve made it pretty easy.

In the case of my mom, how can you fail to honor someone who has made a profoundly positive difference in the lives of tens of thousands of Catholic families over a span of two generations?

And that’s after raising seven sons on a shoestring.

“So seldom can we pay back.  
Because those whom you owe—  
your parents...will be gone.”





## Father's Day

What about my Dad?

As you readers know, this is the first year I'll be separated from my Dad on Father's Day. But perhaps "separated" isn't the right word—any more than the word applies regarding the transcendental relationship between the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. Rather than view it as a separation, I see this as the first year I will have a transcendental union with my Dad on Father's Day.



That doesn't mean I won't miss him; after all, Jesus wept over the death of a friend, and so should we all. But I truly believe that my Dad is in Heaven right now. For my father, hell had no victory; death had no sting.

I miss my Dad, but this thought provides sufficient consolation. As does this: Last year, my father prayed for me on Earth; this year, he can pray for me in the very presence of God. Hell scores no victory there, either.

## The Fourth Commandment

This Father's Day reminds me that the Fourth Commandment does not cease upon death. Mercifully, it continues into eternity.

Thomas Aquinas wrote, "Now a son's debt to his father is so evident that one cannot get away from it by denying it: since the father is the principle of generation and being, and also of upbringing and teaching." That observation by the Angelic Doctor will always be true. Even in Heaven, I'll still call him "Dad."

He's earned the "honor" mentioned in the Fourth Commandment.

He's also earned my emulation. That presents a challenge for me, but a thoughtful and joyful one.

Living in Columbus, Ohio, my Dad was a huge fan of the Ohio State Buckeyes and their coach, Woody Hayes. A year before Coach Hayes passed away, he was honored to give a commencement speech to the Buckeye graduates.

His voice cracking with emotion, Hayes said, "So seldom can we pay back. Because those whom you owe—your parents...will be gone. Emerson had something to say about that. He said you can pay back only seldom. But you can always pay forward, and you must pay line for line, deed for deed, and cent for cent. He said beware of too much good accumulating in your palm, or it will fast corrupt. That was Emerson's attitude, and no one put it better than he did."

Perhaps in a newly discovered way, I can see what Hayes meant and why my Dad liked him so much. I cannot repay my Dad. A son cannot repay good fatherhood. But he can pay it forward. He can pay it forward to his own sons and daughters.

After the loss of my father this year, I realize that the greatest version of honoring my father—the most profound actualization of the Fourth Commandment—is to be a good father.

Happy Mother's Day!

Happy Father's Day!



**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*.



Ask the Experts:

## How do you instill patriotism and civic duty in your children?

*Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience*

### *Patriotism and Good Citizenship...*



The flexibility of homeschooling makes teaching patriotism and civic duty quite doable because the reality is that love of country and good citizenship are ideas best learned through doing.

Toward that end, I teach my children by example. We not only read and talk about important political matters affecting our country, but I take my children with me to the voting polls.

More than a few times, we've walked the halls of our local legislature and talked to our representatives about topics of concern. My children have witnessed me call and write to our representatives.

Additionally, we have attended pro-life marches and freedom rallies together. Though such events sometimes expose us to negative comments and bad behavior from the opposition, the lessons are invaluable. We discuss ideas such as freedom of speech and see how that freedom can inspire patriotism and civic duty or inhibit it.

In an age when people have so many avenues to express their opinions, children need to see that their voice and actions can impact their communities and their country.

“Love of country and good citizenship are best learned through doing.”

That vision is most evident through the thoughtful study of history and active engagement in the day's events. Once children understand that they have a meaningful role in the world, then love of country and civic duty become natural impulses.

***Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina***



## Service Outside the Home...



I instill a sense of civic duty in my kids first by requiring service outside the home.

It could be helping a shut-in rake some leaves, volunteering at a food pantry, running a coat drive for the homeless, etc.

They must do five hours a year in grade school, ten in middle school, and twenty in high school.

For when we serve, we learn to love. My kids usually surpass their needed hours, usually through our scout work in Trail Life and American Heritage Girls.

Through these groups, we have put wreaths on graves of deceased soldiers, welcomed veterans home through honor flights, and participated in retiring the flag ceremonies.

The most memorable time was when we were at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, welcoming Marine Veterans from WWII to a special service held in their honor.

My son happened to be in a wheelchair due to a broken foot and ankle. (Author's note: stay away from trampolines!!) He sat there reverently in full uniform, holding a picture-perfect salute.

*“When we serve,  
we serve for love.”*

The veterans passed into the museum, many tearing up as they saw the children with their signs and balloons and heard their cheers. One elderly man, however, had tears STREAMING down his face. He was in a wheelchair. He whispered something to his caregiver, and she wheeled him over and asked if he could get a picture with my son.

And there they were, opposite ends of life's spectrum, bonded over their mutual respect and love of country. They got the picture, the gentlemen nodded, saluted my son, and was wheeled away. It was a powerful moment my son will not soon forget.

**Kristin Brown, Virginia**

## Doing Our Duties as Citizens...



Just as we are commanded to love and honor our parents, it's only fitting that we should love and honor our country, our fatherland.

The best way we have found to teach this to our children is to do what we should do as citizens. We vote at every election and primary, and now our adult children do too.

We support pro-life candidates by passing out flyers, attending rallies for just causes, and speaking out against unjust laws.

We pay our taxes, support our community and parish, and have been available for jury duty when needed.

*“We should love and  
honor our country.”*

We hope that by our leading by example, our children will continue to love and support our country's values and help change what needs to be changed.

**Susan Brock, Virginia**



# “CONNECT WITH SETON FAMILIES”

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## PATRIOTISM AND OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

*Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!*

So begins Canto VI of Sir Walter Scott's  
"Lay of the Last Minstrel."

**And** all around the world, hundreds of millions of people feel this same way about their country. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for example, was repulsed by the communist government of the Soviet Union but loved Mother Russia until his dying day.

Chinese men and women who protest their ruler's dictates do so for the love of China and its people. The Ukrainians fighting and dying to resist the invaders of their country do so not because they necessarily support their leaders but because their homeland is under attack.

We can feel loyalty and love for what novelist William Faulkner called "my own little postage stamp of earth."

We can also be good citizens by voting, obeying the just laws of our nation, and respecting the rights of those around us. In short, we can feel deep affection for our country, no matter where we live, without applauding our government.

### Love of Country and the Seton Curriculum

Seton Home Study School blends that patriotism and citizenship into its textbooks and lessons. In the fourth grade, for example, students read *This Is Our Land*, which includes stories about American pioneers and nation-builders as well as tales from Switzerland, England, and Holland, among other countries.

Seton's fifth-grade reader, *These Are Our People*, exposes students to children from many different backgrounds. The brief introduction to the last story sums up America this way: "Our country is a land of many people from many places; but for all of them there shines Sunlight on the Cross."

And then there are the other books from Seton, which are not a part of the curriculum, that boost our knowledge of the past.



## A Personal Note

I was a kid when I first encountered the *Childhood of Famous Americans* series.

At that time, these books came in hardcover, bound in orange or blue, and each volume followed the same pattern: a retelling of the early lives of American heroes, entrepreneurs, scientists, soldiers, and more, followed by the last chapter detailing that person's accomplishments as an adult.

There were scores of these biographies, ranging from those who remain well-known today—Lincoln, Abigail Adams, Mark Twain—to figures now little remarked, like Jane Addams or Ernie Pyle.

I read as many of these books as I could find. They influenced me in childhood and for the rest of my life. Later, as an adult, I bought them up in used book stores and yard sales and have since given many of them to my grandchildren.

Though the current publisher, Simon & Schuster, has trimmed down this long list of titles, Seton carries the classics of this series. Here are the biographies—Washington, Abigail Adams, Davy Crockett, Annie Oakley, and more—that entranced me as a boy, sparked a lifelong interest in history, and helped teach me virtue.

## Summer Reading and Patriotism

Summer's the season for outdoor play, vacations, camps, and for some teenagers, a time to work jobs outside the home.

Usually, summer brings a more leisurely pace for Seton families. Some may continue homeschooling while others take the traditional vacation from formal studies, but nearly all homeschoolers follow a less rigorous academic schedule.

Summer also provides the opportunity to learn some history away from the classroom and textbooks.

With the warmer weather, we can take our children to historic sites, including those close to home. To further enhance our knowledge of the past, we can watch movies or documentaries about our country, the *Liberty Kids* series on YouTube, for instance, or films like *Johnny Tremain* and *Gods and Generals*.

Of course, we can also explore history through books and reading, and Seton offers stories that can entertain us while increasing our familiarity with the past. Novels like *Caddie*

*Woodlawn*, *Old Yeller*, *The Custer Legacy*, *The Virginian*, and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* all whisk us back into earlier days.

In addition, our public libraries stock historical

fiction that should appeal to students. Kenneth Roberts' sagas about colonial and revolutionary periods, Jeff Shaara's Civil War novels, Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, and scores of other books tell the story of the United States.

Seton homeschoolers in other countries around the world might also view their vacation from formal schooling as a chance to deepen their knowledge of their nation's past through visits to museums and historical sites and books and films.

## Making Patriots

In his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, poet Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote:

Then out spake brave Horatius,  
The Captain of the Gate:  
"To every man upon this earth  
Death cometh soon or late.  
And how can man die better  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the ashes of his fathers,  
And the temples of his gods..."

Whatever our nationality, like Horatius, most of us revere that piece of earth containing the ashes of our fathers and our churches.

We homeschooling families have the opportunity, the right, and the obligation to educate our children about the accomplishments of those who have gone before us, those who fought on battlefields or in the public square for their nation, and who sacrificed so much for the rights and traditions we enjoy today.

We must also teach our young people that future circumstances may require them to offer these same sacrifices on the altar of freedom.

Here in the United States, these next few months bring us holidays to honor those who have made such sacrifices: Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Independence Day. We can pay homage to our American heroes by learning their stories.

Our homeschooling brothers and sisters around the globe can do the same, familiarizing themselves with the men and women who helped create, protect, and defend the nation in which they live.

We can all build and strengthen virtue within ourselves by learning their stories.



**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.





# “We Never Looked Back:”

## *The Partridge Family’s Homeschool Odyssey*

WITH JEFF MINICK

**W**hen asked what words of wisdom she might give to those new to home education, veteran homeschool mom Mary Partridge says,

“The best advice I can give is that it’s not always pretty. Never quit on your worst day. You may, at times, feel like a failure. My oldest daughter fought me through most of middle and high school about being homeschooled. When she came back from the United States Air Force Academy this past Christmas to visit, she said, ‘I am so glad you homeschooled me growing up.’ Those words made it all worthwhile.”

*“What keeps me homeschooling is seeing how much my kids thrive in the homeschool environment.”*

Mary and I conducted our interview via email, as she, her husband Dustin, and five of her six children live on the other side of the globe in Okinawa, Japan, where Dustin is serving as a Major

in the United States Marine Corps. Previously, the family has been stationed in North Carolina’s Camp Lejeune; Quantico, Virginia; and Miami, Florida.

Mary is used to life in the military service—“I grew up as a Navy Brat and lived all over the world!” She attended Catholic schools for all 12 years of her formal education, graduating from Bishop Ireton High School in Alexandria, Virginia. Dustin grew up in Northern California and holds a master’s degree in business finance.

Their oldest daughter, Daisy, is a freshman, a cadet 4th class, at the Academy. Luke and his sister Lilac Marie are in 7th grade. Paul is a fourth-grader, Kolbe is in second grade, and James is a kindergartener.

### **We Never Considered Homeschooling**

Though the Partridge family has been enrolled in Seton Home Study School for the past 13 years, since Daisy was in first grade, Mary and Dustin were not always fans of home education.

“We never considered homeschooling,” Mary writes, “and had a very negative impression of homeschooling until our oldest daughter had a very poor experience at our local Catholic school. The experience left us with no choice but to homeschool, and we loved it so much, we never looked back!”





She then adds, “There are so many fantastic things about the Seton program. Their English courses, cannot be beaten. Daisy scored a 780 on the language portion of her SATs, and I credit Seton completely. Seton’s religion program is the most important to us, and we constantly get compliments on how well our children know and can defend their Faith. I also love Seton’s math program for the younger grades—I wish they offered it for higher than 5th grade.”

### A Daily Schedule

When asked to describe a typical homeschooling day, Mary reported that they usually start school around 9 am. She helps James while the other children work independently, bringing Mom each workbook to check when they’ve completed the day’s assignments.

When James finishes, he completes his chores and then plays outside. As the others finish up their schoolwork—the more advanced the grade, the longer they generally take—they follow this same schedule.

The older children also spend many afternoons and evenings on extracurricular activities. Luke, Lilac, Paul, and Kolbe are members of a year-round swim team, and the three boys also play baseball. They also play lacrosse and participate in acrobatics classes.

Meanwhile, Lilac “is a very talented ballet dancer who does jazz, tap, contemporary, and acrobatics and takes over 12 hours of dance classes a week. The boys also love to play family games of lacrosse, and I am very involved in Lilac’s dance studio.”

Mary’s biggest challenge in homeschooling is “finding time to dedicate to each child. To me, this is the beauty of the Seton program. It is mostly self-taught. And if a child is struggling with a particular concept, an older sibling can usually jump in and help explain it. I also love the flexibility. On those days when it’s hard to fit school in, we can skip it and try again the next day. We follow a modified year-round schedule, so even if we miss several days in a row, it all balances out.”

### Parish Life

Their home parish in the United States is St. William of York Catholic Church in Stafford, Virginia, which, Mary tells me, they dearly miss. Currently, they are parishioners at St. Francis Xavier in Okinawa, “where we have been blessed with a wonderful and devout Navy Chaplain. Our sons Luke and Paul are altar servers, and my husband Dustin is an EMHC and a lector.”



Near the end of our conversation, I asked Mary what has helped her stay on the home education path. She responded: “What keeps me homeschooling is seeing how much my kids thrive in the homeschool environment. Every time I think the grass looks greener in school, God shows me why it is not—and that keeps me motivated and focused on my children’s moral formation above all else. I truly believe the rest will fall into place.”

Exactly.

Some gratitude is in order here. Thank you first to Dustin, Mary, and your children for your service to our country. Thank you, too, for keeping the faith in this time of turmoil.

Like all of those Seton families who are focused on “our children’s moral formation above all else,” you are candles in the darkness.



in  
the

# Schoolroom

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT



## *America the Beautiful Star Wreaths*

**When** I was a young elementary school student, every day began with announcements over the loudspeaker followed by a moment of silence for private prayer, the reciting of the *Pledge of Allegiance*, the singing of the *Star-Spangled Banner* and *My Country 'Tis of Thee*. I am not sure this kind of thing happens in schools anymore, but it can happen in our homeschool rooms.

Very few young people seem to know any of the patriotic songs I grew up with, and I find that tragic. It is the kind of thing that can get lost in the busyness of our full homeschool days but instilling this kind of civic pride in your children is an essential part of educating them well.

Fostering a love of country and pride in how our nation has evolved—imperfectly, but with good intentions—is a worthy endeavor.

I am fortunate to have had musical children, so the older piano-playing daughters taught the younger ones (at my request) to sing the national anthem. I taught the older ones with the *Wee Sing* CD. We would begin each day by saying the pledge facing a photo of the flag, singing the anthem. The Boy Scouts in the family would also give little lessons in flag etiquette, an important part of civic life.

Memorial Day is an opportunity to teach the children that the freedom to sing these songs, recite this pledge, and pray as we wish comes at the expense of countless lives, sacrifices, and honorable, dedicated service to something greater than self.

On a lighter note, here is a simple craft for your younger children to make to hang up and show appreciation for your country.



**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 *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.



# Beautiful Star Wreaths

## Craft Supplies:

- Red, white and blue construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Star templates
- Yarn for hanging
- Sturdy paper plate
- **Optional:** red, white, or blue glitter

1.



Find some star templates. I printed mine from a free printable site, but tracing a cookie cutter or using a stencil would work.

2.



Trace your templates on one of the papers (I chose red) and then stack the other two colors behind it and cut out your stars. Stacking saves a lot of cutting time.

3.



Take your paper plate and cut out the inner circle leaving just the rim. The rim will be the base of your “wreath”.

4.



Glue the stars on the rim, making a pleasing arrangement.

5.

Once the glue dries, loop a length of yarn or ribbon through your wreath as a hanger.

6.

If you have glitter you could fancy up your star wreath by brushing some watered-down white glue on the edges of some of the stars and sprinkling a little glitter on the glue.



## Ave Maria University's Homeschool Athletes

# Coaching as a Calling

BY JOE PATTERSON

The pregame music for a men's soccer game at Ave Maria University shocks the secular sensibilities. The 10-song playlist, featuring "Ubi Caritas," "Panis Angelicus," and Bach's "Ave Maria," is an immersive spiritual experience that engulfs both the participants and the spectators. It unsettles as it inspires.

The first time I heard the pregame playlist, it struck me deeply—what a tremendous reminder of the divine, what a tremendous reminder of our ultimate goal.

The musical choices of Ave Maria's men's soccer coach Eddie Gaven are an unambiguous application of the AMU Athletics Mission Statement to "intentionally integrate the Catholic faith into collegiate athletics, promoting the formation of mind, body, and spirit." The sublime music is followed by 90 minutes of intense competition. The music frames the contest that follows, giving context to the pursuit of excellence on the field.

### A Training Ground

Few people debate that sports can serve as a training ground for life, especially in regard to the physical benefits and the inculcation of habits such as hard work and discipline.

Still, the spiritual and moral components produce the greatest, most lasting fruit, but these are too often overlooked.

Christ gave us a playbook for happiness, and we need to follow it faithfully. Ave Maria athletics looks to Christ as it promotes sacrificial effort, authentic toughness, and conquering love through its athletic programs.

Liz Feger, who serves as Ave Maria's Associate Athletic Director, puts it this way: "Athletics helps the student-athlete understand their call because of the discipline it requires. Heroic sanctity isn't easy, and neither is the life of a collegiate student-athlete."

The discipline that gets an athlete or coach out of bed at 4:45 a.m. to attend a 5:15 a.m. morning practice is the same discipline that gets the athlete or coach out of bed at 3:45 a.m. to fill the 4 a.m. to 5 a.m. perpetual adoration time slot.

### Self-Sacrifice

The self-sacrifice that prompts a third-string offensive lineman to serve as a scout team player translates well into the self-sacrifice that prompts a father to humbly toil countless hours to provide for his family. The perseverance that a



**Ave Maria University is proud to be a Seton College Partner.**



softball player shows in the batting cage, driving ball after ball off the tee, foreshadows the unseen daily grind required for parenthood.

This education in virtue is what draws an AMU coach to the sport. For Tyler Rosser, AMU's women's soccer coach, this calling came years into his coaching career. Rosser first began coaching in 2009 while a senior student at Ave Maria University, but he distinctly recalls a prayer session in March 2017 in which "the Lord gently put the desire on my heart to coach to help each individual get to heaven."

For myself, the calling was guised at first. I didn't play college football, so the strategy and competition first attracted me to the sport. It wasn't until I began coaching and teaching that the strategy and competition—both still very important—were eclipsed by a desire to build relationships and the Kingdom.

### The Coaches' Impact

Of course, the coaches' impact can be much more than the practices, competitions, and team meetings. Coaches serve as relatable authority figures who derive their strength from the sacramental life. Our men's basketball coach, Jamon Copeland, is a regular at the 12:05 p.m. daily Mass. He is typically the last person in the long communion line, and the lasting image of each Mass is that of Coach Copeland falling to his knees to receive the Eucharist.

"I seek clarity from our Lord in the Eucharist as well as visiting him in the tabernacle," says Copeland. "As Saint John Paul II says, 'In that little host is the solution to all of the problems in the world.' Also in that little host is the



wisdom and direction to complete the tasks before me."

Teamwork is underpinned by the ability to trust, and trust is what opens the door to conversion of heart. Love conquers all, and it's this conquering love that exemplifies that which is best about sports.

Thankfully, the scoreboard can reward these pursuits. After going 0-10 in my first season as a football coach at AMU, we won the conference championship two years later. Rosser's "calling" in 2017 coincided with a 0-13-1 record. These past two seasons have represented the best two-year stretch in program history.

Likewise, the men's and women's cross country teams finished 2020 and 2021 with their best seasons, notching second-place finishes in the conference championships. The men's basketball team completed its third straight 20-win season, making it to the championship game this season. The volleyball team won the conference championship this year, and both men's and women's tennis teams are currently nationally ranked in the NAIA.

But, of course, it's not ultimately about the scoreboard. It's about the daily commitment to virtue. So many wins in life are simply choices. Am I going to be a good teammate? Am I going to set aside time for prayer? Am I going to support the moral behavior of my fellow teammates? Those are all wins, and there should be little doubt about the importance of winning for coaches at Catholic schools.

This commitment to pursue intercollegiate competition without compromising one's Catholicism has proven popular. In the past two years, when hundreds and hundreds of collegiate programs have been discontinued, AMU has expanded its varsity offerings with eight new teams.

### Embrace Victory

At the same time, the cumulative GPA of the athletic department has improved, as has retention, to the point that the most recent census had the student-athlete retention rate within one percentage point of the University at large. And the teams' aggregate win-loss percentages now routinely place AMU's athletic department in the top half of the conference.

The lesson seems clear. Avoid self-aggrandizing behavior and a preoccupation with individual recognition. Avoid trash talking and vulgar displays. Embrace self-discipline and adversity. Embrace self-sacrificial effort, toughness, and love, animated by Christ's example and teachings. Embrace victory.



**Joe Patterson** is entering his seventh season as the head football coach at Ave Maria University and his third season as the athletic director. He has been coaching and teaching in Catholic education for 25 years.

# STUDENT PROFILE: LIZ WOLF



I have been familiar with Ave Maria University for several years, as my sister and many other students from my parish in Michigan have attended. I reached out to Coach Tyler Rosser of the women's soccer team as I entered my senior year of high school to discuss playing soccer at AMU.

He shared his vision for the upcoming years and the team's mission during our first conversation, which emphasized understanding our identity in Christ through our sport.

I could see that I absolutely wanted to be part of the culture he had built for the team.

Later in my senior year, I visited AMU and was struck by the importance of the Catholic faith and the students on campus. It was such a welcoming environment. People stopped me to say hello and were genuinely interested in getting to know me! This experience made my commitment to attend AMU very easy.



This decision has been affirmed throughout my freshman year, as my faith has grown tremendously because of the people I have encountered and the opportunities offered to me. Your time at AMU is what you make of it. I have access to daily Mass, perpetual Eucharist adoration, and incredible support from my teammates and friends, which allows me to place Christ at the center of my time here.

Coach Rosser regularly reminds us that we “are loved for who we are, not what we do.” I want to be a saint, and this saying reminds me to constantly strive to be the best version of myself by doing what is right, not what is easy. Students at AMU are encouraged to do this in the classroom, on the sports field, and in our daily lives.

I was asked how my Seton education prepared me for success at Ave Maria. My Seton education prepared me very well for success at Ave Maria by incorporating the Catholic faith into my education. Seton's curriculum prepared me to pursue the truth in all matters, which has continued to benefit me immensely in my studies at Ave Maria.



**Liz Wolf** is a freshman on Ave's women's soccer team from Rochester Hills, MI. She is currently in the pre-nursing program and plans to earn her BSN at Ave Maria University.





# THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



“

What inspired us to begin homeschooling was the testimony of other families.

I love the flexibility and the opportunity for family bonding.

We chose Seton Home Study School because our family's roots are Catholic, and we wanted to introduce our children to the Catholic Faith.

- The Velez Family – Doha, Qatar

”



## Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



### *Christian Served His First Traditional Latin Mass*

With a flexible homeschool schedule, Christian was able to go to daily Mass frequently and learned how to serve the Latin Mass.



### *Yedda Finds Strength in Volunteering*

Homeschooling provided Yedda the time for volunteering and helped her connect with different kinds of people.

# St. Zita of Lucca

## *Homeschoolers Inspired by a Seton Workbook!*

BY JENNIFER. SUESS

When a group of homeschoolers gets together to be creative, something wonderful can happen! Something wonderful did happen when our Little Women group, comprised mostly of homeschoolers, decided to produce a film on the life of Saint Zita of Lucca.

Several girls helped write the screenplay, and family members and friends soon got involved. We made location scouting trips, and many people in our homeschool community helped us gather props and costumes. Inspiration for some scenes came from stories about Saint Zita in a Seton Press *Reading/Thinking Skills* workbook.

With the script finished, casting done, and the filming schedule set, we suddenly found ourselves delayed when COVID-19 hit our area with quarantines and restrictions. That summer, we did as much outdoor work as possible, but COVID continued to delay us through much of the following fall, winter, and spring. Finally, at the end of July 2021, we finished filming before some cast members went off to college!

### Amazing Locations

Our locations were worth waiting for—many people have remarked on how their authenticity contributes to the film. One fabulous place was the Rosen House, an Italian Mediterranean-style house listed on the National Register of Historic Places!

Part of Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in Katonah, NY, this unique home has many exciting features, including a bed that belonged to Pope Urban VIII! Another amazing location was Saint Clements Castle in Portland, CT. This property has a unique history. The estate, styled after a 15th-century Norman farmhouse, was built in the late 1890s.

The castle had fallen into disrepair but was given new life by a Roman Catholic priest who founded a non-profit. Father bought the castle to raise money for charities, as a location for weddings and other events.

### Amazing Cast & Crew

Seton students had significant roles among a cast and crew of 49 young people. Seton student Maria Suess was one of the Little Women who contributed to the script and followed through with many other jobs, such as helping sew costumes and operating sound and lighting equipment on set.







Another Seton student, Clare Gugliotto, played the central role of Zita. Seton high school student Matthew Suess was the cameraman, production engineer, and he did much of the film editing. Pearl and Benny Goodman, also Seton students, were memorable characters in the marketplace scenes, and other Seton students played supporting roles as well.

### Homeschool Flexibility

Homeschooling contributed to the success of this project. A Seton homeschool education fosters many qualities that are valuable assets, such as memorization skills, a love of the faith and the saints, and strong writing skills.

Homeschooling also allowed for the flexible schedule we needed and prepared us with lessons in perseverance for a lengthy, complex project!

### Premiere Night

It all paid off on premiere night in November, 2021, when over 150 people came out to see our film. You can enjoy it too! For a fun family movie night, find Zita at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGKdo-LVUp0>.

Zita, a peasant girl of Lucca, Italy, becomes the domestic servant of the Fatinelli family. Unwavering faith and trust in God are the sources of her confidence, allowing her to be undaunted in the face

of insults and abuse from those who find her different. Hardworking, resolute, and sincerely charitable, Zita eventually wins the respect of those around her, bringing them a better way of living.

Saint Zita's feast day is April 27th. On this day, we will think of Zita, whom we have come to know, love, and be inspired by through making this film.



**Jennifer Suess** is a homeschooling mother with Seton for the last eleven years. Of her six children, the youngest three are at home and the oldest three received Seton diplomas and went on to Franciscan University. She enjoys organizing activities for the homeschool community.







BY SETON STAFF

# *A Good Man Remembered:* Rob Lee Jones (1957-2022)

**O**n the morning of January 3, 2022, 64-year-old Rob Lee Jones of Front Royal, Virginia, died in his home after a long battle with COPD. He is survived by his parents, his wife Margaret, their six children and 11 grandchildren, and two siblings.

His obituary notes that “Rob loved listening to music and sitting on the porch, especially with his beloved children, warm sunny days, and extra hot coffee.”

Rob also leaves behind a shining legacy in character and education at Seton Home Study School and with those who knew him. Below are just three takes on this remarkable man.

## **A COLLEAGUE**



For years, Seton’s General Counselor Cecilia Sauer worked closely with Rob as he created the Seton math books for grades K-5. “He wrote the books,” she says, “and I would edit and proof them.”

She explains that Rob brought some wonderful talents and discernment to these projects. He’d taught math for 40 years, and in creating the Seton elementary math series, he examined many different textbooks and then “took his own approach.”

“I especially love his word problems,” she says with a smile, pointing to a third-grade lesson on decimals invented by Rob that

includes problems like this one: “Mark was trying to raise \$100 towards his trip to Fatima with Fr. Fox. So far, he had \$35. What decimal part of his goal had he reached?”

Again and again, Rob blended the Faith into these arithmetic lessons. “We get a lot of good feedback on our math books,” Cecilia says.

## **A PROTÉGÉ**

In the paragraphs below, John Echaniz recalls Rob’s extraordinary talents as a mentor, a supervisor, and a counselor:

*As a college student and later as a fresh-faced graduate in the early 1990s, I had the good fortune to work under Rob’s watchful eye in the Teacher’s Department.*

*We managed the grading of student work and counseled students and parents by phone when various academic (or other!) challenges arose in their homes. Rob’s personal homeschooling experience translated to a gentle and patient demeanor on the phone with an anxious mom who felt a little overwhelmed in juggling multiple grade levels or a teenager who couldn’t quite wrap his head around a geometry proof.*

*He set a high standard for the rest of us and was a great sounding board when we needed help assisting those students and parents in need. We never knew what unexpected challenge we would encounter next, and he was ready for anything.*



*He loved deep conversation and often challenged your assertions, making you think through and articulate your thoughts and opinions. Every wide-eyed twenty-something college kid should be so lucky to have someone to keep him honest as he ventures out into the world.*

## A DAUGHTER

When Clare Schmitt speaks of her dad, the affection in her voice is as warm as sunshine.

Like most of her siblings, Clare was home-educated through high school. She and her husband Carl, who works in Seton's computer department, are parents of two teenagers.

When asked, Clare shared some thoughts on her father's educational philosophies.

"He believed education starts with teaching people how to think. As he would often tell us, 'All the book learning in the world isn't going to do you much good if you can't think critically.'"

Her dad was also a proponent of the 3Rs approach to education: the mastery of reading, writing, and math. Those, Clare says, were the learning tools he constantly stressed.

He also emphasized at both work and home that "one size doesn't fit all," meaning that students are individuals who bring different talents and interests to the table.

Clare offers herself as an example of this approach. "I didn't inherit my family's genes for math," she says with a soft laugh.

"My dad wanted me to fall in love with math, but he finally embraced that I would never love math the way he did. And so, he leaned into my reading and writing. We'd discuss books for hours, and he was a great critic of my writing, helping me build my skills. He stressed clear thinking and structure in my compositions. There was no right answer, so long as I could defend my position."



Clare credits her parents' instruction for her mostly straight-A record in college and her current position as Chief of Staff where she often writes professionally. "Dad could be a harsh critic," she says, "but without that, I wouldn't have a successful career."

## AVE ATQUE VALE

In his funeral speech for Julius Caesar, Shakespeare's Marc Antony says of the dead, "The good is oft interred with their bones."

Not so with Rob Jones. The good done by this husband, father, and teacher remains very much alive in this world, visible in the work he left us and the lives he touched.

Rest in peace, Rob Jones.

# OUR NAME IS SAID FAITHFULLY, MILLIONS OF TIMES A DAY AVE MARIA

Ave Maria University (Latin for Hail Mary) derives its name from the angel Gabriel's salutation to the virgin Mary. Mary, "Full of Grace," hears her vocational call and willingly cooperates with God's plan.

This is the model for all students – prepare yourselves for God's calling by seeking His grace, and then, empowered by this grace, you too can respond with your full assent.

Ave Maria University will help you find God's will for your life and equip you to professionally and personally live it.

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# STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those who serve you!*

**Laura Fusto - Elementary Counselor**

“When Seton offered me a job as an academic counselor,” says Laura Fusto, “it was a ‘Thank you, God’ moment for me.” She pauses a moment, then says, “I was looking for a full-time job, and even though I’d worked part-time over the years, I wasn’t sure I was qualified for anything. Once I started working at Seton, I realized God had prepared me my whole life for this job. I love reading and writing, I enjoy talking with people, and of course, I’d homeschooled three daughters.”



## A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND

Laura grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and after graduation from high school, entered a small liberal arts college, Western Maryland College, which is today’s McDaniel College. There she majored in communications.

She then married her husband, John, a graduate of the Naval Academy, and they spent the next five years moving to various military bases. At one point, Laura worked for *National Geographic Magazine*, first in customer service and then as a liaison between the company’s computer programmers and the users of those programs.

She left full-time work when she became pregnant with her first child. She spent the next 25 years raising her children and seeing to their education, which involved more than 20 years of homeschooling. Meanwhile, her husband worked for 17 years as the International Affiliate Manager for Human Life International. Retired now, he is a part-time grader for the Seton Home Study School.

## WORKING FOR SETON

As an elementary school counselor, Laura has worked for Seton for just over a year. When asked what part of her job gives her the greatest satisfaction, she smiles and says, “I knew you would ask that question, so here’s my answer. It comes when I hang up the phone after speaking with a mom at her wit’s end.

“Sometimes she’s in tears. By the time I’m off the phone, it feels great knowing that I’ve relieved her of 75% of her stress and anxiety. I want all our parents to know that we here at Seton are working with them and their students, and not against them. We want to help fulfill their expectations for their children. Our goal is to help them succeed in the way they want.”

## LOVE OF GARDENING

In addition to guiding her three daughters—Christen, 27, Maria, 19, and Gianna, 17—Laura is an avid gardener. She and her family attend Saint John the Baptist Church here in Front Royal.

To better assist her parents and students, Laura offered this advice. “Have your student number handy when you call,” she says. “But even more importantly, if a problem arises, don’t wait until your child is on a homeschooling cliff to call us. Call earlier rather than later. Call before that problem snowballs. Remember—we’re here to help you.”





FEAST DAY - MAY 15



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### *Parents - Prayer and Preparation of Children*

*Let us again listen to the appeal made by Paul VI to parents: "Mothers, do you teach your children the Christian prayers? Do you prepare them, in conjunction with the priests, for the sacraments that they receive when they are young: Confession, Communion and Confirmation? Do you encourage them when they are sick to think of Christ suffering to invoke the aid of the Blessed Virgin and the saints? Do you say the family rosary together?"*

*And you, fathers, do you pray with your children, with the whole domestic community, at least sometimes? Your example of honesty in thought and action, joined to some common prayer, is a lesson for life, an act of worship of singular value. In this way you bring peace to your homes: Pax huic domui. Remember, it is thus that you build up the Church."*

**John Paul II**  
**Familiaris Consortio**

**On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World**  
**November 22, 1981**

