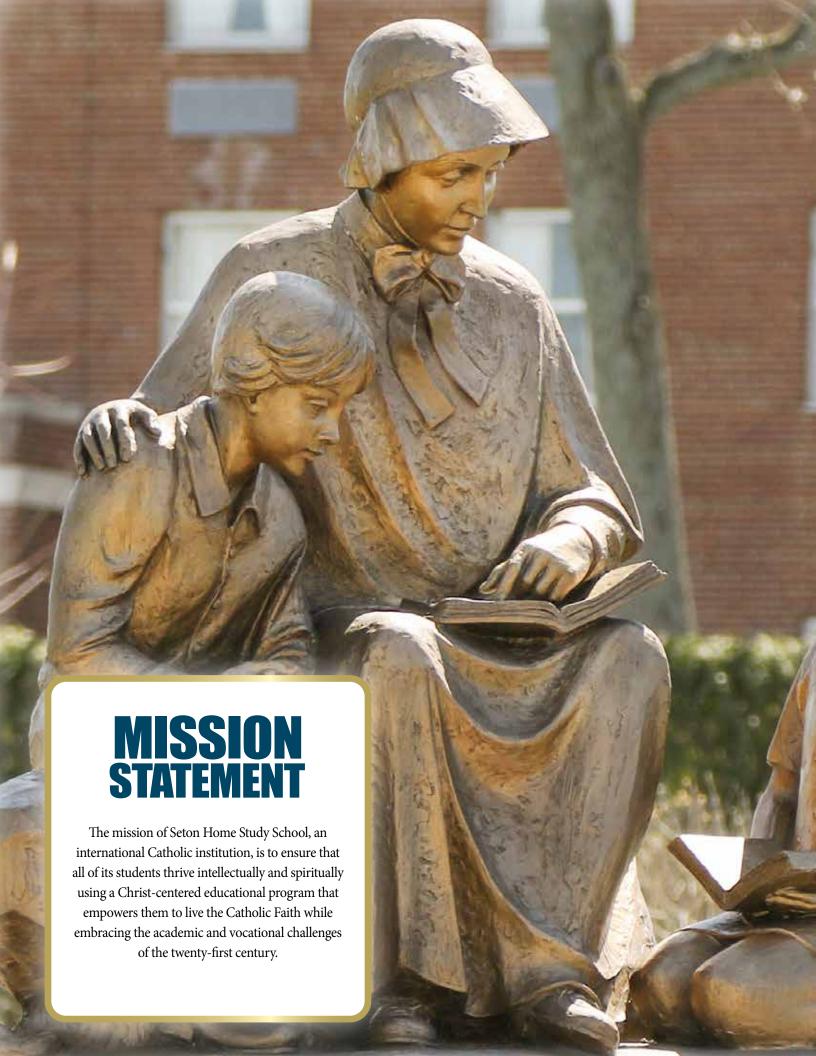
Seton SMAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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LETTER FROM

Dear Readers,

When I approach a writer to contribute to the magazine, it is my job to guide them in the subject matter and to help in any way I can. When I asked Father Andrew to contribute to this issue, we discussed a few things, and I left the conversation with a definite idea of what he would write. A few days later, he sent me the article on page eight, telling me he prayed about it and felt guided to write this article. Of course, it was entirely different from what we discussed, but it was also wholly perfect, especially in the Lenten season. This is a shining example of what happens when you let God take the lead. I have read and prayed about his words many times, and I hope you do as well.

I must know more if I see a picture with beautiful toddlers and chickens. The Irons family is a delightful example of creating a homeschool life that is unique to your family. Seton's flexibility and adventurous spirit make for such a joyful family life. I am grateful they let us take a peek.

Writer and Seton counselor Heather Hibl perfectly expressed what so many veteran moms are experiencing now. I kept nodding my head while reading the article, and as the kids say, "I felt seen."

Easter will be here before you know it, and on behalf of the whole staff at Seton, I would like to wish all our Seton families a blessed Eastertide.

Remember, Easter is an octave, so eight days of celebrating is required!

"Christus resurrexit! Vere resurrexit, alleluia!"

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett

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How do I choose the best math program for my child from the different options Seton offers?

Yes, you're right! Seton provides multiple math options at different grade levels to accommodate various learning styles. Let's go through the choices by grade level.

Elementary (Grades K-5)

Our default math program for these grades is Seton's Math for Young Catholics, a workbook-based program designed to suit most students. The workbooks are organized by topic and include chapter reviews at the end of each section. Practice problems incorporate material from previous chapters to reinforce learning.

If your child needs extra practice, we also offer MCP Math for grades K-6. This program follows a similar workbook format but generally provides more practice problems per lesson than Math for Young Catholics while covering the same core material.

Additionally, parents may choose the Saxon program, which is available for lower elementary grades (K-3).

Saxon Math is a multi-book program that incorporates manipulatives, making it an excellent option for families who prefer hands-on learning. However, it requires significant preparation from the parent or teacher. The program consists of a student workbook, a teacher's manual, and a meeting book with scripted lessons for parents to follow. It's important to note that Saxon is a pricier option, costing over \$100.

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Starting in grade 6, students can choose between Teaching Textbooks (the default) and Saxon.

Teaching Textbooks:

This interactive online program features short animated video lessons with voiceover explanations. The program provides immediate feedback. If an answer is incorrect, the program offers hints and allows the student to try again.

Teaching Textbooks records grades for daily lessons and chapter tests, to minimize grading and record-keeping.

Saxon:

We offer the home study kit as the original hardback Saxon textbooks are no longer available for retail purchase. If you already own a hardback edition, let us know which version you have, and we will provide the appropriate tests.

Parents can choose between the Teaching Textbooks software program, the Teaching Textbooks book, or the Saxon books.

High School (Grades 9-12)

The high school math options remain the same as for middle school: Teaching Textbooks (the default) and Saxon. Both programs follow the same formats as described above.

Choosing the Best Option

Ultimately, the best choice depends on your child's learning style and what works best for your family. Many parents of middle school students appreciate the ease of Teaching Textbooks, as the program handles grading and record-keeping automatically. On the other hand, some families prefer Saxon because writing out the problems helps reinforce concepts more effectively.

If you have any questions about our math programs, don't hesitate to reach out—we're happy to help!

Laura Clark, Academic Counselor

How Does Teaching Textbooks Work?

Teaching Textbooks[™] are online math courses designed for independent learners. Each interactive course includes a digital textbook, teacher lectures, and step-by-step explanations of math concepts.

The courses are accessed using the Teaching Textbooks website. Seton provides a printed course manual and test schedule. Seton tests are taken online at your MySeton.

Courses Available:

Math 6, Math 7, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Pre-Calculus.

You can preview the Table of Contents, Course Descriptions, and Indexes for each course at TeachingTextbook.com. The website also offers Free Placement Tests for all of the courses.

When You Enroll:

Seton provides a coupon code for a one-year course license with Teaching Textbooks. Each course has a software license fee of \$55.



Helping Homeschool Moms Have a Fruitful Lent! A Lenten Guide for Homeschool Moms Order Now! M-RLBK-L1 | \$7.95 Each Median Homeschool Moms • Spiritual Exercises for Mom • Fun Activities for Children • Includes Quick, Easy, and Kid-Friendly Meatless Recipes

Available at SetonBooks.com

Does Seton offer the IOWA E standardized test online? I've done paper testing. Should I switch to online?

We recommend the new online version for several reasons:

Online Testing:

The test is administered online through a secure browser, making it easier since you don't need to worry about waiting for paper materials or dealing with shipping costs. The test is compatible with devices like Chromebooks and iPads.



Virtual Administration:

Seton staff will virtually supervise the test, while the parent serves as the in-room proctor. This setup ensures that everything stays secure while the student takes the test.

Support:

If technical issues or questions arise during the test, Seton offers support through phone, email, and chat to help resolve them quickly.

Fast Results:

You'll receive your test results by the Tuesday after your testing week, which is a speedy turnaround compared to paper testing.

Felicity Smoot, Assistant Director of Seton Testing Services



10% Seton Testing DiscountFor Seton Enrolled Families
Use Coupon Code: **SEHF2025**



The Seton College Partner
Program is a way to encourage
students to continue their
Catholic education by attending
solidly Catholic colleges after
high school.

































setonhome.org/colleges



Do Not Be Afraid

BY FATHER ANDREW CLARK

has been a mark of the Church's life from the Death of Our Lord to the present day that persecution is inevitable. The lives of the saints, even in the Middle Ages of Europe, reflect persecution at the hands of men and women who do not wish the Gospel to be the driving force of their thoughts and actions.

I have always found it fascinating to read the homilies of Medieval saints; they preach patience, chastity, justice, and the dangers of pride and selfishness. In other words, they are always aware of the sinful nature of man.

So Easily Scandalized

One of the peculiar marks of modern men and women is our ability to be easily scandalized. We are shocked when we find out that people in the Church are sinners, sometimes sinners on a grand scale. As a priest, I have often marveled at our ability to be shocked when we find that we are sinners!

Many earnest and devout Catholics feel deeply frustrated that they cannot seem to escape or overcome all the sin in their lives. And worse, many such Catholics believe that if they continue to struggle with sin, it must be because, deep down, they do not love God or they are simply not trying hard enough.

I do not want to minimize sin; it is indeed the most destructive force on the face of the earth. What I do want to emphasize is that sin does not define us. It never tells us what we are; while we yet live, sin has not had the last word.

I hear confessions several days every week, and it is not abnormal for me to encounter someone who believes their sins make them unlovable in some way. So many believe that deep down, if seen for who they truly are, all the parts of their heart and soul they seek to hide from themselves and God, they would be exposed as a fraud. They would be unlovable. But this is a lie—a lie from the devil himself.

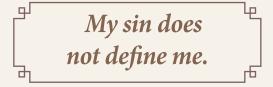
Why are We Afraid?

And what is the fruit of the lie that sin makes me unlovable? How do human beings respond to not living in the truth of God's love? Fear. We become afraid of our sins and the sins of others. And if we are afraid of our sins, we will live in fear constantly. Our sin is always with us because we are fallen. Our nature is wounded. Our tendency is always toward what is easiest instead of what is good.

As modern people, the reason we are afraid of our sins and the reason we are easily scandalized are connected. On some level, we buy into the foundational myth of the Enlightenment and the post-Enlightenment world that we live in, that man is perfectible this side of Heaven. We disregard concupiscence and our broken human nature's tendency toward sin.

Here I am Lord

St. John tells us that perfect love casts out all fear. When we allow the love of Christ to penetrate our hearts and minds, when we give him our sin, then fear is forced to flee. This means allowing Christ to look at me as I am; it means I hold out to Him all the parts of me I am most ashamed of and find most repellent.



It means I treat my sins with the seriousness they have, no more and no less. St. Catherine of Sienna tells us never to think about our sins without meditating on God's mercy. For to think about our sins without also thinking of God's mercy is actually to think about our sins incorrectly, falsely. It is to think of them the way the devil thinks of his sin: as that which defines him.

Justified by Grace

We ought never to be surprised by our sins. But this does not mean we accept them as the status quo either. It means that even as we seek to root out sin, we recognize that we will never be fully perfected on this side of Heaven. And this is not a cause for discouragement but of gratitude. Gratitude that Christ's grace is what justifies and allows me to love as I ought. It means that Our Father in Heaven is pleased even with our stumbles. And if God Himself takes joy in our faltering footsteps in the way of the Cross, who are we to gainsay Him?

My sin does not define me. My fear is not who I am. Will I allow the virtue of Faith to prevail by believing the Lord Jesus when He tells me that He loves me? Will I allow the virtue of Hope to prevail by trusting in His promise to make me perfect, one day at a time, by His grace?

Will I allow the virtue of Charity to live in my heart by having compassion on sinners stumbling on the way, or more worthy of compassion still, those who do not know the way at all?

Do not be afraid. Give Him your sins. The love of God endures forever.



Father Andrew Clark is the second of eight children. He was homeschooled before attending Christendom College, graduating in 2014 with a B.A. in History. He entered seminary for the Diocese of Arlington in 2017, ordained a priest in 2023, and is assigned as parochial vicar to Blessed Sacrament Parish in Alexandria VA. He

is privileged to be one of Dr. Mary Kay Clark's many grandchildren.



Ask the Experts:

How do You Guide Your Children to Influence Society with Catholic Values?

Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience

Set the World on Fire...

How you teach your children to shape culture with Catholic values is a topic I could write a book about.

I chose my confirmation saint, St. Catherine of Siena because of her quote, "Be who God made you to be, and you will set the world on fire." Chances are, if you are reading this, you have

made the GIANT first step in raising kids with Catholic values and enabling them to change the culture.

You are homeschooling them and teaching them the one true Faith. Keep going. Steep them in the Faith. Have saint quotes and pictures and holy water and rosaries and crucifixes in every room. Go to weekly Mass. Monthly confession. Daily prayer. Live the Beatitudes.

Love and serve and pray for your family, your husband, your wife and your children. By name, every day. Steep them in the good, the true, the beautiful. Great art, great music, great books should be in your home.



Defend Truth with Light and Joy.



Discuss these things around the dinner table. Get outside together. Serve together. Get involved in your parish and your community. Pray for your priest by name. Smile at the mailman. Hold the door for the next person in line. Pay for the bill for your neighbor who is struggling. Defend truth with light and joy.

So many Catholics today either do not know the truth or live it out like "sour-faced saints," as St. Teresa of Avila, another one of my favorites, famously said. We are the Church Militant, and we are called to be happy warriors, and in this way, we will set the world on fire.

Kristen Brown, Virginia

Give a Gentle Witness Every Day...

Saying grace before meals is such a seemingly small act. However, though I grew up a cradle Catholic, it wasn't until I became a parent that I started praying before meals.

Then, as my children grew, we carried our prayers into the public square. We openly prayed before meals in restaurants, at picnics, and while dining with friends. We didn't make

a spectacle of ourselves. We just made the Sign of the Cross individually and said our prayers together softly. We gave a gentle, visual witness to our Faith.

We adopted the practice of publicly praying grace precisely because the witness of others inspired us. When we moved to a Southern state nearly three decades ago, we found ourselves surrounded by many Christian witnesses. I used to say that the first question people asked when I lived in the northern parts was where do you work, but the first question Southerners asked was where do you go to church?

66 The Witness of Others Inpires Us.

Whether owing to my upbringing or my Northern cultural influences, I tended to keep my faith practices hidden before I was exposed to the Southern way. So, I was shaped by others, which led me to recognize our opportunities as a Catholic family to shape others.

It doesn't take big actions or loud proclamations to shape the culture. Giving a gentle witness every day, in ordinary places, has the power to affect change, one person, one family at a time.

Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina

Respect All Human Life...

Homeschooling has allowed us to teach our children values by living in a Catholic culture in our home and community. My husband and I made sure that our children respect all human life from conception to natural death.

We celebrated when new babies were born into our families, parish, and homeschool community. We had the opportunity to take care of

our elderly parents and even had one of our parents move in with us when they were no longer able to care for themselves.

It was a true gift to our children to be with their grandparents at the last stages of their lives. We visited nursing homes and prayed the Rosary with the elderly. In addition, we participated in the National March for Life with our children.

We studied the lives of the saints to learn how to live out Catholic values and virtues. Our children wrote a paragraph daily about the saint of the day, which helped them understand how the saints lived out their Catholic faith, often heroically.

There are many resources available online and in books that can help families incorporate the various traditions and foods associated with feast days. Celebrating our Catholic Faith in the family is a gift with eternal rewards!

Vicky Coughlin, California

THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



With homeschooling, our children can focus on the things they love! We don't have to hold them back. There are no limitations to feeding their love of learning and helping them grow.

Another major benefit is the sibling bond between my children. It is such a blessing seeing them learn and grow together!

The Ochoa Family, Goodyear, Arizona



The Stay-at-HOOLING MOM





Season 3 Update!

Ginny Seuffert and Mary Ellen Barrett are back with Season Three of *The Stay at Homeschooling Mom Podcast* with warm and witty discussions for homeschooling moms.

This article highlights insights from Season Two's finale, *Healthy Homeschool Mom*.

New episodes drop every two weeks, covering topics such as fostering cheerful obedience, easy meal planning, and remembering why we homeschool. So, pour a cup of your favorite and join Ginny and Mary Ellen wherever you listen to podcasts.

Reach us on Facebook: *The Stay at Homeschooling Mom Podcast* or email mbarrett@setonhome.org.

And don't forget—share with your homeschooling friends!

www.setonhome.org/podcast

grew up in the era that loved watching *I Love Lucy*. One of the most famous episodes of the show was the one in which Lucy was starring in a commercial for a product called *Vitameatavegamin*, the opening line of which was:

"Are you tired, rundown, listless? Do you poop out at parties?"

Those two sentences often ran through my head when my family was young. The answer was always yes.

Like all mothers, my children's health was my primary concern. I took them to all their well visits, made annual dentist appointments, made sure they ate their vegetables, and had strict bedtimes. However, I ate the crusts off their sandwiches, got very little sleep, didn't see a doctor or dentist for years, and fueled myself with too much coffee and sugar, and it showed.

This is not what God intends for us mothers. There are many places in the Bible where we are commanded to care for our bodies. Our Baptism makes us temples of the Holy Spirit, and as such, we need to care for ourselves.

Your body is a gift, no matter how you feel about it right now, and you need to treat it as such. You cannot pour from an empty cup; if you neglect yourself long enough, it will catch up with you.

#1 Make Time for Appointments

It is easy to put off doctor and dental appointments when you have small children. Bringing them along or getting a sitter can seem overwhelming, but it is important. A yearly

physical, dental cleaning, GYN/OB appointment, and mammogram should be the minimum you try to achieve within a certain amount of time.

Priorities change at different ages, but contact your physician at least once a year.



#2 Prioritize Moving

Go to the park and play with the kids. Do some gardening, go for a walk. Here's something that works well in a homeschool setting because children need recess.

Put the baby in a stroller and take a walk around the neighborhood - everyone will benefit. A walking pad is a great tool if it is within the budget. You can work with the children while getting steps in.



#3 A Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle protects your health and is the key to feeling energetic. This means eating well, moving, and resting.

Set realistic goals and take baby steps at first. Eat one healthy meal per day or change your snacking situation. Start with trying to get 5,000 steps a day or three glasses of water.



#4 Get the Kids Involved

Children balk at doing the dishes but seem to like meal prep. Teach them how to wash and safely cut veggies and make a simple salad.

Each meal should have at least one fruit or veggie or both. Carrot sticks, cucumber slices, a cut-up apple, or a bowl of grapes are all easy for small hands to manage, and it means everyone is eating well.



#5 Resting - A Good Night's Sleep

Resting can mean getting a good night's sleep. It also means learning to handle stress. We Catholics have a real leg up here since praying is the best way to handle stress.

We also have the meditations of the rosary. There are books and online sites to help keep your mind focused on the mysteries, read scripture, or buy a book of prayers – some specifically written for moms.

Pray when you are nursing the baby or before bedtime. Don't worry if you fall asleep, your guardian angel will finish praying for you.

Rest when you can. If you are getting up with a baby at night, try to rest when the baby naps. The kitchen floor can stay sticky for another day.

Even a rest on the couch while older children play quietly can help you feel better. My husband and I used to give each other a "sleep late" day every weekend. I slept in on Saturday, and he did it on Sunday. We chose to attend a later Mass for years to make this happen. It was glorious, and I looked forward to it every week.

Taking care of yourself can seem like one more thing to do in an overcrowded

schedule, but take it from an older mom. The time you put in now will reap many benefits as you age.

You want to be able to dance at your children's weddings and play with grandchildren someday, and the building blocks of those healthy older years begin now.





BY HEATHER HIBL

Notes on Motherhood from My Comfy Chair

There is a moment, someday in your future, when you will look up and realize that you are alone. Not forever. It's not a tragedy. Nothing happened, except time.

All those hours of parenting you did will fade into a blur that is your children's childhoods. Now they are teens. Now they are adults. Now they don't need you the same.

Being alone isn't sad, exactly. Yet, I sit on my yellow chair by the window, and I feel a sense of panic. What do I do? What do I do now? Eight babies in eleven years. It went so fast. It took so long. All the crying and teething and diapers and peanut butter sandwiches and shoes that were always misplaced.

And then, very suddenly, they'd moved on to school, and I was teaching them. Bumbling through. Treating it like a job. Hating it most days. Loving it some. The frightening weight of knowing that they needed an education, and it was on me to give them one.

Setting up the school room with desks and a chalkboard and the American flag in the corner to make us feel legit. A million hours of study ticked out by the clock on the wall. Workbooks, flashcards, spelling tests, and book reports all cluttering a house that always smelled like freshly sharpened pencils.

But over the years, the pencils turned into computers and textbooks and college applications. Play dates were replaced with drama productions and soccer games and driving lessons where my knees ached from pushing an invisible brake on the passenger's side.

I Should Have...

There is a part of me that is freaking out. I should have done it better. I should have taken more time to slow down and see. I should have been present. I should have loved homeschooling more. I'll never get it back. That panicky part of me thinks I should have another baby quick, at forty-seven, and this time, do it right. Soak in every moment, knowing that potty training and math facts and dance practices don't last forever.



So many of the opinions that fly at me now from my children really sting. The half-understood truths of baby adults. It's humbling. It's frightening. I'm learning to be still and listen.

But They Came Back

The most comforting part of it all, though, is that they come back. From my yellow chair, in my silent house, I hear the screen door swing as soccer cleats and car keys drop to the floor. I hear the fridge door open and a sigh as they take in the shelves full of food. I hear, "Mom, there's nothing to eat."

Later on, baskets of dirty clothes are brought in from a clunky, old car because, "Mom, it costs three whole dollars to do laundry at my apartment."

On Sundays, I entice them with steak and peach pie for dinner. Anyone's welcome to join us, and I look down the candle-lit table in wonder at all of the people brought into my life.

What a gift. What a blessing! Ah, so this is middle age, I think to myself with a smile. I climb into bed at seven with wrinkle cream on my face and a little prayer of thanksgiving. Very nice.



Heather Hibl, Seton Elementary Counselor, lives in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia with her blue-eyed husband and her eight blue-eyed children. She is always missing the ocean and nearly always craving blueberry muffins. Obviously, her favorite color is blue. Oh, and she also likes to write.

Seton 2025 Graduation

What You Need to Know:

To participate in the Seton 2025 Graduation held in Front Royal, Virginia, on May 31, 2025, students must:

- Be enrolled in 12th grade.
- Be taking courses that will fulfill the Seton graduation requirements.
- Have earned a minimum of 15 High School credits.
 - Expect to complete all High School work in the 2025 Calendar year.
 - Be current on any payments due to Seton.
- Register and pay the graduation fee by May 1, 2025



We look forward to welcoming all of our graduates this year!

For more graduation information: setonhome.org/student-life/graduation-2025/



option and started by using Seton Home Study.

Life as a Homeschooling Family

Our family includes our seven children, aged 23 to 2, and now includes two grandchildren! Chris is an owner of an in-home service that cares for the elderly.

Our two oldest children are homeschool graduates. Our oldest child is now married and has a one-year-old daughter and another baby girl due to be born in the spring. Our second oldest is attending a local college.

We presently have three homeschoolers: a daughter preparing to graduate in the spring, a son who is a freshman, and a son who is in sixth grade. Our youngest two are ages 3 and 2.

Each day of homeschooling is different and brings new graces, achievements, and challenges. We never get bored! The older children sometimes help teach the younger ones and take turns being with the toddlers so Mom can work one-on-one. Homeschooling truly is a family effort, as everyone plays a role in making it work.

The Blessings of Homeschooling

There are many benefits to homeschooling, but the biggest is the time it allows us to be together as a family. It allows our family to form a special bond and to be together in the ups and downs, joys and suffering, and special, once-in-a-lifetime moments of life.

> We chose Seton because it is solid and firmly rooted in the truths and teachings of the Catholic Church.

It especially allows us to pray together as a family and share in the Mystical Body of Christ as we make an offering of our work each day.

Homeschooling also enables us to live out the church's liturgical year, celebrating and honoring the saints and feast days. Other benefits include the ability to travel while homeschooling and the flexibility to choose when our school breaks will be.

We chose Seton Home Study School because it is solid and firmly rooted in the truths and teachings of the Catholic Church.

Its comprehensive curriculum—including lesson plans, textbooks, grading services, and support services—has provided structure while allowing us to adapt to our family's needs.

Overcoming Challenges

One challenge in our homeschooling experience is staying motivated and on track. Seton has helped us overcome this challenge through its consistency and lesson plans. If we have a rough day or fall behind in a particular subject, the lesson plans allow us to pick up where we left off. They also give us flexibility to make adjustments or modifications to customize in a way that works for us.

Prayer and our faith have been the foundations of our homeschooling experience. We weave our day with prayer. We begin with morning offering prayers and strive to begin and end each subject with prayer, calling upon the help of Our Blessed Mother, the Holy Spirit, and patron saints.

We strive to pray the Angelus, the Rosary, and the Divine Mercy Chaplet each day and end our day with prayers at night.

When people comment on our homeschooling and say words such as, "I don't know how you do it!" Cheri often responds, "We give thanks to God for His graces and His mercy, and we pray our way through!"

Encouragement for Families

Homeschooling has allowed our children to develop their potential by giving them the time and flexibility to pursue their interests, gifts, and talents.

One of the greatest joys of being a homeschooling parent is witnessing the unfolding, unwrapping, and opening up of the gifts and talents that God has given each child—whether it be nurturing God's creation, playing a musical instrument, or pursuing a new hobby such as carpentry or beekeeping.





Beyond academics, homeschooling fosters growth in virtue. Our children learn to love and serve God by loving and serving one another. It is a means of sanctifying our souls as we strive to teach, help, and support each other every day.

For families considering homeschooling, our advice is to pray. Spend time with Our Lord to discern the Will of God and ask for Our Blessed Mother's intercession for the grace to know and do His Will. It is also helpful to speak with other homeschoolers in your area and review textbooks beforehand, either through other homeschoolers or at a homeschool conference.

If you discern that homeschooling is God's Will for your family, do not doubt your ability to do it. Remember, "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). If it is His Will, He will provide the necessary graces to carry it out.



A Knock, a Door, a Journey: From Seton to JPCatholic

Growing up, my older brother and I trespassed upon one another's time with callous freedom. He, in particular, maintained a candid method of announcing his imminent intrusion upon my thoughts.

The Intrusion

BANG BANG BANG!

Three sharp knocks, immediately followed by the crack of my bedroom door flying open, were the unmistakable signs that Raphael desired conversation. The crack came from the inner knob's collision with the wall. The wall sustains an ugly dent, and the poor door, faulty hinges.

I had my own routine reaction. "What do you want? I'm busy." Careful disdain was my modus operandi with Raphael; without jealous time-guarding, we were liable to spend hours

And that day we did: the day he introduced me to JPCatholic. **BANG BANG BANG!**

Crack! "I'm leaving for college next month. You should come."

"What?!" Leaving? Next month? I was too shocked to feign hostility.

"It's everything you've ever wanted in a college. Trust me."



The Lure of JPCatholic

He made me browse the JPCatholic website, and I was dazzled. It was my dream, a thriving Catholic community with daily Mass and confession; illustration and creative writing programs, and a continued life in California.

I was tired of community college, tired of guarding against thinly veiled socialism and the sick fear that—in a split second—my friends would cancel me for my faith.

Gratitude and Growth

Coming to JPCatholic was breathing fresh air. It was finding home.

Simply put, there's a magic to this place. I spend my days plugging away at projects in the company of my husband, my brother, and my best friend—and countless other talented, charming people. Life is a breathtaking whirlwind of love-filled prayer and work.

It's a life made possible by many blessings, among them my time with Seton. Seton students, know your advantage. Really. Seton organized my mind; it ingrained a sense of structure within me. And structure promises success: every fragment of formal training is invaluable.

I know that, in 9th grade, writing about Robinson Crusoe seems unglamorous and unimportant—but it is important, and the glamor comes later. Seton gave me a box; now I can think outside of it. Seton built me a foundation; now I can build cathedrals. Seton assigned me essays; now, I can write anything.

Because of both institutions, I'm now a writer—not perfect, but operative. And I will forever be grateful to Seton and JPCatholic for making me one—and for that first destructive knock on my door.





On His Lifetime Journey, George Now Has Black BeltA young man of many interests, George is a lifetime member of his dojang and plans to continue his taekwondo journey throughout his life.



Elise Star Wins Award in Ballet Debut | The flexibility of homeschooling lets Elise Star finish her lessons in the morning and always have time in the afternoon for her ballet lessons.

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Movies have always been my first love. As a child, I would watch films and imagine myself living the lives of the characters on screen.

When I discovered special features and behind-the-scenes videos, my imagination transformed from becoming the characters themselves to becoming the director, the producer, or part of the crew. I realized that those were the real magicians working to create movie magic. Since that discovery in my youth, I have been determined to make movies that move people the way they moved me.



My journey to that point has been far from straightforward. A career in the movie industry seemed like an elusive prospect at best. In addition to the mystique, I also had something many would say is a hindrance to a career in Hollywood: a strong Catholic faith.

Against the Odds

Despite the odds stacked against me, I set out blindly to pursue this dream. I knew the power of a good movie, and if that medium was combined with the truths of the Catholic Faith, what could be more impactful? Enter John Paul the Great Catholic University.

I discovered the school through a Google search back in 2017. At the time, I was attending another Catholic college. I had been spending more time making movies for fun than doing my actual homework and decided I wanted to transfer to a film school.

I loved the Catholic education I was receiving and knew I would miss it if I attended a secular school. On a whim, I searched the internet to see if a Catholic film school even existed. I doubted that such a thing could be real, but to my utter shock, I found exactly what I was looking for at JPCatholic.

Suddenly, my Catholic faith was no longer a hindrance to my film career but a superpower that unlocked a shortcut to truth-telling (which is all good storytelling really is). My filmmaking spirit was nurtured and pushed to grow in new and exciting ways. I was thriving. I spent two amazing years at the school.

Eventually, graduation came and went, and I began working for a marketing company. While I enjoyed my time there, the urge to make movies rather than commercials and brand videos was ever-present. Then, out of the blue, I reconnected with my old film professor. He told me that since I had left, the school had begun a Feature Film Program.

Featured Film Program

In this program, students and professors collaborate to create movies for class credit. It was a huge undertaking, and he needed another full-time producer to help make it happen. It was exactly the opportunity I had been looking for.

So began my journey back into narrative film, and what a wild and rewarding ride it has been. When I started with the Feature Film Program, JPCatholic had just wrapped and edited their first feature, O, Brawling Love! (now streaming on Prime Video).

My first day on the job was spent reading through scripts that were being considered for the second feature, and we eventually chose a script titled *No Reception*.

No Reception is a "family revenge comedy" in which Cody, a posh city dweller, gets lost in the wilderness and becomes caught up in a longstanding feud between two forest hermits. It's a movie filled with wacky fun and spooky misdirects. At its heart, though, it's a story about family and forgiveness.

Making a Movie

The process of making the movie was long and grueling. Pre-production involved five months of rewriting, planning, and scheduling and building two massive sets from scratch in our school's soundstage.

Filming consisted of a month of 12-hour days, most of them outdoors in the California June heat. Postproduction took a year of editing, re-editing, and editing yet again. Though no part of the process was easy, it was undoubtedly one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.





There is a quote by Vincent van Gogh that states, "Great things are not done by impulse but by a series of small things brought together. And great things are not something accidental but must certainly be willed." This movie was truly willed into existence not solely by me but by many incredibly talented students and professors who poured their hearts into their work day in and day out.

Ritz Theatre Premiere

No Reception premiered this past summer at the Ritz Theatre in downtown Escondido. It was a packed house with over 450 people in attendance. I had the chance to see the entire cast again and most of the students who worked on the film, many of whom had since graduated. It was a night to remember.

There are few feelings comparable to seeing all your hard work pay off in such a tangible way. Hearing laughs during a scene you painstakingly edited to ensure its comedic timing, hearing gasps during moments designed to be scary, and hearing claps and cheers when the hero overcomes obstacles and achieves his goal. Mostly, though, it was rewarding because those Catholic morals I was always told had no place in the movie theatre were exactly what made the film resonate.

No Reception will be released on streaming in 2025. O, Brawling Love! is available now on Prime Video.



Learn More At: jpcatholic.edu/go/feature



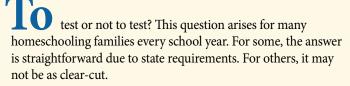
Kaitlyn Krikorian grew up just outside of Toronto, Ontario. She moved to Southern California in 2018 to pursue a career in Filmmaking, graduating from JPCatholic's film program in 2020. Since then, Kaitlyn has worked in the industry as a cinematographer, editor, director, and producer. She is the founder of State of Art, a non-profit offering community and support for San Diego creatives. Her recent work includes producing and directing music videos for Southern California-based artists and producing and editing JPCatholic's second feature film. No Reception.

Why Test?

Benefits of Standardized Testing for Homeschoolers

from Seton Testing Services

BY FELICITY SMOOT AND STAFF



If you're considering whether standardized testing would be a valuable addition to your homeschooling journey, let's explore the benefits and why we recommend it.

Build Test-Taking Skills

Exposure to standardized tests helps students build valuable test-taking strategies, time management, and problem-solving skills useful in future academics and careers.

Reduce Anxiety

Most of us have experienced taking a standardized test filling out a Scantron bubble test sheet with a No. 2 pencil in a quiet room.

Test-taking is an inevitable part of life, whether for the SAT, ACT, college entrance, career certifications, or professional licensing. Introducing standardized testing in a homeschool setting helps students become familiar with the process, reducing anxiety and boosting confidence for future exams.

Unbiased Assessment

Homeschooling parents often wonder, "Is my child on track?"

Standardized testing provides an unbiased assessment, reassuring that your student is excelling.

Scholarship Opportunities

High standardized test scores can qualify students for meritbased scholarships and financial aid programs.

Here's a tip: Check out www.Fastweb.com, a free scholarship search platform.

Discover Weaknesses

In our experience, Seton students consistently perform well on standardized tests. If scores indicate areas needing improvement, testing helps pinpoint specific subjects requiring extra attention.

This focus allows parents to assess their child's strengths and weaknesses compared to peers, identify areas needing improvement, make necessary adjustments, and ensure their child stays on the right academic path.

Highlight Strengths

Standardized testing can serve as a valuable tool for identifying students' strengths by providing a clear, objective measure of their abilities in key academic areas.

These assessments evaluate like reading comprehension, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving. By comparing student performance to a consistent set of criteria, standardized tests highlight where a student excels, whether in specific subjects or cognitive tasks.

Parents can use these insights to tailor teaching strategies to nurture strengths and help students to recognize their talents, boost their confidence and guide academic or potential career paths.

State Requirements

Some states require periodic standardized testing for homeschoolers to demonstrate academic progress and comply with homeschooling laws.

Prepare for the Unexpected

One of the advantages of homeschooling is its flexibility, allowing for unique and personalized learning experiences. However, life is unpredictable. If circumstances require your child to transition into a traditional school, having documented test results can prove their academic progress.

"Good Student" Discounts

Teen car insurance can be costly, but good student discounts help. Standardized test scores may qualify as proof, reducing your costs.

Objective Validation

Test results provide an independent measure of a student's abilities, which can be useful when applying for internships, dual enrollment programs, or jobs that require academic proof.

Bottom Line - Peace of Mind

While testing isn't mandatory for every homeschooling family, its advantages, from easing test anxiety and documenting progress to securing financial benefits can provide peace of mind. Consider whether incorporating standardized testing into your homeschool routine could be valuable for your student's academic journey.



Felicity Smoot is the Assistant Director of Seton Testing Services, a former homeschool student, and holds a B.S. in Psychology from Old Dominion University. She enjoys going on outdoor adventures with her three kids, traveling, long distance running, and reading historical fiction.



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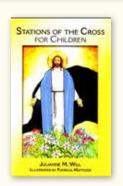
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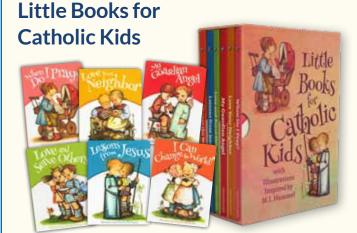


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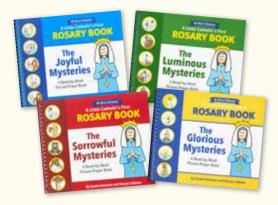
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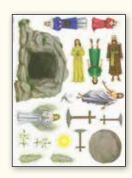
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This Easter Story Magnet Set is a great way for kids of all ages to learn about the Death and Resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. They make great Easter basket stuffers. Creates a full Easter scene.

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Yes, now is the time to plan how you'll finish the school year—not in May when there's too much work left and not enough time to complete it.

Having counseled thousands of homeschooling families, I want to share practical tips to help you cross the finish line smoothly. Planning your school year's end now will bring peace of mind and prevent frustration later.

Seton's Flexibility

Seton does not require elementary students to complete every assignment for a final grade. Not having a final grade will not impact their progression to the next grade. Decide what matters most—mastering essential material or receiving a graded report card.



Laura Clark is a 30-year homeschooling veteran, mother of 8, and grandmother of an ever-growing number of grandchildren. She was a stay-at-home mom until she began working at Seton as an elementary counselor in 2020. Laura volunteers at her parish by heading the homeschool support group and helping run the teen drama club. She loves directing musicals - at least, she must since that's what she does with her free time. She lives with her family in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia.

Were Here to Help

I hope these strategies help you plan a smooth and stress-free end to the school year. If you need guidance, please reach out to us. Our counselors are available by phone, email, or Seton Online chat through your MySeton page.

Happy planning!

Elementary Grades

Option 1: Learn the Essentials

If your priority is ensuring your child learns key concepts, review what remains and set weekly goals based on your target end date. Keep your plan realistic, allowing flexibility for unexpected interruptions. Focus on quality learning rather than checking off assignments.



Option 2: Report Card Completion

If official records matter to you, here's how to finish the year efficiently:

- Review course requirements: Check MySeton or quarter report forms to see which assignments must be submitted for grading. Remember, parent-graded assignments are optional.
- Prioritize Seton-graded work: Identify the required tests and assignments. For example, if a quarter test covers Chapters 6-8, focus on those sections.
- Test out when possible: For subjects such as spelling and math, if your child excels try giving the quarter test first. If they do well, additional exercises may not be necessary. If not, review weak areas before retesting.
- Tackle big projects first: Prioritize time-consuming assignments like the 8th-grade research paper or book reports before smaller tasks.

High School

High school courses must be completed to earn credit, so students working toward a Seton diploma must submit all Seton-graded assignments.

Prioritize and Strategize

- Finish "almost done" subjects first: Eliminating one course from your workload makes others feel more manageable.
- Check software deadlines: Programs like Rosetta Stone or Teaching Textbooks may have expiration dates. If a license is expiring soon, prioritize that subject to avoid
- Focus on required assignments: Determine what must be turned in and break it into manageable steps. For literature, set daily reading goals and outline the book analysis.

Use Online Submissions

Submitting assignments online speeds up grading and prevents lost work. SetonOnline also structures high school coursework by week and day, making it easier to stay on track. If only a couple of courses remain, consider accelerating by completing multiple lessons at once.

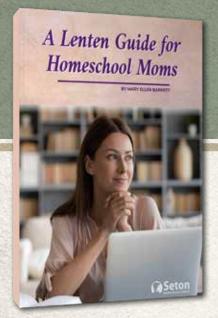
Block Scheduling for Efficiency

Many families use block scheduling, focusing on one or two subjects per day instead of switching between multiple. For example:

- Complete a full week of English in one day.
- The next day, tackle Theology or History.
- Continue until each subject is complete.

However, math requires regular practice, so dedicate time to it daily before switching to other subjects.





A Lenten Guide for Homeschool Moms

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

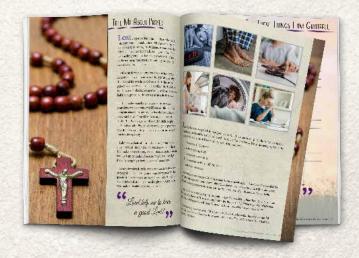
We are again at the holy season of Lent, and for busy moms, it can be hard to approach it in a meaningful and prayerful manner. We are called to try for holiness

all year, but Lent brings about the desire for holiness more profoundly for many of us, which is an entirely good thing.

What can be challenging is the practicality of achieving that holiness. What is holiness for us? Defining it is less important than desiring it, and this guide will help you, as a busy mom, settle your mind into that desire and help you, at least in some part, achieve what you desire.

A Mother's Lenten Journey

This guide is not for your children so much as for you to quietly grow closer to Our Lord this season and lead your family to a closer relationship with Him as well. It is a few pages of suggestions and prompts with space for lists and reflection if that is something you choose to do. However, suppose none of that fits into your life now. In that case, it is important to remember that taking care of



your family, doing laundry, cooking, changing diapers, and teaching numbers and letters is holy work. You can make all these daily tasks your Lenten practice.

"Whatever you do for your family, for your children, for your husband, for your wife, you do for God. All we do, our prayers, our work, our suffering, is for Jesus." - Saint Teresa of Calcutta

This booklet was written to encourage you to make Lent your season to desire closeness with Jesus and to discern His will for your life and family. We hope you find it helpful and that your Lent is one that bears fruit in every aspect of your life.



Mary Ellen Barrett

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SCAN Me





Sean Hilbert - Academic Counselor

In my role with Seton, I offer guidance, encouragement, and support to homeschooling families. Whether it's helping with curriculum choices, providing tips on staying organized, or simply lending a listening ear, my goal is to make their homeschooling experience smoother and more successful.

I was drawn to Seton because of its strong commitment to upholding the truths of the Catholic faith, which resonates with my love for authentic Catholic education.

In a world that often challenges the Church, it's very refreshing to find Seton, which not only provides solid academic instruction but also nurtures the spiritual and moral growth of its students. This approach to education is greatly important to me, and I wanted to be part of an institution that emphasizes the importance of both virtuous learning and virtuous living.

Some Background

Regarding my background, I graduated from Christendom College with a Bachelor of Arts in History, where I wrote my thesis on the Second World War.

This academic experience allowed me to delve into the history of the West while deepening my understanding of how faith and reason intersect in the study of history. I have many other interests, from freelance writing to engaging in pseudophilosophical conversations with friends. Aside from that, I also make it a priority to stay active and work out whenever I can.

My connection to Seton is not just professional but personal. I spent my middle and high school years at Seton School in Manassas, VA, which Anne Carroll ran. For those who don't know, Mrs. Carroll was heavily involved with the founding of Seton Home Study, and there's a fair bit of overlap in their curricula. My family has also been involved with Seton Home Study for many years—in fact, my youngest brother is set to graduate soon!

STAFF SERIES

A chat with those who serve you!

Challenges of Homeschooling

Homeschooling can be overwhelming. Having a supportive network can make all the difference in the world. I am honored to be a part of that network and to help families navigate the challenges of homeschooling.

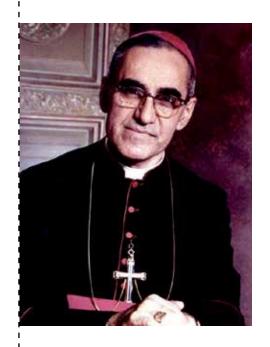
A life lesson I've learned in my time at Seton is the value of perseverance. There are many moments when things don't go as planned, but I've come to realize that persistence, patience, and adaptability are key to overcoming challenges.

This lesson is vital in my work with Seton families, as I encourage them to keep pushing forward, even when faced with difficulty. Knowing that I've been able to help others find their way and stay on track is a deeply fulfilling part of my work. It's a reminder that, with faith and determination, we can face whatever comes our way.



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The first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal.

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Evangelii Nuntiandi On Evangelization in the Modern World Pope Paul VI December 8, 1975