



Seton Home Study School

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Queenship of Mary

During these last days of summer, we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Mother, body and soul, into heaven, on August 15th. A week later, on August 22, we celebrate the feast of the Queenship of Mary.

Her immaculate body, conceived without sin, full of grace, would not be left by Her dear Son Jesus to corrupt in a grave at the end of His Blessed Mother's life. So she was given the tremendous gift of being assumed with a glorious body directly into heaven.

What a feast day the Assumption must have been in heaven! Mary entered heavenly glory, not only surrounded by all the angels, of almost infinite number and variety, but also surrounded by all those holy souls who entered heaven at the time of the Resurrection of Jesus. On that day, Mary was enthroned as Queen of Heaven.

Mary, Queen of Heaven! This title is not enough for the Church. Therefore, we also call her Queen of Angels, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Martyrs, and Queen of All Saints. Mary is Queen because she was the most faithful disciple of Jesus. She lived a life of heroic faith and virtue.

Most of all, however, Mary is Queen because she is the Mother of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Mary is the Queen of Mothers because she gave birth to the perfect Man, Jesus Christ,

Who through His cross and resurrection has become King of the Universe.

Finally, Mary is Queen because she is the mother of her Son's mystical body, the Church. The Blessed Mother gives birth to Jesus in our souls. She gives birth to us as spiritual sons and daughters of the Father.

Since Mary is the Mother of the Church, she is also Mother of the Domestic Church, that is, of each Catholic family and home. She is therefore, the Queen of the Home, the Queen of the Domestic Church. In fact, she should be our own special Queen, Queen of home schooling mothers. We should be her ladies in waiting.

The Queenship of Mary reminds us that Motherhood is a royal and noble vocation. Tragically, motherhood is not respected these days. All sorts of things in our American society are being done and said to discourage women from becoming mothers.

Like Mary, we home schooling mothers must respond to the grace of being a mother and queen. We must show dedication to our own vocation as mothers and teachers of our children. We must demonstrate to our spouse and our children that we regard this vocation of motherhood with tremendous value, dignity and with grace. Like the Queen of heaven, we are offering to our children Her Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mary, Queen of Heaven, help us to understand that each day we must present Jesus Christ to our children as the King that He is.

Mary, Queen of Heaven, help us to be truly queens in our own home, by working to serve instead of being served.

Mary, Queen of Heaven, help us to remember that we are your children and spiritual brothers and sisters of your Son and our King, Jesus Christ.

Mary, Queen of Heaven, help us to be a holy queen in our domestic church, not a queen who sits on a throne, but a queen who works with our spouse and children to help them grow closer to you.

Queen of Mothers, teach us to be true Catholic Mothers. Teach us to be holy, to be good, to be wise, to be loving. Teach us to make our home a domestic church in which you reign as Queen and with your Son Jesus Christ as our King.

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Teaching Reading Comprehension

by Dr. Mary Kay Clark

After religion, there is no subject more important to teach our children than reading. Reading is absolutely necessary for learning all the other subjects. Reading is vital to learning more about our Catholic Faith. The American public school teachers back in the 1800's and well into the 1900's used the common prayers, especially the Our Father, and the Bible to teach reading. They recognized that the goal of reading and of all education is to learn more about God.

"Why do I have to learn to read?" asks your little boy of five. If we cannot read, our level of thinking and of reasoning will likely remain at a childlike level. Have you ever spoken with someone who is illiterate? Someone who cannot read usually has trouble with thinking critically or analytically. These are skills which reading helps to hone.

Recently, the emphasis has been on teaching children subjects which are not the business of schools, such as teaching self-esteem or politically correct topics. Such "subjects" take away from time needed for learning to read. If the children in the schools are not taught to read, but are simply taught ideas, such as the dangers to the environment about the ozone layer, through oral discussions, they will look only to the television for further information. They will be easily led to accept whatever is popularly conveyed to them via the television, movies, videos, or the Internet.

Reading is vital for survival. It has been reported that the reading level of some Americans is so low that it is dangerous for them to travel and to work in certain places and with certain materials. For instance, many workers simply cannot read warning signs about poisonous materials.

Reading comprehension is vital for the sake of our Catholic Church. Many new ideas are being conveyed to Catholics, such as the acceptability of condoms or other birth control devices. If Catho-

lic are not good readers, if they do not subscribe to good Catholic magazines and newspapers, or read good solid Catholic books, how will they be able to know what the Church teaches, or to help other Catholics to learn what the Church teaches?

Reading comprehension is vital for the sake of our nation. An uneducated citizenry, especially one which votes, can lead, perhaps has already led, to disaster. Street signs and directions are now often pictures instead of words. Will we see the day that we will pull the lever over a picture of a candidate when we vote?

Begin with Phonics and Spelling

To read the English language, one must know how to sound out the letters or a combination of letters. Phonics is putting the sounds of letters together to sound out words. Phonics is a decoding system of letters and sounds. Phonics is the key to reading.

Seton is currently using the Modern Curriculum Press series, though we are writing our own Catholic series similar to the MCP series. The MCP company used to produce Catholic phonics books and readers for the Catholic schools. When other publishers started producing texts using various fads and gimmicks, MCP remained faithful to phonics. MCP has a good program, but as long as phonics is taught, any series can be used.

Spelling should be taught along with phonics. Phonics focuses on learning to sound out the letters to be able to read words, and eventually sentences. Spelling is first hearing the words and writing the letters for the spoken sound. Both can and should be used together.

Some parents feel they do not need a spelling book as long as they have a phonics book. However, we believe that the more practice a student has in both phonics and spelling, the better the child

will learn to read. Using two different approaches with different types of lessons gives practice in a variety of applications.

In addition, the spelling takes the student into dictionary usage and vocabulary as the student learns the different meanings of the spelling words, and into creative thinking as he writes sentences using his spelling words.

Starting in third grade, Seton offers a series of vocabulary books. These teach multiple meanings and reading for meaning in context. Our series motivates children to think about words and their meaning in a variety of exercises, including crossword puzzles, a favorite.

Phonics not Comprehension

Some children can learn their phonics and can read words, but do not comprehend what they are reading. Parents are surprised when their child reads the words but cannot repeat the ideas back in their own words. This can be due to not paying attention, whereby the child is reading with his eyes but not with his mind. It also can be the result of the child being uninterested in the particular lesson. Or, it can be due to the fact that the child is not mentally mature enough to think through what he has read sufficiently to take it into his mental processes.

The Seton readers have workbooks that help students to think and to evaluate what they are reading. Parents need to work with the child to make him engage his mental powers during the reading process.

Teaching Comprehension during Pre-School Years

When you read stories, or tell stories, to your pre-school children, ask them questions about what they have heard. This is listening comprehension. Work on helping your children express themselves orally and see if they can repeat the story you have read to them in their own words. Early development of thinking and speaking skills is a good prelude to the thinking skills required

when they start to read and develop reading comprehension.

If you can read short Bible or saint stories to your children at a young age, they will be learning Catholic values as well. Try to read to your children every day. Schedule a specific time each day, perhaps right after breakfast or lunch, or right before dinner, or at bedtime.

Parents Need to be Model Readers

Parents need to be good models for their children, reading books in front of the children, and discussing books with each other and with the children, and even with friends. Children need to see the excitement displayed by parents about the ideas they read in books.

Parents should have a library of books in their home. This can be done very easily by buying books at garage sales and library used-book sales.

Going to the library often, and seeing other people enjoying reading, motivates children to read. Most libraries offer summer reading programs, which not only encourage reading many books over the summer, but usually also require the child to give a little oral book report to the librarian. If your library does not offer this, start a home-schooling support-group library book club that encourages oral book reports.

Parents should read books along with their children all during the grade school years. If a child is having difficulty in high school, especially with comprehending more adult materials, parents can read along with their child, taking turns by paragraph, and discussing the material together.

Beginning Comprehension

Children should start thinking about what they are reading as soon as possible. As soon as a child can read one sentence, he has read one idea that he should be able to express in his own words. Certain books, such as those by Dr. Seuss, encourage thinking skills while entertaining the child. A child knows from experience that the eggs on his

plate are always yellow, and it makes him think and laugh about green eggs!

Phonics and decoding the sounds to read a word is a vital basic tool, but the earlier children put the words into sentences, into an idea, the sooner children will start evaluating, thinking, analyzing. Children need to practice saying what they are thinking as they read.

Seton Readers

Some parents believe that as long as a child is reading a book, the student is learning reading comprehension. This may or may not be true. The readers and reading workbooks used in the Seton curriculum are geared for teaching comprehension through the end-of-selection exercises. The exercises help the student to think about what he has just read.

Reading comprehension exercises consist of the following skills: putting events in chronological order, outlining the incidents in the story, writing a paragraph about a character based on what he said and did, reading between the lines, recalling facts to prove a statement, interpreting, and applying ideas to his own Catholic life.

Seton provides the reading workbooks *Reading for Comprehension* and *Reading-Thinking Skills*. The comprehension book helps students think about and analyze what they have read. The Reading-Thinking workbook teaches students the importance of using precise vocabulary, how to infer from context, understanding degrees of meaning, and so on.

How to Teach Reading Comprehension

At the beginning level, as you either tell a story or read a story, you should omit a word or pause in mid-sentence and ask your child to fill in the missing word. This keeps your child alert to what you are saying or reading, and makes him keep his mind on the idea being presented.

At the intermediate and even at the high school level, with non-fiction material, students should be highlighting or underlining the main idea in the para-

graph or the topic sentence. The supporting ideas for the topic could be listed or numbered on the page. These would be the subheadings in an outline.

For young students who learn better with pictures or graphics, or older students who feel they learn better with a picture, drawings could help with comprehension. For instance, a square could be drawn with the name of a battle within the square, or a picture of a Bull for the Battle of Bull Run. Other graphics could be used to show events or sequences of events or characteristics or even setting. Pyramids, picture maps, diagrams, or story lines are just a few graphics which could be used to help a child learn comprehension.

One way to help your child focus on the content of what he is reading is to ask him to think about what he believes is going to happen next. What do you think will be the result of a character's action?

Teaching reading comprehension means teaching our children how to evaluate and to apply the ideas to our own situation, or a possible future situation. This is why it is so important to read books by Catholics and about Catholics, or books which promote Christian values. This is why it is so important to read books like the *Faith and Freedom* series. The *Faith and Freedom* readers in the primary levels show our children how we can act as good members of a Catholic family. The intermediate level readers give good examples of immigrants and of priests, nuns, and missionaries who wanted to devote their lives to serving God and thus serving others.

Reading is the path to independent learning and thinking. Home schooling parents need to take the time and expend the energy necessary to ensure that their children learn not only the basics of reading, but also the highest level of comprehension, evaluation, and critical thinking.

Note: Seton Educational Media offers a computer program on CD-ROM called "Learn to Read with Phonics" which is available for \$14.95 plus \$4 shipping.

Outing Montgomery

Montgomery County, Maryland public schools have instituted a new policy toward homosexuality which opponents say is trying to push acceptance of this “alternate lifestyle.” The school board unanimously approved adding “sexual orientation” to the list of groups protected against discrimination.

Many parents objected to this addition. Bunny Galladora, of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union of Maryland, said, “As you continue the process of turning this public educational system into a system of indoctrination, please remember unnatural sexual practices and sodomy are still criminal offenses in this state, and, more importantly, an abomination to God.”

It is something of a mystery as to why governmental bodies should promote homosexuality, or even be neutral toward it. After all, it is fruitful marriages which are the hope of the future. Anything which turns people away from the proper use of sexuality in marriage is harmful to the state, regardless of whether one considers it sinful.

VMI RIP

It appears that single-sex education may be completely doomed in this country. The Supreme Court has decided, in a case involving the Virginia Military Institute, that a public institution may not be single-sex. The seven-member majority—Scalia dissented and Thomas recused himself because he has a son attending VMI—tried to declare that their opinion regarded only VMI. But previous rulings on such matters have made it clear that the rules applied to one institution will sooner or later be applied to all, public or private.

There is quite a large body of evidence to suggest that single-sex institutions are quite effective for women. There is less evidence about male-only institutions, principally because there are so few of them. But this decision by the Supreme Court more than likely is the death knell for all such institutions. And it is primarily women’s colleges which will suffer.

Justice Antonin Scalia wrote a blistering dissent against the majority opinion, essentially accusing the majority of deciding the issue based solely upon their particular prejudices. He writes, “Today the Court shuts down an institu-



tion that has served the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia with pride and distinction for over a century and a half. To achieve the desired result, it rejects ... the factual findings of two courts below, sweeps aside the precedents of this Court, and ignores the history of our people.”

Scalia continues, “Much of the Court’s opinion is devoted to deprecating the closed-mindedness of our forebears with regard to women’s education, and even with regard to the treatment of women in areas that have nothing to do with education. Closed-minded they were, as every age is, including our own, with regard to matters it cannot guess, because it simply does not consider them debatable. The virtue of a democratic system with a First Amendment is that it readily enables the people, over time, to be persuaded that what they took for granted is not so, and to change their laws accordingly. That system is destroyed if the smug assurances of each age are removed from the democratic process and written into the Constitution. So to counterbalance the Court’s criticism of our ancestors, let me say a

word in their praise: they left us free to change. The same cannot be said of this most illiberal Court, which has embarked on a course of inscribing one after another of the current preferences of the society (and in some cases only the countermajoritarian preferences of society’s law-trained elite) into our Basic Law.”

Vouching for Catholic Schools

In a recent discussion on C-Span, Democratic Representative Major Owen of New York said that the reason Catholic schools seem to do better than public schools is that they take only the top 5% of students. Let’s see them try to take some of those lower kids, he said, and see how they do. If such abominable ignorance of education in this country is typical of Congress, then it is no wonder non-public education receives so little support in this country.

In fact, despite the reasons why home schoolers might decide not to choose Catholic schools, these schools are vastly superior to public schools in almost every way. The only area in which public schools way outstrip Catholic schools is in the number of dollars spent per student.

Catholic inner city schools have been educating so-called “at-risk” children for many years, and doing a pretty good job at it. According to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, “In 1993 the New York State Department of Education compared city schools with the highest levels of minority enrollment. Conclusion: ‘Catholic schools with 81% to 100% minority composition outscored New York City public schools with the same percentage of minority enrollment in Grade 3 reading (+17%), Grade 3 mathematics (+10%), Grade 5 writing (+6%), Grade 6 reading (+10%), and Grade 6 mathematics (+11%).’”

Indeed, to show how open Catholic schools are to those who underachieve in public schools, Cardinal O’Connor has tried to have New York City enroll their bottom 5% of students in the Catholic schools. Of course, the city has done no such thing.

NCEA & Home Schooling

Our Catholic home schooling parents are probably aware by now that certain people in the National Catholic Education Association, an independent Catholic teachers' group, are interested in establishing guidelines for Catholic home schooling families' religious education.

A couple of years ago, the NCEA sent a lengthy questionnaire to each diocesan department of religious education. They sent the results of the questionnaire back to the dioceses. It was clear from the answers that most diocesan departments of religious education were not familiar with the rights and responsibilities of parents. When asked the question by the NCEA if they wanted "guidelines" to deal with the home schooling parents, many answered in the affirmative.

As a result, the NCEA has been continuing their efforts regarding guidelines for home schooling parents. At their last annual meeting in Philadelphia, an unscheduled workshop on home schooling was conducted.

The religious sister in charge started out by saying that families were choosing home schooling because of a need for special education, a shortage of schools or high tuition, or a desire for more quality educational time with their children. Someone in attendance thought it had more to do with the parents believing that the Catholic schools were not teaching the Catholic religion.

The workshop participants believed that they need to reduce the number of home schoolers by having more communication with the parents and seeing if they could share programs. Someone said that while they cannot control the home schooling parents academically, they can control them sacramentally by making them conform to parish religious education programs.

Seton is aware that various dioceses are coming up with rules, regulations, and mandates which may not be in con-

formity with the rights and responsibilities of parents. We want to make it clear that the bishop has the right, and the responsibility to make sure that children are adequately prepared for the sacraments. He can delegate that duty to a parish priest, who may further delegate it to a DRE. However, the Canon Law is clear that parents have the responsibility, and consequently the right, to train their children in the faith, and to prepare them for the sacraments. After the parental preparation, the bishop or his designated person may determine if the child is properly prepared.

The Catholic Church has never dictated the means parents must use. Parents may use the Seton catechisms or the Ignatius Press catechisms, those from Our Lady of the Rosary or the Baltimore Catechism. Parents may use no catechism. They may convey the faith orally, by example, by Scripture readings, by teaching according to the liturgical year.

Ultimately, the bishop has the right and the responsibility to make sure that all children in his diocese who are receiving the sacraments are properly catechized and prepared to receive the sacraments.

Nevertheless, the NCEA, an association independent of Church authority, has taken steps toward establishing accepted books and other materials for home religious education. We are currently seeing regulations in some dioceses in Louisiana, California, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. The regulations have some variation, but many are saying that if a child is not enrolled in the parish school, the child must attend the parish CCD classes in order to receive the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.

Home schooling parents find this objectionable because most children are attending the public schools, and the classes are geared to them. Classes are very low level, and sometimes either contradict or appear to contradict what is being taught at home.

Confirmation classes have especially been a problem for many families. In some cases, parents find a de-emphasis on many of the traditional aspects of the faith. And in pre-confirmation retreats, there is sometimes a strong "New Age" perspective. Oftentimes these retreats are run at centers used by several parishes, and even the parish priests know little about what goes on. Also, parents have complained that these retreats are inappropriately co-ed.

The regulations we are seeing cover a variety of areas. Home schooling parents are being told the following:

1) They must work with the parish to provide the catechism classes for their own children. Parents are to work with the CCD teachers or a DRE.

2) Rights and responsibilities for the catechizing of their own children are "mutual" for the parish as well as the parents (which is not what the canon law or papal documents teach).

3) The DRE or parish CCD teacher is supposed to help parents choose textbooks or other materials.

4) Parents must attend classes to learn how to teach catechism to their own children!

5) Children must interact with other children in the parish as determined by the DRE or CCD teacher.

6) The DRE or CCD directors will provide materials for the **parents** to learn their faith.

7) Parents and children are expected to attend certain programs in preparation for receiving the sacraments, which may include retreats.

In conclusion, please keep aware of what is happening in your parish or diocese, but also remember that the church is very clear about parental rights and responsibilities. For explicit details, please write Seton and order a pamphlet by a canon lawyer called **Home Schooling and the New Code of Canon Law** for \$5, which includes shipping.



CONFERENCES

Bloomington, OH: August 16-18. Apostolate for Family Consecration. Catholic Family conference. Cardinal Arinze, Fr. Kosicki, Dr. Alice von Hildebrand. Call 614-765-4301. Seton exhibiting.

Indianapolis, IN: September 21, 1996, at St. Augustine Home for the Aged. Seton Conference with Indianapolis Catholic Home Schooling Apostolate. Father Charles Fiore: Church Teachings and Home Schooling; Ginny Seuffert: Home Schooling in the Large Family; Mary Kay Clark: How to Avoid Burnout; Dr. William Marra: Catholic Culture in the Home Schooling Family; Mr. Edward Gudan: The Father's Role in the Catholic Home Schooling Family; Panel on Discipline

Houston, TX: October 5, 1996. Seton Conference with Apostolate of Roman

Catholic Home Schoolers. University of St. Thomas, Jones Auditorium. Father Pablo Straub: Teaching the Sacraments; Dr. William Marra: Catholic Culture in the Home Schooling Family; Ginny Seuffert: Home Schooling in the Large Family; Mary Kay Clark: How to Avoid Home Schooling Burnout; Dr. Mark Lowery: The Father's Role in the Catholic Home Schooling Family; Panel on Discipline.

Chicago, IL: November 8-10. The Round Table for Catholic Home School Leaders. Write to The Round Table, 5936 W. Eastwood, Chicago, IL 60630.

Seattle, WA: January 18, 1997. Seton Conference. Speakers: Fr. Pablo Straub, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Dr. William Marra, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert. Other speakers TBA.

Long Island, NY: March 1, 1997. Seton conference.

Minneapolis, MN: March 15, 1997. Seton conference.

Returning Books

If you are finished with your books for the year, we do encourage you to return them to Seton as soon as possible. Getting books back means that we can reuse books rather than having to purchase new books. This keeps prices down for everyone.

If possible, it is best to send books by UPS rather than the post office. UPS seems to be better at delivering boxes undamaged. If you need help in packing and sending the books, Mail Boxes Etc. or other similar companies can help.

A packing list is enclosed in each box of books which notes with an asterisk which books should be returned. If you are unsure as to which books should be returned, you may call Seton and talk to the book return department.

Partial Birth Abortion

Congress has not yet voted on the partial-birth abortion veto override.

There is still time to call, write, or fax your support for the veto override to your Senator and Representatives.

If you don't know the proper address and phone numbers, you can get the information from the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121. Or, you can call the Clerk of the House at 202-225-7000 or the Secretary of the Senate at 202-224-2115.

E-Mail Grade Reports

We mentioned last month that we were working on making available a service to send grades by e-mail. We are happy to report that this service is now ready and is available to any family with an e-mail address.

If you would like to receive an e-mail copy of grades, please send a message requesting this service to Seton@Shentel.Net.

Those who receive grades by e-mail will still receive a mailed copy of the grade report. E-mail grade reports should be sent within 24 hours of the time that the grades are entered in the computer at Seton.

Sisters of Charity Killed in Front Royal area

Two Sisters of Charity, from Mother Teresa's order, were killed on Saturday, July 6th, here in Warren County, on Interstate 66, when the rear tire of their van blew out. Sister Sylvia Vazhathara, 50, of Kerala, India, a regional superior, was killed, along with Sister Mary Kateri Turo of Syracuse, NY, 40, sister superior of the Bronx convent. The funeral was at St. Patrick's cathedral in New York. Please remember in your prayers these two sisters, and a volunteer who was hurt but not seriously. We hope that these sisters will keep Seton Home Study families and staff in their prayers. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them.

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Home Schooling and Canon Law

In its discussion of the holiness of Christian marriage and family life, the [Second Vatican] Council, through its “Pastoral Constitution on the Church,” *Gaudium et spes*, affirmed the principle that “by its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and *education* of the offspring.... When they are given the dignity and role of fatherhood and motherhood, [parents] will eagerly carry out their duties of education, especially religious education, which devolves primarily on them.” The Council repeated this important teaching a bit later with these words, “Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children.... Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life *and to educate* their children.” Indeed, this teaching is echoed in several places throughout the Conciliar documents. By these assertions, the Council firmly grounded the primacy of parents over the education of their children within the context of marriage. It thus comes as no surprise that Canon 1055.1, the very first canon in the Code’s section on “Marriage,” declares that “The matrimonial covenant...is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and *education* of children....”

Canon 835.4 ... reaffirms the unique participation of parents in the Church’s sanctifying mission. Canon 835.4 states: “Parents share in a special way in this office of sanctification through their conjugal life in the Christian spirit and in taking care for the Christian education of their children.” This canon unambiguously recognizes that the

foundation of parental rights in education lies within their Christian vocation as spouses and parents. The second provision, Canon 1136, which like Canon 1134 is drawn from the section of the Code entitled “The Effects of Marriage,” outlines the wide scope of this parental responsibility when it states: “Parents have a most grave duty and enjoy the primary right of educating to the very best of their ability their children physically, socially, culturally, and morally and religiously as well.”

Canon 793.1 ... states: “Parents and those who hold their place [e.g. adoptive parents or guardians] are bound by the obligation and enjoy the right of educating their children; Catholic parents also have the duty and the right of selecting those means and institutes by which, in light of local circumstances, they can better provide for the Catholic education of their children.” ... The canon states twice that parents (along with those lawfully deputed to fill in for their absence) have the right and duty of educating their children. Moreover, it is explicitly recognized that their right extends to the *choice of means and institutes* which they prudently determine as being most suitable. It is hardly out of place to suggest, then, that should some parents determine that the home schooling of their children is the “means and institute” by which they can provide more suitably for their children’s education, then that decision must be honored.

Home Schooling and the New Code of Canon Law,
by Edward N. Peters, canon lawyer

