



Seton Home Study School

Volume XIII, Number 11

◆ *“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”* ◆

November 1996

Joy of the Magnificat

Many of us may feel very frustrated this election year because so much needs to be changed at all levels of government in order to restore our nation to a society which helps families to be families.

So many government programs, policies, and laws either overtly attack or subtly undermine the family. We see such a need for the political process to do its part to help husband and wives to stay together and to love and respect each other, and to help fathers and mothers raise children who will have solid religious beliefs, strong moral character, emotional well-being, a sense of service to the community, literacy, and skills useful to the Church and society. Yet, the anti-family poison seems only to increase in the corridors of political thought and power! Thus, we may feel that our participation in the political process is quite useless!

When we do experience frustration and a sense of uselessness over the state of our society and its politics, it is helpful to think of the Blessed Virgin Mary who became a mother under such unusual and misunderstood circumstances; who was poor; who had to travel while pregnant to Joseph’s ancestral home, Bethlehem, because of the Roman Emperor’s decree of a census; who had to live in exile because of the cruel machinations of another political ruler, Herod; and then who later had to see her son, Jesus, crucified by a conspiracy of a “puppet” government of her own people and the Roman overlords.

Despite all of these difficult circumstances we can only think that Mary constantly pondered in her heart her great song of praise, the Magnificat, which she first sang in joy to her cousin Elizabeth when they were both pregnant with Jesus and John respectively.

Despite her trying external circumstances, Mary knew the Lord had blessed her with the tremendous gift of being the Mother of God and of the Savior of the world. She knew that her son, Jesus, and her husband, Joseph, were worth all the suffering she was to endure. She knew the greatness and holiness of the Lord. She knew He does not spare us suffering; but He is faithful and merciful; and He will do great things for those who fear Him.

More importantly for our edification at discouraging times, Mary looked back at the extremely discouraging history of her people, Israel—the recurring unfaithfulness and hardness of heart of the people of Israel toward God, the enslavement in Egypt, the profanations of the Temple by the Greek conquerors, and then the oppressive taxes of Roman rule. And with the eyes of faith, she saw, not reasons for pessimism, but the perspective of eternity in all those events. God in the end triumphs.

“He hath shewed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry

with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.”

In her own life she would see this same triumph of God again when her Son utterly defeated, through His Resurrection, all the forces of injustice and cruelty that put Him to death. We can imagine that Mary sang the Magnificat upon hearing that Jesus had risen! We can imagine that Jesus’ first disciples sang the Magnificat with Mary at Jesus’ Ascension and in the upper room while they waited for the Holy Spirit!

We home schooling families are, more often than not, the “humble” and the “hungry.” We will at times be sorely tested by the machinations of worldliness and injustice in politics, but in the end we will be “exalted” and “filled...with good things” if we, like Mary, realize the treasure we have in our children and the hope we have for the future.

Mary, Mother of the Church, you are working to bring the reign of Christ to the Third Millennium; pray that we will never give up doing our part to raise Christians who will be the seeds of a new springtime for the Church! Immaculate Heart of Mary, filled with the joy and triumph of the Magnificat, pray for us.

Inside . . .

| | |
|--|----------|
| <i>A New Civilization</i> | 2 |
| <i>Breaking News</i> | 4 |
| <i>Differences</i> | 5 |
| <i>Catechisms</i> | 6 |
| <i>Notes and News</i> | 7 |
| <i>Authentic Love</i> | 8 |

Civilization of Love

*by Dr. Mary Kay Clark
Director, Seton Home Study School*

Around Thanksgiving, most of us are finishing up the first quarter of work for the home school year. First year home schooling parents may feel overwhelmed; they are often surprised at discovering how much the children have not learned in their previous school. First year parents discover they need to review and review before moving along substantially into the course work.

Second year home schooling parents know more about how their children learn, have passed the first year period of review work, and are moving along at a better pace than the first year.

Third year and later home schooling parents are more relaxed; they know which courses their children can do without much supervision, and which require more parental involvement.

Recently we have had questions from parents about their daughters. One mother said her daughter in third grade breaks out crying every time there is a writing assignment. Another mother said her daughter in fifth grade cries and says she just does not know how to find the answers, though the mother thinks she could if she would just apply herself. A third mother reported that her daughter in sixth grade seems bright, but when it comes to any type of question requiring thinking and not just a one word answer, she rebels.

Our American society is saturated with the idea that we should be able to do what we want. Whatever we feel like doing or saying is "okay,"

and we should not be stifled in expressing ourselves. Even in home schooling families, where contact with the television and public school children is limited, family members can be influenced by the philosophy "I want to do it my way," because it is so much in the cultural air we breathe.

And of course there is Original Sin. We all have inherited this "gift" of wanting to do it our way and not wanting to obey or respect anyone else, be it mother or father, wife or husband, brother or sister, or even God Himself. So when a young child cries or fusses or fumes about school work, it is often due to fallen human nature and the desire to have one's own way.

Our response must be to repeat the Biblical admonition to parents: "Train up a child in the way he should go." We cannot say to ourselves, "Oh, dear! Handwriting makes little Suzy cry, so we will just have to skip handwriting."

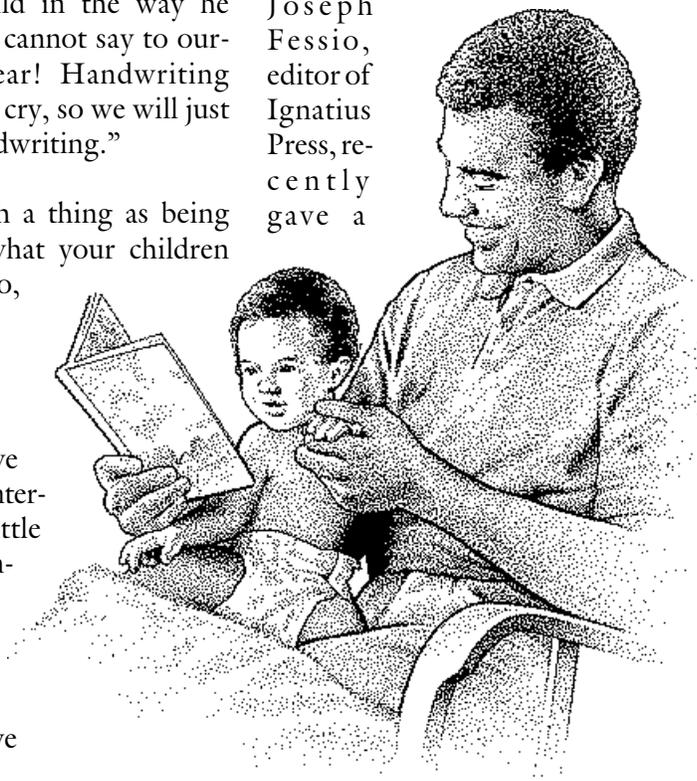
There is such a thing as being realistic about what your children can do and not do, about the amount of time a child can focus on a lesson, but what we are usually encountering with these little ones is a stubbornness and an innocent manipulation through crying so they can have their own way.

We need to be firm when we know it is the time to be firm. We need to pray with our child, by getting down on our knees with our child and praying for help to do the lesson. Ask your child to pray to his patron saint or her guardian angel, or other angels and saints to help with particular subjects.

There is another aspect to this kind of situation, and that is the value of sacrifice. Sacrificing, doing what you personally do not want to do for the sake of a greater good, is a character builder. As parents know, self-sacrifice is the basic virtue of parenting. It does not hurt children to begin practicing this virtue in a small way, even at a young age.

If we don't teach our children how to sacrifice, to do what they would prefer not to do for a noble goal, to do work correctly and on time, then what kind of adults will they be? What kind of Catholics will they be?

Father
Joseph
Fessio,
editor of
Ignatius
Press, re-
cently
gave a



talk at the Wanderer Forum about the Catholic family being like a monastery. He said that we are living in a new Dark Age of violence and selfishness, of greed and a drive for comfort and pleasure.

Father said that since the rulers and legislators of our nation have legalized abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia, "in principle, our society has reached depths below which we cannot go."

He believes our response as Catholics should be to form family "monasteries" away from the world in which we can strengthen our Faith and our culture within our family. We must teach our children not only the doctrines of our Faith, but also how to live our Faith. And that means obedience to authority; it means respect for mother and father; it means doing the lessons when it is difficult; it means sacrificing self-will for a greater cause.

Teaching the virtue of sacrifice for the sake of a greater good needs to be taught not only through instruction but also through good example. Mothers need to show respect and obedience to their husbands, and husbands need to show respect and a loving attitude toward the family for whom they provide and whom they lead.

Every Catholic home should be a kind of monastery, a place of peace and prayer, sacrifice and good example, virtuous living and quality Catholic education.

Like the monasteries of the past, our homes can become centers of Christian Faith, Christian living, Christian culture. Like the monks and saints of the old Dark Ages who fled the corrupt culture, who fled the culture of death, our Catholic homes

can become the monasteries of the new Dark Age, new centers of life.

The monasteries of the past drew more and more people to them, and Christian towns grew up around them, becoming centers of Christian civilization. Perhaps the Catholic home schooling support groups can become new centers of Christian civilization.

On this subject, Margaret Dornay wrote an article in the St. Thomas More Home Educators newsletter of March, 1996, called "Back to Monasticism." She wrote, "Catholic parents have reasons beyond the practical, the convenient and the self-serving for taking a new look at the home as an educational center in the tradition of the abbeys of old. To consider setting up your own home schooling monastery is not to retreat from the world. Paradoxically, the decision to put family first is an excellent way to accomplish the ancient command to bring Christ and His message to the world; for hot-house care lavished on the present



generation will reap a rich harvest in future generations. We know that great monastic centers of the past did not merely enrich their own members. Rather, they produced thinkers, leaders, writers, and teachers whose influence reached far beyond the monastery walls."

Margaret Dornay concluded her article by noting that our home schooling families are mixing prayer, work, and study as the monasteries of old, and, like the monasteries of old, she believes we will soon witness a "flowering of faith, peace, and Christian culture."

We should not be surprised. As Margaret reminds us, "It is certainly nothing new to look to families to solve our problems whether they be social, moral, educational, or economic. No other agency, invention, or association can take the place of the divinely instituted monastery into which each human being is born. It is not that strong families are the best solution; they are the only solution."

During this election month, we are reminded that the society will not be changed by government officials. It will be changed if we lay a strong foundation of many Christian families, many little monasteries building a new Christian civilization on the strong foundation of love.

So when a child complains because he wants his own way, this is your opportunity to teach him about sacrifice, not only the meaning of sacrifice as Jesus taught us, but also the purpose of sacrifice, to make our own civilization Christlike, to make ourselves Christlike, and to gain eternal life for ourselves and those we love.

Catholic home schooling is building a new Civilization of Love.

Private Education

Education Week recently ran a report on the state of private education in the United States. According to the report, private school enrollment decreased in the last 30 years from 6.3 million students in the 1964 school year to 4.8 million students in the 1993 school year. Private school enrollment in 1996 is expected to be 6.1 million. However, private school enrollment has been increasing over the last decade.

The vast majority of the decrease in private education has come in the closure of Catholic schools. In 1964, 90% of all students in private education were in Catholic schools. Today Catholic schools enroll just over half of private school students. Catholic school enrollment has fallen from 5.7 million in 1964 to 2.5 million today. But 1996 represents the fourth straight year of increasing enrollment in Catholic schools.

The big growth sector for private schools has been conservative Christian schools, which grew 31.6% in the decade of the 1980's. The number of students in conservative Christian schools is now nearly as large as the number that attend non-sectarian private schools.

In sheer numbers, Catholic schools are still very dominant. For the 1993-1994 school year, there were 8,352 Catholic schools, 2,827 conservative Christian schools, 1,579 Lutheran schools, 1,071 Seventh-day Adventist schools, and 655 Jewish schools.

Testing the Testers

The College Board and Educational Testing Service have agreed to revise the PSAT Test in order to improve the scores of girls taking the test. Plans for the "girl-friendly" revision include incorporating a section on writing skills in the test. Since girls are thought to do better at writing, this will presumably raise their scores.

The PSAT test is important for college-bound students because millions of dollars in National Merit Scholarships

are given to students based upon their performance on the PSAT. Critics contend that girls get better grades in high school and college than boys, but that boys do better on the PSAT. Therefore, the test is unfair.

It will be an interesting experiment to see if a standardized test can actually be rewritten to favor a pre-selected group. It will be interesting also to see if high schools and colleges across the country



will now be sued by boys' advocates as unfair to boys. Perhaps as the PSAT adds writing to help girls, high schools and colleges will be forced to remove writing to help boys.

Help for Families?

The Clinton Administration has recently been touting plans to expand the Family Leave Act to include more time off for such things as attending PTA meetings. It's hard to be against family leave, but one wonders how much such things really help and how much they really hurt families.

The *Washington Times* recently reported that those who benefit most from family leave are those families with incomes over \$75,000 a year. That makes sense, because in order to take unpaid family leave, you have to have some money in the bank to see you through. Families making \$25,000 a year can't

possibly take family leave because they need every paycheck.

One wonders, though, what the cost to businesses is for family leave, and who ends up paying. Unpaid leave is not free. Businesses do incur costs such as training of workers to take jobs temporarily, and the loss of productivity of a new temporary worker over the (presumably) more skilled worker who is away. A business has to absorb such costs either by raising prices or by lowering wages.

When an employee accepts a job, the employee primarily considers salary. But a business has to consider further costs, such as social security co-payments and the cost of benefits. Questions of whether compensation is given in salary or benefits is largely irrelevant to a business, since the business is paying the same amount either way. But the question of salary versus benefits is very important to the employee. A dental plan may be great for one employee, but not much use at all to another who would prefer to take the \$1000 cost of dental coverage as salary. Such matters are usually worked out on an individual basis or by union negotiation.

However, when the government passes laws *mandating* certain benefits, it means that a business is obligated by law to weight the scale of salary and benefits in a certain way. When more weight goes in the benefit pile, less is available for the salary pile.

When asked the question, "Do you favor family leave?" most Americans answer yes. However, the responses might be very different if the question were phrased, "Do you favor family leave if your salary will be reduced by 2% to help your company offset the cost?"

It is hard to be against the Family Leave Act. It is much easier to be against permitting families and workers to decide for themselves what benefits are important to them, especially when you don't tell people their freedoms are being taken away.

Flawed Expectations

Several years ago Msgr. Michael Wrenn wrote *Catechisms and Controversies* to explain the history of the development of the “questionable agenda” in the religious education departments of American dioceses. Those of us who lived through the events that he describes can still remember going to the parish and diocesan authorities to ask why the traditional faith was no longer being taught in the parish classrooms. For those who wish to understand the historical perspective of the current problems in the Church, *Catechisms and Controversies* is required reading.

Now Msgr. Wrenn, along with Kenneth D. Whitehead, has published *Flawed Expectations*, a book dealing with the current situation regarding the reception of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by those in the religious education establishment.

The title is taken from comments about the *Catechism* from many of those in control of the religious education in this country, for they have called the new *Catechism* “flawed.” Msgr. Wrenn, on the other hand, sees their expectations of what the *Catechism* should be as flawed.

Msgr. Wrenn is a parish priest in New York City, the founder of a graduate catechetical institute, and a special consultant for religious education to Cardinal John O’Connor, who wrote the Foreword to this book. So Msgr. Wrenn understands very well the religious education establishment, and is thoroughly knowledgeable about the past and current situation in religious education in this country.

Msgr. Wrenn gives some background about why the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was needed. Based on a misinterpretation of the Second Vatican Council, certain people in the religious education establishment in the late sixties began a program of religious education which was not based on the continual and constant teaching of the Church. It was based on personal experience

and process rather than doctrine. In fact, what they published were not really catechisms at all.

In response to the problems in the 1970’s, the Vatican published the *National Catechetical Directory*, giving guidelines for catechisms. But this was completely ignored by the religious education establishment. Bishops were in general not aware of the situation, and trusted those to whom they had given the authority to work and make decisions in this area.

When it was time to translate the *Catechism* into English, the religious education establishment wanted to produce a translation which would present their own ideas more favorably, using inclusive language, for example. Three Appendixes further deal with the attempts by the religious education establishment to “translate” the *Catechism*.

Chapter five consists of 40 pages of eye-opening activities by the professional religious educators in the country, and explains fully why parents should be upset at the new religion being taught in the Catholic schools and CCD programs. Home schoolers, in light of the current efforts by diocesan Directors of Religious Education to control the religious education of home schooling families, definitely need to read this chapter.

Msgr. Wrenn and Kenneth Whitehead document how religious education “experts” in this country have tried to keep the actual *Catechism* away from the faithful. Soon after the *Catechism* was released, a commentary called *The Catechism: Highlights and Commentary* was produced by Dr. Brennan Hill and Dr. William Madges. This *Commentary* was widely distributed to religious educators, with the intention of keeping religious educators from reading the actual *Catechism* and instead relying on the *Commentary*.

An abridged version of the *Commentary* appeared in a series of seven

issues of *The Religion Teacher’s Journal* in 1994 and 1995, thus widely read by DREs, teachers, and catechists. The *Journal* also printed and widely distributed lesson plans and teacher guides in order to use the *Commentary*, NOT the *Catechism*. A video series was also produced on the *Commentary*. The title of the series is “The New Catechism: Catholic Faith Today,” but it was produced to be used with the Hill and Madges *Commentary*, not with the new *Catechism*.

So what is the content of the Hill and Madges *Commentary*? What is being taught through this abundance of supplemental materials distributed throughout all the dioceses and parishes of America? Wrenn and Whitehead write:

“Those familiar with the religious education scene in the United States in the postconciliar era will already have some inkling of the reasons why today’s typical new catechists, and the theological gurus who stand behind them, do not like the new *Catechism*. They do not like it because it asserts definite truths, whereas they tend to prefer indefinite, interminable ‘searching’; because it is cognitive and doctrinal, whereas they would prefer something more social and ‘experiential’; because it is traditional, whereas they almost always prefer something new; because it is authoritative, whereas they invariably prefer ‘consultation’ and ‘democracy,’ regardless of whether these things even apply to the case; because it is concerned with redemption from sin by Christ and looks to our sanctification in this life and salvation in the world to come, whereas they almost compulsively prefer self-help, self-expression, ‘community,’ and vague uplift, combined with a this-worldly social activism.” [pp. 164-165]

In next month’s issue, I will discuss the details of this new religion being taught in many dioceses in America.

Meanwhile, pick up a copy of *Flawed Expectations*. It is must reading for all who want to have some understanding of the current situation regarding Catholic schools and CCD programs.



The Round Table for Catholic Home School Leaders, Cabrini Retreat Center, Chicago, IL, November 8 to 10. Two nights, five meals for \$130. Call Kim Cozzi at 312-286-8571 to register.

Let leaders in your local and state organizations know about this Leadership Conference. Or send names of leaders to Kim Cozzi, and the information will be sent for the next meeting.

Conferences

Note: For Seton conferences, information is sent by mail to those in the state, and usually to surrounding states as well. Conferences include talks and the sale of Seton textbooks.

The Seton Home Study Newsletter

is published monthly by
Seton Home Study School
1350 Progress Dr.

Front Royal, VA 22630
Phone: (540) 636-9990

Computer Bulletin Board:
(540) 635-7528

Fax Machine: (540) 636-1602

Internet: Seton@Shentel.Net

Subscription price for non-enrolled families
is \$15 per year.

Executive Editor:
Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Ph.D.

Editor:
Kevin Clark

Seattle, WA: January 18, 1997. Seton Conference and Textbook Sale. Speakers: Rev. Pablo Straub on *The Sacraments*, Rev. Joseph Stanichar on *Church Teachings on Home Schooling*, Dr. Mary Kay Clark on *How to Avoid Burnout*, Dr. William Marra on *Restoring Catholic Faith and Culture Through Home Schooling*, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert on *Home Schooling in the Large Family*.

Long Island, NY: March 1, 1997. Seton Conference and Textbook Sale. Speakers: Rev. Pablo Straub, Rev. Robert Hermley on *Church Teachings on Home Education*, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Dr. William Marra, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert, Mr. Ed Gudan on *The Father's Role in Home Schooling*.

Minneapolis, MN: March 15, 1997. Seton Conference and Textbook Sale. Speakers: Rev. Pablo Straub, Rev. Robert Hermley, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Dr. William Marra, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert, Mr. Ed Gudan.

Boston, MA: tentative in the spring.

Pennsylvania: April 19.

New Orleans, LA: tentative in the spring.

Quick Notes

Support Group Newsletters. We are interested in seeing your support group newsletter. We would appreciate being on your mailing list. This keeps us informed about what is happening in the Catholic home schooling movement around the country. Let us know if you would like to trade a subscription of your newsletter for our newsletter.

Financial Aid. We often receive phone calls from people looking for financial aid. While Seton does offer financial aid on a case-by-case basis, there are many other possible sources available as well. One helpful source that we have found is retired priests who often have extra money and are happy to help pay for the education of children. We recommend that a local or state home schooling support group consider helping a needy family. Local Knights of Columbus groups often help pay tuition for a Catholic family in need. The Catholics United for the Faith local groups are very sympathetic toward home schooling, and may help a needy family. Many Catholics are concerned about the education of children. Try to see what resources might be available in your local community or circle of friends and relatives.

English workbooks. We are in the process of writing our own English workbooks. We hope to have grades 1 to 4 ready for the next home schooling year.

Sacraments. We have been hearing that some parents are being told that their children may not receive the sacraments unless they attend the parish CCD class, or unless they have special catechists' training, or unless they use certain approved texts. Some families are being pressured to "be a part of the parish community" by having the children enrolled in the parish school or CCD classes.

Hang on. Remember that the Church teaches that parents not only may but SHOULD prepare their children for the sacraments. The Church is clear, however, that pastors or bishops may question the children and make sure they are sufficiently prepared to receive the sacraments.

If you need help in responding to your local parish DRE, pastor, or bishop's office, please call and ask for our Seton chaplain to help you.

LEARNING AUTHENTIC LOVE

Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality

The Christian family is capable of offering an atmosphere permeated with that love for God that makes an authentic reciprocal gift possible. Children who have this experience are better disposed to live according to those moral truths that they see practiced in their parents' life. They will have confidence in them and will learn about the love that overcomes fears — and nothing moves us to love more than knowing that we are loved. In this way, the bond of mutual love, to which parents bear witness before their children, will safeguard their affective serenity. This bond will refine the intellect, the will, and the emotions by rejecting everything that could degrade or devalue the gift of human sexuality. In a family where love reigns, this gift is always understood as part of the call to self-giving in love for God and others. “The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible, and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society.”

Basically, education for authentic love, authentic only if it becomes kind, well-disposed love, involves accepting the person who is loved and considering his or her good as one's own; hence this implies educating in right relationships with others. Children, adolescents, and young people should be taught how to enter into healthy relationships with God, with their parents, their brothers, and sisters, with the companions of the same or the opposite sex, and with adults.

It must also not be forgotten that education in love is an overall reality. There will be no progress in setting up proper relationships with one person if at the same time there are no proper relationships with other people. As we have already mentioned, education in chastity, as education in love, is at the same time education of one's spirit, one's sensitivity, and one's feelings. The attitude toward other persons depends largely on the way spontaneous feelings toward them are handled, the way some feelings are cultivated and others are controlled. Chastity as a virtue is never reduced to merely being able to perform acts conformed to a norm of external behavior. Chastity requires activating and developing the dynamisms of nature and grace which make up the principal and immanent element of our discovery of God's law as a guarantee of growth and freedom.

- Pontifical Council for the Family