



Seton Home

Study School

Volume XV, Number 2

◆ “Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church” ◆

February 1998

The Fear of the Lord

by Fr. Constantine, Byzantine Chaplain

“The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” How is it that we “fear God?” Some find the expression “fear of the Lord” offputting. However, the concept in the Sacred Scriptures is everywhere “I will fear the Lord at all times.” The ten commandments do not command the fear of the Lord but they do command love of the Lord, in fact total love of God is the first commandment. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with thy whole mind, thy whole soul.* I believe that it is in this the first commandment that we find the key to understanding “the fear of the Lord.”

Have you ever stood next to a professional football team? If you are a person of ordinary size these huge men, together, surrounding you can be very intimidating. Proximity to anything that can suddenly hurt or kill us induces “fear.” Usually we think of that kind of fear as “physical.” But this is not the kind of fear that is the fear of the Lord. We could be physically afraid of the Lord like the Hebrews at the foot of Mt. Sinai when they were terrified

of the manifestations of God’s power. That is also not what we mean here. The fear of the Lord is a spiritual fear rooted in the love of God. This love of God so penetrates our minds and hearts that the very idea of offending God, causing Him to be ashamed of us or be displeased with us makes us fear offending Him because we love him so much. This fear, in turn, causes us to be very attentive to everything that could possibly lead us into sin with a sort of dread of damaging our relationship with the Lord Who is our dearly loved Father.

As we come to know the Lord better and better we realize more and more how holy He is, how beyond our feeble ideas about Him, how infinite His love for us. We stand in awe of His greatness and are struck by his love for us which in turn makes us love him “as sons.” The gift of the Holy Spirit then that we call “fear of the Lord” is the fear of a son who loves his father not the fear of a slave for his master. This is called “*servile fear.*” True fear of the Lord has no

element of the servile in it. It is a reverence and attention to God’s claims upon us as our Creator, Lord, and Father. Fear of the Lord makes us respect and honour the things of God and persons dedicated to Him. The crown of the High Priest of the old Law bore the sentence “Holy to the Lord” meaning “this man is set aside for God.” As Catholics, our fear of the Lord manifests itself in a life characterized by virtue and especially by reverence for the people and things that are set aside for God: His priests, religious, and everything that could be called “God’s,” should be shown a special care that is called reverence just as Jacob says in Genesis “How awesome in this thy place! It is no other thou the House of God and the gate of Heaven.”

Inside . . .

- Flexibility at Seton 2**
- The Round Rose..... 4**
- The Reason for Lent 6**
- Notes and News 7**
- Homily from Cuba..... 8**

Flexibility at Seton

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

Flexibility in the Seton curriculum always has meant that parents have the freedom to adjust the day-to-day program, or lesson plans, to meet the needs and abilities of each child. Our well-known motto is "Adjust the program to the child, not the child to the program."

We encourage parents, for instance, to do only one page of phonics if the child understands the concept being taught. Thus the parent may choose to omit the following one or two pages which reinforce the concept. At the same time, the parent may choose to have the child do the reinforcement pages to solidify the concept, or because the drill is good practice, or because the child wants to do the pages.

Sometimes parents believe that only half the problems on a page of exercises need to be done. Sometimes parents assign only half the words in the spelling list to have definitions written out.

Some parents with children who are struggling with handwriting do more oral work than assigned in the lessons. Some children record answers for their daily work on a tape recorder, though tests need to be sent to Seton on paper. Some parents like to work more with flash cards and educational games.

Parents often find that among the children in the family, there are different learning styles. They often have different favorite school subjects. All this demands that parents be ready to be flexible even among the children.

While we encourage flexibility for the methods and

approaches of teaching each day, we also must have certain policies in order to put grades on our Seton report card.

Seton must be honest when placing grades on a report card. Our grader-teachers need to see the test itself, and the assigned test needs to be done because the graders know that particular test, and because the test is a standardized evaluation of the quarterly requirements.

Our Seton report cards and grades mean we have seen and evaluated evidence of work done. A Seton grade is verification that the student has met a Seton standard. In fact, we have stated to the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges that we give academic grades based on evaluating tests sent to Seton.

Art, Music, Physical Education

These are subjects where we especially encourage flexibility and creativity. While we have lesson plans to meet the needs, parents may choose to do their own curriculum, or to send their children to classes in the local community, or work with their local home schooling support group. If parents send us a grade, we will add it to the Seton report card. We would like a statement on the quarter report form about the classes, what was done, how long the classes were each week, and how much time was spent doing the art, music, or physical education at home. If a tutor or teacher was involved, we would like to know what the teacher said. Parents can give their own grade, use the teacher's grade, or base the grade on the teacher's comments.

Handwriting

Handwriting is a subject for which we accept the parent's grade. This is primarily because children at these young ages develop their small muscle skills at different ages or stages of growth. Usually girls develop their handwriting skills younger than boys, but only a parent can know just how much a child is struggling to write. Therefore, we accept the parent's grade with no questions asked. We do want to see a sample of the child's handwriting, and we encourage the use of the selections in our Catholic handwriting series.

Sometimes parents want to choose another handwriting style because the child started using it in a former school. We have never insisted that children change their handwriting style, but we certainly encourage parents to have their child practice the Catholic paragraphs in our books.

Children past the third grade should write their assignments in ink and in cursive rather than print, unless the child is simply unable to do cursive for lack of development of the small muscles, which needs to be explained in a note on the quarter report form.

Science

Science is not considered an essential or major subject in the elementary grades, and is not included in the Basic Battery of the nationally-standardized tests.

When students come to Seton at the intermediate or upper elementary levels, they often need to work more in the reading, writing, math, or English skills, which is why we often advise their parents to skip science the first year they are with Seton. At the same time, we encourage parents to have their child read the science lessons even if they don't take a test, in which case no grade would be given.

Sometimes parents request that their child use a different textbook, though our texts in grades one, two, four, seven, and eight are Catholic. If a different text is used, or if a parent decides the child should do science projects, Seton will give a grade on the Seton report card if the parents a) explain the course work on the quarter report form, b) send evidence of the course work, and c) give a letter grade. In 7th and 8th grades, we ask parents to contact a counselor to discuss alternate work prior to sending work.

History

We consider history an important subject, but sometimes it must be omitted when a student needs extra time to work on religion, English, math, phonics, or reading, which are essential.

Our history texts teach about the Catholic church and Catholic people as well as main historical events. If parents wish to use another text and have a grade put on the Seton report card, a Catholic history text must be used. A parent should contact a Seton counselor, give the name of the text, and send a grade-level-appropriate test with the letter grade given by the parent. Since U.S. history is required for American students in 7th or 8th grade, it must be taken in 8th if omitted in 7th. A Seton counselor needs to be notified so this information is recorded.

The Seton 8th grade world history course, Catholic World Culture, is an excellent course to prepare students for high school.

State history is required by all states, so if a parent chooses a text, the student may take our test. A different test may be sent to Seton, though it needs to be graded by the parent with a letter grade. This grade is averaged in with the fourth quarter U.S. History grade.

Spelling and Vocabulary

Sometimes parents feel that the spelling words are too easy, or that they do not want to teach a separate course in spelling and wish to use the vocabulary words instead. While parents may do this, we recommend that children do some dictionary work and also that the Catholic selections be read in the speller since the vocabulary workbook is secular.

Spelling and vocabulary are essential subjects in the elementary levels. If a parent wishes to have a spelling grade on the Seton report card, the words on the Seton spelling test or on the Seton vocabulary tests must be used as the spelling-test words, and the spelling quarter report form needs to be attached to the spelling test. Of course, the vocabulary words on the Seton vocabulary test need to be used for a vocabulary grade.

Math

The huge majority of our families like the MCP math in the primary levels, and the Saxon math in the upper levels. However, if a parent chooses to use another text, in order to give a grade on our Seton report card, we need the student to take the Seton math test.

Even if another text is used, we ask that parents give the Seton math tests whenever the child has learned the concepts on the tests; we have no time limits on the submission of tests. If a parent feels the child is taking too many tests, we will accept a single test, the last test in the quarter, since it is a cumulative test. However, that would mean the quarter grade would be based on only one test, so we encourage students to take all of the tests assigned within the quarter.

Religion, English, Phonics, and Reading

Obviously these are essential foundational subjects, especially

phonics in the primary grades, and English in the intermediate and upper grades.

We believe that the course content and testing in the Seton program is especially important in these subject areas. Therefore, no matter which methods or materials parents may use to supplement or to substitute, to obtain a grade on the Seton report card, the student must submit all the work in Section B on the quarter report form.

For phonics, there is only one quarter test. Religion includes a catechism test and a Bible test for most quarters.

For English, there are usually several items: grammar exercises, paragraphs, or other brief writing assignments. If something needs to be skipped for some reason, it should not be writing assignments because writing demands thinking skills as well. A major problem in our nation in education today is the lack of writing and consequently thinking skills. It would be better to skip a class in a minor subject, such as science.

The reading assignments are usually brief, and includes a book report. We know how difficult it can sometimes be to get a book report done, but the writing and thinking skills are vital, as well as developing an appreciation for good quality writing, good literature, and Christian values usually found in the classics. Students need to understand that the books on the list are very good but if they cannot be found, several can be ordered from Seton.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we hope parents and students understand that while we highly recommend flexibility in the day-to-day teaching and methods, in most subjects, we need students to take our Seton tests so that we can keep a high standard which will ultimately benefit the student.

The Sacramental Universe in THE ROSE ROUND

by Mitchell Kalpakgian

THE ROSE ROUND

by Meriol Trevor

Bethlehem Books (Ignatius Press)

211 pp., \$11.95.

1-800-757-6831

Meriol Trevor's *THE ROSE ROUND* (1963), reprinted recently by Bethlehem Books, is an enchanting, poignant story which is ideal for junior high and high school students. Exquisitely and sensitively written, the story presents three main plots or themes: a disillusioned Catholic mother who rejects her religion because of a family tragedy; a rejected son who returns good for evil and leads his mother back to her Catholic faith; an innocent friendship between an aristocratic, affluent girl and a happy-go-lucky, unassuming boy of the lower classes which mysteriously leads to the blossoming of the rose garden at Woodhall, to the return of the Catholic faith to the Ayre family, and to a surprising marriage which defies silly social convention. The story becomes a stirring parable which illuminates the mystery of God's sacramental presence in the world: *LUX UMBRA DEI* (The sun is the shadow of God). When thirteen-year-old Matt Rendal asks why the Blessed Mother occupies the middle of the circular rose garden (the rose round), he receives this profound answer:

"Because this is our world.... He chose to come into it through her. He is too great to fit into the ring of the world, this little pattern of our sun and our hearts, except by becoming her child, and so one of us. And yet if you look at it inside out you will see that all this, the solar circle, the seasons of time, the fountain of life, the fourfold living signs of the soul, and the

Lady herself who said yes to the will of love, are all in him, and we see them clearer when we look at them in him."

The whole novel builds to this climax and leads to this revelation: God is centered in the solar system, in the rose garden where the statue of Mary stands, in the heart of the Blessed Mother, in the fountain at the center of the rose round, and in the soul of each person.

The first major theme of the novel relates to Madame Ayre's abandonment of her Catholic faith. Disillusioned because of her son Julian's death at war and heartbroken at the loss of her only daughter Rosario, she blames her son Theo for her daughter's death: "It was when her little daughter was dying of the flu that this one came, and she couldn't nurse the child herself because of him, and she always says it was because of him that she lost the girl," explains one of the servants. Because God is no longer at the center of her life, the garden has been neglected, and the statue of the Blessed Mother has been removed from the center of the rose round and stored with old junk. An embittered old woman who is the guardian of her only granddaughter Alix, Madame Ayre casts her gloom on the life of the child. Overprotective and dominating, she denies Alix the normal adventures and social life of childhood, frustrating the child to the point where she protests, "Sometimes I think it's like being shut up in a museum here. I don't see why I have to live alone, without friends, always and always." Hardhearted and uncharitable, Madame Ayre

resents Alix's friendship with Matt Rendal: "I do not like this boy. He reminds me of Theodore"—her least favorite child. Always inconsiderate and contemptuous of Theo, she gives the impression he is "a kind of monster sent to make her life unendurable." She is offended by his deformed hand and insists that he keep it in a glove and hold it in a sling in her presence. She adamantly refuses to allow her son to use her large, empty house as a school for orphaned and handicapped children. She constantly insults Theo, blaming him for being incompetent, awkward, and bungling—"a stupid boy who can't be trusted to manage anything without making a mess of it." Thus Woodhall, the family home, is without love, joy, or beauty because Mrs. Ayre has hardened her heart against God, against her son, and against children.

Even though Theo is not appreciated by his mother, Matt Rendal admires him for his sterling moral character, cherishes his warm friendship and kindness to children, and wishes his sister Caro would marry Theo rather than her affluent, snobbish fiancé, Jasper Hartnoll. Teaching the boy to ride horses, Theo also answers many of Matt's questions and embodies for him a model of Christian charity. Discussing his unhappy childhood, Theo explains "it was good for me to have something to struggle against, and learn how to bear things alone," exemplifying for Matt the virtue of patience. Noticing the constant habit of Theo's virtue, Matt recognizes his steadiness, consistency, and equanimity. "I wouldn't mind being like him," he admits to Alix. "He's always the

same and never gets in a temper.” Despite Madame Ayre’s scorn and sarcasm, Theo never dishonors his mother or returns evil for evil. When Matt observes, “I don’t see how you can like people who are so beastly to you,” Theo explains how to love one’s enemies: “Perhaps you can’t like them,” said Theo. “But you ought not to hate them, to keep on thinking what they have done to you, and wish something nasty would happen to them.” When Theo reminisces about his brother Julian’s cruel jokes—shutting him in a cellar that was like a cave under the earth—Matt cannot understand how Theo controlled his temper. Theo explains the blessedness of meekness: although one cannot control the feelings and reactions of others, one can always master one’s own emotions: “If you ever feel miserable and furious because of what someone’s said to you, just try it and see. Say to yourself, ‘I can’t do anything about him, but I can do something about myself, and I’m not going to let all that go on worrying me.’” Matt’s sister Caro also discovers the saintly soul of Theo, noticing his genuine humility: “What a good person he is.... I’ve never known anyone who made so little fuss, just taking things as they come.” While Matt and Caro lament the status of Woodhall as a home that is “so beautiful” and “so dead,” they rejoice at the transforming power of Theo’s influence and presence in restoring God, love, joy, and beauty to this dead world where roses cease to bloom, where children are forbidden to play, and where the Blessed Mother’s grace is banned.

First, Theo intercedes on behalf of his niece, insisting that Alix needs the companionship of other children and the normal fun of adventure lest she seek wild escapades as a way of rebellion. He warns his mother not to establish

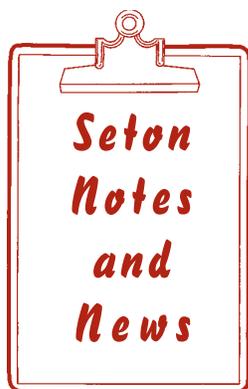
unfair rules or wage a battle of wills with Alix, urging Madame Ayre to understand the sensitivities of an only child. When his prophetic words come true and Alix—starved for excitement—ventures on to the roof, loses her balance on a slippery slope, and clutches the gutters, Theo saves his niece from falling; however, he himself suffers a terrifying accident, rolling from the roof, toppling from the ladder, and barely escaping death. This episode marks a turning point in Madame Ayre’s battle with God. While Alix regrets going on the roof and cries “It’s my fault,” her grandmother assumes the primary blame: “Theo told me you would do something silly if I forbade you to come here.” Realizing that her pride and willfulness provoked Alix, put the child’s life in grave danger, and nearly caused Theo’s death, Madame Ayre is humiliated and contrite: “Theo, I’m ashamed.” Shortly after this reconciliation Madame Ayre ends her feud with God and dies receiving the Last Sacraments. Theo has restored childhood to his niece, melted the hardened heart of his mother, and brought the grace of God once again to a home that was founded on the Catholic faith.

After Mrs. Ayre’s death, joy, beauty, love, and God flourish once again at Woodhall. Theo establishes a home and school for handicapped children, inspired by Christ’s words: “I was homeless and you did not take me in.” Children now revel on the lawn, delighting in games like a ring around the roses in the rose round, the circular garden with the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary and the water fountain in the middle. As the children are playing ball on the lawn, their figures forming a wide circle resembling a sundial, Theo observes, “Games played in circles are games of the

sun,” and Matt replies “Ring of Roses” and “The Rose Round.” Alix adds, “We all go round the sun.” The symbolism is luminous for Theo: “And the sun is the shadow of God.” As Matt reflects on the meaning of circles, noticing the ring of the garden, the circle of children on the grass, the circle of the sundial in the tower, he states the simple truth: the sun is the center. The sun, however, is “the center outside,” clarifies Theo. “It is the image of the one who is inside: LUX UMBRA DEI” (Light is the shadow of God). When Matt wonders, then, why “it is the image of our Lady who is here in the middle of the garden,” he discerns the mystery of the Incarnation and the overwhelming truth that God is Love. “Because this is our world,” said Theo. “he chose to come into it through her. He is too great to fit into the ring of the world, this little pattern of our sun and our hearts, except by becoming her child, and so one of us.”

This moving novel evokes wonder at the miracle of love and the goodness of the heart, awakens contemplation of the natural images in creation such as circles and of holy images such as statues of Our Lady, and illuminates the nature of reality as a great mystery where the gifts of life, beauty, and joy flow from the grace of God as the source or “sun” in whose light “all things are revealed as they are” through signs which constantly tell us “our selves are moons to His sun.”

Dr. Kalpakgian is a professor of English at Simpson College in Iowa who taught at Christendom College from 1990 to 1992. He is a frequent contributor to *NEW OXFORD REVIEW* and *CULTURE WARS*. He has authored several high school and college courses for Seton Home Study.



Conferences

Note: Information about Seton conferences is sent by mail to home schooling families on our mailing list in the state, and usually to surrounding states as well. Conferences include talks as well as the sale of Seton textbooks. If your support group is interested in having a Seton conference in your area, please call Mary Lou Warren at Seton, ext. 137.

Seton Conferences

Lafayette, LA: February 14, 1998. St. Francis of Assisi Hall, 610 N. Main, Breaux Bridge, LA. Fr. Robert Hermley on *Church Teachings on Home Schooling*, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert on *Home Schooling in the Large Family*, Dr. Mary Kay Clark on *Avoiding Home School Burnout*, Mr. Paul Sullivan on *Home Schoolers*

at College, Dr. William Marra on *The Rebirth of Catholic Faith and Culture Through Home Schooling*, Mr. Ed Gudan on *The Father's Role*, and Panel on *Discipline* by Seuffert, Clark, and Gudan.

Santa Clara, CA: February 28, 1998. St. Lawrence the Martyr Church, 1971 St. Lawrence Dr. Fr. Robert Hermley on *Church Teachings on Home Schooling*, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert on *Home Schooling in the Large Family*, Dr. Mary Kay Clark on *Avoiding Home School Burnout*, Dr. Thomas Susanka on *Home Schoolers at College*, Dr. William Marra on *The Rebirth of Catholic Faith and Culture Through Home Schooling*, Fr. Joseph Fessio on *The Domestic Church as a Modern Day Monastery*, Panel on *Discipline & Father's Role* by Seuffert, Clark, and Susanka.

Columbus, OH: March 28, 1998. St. Patrick's Church. Fr. Robert Hermley on *Church Teachings on Home Schooling*, Ginny Seuffert on *Home Schooling in the Large Family*, Dr. Mary Kay Clark on *Avoiding Home School Burnout*, Mr. Paul Sullivan on *Home Schoolers at College*, Dr. William Marra on *The Rebirth of Catholic Faith and Culture through Home Schooling*, Mr. Greg Lloyd on *Virtue and Character Education*, Seuffert, Clark, & Lloyd Panel on *Discipline & Father's Role*.

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: May 23, 1998.

Other Conferences

Orlando, FL: April 25, 1998. Florida Catholic Home Educators Conference. Dr. Clark speaking. Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Winter Park.

Harrisburg, PA: April 25, 1998. Catholic Home Schoolers of PA Conference, Holy Name of Jesus Church.

Seton on the Web

February marks the one year anniversary of Seton Home Study School's presence on the World Wide Web. Our website, located at www.setonhome.org, has undergone one major and many minor revisions since it was first launched, and we are committed to it's continued evolution. The website provides information to current and prospective home schooling families about Seton's programs, along with resources available outside of Seton. Our Introduction page provides a history and tour of Seton, along with an online copy of our brochure and information about upcoming Home Schooling conferences can be found on our Conferences page. The Hot News page contains headlines, articles, and links relating to exciting events relevant to Seton, the Church, and home schooling. We try to update this page frequently, so add it to your favorites list! Two interactive pages were recently added to our website; an online version of our S.E.M. catalog, and a Message Board. The online SEM catalog lists most of the books, tapes, and software available for order from Seton, and many of the book titles have sample pages linked to them to allow previewing. Secure orders can be placed via credit card. The Message Board is an online forum for homeschooling kids and parents to meet and discuss home schooling issues, and we hope it will become a valuable resource for many of our families. Please visit our website and e-mail your comments and suggestions to: webmaster@setonhome.org.

Seton Counselors

Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Hermley and Fr. Constantine
 High school English: Mark Gallagher: 540-636-2342
 High School Math: Will Sonak: 540-636-1846
 History: Bruce Clark: 540-636-6870, Extension 122
 Grade school English: Charlie Bak: 540-636-1755
 Motivation, discipline: Janet Hartley: 540-636-1946
 High school guidance/testing: Bob Wiesner: 540-636-2238
 Admissions, Enrolling: 540-636-2039
 Elementary academics: Rose McNeill
 Home school fathers: Tom Kosten, Tom Furtado
 Home school mothers: Rose McNeill, Janet Hartley

The Seton Home Study Newsletter

is published monthly by
 Seton Home Study School
 1350 Progress Dr.
 Front Royal, VA 22630
 Phone: (540) 636-9990
 Fax Machine: (540) 636-1602
 Internet: www.setonhome.org
 E-Mail: info@SetonHome.org

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

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

Editor:
 Kevin Clark

Homily from Cuba

In married life, the service of life does not end with conception, but continues in the education of the new generations. Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it (cf. Gravissimum Educationis, 3). We are speaking of an irreplaceable and inalienable duty and right. It is true that in the area of education public authority has certain rights and duties, since it must serve the common good. Nonetheless, this does not give public authority the right to take the place of parents. Consequently parents, without expecting others to replace them in a matter which is their own responsibility, should be able to choose for their children the pedagogical method, the ethical and civic content and the religious inspiration which will enable them to receive an integral education. They must not expect everything to be given to them; they should assume their mission as educator while seeking opportunities and creating adequate structures within civil society.

Furthermore, families need proper housing and a united home life, so that they can pass on ethical values in an environment favorable to the fostering of high ideals and living the faith.

Dear brothers and sisters, dear married couples and parents: I have wished to recall a few essential aspects of God's plan for marriage and the family, in order to help you to follow with generosity and commitment that particular path to holiness to which many of you are called. Accept with love the Word of the Lord proclaimed in this Eucharist. In the Responsorial Psalm we have heard: "Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways! Your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Indeed, thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord" (Ps 127:1,3,4).

Great is the vocation to marriage and family life inspired by the Word of God and modeled on the Holy Family of Nazareth. Dear people of Cuba: Be faithful to God's Word and to this model! Dear husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and the families of this noble country of Cuba: In your lives hold on to this sublime model, aided by the grace given to you in the Sacrament of Marriage. May God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, dwell in your homes. Thus will the Catholic families of Cuba contribute decisively to God's great work of human salvation in this blessed land which is your Country and your Nation. Cuba: care for your families, in order to keep your heart pure!

Homily from the Mass at Santa Clara, January 22, 1998
by **Pope John Paul II**

Seton School

1350 Progress Drive
Front royal, Va 22630

Address Correction requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 28
Front Royal, VA