



Seton Home

Study School

Volume XV, Number 3



“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”



March 1998

Saint Joseph

Saint Joseph, we celebrate your feast day in this month of March. Help us as parents to understand your vital role in our home schooling family.

Saint Joseph, you and Mary as the parents of Jesus were His primary educators in your home in Nazareth. Help us to home school in the best way to strengthen the Catholic Faith in our family.

Saint Joseph, God gave you the glorious gift of seeing and hearing Jesus in the flesh. Help us and our children to see Jesus by faith, in the Blessed Sacrament, in Holy Scripture, and in each other as images of God.

Saint Joseph, you carried Jesus in your arms, you kissed Him as His foster father, you watched over Him, and you taught Him with prudent direction and love. Help us fathers and mothers to embrace, watch, and teach our children with loving dedication so that we all may grow closer to Jesus.

Saint Joseph, Jesus as the eternal Son chose you to be His foster father on earth. He chose to be born into a human family to show us how to live as a family that

reflects the “family” of the Holy Trinity. Help us as parents to make our family life a reflection of the life of the Holy Family, and thereby a reflection of the communion of the Holy Trinity.

Saint Joseph, you were the shadow of the eternal Father and head of the Holy Family. Help all Christian husbands to be Christ-like heads of their families, making their wives and children first in the their hearts, minds, and actions.

Saint Joseph, you were the husband of Mary, and you supported her as the heart of the Holy Family and the mother of Jesus. Help all Christian husbands to support their wives as the hearts of their families and the mothers of their children.

Saint Joseph, you took Jesus and Mary and fled the evil machinations of the powerful and corrupt Herod. Help us as parents to know when to fight and when to flee the powerful and corrupting influences of the world.

Saint Joseph, you guarded the virginal chastity of Mary and Jesus. Help us to guard the modesty and purity of our children, and preserve them from corruption.

Saint Joseph, you listened to and obeyed God’s will manifested in the messages you received from His angels. Help us to discern God’s will concerning the sacrifices and changes that we need to make to ensure the spiritual survival and growth of our family.

Saint Joseph, you were the first to have true devotion to Mary. Help us to keep Mary, our spiritual mother and our model of faith, at the heart of our family and at the heart of the whole Church.

Saint Joseph, you were the protector of the Holy Family. Protect our family and the whole Church from heresy, apostasy, worldliness, and damnation.

Saint Joseph, pray that our home schooling leads each member of our family closer to Jesus and Mary.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

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The Training of Children at Home

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

As we travel around the country talking to home schooling parents, we constantly counsel parents about home schooling. Sometimes the questions relate to the actual education of the children. More often, however, the questions relate to the training of the children, the necessary disciplining of the will in order to get the educational assignments accomplished.

Defiance against parents is grievous, because it is defiance against those who cooperated with God in His creation of the child. To defy those who “created” the body on earth is also a defiance of God Who created the soul. A sin of disobedience is a use of the will power, a part of the soul, against the Creator of the soul. A sin of disobedience against parents is a sin against justice primarily. Obedience is owed to the Creator of Life as well as to the parents who cooperated with Him to give life.

Most children do not realize the serious nature of their sins of disobedience or rebellion. In the past, parents realized the serious nature of disobedience and swiftly dealt with it. Today, parents are afraid to punish their children for sins of disobedience, either because of the pressure of our secular Godless society, or because they are afraid of losing the love or cooperation of their children. Some parents were not disciplined themselves when they were young and do not know how to discipline their children.

Besides the Book of Proverbs and other books of the Bible, good books which deal with the practical ways to discipline children from the Christian viewpoint are Dr. James Dobson’s

books: *Parenting Isn’t for Cowards*; *Dealing Confidently with the Frustrations of Child Rearing*; *Dare to Discipline*; and *The Strong-Willed Child*. Dr. James Stenson, a Catholic who has been the principal of two boys’ schools, has written two excellent books showing how to teach children to live the virtues: Upbringing and Lifeline.

Disciplining Girls

We are frequently asked how to help with daughters who refuse to focus on their schooling, or who resist being obedient to mother’s instructions. Some defy Mom by saying that “You are not a good teacher!” or who, even though the work seems easy, they have a sour attitude about schoolwork.

The first thing to keep in mind is that your kids are worth fighting for. A soft or easy attitude by the parent sends the message to the child that other things are more important. Simplify your lifestyle so that you are not tired out by doing so much housework or other projects that you are too exhausted to deal with the training of your children.

Secondly, approach this problem like you approach all problems: with prayer. Pray to your guardian angel and your child’s guardian angel. Pray to your patron saint and your child’s patron saint. Pray to Jesus and the Blessed Mother. Say the family rosary every day; if need be, say only one decade at a time at various times during the day.

Don’t try to hide the problem. Let it be a matter for discussion between you and your child, between your

husband and your child. Let your husband be involved, both in the discussion and in the solution.

Let it be a matter of family prayer. As your family says the rosary together, include prayers for “Susie to see the importance of focusing on her schoolwork.” As your family prays together to solve problems, so they should see all the household and home schooling activities as part of the teamwork of your family. Consider having a difficult child work with an older child, on chores as well as on academic work or other projects.

While you yourself need to be aware of the seriousness and gravity of disobedience by your child, you also need to make your child aware of the gravity of this sin. Be sure to have a nightly examination of conscience with your child. Take her to confession each week. Take her to Mass every day if possible so that she can receive the graces necessary to fight off the temptation to be disobedient. Encourage her to read the lives of the saints. Take the time yourself to read the lives of the saints aloud to the children, especially in the morning to set the tone for the day, and also as a treat at the end of the day.

Take time to examine the schoolwork itself. Is it possible that your child does not need to do all the work, that your child learns very quickly, and can move more rapidly through some of the subjects? It may be that the work is too advanced in some subjects, and this is why your child rebels. You may need materials at a different level in one or more subjects.

Be sure also that your child has enough important chores to do. Every child not only needs to be kept busy, but they need to feel that what they are doing is important in the home and family. Give your children meaningful jobs, such as cleaning and doing the laundry, painting, building shelves,

mowing the lawn. Dad can help by praising the work, showing concern, and emphasizing the value of the job for the family. Dad needs to look over the schoolwork each evening, but he needs also to ask about the chores.

While all these things are to prevent situations which may result in disobedience, there needs to be a policy which the children understand for punishment for disobedience. There needs to be unpleasant consequences for committing the sin of disobedience. It is disobedience or rebellion to refuse to do schoolwork or chores. Taking some time to analyze the problem is appropriate, but parents cannot spend so much time trying to “understand” their child. The child takes advantage of these continual opportunities to keep causing problems. Parents cannot get bogged down, especially with girls, using amateur psychology to figure it all out. Consequences for disobedience need to be immediate, consistent, physical, and unpleasant.

Disciplining Boys

While girls may like to have dialogue about the why and wherefores, boys are more straight-forward, and respond to quick punishment. If Dad is home, he should mete out the punishment. Otherwise, mother needs to use the spiritual approach. Check out the educational level of the materials, and be sure the boys are doing important “man’s” work around the house. Boys need constant physical activity; assign physical chores between class assignments. Give plenty of large or broad chores, such as keeping the basement or garage clean, keeping the yard picked up, clipping the hedges, sweeping the sidewalk and driveway, painting the garage, building a wall, and so on. Keep them busy with good sports activities in the back yard.

Disobedience or disrespect to mother is especially serious and

grievous on the part of boys because the behavior affects their adult behavior toward sisters and wives. Parents have a responsibility to train their sons to respect women as Jesus wants us to respect His mother.

One of the frequent questions we are asked is how to deal with boys who produce careless or shoddy work, and refuse to do it over again, or when they do, it continues to be carelessly done. This involves misspelled words, lack of correct punctuation and capitalization, and so on. Sometimes they dawdle, scribble, daydream, or take two hours to do a 20-minute assignment.

Make sure that your son is in good health, that he is not only getting enough exercise, but also that he is eating his vegetables! Have your child get a good physical exam every year or so, especially checking his hearing. Be sure to have his eyes checked by a good eye doctor.

Be aware that boys, in general, have slower development, such as in handwriting and communications skills, and interest in academics. Boys love computers, however. If you can teach your son, even in second grade, how to use the keyboard, he can do many of his assignments on the computer. When boys need to start book reports in fourth grade, many are enthusiastic about the ability to change words, phrases, or sentences easily.

Dads are vital to success in home schooling. Training boys should be primarily the father’s responsibility. Fathers need to be involved, even phoning during the day to check up on the son’s work or chores or behavior. If there is no father in the family, mother needs to ask an adult male in the family to become involved with the training and education of her son.

Boys often do not understand the concept of time. Be sure to keep a

clock on the desk, and give half-hour assignments. Boys need to understand they cannot eat their meal until the schoolwork assignment is done. They could do math before breakfast with Dad before he goes to work. They could do three or four assignments before lunch, understanding that lunch does not come until the assignments are done.

Fathers should take their children, one at a time, to work with them whenever possible, so they can see that the skills they are learning in their home schooling will be used when they need to work for a living. Sometimes children can do home schooling at the office with Dad, or in the car as Dad travels to his clients.

Conclusion

Have you ever had the experience of teaching your child something, being convinced that it never sunk in, and then hearing your child tell someone else about what he learned? The same thing happens with discipline. You may feel discouraged. You may feel that your child continues to be disobedient, but you will find that the results are more obvious when you visit a friend’s house, or go shopping.

Have faith in Jesus, His Blessed Mother, and the saints. Surround your children with your spiritual friends. Make your home look like the “domestic church” from which saints come! Have plenty of pictures or statues of the saints. Encourage your children to wear medals and scapulars. Attend daily Mass and Holy Communion as a family whenever possible. Please help your child with his daily examination of conscience, weekly confession, and reading of the saints. Teaching by word and example is what the Bible commands. You can and will be successful if you persevere.

Home Education and the Survival of the Family

by Father John Hardon

Editor's Note: The following is a condensation of remarks made by Father Hardon at Seton's Family and Home Schooling Conference in Washington, DC, in 1994.

This is the importance of home education: Except for home education, there would have been no survival of the Catholic family. And unless there is a revival of home education in the United States, the Catholic family will not exist here.

What is home education? It is home education, first, because it is done by the parents, and secondly, it is done at home. Moreover, when I speak of home education I mean by both parents and not only by the mother. This needs to be stressed. A father's contribution to the home education of his children is indispensable.

Moreover, when I speak of home education, I mean education which does not absolutely exclude all other forms of education, which would be literally impossible: there are too many other factors, too many other elements, at work. Nevertheless, the home is primary in every sense of the word, so that education by both parents is secondary to nothing. Every other agency, every other institution, is auxiliary to the home. Every other means of training or educating the child is dependent on the home. What is the span then of this home education? It literally spans everything in which a child can and should be trained.

Human beings are both body and soul. Both the body and the soul need to be educated. But as we know, the body and soul are not separated. They are united, and therefore home education constantly educates the one while being fully conscious the other is also being educated.

Let me insert an insight that I have shared with my Jesuits over the 25 years

that I have taught them their theology. All education begins with the senses. What we hear, what we see, what we taste, what we touch, what we feel, is the source of everything in our lives. Everything. On this level education begins at the moment of conception, nine months before birth.

All sense experience leads to thought. We would not have a thought in our minds unless it first began in the senses. Oh how crucial, critically crucial is the sense experience that parents provide their children from the first moment of the child's conception.

We teach in philosophy *nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu*. It means there is nothing in the intellect which has not first been in the senses. In other words, education begins in the senses, nine months before birth. Education then spans all of the faculties of both body and soul. Of the emotions, of the feelings, of the mind, and will.

I say home education is necessary for the survival of the Catholic family. And the very critics of home education only confirm the thesis. Only in so far as the Catholic faith is still strong, only there, and only in that degree, is there still an authentic honest-to-God family life. I could not make my statement more clear. This is the historical truth.

So let me be clear. I'm not merely saying that home education is necessary in the modern world, as though this were a conditional necessity, as though the necessity did not exist, say in the 19th or 18th centuries. It is not just because the modern world has become so widely and deeply secularized that home education has become a necessity. No. In fact, one of the main factors contributing to the secularization of once strongly Christian cultures has been the neglect of sound, orthodox,

authentic, courageous, magisterial, historic Catholic teaching in faith and morals by the parents.

It is the history of two thousand years of Christianity: unless this education is provided by parents from the dawn of infancy, then the inevitable happens. The society in which that education is neglected secularizes.

The issue we are addressing is perennial. Either Catholic parents provide their offspring with the education children need, or, the inevitable consequence follows, as is happening in the world today.

But why are parents so necessary for the proper education of their children, and the corresponding survival of the Catholic family? The answer is really a cluster of reasons, all derived from what is at heart both a matter of human nature and locked up in the mystery of divine grace. The reason is that we *are* what we have received, or we might call it the mysterious law of interdependence. It applies first of all to our physical nature.

Only human beings can reproduce human beings. This reproduction, however, is not only bodily, it is also mental and volitional. *What* do we know, *what do* we know, that someone else has not taught us? *What?* And what do we love, except what others have helped us to choose and appreciate?

There are two kinds of reproductivity: in body, and in spirit. Under God, the primacy, and therefore the primary importance for parents, is to reproduce themselves, with their minds and their wills. Parents are to recognize that the children they have brought into this world are not meant for this world. That would be madness. They are meant for eternity.

In other words, the parents are meant to be parents twice over, reproducing themselves in body and reproducing themselves in soul.

The second reason parents are necessary for educating children is that parents are the primary source of grace. No one reaches heaven without divine grace. No one receives this grace except through another human being, and parents are the primary channels of grace for their children. There is no heaven without grace, no grace without people being channels of that grace, and on earth, the principal channels of that grace are parents for their children.

This primacy as channels of grace for the children comes through the sacrament of matrimony. The sacrament confers two graces. First, the grace for husband and wife to love one another faithfully, even until death. Second, the corresponding grace as parents to be channels of grace for their children. The purpose of marriage therefore is to rear families indeed here on earth, but to rear families *for* heaven. Nothing less. And, I would say: there can be nothing more. All of this is most certain by our faith.

One of the great blessings of modern home education is that it is finally waking up some parents to God's plan for them. The providence of God allows no evil, no suffering, without purpose. He wants to wake parents up, and not just in our country, but especially in the western world, where Catholic family life is in such dire need and, in so many dioceses, in such shambles.

The widespread secularization of organized education in so many parts of the western world has, I believe, been the lightning and thunder that some have needed to wake them up to their primary duty as fathers and mothers.

My final point is the hard one, about parents' responsibility. We are not just talking rhetoric, but hard, demanding reality about the value of home education.

If I were to offer one passage from the New Testament on the How of home education, I would choose St. Paul's statement in a letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verse 28. Says

Paul: "To those who love God, everything works together unto good."

St. Paul is saying that we are united with God by loving Him, and we love Him if we keep His commandments. If we love Him, He will use us to accomplish His divine plans. There is one condition parents must meet: that they are united with God in loving Him.

Or you might say, in other words, with faith in our union in God's will, there is no limit at all to what God will accomplish through us. Miracles are nothing to God. Nothing. Expect miracles in your lives. Hear me: expect miracles.

Be united with God, and in measure of your union with His will, He will use you. Be clear about this: it is not merely giving others a good example. We simply are unable to give to others what we do not have ourselves.

This goes much deeper. In the vision of my father in God, St. Ignatius, in the measure in which our hearts be united with the heart of God, in that measure God will use us, in the most extreme degree. But it is we who set the condition: How generous, how faithful will I be to God? In the measure that *we* love God, He will thoroughly use us to achieve the design that He wants to achieve, and, this means,

especially in the lives of others. For parents, of course, there are no other lives that should be more important than those of their children.

What does this mean for home education? My answer is — everything. In the degree that parents love God, God will use them to teach and train their children. And nobody cheats here. A doctorate in pedagogy means nothing. Academic studies in the field of education also mean nothing. If the parents have a strong faith, God will use them to strengthen the faith of their children. If the parents are humble, they will effectively teach humility to their children, and the key word is the adverb, effectively.

What a difference between a pedagogy that is above the neck, and a pedagogy that involves the whole being. Parents must be trustful of God, hopeful against all human odds, patient under suffering, chaste: only God knows all the incalculable damage that contraceptive parents do to their children. If the parents are prayerful as well, God will use those parents to be means of giving their faith, their hope, their chastity, and their humility to their children. The corresponding virtues are now able to be in the child because they were in the parents.

Papal Documents to Study

Letter to Families, Pope John Paul II

Catechesis in Our Time, Pope John Paul II

***Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World,
Pope John Paul II***

Christian Education of Youth, Pope Pius XI

Charter of the Rights of the Family, Pope John Paul II

***Declaration on Christian Education,
Second Vatican Council***

***Home Schooling & the New Code of Canon Law,
Dr. Edward Peters***



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

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*,

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Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Ph.D.
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Mary, Mother of Unity Essay Contest

Grades:	9-12	Essays will be	Grammar
Entry Fee:	\$5.00	judged on:	Neatness
Deadline Date:	June 13, 1998		Form
			Content

First Prize is a beautiful original Icon from Slovakia, and the winning essay will be published in the Miles Jesu Monthly.

Send entries to: Miles Jesu
 C/O Joan Sullivan
 8242 N. Poinciana
 El Cajon, CA 92021
 619-448-0769

Katie Moran on *The Rosary & Home Schooling*, 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.

Rochester, New York:
 June 13, 1998

New Haven, CT:
 June 27, 1998

Other Catholic H.S. Conferences

Covington, LA: April 17. St. Peter's Parish House. Call Connie Mundell, 504-882-9267.

Orlando, FL: April 25. Florida Network of Catholic Home Educators Conference & vendors. Dr. Clark speaking. Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Winter Park. Call Laura Miller, 904-249-3143.

Harrisburg, PA: April 25. Catholic Home Schoolers of PA, Holy Name of Jesus Church. Conference & vendors. Call Ellen Kramer, 717-866-5425.

Madison, Alabama: May 16. St. Peter's Academy. Dorothy Agnew, 205-837-1676.

Tennessee: Catholic Conference: June 20, 1998. Call Sharon Poston at 423-842-6319.

Detroit-Redford, MI: June 27, Catholic Home Ed. of Michigan. Call 313-561-8907.

Atlanta, GA: July 10-11. Catholic Home Schoolers of GA. Conference & vendors. Dr. Clark speaking. Call Karen Donaldson at 706-367-2437.

Indianapolis, IN: July 11. Catholic Home Ed. of Indiana. Call Colleen Farris, 317-862-1371.

Manassas, VA: July 17-18. National Catholic Home Educators. Conference & vendors. Call Rachel Watkins, 410-254-9390.

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
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 High school guidance/testing: Bob Wiesner: 540-636-2238
 Admissions, Enrolling: 540-636-2039
 Elementary: Rose McNeill: 540-636-1755
 Home school fathers: Tom Kosten, Tom Furtado
 Home school mothers: Rose McNeill, Janet Hartley

Christian Education

All Christians, who through rebirth by water and the Holy Spirit are made new creatures who are called and are sons of God, have the right to a Christian education. Its aim is... principally to make the baptized more aware of the gift of faith they have received, as they are led step by step into knowledge of the mystery of salvation. They must learn how to adore God the Father in Spirit and in Truth, above all in the action of the liturgy; they must be formed to live their own lives according to the new self justified and sanctified through the Truth.

Since parents have given life to their children, they are bound by a grave obligation to educate their offspring, and so must be recognized as their primary and principal educators. Their role in education is of such importance that where it is missing, its place can scarcely be supplied. For it is the parents' task to create the kind of family atmosphere, inspired by love and by piety towards God and men, that is favorable to the complete personal and social education of their children.

The family then is the first school of those social virtues that every society needs. It is most important in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and the obligations of the sacrament of Matrimony, that children must be taught right from infancy to know and to worship God according to the faith they received in Baptism, and to love their neighbor.

There too [in the Christian family] they meet with their first experience of a sound human society and of the Church. It is through the family, finally, that they are little by little introduced to the civil community of mankind, and to the People of God.

Let parents understand then, the great importance of a truly Christian family for the life and progress of God's People itself.

Declaration on Christian Education
Second Vatican Council, #2, 3

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