



Seton Home Study School

Volume XVI, Number 8

“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”

August 1999

The Assumption

The glorious feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven, body and soul, has been celebrated by the Catholic Church for the past fourteen hundred years.

According to tradition, the twelve apostles were gathered around the Blessed Mother in her home in Jerusalem when she died or “fell asleep.” Eastern legends say that the apostles saw Jesus come and receive the soul of His Mother in His arms. The falling asleep or “dormition” of Mary, the Mother of God (Theotokos), is pictured in Eastern icons, with Jesus in the center holding a tiny replica of Mary, representing her soul.

Mary was now leaving the apostles whom she had been helping to spread and to teach the Faith throughout the world. St. Alphonsus de Liguori wrote that during the years after the Ascension, Mary “solved their doubts, comforted them in their persecutions, encouraged them to labor for the Divine glory and the salvation of souls.”

As home schooling parents, we can reflect on this scene and understand that we must ask the Blessed Mother to help us to imitate her. She can guide us in our responsibilities to our children to train them to be disciples for Jesus Christ.

We should consider also that the apostles were the first bishops, the first theologians of the Church. Peter, the first pope, was present at the Assumption of Mary. This is a feast day on which we should ask the apostles to intercede for our bishops and

theologians, to help them to kneel at the feet of Mary, the Queen of Apostles. Pray for Mary to give them wisdom and understanding as they guide us, their flock.

This feast day presents us with the opportunity to teach our children that death is not to be feared if we have been faithful to Our Lord Jesus Christ. While Mary’s body “fell asleep,” her soul was taken immediately by Jesus to His heavenly home.

When people join Mother Angelica’s Eternal Word Television Network to say the Glorious Mysteries, we can see where Mary was “buried.” She was put into a stone “casket,” but later when the apostles opened it, her body was gone, assumed into heaven.

At the Last Judgment, our bodies will be rejoined to our souls to go to the heavenly kingdom. As our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and as we often carry Jesus Christ Himself in our bodies after Holy Communion, we must teach our children the importance of the Marian virtues of modesty and chastity and especially the virtue of purity.

The Blessed Mother continues to intercede for us in heaven. She is our hope and our protection. As a mother herself, she is always ready to help us in our parental responsibilities, especially in teaching and training our children.

The following prayer is adapted from the Byzantine Catholic Liturgy.

O Blessed Mother, Our Lady of the Assumption, your glory shines with the radiance of divine grace. All the heavenly choirs of angels sing a hymn of glory on this feast of your Assumption. The highest angels in heaven came to pay respect to you, O Immaculate Mother, because you are the Queen of heaven and earth.

O most pure Mother of God, forever alive with your Son, the Source of Life, do not cease to intercede with Him that He may guard and save your people from every trouble.

Let us fill the Church with hymns of praise at the falling asleep of the Ark of God! Heaven has received the Woman who gave birth to the One Whom nothing can contain. Today the earth gives back to heaven the Woman who was the source of Life. The angels join the crowd of the apostles, and together they gaze upon the Woman who gave birth to the Principle of Life, and who now moves up from life to Life.

Let us therefore venerate her and beseech her, saying: O Blessed Mother, do not forget those who celebrate your holy Assumption with fervor and love.

- MKC

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Questions We Are Asked

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

It is August and I am not finished with my home schooling for last year. What should I do?

The schedule for the government schools is from September through mid-June, but homeschooling families are not bound by this schedule. A wonderful benefit of home schooling is the opportunity to have a home schooling calendar that meets the needs and changing situations in our own family. Take the breaks you need, and do schoolwork at the best times for you, not according to an outside schedule.

At the same time, if your children, especially junior high or high school children, are concerned to finish up, consider shortcuts for individual subjects. For instance, assuming that you are at least in the fourth quarter, consider giving your children two or three tests a week in subjects in which they are doing very well. For instance, spelling tests could be taken without doing all the dictionary work. Consider assigning your children to study the definitions of the vocabulary words without doing all the written assignments. Some students may be able to take the history and science tests by studying the chapter without doing the written work.

If your child is in the first or second quarter, consider taking a break and starting up again in September. Hopefully, you can finish up by January.

If you are having a baby, you might decide to quit the home schooling for a couple of weeks after the baby arrives. Look for a natural break, such as the end of a chapter or unit, if possible. You can do this and then pick it up again where you left off.

If you are not too tired, you might try to continue with the home schooling during August, with a lighter schedule of subjects. Many families do home school all year. It keeps the kids out of trouble, there are no "I'm bored!" complaints, and they keep progressing in important areas such as reading and math.

During the hot month of August, if you are home schooling, consider certain treats after the homeschooling day. Going swimming at 5 o'clock when the crowd is leaving and the sun is not so hot is a favorite in some families. Also, special ice cream treats in the middle of a hot afternoon after homeschooling is something to which the kids look forward.

We need to help our children see Catholic education as a lifelong opportunity or challenge, and not be anxiously looking for vacation time. There really should be no "vacation" from learning about God and His world.

Why are you writing a new religion series?

We are writing a new religion series because many parents have said that their local pastor would like to see newer religion books which incorporate material from The Catechism of the Catholic Church. The new Seton religion series is simply a supplement, however, an explanation to accompany the Baltimore Catechism, which we will always keep. The new series will more closely follow the order of the Baltimore Catechism chapters.

The General Catechetical Directory from the Vatican has stated clearly that the whole deposit of the Faith must be taught each year. Each grade level of the new Seton series will cover all the seven sacraments, the ten

Commandments, and the Creed. The Directory points out that the material must be adjusted to the child's level of learning, but that the lessons cannot omit huge segments of the Faith.

At this time, only the kindergarten through 3rd grade is available in the new series. The others are in various stages of production. All must be approved by a bishop. We welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions.

Why must our children memorize the catechism answers exactly?

It is important that children know their catechism exactly.

Father John Hardon gave a talk at a Catholic homeschooling conference some time ago emphasizing the importance of memorizing the catechism. Father emphasized that children certainly do need to understand the catechism concepts as well, not just have them memorized by rote. If children memorize the answers exactly, they will, in the years ahead as adults, remember the answers exactly. If in their young years they do not memorize them exactly, they will not be able to remember them correctly when they are in a situation talking with other adults in defense of their religion.

It would be great if the children also memorized the Scripture quotes which relate to the catechism lesson. If the children memorized just those catechism and Bible quotes, they would have a whole library in their heads which would serve them adequately for the rest of their lives.

Our Catholic Faith is true, accurate and precise. Confusion reigns in this world, but the Catholic Faith is exactly correct. In 1884, at the Third Plenary Council of American bishops, a commission was appointed to prepare a catechism for general use, which was obligatory for the Catholic schools. The Baltimore Catechism received the highest praise from many of the bishops of that time.

The Baltimore Catechism questions and answers for children were developed by the American bishops

over a period of several years, based on the Council of Trent. You can find the same answers, with some additions based on recent concerns (such as suicide and euthanasia), in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, an adult catechism.

Can you give some tips about teaching methods that work particularly well for homeschooling?

What teachers and parents are most concerned about is that the child focuses his attention on the lesson at hand. Human beings learn very easily, actually, and children learn easiest of all. The problem is that there are so many distractions, so many other things children want to learn about than the book sitting before him.

Children need to be motivated to focus on what mother is trying to teach, or on what mother says must be read and studied. This motivation must be deep and spiritual. The greatest internal motivation is a desire to please God and to please parents. This is why children should go to Mass every day and/or start the day with prayer and reading of the life of a saint. When the day starts with an understanding of Jesus and what He did for us, and an understanding of the sacrifices made by the saints to be good for Jesus, children will be motivated to be obedient to mother.

In addition, parents need to be excited about learning themselves. Both parents need to show an interest in the subject at hand, as well as show an interest in seeing the children become excited about learning.

Educational videos and educational computer programs, lots of books and encyclopedias, interactive CD's, libraries on Internet, frequent trips to the library and museums all "sell" the idea that learning is fun and interesting.

Once these motivational ideas are implemented, then the parent can focus on the best teaching methods for each subject for each particular child. However, remember that almost all children can learn easily through reading, through listening, through writing, through studying. It is not

some magic art that only teachers know. God made us to learn naturally. It is part of our nature to learn. We need to be careful that we are not being "overwhelmed" because a child is being stubborn or lazy, thus forcing us to continually look for new ways and new methods.

Old tried and true methods which have worked for generations are the methods most likely to work for you and yours. The best method for your child is likely to be the methods that worked for you and your spouse when you were children. Your children have your genes and your learning inclinations. They are likely to learn best with the methods by which you learned best.

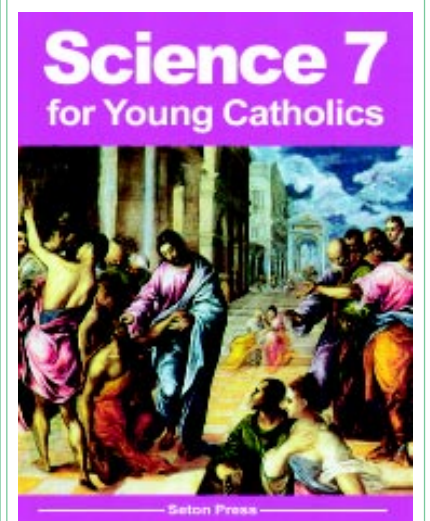
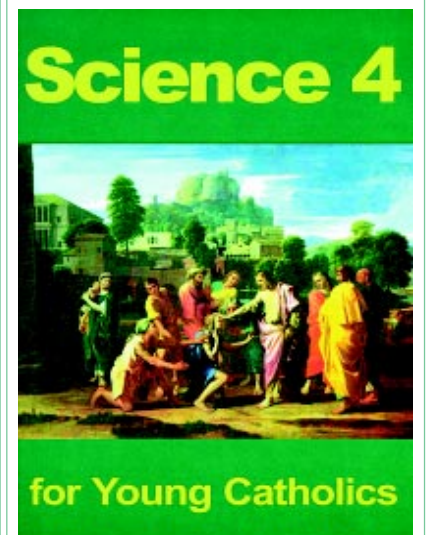
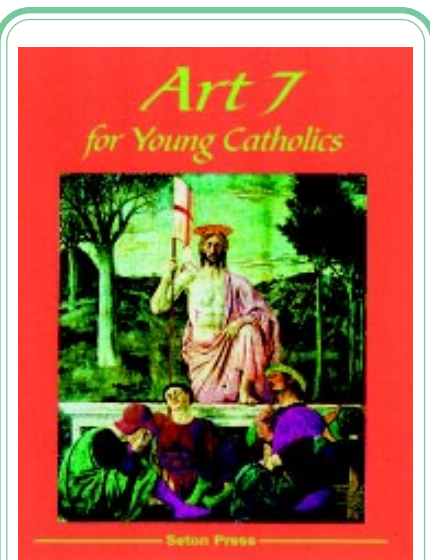
The best specific tip to learning is reading and writing, writing and reading. Reading aloud is especially important, as the child is forced to use inflections which force comprehension. Also, learning is easier when more senses are used. After your child has read an assignment, have him write or give an oral presentation or a summary of what he read. After a chapter has been finished, nothing can beat a good old-fashioned discussion of the ideas in the chapter.

Why must my son redo the paragraphs in his composition course when with his home grades, the average is a passing grade?

It certainly is more difficult and time-consuming for us to re-grade test papers, especially compositions. It would be easier to give a final passing grade.

However, we are serious about education and about the individual student learning. In addition, we have a concern about the future of the Church, the future of the local community, the future of our society. Our concern is that we help produce educated Catholic citizens.

So, even when the student's final grade is passing because it is averaged with the home grades, we encourage, and sometimes insist, that tests and papers under the 70th percent be redone.



Books from Seton
Educational Media!

Soul of Catholic Education

by Father John Hardon

Several years ago, Father John Hardon, well-known Catholic priest who has often spoken and written about the importance of Catholic homeschooling, gave a talk called "Home Schooling: The Soul of Catholic Education." The following are some quotes from this talk.

I am sure that none of you has any illusion about the price you have to pay to engage seriously in home schooling. It will take no ordinary fortitude, otherwise known as courage. You are only as courageous as you are convinced. Only convinced people are courageous. It takes heroic courage to engage in home schooling in our nation in our day.

Parents are the primary teachers of their children. It is by divine right that parents are the primary, principal teachers of the children that they have brought physically into the world. It is a right that you parents have that is inalienable; it is not conferred by any human authority but by God Himself, and cannot be taken away by any human power. You are to be willing to lay down your lives rather than have anyone take that authority from you.

Once the parents have conceived and given birth to their child, they have the divinely confirmed responsibility for the care of their child. For the care of your child physically... intellectually... morally to provide for the training of the wills of your children, so that they will realize that there is only one reason we have a free will: to give that free will back to God from Whom we received it.

But most importantly as parents, you have the divinely-conferred right of providing for the spiritual rearing of your children.... You are to insure that your children reach their heavenly destiny.

Homeschooling as home education is not an option for parents. It is an obligation, for which you are gravely responsible before God. God entrusts you with your children to take care of

them in this world and teach them — that's the only reason you have children, the only reason you have children in this life, is to bring your children with you into a heavenly eternity.

There are powerful forces in our country, highly organized, carefully planned, very strategic, highly subsidized financially, that are consciously and deliberately working to destroy the Catholic Church in America.

Formal institutionalized education is becoming increasingly secularized and de-Christianized. And de-Catholicized. In the face of these stark realities, parents must protect their children whom God has entrusted to their care. If home education has always been important, it is fast becoming not merely important, but imperative to ensure the propagation and preservation of the true Faith in our own still, to some extent, free America.

The state has a monopoly over laws governing sexual morality. Not only is homosexuality but sex education programs are widely authorized to teach the children from infancy. They are told and trained to adopt the morality of a nation that has in large measure discarded Jesus Christ.

The heart of Catholic education is the transmission of authentic Catholic truths of the Faith, and authentic Catholic norms of morality. The heart of Catholic education is also the training of children to accept these principles with a believing mind, and to put them into practice with an obedient will.

Will you be teaching your children? Or will you allow someone more powerful to teach your children? We are living in the age of martyrs today, which means practicing heroic virtue in sharing your Faith with the children God gave you, even if it means laying down your lives for the eternal welfare of the children that God has put into your loving care.

Grace is the power to do what is humanly impossible. That Grace must be obtained from God through the sacraments which Jesus Christ instituted.

Two thousand years of Church history has shown that Catholic teaching and Catholic training can be done most effectively, most deeply, most lastingly, and most practically by parents teaching their children.

Home schooling is necessary for the preservation of the Catholic Faith in America. Parents, in today's increasingly de-Christianized America, secularized American culture, and paganized American society, you have no option. You must under God and with His Light and Strength, become the principal teachers of your children. This presumes, of course, that you know your Catholic Faith.

This is an order: Learn your Faith. You ought to communicate your Faith by giving good example to the children under your care. Eye sees more than meets the ear.

It is not only that you are to teach your children as the academic world understands teaching.... Teaching of the Catholic Faith is communicating Divine Grace from mind to mind, from believing mind to believing mind, from believing will to believing will. You parents are no mere teachers when you, as we casually say, teach the Catholic Faith. You are the conduits of Divine Grace.

You shall be as effective channels of God's Grace as you are yourselves united with God. You have no option. No degrees from academic institutions will do. Your own union with God, your holiness, your patience, your humility, your chastity, your selfless love as parents, husband and wife loving each other selflessly, your loving your children with the love that only Christ can enable you to practice.

God made you not merely teachers but communicators of Grace to the children that God gave you, to share with them, — not only as you have done with your bodies, — but your souls, indeed your souls animated with the spirit of God.

Support Groups

Last month in answering a question, I encouraged Catholic parents to keep their Catholic home schooling support group Catholic. I said that if members are not Catholic, it does not provide the support that Catholic home schooling parents need and are looking for when they join.

Since then, I have received a few calls. Some parents have spouses or relatives who are Protestant. Obviously, family members should be welcome. We can assume that they are not going to try to undermine the children's faith.

Some Catholic parents have said that some Protestants want to join their group because they are interested in joining the Catholic Church. As long as the purpose of joining the group is to learn about the Catholic faith and family life, certainly such families should be welcome. They will not be attempting to evangelize for Protestantism. Protestants should be told in the beginning that this is a Catholic group and unless they become Catholic, they will not be allowed to continue coming to the meetings.

One of the problems arising in Catholic support groups is that different members expect different things. A group really needs a mission statement. Are you a religious group, for the purpose of promoting the Catholic faith and family life, especially for the children? Are you really a social group, wanting to evangelize others who are not Catholic? Support groups have an obligation not to mislead prospective members.

A religious home schooling support group tends to meet on First Fridays, at a parish church, going to Mass and confession each month. This kind of group regularly celebrates the liturgical feast days, especially involving the children. Priests come and talk about vocations. Field trips are to Catholic churches to study stained glass windows or to convents to visit the aged nuns. Children are taught Latin and Gregorian Chant, dress up as saints on All Saints Day, and start the school year with a Mass in honor of the Infant Jesus of Prague. Some groups have a common First Holy Communion, and some even have a

Confirmation. Graduation ceremonies are in church. Activities center around the Faith and the parish.

A social home schooling support group gathers for social events, with little or no concern about anyone's religious values. These groups gather for ice skating and visits to the natural history museum. The group often sponsors science fairs and sports events.

Some home schooling support groups are for parents only. These groups meet in the evening to discuss discipline and teaching phonics. They share ideas about

In the present society, a culture which is not friendly toward our Catholic values, a religious Catholic home schooling support group is almost a necessity for Catholic home schooling families

curriculum. Sometimes parents meet on Saturday mornings for a breakfast break with other homeschooling moms. Often these groups are concerned about local regulations or pending state legislation. Sometimes these are religiously-oriented. Catholics want to discuss principles of discipline from papal documents and priests, Protestants want principles based on the Bible alone.

There is nothing wrong with any of these types of support groups. Indeed, many families may find themselves belonging to several support groups.

Catholic home schooling support groups, however, usually have the goal to encourage and support the Catholic faith and family values, especially for the children. In this kind of a group, Father John Hardon and Father Robert Fox encourage and support a family-to-

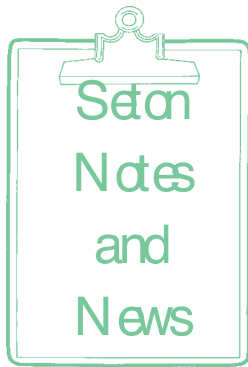
family apostolate to strengthen Catholic values. Pope Leo XIII wrote in one of his documents that "Catholics ought to prefer to associate with Catholics, a course which will be very conducive to the safeguarding of their faith."

In the present society, a culture which is not friendly toward our Catholic values, a religious Catholic home schooling support group is almost a necessity for Catholic home schooling families. There are many social occasions when we and our children are exposed to "mixed" groups. The Catholic home schooling support group may be the only opportunity to spend time with only Catholic families to encourage Catholic values.

Father Joseph Fessio, head of Ignatius Press, gave a speech at a Seton Conference in California. He compared the Catholic home schooling families to the monasteries of the Middle Ages. He believes the homeschooling families need to preserve and foster the Catholic Faith. The Catholic home schooling families need to bring the Catholic culture to our American society. He encouraged Catholic home schooling families to bring back the Catholic hymns and liturgical music, both in the Domestic Church of the Home as well as in the parish.

A Catholic home schooling support group can influence and enrich the life of a parish or a diocese. Support groups can organize and sponsor distinctively Catholic events at church, bring in Catholic speakers, have monthly meetings about the Faith for adults, and arrange parish or diocesan events in relation to the liturgical year, such as a rosary rally, a May crowning, and Benediction to start the school year. Sponsoring Catholic Family and Home Schooling conferences with a variety of Catholic speakers and vendors can help in the spiritual growth of members in a parish.

There are many reasons why Catholic families choose home schooling. If you are concerned to renew, to reinforce, to strengthen, and to maintain the Catholic faith and family values and culture for yourself and your children, I encourage you to keep your Catholic home schooling group Catholic.



Conferences

Information about Seton conferences is sent by mail to homeschooling 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 and supplemental books. Half-day conferences also available. Costs are borne by Seton. If your support group is interested in having a conference in your area, please call Mary Lou Warren at Seton.

Boston, MA. Seton Home Schooling Conference. Oct. 9, 1999.

Denver, CO. Seton & Catholics United for the Faith. Family & Home Schooling Conference. Oct. 23, 1999.

San Antonio, TX. The Round Table. Catholic Home Schooling Leaders meeting. November 19-21, 1999.

The Seton Home Study Newsletter

is published monthly by
Seton Home Study School
1350 Progress Dr.
Front Royal, VA 22630
Phone: (540) 636-9990
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Internet: www.setonhome.org
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Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year.

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Accounts Overdue

Seton has been compelled to charge late fees to those seriously overdue in their monthly payments, that is, more than sixty days overdue. We still have \$300,000 in overdue accounts receivable.

For the sake of the Seton apostolate, we ask that all those on the payment plan please make their payments on time. Thank you.

California Office

Seton has opened a California Office in the Los Angeles area.

Student records for California students will be kept on file. Pre-packaged grade level curriculums available for grades K through 8. Curriculum and supplemental materials available for purchase separately. Seton representative, Mark Gallagher, is available to visit support group curriculum fairs and conferences. Contact Mark at Seton Home Study California, 44751 Date Street, Suite 8, Lancaster, CA 93534. Phone: 661-948-8881; E-mail at setonca@networkone.net; fax: 661-948-7006.

Donations

We want to thank all those who have made generous donations to Seton Home Study School. We hope you are enjoying the art book we sent you.

Seton is doing vital work for the church. Our homeschooling program is allowing families to be Catholic families, working together, learning together, strengthening the Catholic family life. Ultimately, Seton home schooling graduates with their religious knowledge, religious life, and academic skills, will produce solid change in our society.

If you can make a donation to Seton Home Study School, you can be sure that your money is being spent wisely on good Catholic textbooks

to help produce higher quality Catholic education for leaders in the Church. We will continue to send our new full-color religious art book to any donors of \$100 or more.

Thank you for your generosity.

Standardized Tests

CAT Tests are available from Seton for all home schoolers, for \$20 for tests and scoring. For further information or to order by credit card, call "Testing Department" at 540-636-9990; or fax at 540-636-1602; or e-mail testing@setonhome.org. Let your know schooling friends know. "We are serious about education!"

Answer Key CD's

We have begun sending out answer keys on CD to families receiving books for students in grades 4 through 8. These CD's are being placed into boxes along with the printed answer keys. A bit less than half of the families with children in grades 4 through 8 will be receiving the CD's.

As mentioned last month, this is a test to see how well putting materials on CD will work. If you have children in grades 4 through 8 and do not receive the CD with your books, you can download the contents of the CD from our website. You can download just the access program you need (Windows or Mac) and the grade level(s) that you need, so the download is not excessively large.

Seton Counselors

(540-636-9990, plus extensions where appropriate)

Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Hermy, Fr. Constantine, Fr. Barrett

High School English: 540-636-2342, 540-636-1755

High School Math: Don Valaika, 540-636-1846

Senior Guidance/Testing (CAT): Bob Wesner, 540-636-2238

History: Bruce Clark, Ext. 122

Elementary: 540-636-1755, 540-636-2342

Admissions, Enrollment, Re-Enrollment: 540-636-2039

Home Schooling Fathers: Tom Kosten, Bruce Clark, Pandy DeQue

Special Needs/LD: Pat Walker, Ext. 152

Report Cards/Graders: Melissa Ott, Ext. 138

Independent Studies: Dr. Jerry Smith, Ext. 159

“A great sign
appeared in
heaven, a
woman clothed
with the sun,
and the



moon was
under her feet,
and upon
her head
a crown of
twelve stars”

Apocalypse 12:1

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