



Seton Home Study School

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

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Shadow of the Eternal Father

In the past five hundred years, Catholic appreciation of St. Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord, has been growing by leaps and bounds. Chief among the saints who have deepened our appreciation of this incomparably great figure of salvation is St. Teresa of Jesus or of Avila, whom Pope Paul VI named a doctor of the Church. St. Teresa, the reformer of the Carmelites, an order with its roots in the Holy Land, had boundless trust in St. Joseph and never asked him for a favor in vain.

However, the dignity of St. Joseph has always been there to be discovered. Just as the incarnate Word of God chose, created, and formed His mother, “the world’s first love,” so did He likewise choose, create, and form His foster father. In sacred Scripture St. Joseph is called “just” in a situation that was a great anguish for him—namely what to do when his fiancée, whom he knew to be pure, was “found with child.” Had St. Joseph thought that another man was the father of the child, he was bound by Jewish law to denounce Our Lady to the authorities, as the Law of Moses dictated.

I do not believe that he thought the child was a natural child of another man. I believe that St. Joseph was, in his humility, terrified to be the foster father of God incarnate. I believe that Our Lady and St. Joseph are the very pinnacle of the human race—Our Lord excepted, as God in the flesh. St. Joseph in this appreciation is the most intelligent, the most gifted, the most talented of all the mere sons of men. He was not in the dark about Who this child is. Therefore the angel addresses him, “Yes, you are correct about the identity of the child,

but this is your identity. You are the virgin father of the Redeemer. You will give Him His name and you will form Him because God has so chosen—He has chosen you.” With this news all clouds vanish and St. Joseph takes refuge in the will of God. To do the clearly indicated will of God is to be perfectly safe. And so he joyfully takes his fiancée and makes her his wife and awaits with awe the birth of “their” child.

St. Augustine was the first to call St. Joseph the “virgin father of the Savior.” He was as much the real father of Our Lord as possible without physical generation. It is my own belief that there were two men who resembled Our Lord Jesus Christ as if they were identical twins—St. Joseph and St. James, who is called “the brother of the Lord.” It is very appropriate for God’s plan of virginal paternity that Our Lord and St. Joseph look very much alike. “Isn’t this the son of the carpenter?” St. Joseph loved Our Lord as his Son, his Lord and his God. We come to resemble that which we love and St. Joseph’s love was the most perfect love of God that ever filled a merely human man’s heart.

It is fascinating to think of what this great man would have done in the face of the public life and passion of Our Lord. But we have no word of him after Our Lord makes it clear in the Temple of Jerusalem that He knows very well who He is. He knows and says right out that His Father in the most profound sense is not St. Joseph. I have often wondered what must have passed through the mind and heart of this very best of men and fathers, hearing these words of his dearly beloved son. Because

he is also the most perfect of men whose refuge is the will and pleasure of God, perhaps this statement of Our Lord occasioned no pain but rather thanksgiving from St. Joseph that he had been chosen to stand in the visible realm between the Son of the Father and the human nature of the Son.

He is the shadow of the Eternal Father. A shadow is totally dependent upon the body which casts it. It moves only when the body casting it moves. This reminds us of St. Joseph’s perfect obedience. “Fear not” to take Mary as your wedded wife. Assured that this is the will of God, it is as good as accomplished. “Arise and take the Child and His mother.” St. Joseph is gone immediately with a new young mother and infant into a pagan country. Informed that the danger is past, he returns with as much alacrity as he had gone.

What was it like to nurture the incarnate God? Can we even imagine? It doesn’t even seem right to speculate on this absolutely unique situation: the father and mother were made by the Son Who created them both to His specifications. Yet He deigns to be formed as a human nature by His own creatures.

St. Joseph, Virgin Father of the Savior, pray for us. St. Joseph, Shadow of the Eternal Father, pray for us.

Father Constantine

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Questions We Are Asked

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

My son dislikes math because he lacks confidence in his own ability. He is constantly saying, "I can't do it."

Winnie Newcomb, one of our counselors, answers the question this way: Make a big deal out of every problem he answers correctly. Pray out loud to his angel in front of him to remind him of his angel's presence and help. Do not let him speak negatively. If he says he will not try, tell him that he has an unacceptable attitude, and that he is denying the wonderful gifts God gave him.

Be very careful when criticizing his mistakes. Never tell him that he has done a problem wrong or that he has made a mistake. Never say "No! That's the wrong answer!" Instead, discuss mistakes in a positive manner. Try saying, "Let's do this one again." Or "We need to do some more work on this one!" It is important to use words such as "let's" or "we" because these reaffirm the idea that your child is not doing the work alone. He gains confidence because you are there to help him and guide him.

My first grader is very smart, but lacks the motivation to study the math facts. Do you have any suggestions?

Again from Winnie Newcomb: Have your child help you in the kitchen. Let your child measure things and count them out, especially when you are making a cake or something else your child can enjoy when all the "work" is done.

At the grocery store, ask your child to put three cans of tuna in the cart and four cans of soup, then total the cans. Ask him to put ten oranges in the cart and take out five; ask how many are left.

At the library, ask your child to count the number of books to check out. At the mailbox, ask how many letters came in the mail. How many are for Mom? How many are left for the rest of the family?

Show your child how math can be an opportunity for fun. When Dad comes home from work, there can be a special time with just the two of them as Dad quizzes your child with his math flash c. Ask math questions at the dinner table: "If Dad has three peas left on his plate and I have five peas left on my plate, how many peas do we both have left?"

If your child likes manipulatives, let him use blocks until he is more proficient in his math facts. Some children like to use playing cards, looking at the numbers and counting the hearts, clubs, diamonds, & spades. You can make up games; for example, the red cards could be for subtraction problems, the black for addition.

Use pennies, nickels, and dimes to teach addition and subtraction facts. Children like working with money because they see Mom and Dad using money. Some children like practicing addition and subtraction facts with colorful poker chips.

Ask questions whenever the opportunity arises to show that we can or should be thinking in math terms. Driving in the car, you might ask, "First we went through two lights, then we went through three lights. How many lights did we pass through?" Use every opportunity to not only reinforce math facts, but to show how important it is to know math.

I have four children, and my oldest is a five year old girl. My baby is

only four weeks old. I am frustrated because I am too tired to teach my oldest. Can you help me?

First you need to be a little kinder to yourself. Take the time to rest and gain back your strength and energy. Your baby is not even sleeping through the night yet!

Secondly, pray all the time. Pray day and night. Say the morning offering so that everything you do is offered up as a prayer. Keep a little prayer book on your bedside table so that even if you have a minute during a nursing, you can meditate with Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

Never say "No! That's the wrong answer!" Try saying, "Let's do this one again." Or "We need to do some more work on this one!" It is important to use words such as "let's" or "we" because these reaffirm the idea that your child is not doing the work alone.

Don't be reluctant to break out in prayer at anytime during the day, encouraging your children to join you. Don't forget to sing a few prayers every day, like Immaculate Mary. The children will learn the songs quickly, and these will bring you and them special graces to be successful in your domestic church home schooling.

If you want to do anything with home schooling your oldest, gather the children around you in the bed. They can be on your bed or on the floor near your bed. Your oldest can move down the hall if she needs to have some quiet time.

Have the toddler play with his toys on the floor, and your four year old can have coloring books or other educational-type games that make her feel she is having school too.

Consider schooling your oldest slowly, doing only phonics, religion, and math. Involve the four-year-old to some extent.

Think about next year. Perhaps your oldest could help her younger sister with her phonics and math and you can begin to teach them both together. As the girls work together, they will help each other, giving you more time with the little ones.

Home schooling laws in the United States have been relaxed in recent years.

If home schoolers can keep showing good results, we can look forward to a continued positive legal climate.

If results start to slip, many legislators are eager to restrict home schooling.

I would really like to see Catholic high school science books. Even at the local parent-operated Catholic school, they have no Catholic science books. Are there any available?

As you know, we are in a crisis situation regarding Catholic textbooks. Catholic science books are not being published. However, we have published Catholic science books in several of the elementary grade levels. At present, a Catholic college science professor has taken a leave of absence, and has graciously agreed to write a Catholic biology textbook for us. Please keep her in your prayers. This is a demanding project.

Our intentions are to write a Catholic earth science text and a Catholic physical science text. On the surface, this may seem not to be necessary, but the difference will be noticeable after it is published.

One fine Catholic home schooling father and writer has agreed to write a Catholic high school health textbook for us. Please keep him in your prayers as he has a very large family, and this will be especially demanding on his time.

We all need to pray that God sends us the people and the money and the technical resources to accomplish this important goal.

Your book reports seem to be getting too structured. I feel we don't have the freedom to be more creative.

We do have more structure in the book reports because parents and students did not realize that we are looking for comprehension of main themes or concepts. We want students to think about examples in the books which prove certain concepts.

In the past, students were simply writing chronological events for a book report. Putting events in chronological order is a good learning experience, but it is learned in other places, such as in the questions in the readers and in the reading-thinking skills workbooks.

Students need to learn to see the events in a story as part of a picture which presents a larger principle or theme. Giving the student the topic sentence or a main idea, for two books out of four, we hope will lead to learning how to draw conclusions. For our future Catholic leaders and writers and thinkers, we need to teach our children when they are young to defend and promote Catholic values, issues, ideas, doctrines, and principles.

Would you put my story in your newsletter?

A professional woman in the medical profession called me to ask me to put her story in the

Seton newsletter to encourage other parents. She said that she enrolled her two boys in the elementary grades for several years. When they went into the high school grades, they started to get lazy. She was busy working and did not keep on top of their schoolwork. She let the boys go without sending in papers, without getting grades or credits. Other Catholic home schooling families told her that was okay.

Now the boys are at 11th grade age, and they not only have no grades or credits, they also are not educated even through the ninth grade. She wanted me to convey to other families that she believes that the structure Seton offers is wonderful. She is so sorry she did not fulfill her responsibility with her boys, and encourages every home schooling parent to keep up with the Seton program.

There is a lot of talk in certain circles these days about how very little time and effort needs to be put into home schooling, as little as an hour a day. While it is true that each family must decide for itself how much time and work needs to be done, it is important to keep on top of the situation and try to keep to a reasonable schedule. Your home schooling time is sort of like money—if you don't keep track of it you reach the end of the month and wonder where it all went.

Remember, too, that the reason that home schooling laws around the United States have been relaxed in recent years is that home schoolers were able to show that they achieve stunning educational results. If home schoolers can keep up these results, then we can look forward to a continued good legal climate. But if the results being to slip, state legislators are only too eager to enact restrictive laws again. If a large number of home schooled students begin doing badly on standardized tests, or if even a few stories surface about children not really being taught at home, you can be sure that negative legislation will follow.

The Biblical Role of the Father

by Gerry Matatics

According to Scripture, God expects all parents to “home school” their children to some degree (even if they attend a school outside the home as well). Let’s look at one aspect of this parental responsibility that’s often overlooked. Let’s consider the question, “What do the daddies do?”

Several biblical passages focus on the father’s involvement in the education and character development of his children. God expected Abraham (not just—or even primarily—Sarah) to “instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is just and right” (Genesis 18:19). The Book of Proverbs mentions the “father’s instruction” in the same breath as the “mother’s teaching” (1:8; 6:20, etc). And St. Paul’s command is, “Fathers ...bring [your children] up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Active Fathers

Clearly the Bible envisions fathers taking an active role in the spiritual and intellectual formation of their children. This is definitely not something Dad can drop into Mom’s lap, anymore than Dad and Mom together can drop it into the state’s lap, or even the Church’s.

For some families this poses a problem. Many Americans—Catholic and Protestant alike—see religion, including instruction in religious duties, as primarily “women’s work.” Partly this is due to the sentimentalization and emasculation of religion in this country that Ann Douglas has diagnosed in her now classic study, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Knopf, 1977). Partly this is due to economic forces that act centrifugally to make men think their significant work and worth lie lamely outside the home. Partly it is due to the fact that being a nurturer doesn’t come as easily, as naturally, as instinctively to us men as it does to women: it requires an extra effort on our part, an effort that all too

often we can’t seem to muster the energy to make. Regardless of the reasons, this is a problem we men must overcome if our family’s home schooling is to be successful. So what can we do?

Before we go any further, let’s remember that one of the reasons for (and advantages of) home schooling is the flexibility it provides to tailor instruction to each child, to customize our curriculum to best meet his particular circumstances. If every child is different, this is no less true of every family and every father. Every father’s involvement in his family’s home school will therefore be different. To praise the virtues of home schooling precisely because it respects the individuality and uniqueness of each child, and then turn around and insist that all fathers teach certain subjects, or spend x number of hours a day doing certain prescribed things, seems ironically inconsistent, to say the least. We shouldn’t abandon the rigid hoops that some say our children must jump through, only to reinstate them for the fathers! What we’re after here are general principles, which will apply differently in varying circumstances.

One of those varying circumstances is how we earn our money. Fathers, after all, have an obligation to support their families. In traditional societies, this did not necessarily mean that the father was absent from the family circle for the better part of the day; such fathers were the exception rather than the rule. The change came with the rise of the industrial revolution and its attendant urbanization—something that should make us view those social developments as a mixed blessing at best. As a result, many, if not most, fathers must now spend nine hours a day (or more if they have a long commute) away from their families.

The Impact of Technology

Fortunately, the technological revolution marking our shift from an industrial to an information economy (chronicled in Alvin Toffler’s The Third

Wave, John Naisbitt’s Megatrends or Megatrends 2000 and similar works) means that many men, armed with a home computer and a modem or fax machine, can now do either all or much of their work without leaving home, either because they work for themselves (as a writer, or consultant, or whatnot), or because their employers permit them to “telecommute.” If your employer does not, but the nature of your work makes this possible, approach him or her about it.

If you can work at home at least part of the time, your mere presence there is an irreplaceable source of strength to your wife as she seeks to juggle the various conflicting demands of being a home schooling mom. In addition to being available to intercept interruptions (answering the phone, taking a fussy infant for a walk), you might want to consider teaching a class or two.

What to Do?

But what if we can’t be at home as much as we’d like, at least for now, what can we do in the meantime?

First, we can fully support our wives—emotionally as well as financially—so that they are free to teach our children at home. A woman’s knowledge that her husband believes in her and enthusiastically backs up her desire to make the sacrifices to be a home schooling mom is one of the greatest factors in her success. In addition to practical matters like hugs (psychologists say people need eight to twelve a day, just to stay emotionally healthy and strong) and words of encouragement, pray out loud with your wife for her success that day as a home schooler. Pray for each child by name, thanking God for specific achievements and interceding for any particular problems they may be having.

Second, we can spiritually minister to our children with whatever time we do have, if not on a daily basis, at least weekly. Reading and discussing the Bible, the catechism, the lives of the saints; teaching them how to pray and praying with them; taking them with us to picket or pray the rosary in front of an abortion clinic—these are just a few of the ways a father can carry out

his calling to be the spiritual head of the home, the “priest” of his little “domestic church”.

Thirdly, don’t overlook other subjects. Are you a writer? Teach them to write stories. A history buff? An art major? Can you sing or play a musical instrument? Are you a whiz at woodworking, electronics, car repair, computers? Share your hobbies with your children.

Fourthly, turn them on to the books and films that were your favorites when you were a kid by reading them to them and watching them with them. They will get a kick out of becoming a fan along with you, will gain a greater insight into the person you are, and it will be a nice exercise in nostalgia for you. In our house this takes the form of finding (at garage sales and used book stores) and reading to them Thor comics from the 1960’s, Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators mysteries, abridged editions of the classics from Mark Twain to Jules Verne to Alexandre Dumas, every Scholastic Book paperback I loved as a child, and watching, in order, the Sherlock Holmes films starring Basil Rathbone, among other things.

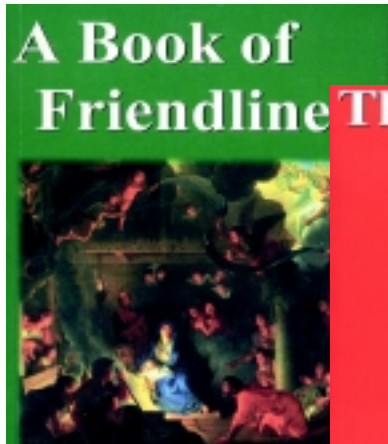
Fifthly, remember that part of the rationale for home schooling lies in our conviction that information travels most effectively along a cultivated, covenant relationship, such as exists between parent and child. The more you know and trust someone, the more you will learn from them. Whenever possible, try to spend time each day with each of your children, even if it’s only for fifteen minutes (hopefully more). Get down on the carpet with him to give him a ride or a wrestle, go for a walk with him, read him a book, play a game with him, build something with him. I have a rule that whenever I have to leave the house to run an errand to the bank, post office, supermarket or dry cleaners or whatever, I take one or more of the children with me. This enables me to give individualized attention to each child, and gets one or more of

them out of the home to give my wife a much-needed break!

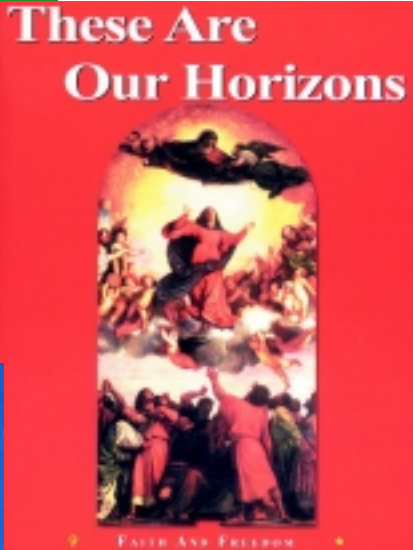
Ultimately the father’s most significant contribution is in what he is rather than what he does. What kind of example do we provide in our spiritual lives, in our relationship with God? Do our children know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we love God, that the supreme passion of our lives is knowing and doing His will? Do they hear us say so? Do they see us pay the price, when we are persecuted for our beliefs? Less dramatically but perhaps more importantly, do they see our Christian character in the more mundane matters of life, especially the difficult ones? How do we handle milk spills, headaches, screaming infants, unexpectedly large phone bills, flat tires, traffic jams, kids delaying our departure for mass

because they can’t find their shoes— not to mention the larger trials of life? Do we deal with these difficulties as committed Christians? All too often, I know I do not. *Mea maxima culpa!* But even here, in our sincere repentance, in our humbling ourselves to ask forgiveness from our wives and children, in our amendment of life, we can teach our children, even as we learn along with them, what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.


Gerry Matatics is the president of Biblical Foundations International. He has been a professor on the faculty of several colleges, including Christendom College in Front Royal, VA. He is a popular speaker at conferences and seminars around the world. He can be reached at his website at www.gerrymatatics.org.



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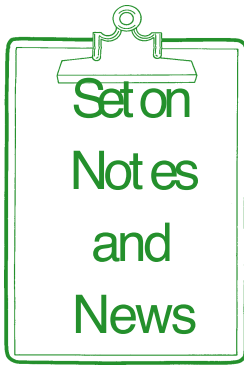
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Information about Seton conferences is sent by mail to home schooling families on our mailing list in the state, and usually to surrounding states as well. Conferences include talks as well as the sale of Seton textbooks and supplemental books. Half-day conferences also are 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.

Non-Seton Conferences

Many state and local groups are now sponsoring their own conferences, inviting various Catholic vendors and curriculum providers. Seton is happy to participate at these conferences as a vendor. Dr. Mary Kay Clark is often available to speak at these conferences.

We also suggest as a speaker Ginny Seuffert, mother of twelve children and home schooling mother of many years. She is a favorite speaker who offers her home schooling tips with fun and humor. Seton has sent information to families on our mailing list within 100 miles of these conferences, which have shown an increase in attendance.

Upcoming conferences

Toledo, OH – March 11, 2000: Annual Catholic Faith and Family Conference. Dr. Clark speaking: Catholic Home Schooling: Hope of the Church. Contact Rita at 419-885-3145; Thomas_haus@msn.com

Olathe, KS – March 18, 2000. Catholic Home Schooling Education Fair. Prince of Peace Church. Dr. Clark speaking. Contact Paulette at 913-829-5168.

Aiken, SC – March 18, 2000. Conference by Catholic Home Educators of SC. Seton books for sale. Contact Mary Ellen: 803-649-6367; Trjack@groupZ.net

Rochester, NY – March 25, 2000: Seton Conference. St. Jude the Apostle Church. Dr. Clark on Cultivating Catholic Culture at Home; Ginny Seuffert on Practical Tips for Home Schooling in Large Families; Fr. James McLucas: Emasculation in our Culture: the Danger to Catholic Fatherhood. Dr. Bernard Way: Apostolic Catholics vs. Drawbridge Catholics. Paul Sullivan: Focusing for College; Mr. Greg Lloyd: Church Teachings on Home Schooling. Register with Seton at 540-636-9996; mlwarren@setonhome.org. Local contact: Judy: 716-247-5262.

Houston, TX – April 1, 2000. Annual Catholic Home Schooling Conference. Dr. Clark speaking. Seton

books for sale. Contact: Ana at 281-583-5430.

Harrisburg, PA – April 8, 2000. Annual Home Schooling conference by Catholic Homeschoolers of PA. Dr. Clark speaking, Seton books for sale. Contact Ellen Kramer at 717-866-5425.

Rockford, IL – May 19-20, 2000. Latin Mass Community Conference. Dr. Clark speaking. Contact Peg at 800-437-5876.

Chattanooga, TN – June 10, 2000. Annual Catholic Home Schooling Conference. Dr. Clark speaking. Seton Books for Sale. Contact Sharon at 423-842-6319.

Detroit, MI – June 24, 2000. Catholic Home Schooling Conference. Ginny Seuffert speaking. Seton books for sale. Contact Cathie at 313-565-6129.

Minneapolis, MN – June 17, 2000 [note date change]. Annual Catholic Home Schooling Conference. Kenneth Clark speaking on Home Schooling Your High Schooler. Seton books for sale. Contact Kerri at 612-906-0005.

Linking to Seton

If your local parish has a website with a resources link page, perhaps you could ask them to list Seton as an educational link. Several parishes throughout the country have listed Seton as a link, including Blessed Sacrament in MO, St. Raymond of Pennafort and St. John Bosco in VA, and St. Maximilian Kolbe in PA. The link should point to www.setonhome.org

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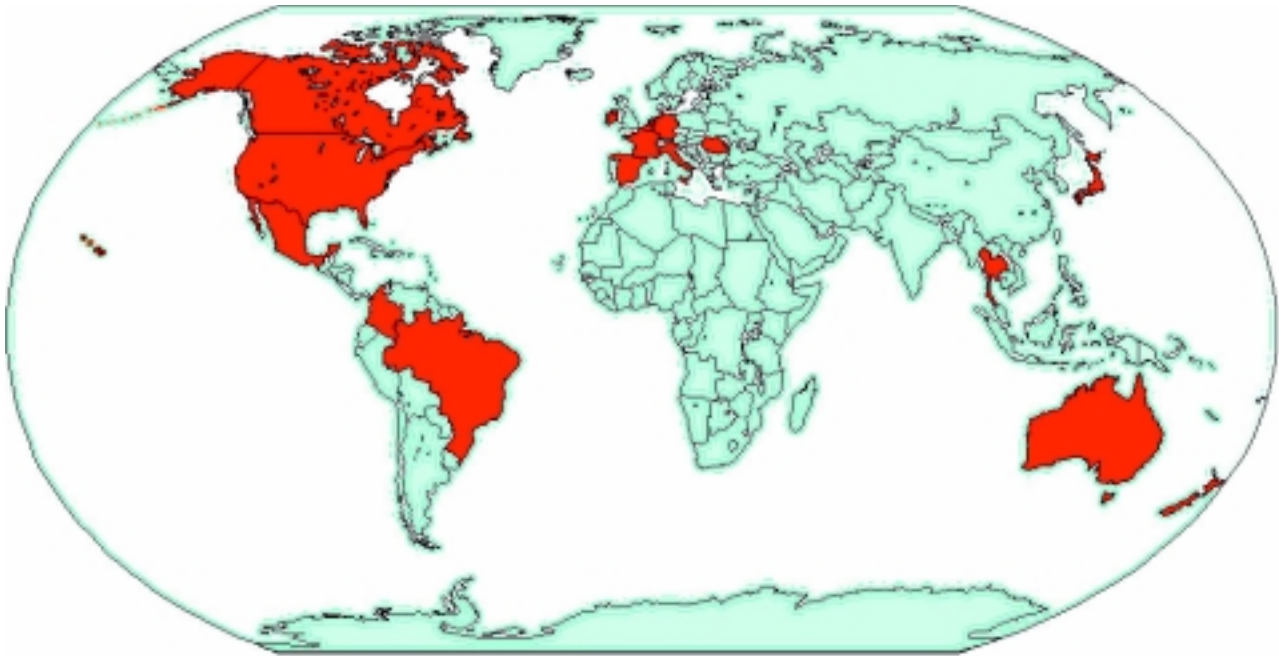
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Seton Around the World



One or more Seton families lives in each of the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, Romania, Spain, Thailand, and the United States. The U.S. has the most families with approximately 6,700, followed by Canada with 185, including 83 families in Ontario and 63 families in Alberta. Australia is next with 20 families, followed by the Philippines with 18. (Note: These numbers do not include military or diplomatic families living overseas.)

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