



Seton Home



Study School

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“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”



April 2000

Resurrection

Certainly the greatest event in history is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This event of Jesus rising from the tomb and appearing to His disciples for forty days was the way God the Father ratified, validated, and accepted the sacrificial death of His Son for our sins.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the sign that God will accept us also into heaven, raising our bodies from the dead at the end of time. Of course, we must believe in Jesus Christ as the Risen Lord, and repent of our sins.

St. Paul tells us that we can know the power of Jesus and His Resurrection when we share in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10-11). For us home schooling parents, the many sacrifices and hardships required to home school can be our share in the sufferings of Christ.

Temptations to discouragement, resentment, and bitterness can be averted if by faith we claim the power of the Resurrection of Jesus in the midst of our difficulties.

A shining example of someone who knew the power of the Resurrection of Jesus amidst great suffering is Blessed Margaret of Castello. Margaret was born with serious physical problems; she was born blind and had a deformed spine which made her bent over all the time. To make matters worse,

Margaret’s parents were ashamed of her, and kept her imprisoned during her childhood in a tower room.

During her imprisonment, a priest took pity on Margaret and visited her every day through a window in her tower cell. She memorized and took into her heart every doctrine of God he taught her. Though she had the distractions and temptations of her own physical ailments and hardships of imprisonment, Margaret grew to great heights in her spiritual life.

When Margaret was only a teenager, her parents abandoned her on the streets of a nearby city. Margaret sat outside the church door, and came to know and love certain Catholics who belonged to a religious third order. Margaret, in spite of her serious problems, offered love and hope to others. She visited the sick and imprisoned, groups for whom she had special affection.

Margaret reflected Christ’s love in her dedication to helping others. Though she had little physical beauty, she developed an extraordinary spiritual beauty which drew others to her. She knew the power of the Resurrection of Jesus: she followed His example in His sufferings and death through her physical infirmities, her abandonment, and her humiliations. Her spiritual beauty will one day be reflected in great physical beauty when she

experiences the resurrection of her body at the end of time.

As concerned home schooling parents, we experience some of the humiliation and abandonment, the indifference and rebellion, and even the scorn of family members and fellow parishioners.

We must see such situations as a challenge to know Jesus more and more deeply by faith, hope, and charity. Let us continually discover “the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil.3:8) in prayer, the reception of the sacraments, and the fellowship of other home schooling parents.

Christ is risen from the dead! By death He conquered death, and to those in the graves, He granted life! Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. Let the whole universe, visible and invisible, rejoice, for Christ our Eternal Joy is risen from the dead. He has given us eternal life and abundant mercy.

-MKC

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Questions We Are Asked

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

What do we do with the toddler while we are home schooling?

Your toddler needs to be involved in the home schooling. Your young toddler could be safe in a play yard with toddler-type books as well as toys. You could hold your toddler on your lap as you give instructions or listen to your child read. An older toddler could play on the floor, again with the option of having "school books."

Those of us who have home schooled with toddlers in the home-schooling room have found that they learn what the older children are learning. They don't always understand what they are learning, but they are learning words and some ideas. It is much easier to begin home schooling a child of four or five if he has been "learning" through the toddler years. He usually knows his alphabet, his numbers, songs, and catechism. His little brain has been attuned to the learning process.

Toddlers may be taken outside for fresh air by an older child, or taken into another room for toddler play. It is good for older children to learn responsibility toward other younger members of the family. Having each older child take an hour with the toddler gives both siblings a respect for each other. It can also make them friends.

Should I spend time working with my high schooler, or should he work alone?

Each situation is different. Some students, especially those who have been home schooled for several years, like to work on their own. I can remember my sons saying, "But Mom, I can do it myself!"

Other students who are just starting home schooling, or those who are struggling, may need the fairly constant support or even teaching of mom or dad until they become independent learners.

Some students need help in a single subject, such as English or math, but are able to handle the other subjects on their own.

It is important to have the goal of teaching your child in such a way that he eventually becomes an independent learner. It is important to ask him to think out the question, look it up in the text, figure it out step by step. Help him to establish a study pattern that can serve him the rest of his life. The Mini Study Skills course we send to the students in grades 7 to 12 can be very helpful.

Home schooling provides flexibility and the opportunity to help your child in a way that is unique for him. That is the beauty of home schooling.

Do you have specific study tips for the junior & senior high school students?

We do refer you back to the Mini Study Skills course which we send out to older students.

We recommend first that parents help their children to understand the importance of being educated, and to develop a positive attitude. We can have a positive attitude about anything. Joan Andrews Bell, a pro-lifer who spent months and months in jail, looked on her jail time as an opportunity for prayer. Many priests and bishops imprisoned in Communist countries would say the Mass prayers and reflect on the Stations of the Cross and say the rosary. Anything we do can become an opportunity for joy and grace.

Short-term goals should be set. Instead of looking at all the work ahead for the year, the student should concentrate on this week, or today's goals.

Finding a good study area is important. Older students need to have their own space, either in a bedroom or study room. Some high school students find going to the public library (or the university library) for a couple of hours a day, and working in a study carrel, gives them the opportunity to focus without distractions.

Study aids are so important. We emphasize in the science and history courses the importance of "attacking" the chapter. Look through the whole

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chapter, read the notes under the illustrations and graphs, look at the outline for the chapter, read any review questions at the end of the chapter, read the headings and subheadings. After all that is done, then begin reading the chapter, out loud. Read with expression. This could be taped and played back for help in remembering.

Read the chapter out loud a second time, using a highlighter or underline or write an outline in your notebook. The more senses used, the better the material will be absorbed by the brain.

Use a dictionary. No one should read anything without a dictionary available. Have an encyclopedia available to look up anything interesting. When my boys would read a chapter, we always

looked up at least one thing in the encyclopedia to get a fuller understanding. We would even look up something we would read about in the stories in the readers. For instance, in one of the readers, there is a story about Sister Blandina and Billy the Kid. So we looked up Billy the Kid.

Use supplementary helps. We would see what the topic would be in history and science for the coming week. Then we would visit the library on the weekend BEFORE we read the chapter, and find books (and films in those days) which related to what we would be studying.

If you have a television with the History Channel or the Biography Channel, they have good programs to

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supplement. You can usually find some science programs also.

The Internet offers great help if you are careful. One major problem we have found with the Internet is trying to find good sources of information from the thousands of sources available. To help with this, Seton is undertaking a huge project of putting resources for our high school courses on our web site. In other words, for each section of a book, we will have links where you can find more information on the topic—links that we have determined have good information. So, rather than blindly using a search engine and hoping for the best, you will be able to go to the Seton website and have a ready-made set of links for a course. This is a huge project which will take some time to complete. Currently

we have on-line links for the high school American History and World History courses.

Some parents have asked us about good Catholic Internet sources for research. We suggest EWTN and Catholicity, as well as the Catholic Encyclopedia. All these can be reached through links on our Seton web site.

How do you regain obedience and discipline with older children?

This is the most frequently-asked question at our conferences.

Remember that older students who are not disciplined or who are disobedient are having spiritual problems. This is rebellion against you, as a parent, against your legitimate God-given authority.

First you need to acknowledge to yourself that you have the God-given authority and responsibility to demand respect and obedience from your children. It is wrong not to train your children to be obedient, because this will result in their being disobedient to other authorities, and ultimately, to God.

Second, disobedience or rebellion against parents is a spiritual problem which needs to be addressed with spiritual solutions. Please start taking your children to daily Mass. If you cannot go every day, start out by going on Saturdays. Then add Fridays, then add Wednesdays. The graces for you and your children will help you to be a better parent and your children to be obedient children.

Be sure to take your children to weekly confession. Your children will begin to recognize their sins for what they are if you take them to Mass during the week, and if you take them to confession each week. Help them to examine their consciences.

Pray with your children during the day, and also at night when they go to bed. Be sure to include the Act of Contrition. Help them to reflect on the happenings of the day, how they have

improved in behavior, the times they were disobedient, and so on.

Third, if you are starting a new program of training and discipline at the same time you are home schooling, you may have to pull back a little on the academics and take more time for character formation. After all, without a good attitude and a recognition of your authority, you will not accomplish much academically anyway. However, keep up the religion classes and other classes which help develop character, such as literature classes.

Fourth, remember that there must be consequences for behavior. You can institute good consequences for good behavior, but you must also institute bad consequences for bad behavior. This is Biblical, by the way. God punished His people for disobedience. Lot's wife can testify that a "simple little" act of disobedience to authority, just "looking back," can result in terrible consequences. While not being obedient may not be physically fatal, it could be spiritually fatal if it continues.

Why do we have to do book reports in World Literature and English?

Actually, the assignments we call book reports for World Literature are nothing like a book report at all. The World Literature assignments are more like quizzes than reports. They are much easier than English book reports because they do not require the formulation of an overall thesis statement and a single orderly composition. Instead, we ask five separate questions to be answered with individual paragraphs. Each paragraph needs a unique topic sentence, then, because it is answering a new question. Therefore, even though we use the term "book report" in the WL course, you really have to do only three book reports for your English course and these four "quizzes" for World Literature. Finally, the only things submitted to Seton for grading in World Literature each quarter are an open-book test and the book report/quiz. Therefore, this assignment should not be bypassed.

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 a Seton Family and Home Schooling Conference in Washington, DC.

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.



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Conferences

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.

Upcoming conferences

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.

Columbus, OH – May 13, 2000. St. Patrick's Church. Columbus Area Catholic Home Educators and Seton. Curriculum Fair with speakers: St. Patrick's pastor on Fatima and the Home Schooling Family; Ginny Seuffert on Tips for Home Schooling K to 12; Dr. Mary Kay Clark on Cultivating Catholic Culture in the Home. Contact Seton.

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

Indianapolis, IN – June 3, 2000. Indianapolis Catholic Home Schoolers Network Annual Conference. Kenneth Clark speaking. Contact Teresa at 317-849-9821.

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

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.

Lansing, MI – June 23-24, 2000. Michigan Catholic Home Educators Conference and Book Fair. Steve Wood, Dr. James Leek,

Ginny Seuffert speaking. Seton books for sale. Contact Cathie at 313-565-6129.

Accounts Overdue

Seton has been compelled to charge late fees to those overdue with their monthly payments. This apostolate relies on timely payments by parents in order to meet our own financial obligations to our employees and creditors. Please make payments on time. Thank you.

California Office

Available in our Los Angeles California office are textbooks and pre-packed curriculums for grades K through 8. Contact Mark at Seton, 44751 Date St., Suite 8, Lancaster, CA 93534; phone: 661-948-8881; e-mail: setonca@networkone.net; fax: 661-948-7006.

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TO CHRISTIAN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

And now our words more directly address our own children, particularly those whom God calls to serve Him in marriage. The Church, while teaching inprescriptible demands of the divine law, announces the tidings of salvation, and by means of the sacraments opens up the paths of grace, which makes man a new creature, capable of corresponding with love and true freedom to the design of his Creator and Savior, and of finding the yoke of Christ to be sweet.

Christian married couples, then, docile to her voice, must remember that their Christian vocations, which began at baptism, is further specified and reinforced by the sacrament of matrimony. By it husband and wife are strengthened and as it were consecrated for the faithful accomplishment of their proper duties, for the carrying out of their proper vocation even to perfection, and the Christian witness which is proper to them before the whole world. To them the Lord entrusts the task of making visible to men the holiness and sweetness of the law which unites the mutual love of husband and wife with their cooperation with the love of God, the author of human life.

We do not at all intend to hide the sometimes serious difficulties inherent in the life of Christian married persons; for them as for everyone else, “the gate is narrow and the way is

hard, that leads to life.” But the hope of that life must illuminate their way, as with courage they strive to live with wisdom, justice and piety in this present time, knowing that the figure of this world passes away.

Let married couples, then, face up to the efforts needed, supported by the faith and hope which “do not disappoint ... because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” Let them implore divine assistance by persevering prayer; above all, let them draw from the source of grace and charity in the Eucharist. And if sin should still keep its hold over them, let them not be discouraged, but rather have recourse with humble perseverance to the mercy of God, which is poured forth in the sacrament of Penance. In this way they will be enabled to achieve the fullness of conjugal life described by the Apostle: “husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church ... husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church ... this is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

--Humanae Vitae, Paul VI

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