



# Seton Home



# Study School

Volume XVIII, Number 8



*“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”*



August 2001

## *Immaculate Heart of Mary*

This month we celebrate the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother into Heaven, but we also celebrate the Feast of The Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was because Mary was so pure in her heart that she was chosen to be the Mother of God, and ultimately was assumed body and soul into Heaven.

We homeschooling parents, especially mothers, are usually busy about the work of our homes and home schooling. We are an active apostolate, so to speak, as we fulfill our domestic and family obligations in words and deeds. Perhaps, though, we need to reflect on our innermost thoughts and work to free them of sin and temptation in order that our hearts may be pure. Frequently, we need to ask the Blessed Mother to help us to grow closer to her Immaculate Heart.

St. Anne, the mother of Mary, knew that her little baby girl was very special. St. Anne had asked God for this special gift of a baby in her old age. She received much more than she asked for. When Mary was very young, St. Anne realized her own home was not sufficiently close to the heavenly Father. Therefore, she took Mary to live in the Temple where her Immaculate Heart could be closer to her loving Father in Heaven.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, flooded with grace, pray for us to take seriously the responsibility of

leading our children closer to you, your Son, and our heavenly Father. Help me in my home schooling to make my home a domestic church.

Mary’s cousin, Elizabeth, recognized Mary with her Immaculate Heart when Mary visited her. It was revealed to her that Mary was the Mother of her Lord. As “Mother of my Lord,” Mary could only be pure and holy.

Most Immaculate Heart of Mary, blessed of all hearts, help me, my spouse, my children, and my relatives to draw closer to your Immaculate Heart.

St. Joseph also came to recognize Mary with her Immaculate Heart. At first, he was confused until the angel came to explain that she still was immaculate, and was overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph was privileged to know the ultimate source of Mary’s immaculate purity: the Holy Spirit.

St. Joseph, Guardian of the Immaculate Hearts of Jesus and Mary, move us to be ever attentive to the delicate motions of the Holy Spirit as we pray and discern what is best for our family.

When the Blessed Mother appeared to the three children of Fatima, she asked that a special devotion be started to her Immaculate Heart. “Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved,” she said. “He wants to establish the Devotion to my Immaculate Heart

in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by myself to adorn His throne.” She followed this shortly afterwards by promising “I will never leave you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge, and the way that will lead you to God.” At a later apparition to the three children, the Blessed Mother asked for “Communions of Reparation [for poor sinners] on the first Saturdays [of the month].”

Immaculate Heart of Mary, refuge of poor sinners, pray for our home schooling family that we will avoid sin in our hearts, in our minds, and our wills. We know that sin often starts in the heart. Help us to grow in purity of heart that someday we may join you and your Son in eternity.

O most merciful God, who for the salvation and refuge of poor sinners, has made the Immaculate Heart of Mary most like in tenderness and pity to the Heart of Jesus, grant that we who now commemorate her most sweet, pure, and loving Immaculate Heart, may by her intercession ever live in communion with the two hearts of Mother and Son, Mary and Jesus. Most Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us. Amen.

- MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**My son is 17 years old and is just finishing up his 10<sup>th</sup> grade work. Is there something we can do so he can finish up quickly?**

We encourage you or your son to speak with our academic counselors. The English counselor, for instance, will go through the assignments with your son and find out just where he is having the problems, and what can be done to move him along more quickly. If your son is having problems in math, he should speak with the math counselor and see what is the specific problem.

**The academic counselors can be reached by phone or fax or email. The address is [counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org). Also, we now have a "message board" for our students for math, English, and history. Your child can type in his message and the counselor will answer within 24 hours, on a weekday. These questions and answers are available for other students to look at also.**

Your son is a young man and he is very much influenced by his father at this age. Try to have your husband assist your son in some way to finish up. Perhaps your son can go to work with your husband and do his work in the office. This puts real importance and prestige on the schoolwork.

Often at this age, students are having emotional or spiritual problems. Be sure your son is attending Mass and going to Confession frequently and regularly. He should be praying each day before doing his coursework.

**I have several children in the elementary levels, and I feel overwhelmed with the amount of**

**work. Can you reduce the amount of work required?**

Yes we can, but you need to speak with one of our elementary level counselors to review the specific problem area. In general, we say that the daily assignments are suggestions. They can be reduced as you judge is possible without causing your child to lose out on important concepts. For instance, there are usually two or three phonics pages devoted to a single concept. If your child learns it in the first lesson, perhaps your child can omit the following lessons, or do them orally.

We do need your child to take the Seton tests, however, if you want a grade on the Seton report card.

Be sure that you are saying your prayers every day and asking for the graces to teach your children. Be sure the children are praying also. Try to attend daily Mass with the children as often as possible. You all need the graces.

**Why do other homeschool programs require less work than Seton?**

Actually, we don't *require* anything. However, if you want a grade on the Seton report card, we do require that your child take the Seton tests. Remember, the daily assignments are suggestions or guidelines. Whatever you think your child needs to do in order to learn the material or pass the tests is entirely up to you.

We think it is better to have more assignments available to choose from than to have fewer. Also, we are trying to include more possible supplemental information or links from the internet. These are all optional, of course.

Remember that it is not possible for Seton to create lesson plans that are

right for every child. We receive calls from parents saying that a certain course is too difficult, and also calls from parents saying that the same course is too easy. Both statements are true, because any given course as written is too hard for some students and too easy for others. That is why parents, who are the primary educators, need to adjust the program to fit the child.

**How can I get my reluctant husband to participate in our homeschooling?**

Prayer is the best way, and lots of it! With grace, he will come to know and understand and eventually support what you are doing. Be sure to go to daily Mass whenever possible, and pray to St. Joseph.

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*The daily assignments are suggestions. They can be reduced as you judge is possible without causing your child to lose out on important concepts.*

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See if your husband would listen to one of the children read or if he would check over the math lesson with one of the children. Start with just little bits here and there, maybe just one little thing each week.

See if your husband would attend one of the support group meetings, or watch a video on a homeschooling talk. Your husband's reluctance to help may be because he does not feel committed to homeschooling. Once he understands that you are serious about this enterprise and that the children are really progressing, he may come around.

**What is available to help parents teach science to high school children?**

There are loads of web sites available which you can find online yourself,

and which you may want to check out for your children. Using a search engine, you can type in anything at all and get anywhere from 60 to 1000 sites! Look for museums, universities, government agencies such as NASA, encyclopedias, science magazines such as *Sky & Telescope*, and so on. You will want to check out the sites first to look for any dangerous or anti-Catholic concepts.

There are many software programs available on-line to teach science. You can find software for everything from astronomy to zoology. Two of the best sites for downloading software are ZDNet's [www.hotfiles.com](http://www.hotfiles.com) and c|net's [www.download.com](http://www.download.com).

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*Life is a wonderful adventure! Become excited about it yourself, and pull your kids along for the ride!*

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If your child is taking Earth Science or Physical Science, you can go to our web site and click on Course Resources. We have checked out numerous resources, and they are listed by specific topics being studied in the textbooks.

We are having a college physics professor write new lesson plans for a new physics book. When he is finished, we hope he can suggest specific helpful web sites. We are also finishing up a Catholic Biology textbook. Lesson plans will include numerous web sites, especially pro-life sites.

#### **When should I have my kids take the ACT or SAT?**

Students must take these tests no later than the third year of high school if they want the test scores to be considered at a college for the year the student intends to enter.

If you hope your child will obtain a scholarship, we recommend that he

start taking the tests in ninth grade. Students do better if they have a chance to take the test once or twice before sending the results to a college.

We also recommend that you purchase the Barron's SAT study guide/workbook, *How to Prepare for the SAT*, which Seton sells for only \$14. This can be used for daily practice in actual previous tests in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math which includes algebra and geometry. Students who either study the Barron's preparation book or enroll in a local SAT preparation class do very well on the ACT or SAT test.

Seton automatically sends SAT and ACT registration information to high school students in August. If you do not receive this, please call Bob Wiesner, our senior counselor, or email him at [bwiesner@setonhome.org](mailto:bwiesner@setonhome.org).

By the way, three Seton graduates have had perfect SAT or ACT scores: Raymond Hain, from Alabama, who went on to Christendom College; Elizabeth Ptacek, from NC, who went on to Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and recently Justin Nolan, from Oklahoma. In fact, in the recent ACT testing, Justin was the only student among thousands taking the test in Oklahoma to receive a perfect score.

#### **Do you have any tips to improve concentration with the boys?**

The first thing to remember in teaching boys is that they would rather be outside playing baseball!

Studies have proven that children do better in their schoolwork if they have frequent physical exercise during the day. When I taught my seven sons, they had physical exercise every day. They would play baseball or football outside in the yard, ride their bikes, or play basketball at the local YMCA or college. Also, they would have physical chores during the day, such as sweeping the floor or putting in a load of laundry, which involved going up and down the stairs. I also invested in jump ropes for the boys for safe inside activity.

Learning a musical instrument is also important in learning to concentrate. Children can start very young, even at three or four years of age, to learn the piano or the violin. It is really amazing, but they can learn from simply hearing the notes and the rhythm. If you cannot afford music lessons, have just one person in the family take lessons and teach the others. Except for the babies, all my grandchildren are taking some form of music lessons. At the same time, they are doing very well in reading and writing.

Boys also like working on the computer, which is very helpful when they normally struggle with handwriting, or rewriting assignments such as book reports. Boys should be working on the computer as early as fifth or sixth grade.

Being excited yourself about the subjects you are teaching goes a long way toward helping your boys learn. Have Dad involved, which is essential if you want boys to appreciate learning. See if Dad can teach his favorite subject, such as math, history, or science. Dad can also take kids on field trips. Kids naturally love doing things with Dad, and it seems more important when Dad thinks it is important.

If there is a subject area which seems "boring" to your boys, consider pre-screening some web sites which might offer colorful or interactive supplemental information. Such web sites can make anything come alive. Have you ever gone on a search engine and looked for sites on caves, one of the chapter topics in the Earth Science course? It is incredible how many caves we have in this country which can be visited by tourists! They are colorful and have wonderful descriptive names. Some have historical interest as they were visited by those in the underground railroad during the Civil War. Some caves offer gold mining activities for children who visit! Our boys can compare them to the catacombs under Rome!

Life is a wonderful adventure! Become excited about it yourself, and pull your kids along for the ride!

## *The Importance of Fathers in our Search for God*

Excerpts of an address delivered May 1, 1999, to the pastoral workers of the Diocese of Cheyenne by Most Rev. Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Denver

These have been a tough couple of decades for fathers in particular, and men in general.

[People] attack men's identity and undermine the whole idea of fatherhood. In the process, women and children are hurt, families are damaged, and our understanding of God Himself becomes confused. Let me outline three criticisms, or problems, which make our times especially hard for fathers.

The first problem is with Dad's genes. ... And it's described best in a 1996 book called *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. ... As you'd expect, the authors have a pretty hostile view of the traditional family and marriage, which they see as a trap for women cooked up by patriarchal power.

Dad's second big problem is economic. Children now watch 5,000 hours of television before they enter kindergarten and 16,000 hours before they graduate from high school. The average American sees 1,000 commercials a week, and 1 million before he or she is 20. And what commercials teach is this: The best things in life are *not* free; in fact, they cost quite a bit of money . . . but we should get them anyway, because otherwise, we won't be happy.

Consumer capitalism encourages appetites; which require spending; which encourages debt; which demands more work to earn more money; which gets spent on bigger appetites; and so on. *That's its nature*. The result, in many families, is the elevation of money as the only real measure of value. Which implies that if you don't get paid for your labor — and obviously, stay at home mothers don't get paid — your work is somehow inferior. Which helps drive more and more women into the workforce.

My point is this. Our economy has changed. Many men don't play the same, clear, solitary provider role for their families they once did in the past. At the same time, family members are taught by the mass media to see themselves as self-contained consumers. So the internal economic life of the family has *also* changed — from a common purpose shared by all family members, to a collection of competing individual interests. In other words, Dad's muscle work isn't as valuable as it used to be. And even a good male "brainworker" can rarely keep up with the costs of consumerist family life.

The final problem men face is philosophical — or more accurately, political. ...

Real feminism resists abortion and is naturally prolife. But a certain kind of modern feminism is not just pro-woman, but anti-male. In the words of one feminist scholar, "Socialist feminists see [the traditional] family structure as a cornerstone of women's oppression: it enforces women's dependence on men, it enforces heterosexuality and it imposes the prevailing masculine and feminine character structure on the next generation."

What should we make of all this? First, each of these three tendencies is inhuman. Each turns the human person into an object. We're determined by our genes, so we have to breed better pacifists. We're determined by what we earn and buy, so we have to earn and buy more. We're determined by the limitations of our gender, so we have to rewire our biology to serve our politics. These are just *bad ideas*. Nowhere in any of these tendencies is there any room for fathers, mothers or families as we traditionally understand them. And not surprisingly, who else is absent? God.

The biggest delusion of the 1960s, '70s and '80s was that women and children could survive and even prosper without husbands and fathers; that divorce could be a good thing with little or no impact on the children involved. Just the opposite is true.

The evidence is clear. The breakdown of intact, two-parent families severely damages children. Worse, as single-parent and step-parent households increase, our social fabric weakens. There's no mystery to the data: Children need fathers, and we all suffer if fathers disappear. Which is why David Blankenhorn, the author of *Fatherless America*, can say that "fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation. It is the leading cause of declining child well-being in our society. It is also the engine driving our most urgent social problems from crime to adolescent pregnancy to child sexual abuse to domestic violence against women."

Author Robert Samuelson puts it another way: "The only solution [to our contemporary problems] is to reconstruct, somehow, families that provide the love, sense of self-worth and discipline that children require to develop into responsible, self-sufficient adults. But no one really knows how to do this . . . "Of course, that's not quite true. I think the solution exists, and we can find it in our faith.

There's an old saying that the greatest gift a father can give his children is to love their mother. That's the importance of a father: *the witness he gives through his love*. I have many memories of my own father. But above all, I remember and cherish his love for my mother. I always believed in it, because it was always there. My father taught me that fidelity was not just possible, but a source of joy and freedom, satisfaction and friendship. I might have learned that without him, but not in the same way, and not with the same intimacy. He also taught me how to *choose* to love. Fathers *choose* to love and *choose* to remain with their children in a way mothers do not, because mother-love is frankly just more intense, more natural, more organic. Nothing in fatherhood

is as automatic, or as biologically directed, as motherhood. Real father-love is entirely a free-will act of self-sacrifice. Lived well, it gives us a window on God's own fatherhood.

Of course, it's misleading to draw too many parallels between the fatherhood of God and human fathers. God is wholly other, and neither male nor female. But Scripture says, "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph 3:14,15). And Jesus Himself told us to call God "Father." It's the language God chooses to reveal Himself, and it's through a human father that the child best learns how to integrate justice and mercy; how to engage with the world; our purpose beyond the family; the nobility of strength when it's ruled by love; and the creative fruitfulness of work. A father's love *completes* the family — and in that communion of persons, the child gets the first inkling of who God is, a Trinity of persons in a community of love . . . like the family.

Looking out from within the love of a family, we can see the poverty of so much of today's culture. If men are simply predators and inseminators looking to spread their seed, and if women really need men only as a way of getting children, well . . . then marriage is just a contract of mutual utility, with the sexes using each other as a means to an end. *But people are better than that.* Our motives and yearnings are higher than that.

So we come to a final question: What do we do to restore fathers to their place in the family and in the culture, and through that, to renew our language of God?

We live in a curious time. We lionize books like Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*. We revere the values which the generation of the 1940s embodied — especially the fathers and brothers and sons who fought in World War II. But how much of it, I wonder, is just our nostalgia for a life we have no intention of choosing . . . because it would demand the hard work of conversion.

You see, that's the heart of the matter. The revolution starts in the individual soul. When men and women decide to live scriptural lives, sacramental lives, *then and only then*, will the world begin to change.

It sounds pious and impractical, but it was impractical for the first Christians to oppose the Roman Empire. It was impractical to abolish slavery. Societies change when families change. Families change when individuals change. Turn off the television. Buy less. It sounds easy — *but try it.* Spend time with your kids. Keep Sunday holy. Pray together. Choose to be faithful. Spouses, choose to subordinate yourselves to each other. Husbands and fathers: Be the leaders you were meant to be. Claim it, and it will be yours. Goodness is magnetic.

Preparing these remarks, I noticed that I'd be speaking with you on the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. This is one of my favorite feast days, because Joseph was a *man's man* — a man accustomed to labor, sweat and the burden of supporting a family. Scripture says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Ps 127:1). It's always struck me that God the Father put His only Son into the care of a carpenter, a *builder*. And Joseph, in his faith and obedience, allowed God to use his own human talents to build the Living Tabernacle. Joseph protected and taught, formed and provided for, the Redeemer of the world.

Joseph was a living witness of the meaning of manliness; the nobility of human labor; and the dignity of married love. Surely, Jesus must have admired and loved him *with all his heart*. So if we hope to restore the identity of fathers in our families and in our culture, if we hope to rebuild the integrity of family life in our communities . . . we should look first to Joseph.

We have no better model.

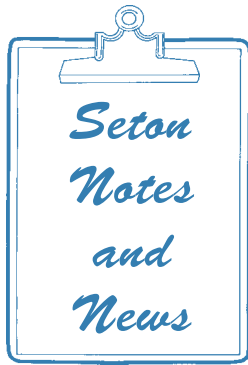
*The Archbishop's full remarks are available at the website of the Archdiocese of Denver at [www.archden.org](http://www.archden.org).*

### *Clarification on Educational Savings Accounts*

Last month we mentioned that Congress has expanded the scope of Educational Savings Accounts (ESA's). In the past, ESA's were available only for college or advanced degree programs. Congress has now expanded the program so that ESA's can be used to pay for K through 12 educational expenses as well. Individuals or corporations can place up to \$2000 per year in an ESA.

However, the ESA works along the same lines as the Roth IRA. The original money put into the ESA is not tax free. It is taxed as regular income. It is only the income (interest, dividends, capital gains, etc.) from the account that is tax free when used to pay for bona fide educational expenses. The law additionally sets income limits for individuals and married couples, and the law lapses in 2006.

Clearly, the Educational Savings Account is a rather complex vehicle for dealing with educational bills. It would probably be best to consult with a tax professional to decide if it is appropriate for your family.



## Conferences

Seton is happy to participate at homeschooling conferences. Dr. Mary Kay Clark is often available to speak at these conferences. We also recommend:

- Ginny Seuffert, mother of twelve children and homeschooling mother of many years. She is a favorite speaker who offers her homeschooling tips with fun and humor.
- Father James McLucas, who speaks about the role of the father in the Catholic home schooling family.
- Katie Moran, president of Catholic Home Schooling Network of America, speaks on Home Schooling the Child with Learning Problems, and Teaching Marian Modesty.
- Father Ben Cameron of the Fathers of Mercy, who has spoken at several Catholic homeschooling conferences, on vocations and on the sacramental life.

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Kevin Clark

## Conference and Book Fairs

Seton is exhibiting lesson plans and selling books at the following Catholic Homeschooling Conferences.

**New-Hampshire/Boston area. October 20, 2001.** St Marie's Church, Manchester, New Hampshire. Seton Conference. More details to be announced.

**Omaha, NE. November 17, 2001. Omaha Catholic Homeschool Conference.** Contact [omahayers@aol.com](mailto:omahayers@aol.com) for more information.

## Honors Received

**Justin Nolan** of Guthrie, OK, achieved a perfect score on the ACT Assessment Test. He was one of only 71 students in the nation, out of 389,000 who took the test, to receive a perfect score. He was the only student in the state of Oklahoma to receive a perfect score. Congratulations, Justin.

**Angeline Larrivee**, a fourth grade Seton student, has been awarded first place for fourth grade in the State Pre-College Piano Auditions, sponsored by the South Carolina Music Teachers Association. Congratulations, Angeline.

## PSAT

Students who are entering 11th grade this year are reminded to register for the PSAT (given only in October) at a local school. Only 11th graders are eligible for the National Merit Scholarship Program. These awards are determined by performance on the PSAT. DO NOT use the Seton Home Study

School code for this test; each state has its own home school code which should be used for the PSAT. If you do not know this code number, call or email Bob Wiesner at Seton.

## Donations

Thank you to all those who have made generous donations to Seton. Seton is doing vital work for the Church.

If you are able to make a donation to Seton, you can be sure that your money is being spent wisely on producing good Catholic textbooks for high quality Catholic education.

Our new full-color religious art book, *Art Through Faith*, is sent to donors of \$100 or more. For a \$250 donation, we will send an autographed copy of *The Custer Legacy*, an historical novel by Seton historian, Bruce Clark. For a \$500 donation, we will send an autographed pre-publication copy of *The Castro Conspiracy*. For a \$1000 donation, we will dedicate a Seton textbook to you and your family, which will encourage prayers for your intentions.

\$5000 donors will receive a hand-painted oil reproduction of a religious master, 24" by 36", by Murillo or Rubens.

## Seton Counselors

(Seton main number: 540-636-9990)

Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Constantine, Fr. Barrett  
High School English: Devin Pesta, Ext. 124 or 540-636-1755  
High School Math: Tom Luckey, Ext. 165 or 540-636-1846;  
Don Valaika, Ext. 132  
High School Science: Fr. Kevin Barrett, Ext. 120  
Senior Guidance: Bob Wiesner, 540-636-2238  
History: Bruce Clark, Ext. 122  
Elementary: Winnie Ehlinger, 540-636-2342 or Ext. 118  
Admissions, Enrollment, Re-Enrollment: 540-636-2039  
Home Schooling Fathers: Tom Kosten, Randy DeClue, Tom Sayre  
Special Needs: Sharon Hines, Ext. 151; Pat Walker, Ext. 152  
Grading: Jim Price, Ext. 138; Rhonda Way, Ext. 166  
Independent Studies: Paul Neulieb, Ext. 117  
Testing (CAT): Ext. 150  
High School Course Approval: Paul Neulieb, Ext. 117



The first natural and necessary element in this environment, as regards education, is the family, and this precisely because it is so ordained by the Creator Himself.

Accordingly, that education which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family will, as a rule, be more effective and lasting, and more efficacious in proportion to the clear and constant good example set, first by the parents, and then by the other members of the household.

...For the love of Our Savior Jesus Christ, therefore, We implore pastors of souls, by every means in their power, by instructions and by catechisms, by word of mouth and by widely distributed written articles, to warn Christian parents of their grave obligations. And this should be done not merely in a theoretical and general way, but with practical and specific application to the various responsibilities of parents touching the religious, moral, and civil training of their children, and with an indication of the methods best adapted to make their training most effective, in addition to the influence of their own exemplary lives.

*Christian Education of Youth*

Pope Pius XI

***Seton Home Study School***

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