



# Seton Home



# Study School



Volume XIX, Number 2

“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”

February 2002

## Our Lady of Lourdes

In February, we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the feast of St. Bernadette Soubirous, to whom Our Lady appeared at Lourdes, France, in the early months of 1858.

At this mid-point of the home schooling year, perhaps we should reflect on the meaning of the Blessed Mother’s appearance and message to us all.

Bernadette grew up in poor health, suffering asthma and difficulty in breathing. Her family lived in dire poverty, living in an abandoned jailhouse. Nevertheless, Bernadette’s mother and father kept the Catholic faith alive in their family. The family prayed together every day, especially the daily Rosary.

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette 18 times, almost daily during the month of February, 1858. From the very first appearance, and at every appearance after, Bernadette said the Rosary under the direction of the Blessed Mother. One time, they said the Rosary three times, covering all fifteen mysteries.

Those who crowded around Bernadette during the apparitions—at one apparition there were 20,000 people present—not only saw her say the Rosary with great devotion, but remarked about the way she made the Sign of the Cross. One person said that she made the Sign of the Cross the way the angels must make it in Heaven. Others said her Sign of the Cross was “profound” and “impressive” and made with great devotion.

The Blessed Mother had very little to say at these apparitions at Lourdes. The one specific message was “Pray for sinners.” In one apparition, Bernadette said, “Penance, penance, penance.” In another apparition, the Blessed Mother told Bernadette: “I don’t promise to make you happy in this world, but in the next.” The most famous words of Our Lady at Lourdes were her name: “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

St. Bernadette’s body remains incorrupt in a convent in Nevers, France, a testimony from Heaven as to her holiness and the truth of the messages given to her and to the world.

Sometimes at this time of the year, we become frustrated with our duties and responsibilities, especially when the weather is cold and dreary. Reflecting and meditating on the great message of Our Lady of Lourdes, saying the daily Rosary, can help us overcome our midwinter doldrums.

Praying the Rosary for sinners, praying the Rosary daily as a special sacrifice for the sins of the world, reminding ourselves and our children through the daily Rosary about the great events in the life of Jesus and Mary, can uplift our souls to a realization and happiness in the fact that eternal joy will come in the next world.

“Mary, you showed yourself to Bernadette in the crevice of the rock. In the cold and gray of winter, you brought the warmth, light and beauty

of your presence. In the often obscure depths of our lives, in the depth of the world where evil is so powerful, bring hope, return our confidence! You are the Immaculate Conception, come to our aid, sinners that we are. Give us the humility to have a change of heart, the courage to do penance. Teach us to pray for all people. Guide us to the source of True Life. Make us pilgrims going forward with your Church, whet our appetite for the Eucharist, the Bread for the journey, the Bread of Life. The Spirit brought about wonders in you, O Mary: by his power, he has placed you near the Father, in the glory of your eternal Son. Look with kindness on our miserable bodies and hearts. Shine forth for us, like a gentle light, at the hour of our death. Together with Bernadette, we pray to you, O Mary, as your poor children. May we enter, like her, into the spirit of the Beatitudes. Then, we will be able, here below, to begin to know the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven and sing together with you: Magnificat! Glory to you, Virgin Mary, blessed servant of the Lord.” [Prayer from the Shrine of Lourdes]

-MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

### **My kids are behind in their work. What do you suggest we do?**

No student is behind if the parents are progressing with the school work at a rate that is best for the student. If your child is doing his best, he is doing well no matter where he is working in the suggested schedule. The lesson plans are designed as a road map at a pace that our experience shows is according to what the average child can accomplish.

However, if you believe your child should be learning at a faster pace in one or more subjects, then you need to analyze why your child is not progressing at the rate he should be. Sometimes children need a clock to keep them on a regular pace; many children have little concept about time. Perhaps analyzing each subject, and working to catch them up by doing more oral assignments, will help your children to move ahead.

There are many methods to motivate children to do their work in a timely way. Either not allowing privileges until work is finished, or giving special privileges once the work is done, is often effective. For example, on a nice day, you might tell the children that you will go to the playground if all the children finish their work by a certain time.

Of course, sometimes students are not completing their work because they do not sufficiently understand the concepts being taught. If this is the case, do not hesitate to call one of the Seton

counselors who may be able to help you in specific areas.

### **My younger two are doing well with home schooling, but my son in 6<sup>th</sup> grade says he is bored. Yet when we work together, he does not seem to be able to answer the questions. What should I do?**

There is the possibility that your child is very bright, and answers questions incorrectly as a means of rebellion or defiance. There is also the possibility that he is struggling but does not want you to know about it, and uses the excuse that he is bored.

Talk with him more to find out what specifically he is "bored" about. If you discover he really is struggling, you need to consider moving him back a grade level. This can be a "review" until he is ready to do the sixth grade work.

If you think he may really be bored and be able to move ahead, try enrolling him in one or two subjects a grade level ahead and see how he does. You might consider giving him a placement test for end of sixth or end of seventh. If you tell him that if he does very well on the test, you will move him up a grade level, he will try to do his best to advance.

### **Do you think it is a good idea to have my high school son redo his work?**

One of the great advantages of homeschooling is that you can take the time to help your child learn the material. If you see he has done

poorly on an assignment or a test, review the material again and again until he has learned it. The material that we send is important and basic for an educated person in our society. High school students need to learn the material to do well in college, in vocational school, or simply to be a productive citizen.

Sometimes presenting the material in different words can help. Ask your spouse to teach a lesson with which your son is struggling. Sometimes an older brother or an uncle can help.

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*In high school, some of the students take only two subjects at a time, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.*

*They are able to finish up two subjects in a couple of months.*

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In high school, some of the students take only two subjects at a time, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. They are able to finish up two subjects in a couple of months. For some students, this more in-depth work helps them to learn and understand concepts better than studying an hour each day over nine months.

### **My high school daughter complains about missing out on the social activities of a regular high school. What should I say or do?**

It is important to explain to our high school children exactly why we are homeschooling. The problems in the schools relate not only to academics but also to the social problems that exist in the schools.

Take time to review the problems that you know have happened in your community and state—the drug problems, the shootings, and so on. Many teens live in daily fear in the high schools. Just this week, Fox News reported that four teens were arrested for paying someone (and they provided the gun) to kill a fellow student! This is not the first time this has been reported.

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That said, depending on where you live, there may be many activities available for homeschoolers. Involve your daughter in some of the social activities at church and in the homeschooling support groups. If there is one particular parish in your diocese with many homeschoolers, you might want to consider attending Mass there, especially on weekdays.

There may be activities, such as sports or drama or dancing or music, in which she may be interested which would provide her some social time with those who are interested in the same activities.

**What are the advantages of your online tests for the high school students? Can I still send the tests by mail?**

The online tests always will be optional. You may use the regular mail to send in tests, or you may use the FAX machine, though we ask

that you are careful to use black ink at the elementary levels. Answers for the high school tests, except in math, should be typed.

The high school online tests are being put into the “My Seton” section on our web site as quickly as possible. These are tests which require objective answers and the computer grades them. Tests online include the sciences, foreign languages, geography, grammar, vocabulary, health, and American Government.

If the test requires an essay question, there will be a place on the test for the student to type in the answer, and our teacher-grader will grade it. For instance, while the majority of questions for the foreign languages are objective, translations are graded by a teacher.

We started the online tests because parents and students like to know their grades immediately. Also, some families live at a distance and the time for the mail to arrive may be up to five days, and of course, five days to return by mail. We also have hundreds of families living all around the world, especially in Canada, Australia, and in the U. S. military. With the recent anthrax scare in this Washington, D.C. area, the mail is even slower.

We will be adding the science tests for grades 6, 7, and 8, primarily because students should become accustomed to taking online tests before they start high school. We may add the objective sections of the grammar tests.

**Can your teachers grade our English papers online?**

We have just started the process of grading directly on the computer. We are currently in the test phase to give us a chance to work out any problems. Our Computer Operations Department has been in charge of this project, and is

to be commended for a fantastic technological achievement.

When the work is sent in, our computers will convert the text to Acrobat format, and register it for the date on which it arrived. Graders will then “check out” and grade the paper. When finished, the grader will check the paper back in and assign a grade to the assignment. The computer will automatically record the grade in our database and will send an email notification with the grade to the parent. Included in the email will be a link which the parent can click to save or print the graded work.

All papers sent online will be kept in the computers for an indefinite period of time. If a paper is redone, the teacher-grader can access the former paper.

Currently, only the graders who work in the Seton building are grading on-line. Once the test phase is completed, we will also have at-home graders grade this way. This gives us the opportunity to employ teachers who live anywhere in the world.

**Do you have online courses as well?**

Yes. Several foreign language courses and English 9 are online. However, due to some difficulties with the site that is currently hosting the on-line courses, we need to switch providers by June. So we won't be adding more courses until then.

The online courses provide links for internet supplemental activities, as well as updated information. This will provide online tutoring and several interactive-type helps. We can provide an almost endless amount of help and supplemental information which cannot be provided by hard-copy.

Please keep us in your prayers, as this is a time-consuming and expensive project.

## *The Importance of Catholic Materials*

Teaching the Catholic Faith to our children is our primary responsibility as Catholic parents. We must teach it mainly by good example, showing our children how to live our Faith each day in our daily situations. In addition, the Church declares we are to teach the Faith by “word.” This means we must teach it orally. Most of us use catechisms and other materials as well. What we must not forget, however, is that the Church is clear that all subjects should be taught from a Catholic perspective.

Back in 1864 and in 1875, and repeated in 1955, the Vatican sent instructions to the bishops of the United States, declaring that education in public schools was dangerous because of the lack of Catholic education. “To the Sacred Congregation, this method [of public education] has appeared intrinsically dangerous and absolutely contrary to Catholicism. Indeed, because the special program adopted by these schools excludes all religious instruction, the pupils cannot grasp the elements of the Faith, nor are they instructed in the precepts of the Church...”

In 1897, in the encyclical *Militantis Ecclesiae*, Pope Leo XIII declared: “A wide knowledge should go hand in hand with care for spiritual progress... religion must permeate and direct every branch of knowledge whatever be its nature... it has always been the Church’s intention that every branch of study be of great service in the religious formation of youth...” Obviously, in order for every branch of study to be of great service in religious formation, every branch of study must be taught with Catholic principles.

Pope Pius XI, in the great encyclical *Christian Education of Youth*, wrote of the need for religion to permeate *the whole of the learning enterprise*: “...it is necessary that *all the teaching* and the whole organization of the school, its teachers, syllabus and *textbooks of every*

*kind*, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that religion may be in very truth the foundation and the crown of youth’s entire training...” Obviously, from the bottom to the top and everything in between must be permeated with our Catholic Faith.

*Christian Education of Youth* continues: “It is therefore as important to make no mistake in education as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last goal, with which the whole work of education is intimately and necessarily connected. In fact, since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below in order to attain the sublime goal for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man’s last end.... there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education.”

Further on in *Christian Education of Youth*, Pope Pius XI declares: “From this it follows that the so-called ‘neutral’ or ‘lay’ school, from which religion is excluded is contrary to the fundamental principles of education. Such a school, moreover, cannot exist in practice; it is bound to become irreligious.” In other words, if God and His Laws are left out of the instruction, ultimately students and the school deny God and His Laws. Certainly the American public schools are proof of the Pope’s warning.

Later in this paragraph, the Pope states that even if children receive Catholic religious instruction but receive other lessons that are not Catholic, it is not satisfactory. “Neither can Catholics allow that other type of mixed schools, where the students are provided with separate religious instruction, but receive other lessons in common with non-Catholic children from non-Catholic teachers.” The Pope here, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, states that we cannot expect to raise

practicing Catholics by teaching God only in religion class but ignoring Him in the rest of education.

Immediately following, the Pope declares “...it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, its teachers, syllabus and textbooks of every kind, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that religion may be in very truth the foundation and the crown of youth’s entire training; and this applies to every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the high institutions of learning as well.

“To use the words of [Pope] Leo XIII: ‘It is necessary not only that religious instruction be given to the young at certain fixed times, but also that every other subject taught be permeated with Christian piety. If this be lacking, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade and warm the hearts of masters and scholars alike, little good can be expected from any kind of learning, and considerable harm will often be the consequence.’”

In many documents, the Church commands us to use Catholic materials. Weaving the Catholic Faith throughout all subjects shows the child that the Faith is necessary in understanding all areas of knowledge. The omission of God in any subject sends a message that this subject can be properly learned without reference to God or the Church.

Pope John Paul II himself has declared that home schooling is especially important because it involves the whole family in learning the Catholic Faith through all subjects. Cardinal Edouard Gagnon visited Seton Home Study School some time ago and took a copy of the book *Catholic Home Schooling* to give to Pope John Paul II. When I later met His Holiness in Rome and presented him with a copy of *Catholic Home Schooling*, he said, “Good work! Good work!”

## Catholic Philosophy of Education

Father John Hardon, a pre-eminent theologian in America for many years until his death on Dec. 30, 2000, was a prominent supporter of Catholic home education. He often talked about the importance of parents looking for the “norm” of what to teach and how to teach from Jesus Christ and His Apostles, as well as those who taught along with the Apostles, and those who taught afterwards but knew the Apostles personally and followed their directions.

The Bruce Publishing Company, probably the top name among Catholic publishers in the 1940’s, 1950’s, and 1960’s, published a 600 page book titled *A Catholic Philosophy of Education*. This book was written in 1956 by two Ph.D. professors teaching at the School of Education at a Jesuit university, Fordham University. (The Jesuits, of course, were highly praised by the Church for centuries for their excellent schools and universities.) The book received the Nihil Obstat and the Imprimatur, and was dedicated to His Eminence, Cardinal Spellman of New York.

Catholic home schoolers often converse with non-Catholic home schoolers or read books or articles by non-Catholic home schoolers. We are presented with ideas from current or past leaders in the Protestant or secular home schooling movement. We thought the following might be of some help in keeping us focused on the meaning of Catholic education.

In Chapter IV, titled “Educational Aims,” the authors present the aim of education in early Christianity:

**Early Christianity.** Whatever individual interpretations have been given to the teachings of Jesus Christ,

the fact remains that His aim of life and His aim of education were one and the same, namely, to save one’s immortal soul. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul.”

The following were introduced into culture and education by Christianity:

- (1) the religious element centering in the life and person of Christ;
- (2) the hope by everyone for eternal life;
- (3) Christian democracy wherein all are equal before the Father;
- (4) marriage was given the dignity of a sacrament;
- (5) through faith, the individual received from God

the seed of the spiritual life;  
(6) a harmonious system of philosophy and theology which presented a unified view of the universe;

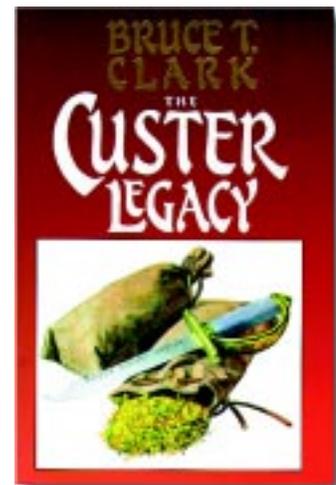
(7) history and language took a universal form because all men are potentially members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

The ultimate aim of early Christian education was clearly not of this world; it was a life beyond this life to be attained by following Christ. With Christianity, religion became the central element in life and education. The Christian sought the salvation of his soul, and the moral regeneration of society.

Early Christianity also recognized the importance of secondary aims in their proper place and significance, such as knowledge, culture, vocation, discipline, efficiency; but these were always subordinate to man’s last end.

This novel by Seton historian Bruce Clark takes the reader on a wild ride that contains deadly Aztec sacrifices, wary conquistadors, the call of bugles, and the clash of saber meeting tomahawk. It is a history-mystery in which the reader meets such real-life figures as Hernan Cortez, George Custer, and Crazy Horse, while sharing the adventures of an Irish soldier of fortune, a white/Indian warrior from the Virginia Military Institute, and the “detective” from the Vatican whose job it is to unravel all of the mysteries and recover *The Custer Legacy*. Available from Seton Educational Media.

Also coming from Bruce Clark: *The Castro Conspiracy*. A chapter from *The Castro Conspiracy* is now available on-line at Seton’s website.



[www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)



## 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. For more information, contact Mary Lou Warren. Besides Dr. Clark, we suggest the following speakers for conferences:

- Ginny Seuffert, mother of twelve children and homeschooling mother of many years. She is a favorite speaker who offers her home schooling tips with fun and humor.
- Father James McLucas, who speaks about the role of the father in the Catholic homeschooling family.
- Katie Moran, president of the Catholic Home Schooling Network of America, has been a popular speaker 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, speaks about vocations and about the Sacramental Life. The Fathers of Mercy give retreats and missions, and are happy to speak at homeschooling conferences.

These conferences are upcoming for the year 2002:

**Covington, LA:** February 23, 2002. For information call Michelle at 504-875-9363.

**Greenville, SC:** March 8-9. For information call Lori at 864-488-3664, or email [L@teleplex.net](mailto:L@teleplex.net).

**Erie, PA:** March 2. For information call Pam at 814-725-2667.

**Harrisburg, PA:** April 13. For information call 717-866-5425, or email [conference@catholichomeschoolpa.org](mailto:conference@catholichomeschoolpa.org).

**St. Louis:** April 13. For information call Carmen at 314-432-0423, or email [carmen@stlouiscatholichomeschool.com](mailto:carmen@stlouiscatholichomeschool.com).

**Olathe (Kansas City area), KS:** April 20. For information call 816-763-1781.

**Houston, TX:** April 26 & 27. For information call Doug at 713-973-8366, or email [archangel\\_tx@lycos.com](mailto:archangel_tx@lycos.com).

**Ottawa, Ontario, Canada:** May 4. For information call Barbara at 613-258-4393, or email [chsao@rogers.com](mailto:chsao@rogers.com).

Literature, History, Religion, and other subjects. We can grade them faster and more efficiently because graders do not need to adjust to specific writing styles. More importantly, the content of the student's work is better because corrections and revisions can be made more easily.

## Pro-Life Organizations

Catholic Home Loan is a national mortgage lender dedicated to providing Catholic families with low-cost home financing options. They donate over 15% of net profits to Catholic charities and organizations. They will donate to the Catholic charity of the borrower's choice. Consider using them and asking them to donate to Seton Home Study School. Contact them at 800-270-8565 or [www.catholichomeloan.com](http://www.catholichomeloan.com).

Paladin Financial Group invests funds only in companies or mutual funds which are either pro-life or do not support any pro-death companies or activities. Contact them at 540-636-7950.

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Editor:  
Kevin Clark

## High School Students

High School students need to send in their paragraphs, essays, book reports, book analyses, and research reports typed on a computer or typewriter. This includes English,

## Seton Counselors

(Seton main number: 540-636-9990)

Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Constantine, Fr. Barrett  
High School English: Therese Zepeda, Ext. 124 or 540-636-1755  
High School Math and Science: 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: Kathleen Kelly, Ext. 117  
Testing (CAT): Ext. 150  
High School Course Approval: Kathleen Kelly, Ext. 117

## *Christian Education Benefits Society*

The proper and immediate aim of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian... For the true Christian must live a supernatural life in Christ: "Christ Who is your life," and display it in all his actions...

For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social...

Hence the true Christian, a product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason, illumined by the supernatural life of the example and teaching of Christ.

The authentic Christian does not renounce the activities of this life, he does not stunt his natural faculties, but he develops and perfects them by coordinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles what is merely natural in life...

This fact is proved by the whole history of Christianity and its institutions, which is nothing else but the history of true civilization and progress up to the present day. It

stands out conspicuously in the lives of the numerous saints, whom the Church and she alone, produces, in whom is perfectly realized the purpose of Christian education, and who have in every way ennobled and benefited human society.

What of the founders of so many charitable and social institutions, of the vast numbers of saintly educators, men and women, who have perpetuated and multiplied their life work, by leaving behind them prolific institutions of Christian education, in aid of families and for the inestimable advantage of nations?

Such are the fruits of Christian education. Their price and value are derived from the supernatural virtue and life in Christ which Christian education forms and develops in man. Of this life and virtue, Christ Our Lord and Master is the source and dispenser. By His example, He is at the same time the universal Model, accessible to all, especially to the young, in the period of His hidden life, a life of labor and obedience, adorned with all virtues, personal, domestic and social, before God and men.

**Christian Education of Youth**

### *Seton Home Study School*

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