



Seton Home



Study School



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May 2003

The Little Way

We can obtain so many ideas on how to live a life of holiness from the lives of the saints. Sister Josefa Menendez has not yet been declared a saint, but she received continuous visions from Our Lord when she was living in a convent in the 1920's in France. She was commanded by Our Lord to write down His words, which were later published, and approved by Pope Pius XII, in the book *The Way of Divine Love*.

After Easter, there was a quiet time as compared with the sufferings of Holy Week. She attended to her daily duties of training the younger sisters in sewing and needlework.

Sister's little way of work and prayer gives us an example of how we might proceed in our homeschooling. "From the very beginning, she made of this little sphere of her influence one of prayerful industry. She and her Novice helpers rarely lost sight of the Presence of God... She taught them to turn towards the Tabernacle and unite themselves to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."

Blessed Mother, help us make our children conscious of Mass times during the day, thinking of when Jesus is present in the nearby church, saying a small prayer to welcome Him into our community at that time.

"Surely Our Lord must have found in this busy workroom a refuge of peace and joy for His heart by the silent

fidelity to Rule, tender charity, and mutual helpfulness to be found there."

Blessed Mother, help us teach our children to realize that Jesus is greatly pleased by obedience to the rules of our home, especially when it is difficult. Help us teach them charity to others in the home, and a willingness to be helpful around the house and in the homeschooling of the younger children.

"The intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, constantly in the minds of those whose horizon was nothing smaller than the whole world, stimulated adroit fingers and loving hearts to give of their best."

Blessed Mother, sometimes we homeschooling mothers think about "getting out of the house." Help us to realize that as members of the Communion of Saints, our area of concern is nothing less than the sanctification of the whole world. Help us to pray for those who suffer around the world. The greatest suffering, of course, is a life without Jesus Christ. While we may not be able to be missionaries in a foreign land, help us to pray for the conversion of those near and far.

"We never saw her impatient or out of temper. If work had been done carelessly, she would say: 'Don't let us ever do anything carelessly in Our Lord's service!' Her firm and gentle ways won love and respect and her

example was a constant lesson in religious life."

"The children felt her love and joy in serving them..."

"Josefa's devotedness was far from being concentrated on her workroom alone. We have already spoken of the many services she was able to render in almost every kind of housework, but what is chiefly worthy of notice is her untiring energy and invariable spirit of sacrifice, especially if we remember that her interior and hidden life was so extraordinary, and yet never prevented her from carrying out her daily and very humble duties."

Blessed Mother, sometimes we feel that our spiritual life is being neglected because of our daily duties, housework, and home schooling. Help us to unite our work to Our Lord, to make our work and duties a form of prayer and sacrifice so that our burdens may become light as He promised.

Blessed Mother, help us to please your Son by giving us the graces to offer up our daily duties for the conversion of souls, especially for the conversion of those in our own family and in our own neighborhood.

- MKC

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Questions We Are Asked
 by *Dr. Mary Kay Clark*
 Director, *Seton Home Study School*

This is my first year with Seton, and my daughter will not be able to finish up the high school work until the summer. I am concerned that if we need even more time, the local school district will complain. How should I handle that?

Most local school districts don't follow the progress of homeschool students that closely. However, it is impossible to predict how your local school district will react. Many hate homeschooling, some do not. Many try to enforce their own ideas, over and above the state regulations. So it is hard to predict.

However, it does not seem reasonable for a true educator to complain if a parent is taking the time to make sure a student has learned the material and done the assignments before going on to the next grade level. You need to do what is best for your child, and try not to worry about what might happen.

Another thing you might consider is to have your student finish up the easier subjects, so that most of the subjects are finished soon. For example, I would guess that your student could finish up religion and the science course for certain. Perhaps then you could work on finishing up the course or two that is nearest to being finished. If you have only one course, for instance, that is not quite finished up by summer, it should not be a problem.

Be sure to have your high school student attend daily Mass. High school students need daily Mass. They are going through emotional changes and need the spiritual help. Often what is slowing down a student is the need for spiritual self-examination.

My son's paragraphs and reports come back frequently to be redone. Do you have any tips so he does not have to keep redoing them?

This may surprise you but the biggest problem with writing assignments that must be redone is that the directions were not followed. Be sure to read the directions and go over the directions with your child. Be sure your child follows the directions from the beginning. Don't allow your child to do the assignment first, then read the directions later.

Help your child to understand that no author hands in his work until it has been proofread. Most authors proof their work several times. Help your student to proof his own work, at least once, and preferably twice.

By the time your student reaches seventh grade, teach your child to use the word processor. Students are more willing to correct their work on the computer because it is so easy to correct. Tell your student to pray for help from his guardian angel before he does the assignment.

I have only one child of school age. I am finding it difficult to manage the homeschooling and taking care of the younger children. Do you have any ideas to help me?

Pray constantly to the Blessed Mother for help. Even if you just utter the words, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," or simply, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." Nothing is more powerful than the Holy Name of Jesus.

Organization and setting priorities is essential. Since your student is likely in a primary grade level, your priority for teaching must be religion, math, reading, phonics, and spelling. These subjects must be taught every day, even if only for 15 or 20 minutes at a sitting.

Schedule some time with Dad, perhaps before he goes to work or when he returns from work. Schedule the reading when the baby is sleeping. Keep the toddler busy with a quiet game when

you are teaching a math concept. Consider giving your toddler some math manipulatives so he is a part of the learning process. Be sure he has these educational items only when "school" is in session so he won't tire of the "lessons."

If one of the younger ones is only a year younger than your student, consider having your student read his stories to his younger sibling. Some are ready to listen!

Why did you take the Algebra I online tests off the Seton web site?

We were receiving some complaints about the tests not being quite in line with the chapters studied. In addition, we have been aware of a number of publisher tests and keys available in general. So we have now published our own Seton tests for the Saxon Algebra I. You will notice that there is a test for the second edition and another test for the third edition.

Be sure to read the directions and go over the directions with your student. Be sure your student follows the directions from the beginning.

We encourage you to purchase the \$20 Algebra CD from our SEM department to help with learning Algebra I, and as a review before starting Algebra II. It is a colorful interactive CD and students have a good time learning the concepts from the computer disk.

I really want our family to live the Catholic lifestyle and for my home to be a domestic church. What specific suggestions can you give me?

There are many rich Catholic traditions and practices. So many of them have been forgotten, but we have an opportunity to bring them into our own family and begin these

traditions anew, traditions that may be continued by our own children, and our children's children.

Some of these traditions can be found in the books in our curriculum. Some of these can be found in the lives of the saints, such as the series published by TAN by Mary Fabyan Windeatt, and the series published by Ignatius Press, the Vision series. Catholic traditions can be found in some of the supplemental books we sell through our SEM department: *The Saints and Our Children*, *Saints and Feastdays*, and *Religious Customs in the Family*.

When we see once again the Catholic churches filled, and when we see again Catholics lined up outside the confessionals, then we will see the return of Catholic values to our nation.

However, the basic way we must live the Catholic life is to attend daily Mass with our spouse and our children. And secondly, to be a strong Catholic family, we must receive the sacrament of Penance frequently. The Church recommends once a month.

When we see once again the Catholic churches filled every day for Mass, and when we see again Catholics lined up outside the confessionals every Saturday afternoon, then we will see the return of Catholic values to our nation. We cannot be a good family, a true domestic church, until we are a true Catholic family. We cannot be a good nation until we are a Catholic nation.

I am having a difficult time with my daughter who does not see the value of learning a foreign language. What can I tell her?

For the languages we have at Seton, Latin, French, and Spanish, students learn about a Catholic culture as well a language. While we have some of that in our courses, we have added web site links to our foreign language online courses which should be motivational for high school students.

Your daughter can find our online courses by going to www.setonhome.org, then clicking on My Seton, then Logging On with the ID number. Then she should click on Courses Online. She may have to scroll down to click on the link.

You will notice that links are to shrines and cathedrals, to songs in the language, and to a bishop's site for lives of the saints in that language. Of course, additional links are for helps in grammar and syntax.

A professor of French and English at Christendom College, Mary Alice Rice, emphasizes that learning a foreign language increases one's English vocabulary since many English words are derived from or have roots in a foreign language. Learning another language is a good way to learn the grammatical structure of English. As we read and write, we can understand and express our ideas more precisely if we have an excellent understanding of the structure of sentences.

One might consider different reasons for learning each foreign language. Learning Spanish would be extremely practical since approximately 17 million Americans speak Spanish as a first or second language. Latin is the language of the Catholic Church, and can help us to understand some of the Church teachings more precisely, such as checking on a phrase from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Learning French opens up the vast world of French literature.

Learning a foreign language develops a part of the brain that often remains dormant. Younger people can learn several foreign languages once that part of the brain has been developed and exercised. Older people often cannot learn foreign

languages at all because that part of the brain has never been exercised. We can see this as we study the lives of missionary saints.

Good colleges require two years of a foreign language because they realize the values as noted above. So if your daughter does not appreciate the reasons above, perhaps the more immediate reason of being admitted to a good college will convince her.

My husband is out of work and we are struggling with everything. Would you please pray for us?

We pray every day at noon for all our families, and we pray especially for our unemployed fathers. Here is a wife's prayer to St. Juan Diego for Happy Employment:

Dear St. Juan Diego, when Our Lady of Tepeyac Hill, Holy Mary of Guadalupe, gave the world her miraculous picture on your tilma, she also gave you the task to fill your days with happy labor. It was your privilege and joy to spend hours caring for the Chapel of the Tilma, telling its blessed story to those who came there. Here the time of your earthly pilgrimage passed happily because you worked for Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Dear St. Juan Diego, please help my husband find steady employment that his time and work may be devoted to the tasks suited for his nature and ability, and suited for service to Almighty God. May the hours of toil give fair return and more to him who hires my husband. May the work be done not for mere profit or only to make a living. May it also be done to make my husband more able to honor Almighty God. May the work be done with reverence and appreciation of the materials supplied by God and modified by man. May the work be done to promote and to enjoy the benefits of skilled and honest labor.

Most especially, allow the work to make Our Lady known and to lead others to love Our Lady of Guadalupe whom you, St. Juan Diego, served so well. Through Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Taking Children to Church

by Dr. Mary Kay Clark

A homeschooling mother recently asked for suggestions regarding her four-year-old boy who does not want to go to daily Mass with the rest of the family. The boy says he “hates going to Mass.”

First you need to consider the nature of a four-year-old boy. He “hates” his peas, and he “hates” his little sister when she tears up his picture. It is not unusual for a young child to freely toss around the word “hate.” Nor is it unusual for a young child to cry in misery at all his terrible problems, like putting on matching socks and wearing his hat outside in the freezing weather.

A young child’s cries and shouts of hate should generally be disregarded. If anything should be done, it is to teach him not to cry and shout, which is usually accomplished by not giving in to his antics. Giving in encourages him to try it again and again to get his way.

Words like “hate” should be explained as being inappropriate for a Christian child. Needless to say, this should be explained in calm moments. It can be the basis for a catechism lesson.

In addition, whenever such language is used, the child should be reminded that this behavior makes Jesus unhappy, that his guardian angel must be covering his ears, that in fact, such words are a sin if they are meant. Of course, at four, they are not meant, but if left to continue, it can become a serious situation in the soul of the child and in the family.

We need to think about our proper role as Mother. “It breaks my heart to hear my son be so against going to Mass.” A small child is not against going to Mass any more than he is against wearing his hat or eating his peas. It is just a discomfort he does not like. He has no deep feelings about this at all. We must be careful and try

not to take these childish statements as if they were from an adult.

Daily Mass is a blessing for us and the others in our families. Some of the blessings can not be measured. Some of the fruits we can see now, and many we will see later.

So, families should continue their wonderful grace-filled daily practice, and don’t allow the cries and shouts of a four-year-old to dissuade them from doing what is best for them and for their families.

Another suggestion comes from Dr. Mark Lowery, a home schooling father in Texas. He goes over the rules for church and has the children practice them at home. On the way to church in the car, he reviews the rules.

Another suggestion is to purchase some books written for children about the Mass, sacraments, rosary, or saints. Perhaps once a week, review thoroughly the meaning of the Mass. On the way to Mass in the car, quickly review the meaning of the Mass. Take a book along to Mass for your child to look at which explains the Mass.

When the kids are young, keep the little one on your lap, explaining what is happening. Explain about all the angels in adoration around the altar. Keep him close to you. Sit on the pew next to him to explain the Our Father.

As your child learns to read, move your finger along the lines as the priest says the prayers. You can ask Father to let you borrow a Missalette to use at home before Mass. Explain each feastday, and why the priest is wearing certain colored vestments.

Have a special field trip to the church on an afternoon, and point out the statues and pictures. Make a catechism lesson out of the stained glass windows, if you have them. A church is like a little bit of Heaven in its surroundings. Lighting the candles, saying the Stations of the Cross after Mass, saying the Rosary after Mass, all these things

encourage children to learn and love their Faith.

Here in Front Royal, every day the church is filled with homeschooling families and LOADS of kids. Plenty of altar boys! And the kids say the Rosary. On Saturdays, the boys say the first half of the prayers, the girls the second half. Sometimes they sing Immaculate Mary.

Each day the Mass celebrates a saint’s feast or a holy day. Today, as I write this, it is the feast of the Presentation, and what a day for a procession and the blessing of candles. And Father has his candles ready with a red ribbon to bless the throats tomorrow.

The Mass and the feasts and the church itself are all so rich in our Catholic culture and heritage. How can kids not love it? We need to convey our love and enthusiasm, and knowledge about the Faith to our children each and every day.

A Seton fifth grade boy recently wrote a paper for his English class called Family Prayer. “A family that prays together stays together. Saying that makes me feel good because my family prays together all the time. We pray when we get up, before school, at each meal, in the car, after dinner, and at bedtime. We go to Mass and say the Rosary daily. We say a prayer for a priest, and try to say the Angelus three times a day. Prayer time is all the time at our house. It makes me feel closer to God in many ways. Prayer helps me be more open to saying Yes to God, and to act more like the child Jesus. Family and prayer just seem to belong together.”

Pray, pray, and pray for all your children, that they will come to love Jesus so much, to love the Mass so much, that for all their lives they will continue to attend daily Mass and receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in Holy Communion. May they come to feel that a day begun without Jesus is not a day at all.

**Seton Home Study School
will be present at**



**The Immaculate Heart of Mary
National Home School and Family Conference 2003**

Sponsored by the Immaculate Heart of Mary Coalition

June 13, 2003 - Friday - 9:00 A.M. - 9:30 P.M.

and

June 14, 2003 - Saturday - 9:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

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Fr. Pablo Straub, Father Ray Williams, Deacon Eugene McGuirk
Former Congressman Robert Dornan, Dr. Mary Kay Clark,
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Check the Coalition’s website at: www.ihmconference.org, or for questions contact: info@ihmconference.org or 540-636-1946.

A Sense of Beauty

by Robert M. Wiesner

Good Catholic parents would never dispute the necessity of training their children in the knowledge of the truth about God. In order to live a reputable Christian life, certain facts simply must be made an integral part of the intellectual fabric. We must know that God is One, but also Trinity. We must understand that the Second Person of the Trinity became human like us, died for our salvation and rose from the dead. We must be aware that the Holy Spirit is operating in the world throughout history. This knowledge of the facts concerning God gives rise to a certain type of prayer, that of affirmation; the acknowledgement of God as Truth allows us, in short, to recite the Creed.

Likewise, it is an obvious imperative to train children in an appreciation of God as Goodness. A solidly Catholic life demands that we live according to the moral dictates of God, based upon the Ten Commandments, but also deriving from the fulfillment of the Law in Charity. Anyone whose actions do not correspond with God's moral code, no matter how loudly they proclaim their adherence to Christian Truth, is, as St. Paul puts it, a "clanging gong" or a "clashing cymbal." Living the Christian moral code makes of one's entire life a prayer pleasing to God. Adherence to the Goodness of God leads to prayers of repentance for sin, amendment of behavior and holiness of life.

Unfortunately, the third great approach to God often takes something of a back seat to God as Truth and God as Goodness. Catholics often seem to minimize the importance of training youth in an appreciation of God as Beauty. The neglect of the esthetic sensibilities of the young has disastrous effects, for it effectively does away with that sublime form of prayer, contemplation.

Americans have generally been regarded as an especially pragmatic people. In some ways, American youth have been brought up to believe that their worth to the world consists of what

they can do for the world and in how good they are at producing wealth. Perhaps the attitude may be best summed up as "the Protestant work ethic." There is something to be said for this attitude toward life. Americans have become such a wonderfully strong and wealthy nation due to this approach to economic life. But the danger of pragmatism is that work and production may all too easily become the goal of human life. The end of this sort of mentality is the rise of consumerism and the odd notion that "whoever dies with the most toys wins." The worth of the human being is seen as what can be accumulated or what can be produced rather than what a person innately is, a child of God.

This approach to economic life is often carried over into the relationship with God. Particularly in the last generation, great emphasis has been placed upon social action in the Western Church. Obviously, charity would demand that a certain level of activity on behalf of justice and relieving the plight of the poor be undertaken by every Catholic, but lately it seems that such activity has taken on such proportions that our true goal of union with God has all but been lost to us. Emphasis upon action and production has spilled over into our religious life, with the result that our contemplation of God has virtually disappeared. Antithetical to this spirit is the dictum "Be still and know that I am God," for stillness seems not to have much in the way of outward productivity. The pragmatist would see contemplation as an essentially useless occupation.

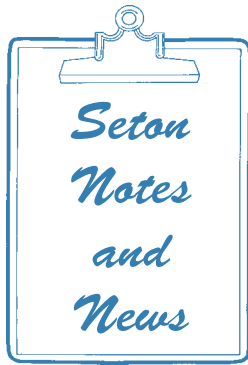
Unfortunately, the pragmatic attitude pervades also the realm of the arts. There is not much "use" for a beautiful painting or a symphony, so Americans have lagged far behind Europe and indeed most areas of the earth in terms of art. In comparison, America has produced very little in terms of great music, visual arts and architecture. There is a certain sickness of the American soul where artistic endeavors are concerned and it is a sickness which badly needs a remedy.

So how do parents begin to instill in their children a love for real beauty? Many families live far away from cities where there may be great art museums or symphony orchestras. They may lack the means to purchase CD's or art books.

Fortunately, we do all have access to the Greatest Artist and the Author of all art. His work surrounds us on every hand and all we need to discover God's Beauty is to simply stop taking it for granted.

At some point, we probably have all seen some artist's rendition of a flower. The painting may be of high quality and it may evoke a deep response from us. The artist's interpretation of beauty as expressed through the flower might teach us a vital spiritual lesson. Still, any rendition of a flower really does pale in comparison to an actual flower. God's work is infinitely more detailed and employs a far broader palette than any human artist applies. The rules of pragmatism do not apply; the artist might paint in order to sell and thus the use of human art is discovered. But God does not need a flower. The flower is an entirely gratuitous act on the part of God; it may just as easily not be as be. The only discernible "use" for the flower is for our enjoyment. If we really look at a flower and think about it, it must inevitably lead to a prayer of thanksgiving and praise for the magnificent artistry of God. Thus, finally, we come to the spiritual "use" for an esthetic sense: appreciation of Beauty leads to an appreciation for the Artist. Truth should lead to a prayer of affirmation, Goodness to the prayer of repentance, but only Beauty can bring us to the prayer of praise.

All of the works of God may be appreciated for their beauty and parents should take the time to impress upon their children the wonder that is to be found in the works of nature. Trees, stars, animals, human beings themselves, are all worthy subjects for contemplation. There is the story of the old hillbilly who, upon observing a particularly vivid sunset, was heard to remark, "Lawd, You done gone did good!" The grammar may be lamentable, but it would be difficult to improve upon the prayer of praise.



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 at 540-636-9990.

Houston, TX. May 9 & 10. 2003 ARCH Homeschoolers Curriculum Fair at Seton Junior High School. For information call Laurie at 281-997-7844.

Memphis, TN. May 23 & 24. St. Louis Church. For information call 662-233-1194.

St. Paul/Minneapolis, MN. May 30-31, 2003. 5th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Education Conference

and Curriculum Fair, University of St. Thomas. For more information, contact Debbie at 952-941-5646.

Plainfield, IL (Chicago area). May 31, 2003. St. Mary Immaculate Parish Center. Speakers include Ginny Seuffert. For information call Katie at 815-467-2201.

Indianapolis, IN. June 7, 2003. Get the Faith Catholic 2003 Curriculum Fair and Conference at the Hamilton County Exhibition Center, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Kenneth Clark and Ginny Seuffert will attend. For information call 317-849-9821, or email conference@rchei.org.

Herndon, VA (Washington, DC area). June 13-14, 2003. Immaculate Heart of Mary National Home School and Family Conference. Speakers include Monsignor Michael Wrenn, Fr. Robert Levis, Fr. Pablo, Straub, Dr. Alice von Hildebrand, Fr. Thomas Euteneuer, Fr. John Perricone, Congressman Robert Dornan and many others.

Lansing, MI. June 20-21, 2003. 9th Annual It's Great to Be Catholic Family and Home Education Conference and Book Fair, at the Lansing Center. For information, call Cathie at 313-565-6129, or email mch001@juno.com.

Letter from a student

Dear Dr. Clark, I use Seton books and I just want to say that I love them. All the other books I've ever used just taught useless little facts that I've been learning over and over again. (Sorry for saying useless, that's the only word that can describe it.) Your books are so mind-filling. I think that is how school should be. There is this girl that goes to my church, and I used to go to school with her before I started homeschooling. Not many people like her, but I do. My friends would run away every time she came out of church. I did it too because I didn't want them to think I was weird if I didn't. I know it was wrong and I feel awful and embarrassed, but your religion book inspired me to be a better person and be a lot nicer to this girl.

Your Website Can Help Seton!

As you may know, search engines on the Internet decide where to list websites based partly on how many other websites are linked to them. So, if you have a personal website, you can help Seton by putting a link on your website to our main page at www.setonhome.org.



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Second Vatican Council

“...by its very nature, the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the children... When they are given the dignity and role of fatherhood and motherhood, [parents] will eagerly carry out their duties of education, especially religious education, which devolves primarily on them. ...Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children. ... Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life and to educate their children.” (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48, 50)

This teaching is echoed throughout the Second Vatican Council documents. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 11: parents are the first heralds of the faith; Declaration on Religious Liberty, no. 5: parents should enjoy true freedom in the religious upbringing of their children; Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, no. 11: parents have priority in the religious and educational care of their children.

Canon 1055.1, the very first canon in the Code’s section on “Marriage,” declares that “The matrimonial covenant... is

by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children....”

Both the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law are affirming the natural right of parents over the education of their children, a right whose validity is not dependent upon the state or even the Church for recognition.

To be sure, the Code is concerned with more than merely the natural effects of marriage. It recognizes the distinctively spiritual aspects as well – including the Christian spouses’ participation in the Church’s sanctifying office through their parental educational rights and duties. Now it is a settled matter that a call to a particular vocation, such as the vocation to marriage, entails the graces necessary for the successful accomplishment of the elements of that vocation.... Canon 1134 states that ... “in Christian marriage, moreover, spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated by this special sacrament for the duties and dignity of their state.”

Home Schooling and the New Code of Canon Law by Ed Peters. Available from Seton Educational Media.

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