



Seton Home



Study School

Volume XX, Number 11



Newsletter 20th Anniversary Year



November 2003

All Saints

As we celebrate the Feast of All Saints on November 1st, the month of November is a perfect time to teach our children about Christ's call to perfection, the call to holiness, the command by Jesus Christ that we all become saints. Jesus said, "Be you therefore perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." (Luke 6:40)

The word "saint" comes from "sanctus," the Latin word for "holy." "Holiness" is most properly a characteristic of God as is "perfection." Thus, Jesus could have equally said, "Be you therefore holy as also your Heavenly Father is holy."

We are to be as morally perfect or holy as God's special design for each of us, as His grace, our human nature, and our free will allow. As we participate more and more in His divine life of grace, we become ever more holy, but we cannot attain the infinite perfection and holiness of God.

Obviously, no one can enter the kingdom of Heaven with any sin on his soul, which is why Purgatory exists, to give us a final opportunity to cleanse our souls of sin.

On November 2nd, we celebrate the Feast of All Souls' Day. The Church recognizes that while those who are suffering in Purgatory are not completely free of sin, they will be completely cleansed eventually, and consequently will be able to enter Heaven and be numbered among the saints.

However, we are all called to holiness during our lifetime. In fact, we are given life for the specific

purpose of becoming holy by participation in the divine life of God, first by grace and then in glory. And it so happens that attaining the holiness of Heaven is the only way we can be perfectly happy as human beings.

Our Lord Jesus Christ commands us all to live a life of holiness, and the lives of the saints who have gone before us give us practical examples of how that can be done. The lives of all the saints show that holiness is attained through humility, repentance, unceasing prayer, frequent reception of the Sacraments, sacrifices, love of the New Testament, and devotion to Mary.

There are many saints, of course, whom we don't know at all. There are likely many millions of saints who lived private lives and whose names are not recorded in the official list of saints.

Our children need to know that they can be saints, too. Perhaps looking around the community, they can see the holiness of certain people, and they can see how specific virtues are being practiced by some people in the parish.

While we often look up to the well-known saints and admire their virtues, observing the virtuous life of someone the children know can help them realize that holiness is attainable by each one of us, no matter how young or how old.

The Communion of Saints, the Church teaches, includes not only those who are now saints in Heaven, but those who are on the road to becoming saints: the Church Suffering in Purgatory, and the Church Militant, those of us on earth struggling to obtain sainthood.

As members of the Church Militant, we are constantly at war with our own selfish desires as well as the temptations of the world and the devil. If we are not actively engaged in the battle, we can easily fall into sin and not even recognize it.

Reading about the saints, especially about the saint for the day, keeps us and our children trying to practice the virtues. In this holy war against the enemies of Jesus Christ, we have the consolation of knowing that the saints are praying for us. In fact, our patron saints and our guardian angels are actively working to help us.

Certainly we and our children should be praying daily for the intercession and the prayers of our patron saints whose names we received at Baptism and whose names we took at Confirmation.

Attending Mass and receiving Jesus Christ in Holy Communion is essential for us to become saints and to reach a place of holiness among the saints in Heaven.

O Blessed Mother, Queen of Saints, help us and our children to become ever closer to your Son, Jesus Christ, by answering His call for us to be perfect and to reach eternal salvation in Heaven among all the saints.

- MKC

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Questions We Are Asked

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

We just started Seton this year, and my ninth grade student is struggling. Do you have any tips?

It is not too unusual for a ninth grader who is new to homeschooling to be struggling. Homeschooling in high school requires a degree of self-discipline that is often lacking. You need to be sure to establish a schedule and a structure for the day which can help your student to progress at a steady pace.

Regarding the courses themselves, Seton is providing more and more academic aids for our high school students. Right now, the ninth graders can access our web site to find the lesson plans for Earth Science and English 9. The Earth Science offers links and graphics, the English 9 offers weekly lectures by an experienced English teacher with a Master's Degree in English. In addition, chapter notes are available for the selection of book report books.

In addition, the ninth graders may obtain through our SEM department a CD for Algebra 1, which offers audio and video tutoring help for each and every lesson in the Saxon Algebra I textbook.

If your student is having trouble with the Grammar and Composition Course, we do have copies of the Voyages in English for supplemental help, available from our SEM department. Also, Seton is producing our own Catholic edition of Grammar 9. If you would be interested in evaluating the book for us, we will send you a free copy along with the answer key, the lesson plans, and tests.

Remember, also, to focus on your child's spiritual life. We have many academic helps available, but the main help that young people need is spiritual help. It is essential and necessary for all of us to succeed to attend Mass

frequently, even every day, and to go to Confession frequently, even weekly. The consolation and the graces from the sacraments help students to lead a moral life, thus a calm emotional and spiritual life which is necessary for focusing on and achieving in the academic studies.

A daily prayer life is also necessary, so we encourage the family Rosary as well as morning and evening prayers.

My child is enrolled in second grade. Do you think it is necessary to do all the work every day? Can some of it be skipped?

As we always say, the lesson plans are only a suggestion. If the student is able to complete all the assigned work every day, we certainly think that would be beneficial. However, we realize that parents have other obligations, students proceed at their own pace, and it may be necessary to cut back on some of the assignments.

Art, Music, and Physical Education are optional. If you need to cut out something, these can be skipped.

For Science and History, the text could simply be read. These concepts will be covered again in later grades.

Subjects which need to be done every day at this level, even if for only 15 or 20 minutes, are English, Handwriting, Phonics, Religion, and Spelling. However, subjects which ought to be done for an hour every day, perhaps with two sessions of one-half hour each, are Reading and Math.

Older children and grandparents can be very helpful for teaching or for listening to students, and they often like to do it. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to phone or to email our elementary counselors, Winnie and Bridget.

My pastor says that my daughter cannot receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist unless she attends religious education classes every Sunday morning for two years! I'm concerned about the influences from the other children in the class, and I really don't want my daughter in the classes. Can you give me some advice?

This question comes to us on a regular basis. We recommend that you purchase two little pamphlets from our SEM department: *Home Schooling and the New Code of Canon Law* by a canon lawyer, and *Responsibilities and Rights of Parents in Religious Education*.

The Church has a long-standing and repeated teaching that parents have the right and the responsibility to prepare their children to receive the sacraments. Parents cannot be forced to use parish religious education programs as a condition for their children to receive a sacrament.

As we always say, the lesson plans are only a suggestion. If the student is able to complete all the assigned work every day, that would be beneficial.

As primary educators of their children, parents may choose to teach the catechism themselves as long as what they are teaching is in accord with the teachings of the Church. Parents have primary authority in the area of teaching their children.

Pastors are the primary stewards of Christ's sacraments. They have the principal and primary authority to determine the eligibility and the disposition of a child to receive the sacraments. They have the primary authority to administer the sacraments.

However, the Church has always allowed babies to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist, which the Catholic Eastern Rite churches still do.

Religious education classes were set up some years ago because so many Catholic children were attending non-Catholic schools. Students enrolled in Seton are attending a Catholic school, and, if parents are following the program, students are receiving formal religion classes at least five days a week.

Our experience over the past twenty years is that when families are teaching their children at home, the family is more likely to attend daily Mass, to go to Confession frequently, attend Church devotions and novenas, and to use many of the sacramentals such as the rosary, scapulars, and medals. This leads to stronger Catholic families and conversions to the Faith.

When families are teaching their children at home, they are more likely to attend daily Mass, to go to Confession frequently, and attend Church devotions.

As a practical matter, your pastor may or may not be committed to his stated policy. It may be that your pastor is unaware of your rights and responsibilities under Canon Law. The first place to start is certainly to try to politely inform him of the Church's law and teaching in this matter.

If that doesn't work, then you have to consider either making an appeal to the bishop or switching to a more homeschool-friendly parish. Switching parishes, at least for First Communion, is certainly the simpler way to handle

things. An appeal to the chancery, and perhaps even beyond there, may be time-consuming and difficult, and it would likely put you at odds with your pastor. If there is a local Catholic support group in your area, ask the other members how they have handled this problem.

My daughter is nervous about taking tests and I am concerned about her taking the SAT tests for college entrance.

The best way for students to do well on the SAT or ACT tests is to prepare for them by taking them several times. Encourage your daughter to start taking "practice" tests in her tenth grade. She could take one in the fall and one in the spring, and then one in the fall and spring of her junior year. By the time she takes her last one, she can send the score to the colleges of her choice.

Another way to prepare for the SAT tests is to purchase the book *How to Prepare for the SAT*. If you call the SEM department at Seton, you can purchase this book of 650 pages for \$14. It gives sample past SAT tests for practice. It also helps students to understand why the answers are right or wrong.

If you go on the Internet, there are many ideas and places which offer software for practice. Be careful that you find a reliable source, however.

Another way to prepare for the SAT or ACT tests is to enroll in a local SAT preparation class. Sometimes these are sponsored by local schools at a minimal cost. However, if you want excellent classes and are willing to pay for them, the Sylvan Learning Centers have regular tutoring classes to prepare students to take the SAT or ACT tests. Considering the possible scholarship opportunities and money saved, these classes are worth the price. The students who score the highest on the SAT are often those who took the Sylvan classes.

I have been homeschooling my son for several years, but now as he enters the eleventh grade, he is talking about being tired of homeschooling and wants to try attending a school.

Help your son to understand the importance and the reasons for your homeschooling. He is old enough to

read and understand Chapter 3 in *Catholic Home Schooling*, which details Church teaching in the area of education.

Like many things in life, there are times when we want a change. However, change simply for the sake of change is not going to be spiritually or pedagogically effective. There might be other things you can do to help him have some change in his life. There might be community activities at the YMCA or through the local support group. He might take arts and crafts classes or music or something different like fencing!

If he is at least 16, he would be eligible to take a course at the local community college; it could be an academic course, such as in a foreign language or a science lab course, or he could take something more in a vocational area. Some students at this age are interested in meeting more mature young adults at the college level.

Many high school students decide to take jobs. This should be carefully considered. I don't recommend a job because they often become too overwhelming. Studies often suffer when students take a job, and part-time jobs often become nearly full-time.

Can you help me find financial aid for the Seton tuition for my children?

Seton does offer the Sallie Mae loan program which you may find is a very affordable way to finance your children's education.

The local and state chapters of the Knights of Columbus usually have a fund to help Catholic families to pay tuition for a Catholic education. Often parishes will help families in the parish who need help in paying tuition for a Catholic school. If they have any questions about Seton, give them our web site to learn about us.

Consider asking older family members, grandparents, godparents, aunts and uncles who have some money and less expenses. They may be willing to help. Older nuns and priests, and retired fellow parishioners sometimes have money to help a Catholic family for a good Catholic education.

Essentials of Home Management, #2

by Ginny Seuffert

Homeschooling parents who acted on last issue's Home Management Essential – Get Rid of Things – have a real head start on Essential #2 – Simplify Your Life. Stowing or tossing useless clutter frees Moms and Dads to concentrate on the real goal of transforming their children into honorable citizens and holy saints. To ensure that our focus remains as orderly as our living space, we need to find straightforward ways to meet our families' basic needs, and not allow ourselves to be distracted by non-essentials.

It's easy to wander off track because so many of these distractions are attractive, and appeal to our desire to do what's best for our families, our home schools, our churches, and our country. We want the healthiest meals possible, so we spend hours driving to organic food co-ops and sprouting alfalfa. We want beautiful homes so we try to decorate our houses like magazine covers. We spend incredible amounts of time researching the best curriculum choices. We teach CCD and take the Friday evening Latin classes at our parish. We volunteer at food pantries and picket abortion clinics. All of these activities are wholesome and meritorious, but right now, while you are homeschooling, you should probably say "no" to many, if not most, of them.

To manage a household, it is essential to spend as much time there-- in the house--as possible. Moms and Dads with young children, often welcoming a new baby every two years, need to set careful priorities during these irreplaceable early years of the children's lives. Any activity outside the home, no matter how worthy, must be carefully weighed against the time away from spouse and children. No pro-life work, no parish involvement, no cultural experience will compensate for neglected children. There will always be worthy causes and activities, but your two-year-old will never be a toddler again, and your house can easily spin out of control. Simplify

your life by limiting your involvement outside the home.

How time is spent in the home is essential, too. Catholic homeschooling Moms should have clean orderly homes, but keep the housekeeping routines simple, not overly complicated or time consuming. Beds with warm cozy quilts over the sheets take a minute to make up in the morning. Resist the urge to have a luxurious bed with lace-trimmed sheets that must be folded down over a duvet and topped with a dozen carefully placed, color-coordinated pillows.

Join the white towel club! White goes with any décor, and new white towels always match your old white towels. You can bleach them when the kids get them filthy, and they make terrific dust cloths when the towels wear out. Save the color-coordinated towels for when your children are grown.

I meet homeschooling Moms all the time who spend hours grinding grains and baking their own bread because they are concerned about the quality of the typical highly-processed American diet. Simple meals can be nutritious, too. Limit purchases of sugary, fat-laden processed foods by restricting your route within the grocery store to the produce, meat and dairy aisles. Have wholesome snacks, like fruit and cut-up veggies, available for snacks. As much as possible, use only whole grain breads and cereals. You do not, however, have to grow them yourself!

No article on this topic specifically directed to homeschoolers would be complete without a discussion of one of the hugest distractions--choosing the curriculum for your home school. Too many parents spend scores of hours reading and researching, and then trying to procure textbooks and other educational aids, convinced by the available literature that learning will only take place with a curriculum specifically tailored to each child's needs. Certainly, we should change a program to accommodate each student's learning style, and Seton's motto is "Adjust the

program to fit the child, not the child to fit the program." That is just what we should do: Pick a program (The publisher of this newsletter has been my favorite for 15 years!) and modify it if necessary. Do not spend valuable teaching time trying to reinvent the educational wheel.

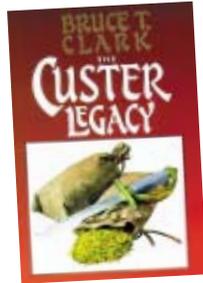
In practice, this is simple to accomplish. Your third grade son has ants in his pants and balks at finishing his math drills. In place of endless research to locate a more hands on learning program, buy some flashcards or do more oral drill using the textbook material as a guide. If your sixth grade girl is a great speller, skip writing the words ten times each in alphabetical order, and give her an oral quiz. If your child needs a greater challenge in science, expand on the lesson plans with trips to zoos, aquariums, museums, and botanical gardens.

Here's a personal anecdote that demonstrates what I mean. My seventh grade daughter is a terrific reader and can handle Seton's workload and more. Seton sent *The Singing Tree* by Kate Seredy for the first quarter book report. To challenge her, I purchased *The Good Master*, a "prequel" to *The Singing Tree*, which we are reading first. As Laura seems to like the author, and Mom loves the content, *The White Stag* also by Seredy, will be under the Christmas tree. None of this requires any real time investment or complicated planning on my part, but delivers a nice educational boost.

This month's "assignment" is to look over the activities you spend time on. First, consider if the activity is necessary at all, or if it is something that can be eliminated or postponed until the children are older. Second, look at those necessary activities (cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc.) and ask yourself, "Is this the easiest, simplest way to get the job done? What can I do to streamline the procedure?" Third, consider if you are spending too much time designing and procuring your child's curriculum, and remind yourself that often this time is better spent actually teaching. Finally and most important, pray to the Holy Family everyday for guidance in how to simplify your life to accomplish the essentials while remaining serene as you go about your daily tasks.

*Materials from Seton Educational Media make great Christmas gifts!
To order, call 540-636-9996, or order online at www.setonhome.org.*

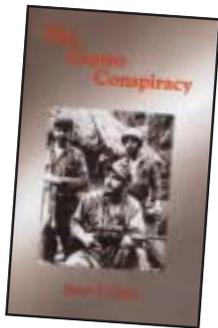
The Custer Legacy



This novel by Seton’s resident historian, Bruce T. 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’s a history-mystery in which the reader meets such real-life figures as Cortez, Custer, and Crazy Horse, while sharing the adventures of an Irish soldier of fortune, and the “detective from the Vatican” whose job it is to finally unravel all the mysteries and recover *The Custer Legacy*. Hardcover. 612 pp.

M-RDBK-01P \$20.00

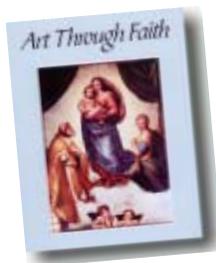
The Castro Conspiracy



Why were ten attempts made on Castro’s life? Why was President Kennedy assassinated? What role in the assassination of President Kennedy was played by Castro, the CIA, the Mafia, the war profiteers? Who actually killed President Kennedy? How were Hollywood movie stars involved?

Who were Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby? Bruce Clark’s long-awaited second novel answers these and other questions. Softcover. 436 pp. \$20.

Art Through Faith



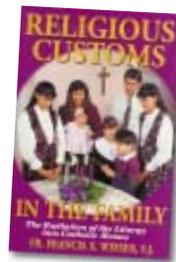
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Practical Counsels For Growing Together With Your Angel

By Father William Wagner, ORC

Here are seven practical suggestions. Inasmuch as practical, their efficacy depends on being put into habitual practice.

1. Cultivate a great esteem for the ultimate truths of the Faith: the absolute sovereignty of God, the universal mediatorship of Jesus Christ, the uniqueness of the Church and its Magisterium, and the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. All knowledge depends upon its reduction to first principles; all virtuous action depends upon prior knowledge. These are the first principles of the Faith which should inspire all our actions. This exercise disposes us for the Gift of Understanding.
2. Make of everything you do a sacrifice of love for GOD. Consciously live your baptismal vows, your consecrations to Our Lord and His Mother. Live and renew your alliance with your Guardian Angel, ordering all things to the glorification of the Most Holy Trinity. This exercise will dispose us for the Gift of Wisdom.
3. Conscientiously form and purify your conscience according to the guiding light of the Magisterium of the Church. Be prompt in the execution of your duties, particularly those of your state and station in life. If we are faithful in little things, greater gifts and lights will be given to us. The works of mercy are also particularly appropriate to disposing ourselves in docility to the Gift of Counsel.
4. Order your "steps" in the footsteps of Our Lord. On the tomb of a Prior of the Order of Holy Cross was written the epitaph: "He never took a step that was not directed to the honor of God." When exhumed, they discovered that his legs were incorrupt. This may seem easy, but it is the battle against character faults, habitual venial sin, concessions to comfort, to human respect. It is the path of sincere self-discipline in which we never lose sight of the goal nor take any illicit detours. We cannot deviate from the example of Christ without losing the hand of the Angel. The Cross looms on the horizon of this counsel, which disposes us for the Gift of Science, the science of the Life of Christ.
5. Make an effort to be genuinely kind and patient. Kindness is the trait of generous love that willingly exceeds the demands of justice. Hence, it is a divine virtue. Patience, 'hard thing,' is literally the willingness to suffer. The LORD said to St. Catherine of Siena: "Divine charity is so closely joined in the soul with perfect patience, that neither can leave the soul without the other. For this reason (if the soul choose to love Me), it should choose to endure pains for Me in whatever mode or circumstance I may send them. Patience cannot be proved in any other way than by suffering, and patience is united with love as has been said" (Dialogues, "On Providence"). Since the Angel is commissioned

to lead us to perfection, there can be no sustained collaboration nor any significant intimacy with him except we be resolved to cultivate these virtues in us, which dispose us for the Gift of Fortitude.

6. Walk constantly in the presence of God and your Angel. This cultivates in us the habit of recollection, of holy reverence. Only those who are habitually aware of the presence of God can spontaneously judge all things in the light of eternal values. This state of recollection, the foundation of the spiritual life, is an habitual state of contact, of conversation with the Guardian Angel. To acquire it, we need the humility and readiness to start over hundreds of times each day. This exercise will dispose us for the Gift of the Fear of the Lord.
7. Rejoice in the Love of the Father, in Christ's personal love for you, in the sanctifying, loving presence of the Holy Spirit. Reflect frequently upon Our Lord's love for you, upon His insatiable thirst to be able to communicate Himself more perfectly to you. Let your heart be enkindled with the Love of Mary, your Mother, and the love of your Guardian Angel. Consider that only you can satisfy their thirst for your love. There are no substitutes for a flaming heart. It cannot be held back, it will accomplish great works in the fiery love of the Gift of Godliness.

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Free subscription available at 13800 Gratiot Avenue, Detroit, MI 48205. Web site: www.opusangelorum.org

Independent Study Program

Seton offers an Independent Study Program for high school students to earn credit for courses they take independently—not through an educational institution. For instance, many students are taking music lessons or vocational courses or technical courses or courses in sports, such as swimming or skiing. However, since they are being taught by a tutor, they are not able to earn high school credit.

We want to encourage our high school students to take these kinds of courses, and so we offer high school credit for them. Any full-time Seton high school student is eligible for this Independent Study credit, but it must be approved by our Independent Study counselor.

For an application form, phone our mail department; or go to your My Seton page on our website, click on “Resources,” then click on “Request for Independent Study Approval.”

Book Credits

We have been giving our parents book credits for books they have ordered in the past. However, we had several problems this year. Many parents asked for credit after they enrolled and the books had been shipped. The process of giving a book credit after enrollment involves many people if a book is sent back after being shipped. When a book is returned, it must go through our receiving department, then our shipping department, then our accounting department for the refund credit, then two signatures are required, then the accounting department again, then the mailing department. In addition, many returned books are damaged when they arrive via the post office. We sometimes must go through this process for a book credit of only \$2 or \$3. Please plan for next year to be prepared to let us know what books you have for credit at the time of enrollment.

A second problem we had this year in regard to book credits is that many of our Seton consumable books, that is the workbooks in

English, handwriting, spelling, religion, and some others, are revised from year to year. We revise our books in response to parental requests. However, if you have an older edition of a book, and do not order the newer edition, often lesson plans, answer keys, tests, and quarter report forms will not match your older copy. We had hundreds of phone calls this past year because things did not match. If you discover after enrolling that your copy of the book is not the current edition, please call the SEM department and order the newer book. Please do not phone the shipping department as they cannot both ship books and take orders.

Your Website Can Help Seton!

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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Musical Mother

by Margaret Flagg

Before her marriage to William Seton, Elizabeth would often leave a message that “if he was anxious to see her, he would find her at the piano.” Elizabeth Bayley was an accomplished pianist, and found much peace while engrossed in music. During their marriage, William would often accompany her with his Stradivarius, the first, it seems, to have come to the United States. This delight in good music often suggests something which flows much deeper and touches the very soul of a person. After all, isn't it said that music is an expression of the soul?

In the life of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, music contributed in its special way to the development of her great love of God. For most of us, there are certain tunes which pluck the strings of our souls, creating a harmony and a longing so deep that we are spontaneously brought to a very simple yet profound way of prayer. This advances us (however little) in the way of desire for union with God whose “music,” we realize, must be so sublime that we wish to be immediately immersed in its fullness.

Sometimes this works in reverse, and we are so filled with the love of God, with joy, or with His peace that we find no other way of expressing it but through music. Mother Seton had a similar experience as evidenced in her favorite hymn, “Jerusalem, My Happy Home,” which is said to have been composed by her:

Jerusalem, my happy home,
How do I sigh for thee!
When shall my exile have an end,
Thy joys when shall I see?
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, my happy home,
How do I sigh for thee!

No sun, no moon, in borrowed light,
Revolves thine hours away;
The Lamb on Calv'ry's mountain slain
Is thy eternal day.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, etc.

From every eye He wipes the tear,
All sighs and sorrow cease;
No more alternate hope and fear,
But everlasting peace.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, etc.

The thought of thee to us is given,
Our sorrows to beguile,
To anticipate the bliss of Heaven,
In His eternal smile.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, etc.

Elizabeth Ann Seton: A Self Portrait, Sr. Marie Celeste, S.C.
Franciscan Marytown Press, 1986. pp. 33, 15, 252.

Seton Home Study School

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