



Seton Home



Study School

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Finding in the Temple

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-50) when He was twelve years old is one of those mysteries of our Savior’s life, recorded in Scripture, that especially tantalizes our curiosity with its brevity of information but richness of suggestion. This event occurred when the Holy Family, like many Jewish families, traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover, a journey they made on a yearly basis. This feast was celebrated annually because of the specific command of God the Father to Moses that His people were to remember His mercy in arranging their escape from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13; Deuteronomy 16:1-8).

The name of the Feast comes from the “passing” of the angel of death “over” the homes of the Hebrew families in Egypt. The angel of death slaughtered the first-born males of the children and livestock of the Egyptian families because the Egyptian pharaoh would not release the Jews held in slavery. However, the angel of death did not touch the first-born of the Hebrews if their homes had the sign for the angel to pass over them.

This sign was the blood of a lamb on the doorpost, a lamb that had just been slaughtered and eaten by the Jewish families in their homes. Because of this slaughter of a lamb, the Passover was also a continuation of the sacrifices of unblemished lambs begun by Abel, the son of Adam and Eve. Jesus, of course, came to be the final and fully effective sacrifice: the “Lamb of God” whose crucified body and poured-out blood—once and for all—has taken away the sins of the world. The angel of eternal death passes over us if we believe in the Lamb and His sacrificial

death, participate in His sacrifice through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and unite with Him in Holy Communion.

The story of Jesus being found as a youth in the Temple around Passover indicates that Jesus knew His Father’s “business” was to be the Sacrifice that takes away sin. The story begins with Mary and Joseph traveling back home from a particular celebration of Passover. They assumed Jesus was with the large group of relatives with whom they were traveling. When they discovered he was missing, Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem and found Jesus in the Temple conversing with the learned doctors of the Mosaic Law.

Luke’s Gospel does not record the questions the learned scholars asked Jesus or the answers Jesus gave. Nevertheless, Jesus must have encouraged them to open their eyes and see how the Scriptures were about to be fulfilled. Surely during the Passover, Jesus would have explained about the true Lamb which was to come and be slaughtered to free mankind from the slavery of sin, that is, from the slavery of being controlled by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus likely quoted the words of Abraham as he took his only son Isaac to be sacrificed: God will provide Himself a victim for the sacrifice (Genesis 22:8).

While some of the Jewish people today still celebrate the Passover by reading the Old Testament passages, and still cook and consume the lamb, the true Lamb is consumed at Mass each day. For the Mass is the Supper of the Lamb. Death will not come to those of us who consume the Lamb Who shed His Blood for us. By consuming the true Lamb at Mass, we can

be freed from the slavery of sin. The shedding of the Blood of the true Lamb gives us eternal life. In John’s Gospel Jesus says, “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (6:54).

For us homeschooling parents, the story of the Finding of Jesus in the Temple, with its drama and mystery about Jesus on the brink of manhood, is one that not only appeals to our children but also offers us the opportunity to teach them. From Jesus, our children can hear the words, “I must be about My Father’s business.” Ultimately, Jesus’ business was to be the sacrificial Lamb of God.

Blessed Mother, help us homeschooling parents teach our children about the business of being willing to sacrifice, to offer up our sacrifices in reparation for sin, and that sacrifice for others for the love of God is the Godly business we must be about.

Oh, Blessed Mother! We are raising our children in the midst of a society which constantly attacks family life and has torn many families apart! Help us and our children to free ourselves from the slavery of sin and death by frequently receiving your Son, the Lamb of God, at Holy Mass each day.

Blessed Mother, never allow our children to become lost, even for a moment, but keep them close to you and your Divine Son, through the frequent reception of the Lamb of God in Holy Communion.

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

Some of the parents in our homeschooling support group teach the younger children at home, but then send the high school students off to a school. What do you think about that?

I think the philosophy behind this is that, if the children are given a good basis in education and the Catholic Faith through the elementary grades, then they will be okay in public schools for high school. The problem with this philosophy is that high school is the time when a child's mind really begins to open up to try to understand the world. It is in high school that a student begins to understand the concepts underlying religion, philosophy, literature, politics (in the classic sense), and the social order.

It is also in high school that many people begin to make profound choices in their lives which will determine what kind of life they will lead. These choices can stay with them for their whole lives.

There was a book written some years ago by William Kilpatrick called *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong*. The thesis of the book is that much of moral education comes from reading about the Good, the True, and the Right and wanting to be part of that. We can talk about courage and understand its value, but when we read a story about courage, then we want to be courageous.

If you look at the Seton book list for the high school literature courses, you will see that students read some of the great literature of the world. This literature is great not merely because it is well-written, but because it speaks to the longings of the human heart. This literature teaches lessons that have stood the test of time, not the latest fad. One wonders what students in the average public school are reading, and whether this reading is good or bad for the soul.

When the Pope spoke in Cuba a few years ago, he said that "often traumatic is the separation of children and the substitution of the role of parents as a result of schooling away from home, even during adolescence. These experiences place young people in situations which sadly result in the spread of promiscuous behavior, loss of ethical values, coarseness, premarital sexual relations at an early age, and easy recourse to abortion. All this has a profoundly negative impact on young people who are called to embody authentic moral values for the building of a better society."

The Pope pointed out in his speech that "The path to overcome these evils is none other than Jesus Christ, His teaching and His example of total love which saves us. No ideology can replace His infinite wisdom and power. For this reason, there is a need to recover religious values at the level of the family and of society, and to encourage the practice of the virtues..."

If you have a television and watch the news, it is deeply disturbing what is happening in the schools, even in the Catholic schools. The recent reports about violent and sexual high school and college hazing activities are enough to keep your children at home and out of the hospital.

In practical terms, students can be and are very successful homeschooling through high school. Homeschooling, especially with an accredited program such as Seton Home Study School, positions a student very well for college. We hear often from colleges how homeschooled students have the best study habits and the best work ethic in college. They tend to advance quickly to the front of the class.

So, if you want your student not only to do well in college, but also to do well in life, homeschooling throughout high school is the answer.

What do the high school online courses offer in addition to the lesson plans that you sent me?

The online courses offer more motivational aids to encourage the students to keep going on their assignments. The chapter notes for the book reports are very popular. Also, the online lessons often include graphics, and as time goes on, we will be adding to these. In addition, the students can click on web site links which offer more interesting information about a topic. For example, for *Lilies of the Field*, which is studied in English 9, students can learn about missionary sisters. The links make the readings more interesting and give more depth and background information.

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Just this year, we have added audio lectures by the professors. Lectures by Manuel Vicente for the Spanish online courses have been great fun! Mr. Vicente, a certified teacher and former radio announcer, offers songs in Spanish, pronunciation of the Spanish vocabulary, and prayers in Spanish. He takes students through some of the lessons, and offers students links in Spain and in South America.

Very full lectures are being given to American History students by Bruce Clark, an experienced high school and military teacher.

Glen Tortorella, who has a Master's Degree in English, has finished the year's

lectures for English 9, and has just begun, in the Second Quarter, to give lectures to the English 10 students.

John McMahon, who has his Master's Degree in Classical Languages and is a high school and college Latin teacher, has been giving weekly lectures in Latin, has done all the pronunciation for the Latin vocabulary, and has found interesting Latin links, including information about Latin contests. Sharon Higby, an experienced university professor who is working on her Ph.D. will be starting lectures in January for the Literature courses.

Our experienced high school Algebra and Geometry teacher, counselor Tom Herlihy has been adding written "lectures" for each lesson's Classroom Exercises, available only online.

Novenas, nine days of special prayers, are essential in times like this. Novenas to St. Joseph are very powerful, as well as novenas to the Blessed Mother.

We are beginning to add to our online courses "Guest Lecturers," special lectures given in an area which may be of interest to our students. Our first Guest Lecture will be by author Tom DiLorenzo on "The Real Lincoln" for our American History students.

My husband is out of work and we are a stressed-out family. I am falling behind and don't know how I can be successful with the homeschooling lessons.

Many of us, if not all of us, at one point or another have been through the agony of the main (often the only) breadwinner being out of work. There

is always lots of pressure for Mom to go to work, and to stop the homeschooling. These are times when we must struggle to keep our priorities, to keep the family values we know are important, to keep our children at home where we know they belong.

Novenas, nine days of special prayers, are essential in times like this. Novenas to St. Joseph are very powerful, as well as novenas to the Blessed Mother. The Rosary Novena, 30 days of Petition and 30 days of Thanksgiving, has worked miracles. Be sure to involve the children, whose prayers are so powerful! If you check on the EWTN web site (www.ewtn.com), you can find about 40 different novenas.

On a more mundane level, your emotional stress level can come down if you focus on the children. Realize that God wants you to do your job, to fulfill your responsibilities while your husband is struggling to find the work he needs to fulfill his. You need to keep calm during the storm to keep your husband calm and focused on what he needs to do without panicking. You don't want to be an additional burden to him.

If you both believe that you must work, be sure it is only part-time, and that the hours are such that your husband can be home when you are working. Some homeschooling mothers work outside the home during the evenings or on the weekends. Homeschooling, you will find, keeps stability for the children.

What about the disturbances with several young children while trying to teach older children?

When I was homeschooling my seven sons, as you can imagine, the younger ones were noisy as healthy boys always are. In one house, those who were studying worked in a sun room off the living room. I could easily go back and forth, and could shut the door if needed. Sometimes, the boys worked in their bedrooms. In one house, the boys did their schoolwork in a room on the third floor. When I was needed, I would either go the room where a boy was working, or a boy would come down to the living room or dining room where I could help with a particular class. I

know some mothers whose husbands built a classroom, or redesigned a room to be a classroom. Some mothers homeschool on the same floor, but some had the room in the basement or lower level to be away from the main part of the house. A sun room or porch is often easy to convert to a homeschooling room.

I have been hearing rumblings about possible legal problems with home schooling.

There is no question that the public school educators, and especially the National Education Association, are against homeschooling and do everything they can to discourage it. In fact, they pressure new homeschoolers with made-up regulations to stop them from homeschooling immediately. Many young parents are frightened and don't question the local "authority." It never occurs to them that they might not be hearing the truth.

Support groups should be sure that they know the facts and that they are public enough so that inquiring parents can consult them. Individuals could tell anyone asking to consult the web site for Home School Legal Defense Association. The rules and regulations for the states are listed.

Those who are enrolled with Seton are in an especially strong position. Seton Home Study School is accredited as a private school by the same accrediting agency that accredits public schools and that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. We are recognized as a private school by the state of Virginia, having been accepted as a member of the Virginia Council for Private Education. We are also on the list of approved home study programs for Virginia. In states with religious exemptions, our families usually register under the religious exemption. We are under the bishop of Arlington according to the Canon Law. We believe that parents have several options, both here in Virginia and in other states if they are enrolled in Seton, and if they are conscientious about sending in the tests and assignments to obtain grades on a report card.

Essentials of Home Management, #4

by Ginny Seuffert

Faithful readers of this series have received a few simple tips intended to maintain your serenity—well at least your sanity—as you homeschool your children and try to keep your house orderly. The best way for homeschooling moms and dads to maintain order is through a campaign of simplification. We must simplify our lives by getting rid of unnecessary clutter, and by restricting our activities to those which further our primary goal of raising saints for the kingdom of God. To accomplish this, we should adopt the same goal-oriented attitude that we bring to professional work outside the home. After all, home education, with the purpose of molding great Catholic citizens, is a very important business indeed. Major stumbling blocks to an uncomplicated lifestyle have been identified in the business world as the 3 P's: Perfection, Procrastination, and Paralysis.

Many examples of the 3 P's come to mind. Your upstairs bathroom really needs to be cleaned. The sink is encrusted with week-old toothpaste. The ring around the tub looks like a stripe that was painted on, and the grout between the tiles has a sort of green, fuzzy look to it. Three empty cardboard rolls are sitting on the back of the toilet tank. You should get upstairs and clean it, now. What's stopping you is that the cabinet under the sink is so loaded with who-knows-what that you can barely shut the door and seems to be sending out a funky sort of odor. You can't do the bathroom justice unless you clean that cabinet out too. That's the first P—Perfection.

You need to set aside an hour, or maybe even several hours, to do the kind of job you know needs to be done. You never seem to find that kind of time, which is hardly surprising as you have three children under the age of five, and you're homeschooling the kindergartner and

second grader. Anyhow, you ordered some very, very effective tile cleaner that was advertised on TV one night at three A.M., when you were nursing the baby back to sleep. No sense in starting the bathroom before that comes in. Plus, all the towels are frayed, and there is a white sale at Sears, so you may as well wait to clean the bathroom until you have the time to run over and pick some up. That's the second P—Procrastination.

Some time later, the bathroom has hit the critical point. The toothpaste in the sink is now so thick that the drain is clogged. The stripe in the tub seems to have chemically bonded with the porcelain. The green fuzzy haze in the grout has become dense undergrowth, and the children are afraid it will attack them if they take a bath. The door to the cabinet under the sink has broken off from being forced closed so many times, and the base of the toilet looks like... Well, it looks like nothing that can be described in a family newsletter! Probably you would be better off if you just replaced the whole bathroom, except you don't have the money for that. That's the third P—Paralysis.

Let's face facts! Things would never have reached this point if you had overcome the first P—Perfection—and kept the bathroom surface clean. A daily routine of wiping down the sink, tub, and toilet with any spray cleaner that comes to hand would prevent the job from becoming overwhelming. If the bathroom is surface clean all the time, you are more likely to find a few spare moments to tackle the grout or the cabinet, and the clean sinks are less likely to clog. Overcoming the first P helps us to conquer the second two.

We see this in homeschooling chat rooms all the time. Little Billy struggled with third grade math last year. He was bored with workbook pages, and resisted memorizing his math facts. Billy's Mom wants to find the perfect math series

that will absolutely fit his learning style, and she asks her chat room buddies for some suggestions. Mom is swamped with suggestions. She should use Math U See, or Saxon Math. No, no they are too rigid; she should use Mortensen Math or buy Montessori materials. No, they are too expensive, just use ordinary household items and design a math program yourself. No, that's too time consuming, she is better off buying a planned curriculum. It goes on, and on, and on. Billy's Mom could have instead taken the hours and hours she used to read these emails and research math programs to actually teach Billy some math. Daily oral drill, a bit of written work, and Mom spending time with Billy, instead of sitting in front of her computer monitor, would do the trick quite nicely.

The three P's can even affect our prayer lives. Some families with infants and toddlers just cannot find time for daily Mass or an uninterrupted family rosary. Don't allow this to discourage you. Even the busiest families can find a few minutes, here and there, for the Morning Offering, the Angelus, Grace with meals, and an Act of Contrition at bedtime. Teach your children short, but important, pious practices like making the sign of the cross when passing a church or uttering a brief aspiration when an ambulance or fire truck races by. As a child, I was taught to silently pray, "Praise His holy name," when I heard the Lord's name being taken in vain. We have the habit of starting family car trips with a Memorare and prayer to Our Lady of the Way. You do not need to wait until you can perform every pious activity, just do the best you can.

Let's avoid procrastination and paralysis by setting realistic, if less than perfect, goals. Busy homeschooling moms can find only so much time to run their households, teach their children, or pray. By keeping up with the possible, we are more likely to find some time for the desirable. As always, we should turn to Our Lady for guidance in keeping our homes cheerful Christian households.

The Moral Power of Music

Excerpts from an article by
Father Basil Nortz

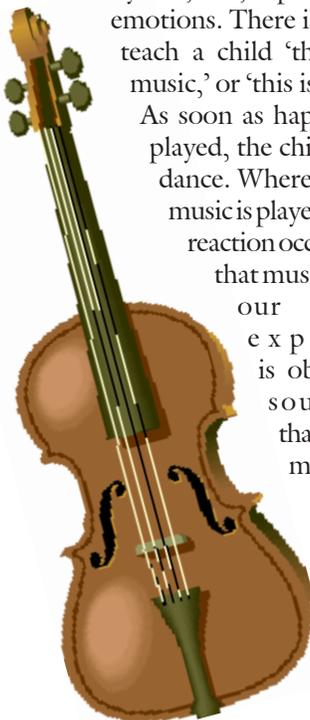
“Philosophers and sages throughout the ages have asserted the decisive influence music can have on the character and moral formation of the young and on the formation of a civilization.” This sentence is the beginning of an article by Father Basil Nortz regarding the influence of music for developing virtues or for disposing the young to vice. Father quotes ancient and not so ancient non-Christian and Christian writers who point out that the very survival of a civilization can depend on good music.

“Inasmuch as the civilized public order of men depends upon a culture which seeks to perfect the private order of individuals, there is scarcely any more effective means for disrupting civilization than through a degenerate music which inordinately stimulates the passions giving them free dominion, a veritable tyranny of avarice and sensuality... The music generally accepted by a civilization will profoundly determine its moral health, and ultimately its growth or demise.”

Father explains that “music by its very melody, harmony, rhythm, etc., expresses specific emotions. There is no need to teach a child ‘this is happy music,’ or ‘this is sad music.’

As soon as happy music is played, the child begins to dance. Whereas when sad music is played, a different reaction occurs. The fact that music intensifies our emotional experience is obvious from sound-tracks that accompany movies.”

Father writes that other works of art also influence



ence man’s emotions, but “Music is different because it does not portray others experiencing an emotion, but rather it directly stimulates the emotions themselves” of the listener. “Even without lyrics to identify the feeling the composer wishes to arouse, the feeling is aroused.”

“The connection between music and the formation of virtue becomes clear when we realize that the two cardinal virtues of fortitude and temperance and many other related virtues are primarily concerned with the ordering of our passions or emotions according to right reason. These virtues perfect our emotions so that we take delight in what is truly good and avoid what is truly evil.”

The virtues Father is concerned about are “virtues like chastity, sobriety, meekness, patience, clemency, courage, humility.... In order to acquire these moral virtues which beautify the soul by ordering the passions, man must habituate his emotions to act in accord with right reason.”

“The repeated listening to a certain kind of music becomes *habitual* in the strictest sense of the word: the emotions clothe themselves with a habit, either a virtue or a vice, according to the quality of the music one habitually listens to. Music can imitate a reasonable, ordered, honorable, virtuous emotion, in which case music helps dispose man to the virtuous and honorable ordering of his life. However, music can also imitate an unreasonable, disordered, dishonorable, vicious emotion. The old saying that music calms the savage beast may be true of old music, but it would hardly be true for many forms of modern music.”

The way in which the “melody, harmony, and rhythm... move the passions should serve as a principal basis for judgment on whether any given piece of music is good or bad.”

Father Nortz explains that teaching the Ten Commandments is good intellectual formation but it is not moral

formation, which is the formation of the “will and the emotions.” Good music should be “based upon whether the passions imitated are according to right reason or not.... Good music will stimulate the emotions in such a way that the faculties of the soul, under the guidance of reason, are made to effectively pursue the good of the individual and his neighbor. ...disordered music naturally advocates libertinism, rebellion, and chaos.”

Father quotes a music historian who is quoted as saying rock music is “all about disorder, aggression, and sex: a fantasy of human nature running wild to a savage beat.” Since rock music, worse music has developed, as Heavy Metal, Rap, and Punk. “The emotions evoked by such music can hardly be considered virtuous, much less Christian. The passions of sensuality, rebellion, pride, power, and irreverence are commonly evoked by the rhythms characteristic of these types of music.”

“Apart from the emotional effects” that such music has on the individual, “there are also verifiable physiological effects, such as the increase of adrenaline in the blood stream which makes the music physically addictive,” according to Dr. Verle L. Bell, psychiatrist quoted in “How to Conquer the Addiction to Rock Music.” Father Nortz points out that “Since the moral virtues... do not reside in man’s purely spiritual faculties of intellect and will but in the passions of his soul, they are more easily disturbed by such bodily changes.”

Father notes good music which evokes virtues, such as plain chant (begun by the Jews when they chanted the psalms), Baroque, Classical, and traditional folk songs by Christian peoples.

“Good music touches the soul delightfully and elevates it nobly; whereas bad music corrupts the soul as profoundly as error corrupts the mind, because just as the mind should not be enslaved by untruth, so too the soul should not be enslaved by tyrannous passion.”

The complete article first published in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* in April, 2002, can be read at www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/hom.

Spiritual Mother

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's feast day is January 4th. Father Joseph I. Dirvin wrote the book *The Soul of Elizabeth Seton: A Spiritual Portrait* (Ignatius Press). Father George Rutler wrote, after reading this book, "Holiness in ordinary duties is the most heroic of adventures, and these pages show how Mother Seton lived it." In the chapter "If You Would Be My Disciple...", Father Dirvin writes the following:

One of the mysteries of today's contrary world is the silent disappearance of the words *penance* and *mortification* from the Christian and even the religious vocabulary. There is much talk of self-fulfillment, little of self-discipline; much talk of attaining human justice, little of satisfying divine justice. Yet penance and mortification have been urged as instruments of self-purification, perfection, and salvation by ascetical masters from earliest Christian times, indeed, since Jesus Christ Himself insisted, "Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in My steps."

Elizabeth Seton understood from the beginning the necessity of taking up her cross and did so willingly. She learned early that the cross was the mark and abiding providence of Christians. Thus she wrote in her *Journal* on the eve of her father's last illness and death: "The cup which Our Father has given us, shall we not drink it? Blessed Savior, by the bitterness of Thy pains, we may estimate the force of Thy love. We are *sure* of Thy kindness and compassion. Thou wouldst not willingly call on us to suffer. Thou hast declared unto us that all things shall work together for our good, if we are faithful to Thee. Therefore, if Thou so ordain it: welcome disappointments and poverty; welcome sickness and pain; welcome even shame and contempt and calumny!"

She left out nothing. Nor was she speaking from an ivory tower of lofty

sentiments, safe from the harsh realities she welcomed. She had already suffered them all with her husband in his financial disaster and bankruptcy. Nor was it superhuman stoicism, however admirable, but earnest, humble recognition of the Christian way. "If this be a rough and thorny path, it is the one which Thou hast gone before us. Where we see Thy footsteps, we cannot repine."

And her confidence was sure and unafraid. "Meanwhile, Thou wilt support us with the consolations of Thy grace; even here, Thou can compensate us for any temporal sufferings by the possession of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away."

Elizabeth understood too, that "temporal sufferings" were most often caused by fellow creatures, by-products of the daily give-and-take of imperfect beings with wounded natures; and sought to offset their harm by striving "not in any instance or by any provocation to retaliate anger or passion – to speak harshly or severely, even if the truth, of any fellow creature, in all difficulties and situations contrary to the bent of my inclination to remember my cross and for what purpose I wear it – in the name of my Savior and in firm reliance and trust in His assistance."

Elizabeth understood well the reason. She was as imperfect, her nature as wounded as her nearest neighbors, and from the realization came that honest sense of sin that is essential to common goodness, to say nothing of the holiness Elizabeth Seton was to attain. On an August afternoon in 1802, she put it in words: "Solemnly in the presence of my Judge—I resolve through His grace—to remember my infirmity and my sin—to keep the door to my lips—to consider the causes of sorrow for sin in myself and them whose souls are as dear to me as my own."

The saint, like all saints, never lost the sense of sin. Indeed, the more

she pondered it in her mature spiritual years, the sharper it became and the more she was able to probe its depths. Thus she came to the terrible truth that "when we sin, we not only sin in the presence of God, but in God Himself; for since He is the source of motion and life, it follows that the sinner uses the concurrence of God Himself to offend and sin against Him, turning the means of life, health, time, etc., powers of nature and grace, to this horrid perversion and abuse against this Almighty Giver" – and she finished thoughtfully, "which explains to us in some degree the eternity of Hell torments."

The practice of living habitually in God's Presence helped refine the sense of sin, Elizabeth discovered, for "all things work together unto good. A soul faithful to this holy exercise becomes so timorous and tender towards God," she told her Sisters, that "the least fault it commits is a pain to it, the smallest wound of conscience a torment till it has humbled itself before Him and had recourse to His infinite mercies."

A real turning to God in sorrow, she cautioned, "not like those who are restless till they go to confession, and afterwards are neither better or more humble"—she was a shrewd judge of souls—no, that kind of restlessness had nothing to do with the honest emotions of regret that were perfectly natural in the circumstances. "Far from suffering our faults and imperfections to turn us from the Presence of God through the uneasiness and chagrin they cause us," she continued reassuringly, "we should return to [His Presence] as quickly as a little child to its mother after it has had a fall by letting go her hand, and hold to that dear hand with new care and fidelity." The soul practiced in seeking God after some momentary lapse of attention, or even of strayed loyalty, will become so wonderfully used to being with God that nothing can take His place.

Letters from Parents

I love the fact that the faith is in all subjects. My primary goal is not a brilliant child, but one that is so steeped in the Faith, that it resonates to the very core of who she or he is. I'm going for saints! In addition, I want them educated well, in order to serve God in whatever vocation He may call them. Already our eight year old daughter is considering a religious vocation, and I wanted a truly Catholic yet academic curriculum more than anything. In Seton, I believe I've found that.

ML

My daughter took the national standardized tests... She scored higher than 99 percent of third grade students--well above average in every subject. Ignoring other factors, I'd just like to voice my opinion that Seton Home Study School provides an absolutely excellent education. We haven't done anything else different or special, and before sending her to [Catholic School], we worried that she wasn't learning enough. I have a growing respect for Seton and so far, haven't met anyone trained using this program who wasn't tops in both their Catholic

faith and secular studies. The report ended with, "In [my daughter's] case, overall performance is so high that no single area seems particularly weak or strong relative to the others." Yeah for [my daughter]! Yeah for Seton."

JB

Earn Credits Toward Seton Tuition or SEM Books

Did you know that websites such as walmart.com, bestbuy.com, officemax.com, and many other large websites pay percentage commissions on sales on their websites? Now, you can earn these commissions yourself, and store up credits for tuition or books at Seton Home Study School.

You can sign up with a website called OneCause. They create a special shopping website for your family. When you make an online purchase through one of the hundreds of vendors available through OneCause, you will receive a percentage of your purchase as a credit at Seton Home Study School. OneCause will send you a quarterly statement to tell you how much you have earned, and Seton will credit this amount to your account. You can use the money to pay tuition or to buy books from Seton. You can even ask your friends and family to sign up with OneCause and have the credits go to your family.

Important: When you register with OneCause, you need to use Seton's school code of **958** to make sure you are properly credited.

To register your family with OneCause, point your browser to this address: http://www.onecause.com/tc/family_intro.asp

To find out more about how OneCause works, go to: <http://www.onecause.com/about/faq.asp>

For further inquiries or questions, contact Randy DeClue at Seton at 540-636-9990, ext. 123.



Plan B Accounts

Seton Home Study School relies on families making their Plan B payments so that we can pay our staff and our bills. If your family is not current in your Plan B payments, please make every effort to bring your account up to date.

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Seeing God in Creation

by Margaret Flagg

Since the time of Christ, the use of images to teach or to portray certain spiritual ideas, has been a very distinctive trait of Christianity. Many, if not all, of the Saints made use of images from daily life or from nature to shed light on the spiritual. It is no less apparent in the writings of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Mother Seton used images from nature often in her writings, and it seems that her favorite image was the sky, for to her, this was like peering into eternity. She recommends, "Whenever you see the sun set, lift your heart and pierce beyond His golden clouds." And, "Look up to the blue heavens and love Him!" Or of herself, "I try to be good: I try with my whole heart. I long so to get above this blue horizon."

Another image she used is one we do not read in the writings of other saints, and this brings to our awareness how contemporary Mother Seton is. This is the image of the atom. "He who is our All has many ways of consoling His little atoms." She also uses this image in advising us on how to receive the Eucharist. "The heart which is preparing to receive the Holy Eucharist should be like a crystal vase, filled with the purest and most limpid water. We should not allow the slightest impure atom to make its appearance."

These two quotes, which utilize images from nature and from life, are particularly striking to me. "The grave is so dark; but so bright to the longing, desiring, active soul of the prisoner looking beyond its narrow passage to the fields of everlasting verdure." The second is another rare image but very profound: "Coral, in the ocean, is a strip of pale green. Remove it from its native bed, it becomes firm, does not bend, and is almost like a rock. Its tender color is changed to a bright vermilion. So it is with us, submerged in the ocean of this world, subject to the vicissitudes of its waves, ready to yield under the force of each wave of temptation.

"But as soon as our soul elevates itself and as soon as it sighs for heaven, the pale green of our feeble hope is transformed into the pure vermilion of this divine and constant love. There we look upon the overthrow of nature and the fall of empires with unshakable constancy and confidence."

Many more examples exist throughout her writings, but this sampling offers us not only the good thoughts and teachings of Mother Seton, but it shows us also that she took time to observe and appreciate God's wonderful creation.

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