



# Seton Home Study School

Volume XXI, Number 2 ♦ "Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church" ♦ February 2004

## St. Bernadette

In the month of February, we celebrate the apparitions of our Blessed Mother to St. Bernadette in Lourdes. The Blessed Mother appeared eighteen times to little Bernadette, and finally revealed herself as The Immaculate Conception.

The story of Bernadette is especially appealing to homeschooling families, because it is so much the story of a family struggling with day to day problems. Bernadette's father was often out of work. The mother struggled to raise six children and to give them a good religious education. Bernadette, the oldest, was small for her age because of chronic asthma. She was often sick from the damp and the cold weather.

The parents of little Bernadette sent her away to her aunt's home on a few occasions for several months as they hoped that a warmer climate would improve her health. She suffered the loneliness of being away from her family.

Both her aunt and her teachers tried to teach Bernadette her catechism, but they all thought she could not concentrate on her studies. They even called her a "fool" and said she had a "thick head."

Bernadette had many opportunities to offer up her sufferings and to make sacrifices due to her constant illness, due to her loneliness, and due to her struggles to learn her lessons.

People who knew her were surprised that though she was always tired, had a shortness of breath, and struggled to breathe, she seemed "always happy and

cheerful." Others said she was very straightforward with no attempts at excusing herself for her lack of learning. She seemed to have a goodness about her, which is why the pastor gave her First Holy Communion though she was behind in learning her religion lessons.

Bernadette always carried her rosary with her, and when the Blessed Mother appeared to her, Bernadette would reach for her rosary and say her prayers. Bernadette described the beautiful Lady: "There was light all around her like the sun, but I could look at her and she could look at me, and we prayed the rosary." She was dressed in white and over her arm she had a white rosary with a golden cross.

The Blessed Mother told Bernadette that "I do not promise to make you happy in this world, but in the other." For all of us homeschooling families, it is a reminder that we cannot find perfect happiness and satisfaction in this world. We cannot expect our situation to be perfect, but eternal happiness will come if we are obedient, faithful, and trusting.

Bernadette showed her trust in the Blessed Mother by doing as she was told without question. She dug in the dirt with her hands, she ate bitter grass, she smeared her face with mud. Others thought she was "mad" because it did not make sense to them. Because of her trust in the Blessed Mother, her digging produced a small spring, which turned out to be a miraculous spring.

The world does not understand homeschoolers because we turn from

the easy life of comfort and extra income, yet the "spring" that is produced, our children, will prove to be the miracle as they learn to live and to love the Catholic Faith. As the miraculous spring exists today, healing the hearts and souls and bodies of those who trust in God as they are lowered into the spring water, so our children will bring the healing Faith to the desperately ill and sick minds and souls of our country.

During one of the apparitions, Bernadette said, "Penance, penance, penance, pray for sinners." Each day as we struggle to teach or as our children struggle to learn, we should remember that these little struggles can be, and should be, offered up for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Every time we say the rosary, we are asking Mary to "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Each day, as we say our rosary, perhaps we can pray before a picture or a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary to remind us of her appeal to little Bernadette and to all of us to do penances and to pray for sinners. Perhaps our homeschooling will be a little easier as St. Bernadette and the Blessed Mother bring us their gentle peace and consolation.

- MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**I would like to do some science projects with my 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade children. How would they get a grade if I don't follow your lesson plan and tests?**

Many parents like to do their own projects with their children and that is fine. You need to send us an explanation about the project, as well as a picture. If your child has taken notes as the experiment has progressed, you could send those. Also, you need to give your child a grade. Assuming that the Seton teacher-grader is satisfied that the project is at grade level, we will add the grade to the report card.

We are happy to encourage parents to do science projects with their children. In fact, for Kindergarten through Sixth Grade, we have science projects on our web site. A retired elementary teacher is sending us more science projects to add to our web site and later to our books or lesson plans.

To reach the science projects on our web site, go to [www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org). Click on My Seton, then log on. If you have more than one child enrolled, be sure the name of the student in the top right box is correct. Click on Courses, then scroll down to the chart. Notice that the Yellow Pad icon says "View Course Notes." If you scroll down to Science, and then click on the Yellow Pad icon, you will see, in Fourth Grade for instance, 31 pages of Science Projects with teacher instructions included.

**What other helps do you have on the Seton web site for elementary grades?**

In the upper elementary grades, the Yellow Pad icon next to Reading is for Chapter Notes for the Book Reports, a real help for students. The Yellow Pad icon next to Handwriting in some grades is for practice sheets which you can print out for your child to practice his handwriting.

Beginning with Fifth grade, you will see the Yellow Pad icon for supplemental drills in math. Click on the Yellow Pad and go to the words Timed Drill Sheets to be linked to the Saxon math company which provides the drill sheets.

Many of these course helps are also available right on the front of your My Seton page, in the list in the middle of the page. The course helps listed on the front of your My Seton page are the helps available for the all the courses in which your children are enrolled. If you don't see book notes or other items that you think should be listed, click on the button at the top of the page that says "Problems?" and tell us what's wrong.

**Do you provide online tests for students in the elementary levels?**

Seton-compiled computer-graded online math tests for the Saxon math courses are available for grades Five through Eight (and for the high school levels also).

Soon, we will have computer-graded science tests online for Grades Four through Eight. The high school computer graded science tests are online now. All the computer-graded tests can be accessed by going to [www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org), clicking on My Seton, Logging On, and then clicking on Courses. Scroll down the chart to the subject or course. Click on the icon with the hand with the blue cuff. You will be linked to the computer-graded tests.

If a test or other assignment cannot be done directly on the website, you can still upload the test or assignment to be graded electronically. Our teacher-graders can grade all tests at all grade levels on the computer. To upload assignments, go to your My Seton page, then click on Courses, scroll down the chart to whichever subject you want, then click on the

icon with the hand with the red cuff. As your cursor goes over it, you can read "Send an assignment (upload) to Seton over the internet."

If your child has typed the assignment into a word processor, it can be directly uploaded to My Seton. If your child has written the assignment on paper, you will need to scan it into the computer to send it over the internet. We have more detailed instructions on how to submit grading items online at this web address: <http://www.setonhome.org/myseton/scanning.php>.

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*In 2003, we received over 26,000 tests and other uploaded assignments on My Seton. This was more than twice the number of items received online in 2002.*

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After a test or assignment is graded, you will see a magnifying glass icon next to the item. You can click this icon to see the graded tests, with comments from the grader. The nice thing about this is that assignments will continue to be stored online for you for many years.

In 2003, we received over 26,000 tests and other uploaded assignments on My Seton. This was more than twice the number of items received online in 2002.

Besides the online tests and uploads, there is much more available on your My Seton page. You can enter your home assignment grades, you can update your address if you move, you can change your email address, you can make a Plan B payment, you can download answer keys or quarter report forms. And we are adding more all the time.

If you haven't tried your My Seton page, we certainly encourage you to log on and look around. Point your browser to [www.setonhome.org/MySeton](http://www.setonhome.org/MySeton).

**My husband does not understand my problems. Homeschooling and housekeeping and feeding the family and doing the laundry keep me going all day and half the night, but he does not seem to notice or be concerned.**

For some homeschooling mothers, an emotional hardship is the constant realization that their husbands do not notice or appreciate the daily household work, not to mention the noble work of teaching and training the children in the Faith.

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*In a quiet private time, after saying a nine-day novena, ask your husband to be a part of family more by helping around the house or by helping with the homeschooling.*

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Mothers need to find support in their children, having the children help with the housework as well as having older children help with the homeschooling of the younger children. Take the time to write out your daily household chores, and see how each child can take some responsibility, even if it is small. Everyone five years old and older can help clean or pick up, or can help set the table. Children over ten should be able to help listen to a younger child read or recite his math facts or spelling words.

Homeschooling mothers can find support also in a Catholic homeschooling support group. Bring up this topic for a discussion at a support group meeting. See what others are doing.

In addition, in a quiet private time, after saying a nine-day novena, ask your husband to be a part of family more by helping around the house or by helping with the homeschooling. However, many husbands simply cannot deal with the stresses or demands of their job and then

come home and help at home. In this case, prayer is the best answer. You don't want to become a nag.

Spend time each morning before you start your work day in reading and meditation. Even if it is only 15 minutes, you can receive spiritual help and the grace to face the situations of the day if you devote just this short time to prayer. A wonderful little meditative book which I have used for meditation, and which has helped millions of people for 500 years is *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas á Kempis, a priest who lived in a monastery for many years. The meditations are short but encourage the reader to think more deeply about how we live spiritually. According to the Catholic encyclopedia, after the Bible, it is the most widely read book in the world.

**I want to go to Mass every day with my children, but it is not always scheduled at the same time; sometimes it is at 9, sometimes at noon. It is so difficult to attend in the middle of the best teaching hours.**

Many of us experience the same frustration. Getting to Mass is definitely difficult with children at any time. Our parish church has recently begun a Mass at 7 in the morning, and many homeschooling parents like that to get an early start. However, the 9 Mass is the best attended by the homeschooling families, even though it cuts into the quality teaching time. The noon Mass here is also very well attended by the homeschooling families.

No time is perfect, and maybe the sacrifice and the difficulties are part of the reason we earn so many graces by going. This is one of those things that you know is terribly important, and so you just keep at it, doing the best you can.

Father Hardon often talked about white martyrdom. He constantly praised the day to day heroes, the moms and dads who day after day give up their own wants and desires and comforts, dying to their own personal pleasures, to sacrifice for their children to give them eternal happiness with Jesus Christ.

**I feel disorganized with the books and other materials for the several children I am homeschooling.**

There are volumes and volumes of books that have been written about home

organization. You can look on the internet at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and find many books that may help you. You might try visiting another family that appears well-organized to see the little organizational tricks that some mothers have discovered to make homeschooling easier.

Some parents have cardboard file boxes which they purchase at local office supply stores; parents keep in these boxes the quarter report forms and tests or assignments that need to be sent to Seton for grading. Many parents set up a simple or elaborate filing system so they can find the papers quickly. (Of course, we recommend that you do as much as you can on the computer, because then you have no papers to get lost or to file.)

Some parents use laundry baskets, some use those large plastic Rubbermaid containers to keep the books for the children, using different colors for different children. Both schoolbooks and library books can be kept in the basket. The basket can be transported each day to the schooling area, or the basket can be kept in the area. Often the books are kept so the spines are on the top and the books can be easily identified. Parents often purchase a small cigar-sized box for pencils, pens, a ruler, a compass, whatever.

Some families have one or more bookcases, located in the school room or located in each child's bedroom, which contain the books in an orderly way. It is an opportunity to teach library-shelving skills as well.

Homeschooling parents need a Teacher's Plan Book themselves to keep a schedule as close as possible. It is important, however, to put the kids on a schedule also. Kids need to be responsible for their chores and their schoolwork, too. Make a schedule with them and put it up on their wall or the back of their bedroom door, so they know what to do and when to do it.

Some parents keep up the cleaning with the kids each day, but schedule cleaning very well one room each day of the week.

Keep track for a week or two what exactly you are doing and where you would like to make improvements. Talk with friends and family members, look on the internet or in library books, and get ideas about how you can make life simpler and easier and more organized.

## Essentials of Home Management, #5

by Ginny Seuffert

### *Find What Time You Have and Use the Time You Find!*

Catholic homeschooling Moms and Dads enjoy lives of great plenty—plenty of bills, plenty of dirty diapers, plenty of math lessons to be graded, and plenty of prayers just to make it through the day. The one thing we seem constantly short of is time. Most of us want to maintain orderly households, filled with cheerful Christian charity, but too many of us just cannot seem to find enough hours in the day. The key to maintaining order—and sanity—is to figure out what time you have, and then use that time as wisely as you can.

Even Moms with very young children can pick up a few minutes here and there. One tip is to get up an hour earlier (Okay, thirty minutes if the baby was up twice last night!), so that you can snatch a few seconds to straighten up before your husband leaves for work. If the baby is napping, have your school-age children sit at the kitchen table while you do the dishes and get a head start on tonight's dinner. Often an older toddler can supervise a younger one, "Call Mommy if the baby needs me," while you race down to the basement and throw a load of wash in the machine. The key is to put the time you find to good use.

If I could give just one piece of advice to overworked Moms who can't seem to find the minutes to keep things together, it would be: *Stay away from the electronics.* You may be well *below* the national average if you watch only one "favorite" TV show per day, but most Catholic homeschooling families are way *above* the national

average for the number of children we have. Just one hour spent vegging out in front of the tube could be better spent almost anywhere else. Years ago, when I only had five or six kids, I resolved never to "just" watch TV, especially during weekdays. This good habit has served me very well. If you really want to watch a particular program, plan to fold laundry, mend, iron or exercise during the show so that you don't waste an entire hour. Hop up during commercials to switch the wash to the dryer, or run the trash to the curb, and you can enjoy your program—guilt-free.

PC's in general, and online services in particular, are the worst sort of time thieves. No one can vacuum and play spider solitaire at the same time! Homeschooling chat rooms and message boards are filled with Moms who spend hours and hours online, all the while complaining that they can't find the time to grade papers or get meals on the table. Unlike the hands-free TV, a computer does not lend itself to multi-tasking. A good resolution might be to stay away from the keyboard until a particular time of day, say 9 P.M. By that time, most of us are too tired to do much around the house anyway, so it's a good time to answer emails or stay in touch with homeschooling buddies online.

Although all of us sigh with envy at the beautiful homes we see in advertisements and decorating magazines, they are not realistic goals for most homeschooling families, especially those of us just making our bills. An orderly home, and a simple lifestyle will serve the majority of us far better. In the

limited time you can devote to household routines, make sure that you take care of the essentials first, and save the less pressing tasks for Dad's day off.

These essential household chores will keep your home tidy and healthy most of the time. As soon as you get dressed each morning, make your bed, and put any soiled clothes in the hamper. At the end of each meal, take ten minutes to load the dishwasher (or wash the dishes and put them in the drain board to air dry) and wipe the counters. If you have another few minutes, try to sweep. Make a point to put away toiletries in the bathroom and wipe the sink, countertop, toilet seat and rim. As I have lots of daughters with long hair, I sometimes dampen a piece of toilet tissue and swipe it across the floor to pick up the hairs. After school hours, make sure the books and other supplies are put away, and try to pick up any items you find strewn in the living room, dining room or den.

Now these chores can be completed during stolen minutes throughout the day that probably do not add up to much more than one hour. I acknowledge that I didn't mention laundry or meals, and your home is far from spotless. You still have to find time to sweep, mop, or vacuum your floors, dust your furniture and disinfect your bathroom tiles. This simple routine of "surface" cleaning will, however, allow you to maintain some semblance of order and, because daily tasks are not piling up, allow you to attack those larger chores on weekends.

Next month's column will deal with the most effective tools you can use for maintaining a clean home—your kids!

## *The Necessity of Hope*

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles Hugo Doyle has written several homilies for Sundays and Holy Days, published in a book of that title by The Nugent Press. His article can inspire us homeschooling parents, especially in the middle of winter and in the middle of what might seem like a situation in which we are not moving ahead in our homeschooling at the pace we would like.

Monsignor begins his homily by referring to the city of Vienna in 1683 when it was under siege by the Turks, and the king fled the city, leaving the people to suffer under the conqueror. However, the people of Vienna asked the king of Poland to send his army to rescue them. The people waited a long time, anxiously, hopefully, looking toward the route along which the army would come. "At last, they saw the lances of their rescuers gleaming on the mountains." The Polish army saved their city, and their prayers of hope were answered.

"Life on this earth would be unbearable without hope," Msgr. Doyle wrote. "To the Christian, the best things are ahead. So well founded is this belief that we have coined expressions such as 'Where there is life, there is hope.' The weakest invalid has hope, the loneliest missionary has hope, the poor hope for better things for their children, the sinner hopes for pardon."

We homeschooling parents must never lose hope, and must continue to do our best, day after day, in the hope and belief that ultimately our children will attain heaven because of our dedication to teaching and training them in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic

Faith. Father  
H a r d o n ,



*Hope is the thing with feathers,  
that perches in the soul...*

now deceased, was perhaps the most knowledgeable theologian in America for many years, and a strong supporter of Catholic homeschooling. He spoke several times to parents at Catholic homeschooling conferences about the importance of making whatever sacrifices are necessary to keep teaching and training our children at home.

Msgr. Doyle points out that St. Paul, in his letters to the Romans, keeps repeating the word hope "like some dominant tone in a song. The Scriptures, he [Paul] says, were written to give us hope. With great daring, he gives God a new title, calling Him "The God of Hope." St. Paul prays that the Holy Spirit may make us rich in hope.

"When we were baptized," Msgr. Doyle explains, "along with sanctifying grace, God infused into our souls the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. This is the teaching of the Council of Trent. Before defining the virtue of hope, let us realize that infused virtues endow us, not with facility, but with a supernatural proximate power of eliciting supernatural acts."

With the supernatural virtue of hope, we homeschool parents have a supernatural power to help us in our homeschooling teaching.

"Hope is a theological virtue that makes us desire God as our highest good, and expect with a firm confidence, eternal happiness and the means of attaining it because of God's power and goodness."

Thus we homeschooling parents can know that because of God's power and goodness, we can be successful in giving our children the means of attaining eternal happiness through our Catholic homeschooling.

"That hope is placed between faith and charity is not an arbitrary position: we must believe before we can hope for what we believe; we must desire it and hope for it before we can love it.

"The theological virtue of hope infused in us at baptism furthers our sanctification in three ways: First, it unites us to God by detaching us from earthly goods.

Hope shows us that sense-pleasures, wealth, and natural joys of mind and heart lack perfection and permanence.

"Second, hope united to humility imparts efficacy to our prayers. St. Paul points to the Scriptures: 'Everything that was written in times past was written for our instruction, that through the patience and encouragement afforded by the Scriptures, we might have hope.'

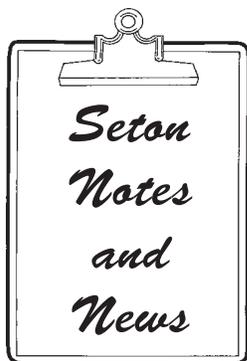
"Prayerful reading of the Bible will strengthen hope. For instance, "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord and has been confounded... For God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation" (Ecclus. 2:11-13). Who could fail to have hope in prayers after reading such texts?

"Third, hope is the principle of fruitful activity: it begets holy desires, particularly the desire to possess God. It increases our energies through the prospect of a reward that will be far in excess of our efforts. Hope infuses into us that courage that gives us the assurance of success."

Homeschooling for many of us means that we must give up several earthly pleasures and earthly goods, either because of lack of time or lack of funds. We should try to give up these things willingly, lovingly, hopefully, because we know that such sacrifices will result in permanent eternal happiness and joy, for ourselves and for our children.

Msgr. continues by reminding us that the sin of presumption, which is a belief that God is too good to send anyone to hell, results in a neglect of daily prayer. Prayer is the result of the virtue of hope, a realization that God does answer prayers, and God expects us to be willing to follow the means toward holiness that He has ordained for us. Jesus gave us the perfect prayer, the Our Father.

The sin of despair, a belief that it is useless to hope for salvation, that God will not forgive us, also results in a neglect of daily prayer. It is prayer that encourages us to hope, to understand the value of eternal happiness in heaven. And that's what Catholic homeschooling is all about!



## 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. For more information, contact Mary Lou Warren at 540-636-9990.

**St. Louis, MO. April 3, 2004.** St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference at the Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Drive, St. Louis. For info call Carmen at 636-447-1072.

**Pine Hill, NJ (Philadelphia area). April 17, 2004.** 5th Annual Homeschool Conference at Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Church, 261 Cross Keys Road, Pine Hill. For info email [chaplet@chaplet.org](mailto:chaplet@chaplet.org).

**Pasadena, TX (Houston area). April 23 & 24, 2004.** 14th Annual ARCH Curriculum Fair at St. Pius V Catholic School, 812 South Main, Pasadena. For information call 281-797-5578.

**Ripon, CA (Sacramento/Modesto area). April 24, 2004.** Northern California Catholic Home School and Family Conference at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 19399 E. St./Rte 120 Highway, Ripon. Co-hosted by Seton and Human Life International. Free admission. For information call Fran at 209-824-5795.

**Harrisburg, PA. April 24, 2004.** 10th Annual Catholic Homeschool Conference and Curriculum Fair at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Route 22 West, Harrisburg. For information call Ellen at 717-866-5425.

**West Allis, WI (Milwaukee area). April 24, 2004.** Greater Milwaukee Catholic Home Educators Curriculum Fair at Saint Mary Help of Christians, 6014 Madison St. For information call Kathy at 414-543-2665.

**Chicago, IL. May 15, 2004.** Immaculate Heart of Mary Regional Catholic Homeschool and Family Conference at Dominican University, main campus in River Forest, IL. For information, email [chicago@ihmconference.org](mailto:chicago@ihmconference.org).

**Herndon, VA (DC area). June 25th and 26th, 2004.** 2004 Immaculate Heart of Mary National Homeschool and Family Conference at the Dulles Hilton. For information, go to [www.ihmconference.com](http://www.ihmconference.com), or call 540-636-1946.

## Letter from a Parent

As I place my son's last religion test in the envelope to be graded by you, I remember back 14 years ago when I first learned of Seton School. I was trying to make up my own at-home religion course using [other materials]. You were a God-send! I felt confident that my sons ... would have a good understanding of and strengthening of their faith. The best part was that the instruction came from you through me. I was on top of what they were learning and could apply it to their daily lives.

I'm not saying it was easy! Many a night when they had all their other homework to do, they were not too happy about having the extra workload, but as we reviewed the daily questions and answers, we communicated and bonded.

As the years passed I saw both my boys grow strong in their faith and love of God and I know in my heart I couldn't have given them that without those wonderful lesson plans and materials you offered. Although I do not know what eventual paths each of my sons will take, I know that they have strong well-formed consciences and a strong faith and love for our dear Lord.

Thank you again and may God's blessings and graces be with you always.

## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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# *The Domestic Church*

## *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**1655** Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than “the family of God.” From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers “together with all [their] household.”[164] When they were converted, they desired that “their whole household” should also be saved.[165] These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world.

**1656** In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. [166] It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation.”[167]

**1657** It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the

priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way “by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity.”[168] Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and “a school for human enrichment.”[169] Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous -- even repeated -- forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life.

**1658** We must also remember the great number of single persons who, because of the particular circumstances in which they have to live—often not of their choosing—are especially close to Jesus’ heart and therefore deserve the special affection and active solicitude of the Church, especially of pastors. Many remain without a human family often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the “domestic churches,” and of the great family which is the Church must be open to all of them. “No one is without a family in this world: the Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who ‘labor and are heavy laden.’”[170]

### *Seton Home Study School*

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