



Seton Home

Study School

Volume XXI, Number 9 ◆ *“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”* ◆ September 2004

Exaltation of the Cross

On September 14th, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The tradition of exalting the Holy Cross, holding up the Cross for us to honor during ceremonies in church, originated after St. Helena found the True Cross, and after the Emperor Heraclius returned the Holy Cross from the Persians. Small relics, pieces of the Cross, were distributed throughout the Catholic Churches around the world. The relic of the True Cross was attached or embedded in a cross and, in a procession, the priest solemnly held up the Cross for veneration.

In the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church, the Exaltation of the Cross is considered a great feast day, with a procession and Mass prayers continuing for a week. A hymn is repeated many times as the people bow before it and sing: “We bow down in worship before Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your resurrection.” In the prayers of the Church for the feast day, the Church members pray together: “O divine power, O invincible power, O incomprehensible power of the glorious and life-giving Cross, protect us sinners.”

The Church teaches that we can rely on the power and mercy of God; in particular, we can rely on the incredible life-giving graces Christ

earned for us by suffering and dying on the Cross. As home schooling parents, we should be asking for these graces which Christ generously and continuously offers to us.

“Joy to you, life-bearing Cross of the Lord! You are the gate to paradise, the strength of the faithful, the stronghold of the Church. Because of you, corruption no longer has any meaning nor any power. We have been lifted up by you from earth to heaven. You are an invincible weapon against evil, a glory indeed for saints and martyrs, and a haven of salvation. You are a source of mercy to the world.”

If we home schooling parents feel unable to teach a concept, we should look at Jesus on the Cross and ask for strength and wisdom. As we pray that the evil influences of our secular society will remain outside of our home and family, we and our children need to make the Sign of the Cross and look to Jesus Christ on the Cross for protection.

“Joy to you, most honorable Cross of the Lord! Through you, mankind has been relieved of the curse [of Original Sin]. You are a sign of joy indeed, and a sign of terror to our spiritual enemies. You are the help of Christians, the glory of kings, the strength of the just, the splendor of priests, a staff of power to your people, and a source of peace.

Around you, the angels gather in awe. You are the glory of Christ who grants great mercy to the world.”

Many of the prayers of the feast contrast the Tree of Death, the cross upon which criminals and Jesus were executed, with the Tree of Life in the Garden of Paradise, because of which Adam sinned and brought death in to the world. The wooden cross was the symbol of death and despair in Roman times, yet the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross brought not death but Eternal Life.

Dear Jesus, we exalt in your Holy Cross, we venerate your sufferings because You willingly suffered on the Cross for the salvation of each one of us whom You created. We know You love us with an infinite love.

Dear Jesus, we home schooling parents are happily willing to offer the sacrifices necessary to give up our personal time and desires for something much more important, the eternal salvation of our children. We acknowledge that it is the strength and power of Your Cross which gives us the ability to do this. Amen.

Inside . . .

<i>Questions</i>	2
<i>Discipline and Manners</i>	4
<i>Holiness and Harmony</i>	6
<i>My Seton</i>	7
<i>Homily from Lourdes</i>	8



Questions We Are Asked

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

What is the difference between online courses and regular courses? How do we enroll in the high school online courses? Does it require a special enrollment or more fees?

You don't need to enroll in the online courses. When we have an online version of a course, the online course is available to everyone enrolled in the course. So you don't have to decide at the time of enrollment if you want the online course or the regular course. The online course is there if you want to use it.

There are no extra fees for any course material available on our online site. The standard course fees cover the regular and online versions of the course.

The online courses contain everything that the standard version of the course contains except for the books. Reading assignments will still need to be done with the printed books. The online courses have the daily lesson plans, tests, answer keys, etc. Depending on the course, they may also have audio lectures, audio pronunciation guides (foreign language courses), message boards, book notes, links to Internet sites, and other supplemental materials.

When the tests are objective, such as multiple choice, they are immediately graded and recorded. Tests that contain essay questions or other non-objective material are put into the electronic grading system and are usually graded within a few days. If an online test is not available, any test or assignment can be uploaded from the My Seton page and will be put in the electronic grading system.

To get the online courses, go to the Seton web site at www.setonhome.org. Then click on My Seton. Then you need to log in using your last name, your zip code, and your family ID number. If you don't know your ID number, look

on the packing list that came on the outside of your box or on your student labels. If you can't find your family number, there is a link on the My Seton login page that says "I don't know my family number". If you click on that link and we have your email address on file, we can immediately email you your family number. If we do not have your email address on file, send an email to myseton@setonhome.org and request your family number.

For additional security, you may choose a password in order to view your family information. You do not need a password the first time you log in.

Once you have entered the My Seton section of the web site, if you have several children enrolled, be sure the correct name of the student is on the upper right hand corner. Then, click on Courses. All the courses in which that student is enrolled will appear in a chart. If you place your cursor over the icons to the right of each course, you will see what you can find to help you and your student for that particular course. You can post home grades, see if we have any online tests, see if the course is online, upload assignments, find supplemental course resources, and so on.

Why are the high school lesson plans set up differently from grade school?

Parents who have students entering high school are sometimes surprised that we no longer provide one lesson plan with all the subjects. We need to have separate lesson plans for each subject because high school students don't all take the same subjects. For example, ninth graders may choose between Earth Science or Physical Science. Students don't always take the math courses in the same years. Siblings in different grades often take courses together, such as a foreign language course.

What is the Independent Study program?

Seton's Independent Study program gives high school credit for non-Seton courses. For example, some home schooling parents find other home schooling families who like to join together to do certain courses at the high school level. The subjects most often chosen are science or a foreign language. If the families choose a different book and a different course manual than we have at Seton, parents can still get credit for that course. To receive credit, you will need to fill out an Independent Study Request Form.

The online courses contain everything that the standard version of the course contains except for the books. Reading will still need to be done with the printed books.

You can request a form by phone or e-mail, but the easiest way is to go to your My Seton page and click on "Resources". From there, you fill out on the on-line form or download the form to mail to Seton.

You will notice there is a form for non-Seton non-academic courses. This is the most popular for students taking music, sports, art, and other kinds of similar courses. The form for academic courses is for students doing non-Seton academic courses for science, math, or foreign languages. We look over the academic courses very closely because we want to make sure that they are at a high school level, and that they in no way contradict our Catholic values.

There is a \$30 fee for full-time students since we do take the time to evaluate the courses, and in fact, we look over the quarterly tests to make sure that adequate tests were given and taken by the student.

Why can we not get book credits when we enroll online?

Last year, we began giving book credits when families enrolled online. We had many problems, mainly due to the different editions of books and revised lesson plans that did not match. This resulted in many supplemental book shipments. We decided not to give book credits unless our Admissions representatives actually spoke with parents to try to make sure the books match the lesson plans. As time goes on and we are able to maintain our books with fewer new revisions, we are likely to re-implement the book credits online.

Do your best to involve your husband in helping the children in some way, such as teaching a class or helping to remodel an area of the house for home schooling.

My husband is against my home schooling. He is willing to try it, reluctantly, but I am fearful he will undermine it with my children. Do you think I should do it anyway?

The benefits of home schooling are so great for your children that you must do whatever you can to show them to your husband. You have a responsibility to raise your children so that they can keep and live their Catholic Faith. With the tremendous difficulties in the schools today, and the amount of time spent in the classroom and peer group, many children fall away from the Faith.

The way to teach your children, to raise your children, is to be a good example, to show your children by word and deed, what it means to be a good Catholic.

If your husband has a specific objection, such as worrying about the academics, find the statistics and studies that will show him the effectiveness of home schooling. You can find studies about home schooling on the Internet, at such sites as the National Home Education Research Institute (<http://www.nheri.org>). Also, remind your husband that Seton HomeStudy School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Do your best to involve your husband in helping the children in some way, such as teaching a class or helping to remodel an area of the house for home schooling. If he feels he is part of the home schooling enterprise, then he may be more positive toward it.

What would you recommend for more reading drill? I am not happy with the books I see in the library and in bookstores, and don't have the time to read all the books first.

In addition to the readers we send for the curriculum, we have about eight titles of lives of the saints for each grade level. I recommend that you order all eight titles for your children. Also, TAN Books, Bethlehem Books, and Ignatius Press are all reprinting good Catholic or good Christian books for children. You can find them on the Internet.

Seton has reading lists online for kindergarten through eighth grade. To see the lists, go to www.setonhome.org, then click on "Parent Resources" and then "Reading Lists". Many of the books listed should be available at your local library. If not, they should be available from online booksellers such as Amazon.com.

We downloaded the chapter notes for the books for the book reports. There are questions, but no answers. Is there an answer key available?

There are no answer keys available for the chapter notes questions. The chapter notes are meant to be motivational, to encourage the student to read the next chapter to find out the answers to the questions. We began to write chapter notes because we received so many phone calls from parents who say their children are not interested in reading; they are interested in movies, videos, computer games, and online activities. There is no question that the entertainment in color and quick movement has discouraged popular reading. We hope that the questions and comments in the chapter notes will arouse the student's curiosity enough to encourage him to read the next chapter.

Also, parents can use the chapter notes to test their child's reading comprehension. After the student reads a chapter, ask them to give oral answers to the chapter notes questions. If they are unable to give answers, then they are not comprehending or thinking about what they are reading. (Parents do not need to have read the book. Just listen for an answer that demonstrates the student has an understanding of the book.)

For those who have not found them yet, the chapter notes are on your My Seton page. Not all book report books have been done yet, but most are available.

Is there still a waiting list for students to get help from the Special Needs department?

This year, we decided not to start a waiting list. We were determined that we would serve all the students who wanted to enroll in that department. By the way, many parents enroll their students in just one or two courses.

We are truly fortunate in having very qualified teachers and counselors to help our parents in selecting materials as well as in maintaining progress throughout the year.

More information about our Special Needs department is available on our web site. Click on Curriculum, then click on Special Service for Special Kids with Special Needs.

Discipline in the Catholic Home: Minding Manners

by Ginny Seuffert

Faithful readers know that this column moved from “home management” to “kid management” last month, although any home schooling mom will tell you that the two topics are not unrelated. Fifteen years of speaking to home schooling moms and dads have convinced me that discipline, actually the lack of discipline, is the biggest obstacle to successful home schooling and orderly households. This is not surprising when one considers all the conflicting advice that young parents hear from experts on TV talk shows, in checkout counter magazines, and from pre-school teachers. Is there any way to sift what really works out of all this information?

It is always useful to see what succeeded in the past and then to decide if past accomplishments have any practical application to our present situation. To do this, we do not need to research ancient Babylonian child rearing practices! Until a mere half-century ago, devoted American Catholic parents confidently—and routinely—raised well-behaved children who matured into responsible adults of character and integrity. These parents, immigrants or the children of immigrants in non-English homes, frequently grew up in grinding poverty, and survived two world wars and the consequent social upheaval. Few had a college education, and more than a few lacked even a high school diploma. How could they be so successful at this daunting task, when the goal of raising happy, well-adjusted children seems beyond the reach of so many modern, very well-fed, very well-educated American parents?

The child-rearing secrets of these past-generation Americans were actually just a combination of ordinary common sense, and circumstances dictated by the conditions of the time. A glance into our nation’s social history shows us what worked for them.

Faith

Faith was central to family life, and passing on the Faith to the next generation was a top priority. Many old parish schools in major cities contain the archeological evidence of this commitment. Poke around and you will find remnants of the first parish church in the school’s basement or auditorium. Our grandparents understood that Catholic children need a Catholic education, so they built the parish school *before* they built the church.

The teaching sisters encouraged, and often required, daily Mass attendance before school started. On the Thursdays before First Fridays, most schools filed the children into the parish church so Father could hear their confessions. On Saturdays, several priests heard Confessions at the same time, and penitents lined the aisles of the church. In my grade school, we had to “check in” before Sunday Mass, or bring a note from our parents if we were absent. A family had to arrive early on Sunday to ensure a seat at Mass, and other devotions like the rosary and weekly novenas were very well attended.

At home, families said grace at meals, recited the rosary daily, and hung holy water fonts next to the doors, even bedroom doors. Thinking back to my own childhood in the 1950’s, I cannot remember a single bedroom, in my house or any other, that did not have a crucifix hanging on

the wall. Children were excited to cut flowers for the Blessed Mother’s “altar” (often a dresser top), and the statues of Mary in the corner of every Catholic classroom were surrounded by cut flowers in a collection of glass vases and jelly jars.

Parental Responsibility

Parents understood and accepted their responsibility to raise respectful, obedient children. Even the most indulgent parents worked hard to teach their children proper manners. Speaking disrespectfully to a parent, or any adult for that matter, was immediately and forcefully corrected. Absolute obedience was not only desirable, but necessary for these struggling families. Dad worked long hours to support the family, and ordinary housework was extraordinarily time-consuming for Mom in those days. Parents had to trust the children to get themselves to school, pitch in with family chores, watch younger siblings and run errands. How the children felt about doing this work was irrelevant.

Until the last quarter of the 20th century, discipline was directly applied. Children didn’t like being on the receiving end of correction, and often parents and teachers were unhappy doling it out, but everyone understood the importance of children behaving the right way.

These punishments were not brutal, but they were immediate and easily understood. Generally, parents who spanked sometimes did not have to spank often. Contrary to modern wisdom, children of this different age did not mature into violence-crazed lunatics as a result of this corporal punishment. Nor were they being taught to use violence to resolve conflict. In those days, there was no conflict. Parents were always right!

Child Labor

Kids pitched in at home and at work. One of the families on my

block in New York had nine children, raised by a relative whose parents had died, and had grandpa living with them, too. Before modern laborsaving devices, and with no money to buy them as they were invented, families like this one needed all members to chip in, both inside and outside the house. Children had regular chores and were not given allowances for completing them. Extras, like a Saturday matinee, were just that, extras, not entitlements.

Children were always on the lookout for a way to earn spending money that their parents could not afford to give them. Opportunities to baby-sit, pet sit, mow lawns, rake leaves, or run to the grocery store were eagerly sought. When times were tough, the kids had to turn the money into the house to pay bills. My dad remembered one week in springtime, during the Great Depression, when he pulled in more cash selling lilacs on the Bronx River Parkway than his Dad earned as a tailor. When his older brothers went to war, he helped out by driving an early morning milk route through the Bronx, even though he was still too young to get a driver's license.

All of these components added together produced generations of devout, respectful, responsible offspring. They, in turn, grew to be adults of character and integrity who passed on their virtues to the generation that followed. This cycle was interrupted by previously unknown (in the history of the world) great material prosperity, a loss of Faith in God, and by "experts" with lots of credentials but no common sense.

In the months to come, this column will examine traditional wisdom regarding child-raising, and discuss how it can be applied to American home schooling families in the 21st century.

Plagiarism

As more high school students use the Internet, we are discovering more and more plagiarism among students' work in history and English. Unfortunately, plagiarism and other cheating seems to be epidemic these days. A 2002 survey by Rutgers' Management Education Center found that three-quarters of high school students "engage in serious cheating." And "More than half have plagiarized work they found on the Internet." Perhaps the most striking finding of the study is that the students do not believe there is anything wrong with cheating.

Cheating on tests or plagiarizing work is wrong. Two commandments are broken when students present another's work as their own: first, it is against the seventh commandment: *Thou shalt not steal*; and second, it is against the eighth commandment: *Thou shalt not bear false witness*, meaning *Thou shalt not tell a lie*. It also shows disrespect for parents, who are trying to help the student receive a good education, and disrespect for teachers, whom the student is trying to deceive.

Plagiarism is a serious matter. It is a form of cheating. Students are being expelled from universities for plagiarism, coaches are losing their jobs, and politicians are not being trusted because of plagiarism discovered years later. Don't be caught in dishonesty and be viewed as a dishonest person. Don't lose your valuable name and reputation. Simply cite your sources and don't plagiarize.

It is obvious to our teachers and graders when the answer to the test question does not answer the question directly. It is simply information related to the topic. While some students may be plagiarizing accidentally, it is still plagiarism, presenting or submitting another person's intellectual work as one's own. Copying whole sentences or whole paragraphs from a website and using them without quotes and attribution on a test or an essay is plagiarism.

Some of our graders and teachers are aware of the sites on the assigned

topics; most of them have been grading these papers for years and know what the answers should be from the book, and know the web sites well enough to recognize the online work. In addition, the language and vocabulary of plagiarized submissions do not match the other work the student has submitted.

Students should know that it is easy to find plagiarism by using a search engine. The teacher only needs to do a search on a unique phrase from the essay or test to find it online. Some students take paragraphs from the Internet but change a word or two so it is not an exact match. That is still plagiarism.

We are happy when students do more research on the Internet, but when answers are written or when a report or a book analysis is to be written, it must be in the student's own words. And unless a test is an open-book test, students need to be writing answers based upon their own memory and understanding, not copying from the book or the Internet.

Several of the Seton English courses contain a page, often in the Appendix, titled "Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism." The wise student will read it carefully.

You can find more information about understanding and avoiding plagiarism online. The Purdue University Writing Lab has a wonderful web site to help students avoid plagiarism. They have several charts, such as "Making Sure You Are Safe." They cover "When researching, note-taking, and interviewing"; "When paraphrasing and summarizing"; "When quoting directly"; and "When quoting indirectly". (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html)

Learn to think for yourself, to analyze ideas, to express ideas in your own words. This will develop critical thinking skills, and help you to be the good Catholic that Christ asks us to be: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

Holiness and Harmony in the Home

by Glen Tortorella

based upon a speech by Father Frank Papa

Father Frank Papa's lecture, "Holiness and Harmony in the Homeschooling Home," provides a detailed answer to the question: How does one create and sustain a harmonious environment in the homeschooling home? Considering the various modern difficulties and issues, creating holiness and harmony in the home is no easy task. Hence, Father Papa offers sensible, practical commentary on establishing a holy and harmonious homeschooling home.

Father Papa begins by pointing out that our Catholic ancestors were avid, dedicated homeschoolers. Reflecting on the early Church, Father Papa indicates, "All the children were educated at home." The difficult circumstances prevailing in the early Church were not unlike those of today, as Catholic parents had to address the problem of raising Catholic children in a pagan world.

Undaunted by this intimidating obstacle, Catholic families produced new Catholics, and thus Catholics began converting the world. Father notes, "By their life and example...they changed society." The importance of fathers and mothers is not to be minimized. Fathers and mothers played a crucial role in advancing their children—and the world—in the light of the true Faith.

The domestic society, therefore, influenced the society at-large. Father, mother, and children make up the domestic society. The domestic society is shaped by the efforts of the father and mother. Thus, Father concludes, "Fathers and mothers must first be husband and wife." Any disharmony in the marital union will eventually manifest itself in the home. A holy, harmonious marriage fosters a holy and harmonious home.

Father Papa is also mindful of the broader, more fundamental characteristics of marriage. "Marriage is between a man and a woman," and cannot exist between people of the same sex. Any other interpretation of marriage

is both clearly erroneous and a blasphemy of God's creation.

If marriage is a blessing from God, then what is the duty of the homeschooling parent? What is the purpose of homeschooling itself? Father addresses this important and foundational issue, stating, "The primary goal of the homeschooling home is to learn how to live...how to be good." Father emphasizes the fact that it is more important to be good than to be smart. Punctuating the matter, Father concludes, "Wisdom is greater than knowledge." The acquisition of worldly knowledge does not necessarily engender wisdom.

The home is also greatly affected by the mood of the mother and father. "The mood of the mother and father affects the mood of the whole family," Father remarks. Cheerfulness spreads from the mother and father to the children. A Catholic home must be a "haven of peace and love in a troubled world." "Peace" must also be understood in its fullest context: "the sound of children's voices is peaceful."

In attempting to create an atmosphere of "peace and love," one should look to the Church for aid and support. Specifically, one should seek heavenly help in the holy and sublime sacraments of the Church, as these are gifts that were given by Our Lord Himself. Frequent reception of the sacraments is necessary. Supernatural grace is at the heart of the happy home. Father recommends that one should go to confession at least once a month. Confession gives a person the grace to "conquer bad habits." Further, "the family should do this together." The holy and harmonious family has a basis and unity in the sacraments.

One must also realize the significance of vocation and Divine Providence. Father declares that "God picked *you*" to be the father or mother of a particular family. There is something special and unique about our lives and our choices. Overall, though, the holy parent is a parent that is willing to sacrifice himself.

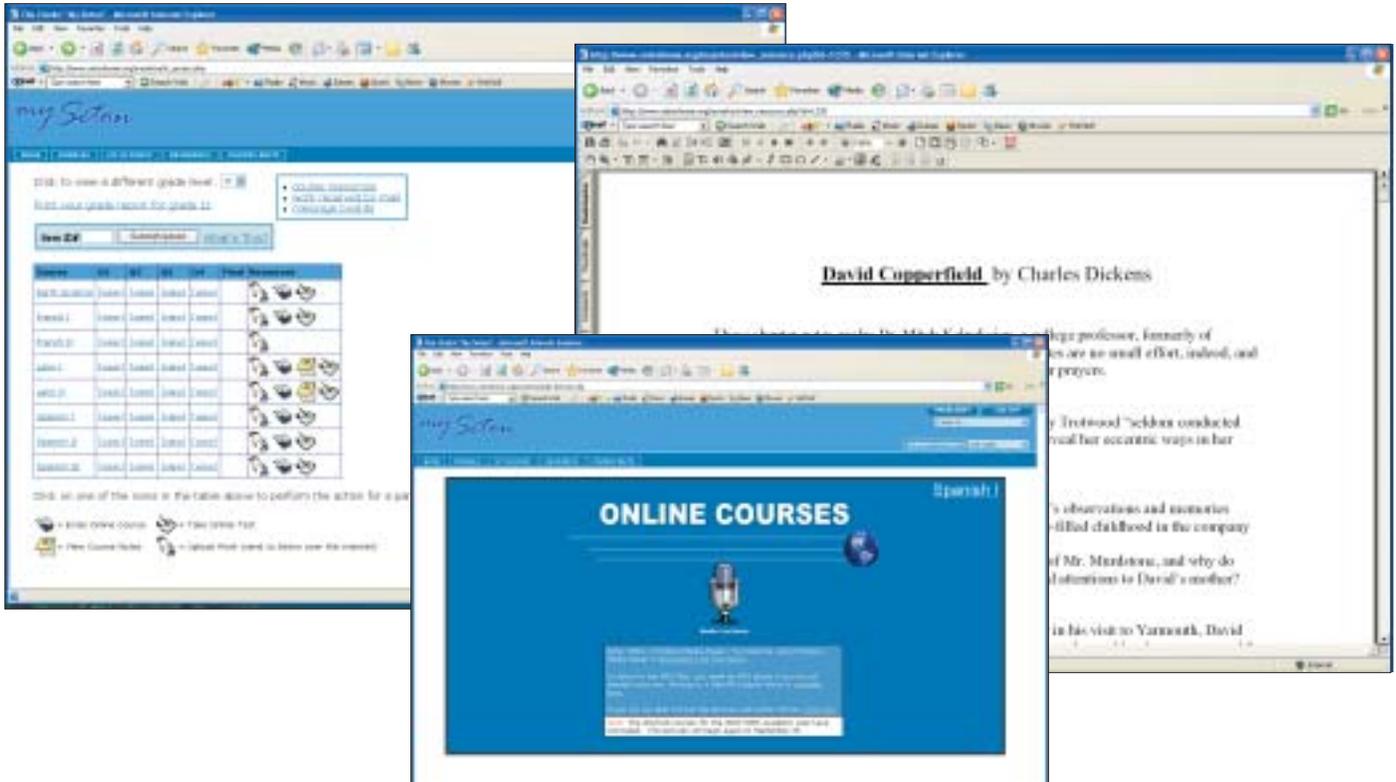
Marriage requires sacrifice, and, likewise, raising children requires sacrifice. Good Catholic parents must be willing to make sacrifices for their children.

Similarly, a good Catholic parent is a *giving* parent. Father remarks, "the greatest gift you can give a child is another child." Children are a blessing, a gift from Heaven. Thus, one should not subscribe to modern theories of "socialization." Socialization is to occur, primarily, within the family. Indeed, the family is a domestic society.

In caring for children and creating a domestic society, the homeschooling parent must also remember that, "taking care of children is an act of love." The holy and helpful things we do for our children are to be considered spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Father also points out that "every mother and father is a homeschooling parent." In comparison to others, it is parents who have the greatest influence and impact upon their children.

Homeschooling parents must have a positive, instructive impact on their children. They must encourage and support, but they must also provide direction and discipline. Father relates that "discipline and rules" are necessary features of the homeschooling environment. However, the homeschooling parent must be careful in his correction. Father points out, "Attack the evil, not the child." It is important that parents convey the wrongfulness of bad behavior, but avoid demeaning or insulting disciplinary approaches. Further, "We must teach them," Father indicates, and avoid letting "our children raise us." It is important to offer "approval of things done right," and thoughtful discipline for misbehavior.

Ultimately, homeschooling is "work that is for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls." Good Catholic mothers and fathers contribute to the greater Catholic good. Likewise, they are the spiritual guardians of their children. The homeschooling parent, then, must strive to be a model of the Faith, and a source of truth, strength, good judgment, and good will. Neither holiness nor harmony may be attained without these essential elements.



Your My Seton page

- online courses
- online tests
- assignment uploads
- electronic grading
- book notes
- course supplements
- course links
- home grade posting
- address changes
- grade reports
- transcript requests
- audio lectures
- answer keys
- quarter report forms
- message boards

www.setonhome.org/MySeton

**The Seton Home Study
Newsletter**

is published monthly by
Seton Home Study School
1350 Progress Dr.
Front Royal, VA 22630
Phone: (540) 636-9990
Fax Machine: (540) 636-1602
Internet: www.setonhome.org
E-Mail: info@setonhome.org

Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year. Free online at www.setonhome.org/archive/default.stm

Executive Editor:
Dr. Mary Kay Clark

Editor:
Kevin Clark

Seton Phone Numbers
(Seton main line: 540-636-9990)

Admissions, Enrollment, Re-Enrollment: 540-636-2039
Elementary: Bridget Reagan, 540-636-2342 or Ext. 118;
Jamie Dresch, Ext. 120
Grading: Rhonda Way, Ext. 138
High School Course Approval: Eric Kraske, Ext. 117
High School English: Sherry Spring, Ext. 124 or
540-636-1755
High School Math and Science: Tom Herlihy, Ext 165 or
540-636-1846; Don Valaike, Ext. 132
History: Bruce Clark, Ext. 122
Homeschooling Fathers: Gene McGuirk, Randy DeClue
Independent Studies: Bob Wiesner, 540-636-2238
Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Constantine, Ext. 161
Senior Guidance: Bob Wiesner, 540-636-2238
Special Needs: Marlicia Fernandez, Ext. 152 or
Sharon Hines, Ext. 151
Testing (CAT): Clare Jones, Ext. 164

counselors@setonhome.org
admissions@setonhome.org
grading@setonhome.org
info@setonhome.org
enrolled@setonhome.org
myseton@setonhome.org
shipping@setonhome.org
testing@setonhome.org
SSDept@setonhome.org

Homily from the Shrine of Lourdes

“Que soyera Immaculada Councepciou.” The words which Mary spoke to Bernadette on 25 March 1858 have a particular resonance this year, as the Church celebrates the 150th anniversary of the solemn definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Blessed Pius IX in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

I have greatly wished to make this pilgrimage to Lourdes in order to celebrate an event which continues to *give glory to the Triune God*. Mary’s Immaculate Conception is the sign of the gracious love of the *Father*, the perfect expression of the redemption accomplished by the *Son* and the beginning of a life completely open to the working of the *Spirit*...

“In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country...” (Lk 1:39). The words of the Gospel story have once more brought before the eyes of our hearts the young maiden of Nazareth as she makes her way to that *“city of Judah”* where her kinswoman Elizabeth lived, in order to be of help to her.

What strikes us about Mary is above all *her loving concern* for her elderly relative. Hers is a *practical love*, one which is not limited to words of understanding but is deeply and personally involved in giving help. The Blessed Virgin does not merely give her cousin something of herself; *she gives her whole self*, asking nothing in return. Mary understood perfectly that the gift she

received from God is more than a *privilege*; it is a *duty* which obliges her to serve others with the selflessness proper to love.

“My soul magnifies the Lord...” (Lk 1:46). Mary’s sentiments in her meeting with Elizabeth are forcefully expressed in the canticle of the *Magnificat*. Her words convey the *hope-filled expectation* of the “poor of the Lord” and at the same time an *awareness that God has fulfilled his promises*, for he *“has remembered his mercy”* (cf. Lk 1:54).

This same awareness is the source of that *joy* of the Virgin Mary which pervades the whole canticle: *joy* in knowing that she has been “looked upon” by God despite her own “lowliness” (cf. Lk 1:48); *joy* in the “service” she is able to offer because of the “great things” to which the Almighty has called her (cf. Lk 1:49); *joy* in her foretaste of the eschatological blessedness promised to “those of low degree” and “the hungry” (cf. Lk 1:52-53)....

By her words and her silence the Virgin Mary stands before us as a model for our pilgrim way. *It is not an easy way*: as a result of the fall of our first parents, humanity is marked by the wounds of sin, whose consequences continue to be felt also among the redeemed. But evil and death *will not have the last word!* Mary confirms this by her whole life, for she is a *living witness of the victory of Christ, our Passover*.

Pope John Paul II, August 15, 2004

Seton Home Study School

1350 Progress Drive
Front Royal, VA 22630

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 19
Elizabethtown, PA