



Seton Home Study School

Volume XXI, Number 11 ♦ “Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church” ♦ November 2004

Christ the King

The third Sunday of November, we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. For some weeks after the national elections, the results of the elections are on the minds of all of us. At times like this, we need to remind ourselves that we have a Divine King, Jesus Christ, and He is the One to Whom we look for guidance.

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote in his *Summa Theologica* about the three kings, the Magi, who visited the Baby Jesus and paid Him homage. St. Thomas taught that the three kings, representing different nations, were inspired by the Holy Spirit to follow the star to Bethlehem to worship Him. This event indicates that governments from all nations and from all times should be basing their laws on what is taught by the Divine King of Kings.

We are all aware of the problems in our American culture and the laws which go against the laws of God. There has always been a conflict between the laws of God and the laws of the state. Since the times of the Old Testament, evil rulers attempted to force the Jews to worship golden statues, which represented the false idols of money and power. Many Jews were tortured and killed rather than deny the One True God. That was why Daniel was put in the lions' den.

In Biblical times, the religious leaders as well as the Romans and other political leaders saw Jesus as a troublemaker who encouraged people to pray to the One True God, and encouraged people not to treat each other as slaves or as property to abuse at will.

St. Thomas quotes St. Augustine who gave a sermon on the feast of the Epiphany, when the three kings came and adored the Christ Child. The three kings came from distant lands to a strange place because they believed that a Divine King was born. They believed that by adoring Him, they would obtain eternal salvation from God. We home schooling parents need to remind our children that a nation that follows the laws of God and puts itself under the protection of the Almighty, is a nation that will be blessed by God. We certainly learned that from the history of the Jewish people; when they turned from God and His laws, they were allowed to be enslaved and punished by the Egyptians.

In his sermon, Augustine says that God purposefully took away the view of the star from the Magi so that the kings would go to Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish nation, and proclaim that the King, the Messiah, was born. The Jewish leaders knew that He was to be born in Bethlehem, and told the Magi the name of the town. King Herod directed his advisers to tell the Magi the direction in which to go. King Herod told the Magi that he would come and worship Jesus also, but Herod and his court did not believe and did not follow the three Magi. The religious and political leaders were afraid of this new King who might take away their authority and their power. King Herod sent out his soldiers to kill all the Jewish boy babies, one of whom might possibly grow up and be a threat to his earthly kingdom.

St. Thomas quotes St. John Chrysostom as saying that the three Magi

did not find a king wearing royal robes. Yet inspired by grace and guided by the heavenly star, they had faith. They knelt down in homage, “for they saw a man, and they acknowledged God.”

The Magi offered Him royal gifts which were especially fitting, as St. John Chrysostom writes: “gold, as to the great King; they offer up incense as to God, because it is used in the Divine Sacrifice; and myrrh, which is used in embalming the bodies of the dead, is offered to Him Who is to die for the salvation of all.”

It is very difficult in our current culture to remain true to the teachings of Christ the King and not to fall into the trap of believing that the majority must be right, or believing that since something is a law, or since the law allows certain things, we must just learn to live with it. Besides, we might say to ourselves, it does not affect me and mine. But that is never true, because the millions of children in the government schools are being taught that it is a crime, even a hate crime, to speak against the government laws. In a country where those who protest the murder of innocent children are put in jail, and those who murder the babies are financially rewarded, we Catholic home schooling parents are living in dangerous times. Our Example, however, is clear. And our Standard-Bearer does not falter.

- MKC

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Questions We Are Asked

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

What do you think about home schooled children taking a course or two at the local elementary school, high school, or college?

Some public schools do allow home schooled students to take one or two classes at the school while still doing most of their studies at home. They do this because they can claim a higher enrollment and receive more government money. Generally speaking, I do not believe that home schooled children benefit from taking a course in an elementary or high school. Not only would the children be subject to a certain amount of opposition from the other children and teachers, which would affect their ability to learn, but the material would not be Catholic or Christian. Furthermore, the other students may undermine the home schooling experience in the mind of your child.

A high school student may want to attend a course at a local college in order to start earning college credit. Also, the serious academic environment of a college may inspire the high school student to a more serious commitment to learning.

Ideally, Catholic students should attend a Catholic college. However, if the older high school student is taking a course in a community college, there is likely to be less of an agenda than in a full-time "resident" program. The courses should be carefully chosen. The math, foreign language, and science courses would be the safest.

Keep in mind that government schools promote the government agenda, which is an acceptance of what is currently being accepted as legal, such as abortion, contraception, same-sex "marriages," homosexuality, embryonic stem cell research, and so on.

Some home schooling families have television, some do not. Do you think there are enough good programs to warrant having a television?

The television, considered in itself, is just a tool. It can be used for good or ill. We did have television when my children were growing up, but it was certainly not as horrific as it is now. My boys and my husband love to watch football, baseball, basketball, and even tennis and golf. However, when my grandchildren come over with their dads to watch with their grandfather, they change the channel during the ads.

EWTN is worth watching because the priests and others definitely support the Catholic concepts we are teaching our children. Some of the educational channels, such as the history channel and the weather channel, are very good.

My answer would be that the television must be strictly controlled. Parents cannot leave their children sitting in front of the television. When children want to watch television, it is better to have videos or DVD's that are either educational or have spiritual value. Seton Educational Media carries the CCC line of videos about saints and heroes, which includes videos on Fatima, St. Patrick, St. Nicholas, St. Bernadette, etc. There are many other videos and DVD's available from many sources that are worthwhile.

We really like your "directed" courses with the weekly tutoring by the teachers. But we cannot seem to keep up. Would you consider having the audio lectures all up at once so we can access any one of them at any time?

A main part of the reason that we started the directed courses was to try to keep students on schedule. To accommodate students, we are now making the past three weeks of lectures

available during each week. We think with this 3-week window of availability, students should be able to keep up.

Do keep in mind that the lectures are a help by providing more depth and enrichment, and a motivation technique, but are not included on any test, nor are they essential to the course. If students really cannot keep up, then maybe they should consider spending more time on the core parts of the course rather than listening to the lectures. We think the lectures are very interesting and informative, but if a student is behind in his work, then maybe listening to the lectures is not the best use of time.

Classes for students in different grade levels can be combined.

Consider teaching children in adjacent grades the same course, especially in religion, history, and science

My life seems to be a balancing act. What are your ideas for teaching several children at once?

My book, *Catholic Home Schooling*, presents many tips in Chapter 6 on "Home Schooling in the Large Family." Do take the time to read the chapter. We hear mothers call for help and say they don't have the time to read a book. If you read just those sections or pages that you need, you would find it can save you time in the day-to-day home schooling.

Consider teaching children in adjacent grades the same course, especially religion, history, and science. Also, consider taking the time over a summer to teach a younger child a subject, such as math, to catch him up with an older child; the following year, you can teach them together. When two children are taking the same course,

they can help each other, and work out the problems together, which gives you time to work with other children.

Consider moving a child up or down a grade in some subjects. A younger child might be able to move up with an older child in language arts subjects. An older child who is struggling might do better moving down a grade to reinforce what he never really solidified in the past year.

Consider having your husband listen to the children read and discuss their history or science on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon. Consider employing a high school age sibling to teach one subject each day to one or two younger children. Consider paying a college student to come in once a week and tutor in a subject for which you would like help. Ask a friend or a relative to come and babysit for one morning a week.

In this day and age, especially as we listen to the political arguments during the presidential campaigns, logical analytical thinking is more necessary than ever.

Consider teaching your children how to help with the household duties. Form teams of two, a much younger child, even a toddler, with an older child who will be in charge. Take a week from your home schooling and train the children to do the jobs, such as vacuuming, putting on the laundry, washing the kitchen floor, and so on. Then schedule the chores between classes. I put up the home schooling schedule for each child, with the chores scheduled between the classes. This keeps the children active throughout

the day and better able to do their schoolwork. By the way, some mothers report that they sing songs with the children during the chores, which makes the chores seem more like fun.

Children need to do chores so they feel a responsibility toward the family. If they don't learn the skills and a correct attitude when they are young, they will have a difficult adulthood.

On the Seton web site Message Board, we have a Parents section. You might try looking there to see other teaching ideas which could help you.

My teenager seems determined not to do the schoolwork. Do you have any ideas about encouraging him to work?

A teen who does not want to obey his parents has a serious problem, a spiritual problem. He needs to go to daily Mass, receive Jesus Christ every day, and go to confession often. I would recommend that you focus on his spiritual life first. Do the religion classes with him every day, and perhaps one or two other subjects. Don't worry about doing all the academics every day. His spiritual and emotional growth are more important. He can learn the academics later.

Talk to your son, have your husband talk to your son, and find out if something specific is bothering him. This might take some time, but eventually, once you and your husband start working with him on his spiritual life, he will come to tell you the problem.

Some teens like to feel they want to be independent. If your son is sixteen, he is old enough to be enrolled in a community college course. This can be very motivational for some teens, and you might find something in which he would be very interested, such as forestry or astronomy. For a younger teen, there might be some community activity which might interest him, such as a local drama group or orchestra or skating club.

Encourage your husband to become more involved in your son's life with some activity or sport they can do together. Your husband can be a quiet role model as he teaches responsibility, caring for others, and attention to details. If possible, have your husband take your son to work once in a while, to observe

what it means to have a responsible job. He can do some of his school assignments while at the office with his dad. Some teens can be "inspired" by college students if they simply do their home schooling work a few afternoons a week in a local college library. The college library atmosphere, the serious students, and the computer technology can be a good environment for encouraging an interest in doing studies.

Don't you think you demand too much of the high school students by having them do seven English courses?

There are no better courses for developing analytical thinking than our English courses, which basically include three composition and analytical thinking courses (English 9, 10, and 11), and three literary survey courses (World Literature, American Literature, and English 12). The Grammar and Composition course teaches deductive thinking in the grammar, and inductive thinking in the composition as students put ideas together in an orderly way.

In this day and age, especially as we listen to the political arguments during the presidential campaigns, logical analytical thinking is more important than ever. In most other courses, the student learns a certain defined content. In the English courses, the student learns the application of ideas and the necessity of inductive thinking. Learning "how to think" is difficult for many. It forces a student to understand what he has read, to read it and study it, to discover certain events or characteristics of a person, and come to some conclusion based on what he has learned. It is a higher level of thinking that is not common in today's society of television and videos and games of all kinds.

One of the helps we offer students in the English and reading classes is Chapter Notes for many of the book reports. These are terrific guides for helping students to think more deeply about what they are reading. The English teachers have not given answers but rather questions to make the students analyze what they are reading. These Chapter Notes are available on your My Seton page, and we certainly encourage students to take advantage of this resource.

Family as the Foundation of Society

by Glen Tortorella

based upon a speech by Father John Berg, FSSP

What is the foundation of society? What are the duties of parents, especially home schooling parents? Father John Berg, FSSP, confronts these pivotal questions in his lecture given at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Conference in Washington, D.C. in July, 2004. In his talk, Father explains the relationship between family and society, and the duties thus accorded to parents, duties for which, even when threatened or eroded, a parent is ultimately responsible.

Father begins by characterizing the often misunderstood ways and values of the home schooling parent, declaring that home schoolers “go against the status quo in society.” Appraising the starkly objectionable educational, social, and moral “status quo” of contemporary society, home schoolers choose a demanding, maverick path, a course, though, that fosters a fuller understanding of the family’s critical importance and fundamental dignity.

As a means of approaching the deeper questions regarding the role of the family and the duties of parents, Father suggests that one must first pose, and answer correctly, two basic questions: “What is man?” and “What are his needs?” Man “is not an angel,” Father remarks. While angels “know things directly...instantaneously,” men must “learn through habit.” One gains knowledge and insight by doing things “again and again,” by continuing a “long, slow, and enduring process.” Man, though, “is not simply an animal.” Father notes that in comparison to animals, man, clearly, has “different needs.” “The formation of an individual soul,” he stresses, “is something which is very, very different.”

In view of man’s nature and needs, one must admit the necessity of the family. The family is necessary because the human soul requires formation. The Church has always recognized this reality. Hence, the Church teaches that

the family has a particular primacy, certain rights afforded by both the Church and natural law.

Father cautions that the duties of parenthood extend far beyond the act of conceiving a child. While the conception of a child is holy, profound, and important, being a parent requires an exhaustive commitment. Explaining the range of parental duties, Father offers the example of Our Lady. Our Lady is a mother—a perfect mother—in every way. In addition to giving birth to Our Lord, Our Lady nurtured and formed Our Lord. Father clarifies his analogy, explaining that we must *form* children “like unto ourselves,” at least in “our own perfections” and not in “our weaknesses.” Father resolves, “This, then, is what has to be the goal of all education.”

God gives the soul many graces, both natural and supernatural. On the natural level, one is graced by birth, and on the supernatural level, the soul receives numerous graces in Baptism. In Baptism, a person enters “into the life of grace and into the life of the Church.” Father continues, “It is for the parent, then, to draw forth, not to create on its own, those perfections given by God.”

There are obstacles to this process, though. Father notes that the enemies of the family “will always point to [the family] as being that thing which stops them from having ultimate progress.” The home schooler is, of course, keenly aware of these enemies. Regardless of what the enemies of the family claim, the Catholic home schooler must understand that the Catholic child is born into *three* societies: the family, civil society, and the Church. The doctrines of the faith are in perfect accord with man’s ultimate end. Holy Mother Church knows that She must convey her teachings to the child.

If education is to flourish, there must be a proper ordering and a just cooperation among the three societies. It is possible for any of the three societies to “overstep its bounds,” but, Father remarks, “Typically...it has been civil society which

does so.” “Civil society or government,” he adds, “is not something which is intrinsically evil.” In itself, civil government is good. The Church teaches the necessity of temporal power. In a just society, however, the temporal power views the “law of the land” as rooted in the Law of God, and hence the teachings of the Catholic Church are central to the just society’s educational program.

Father emphasizes the importance of civil society, as “mothers and fathers can’t be experts in everything.” Civil society is supposed to supply for things that are beyond the scope of the parents’ abilities. “In the day and age in which we live,” the tendency of the state or civil society is to “take over, or to usurp, the rights and duties of the parents themselves.” The communist state is a glaring example of this tendency. In the communist system, the *individual* replaces the *family*. Father observes that communism is “perhaps most opposed to Catholicism altogether,” as in a communist system, a person “is first and foremost a comrade.” Father concludes, “A proper idea of educating,” must begin with “a proper idea of the family.”

Common contemporary aims constitute the antithesis of this “proper idea.” The goal of any enemy of the family, whether it is the pro-abortion politician, pro-homosexual lobbyist, or high-ranking member of a secret society, is the destruction of the family. Ultimately, these evildoers seek the destruction of the Church, and the establishment of a new, “enlightened” society. Nonetheless, it is the family that is responsible for education. Father declares that this responsibility, though obscured by the strategies of subverters, “must never be lost.” He discusses the fact that, in the end, each of us will have to “give an account.”

Father reminds us, though, that, “God, in His Providence, always gives a corresponding grace.” Though he may be tempted to run from his obligations, a father “can’t run away in the middle of the night.” Amid the day-to-day trials and frustrations of parenting, it is easy to forget that Our Lord is always supplying grace. We must, though, be of good will and be constantly

The Blessings of Catholic Home Schooling

by Fr. Constantine

open to accept His grace. Father states that the “deck is stacked against the family,” and that “there are no easy answers,” but one must have continual day-by-day confidence in God’s grace and Our Lady’s intercession. A parent must approach parental duties in a spirit of joy and self-sacrifice, especially at the most difficult times.

What, specifically, are the educational duties of the parent? Father cites four basic responsibilities: “to provide a complete education of the whole man...provide a real education...provide protection of your children from the dangers within this world...and the weighing of the good of education against other goods which are out there.” The various cultural, moral, and social goods in line with the Church’s teaching are essential elements of a Catholic education. Father stipulates that formal schooling is “one tiny element” of the “education of the full man.” In these subtle and decisive areas, the home schooler holds a distinct advantage. The home schooler possesses the freedom to enhance, enrich, and supplement the course of study—to offer a personalized exploration of life’s many beauties and mysteries.

Considering a parent’s educational options, Father indicates that there are “traps” in both “secular and religious education.” There is a certain “identity crisis even within Catholic schooling itself,” he continues. Catholic institutions “no longer know what it means to be Catholic.” Economics also present a challenging obstacle. Father explains that many Catholic schools have become “schools for the wealthy, instead of schools for those who are Catholics.” A school often “caters to the needs of all who come,” rather than to the Catholic seeking an education that will teach him the truth, prepare him for life as a soldier of Christ, and aid him in his earthly journey.

Speaking to the parent who searches for painless solutions and easy answers, Father reiterates the simple truth: “There is no use complaining or whining.” The good Catholic parent and educator must be aware, informed, and determined. Father exhorts Catholic parents to follow the command of Christ: “Pick up your cross and follow Me.”

The first blessing of Catholic Home Schooling is the most obvious: being at home with your children. What does this mean? First, it means that you spend that most priceless of all commodities upon them: time. The person who will have the greatest effect upon a growing child is the person who spends the most time with him. Keeping the children at home can mean that you have enough time to communicate to them your Faith, your values, your expectations, your appreciation—your love—rather than trusting others who have proven over the past forty years to have been so very unworthy of that trust.

With your children at home you can open up to them the wonders, joys and safety of the truly Catholic way of living. You can opt out of the secular way of keeping time and keep time as the Church does, celebrating the Mysteries of the Faith and its heroes, with appropriate times off to anchor that joy of a “feast” in the sense that only ethnic American Catholics of the past infrequently experienced. The joys of vacation, of special “feast” foods learned and cooked in the “home economics” class. Of course, in North America, the experience that we have of Christmas is something of a pale reminder of what a true feast is, although Christmas is deeply flawed by commercialism. Still the atmosphere of feast that is generated by wreaths, carols, candles and Christmas trees could easily be extended to Easter, Pentecost and Our Lady’s Assumption in August and her apparition at Guadalupe in December. In the Byzantine tradition, we have an icon of the feast that pictures the relevant facts of Sacred Scripture or the story of the saint in a perfectly obvious and beautiful way.

One of the most outstanding concerns of the general public with regard to home schooling is the issue of socialization: the making of friends and the nurturing of friendships. However, a very serious aspect of this issue is, “What kind of friends do you want your children to have?” Our contemporary society does not produce good companions as a

general rule and peer pressure is a very significant factor in the degradation of American and worldwide youth culture, which, in many cases, is nothing less than a throwback to out and out barbarism of the crudest kind. It has always been a principle of Christian life that friends are very important and so they should be chosen carefully. Friends should be good people who will have the best possible effect upon the young. Home schooling allows parents to have more of a say in the type of friends that their children will have. There are those who object that this is a “hothouse mentality” and an improper way to raise children. Again, however, when it is pouring rain and hail outside, a good hothouse is a much better place to raise flowers than the garden outside. To those who object that we are not raising flowers, I would respond, “Take a closer look.” One of the singular graces of home schooling is the possibility of preserving innocence and not just the teaching of repentance. Let a child take on the world after he or she is formed in the truth.

Strategic withdrawal from the corruption of general society is not necessarily a flight or an escape from “reality”. As human beings we are supposed to shape reality and not just submit to it, especially if it is objectionable. The “reality” in the general “outside” world is tremendously skewed. It is upside down. Just for starters, men as such are derided, treated contemptuously as well as immorally. Yet, we in Catholic home schooling are discovering that man, especially as husband and father, is the very image of God in the home. Our children must either recover from that or build upon it. Even if Dad is completely out of the picture, there are ineluctable consequences we cannot avoid. With home schooling the natural, normal order of reality can be maintained without the constant intrusion, interference and contradiction of the outside world. In a home schooling atmosphere both father and mother may demonstrate to their children God’s paradigm for the happy home that is also holy.

Discipline in the Catholic Home: The Pre-Kindergarten Years

by Ginny Seuffert

"I would love to home school, but I have two school-age children, a toddler, and I'm expecting! How can we concentrate on schoolwork when little ones are running around, distracting everyone?" Many of our Catholic families are welcoming babies every two years, and comments such as this one are pretty common at Catholic home schooling conferences. Experienced home school moms will answer, "Make the toddler a part of your home school. Let him study along with the rest of your children."

This makes perfect sense to us veterans, but sounds like a foreign language to a mom who was raised to believe that three-year-olds need to attend preschool to learn colors and shapes! How exactly can we make our toddlers part of our home schools? It is vital that we remember that home schooling is more than just teaching the academics; to most of us, it is a way of life. Our toddlers are integrated into our home school through their participation in the daily life of the family.

Home schooling is first and foremost teaching the Faith to our children. Toddlers love to fold their hands and practice the Sign of the Cross. They babble along and pretend they are saying the Morning Offering and Grace with the rest of the family, until they finally master them. Little by little, they learn to, at least, sit still at Mass. At this age, Mass postures and gestures can be very intriguing, and keep a little one interested. A toddler can be put in charge of handing out rosaries, and can often lead a decade by the age of three. All of these practices help the child understand his place as a child of God and a member of an observant Catholic family.

Practical life skills are most valuable in the education of pre-schoolers. Young children love to help around the house, and moms can use the help, so this is a win-win situation. Let the child have a sponge, and bucket of (non-toxic) soapy water, and show him how to clean your wood moldings. Let him fold the napkins

for dinner, and set the silverware on the table. Take your toddler shopping and let him check the fruit for "bad" spots. Buy child size brooms and rakes and assign some clean-up chores. One huge service a toddler can render is to amuse a baby brother or sister while Mom home schools in the next room. Little children, who are assigned "big kid" tasks, often take pride in carrying out their responsibilities.

Parents frequently tell me that, although they teach their children numbers and letters at home, they send them to preschool for "socialization." If the goal of socialization is to train children to be polite, cooperative, and friendly, then it makes no sense to lock them in a room with a group of age mates who are just as immature as they are. In the family setting, children learn these virtues by parental correction, by imitating older brothers and sisters, and by participating in ordinary family work and play.

By working towards the goals of prayerful, responsible, and cooperative children, we do much to further their academic achievement as well. Because they participate in all the other family activities, it is just a natural progression for toddlers to take part in the school day too. Assign the preschooler a bin or shelf, just like the other children have, to store his educational materials. Make sure the child understands that we treat school materials with respect, and that the materials must be put away after each use.

Most preschool work is very straightforward and does not involve spending huge sums of money. I made my own materials with some different colored index cards, marking pens, glue, and envelopes for storing. To teach vocabulary and visual discrimination, I would buy two sets of the same science stickers (perhaps different types of flowers or butterflies), and stick one set to pink index cards and the other set to blue ones, and print the name on the back. The child would learn to match the

zinnia on the pink card to the zinnia on the blue, and do the same with the marigolds, petunias, etc. If she turned the card over, she would see that the cards with the same picture had the same letters written on the back.

To teach classification and thinking skills, I would make other sets of cards. For example, two tags would be labeled "living" and "non-living" and the child had to place the pictures I had glued to the cards under the proper category tag. Other classification groups included "plant or animal," and "fruit or vegetable", but the possibilities are endless.

A big day is when the toddler is given her first schoolbook. I often used marble composition books and markers instead of purchased workbooks, many of which contain frivolous nonsense and ridiculous looking cartoon characters. To develop small motor coordination, I would draw yellow lines with markers that the child had to trace. To encourage left-to-right progression, I would put a green dot where I wanted the child to start and a red dot on the place to stop. We had a knobbed puzzle of basic shapes that the preschooler could trace onto construction paper, cut out and glue into her book. These simple exercises, and many more, offer loads of activities for pennies a day.

Don't forget that preschoolers, and the rest of your children, all need a generous measure of fresh air and vigorous exercise every single day. Riding bikes, jumping rope, skipping, and scootering all improve coordination and get the blood flowing. Really active toddlers love it when mom draws number one through ten on the sidewalk, and assigns the task of singing out the names of the numbers when they jump on them—frontwards and backwards. A nature walk is a great way to improve vocabulary and give each child an appreciation for the Creator of the natural world.

So there you have it! Daily prayers, regular chores, family interaction, some fun academic work and a healthy dose of fresh air and sunshine are just the ticket for getting your toddler champing at the bit to begin kindergarten.

Letters from Moms

Dear Everyone,

I received your October newsletter today and found out about the printable lesson plans, so I hopped onto the website to have a peek.

Well, suffice it to say that I'm up way past my bedtime, enjoying the wonders you've put together! I used to hand-write my kids' lesson plans each night, for the following day's lessons, but no more. I've got my girls' lesson plans for next week all set, printed and "personalized" to our general style. While I was at it, I grabbed the chapter notes for Red Hugh, which my eldest will be reading starting Monday, as we launch into the second quarter. She'll be able to take my printed pages and start her book report independently!

I can't begin to tell you how much easier this is going to be for me and for the kids! As a single home schooling mother with a very necessary full-time job, I can use all the time savers I can get,

Pray Without Ceasing

As your family prays for your intentions each day, we ask you to keep Seton Home Study School in your prayers, especially during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

and your website provided me with tools I'll be using regularly from now on. I also appreciate the fact that all your printable resources come up in Word or Adobe without any annoying computer glitches, and I can customize my heart out!

Thank you so much! I just had to postpone bedtime for another few minutes to extend my gratitude.

Dear Seton,

I must say that I am ecstatic at the way Seton now fits my daughter's needs. Perhaps I am a wiser home schooling parent or perhaps you have made improvements in your program. I am just so happy to be working with you again.

I must specifically say that I appreciated the personal call from Dr. Clark about placement for my daughter. She was right on track with her guidance. Also, I love the "My Seton" function where I can download the weekly lesson plans. Although I got all of the lesson plans when I started, it is very convenient to print out just what I need for that week. I can then slip it into the back of my Teacher's Planner and take it with me to work on during Soccer or while waiting at the Doctor's office, etc. It is much more manageable. Additionally, I appreciate the function that allows me to

increase all levels by one week, as we are in multiple grades and working on different "weeks" within each subject. It is so easy to customize.

I can't thank you enough for all that you have done to make my home schooling a success: individualized attention, great Catholic textbooks, and user-friendly curriculum. Thank you again for all you have done. I know this year is going to be our most successful ever, even with a new baby on the way.



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

Apostolic Letter Mane Nobiscum Domine

It is significant that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, duly prepared by our Lord's words, recognized him at table through the simple gesture of the "breaking of bread". When minds are enlightened and hearts are enkindled, signs begin to "speak". The Eucharist unfolds in a dynamic context of signs containing a rich and luminous message. Through these signs the mystery in some way opens up before the eyes of the believer.

As I emphasized in my Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, it is important that no dimension of this sacrament should be neglected. We are constantly tempted to reduce the Eucharist to our own dimensions, while in reality *it is we who must open ourselves up to the dimensions of the Mystery*. "The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation".

There is no doubt that the most evident dimension of the Eucharist is that it is a *meal*. The Eucharist was born, on the evening of Holy Thursday, in the setting of the Passover meal. *Being a meal* is part of its very structure. "Take, eat... Then he took a cup and... gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you" (*Mt 26:26, 27*). As such, it expresses the fellowship which God wishes to establish with us and which we ourselves must build with one another.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the Eucharistic meal also has a profoundly and primarily *sacrificial* meaning. In the Eucharist, Christ makes present to us anew *the sacrifice offered once for all on Golgotha*. Present in the Eucharist as the Risen Lord, he nonetheless bears the marks of his passion, of which every Mass

is a "memorial", as the Liturgy reminds us in the acclamation following the consecration: "We announce your death, Lord, we proclaim your resurrection..." At the same time, while the Eucharist makes present what occurred in the past, it also *impels us towards the future, when Christ will come again* at the end of history. This "eschatological" aspect makes the Sacrament of the Eucharist an event which draws us into itself and fills our Christian journey with hope.

"I am with you always..." (Mt 28:20)

All these dimensions of the Eucharist come together in one aspect which more than any other makes a demand on our faith: *the mystery of the "real" presence*. With the entire tradition of the Church, we believe that Jesus is truly present under the Eucharistic species. This presence—as Pope Paul VI rightly explained—is called "real" not in an exclusive way, as if to suggest that other forms of Christ's presence are not real, but *par excellence*, because Christ thereby becomes substantially present, whole and entire, in the reality of his body and blood. Faith demands that we approach the Eucharist fully aware that we are approaching Christ himself. It is precisely his presence which gives the other aspects of the Eucharist — as meal, as memorial of the Paschal Mystery, as eschatological anticipation — a significance which goes far beyond mere symbolism. The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfillment of Jesus' promise to remain with us until the end of the world.

John Paul II, October 2004

Seton Home Study School

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