



*Seton Home*



*Study School*

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◆ *“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”* ◆

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## *Our Lady of Lourdes*

The month of February gives us an opportunity to reflect on the events of the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France, in 1858. Her first appearance was on February 11<sup>th</sup>, the date we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Bernadette and her family, living in poverty, often turned to the rosary for their consolation and joy. When Our Lady appeared to Bernadette, she appeared with the rosary hanging over her arm. At each appearance, the Blessed Mother said the prayers of the rosary with Bernadette, except for the Hail Marys.

Sometimes in our busy homeschooling day, it is easy to let the day slip by without saying the rosary. We need to make a new commitment to the daily rosary because the Blessed Mother has made it clear, both at Lourdes and at Fatima, that she wants the rosary said every day. Our Lady of Lourdes, give us the graces we need to encourage us to say the rosary which you and your Son desire every day.

Our Lady appeared dressed in white, with a white veil, a blue sash, and sparkling golden-yellow roses on each foot. Her rosary was white with a golden cross, which sparkled like the roses. Bernadette said Our Lady had a bright halo around her and she appeared brighter than the sun. When Bernadette asked Our Lady her name, she said “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

As we reflect on Our Lady’s appearance, we need to pray for ourselves and for our children that we work everyday to stay free from sin. We can teach our children that the bright shining light of the Blessed Mother should remind us that our souls, when free from sin, shine as bright as the Blessed Mother appeared.

Even when it was difficult, Bernadette did not lie to her mother. Her mother was afraid the devil could be playing tricks, and forbade her daughter to go back to the grotto where Our Lady appeared. Bernadette wept all night because she would not be disobedient to her mother.

Our children can learn from Bernadette that God speaks through parents and even when it seems difficult for them to understand their homeschooling, they need to trust that God is in charge, and that Our Lady, the Mother of God, is always protecting us from harm. When Bernadette returned to the grotto, she said to Our Lady, “If you are from God, come nearer.” All of us can say to Our Lady, “come nearer” to protect us and lead us more clearly to her Son.

Bernadette said Our Lady’s voice was like heavenly music. She promised Bernadette that she would have difficulties in this world but that she would have eternal happiness in the next life. Bernadette did suffer hardships as people laughed at her, as the police tried to trick her and even arrested her.

Our children must understand that while learning may seem hard, learning more about our Faith and about how to live our Faith, will result in total happiness for all of eternity. Some homeschooling families are under attack from neighbors or school officials, but like St. Bernadette, we need to trust that God will protect us from harm.

Our Lady of Lourdes, help us Catholic homeschooling families to stand clearly for the Faith and, like St. Bernadette, to stand in the radiance of your heavenly glow. Help us to keep our souls as bright as the sun, and help us to practice the virtues in our family so that Our Lord sees them as sparkling golden roses.

Along with the visitors at Lourdes, we pray, “Mary, you showed yourself to Bernadette in the crevice of the rock. In the cold and gray of winter, you brought the warmth, light, and beauty of your presence. You are the Immaculate Conception come to our aid, sinners that we are. Give us the humility to have a change of heart, the courage to do penance. Guide us to the Source of true life.”

- MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**My daughter in high school has fallen seriously behind in her work. What suggestions do you have for me to help her?**

When high school students get behind in their work, they often become depressed and frustrated, and often feel they will never catch up. They need to feel successful quickly. The best way to do this is to decide which is the subject that is the closest to being finished or which can be finished the most quickly. Then your daughter needs to work on this subject full time, that is, all morning and all afternoon. In this way, she will be able to finish the subject much more quickly, perhaps in a few weeks.

As she does each assignment for Seton, she should send it in immediately, over the internet if possible since that can be graded more quickly and sent back more quickly. For computer graded tests, she will receive an immediate grade. For human graded tests, she will usually have a grade back in just a few days.

Your daughter will be happier once she has a course finished and a final grade recorded and, most importantly to her, a high school credit on her report card. She will then feel she can finish all the courses in a timely manner if she proceeds with a second subject the same way.

We have had some students who have proceeded all through high school, taking courses one at a time. While this works out with several courses, in a few it is more difficult. For instance, if a student takes Algebra I in the fall of one year, he might forget his algebra by the beginning of the second year which would mean trouble when he starts taking Geometry. As a general rule, the math and foreign language courses should be continued

throughout the year, or the following year's course needs to be taken immediately after the previous one is finished. Also, keep in mind when the SAT tests will be scheduled, which include both Algebra and Geometry.

**My son has been doing well in math since my husband tutors him most evenings. Do you think the CD's you sell would be helpful or not?**

Parents have been raving about the CD's for the math courses. They are called D.I.V.E. into Math, and are available for the Saxon books from 5<sup>th</sup> grade through high school, including Calculus and Physics. Once they are put into the computer, the student hears an audio tutoring lesson and can see the tutor write on the computer screen the problems he is discussing. The lessons are for each and every lesson in the Saxon books.

While the time your son spends with his Dad on the evening lessons is precious and valuable, I would still recommend these tutoring CD's. It simply means your son will have an additional tutoring lesson which I suspect your husband would appreciate. If in fact, your husband could spend less time on math, he might like to spend more time with your son on another favorite subject, such as history or religion. That might turn out to be even more useful.

**My son in 5<sup>th</sup> grade has had serious medical problems this year. He is now able to work again, but is depressed that he is just starting the school year. Do you have any tips for catching up?**

It is important to remember that homeschool students do not need to "catch up" or stay on a strict schedule with the public school students. The

only state I know that insists on a quarterly report for the local school district is New York; the rest of the states give parents much more freedom to determine the curriculum, and to make reasonable adjustments for valid reasons. Don't feel like you need to put in lots of extra work to make up for what was missed. Just set a reasonable schedule and do what you can do.

In the elementary levels, some subjects are essential and some are not. For instance, religion is essential because this is why we are homeschooling. Math and English need to be taken every day because if they are skipped, basic facts can be forgotten. Other subjects which should be scheduled every day are reading and phonics, spelling, and vocabulary.

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*Your daughter will be happier once she has a course finished and a final grade recorded and, most importantly to her, a high school credit on her report card.*

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Subjects which, if necessary, can be put aside until next year, are history and science (in which topics come around every year or two), and handwriting, art, music, and physical education. Even these subjects, however, could be covered on weekends, while on vacation, during the summer, or some convenient time.

**The days just seem to be slipping by and I cannot seem to get my homeschooling done. What should I do?**

Often the biggest problem with homeschooling parents is not the academics, it is organization. Organization is something like trying

to lose weight: you know what to do but it takes strong will power to do it.

When we try to lose weight, we try to stay away from temptation. If we could lock the refrigerator or move the kitchen outside, it would be much easier. In the same way, if we want to stay organized and on target with our home schooling, we need to have a place away from the distractions.

Try to find a location in the house that is not in the midst of activity, or near a telephone or television. A basement level room, an upstairs bedroom or sun room or study room, an attic room, a garage, or anything like these would be best. Going to Grandma's house might be a consideration. Sending a high school student to the public library or to a college library, or to work with Dad might be a consideration.

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*It actually helps a child to keep the brain and body active if he sweeps between religion and math, or puts on a load of laundry between English and history.*

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You don't mention what it is that is keeping you from homeschooling, but if it is your housework, you need to schedule the children to help you do it. I had my children do the chores between the scheduled courses. It actually helps a child to keep the brain and body active if he sweeps between religion and math, or puts on a load of laundry between English and history, or puts away the laundry between science and spelling.

In addition, I used paper plates and cups for breakfast and lunch whenever possible to keep the kitchen duties to a minimum. I also cooked enough for

two dinners at a time, so I could just heat up the dinner the second night. Some mothers cook several meals and freeze them for the following week. Sometimes a lot of time and energy is expended just trying to figure out what to make for dinner every night. Planning out the week's menu might be helpful.

If you belong to a homeschooling support group, ask that this topic be taken up for discussion so you can all share ideas. The chapter in my book, *Catholic Home Schooling*, includes several ideas in the chapter "Home Schooling in the Large Family." For more help, a search for "home organization" on Amazon.com turns up 778 books.

**I want my children to have more enthusiasm for the daily rosary. What do you suggest?**

When I was home schooling, we said our rosary around our "altar" which was a collection of statues and holy pictures usually on a mantle over the fireplace. Having statues and pictures, especially of the Blessed Mother, the crucifix, and perhaps even pictures of the mysteries of the rosary, can help the children focus on what they should be thinking about. We have many such pictures in the art books and religion books we are publishing. They are also available on the internet so they can be downloaded.

If you have young children, you might find it easier to say only a decade of the rosary at a time. One decade in the morning, one before lunch, one after lunch, one at the end of the school day, one in the evening when Dad comes home.

Sometimes an individual child leading the rosary, or a decade, does not work out for various reasons. Try having two or three of the children leading, with two or three responding. Changing the "routine" every once in a while helps to keep attention.

**It seems like there is a lot of writing in the elementary grades. Why is that?**

It is not the writing that children find difficult, it is the thinking that is required. A real education is one that develops thinking skills, and the only way to make sure the thinking is being

done is for the student to write what he is thinking. Writing original sentences in the English books develops good habits of thinking and writing skills.

When I was growing up, there was no television or scheduled sports activities. We would read and write all the time. Besides reading and writing in school, we would read and write at home, often on our own. I can remember writing plays and typing them on an old typewriter—and I mean old, one which demanded pounding the keys.

The writing that Seton requires is really not extraordinary when you consider how important writing is. Do whatever you can to encourage your child to write more. Encourage your child to keep a diary; you can buy a very nice one your child can treasure. If your child writes his thoughts about some event that happens each day, he will develop his writing and thinking skills. The event does not need to be something remarkable. Reflecting about some small thing, such as not wanting to eat his peas, can result in a very imaginative paragraph!

**Why are the online math tests different from the paper copies? Can we use the tests from the home school math packets from the publisher?**

The online math tests are different from the questions on the paper tests because the ones on paper are not always adaptable to the computer. The ones on the computer are usually multiple choice, and there is no place to show the work. As you may have noticed, if a student scores lower than 80 on the math computer test, he needs to take the paper test and show his work, with different questions covering the same material. This is a good way to be sure that students understand the math as they go along.

We ask that parents give the Seton tests rather than the publisher tests because the packets in which the tests are included also include the answer key. It maintains a higher level of security to use the Seton tests, and we can be confident that the testing material is the same for all students. The Seton tests were designed by our own experienced math counselors.

## *Homeschooling for High School*

*by Ginny Seuffert*

Our whole family is proud of my daughter Claire! Her first college report card arrived over the Christmas holiday. She has a perfect 4.0 average and has been placed on the President's List at her school. Her success is even more remarkable because, although Claire is on a full-tuition scholarship, she works long hours to pay all her other expenses, including books, car payment, gasoline and car maintenance, and clothing. Her success may enlighten those who claim that homeschooled children will have a tough time adjusting to "real" school, and the "real" world. Claire had never set foot in a classroom before last September. Claire's experience adds to my husband's and my conviction that continuing to homeschool through the high school years is key, not only to maintaining family ties, but also to raising Christian men and women who will become solid citizens and future saints.

Why then do countless parents hesitate to continue homeschooling during the crucial high school years?

Many parents, even those who have enjoyed great homeschooling success during the elementary years, doubt their ability to guide their children through high school. Others are not sure homeschool is the best choice. Here are some of the comments and objections I hear, along with my answers:

**Teaching language arts and basic math was one thing. How can we possibly develop an academically challenging curriculum by ourselves?**

You don't have to! Seton does that for you, and offers the comfort of a recognized, accredited

program. I strongly caution parents who are thinking of developing their own curriculum for high school to reconsider and enroll.

**How can a parent who is not a teacher hope to teach upper level science and math?**

Seton sends detailed lesson plans, answer keys for all subjects, and solution manuals for math. More help is available for enrolled students by telephone or email from experienced teachers in the subject field. Some parents find a tutor for these subjects at the local high school or community college. Sometimes a few families, with students enrolled in the same course, join together to share the expense of a tutor.

**What about science labs?**

Seton can send you lab books for high school science courses and help you find sources for lab equipment and other supplies. If you feel lab work is vital for your students, you might want to consider single course enrollment for your student at a local community college. Personally, I would be more inclined to enroll a student in chemistry or physics outside the home, than biology. The typical biology course offered in high school and college contains material that is opposed to Catholic teaching.

**I do not think that the cassette tapes that are sent with the foreign language texts will be adequate for teaching conversation in a different language.**

As a former French major, I know a bit about the study of language. Generally speaking, no academic course gives a student adequate practice in foreign language conversation. I would certainly recommend purchasing, or

borrowing from the library, additional audiovisual materials to help your student gain fluency. Planning a trip to a destination where the language is spoken (there is no need to leave the continent for Spanish or French) can be a powerful incentive for the student to actually practice. Seton provides pronunciation on their web site online courses, by experienced high school teachers.

Because I speak French, I have not given my own high school students a choice for foreign language study. I admit it is certainly easier to teach a language you speak yourself. On the other hand, it is also very easy to find a Spanish-speaking person just about anywhere in the United States, and many people would welcome the opportunity to earn some cash tutoring.

**My husband is insisting we send our son to high school, mostly for the sports!**

Many Dads share your husband's view, but sports will not seem so important if your son becomes involved in some other less wholesome activities that are rampant in our nation's schools. Dads need to remember that in the typical central high school, only a tiny fraction of students actually play varsity sports. Often these students become a sort of royalty, and that's not healthy either.

If your student is concerned about the possibility of receiving an athletic scholarship to college, you should know that the NCAA does recognize that homeschooling is a legitimate option for high school. Homeschooled students are eligible for athletic scholarships. There is at least one former homeschooler playing in the National Football League: Jason Taylor, a defensive end with the Miami Dolphins.

I would do two things if I were you. First, say a novena to St. Joseph or your husband's patron saint that he gets his priorities straight. Second, research other local opportunities for your son to play sports. Many towns and civic organizations sponsor tournament teams or club sports. Many places have homeschooling teams.

**There are lots of little children running around our house. I am worried that my teen will not have the peace and quiet he needs to complete high school level work.**

This is a problem for many of our Catholic parents who have big families and small houses. Often a local library offers the perfect solution. The public library in my town offers a club-like reading room (with a fireplace!), free computer use, even individual study rooms. All of these resources are offered free of charge and the library is virtually empty during school hours. Many local colleges offer the same, or even finer facilities, and open their doors to local high school students. Libraries present the additional advantage of having almost unlimited reference materials available, and librarians who are anxious to help eager students.

**I'm afraid my wife won't be able to handle the teens, especially the boys, during the high school years.**

This is one of the best reasons I can think of to homeschool during the elementary-school years. Parents need to work on inculcating virtues like respect, obedience, and order before the children are struggling with adolescence. Even when they are pretty well-behaved—and goodness knows they can be a huge help around the house—

teens frequently offer special challenges. Most kids this age, especially the boys, need a big dose of "Dad" to keep them in line. Dad just knowing what a child is studying, and discussing it around the dinner table, can make a huge difference. If one of the teens is giving Mom an especially tough time, Dad has to be sure to inquire how the school day went every evening when he returns from work. If the student is really giving Mom a hard time, Dad should call home on his lunch hour to reinforce his expectations.

If a child is not growing in virtue, the answer is *not* to ship him off to school so he is the teachers' problem!

**Will colleges, universities, or the military accept someone who was home schooled in high school?**

Naturally every institution will have its own policies and preferences, but Seton graduates do not seem to have any problems. Because it is fully accredited, colleges, universities and the military usually treat the Seton diploma as they would any other. Some schools of higher learning, including very prestigious institutions, actively pursue homeschooled students because of their strong work ethics, independent study habits, and ability to write.

**Isn't there a danger that a homeschooled high school graduate will have difficulty adjusting to the social atmosphere of most college campuses?**

From what I hear about the social atmosphere on the majority of campuses, I certainly hope so! I like to think that my children will be shocked to see casual sex and recreational drug use. Parents and students should strongly consider colleges that offer a more

wholesome environment or colleges within commuting distance of home.

**How will college students adjust to deadlines and other practices not typically found in a home school high school?**

Experience has shown that they adjust pretty well. Claire is the third of my homeschooled children to excel after graduating from Seton, and other Seton families reflect my family's experience. Students learn about schedules and deadlines, not only as they complete the assignments for each quarter, but also by cleaning the bathroom every Saturday morning and by baking brownies before the company arrives.

**My son plans to move into the workforce after high school?**

Then don't send him to public school! When he is working, he will need to interact with people of different ages, from a wide variety of backgrounds. An institutional school will group him with other students within one year of his chronological age. In the workforce, he will need to be courteous, prompt, and well-groomed. Spend a few minutes outside your local high school at 3 o'clock, when classes are letting out. No employer wants his workers to sport purple hair, a dog collar, or ripped clothing, and the language heard outside a typical high school would get any employee fired on the spot.

Fortitude, or courage, is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive when we are confirmed. Parents need to pray to the Holy Spirit for the courage they will need to continue homeschooling through high school. Next month's column will contain some practical tips to make the job easier.

## *Crisis of Faith and the Eucharist*

*by Glen Tortorella*

*from a talk by Fr. John Hardon*

Why do many Catholics doubt or deny Our Lord's Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist? Is there a rampant crisis of faith in the Holy Eucharist? In his lecture, "The Crisis of Faith and the Eucharist," Father John Hardon discusses how some modern theologians have denied the Real Presence, and have spurred a disastrous crisis.

Undoubtedly, the dogma of Our Lord's Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist is one of the Church's central teachings, a sacred truth uttered by Christ Himself (John 6:51-57). It is similarly clear that there is a terrible crisis of faith in the Church. Father Hardon begins, "It is no secret to anyone who understands the Western world that there is a crisis of faith in the Catholic Church." Father points to a wide array of stunning, catastrophic realities: a great number of Catholic schools and parishes have been closed, priestly vocations have steadily declined, and attendance at Sunday Mass has dropped radically.

"We must face the crisis in the Catholic Church squarely," Father exhorts. Father examines the title of his lecture, explaining that the title means "one of two things." In examining the relationship between the crisis of faith and the Holy Eucharist, one may address "the crisis of faith in general and its relation to the Holy Eucharist," or one may "speak of the crisis of Faith in the Holy Eucharist." Father investigates the latter issue, and hence proceeds by asking: "Is there a crisis of faith in the Eucharist among once-believing Catholics? If there is, how are we to cope with this crisis?"

Father highlights the seriousness of this issue, noting that Pope Paul VI published a lengthy encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*, on the Real Presence. "His concern was that the liturgical innovations which the council had introduced would be worse than futile," Father comments. "[Pope Paul VI] feared they would be positively harmful to the Catholic Church...unless the faithful firmly believed and clearly understood the

mystery of faith which is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ which is the Blessed Sacrament."

Beyond the words of Pope Paul VI in *Mysterium Fidei*, "The fundamental truth about the Eucharist," Father stresses, "is that Christ is what he taught in the sixth chapter of Saint John's Gospel." A climate of heresy, though, continues to dominate the theological sphere. In his explication of the crisis, Father isolates "two principal heretical teachings that have deeply penetrated Catholic circles in the last thirty years."

Errors and heresies with regard to the Holy Eucharist, however, are not a modern invention. Citing the noteworthy Gospel parallel, Father recalls, "Many of His own disciples said to one another: 'This is intolerable language—who can believe it?'" Father concludes, "That sixth chapter of Saint John was not only history, it was prophecy."

"Years of experience," convinced Father that "Millions of once-professed Catholics no longer believe in the Real Presence." The Gospel rejection of the Eucharist by some of Jesus' followers foreshadowed the same rejection today. Father explains that understanding the cause of the unprecedented denial of the Real Presence requires an analysis of the heretical teachings that have undermined the dogma of the Real Presence.

Father points out that Pope Paul VI was "a mild man," and thus, "His language was correspondingly gentle," rather than condemnatory, in *Mysterium Fidei*. Pope Paul VI confronts the increasingly threatening problem of heretical Eucharistic theology by stating, as Father notes, that there are "opinions which disturb the faithful and fill their minds with no little confusion about matters of faith." Father contends, though, that two heretical positions—transignification and transfinalization—constitute the source of the problem.

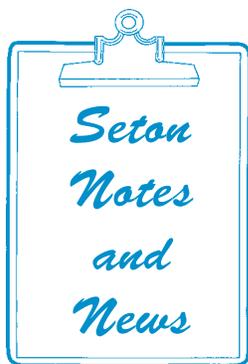
What is transignification? It means that "...when the consecration at Mass

is performed, only a change of meaning, or significance, of the bread and wine takes place. Their substance does not change. The consecrated elements are said to signify all that Christians associate with the Last Supper." Father continues, "The bread and wine acquire a higher meaning than merely food for the body, but they remain bread and wine." The heresy of this position is manifest, and Father adds that it has "deeply penetrated Catholic thought."

Defending against Protestant attacks on the Holy Eucharist, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) dogmatically defined "the marvelous change of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ," Father explains. The Church has always taught that transubstantiation takes place at the consecration—that is, bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord. In holding that a change occurs only in meaning rather than in the actual substance of the bread and wine, This doctrine is "no different than [that of] the reformers," Father stresses.

The heresy of transfinalization is very similar to that of transignification, and is "perhaps another name for transignification," Father comments. Father describes transfinalization as, "The view of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as the purpose, or 'finality,' of the bread and wine...but what remains after the consecration is still bread and wine." Clarifying this unfounded and contrived view, Father expounds, "In other words, the bread and wine are now serving a new function as sacred elements that arouse the faith of the people in Christ's redemptive love." In the process of transfinalization, as with transignification, "There is no change in their being. Bread and wine merely take on a new meaning."

The awful consequences of the denial of Christ's Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist are shocking and scandalous. Father explains that the "learned denial of Christ's Real Presence goes on," but that faithful Catholics must remain firm in both their doctrine and devotion. Catholics must "face the issue squarely," and ensure that their own faith "is clear."



## 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.

**Memphis, TN, March 18/19, 2005.** 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Homeschool & Curriculum Fair: Back to Basics. St. Louis Church, 203 S. White Station Road, Memphis. For more information, contact Ana at 901-861-6089, or email [thebonds@highstream.net](mailto:thebonds@highstream.net).

**St. Louis, MO, March 19, 2005.** 2005 St. Louis Catholic Home School Conference. Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Dr., St. Louis.

For more information contact Carmen at 636-447-1072 or by email at [carmen@stlouiscatholichomeschool.com](mailto:carmen@stlouiscatholichomeschool.com).

**Harrisburg, PA, April 9, 2005.** The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Homeschool Conference & Curriculum Fair. Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 6150 Allentown Boulevard (Route 22 West), Harrisburg. For more information, contact Ellen at 717-866-5425, or email [conference@catholichomeschoolpa.org](mailto:conference@catholichomeschoolpa.org).

**Houston, TX, April 9, 2005.** 2005 ARCH Home Schoolers of Houston, TX Book Fair and Speakers Forum. St. Theresa's Catholic School, 6622 Haskell St. (near Memorial Park), Houston, TX. For information call 281-797-5578 (leave message) or email [info@arch-homeschool.org](mailto:info@arch-homeschool.org).

**Milwaukee, WI, April 15-16, 2005.** Celebrate the Faith Catholic Home School Conference and Book Fair, Archbishop Cousins Center, 3501 S Lake Drive, Milwaukee. Speakers include Fr. Pablo Straub. For more information, contact Beth at 414-762-6263, or email [rpyank@juno.com](mailto:rpyank@juno.com).

**Covington, LA, April 16, 2005.** Roman Catholic Home School Association in Louisiana. St. Peter's Church (St. Mary's Hall), 125 E 19<sup>th</sup> Ave., Covington, LA. Speakers include Jim

Clark. For more information, call 985-796-1274 or email [jm3@bertucciinc.com](mailto:jm3@bertucciinc.com).

**Berlin, NJ (Philadelphia area), April 16, 2005.** 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Homeschooling Curriculum and Book Fair. Mater Ecclesiae Roman Catholic Church (8 AM Mass - 5 PM), 261 Cross Keys Road, Berlin, NJ. For information email [info@chaplet.org](mailto:info@chaplet.org), or go to website [www.chaplet.org](http://www.chaplet.org).

**Dayton, OH, April 23, 2005.** Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish, 2300 S. Smithville Road, Dayton, OH. For information call 937-648-9245, or email [ablesclan@yahoo.com](mailto:ablesclan@yahoo.com).

**Des Moines, IA, April 30, 2005.** 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Family Home School Conference. Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church (8 AM - 4 PM), 510 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Ankeny, IA. Speakers include Ginny Seuffert. For information call 515-832-6214 or email [daniel363@catholicexchange.com](mailto:daniel363@catholicexchange.com) or go to website [www.Columbus-Academy.org](http://www.Columbus-Academy.org).

**Herndon, VA, June 10-11, 2005.** Immaculate Heart of Mary National Home School and Family Conference. For information go to website [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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1350 Progress Dr.

Front Royal, VA 22630  
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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, Irene O'Brien, Ext. 177  
Grading: Rhonda Way, Ext. 138  
High School Course Approval: Eric Kraske, Ext. 117  
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Senior Guidance: Bob Wiesner, 540-636-2238  
Special Needs: Stephen Costanzo, Ext. 176 or  
Sharon Hines, Ext. 151  
Testing (CAT): Clare Jones, Ext. 164

[www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)  
[counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org)  
[admissions@setonhome.org](mailto:admissions@setonhome.org)  
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[shipping@setonhome.org](mailto:shipping@setonhome.org)  
[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)  
[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)

## *Pope John Paul II Letter for World Day of Vocations 2005*

*“Duc in altum!”* At the beginning of the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, I made reference to the words with which Jesus encourages the first disciples to let down their nets for a catch, which turned out to be a marvelous one. Jesus says to Peter: *“Duc in altum - Put out into the deep”* (Lk 5:4). “Peter and the first companions trusted Christ's words and cast their nets” (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 1).

*“Duc in altum!”* The command of Christ is particularly relevant in our time, when there is a widespread mentality which, in the face of difficulties, favours personal non-commitment. The first condition for “putting out into the deep” is to cultivate a deep spirit of prayer nourished by a daily listening to the Word of God. The authenticity of the Christian life is measured by the depth of one's prayer, an art that must be humbly learnt “from the lips of the Divine Master”, almost imploring “like the first disciples: ‘Lord, teach us to pray!’ (Lk 11:1). In prayer, a conversation with Christ develops and it makes us his intimate friends: ‘Abide in me and I in you’ (Jn 15:4)” (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 32).

The link with Christ through prayer also makes us aware that He is also present in moments of apparent failure, when tireless effort seems useless, as happened to the Apostles themselves, who after toiling all night, exclaimed: “Master, we took nothing” (Lk 5:5). It is especially in these moments that one needs to open one's heart to the abundance of grace and to allow the word of the Redeemer to act with all its power: *“Duc in altum!”* (cfr *Novo millennio ineunte*, 38).

Whoever opens his heart to Christ will not only understand the mystery of his own existence, but also that of his own vocation; he will bear the abundant fruit of grace. The first fruit will be his growth in holiness, in the course of a spiritual journey which begins with the gift of Baptism and continues even to the fullness of perfect love (cfr *ibid.*, 30). Living the Gospel without adding to it, the Christian becomes always increasingly capable of loving in the way that Christ loved, and welcomes the exhortation of Christ: “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). He will commit himself to persevering in unity with his brothers within the communion of the Church, and he will place himself at the service of the new evangelization, to proclaim and bear witness to the wonderful truth of the saving love of God.

Dear adolescents and young people, it is to you in a particular way that I renew the invitation of Christ to “put out into the deep”. You find yourselves having to make important decisions for your future. I still hold in my heart the memory of the many opportunities I have had over the years to meet with young people, who have now become adults, some of them your own parents perhaps, or priests or religious, your teachers in the faith. I saw them, happy as young people should be, but also thoughtful, because they were conscious of a desire to give full ‘meaning’ to their lives. I came to recognise more and more how strong is the attraction in young people to the values of the spirit, and how sincere is their desire for holiness. Young people need Christ, but they also know that Christ chose to be in need of them.

### *Seton Home Study School*

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