



# Seton Home



# Study School

Volume XXII, Number 5



*“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”*



May 2005

## *Our Lady of Fatima*

We celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13<sup>th</sup>, the date in 1917 of the Miracle of the Sun in Fatima, Portugal. When Our Lady appeared to the three children, Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia (who just recently passed away), the Blessed Mother spoke constantly about the importance of daily prayer and saying the Rosary.

At the sixth apparition of the Blessed Mother, moments before the Miracle of the Sun, Lucia asked her, “What do you want of me?” The Queen of Heaven responded, “I want to tell you that they must build a chapel here in my honor; that I am the Lady of the Rosary; that they continue to say the Rosary every day.”

We homeschooling parents must take this message from heaven personally. We must “build” a chapel or shrine in our homes, our domestic churches, even if it is only a place of honor on a mantle in our living rooms. The center and focus must be the crucifix, but a statue or picture or icon of Our Lady should be there also.

The words of the Hail Mary, the main prayer of the Rosary, are the most special words that were uttered to Mary when she was on earth, those words from God which recognized her as worthy to be the Mother of God. The angel Gabriel greeted her with the words: “Hail, Mary, full of grace.” Heaven was declaring that there is no sin in Mary; she is filled with heavenly graces.

Later, when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, her cousin was inspired by God and knew immediately that Mary was the Mother of the coming Savior. She fell to her knees and exclaimed, “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.”

The final words of the Hail Mary declare Mary’s essential role as the Mother of God. All other titles and recognitions stem from this one: Mother of God. Then we end with a plea that she pray for us, not only at the present time, but when we will face our judgment day: “Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.”

The Rosary is a powerful prayer, as is evidenced by many of the miracles in history, and in families past and present. It is bound to be powerful because we are asking Mary, the Mother of the Son of God, to plead our case for special intervention by God.

The Blessed Mother said that she expects us to do more than pray. Lucia told the Blessed Mother that she had many favors to ask that the people had given her. “Do you wish to grant them or not?” Lucia asked.

The Blessed Mother answered, “Some I will, others I will not. They must mend their lives, ask forgiveness for their sins. Offend not Our Lord any more, for He is already much offended.” We cannot expect to have the Blessed Mother intercede for us, or to have the Son of God shower His graces on us, if we do not give up our bad habits, and

ask forgiveness for our sins, especially forgiveness in Confession.

God is already much offended, the Blessed Mother reminds us, as we can easily see by what we learn from the radio, the television, the internet, and the newspaper. We must make reparation by offering up sacrifices to show our love for God and by showing our sorrow for the wicked deeds being done on this earth.

The Blessed Mother gave us a great way to praise the Lord with her response to Elizabeth in her Magnificat prayer. “He that is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His Name. And His mercy is from generation to generation to those that fear Him,” meaning to those who respect Him as almighty God by obeying Him. As we witness the small miracles in our families, it is important to point out to our children that God has done great things for us, and we must thank Him and praise Him as well as continue to obey Him.

Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of the Rosary, help us to teach our children the importance of saying the daily Rosary as well as to practice good habits of obedience, especially in our homeschooling. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**My husband wants to put our children back into public school, but I am worried about the children being exposed to anti-Catholic, anti-Christian, and anti-family values. What should I do?**

You might first try to pinpoint exactly why your husband wants to put the children back into public school. It may be that the reason is something that can be addressed. Or it may be that your husband is just taking a while to get used to homeschooling, in which case you might suggest trying it for a while longer.

Or it may be that your husband simply doesn't see the benefits of homeschooling, both academically and as a family. In that case, keep this newsletter and other articles available for him to read. Try to take him to some homeschooling meetings or a conference. One father who did not support homeschooling went to a homeschooling spelling bee and was so impressed by the children and the parents, that he completely changed his mind.

Decisions about the education of your children are some of the most important decisions that parents make. Such decisions should be undertaken with prayer and discernment. Pray about this decision every day, saying the Rosary and going to Mass every day if possible.

**Ginny Seuffert's article last month seemed to say that everyone should be homeschooling. Do you really think everyone can or should home school?**

No one can tell you what educational means or institutions you ought to choose for your family. No one but you is given the graces to discern this

matter. The *Code of Canon Law* recognizes this. The Church, through encyclicals, apostolic letters, and other documents, does give guidelines for what type of education children ought to receive. However, the Church also says that parents should have "true freedom" to decide on "means and institutions."

If the question is, "Is it possible for all families to homeschool?" then there is no real answer. It is up to each family to decide whether, in their circumstances, they think that homeschooling is right and possible for them. Just as no one outside a particular family can decide if that family ought to homeschool, so no one outside a particular family can decide if they ought not.

Whatever educational institution or methods parents choose, one of the primary considerations should be the value of an authentically Catholic education. This could mean the difference between eternal life and eternal death.

**I have having trouble teaching my child diagramming. What extra helps do you have for me as the parent-teacher?**

Many parents never had diagramming in school, and many others have forgotten it. We have added more diagramming help in the lesson plans. In addition, we sell two diagramming books, *Better Sentences Through Diagramming*, Book 1 for grades 4 to 6, and Book 2 for grade 6 to 8. We have just recently added a favorite of our elementary counselors, *Rex Barks: Diagramming Sentences Made Easy*.

Diagramming is important because it develops logical thinking in

understanding the relationship of words and ideas, and because it helps in writing sentences with precision.

**My parents are concerned that my only child will suffer from not socializing with other children. I am concerned to give my child a truly Catholic education. How can I do both?**

It is important to remember that socializing with other children of the same age is not always a positive experience in this day and age. Homeschooled children tend to socialize with other families with members of all ages, which results in more mature socializing experiences. If you join a Catholic homeschooling support group, try to find some good families with a range of children similar in age to your child. If your child is old enough, try having her do volunteer work. That way she can help other people while developing social skills.

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You do need to be aware of and monitor your child's social interactions. For example, if your child joins a sports team, it's a good idea to go to the practices and meet some of the other parents. You will be able to tell from the values of the parents what the values of the children are.

Regarding schools, often older parents don't understand what is going on in the schools. If they were in school in the 1940s or 1950s, they may think the schools are the same today as

they were then. Your parents need to become more informed about what is happening in the schools.

**It seems like there is so much to do in Reading class for my sixth grader. What are the most important assignments?**

Reading is a major subject, vital to success in all academic subjects. The most important assignment in Reading is reading the selections and answering the discussion questions, either those in the book or in the Lesson Plan Manual. Be sure that you listen to your sixth grader read aloud from time to time; you can tell from his inflections and expression if he is comprehending what he is reading. Writing the answers will help your child to reflect on what he has read and put the ideas together. If the reading and writing seems overwhelming, try breaking up the assignments. He could read the selection in the morning, and do the written assignments in the afternoon. If writing the answers proves too difficult, then try doing some of the assignments orally.

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*Wherever two or three Catholic families are gathered together, Jesus is also in their midst in a special way.*

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The book reports are very important and should not be skipped. It would be better to take a week out of the other school assignments in order to read the book and do the report, all in one week, than not do it at all. This assignment helps your child to interpret what he has read, to organize the ideas, and to come to some conclusions.

In sixth grade, we have two reading workbooks which are very good for developing comprehension and thinking skills. However, if you must

skip something, some of these chapters could be skipped.

If possible, though, the reading assignments should not be skipped. It would be better to skip assignments in a minor subject, such as music, art, and physical education, or even assignments in history or science could be skipped rather than skip the reading assignments.

**We do not have other Catholic homeschooling families in our area. Do you think we should move to be near other Catholic families?**

Many of our ancestors moved from countries where they felt their children could not be raised in their religious values, so it is certainly a valid and noble reason for moving. Sometimes you do not need to move out of the town, but to a different area of the town. Sometimes you can move to a nearby town so there is no need to change jobs.

What you might do is look on our web site, on the home page, where there are listed Catholic conferences. You can be sure that there are a good number of Catholic homeschoolers in those areas. You might even attend one of those conferences and meet people. Look at the names of the towns on their name tags. Be sure to talk to your spouse, since this obviously needs to be a matter of discussion between the two of you.

In the Gospel, we read that wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, He is there in their midst. We might say as well that where two or three Catholic families are gathered, Jesus is also in their midst in a special way.

**My child has finished her fifth grade math book already. Should I order the next level now or just wait until next year?**

Math is a subject that cannot be put away for a period of time. If she has finished the fifth grade book, you can either get another book which may not advance very much but keeps her doing drills, or advance her up to the next level. If she would like to advance, by all means, order

the next level. However, I know that some students resent being pushed up another level, and see this as a punishment for doing well.

You might consider looking for math games on the internet. This could be fun and a different approach she would like without pushing her to advance to the next level text.

**We started late as I pulled my son out of the local school in mid year. Do you recommend I continue over the summer?**

Many families find that continuing the schoolwork on a part-time basis over the summer does help with consistency, or in your case, keeps the student moving along in the grade level. However, some older students resent doing schoolwork in the summer months, and would not apply themselves to their studies. In some families, it would be too difficult for the mother to have one child homeschooling while the others are playing and going swimming. If it looks like you can make substantial progress, it may be worthwhile, but otherwise it might end up being a frustration for everyone involved. I suggest you discuss it first with your husband and then, depending on the age of your child, discuss it with your son.

**My daughter has been a straight A student in 9<sup>th</sup> grade since I have been homeschooling her. I think she could skip tenth grade. Would you have a problem putting her into eleventh grade?**

In high school, it is not so much a question of what grade a student is in as how many credits she has. In order to receive a high school diploma, a certain number of credits is required. If a student wants to take a sufficient number of courses to graduate in 3 or 3 ½ years, that is certainly permissible. One would want to be careful however, that in trying to take a large number of courses quickly, one's grades and one's understanding of the material did not suffer.

## Some Basic Rules for the Home

by Ginny Seuffert

This time of year, I attend Catholic homeschooling conferences all over the country so I hope to meet some of you face to face in the coming months. Please feel free to comment on these columns and make suggestions about what you think homeschoolers need to hear. This month's column is dedicated to a very nice lady from St. Louis who told me that homeschooling falters, not only when children are lazy or undisciplined, but also when parent-teachers fail to discipline themselves. She feels parents need to set rules for themselves and then follow those rules.

This lady's situation is pretty typical in many of our large Catholic families. Her homeschool was humming along smoothly until she had another baby. Swollen ankles and heartburn at the end of pregnancy, followed by night feedings and postpartum aches and pains caused her standards to slip, and the homeschooling quickly fell behind schedule. Those of us who have "been there and done that" will certainly sympathize with the situation, while at the same time recognizing that if we allow ourselves a six month maternity leave from homeschooling after each baby, our children may graduate from high school at age thirty!

I am offering a few rules that are broad enough to apply to just about every family situation. Please note that these are rules that have worked in my home and may need to be adapted to your particular situation.

### Rules for Moms:

Buy a wristwatch and wear it. Check it throughout the day to make sure that prayer, meals, housework and schoolwork all more or less stay on schedule.

Get up at the same time each morning, preferably a full hour before the children. If night

feedings are robbing you of sleep, plan a short nap in the afternoon.

Maintain basic housekeeping standards (making the beds, loading the dishwasher, picking up clutter) even if you do not have the time to do a more thorough job.

Assign regular chores for each child and schedule a 30-minute clean up period every day right after school time.

Find 30 minutes each day for prayer and reflection away from distracting little ones. I start my day with morning Mass, with or without the children, and find that this practice really sets up my day. If a trip to church does not work for your situation, try to get up a bit earlier or set aside time after the children settle down for the night, and just sit with your rosary, a book of prayers or some other spiritual reading. (I find books from the *Art for Young Catholic* series, published by Seton Press, a tremendous help to meditate on the lives of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.)

### Rules for Dads:

Recognize and accept your irreplaceable role in the discipline of your children. Always inquire about their behavior while you were at work, and back up Mom 100%. If a particular child is frequently misbehaving, call home during your lunch break and check on his or her progress during the day.

If the house is a disaster area when you arrive home from work, ask the children why they haven't done more to help their mother. Better yet, roll up your sleeves and supervise them while they straighten up.

Be reasonable in your expectations. A woman with five children under the age of nine,

homeschooling three of them, with two loads of laundry to wash and fold each day, and a four bedroom house to clean, who is eight months pregnant with number six, might not be able to get dinner on the table by five o'clock sharp.

### Rules for School-age Children:

Don't argue with your parents. If they ask you to do something, say, "Sure." If you get stuck with a job you hate, offer it up for the poor souls in Purgatory.

Don't argue with your brothers and sisters. In matters of personal preference, give in for the sake of family harmony. The poor souls will thank you!

Remember that the biggest indicator of a mature person is doing the right thing *without being asked*, so if you see a toy on the floor, pick it up. If there are dishes in the sink, load the dishwasher. If you are behind in school, work in the evening, all without being asked!

As much as you can, try to do your schoolwork on your own. If you get to something that requires help, mark it so you remember to ask Mom later, and move on to something else.

At the very least, pray when you first wake up in the morning, and examine your conscience and say an Act of Contrition at bedtime. Try to read something with a spiritual dimension everyday.

You will never be sorry if you develop the habit of attending daily Mass. I grew attached to this practice while I was still in grade school. I often went in high school, even when I was not the best person I could be. Looking back, I am *certain* that the graces of frequent Mass have protected me my whole life.

### Rules for Couples:

Treat each other with courtesy and respect. Set a cheerful tone in your household.

Get away from the children at least once a week, even if all you can afford is a slice of pizza and a coke. If you can safely leave your children for a few minutes, take a walk each night. You need to be able to speak to one another without interruption.

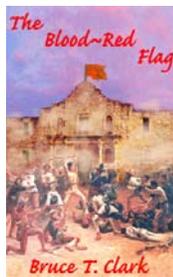
***Something for Everyone to Remember:***

We Americans enjoy such a comfortable existence that we have very little tolerance for even the mildest pain. It's important to remember that humans were not made for happiness on earth. Rather we were made to know, love and serve God on earth so that we might enjoy eternal happiness with him in heaven. In the Holy Scripture, Jesus tells us that, "If any man wishes to be My follower, he must deny his very self, pick up his cross and follow Me."

Rising on time, even when you were nursing the baby all night—that's the cross He was talking about. Helping the children to pick up toys from the floor when you just got in from a long day at work—that's what He meant by the cross. "Denying your very self" is giving in—with a smile—in matters of personal preference. Faithfully fulfilling the ordinary duties of our state in life is what our Creator requires from us in return for an eternity of perfect joy. In the meantime, trusting in His Divine Providence will give us peace of mind here and now.

***Available from SEM***

***The Blood-Red Flag.*** An epic tale of the legendary Texican heroes and their war against violence and injustice, as well as the fascinating life and times of Jim Bowie, and the real story behind his deadly Bowie knife. 468 pp. Cost is \$15, plus shipping.



## ***Book Analyses***

The most frequent question our academic counselors receive relate to the writing of book analyses. We have more redos with these than with any other assignments. In many cases, the students do not read the guidelines which are contained in the lesson plans. In other cases, the students do not take the guidelines seriously; and simply write a summary of the book rather than an analysis. These guidelines, however, are vital to a successful book analysis, since the graders use the guidelines when grading the assignments.

The student should read the book analysis guidelines before starting to read the book. As the student reads his book, he can highlight or underline any passages which may be relevant to the writing assignment. Secondly, the student, along with the parent, should work out a schedule for reading the book and for writing the book analysis. Simply figure on a certain number of weeks, preferably four to six weeks, for the reading and writing. Reading the book or even just writing the report at the end of the quarter does not give time for adequate thinking about the writing assignment. These assignments demand more analytical thinking than the student realizes.

Most of the book analysis assignments include writing a character sketch of the main character or characters. Students are to identify three prominent character traits and to prove that the character has these traits by explaining two or three specific examples from the story. These examples should be things the character says, does, or thinks, or a description by the author of what the character looks like, or even what other people in the story say or think about the character.

In the outline of the guidelines, students are told to state whether the character's personality was constant or changed through the story. If it did change, the student should describe the personality before and after, and what caused the change. Only include

the plot details that exemplify the personality traits. Often students wander off the topic and do not remain focused on the relevant details.

Some students think that writing a book analysis is very difficult. That is because most other assignments are looking for objective answers. Writing an analysis, coming to a conclusion, and finding examples to prove the conclusion, is more advanced thinking—inductive thinking rather than deductive thinking.

We receive letters on a regular basis from parents who tell us how well their children are doing in college. They repeatedly write about the English courses, how demanding our courses are, but how successful their children are doing in writing and thinking skills. Just last month, we received a letter from a mother of a college student who said, "Thanks to the education [my daughter] received at Seton Home Study School, she had the ability to discern the errors, the necessary knowledge of history and our faith, and the reasoning and writing skills she needed to respond to this challenging situation in a positive and effective manner."

Three months ago, we received a letter from another mother who said that her daughter "excelled on the English portion of the ACT [college entrance test]." The mother explained that her daughter's grades have been excellent at the Catholic university she is attending. She was on the Dean's List, earned 18 credit hours in the first year, and earned a 4.00 GPA her first year." She wrote "[She] is featured in the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Edition of Who's Who Among American High School Students, 2003-2004. She was in the top 5% of students who had achieved academic excellence." Her daughter received a Certificate of Recognition from her state, for "outstanding academic achievement."

Parents, please help your children to keep working on the book analyses. Someday they will come to appreciate the analytical skills they are learning.

## Pope John Paul II

In memory of Pope John Paul II, the following is taken from the book *For the Children: Words of Love and Inspiration from His Holiness Pope John Paul II*, Scholastic Press, 2000.

Prepare for life with seriousness and diligence. Always remember that only if one builds, as St. Paul says, on the one foundation which is Jesus Christ, will one be able to construct something really great and lasting.

With the liveliness that is characteristic of your age, with the generous enthusiasm of your young hearts, walk toward Christ.

He alone is the solution to all your problems.

He alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

He alone is the real salvation of the world.

He alone is the hope of mankind.

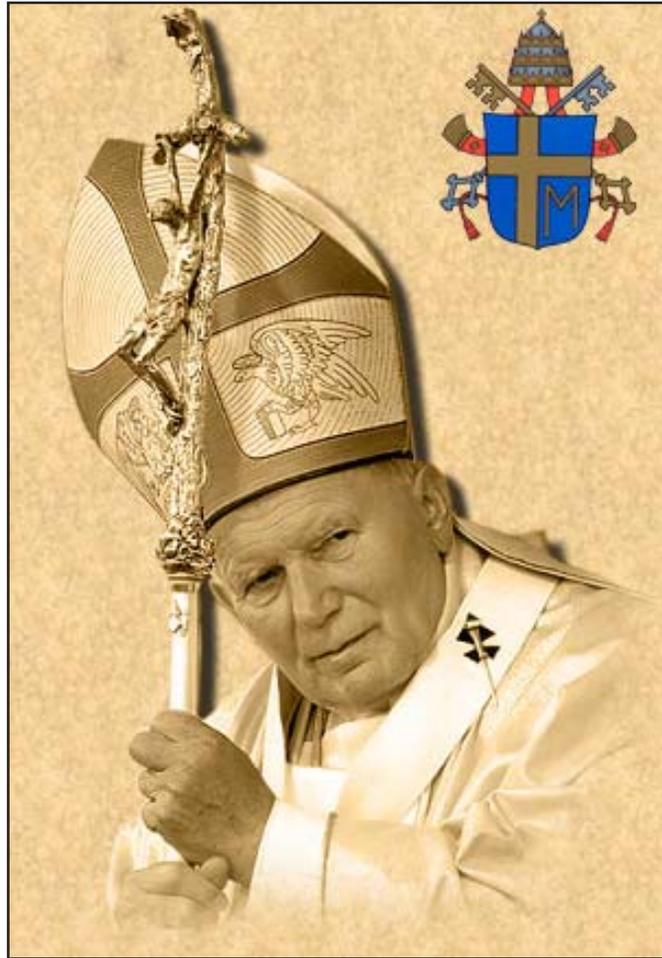
*Speech to eight thousand children in Guadalajara, Mexico*

People cannot live without love. They are called to love God and their neighbor, but in order to love properly, they must be certain that God loves them. God loves you, dear children. This is what I want to tell you...

*Letter of the Pope to Children, Vatican City*

True happiness lies in giving ourselves in love to our brothers and sisters.

*Message to young people in Camaguey, Cuba*



If you follow Jesus' advice and pray to God constantly, then you will learn to pray well. God Himself will teach you.

*Meeting with youth in New Orleans, Louisiana*

Allow me to enter your homes; yes, you want to have the Pope as your guest and friend, and to give him the consolation of seeing in

your homes the union and the family love which gives rest, after a hard day's work. It shows me, dear children, that you are preparing seriously for the future; I repeat to you, you are the hope of the Pope. Do not deny me the joy of seeing you walk along paths that lead you to be real followers of good, and friends of Christ.

Do not deny me the joy of your sense of responsibility in studies, activities, and amusements.

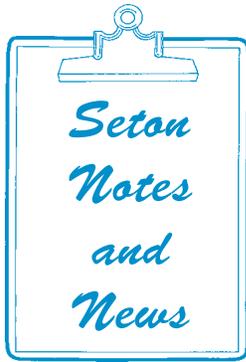
You are called to be bearers of generosity and honesty, to fight against immorality, to prepare a most just, healthier, and happier world.

*Speech to one hundred thousand families in Guadalajara, Mexico*

In the family... husband and wife, adults and children, brothers and sisters accept one another as God's gift and give each other the life and love of God. In the family, the healthy and the sick stand by each other.

Young and old speak up for one another. They try to solve problems together... Lastly, the family is also the place where everyone can experience mutual forgiveness in an atmosphere of love.

*Discourse to Schonstatt Family Association, Vatican City*



*Conferences*

Many state and local groups are now sponsoring their own conferences, inviting various Catholic vendors and curriculum providers. Seton is happy to participate at these conferences as a vendor. For more information, contact Mary Lou Warren at 540-636-9990.

**St. Paul/Minneapolis, MN, June 3-4.** 7th Annual MN Catholic Home Education Conference and Curriculum Fair, University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul. For information call 952-941-5646, or email [info@mnconference.org](mailto:info@mnconference.org).

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

540-636-1946, or email [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org).

**Denver, CO, June 10-11.** 6<sup>th</sup> Annual CO Catholic Home Educators Conference, Bishop Machebeuf Catholic High School –Lowry Campus, 458 Uinta Way, Denver, CO. For more information, contact Mary at 303-814-1143, or go to website [www.mt3solutions.com/rhc](http://www.mt3solutions.com/rhc).

**Lansing, MI, June 17-18.** 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Catholic Home Educators “It’s Great to be Catholic” Family and Home Education Conference and Book Fair, Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave (at Cedar), Lansing. Speakers include Fr. Pablo Straub and Ginny Seuffert. For more information, contact Cathie at 313-565-6129, or email [mch001@juno.com](mailto:mch001@juno.com), or go to website [www.homeschoolcatholic.org](http://www.homeschoolcatholic.org).

**Indianapolis/Noblesville, IN, June 25.** Get the Faith Catholic 2005 Home Educators Curriculum Fair and Conference, Hamilton County 4-H Exhibition Center, 2003 Pleasant Street, Noblesville, IN. Speakers include Ginny Seuffert. For more information contact Teresa at 317-849-9821 (after 2PM weekdays), or go to website [www.rchei.org](http://www.rchei.org), or email [conference@rchei.org](mailto:conference@rchei.org).

**Lafayette, LA, June 25.** Our Lady of Good Success Home School Conference, The Rayne Civic Center, 300 Frog Festival Dr., Rayne, LA. For information contact Julie at 337-873-7547, [jodeofkemah@yahoo.com](mailto:jodeofkemah@yahoo.com).

**Chino Hills, CA, June 25.** SSCHE (Southern California Catholic Home Educators) Conference and Curriculum Fair, St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church (8 AM - 4 PM), 14085 Peyton Drive, Chino Hills. For information contact Sandy at 909-590-7224, or email [tws4sks@yahoo.com](mailto:tws4sks@yahoo.com), or go to website [www.scchehomepage.com](http://www.scchehomepage.com).

**Phoenix, AZ, July 9.** St. Helen’s Catholic Church, Glendale, AZ. Speakers include Ginny Seuffert. For information contact Veronica at 623-516-4917, or email [olghsc@aol.com](mailto:olghsc@aol.com).

**Anaheim, CA, July 23-24.** CRC’s 15<sup>th</sup> Annual National Catholic Family Conference, Anaheim Convention Center and Marriott, 800 West Kalella Ave., Anaheim, CA. Speakers include Fr. Pablo Straub. For information contact Ruben at 877-526-2151 (toll-free) or 626-856-0747 (local), or email [info@CatholiCRC.org](mailto:info@CatholiCRC.org), or go to website [www.CatholiCRC.org](http://www.CatholiCRC.org).

*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](http://www.setonhome.org)  
E-Mail: [info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year. Free online at [www.setonhome.org/archive/default.stm](http://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;  
Irene O’ Brien, Ext 177  
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[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)

## *Spiritual Testament of John Paul II*

When, on 16 October 1978, the Conclave of Cardinals chose John Paul II, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the Primate of Poland, said to me: "The task of the new Pope will be to lead the Church into the Third Millennium". I do not know if I am repeating the sentence exactly as he said it, but this was at least the sense of what I heard him say at the time. These words were spoken by the Man who went down in history as the Primate of the Millennium: a great Primate. I witnessed his mission, his total confidence, his struggles and his triumph. "When victory is won, it will be a victory through Mary": The Primate of the Millennium was fond of repeating these words of his Predecessor, Cardinal August Hlond.

Thus, I was in some way prepared for the task presented to me on that day, 16 October 1978. As I write these words, the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 is already a reality that is taking place. On the night of 24 December 1999 the symbolic Great Jubilee Door in the Basilica of St Peter was opened, and subsequently that of St John Lateran, then that of St Mary Major - on New Year's Day, and on 19 January the Door of the Basilica of St Paul "Outside-the-Walls". Particularly the latter event, because of its ecumenical character, was imprinted indelibly on memories.

As the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 continues, the 20th century closes behind us and the 21st century unfolds, from one day to the next. In accordance with the designs of Providence, I have been granted to live in the difficult century that is retreating into the past, and now in the year in which I have reached my 80s

("octogesima adveniens"), I must ask myself whether the time has come to say with Simeon of the Bible, "Nunc dimittis".

On 13 May 1981, the day of the attack on the Pope during the General Audience in St Peter's Square, Divine Providence miraculously saved me from death. He Himself, who is the One Lord of life and death, extended this life of mine, and in a certain way he restored it to me. Ever since that moment it has belonged even more to Him. I hope He will help me to recognize how long I must continue this service to which he called me on 16 October 1978. I ask him to deign to call me to Himself whenever he wishes. "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then... we are the Lord's" (cf. Rom 14: 8). I hope that as long as I am granted to carry out the Petrine service in the Church, God in His Mercy will grant me the necessary strength for this service.

As I stand on the threshold of the Third Millennium "in medio Ecclesiae", I would like once again to express my gratitude to the Holy Spirit for the great gift of the Second Vatican Council, to which, together with the whole Church - and especially with the whole Episcopate - I feel indebted. I am convinced that it will long be granted to the new generations to draw from the treasures that this 20th-century Council has lavished upon us. As a Bishop who took part in the Council from the first to the last day, I desire to entrust this great patrimony to all who are and will be called in the future to put it into practice. For my part, I thank the eternal Pastor who has enabled me to serve this very great cause in the course of all the years of my Pontificate.

### *Seton Home Study School*

1350 Progress Drive  
Front Royal, VA 22630

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