



# Seton Home



# Study School

Volume XXII, Number 7



*“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”*



July 2005

## Good Saint Anne

On July 26<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the Feast of Good Saint Anne and her husband, St. Joachim, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the grandparents of Jesus.

Frances Parkinson Keyes wrote several Catholic biographies, including a biography of St. Anne, grandmother of Our Saviour. The author did extensive research and traveling to find out the details of the life of St. Anne. Keyes writes that Anne’s parents and close friends were aware that Anne was to be the mother of the Virgin who would be the mother of the Messiah.

Both of Anne’s parents were told miraculously about the birth of Anne, and once she was born, miraculous healings were performed by Anne even as a baby. A blind man was able to see with the touch of Anne’s hands.

Good St. Anne, pray for our young children and inspire them to be such good Catholic children that those who do not have the truth of the Catholic Faith can be led by the innocence and example of our children to “see” the truth of Jesus and His Mother Mary.

Anne’s family moved near Jerusalem and placed Anne in the Temple school for her to be educated about the teachings of God and about the Ten Commandments. Her father had a prestigious position in the Temple, but Anne and her family did not live there. Her father kept a close eye on his daughter since she was his only child. He owned land in the country and when he went to oversee his pasture land and grazing sheep, little Anne went with him.

Little Anne learned Jewish history and geography. Most of all, she learned the Old Testament at school. She also learned

household duties in the home. Both school and home activities involved regular times of family prayer.

Good St. Anne, help us in our homeschooling so that our domestic church provides the kind of education and good example for our children to live holy lives. Help the father of our family to realize his important role in teaching our children by word and example.

After Anne grew up, she married Joachim, a man known for his holiness. Since Anne’s father had no son, Joachim took on the responsibility of helping Anne’s father with his fairly extensive fertile lands and abundant flocks. They lived near the city walls outside Jerusalem, with flowering gardens and near the miraculous healing pool of Bethesda. They lived a quiet life since Joachim was gone all day in the fields, but they both observed the Jewish feasts faithfully. Anne was said, according to the holy books of the time, to have “a great gift of nursing the sick of both body and mind, and those in pain and distress frequently called on her for help, and were never denied.”

The one sorrow of Joachim and Anne was their childlessness. Among the Jews, having no children was considered a punishment from God. When Joachim would go to the Temple, the men would reproach him, even declaring that his gifts to the Temple were unacceptable since it was obvious that God judged him unworthy to have children. This was one reason why Joachim spent so much time in the fields and not in the city.

Good St. Anne, one of the most difficult things to endure is reproach from those

who attend church with us but who do not understand our decision to teach our children at home. Help us to forgive those who offend us and speak against us; help us to remain silent while we continue to fulfill our responsibilities to our children.

Since God intended that the child of Joachim and Anne would be the Mother of God, the conception of Mary involved miracles; her birth was announced to Joachim and Anne by angels before it occurred, and the conception itself was a miracle since Anne was past her years for childbearing. An angel appeared to Joachim in the fields, and also appeared to Anne in her garden. The angel told them that they were to have a child. The angel said to Anne, “Fear not... a daughter will be born unto you, who shall be called Mary, and shall be blessed above all women.”

Good Saint Anne, help us to realize that our children are special gifts from God, and that God has assigned to each one of them a guardian angel to guide and protect the child. Help us work with the guardian angels of our children as we teach and show our children how to live the holy life to which God has called them. Good Saint Anne, help us and our children to be holy and to realize that our Catholic homeschooling is a vital part of our path to sanctification and to the eternal blessedness of heaven. Saint Anne, Grandmother of Our Saviour, pray for us.

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**My high school student is still working on courses from this past year. Should we start with the next grade level in September?**

If your child is in high school, the courses need to be finished before starting the next grade level in that subject. For instance, if your child has not finished the English course, he should not start the next level of English. However, he could start the next level of any other courses he has finished, such as the next level of science or math.

On the other hand, some parents, including myself, believe that the student should finish all of the courses before starting any of the next grade level of courses. This puts a certain amount of pressure on the student to finish up the incomplete courses. In addition, if a student receives the next level of other courses, he may be distracted to do those courses he likes instead of finishing up the incomplete course he does not like. On the other hand, some students may need the encouragement to start at least one or two courses on the next grade level to gain confidence and feel successful.

Remember, in high school, students need credits in order to graduate, unlike grade school where it is easier to move students along even if they have not finished. Whether a student is with Seton or another school, they will need those credits. So it is important that students work diligently to finish up their courses.

Many high school students obtain jobs, which interferes with their schoolwork. The more hours they work, the less time and focus they put into their schoolwork. Students have a lifetime of work ahead of them. With upcoming changes to social security, it is likely that people will have to work until at least age 70 before retiring; current high school students will be

working for fifty years. It is not necessary to start working when they are still in high school.

**My child is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and has not finished some of his courses. Should I quit for the summer or should he finish up his courses over the summer?**

If your student is in the elementary levels, it is not necessary to finish up all the courses. The courses that are most important to finish up are math and English. These courses build from year to year, and ought to be finished at each level to be successful at the next grade level. If the courses are not finished, then the student might not be ready to start the next level. However, most courses have some amount of review in the beginning, so if almost all of the course is finished, the student will probably not have too much trouble in the next grade level.

It is helpful for elementary students to have some practice and review in math and reading over the summer. They do not need to be formal "classes." It could be math games on the computer. It could be math activities from books or card games, or other activities with the family which encourage math skills.

Summer reading is essential for students in the elementary grade levels. Many libraries offer summer reading programs for elementary students. Watch what they are reading, however. Just because a book says that it is for children does not mean it is suitable for children.

**I am homeschooling two children, and have three pre-schoolers. Should I start my five-year-old boy in kindergarten this year?**

I don't advise starting a full kindergarten program with a boy who is only five years old unless he has already

given signs that he is ready for it. Unless he is sitting down for a length of time and looking through books, I would not start him in a full program. Most boys of this age are still very active and learning about the world in other ways than books.

If he is interested, I would start him with math activities. Boys at this age usually like counting. There are many hands-on activities or games, such as card games, that can be started. If you look on the computer for math games for pre-schoolers, you can find ideas, and can even download charts or other activities to help with understanding math. Local teachers' stores have loads of math learning games, though they are not cheap.

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*Some students may need the encouragement to start at least one or two courses on the next grade level to gain confidence and feel successful.*

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By the way, two good places to download software of any kind from the internet are [www.hotfiles.com](http://www.hotfiles.com) (run by ZDNet, the publishers of PC Magazine) and [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) (run by CNet). Both sites have thousands of software programs available for download.

**Some of my relatives think I should put my oldest in a school so I can focus on spending time with my younger children. On some days, it seems like I need to get a break from the homeschooling.**

Of course, only you can decide what is best for your family. You need to make educational decisions with prayerful discernment.

Sometimes parents become discouraged about homeschooling, thinking that maybe they just aren't

doing a good enough job teaching. Actually, their children are probably learning at least as much as they would in a school. But what you are providing with Catholic homeschooling is more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. You are providing what Church documents refer to as the “domestic church.” You are showing your children on a daily basis how to respond to the life situations that arise.

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*It is certainly worth going to Mass everyday, even if you feel the most you can achieve amounts to little more than “just showing up.”*

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Hopefully, you are attending Mass every day or at least frequently. You are praying with your children. You are turning to God, the Blessed Mother and the patron saints as you go through the daily duties of home and schooling. You are teaching the Faith in relation to all the subjects you are teaching.

The culture we see on the TV, remember, is also in the schools. It comes via the teachers and the textbooks. It surely comes via the other students, many of whom are living in un-Christian family situations. Remember that as the states make laws to accept single-sex “marriages,” schools will be forced to accept and even teach the acceptance of such situations. And this teaching will begin, or has begun, as early as kindergarten.

Some parents have the conviction that their children ought to go to the public schools and give a Christian witness. That has always struck me as unwise. When our children are older, of college age, after they have had a strong foundation in Catholic values, they can go out and fight the battles in the public

square. We don’t send children into physical battles, and they generally don’t belong in moral battles, either.

**I would like to attend Mass every day, but my younger children are difficult and cannot sit still at Mass.**

It is important for you to attend Mass as frequently as possible. You need the graces to help you throughout the day. Of course, your children need the graces, too, but if you are simply baby-sitting and they are acting up, you may wonder if it is worth the effort. I suggest that you go every day if possible, but leave an older child with your little ones. If you don’t have an older child, ask a relative or a friend to go with you and help with the little ones. They can stand in the back while you are in front with the older children.

Even if you feel that the children are not receiving graces at Mass because they are playing or not paying attention, you never really know the effect that it is having on them. Somebody once said that ninety percent of life is just showing up. It is certainly worth going to Mass everyday, even if you feel the most you can achieve amounts to little more than “just showing up.”

**My daughter is in seventh grade, and she needs to spend more time on math and English before the year ends. How flexible can I be with the history and science courses?**

The core courses in the elementary grades are the religion, the language arts, and the math. These really need to be done every day, though spelling and vocabulary could be reduced to two or three times a week depending on the needs of the student.

History and science are considered “minor” courses in the elementary grades because they are secondary in importance to the language arts and math courses. This means that less time can be devoted to them, especially when you consider that the students will be taking required courses in history and science in the high school years.

Assuming you need extra time for the major courses, we encourage you to have your daughter read the history and science chapters on the weekend, perhaps with

Dad. That way she has the benefit of learning the material but without answering questions and taking the tests. (If she didn’t do the tests, then she would not receive a grade for the course on her report card, but that should not be such a large consideration at this level.)

Alternatively, you might consider skipping the history and science entirely for now, and have your daughter do some of the course work in these classes over the summer. In addition, over the summer, your daughter might read some books in the general areas of history and science. You might find some good historical biographies or historical fiction for your daughter. As for science, try to discover some areas she might find interesting that she could read more about. She might be interested in birds or other animals; she might be interested in the oceans, in flowers, in magnetism, hurricanes or tornadoes; encourage her to read or even to look at pictures. Science and history are so wide-ranging and multi-faceted, it is hard to believe that a student couldn’t find area of interest to her.

**Do any of your religion courses use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*?**

We don’t use the *Catechism* specifically as a text for the courses. We like to use religion textbooks for the students because they are written at the appropriate grade level, and they usually contain study questions and answers. The *Catechism* is really on an adult level, and is not meant as a religion text for students. However, this is not to say that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is ignored. For example, in Religion 12, after many lessons there is a reference to further reading in the *Catechism*.

Remember that the teachings of the Catholic Church do not change. There can be a new emphasis or what is called a “development of doctrine.” But the truths of the Faith are the same whether they are found in the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* or the newer *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is available online at the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm>. It is also available in a printed edition through SEM.

## *Cutting Out Distractions*

*by Ginny Seuffert*

Many homeschooling families really enjoy the summer holidays, but most of us just wish that they would start sooner. Moms are frustrated as we are pushing the students to finish 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Hopes were so high last September as we began the new school year, but despite our best efforts, we still fell behind. Is there anything we can change so that we finish this coming year in a more timely fashion?

There are several reasons that home education does not stay on the strict schedule of institutional schools. Our homes are not insulated classrooms; real people live in them. Babies cry, telephones ring, and we can always expect the unexpected. The doctor tells you to stay in bed the last month of your pregnancy. The new baby has colic and cries all the time. One minute the kids are playing on the lawn, and the next minute you are racing to the Emergency Room for stitches. The roof begins to leak and you have to spend all morning on the phone finding a contractor and negotiating the lowest price. Your cousin needs surgery and you watch her kids for a week. While we recognize that our children are learning about real life situations by watching and participating in them, nonetheless, the unexpected can really cut into class time. There are some things that you can't do much about, but on the other hand, there are many distractions to our homeschooling that we can minimize or eliminate altogether. This month's column deals with two.

### *The "Talented and Gifted" Distraction*

Many homeschooling Moms report that they do not have enough time for academics because their

children are heavily involved in outside activities, usually sports or artistic endeavors, like dance or instrumental music. Most realize that reducing the commitments to these pursuits would free up time for schoolwork, but claim that their hands are tied. Sports are the kids' tickets to college scholarships, and maybe on to the big income of professional sports and endorsements. Often little girls dream of gliding across the ballet stage in pink pointe shoes or picture themselves singing with the Metropolitan Opera. Homeschooling parents who love their children do not want to be dream wreckers!

You could populate a small nation with young Americans who have dreams of a career in the performing arts, or in sports, but are never able to support themselves in these fields, much less have any sort of plan for financial security. These children all need what I call a "Plan B," and this means a strong academic background. Many top universities do not offer sports scholarships, but most will offer a "package" of grant and loan money to athletes who are also qualified students. One need only glance at the headlines of magazines at the grocery store checkout counter to see that many who "make it" in the performing arts lack the basics of moral living and clear thinking. Clearly, they did not receive the benefits of a Seton high school education!

### *The "Talented and Gifted" Solution*

This summer, let your children know that for the coming school year continued participation in these activities that they love so much will hinge on school assignments being completed in a timely fashion. If they are truly dedicated to the activity, they must be willing to forgo TV,

movies, or time with their buddies—not their schoolwork—to free up the necessary hours!

### *The "Good Catholic Home Schooler" Distraction*

Remember how delighted you were when you started homeschooling because of all the opportunities your children would have for enrichment? You joined your local Catholic homeschool support group. The support group has meetings, play dates, "gym" days, group Mass, and class trips. You found parents who band together for group classes, especially in foreign language, history, science and music. You enrolled your teens in Spanish and Latin classes on Friday, right after Mass. All the children wanted to be part of the Ancient Egypt class, so you do that on Wednesdays. Once a month, your support group plans a trip and you always participate in that.

Think of the time all this support group involvement takes. Let's say you want your teens to take a Latin class one hour a week. Adding the half hour ride each way, we're up to two hours. Except you have to bring all of the children with you because the fifth and sixth graders will fight if you're not home, and your only babysitters are taking the Latin class. So now everyone has to be nicely dressed, hair done, diapers changed, the whole nine yards. If you have a large family, that could easily add another hour. So now you are hauling all your children out of the classroom for three hours a week. If you attend a group Mass, that could add another three hours lost. We just wiped out a whole school day! It's easy to see how just one or two activities per week can really cut into class time, and all that running around can really burn out Mom!

And, of course, you want your family to be involved in your local parish. Mom teaches CCD; Dad is an usher; Junior is an altar boy, Annie

and Janey sing in the choir, and now the pastor is asking Mom and Dad to do pre-Cana counseling. Many Catholic families are also active in pro-life or political activities.

Strictly speaking, there is nothing wrong with any of these activities. That's the predicament! Because all of these are wholesome, sometimes even holy activities, we are attracted to the advantages they offer our families.

### *The "Good Catholic Home Schooler" Solution*

Real education is not easy and it takes time! In institutional school, children spend approximately five hours each day in the classroom and often have an hour or two of homework. No question, homeschooling is more efficient, but the children still have to learn skills and practice the skills that they learn. That takes time!

Carefully consider the hours you are losing in your home classroom before you agree to an outside activity. Try to find solutions that do not often pull you from your home. Group Mass is nice for a Mass of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the school year, but you get the same graces from daily Mass at your local parish.

Moms and Dads with school-age children, often welcoming a new baby every two years, need to set careful priorities during these irreplaceable years of the children's lives. The benefits of any activity outside the home, no matter how worthy, must be carefully weighed against the time away from the classroom. Pro-life work, parish involvement, cultural experiences with a support group, team sports, and music lessons, all of these must take their places behind the children's time in the classroom. There will always be worthy causes and activities; pick just a few and you will find the next school year just may stay on schedule.

## *Ballad of Father Gilligan*

As the article by Robert Rice on the next page states, a story can often convey an idea more effectively than simply saying the idea. Good fiction can inspire in the reader a love of virtue and a desire for what is right. It teaches the heart as well as the mind.

The following is a poem in our high school American Literature textbook. Based on an old Irish legend, it was written by William Butler Yeats, a poet, dramatist, and essayist who won many honors, including a Nobel Prize in 1923, and an honorary degree from Oxford University.

We believe it is a model of fine literature which teaches Catholic philosophy in real life to our students.

The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Was weary night and day;  
For half his flock were in their beds,  
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,  
At the moth-hour of eve,  
Another poor man sent for him,  
And he began to grieve.



"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,  
For people die and die;"  
And after cried he, "God forgive!  
My body spoke, not I."

He knelt, and leaning on the chair,  
He prayed and fell asleep;  
And the moth-hour went from the fields,  
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,  
And leaves shook in the wind;  
And God covered the world with shade,  
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp  
When the moths came once more,  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Stood upright on the floor.

"Mavrone, mavrone! The man has died,  
While I slept on the chair";  
He roused his horse out of its sleep,  
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,  
By rocky lane and fen;  
The sick man's wife opened the door:  
"Father! You come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.  
"He died an hour ago."  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone, he turned and died  
As merry as a bird."  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars  
For souls who tire and bleed,  
Sent one of His great angels down  
To help me in my need.

"He Who is wrapped in purple robes,  
With planets in His care,  
Had pity on the least of things,  
Asleep upon a chair."

## Why Study Literature?

Why are literary studies an essential part of a sound Catholic education? If the student isn't planning on going to college, is it worth the effort? Isn't it enough that the student know how to read, write, and calculate? Isn't knowledge of the Catechism, the truths of the Catholic Faith, all that is really necessary? Homeschooling parents sometimes ask such questions, prompted perhaps by their own less-than-satisfying educational experience in "English" classes, or by their finding the task of leading their children in the study of literature somewhat daunting.

We can approach the answers to these questions by looking at what may be gained by literary study and at what a person may lack who has not enjoyed the benefits of good literature.

The study of imaginative literature is, in the words of the literary scholar Marion Montgomery, "a long journey in pursuit of the human heart and

mind." In literature one discovers more deeply what it means to be human. The student of literature vicariously experiences many lives in the comfort of his own home: the drama, excitement, and adventure of the lives of heroic explorers and missionaries on seven continents, the ordeals of questing knights and Crusaders in the Middle Ages, the suffering and glory of martyrs from first-century Rome to twentieth-century Sudan, the perspectives of artistic geniuses, the wisdom of great thinkers, the mystic insights of saints—in short, the misery and the majesty, the agony and the ecstasy, the squalor and the splendor of mankind in a multitude and variety of forms otherwise impossible for one person to experience on his own.

Are we meant to experience so much? The greatest work of literature of all time—containing dramatized histories of the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, tales of heroes and heroines, of love and lust, of sin and sanctity, of the seven deadly sins and the four cardinal virtues, as well as hymns, prophecies, and books of wisdom (the Bible, of course)—has as its Author the Holy Spirit! Our Lord Himself chose to teach in parables, that is, allegorical or symbolic stories. It seems evident, then, that our

Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier approves of imaginative literature and has used it for the highest ends. So too, since the power of expression is a gift from God, the masterworks of merely human authors ("the best of what has been thought and expressed," as Matthew Arnold put it) also help teach us to aspire to the nobility of virtue, to shun the degradation of vice, and to value the true, the good, and the beautiful above all the meretricious temptations of the Enemy of man.

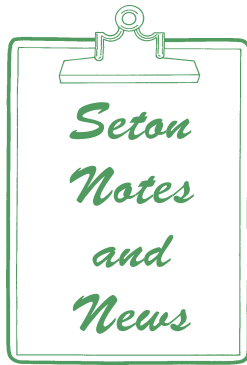
Furthermore, literature and history are mutually illuminating. The authors of great literature are both representative of their age and agents of its transformation; they at once reflect and mold our civilization's image of Man. The works offered by Seton's literature courses will help prepare the student to form a critical taste, enabling him to deal later in life with influential but pernicious works of literature.

What does one miss by neglecting such literary study? Such a one would be the poorer for not having known the brilliance and wisdom of a Chesterton or a Belloc, the profundity and nobility of mind of a Gerard Manley Hopkins or a John Henry Newman, the mystery and romance of an Edgar Allan Poe or a Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Such a one would be the poorer for having neglected the God-given gifts of literary genius. Such a one would be the poorer for being ignorant of the lives of noble men and women who have so much to teach us about how to live, in times both of trial and of peace. Wisdom comes from profound experiences deeply pondered, and great literature is the gateway to the wisdom of the ages.

Is literary study, then, worth the effort? Since God created us as human beings, creatures composed of matter and spirit, with an immortal soul endowed with intellect, memory, and will, capable of knowing and loving both ourselves and our Creator, it must be important for us to seek to know what it means to be fully human. Through literature, the Venerable John Henry Newman wrote, "the secrets of the heart are brought to light, pain of the soul is relieved, hidden grief is carried off, sympathy conveyed, counsel imparted, experience recorded, and wisdom perpetuated"—through this powerful medium we can glean perhaps a deeper and wider understanding of the mystery of what it means to be a man or a woman, for the sake of whom the Son of God gave His life on the cross. It must be worth the effort.

*Robert Rice is Chairman of the Department of English Language and Literature at Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia.*





## 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.

**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 15th 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).

## Spam Filters

It seems like most of the email everyone gets is spam, so it's no wonder that more and more people are using spam filters to filter out unwanted email. Unfortunately, we have found that a lot of email from Seton is being filtered out by these filters. Email that is filtered out includes grade reports, notices of work received, notices if uploads were not successful, etc. In other words, these are emails that you probably want to get.

Fortunately, spam filters usually give a way to tell them that email is not spam. The best thing to do, if possible, is to set the spam filter to allow through anything from [SETONHOME.ORG](http://SETONHOME.ORG). If you have to enter specific email addresses, you can use [Grading@SetonHome.org](mailto:Grading@SetonHome.org), [MySeton@SetonHome.org](mailto:MySeton@SetonHome.org), and [Admissions@SetonHome.org](mailto:Admissions@SetonHome.org).

By the way, if you really do not want to receive emails from Seton, you can opt-out of emails. Just go to your My Seton page at [www.setonhome.org/myseton](http://www.setonhome.org/myseton). Click on "My Account", then click on "Preferences" and check the box that says "Don't send me notifications by e-mail".

## Letter from a Parent

I just want to thank you for all you have done through God to promote homeschooling.

Years ago, as a young Catholic college student, I watched you on EWTN speaking about Seton. Since I was studying Education, and had been "Catholic" school educated (rather uneducated), I saw a tremendous need for a program such as this (Seton). I became determined that when I started a family, I would be a Seton homeschool family. I have never regretted it!

After my first child was born, I enrolled her in Kindergarten at the earliest opportunity and the other children as well. [My youngest], who is only two, awaits her turn. I have been so happy and confident with Seton's curriculum, though it is always challenging. My son who just turned six was told by our parish D.R.E. that he is more than ready for First Confession and First Communion. My husband and I were thoroughly congratulated. Then the D.R.E. reiterated that we were wonderful parents in the way we are educating our children in the Faith.

We praise and immensely thank God for His grace and Seton Home Study School. Please keep up the good work and remember us in your prayers as we will always remember you.

## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

is published monthly by  
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Phone: (540) 636-9990  
Fax Machine: (540) 636-1602  
Internet: [www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)  
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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)

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## *Homily on Corpus Christi*

On the feast of *Corpus Domini*, the Church relives the mystery of Holy Thursday in the light of the Resurrection. There is also a Eucharistic procession on Holy Thursday, when the Church repeats the exodus of Jesus from the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives.

In Israel, the night of the Passover was celebrated in the home, within the intimacy of the family; this is how the first Passover in Egypt was commemorated, the night in which the blood of the paschal lamb, sprinkled on the crossbeam and doorposts of the houses, served as protection against the destroyer.

On that night, Jesus goes out and hands himself over to the betrayer, the destroyer, and in so doing, overcomes the night, overcomes the darkness of evil. Only in this way is the gift of the Eucharist, instituted in the Upper Room, fulfilled: Jesus truly gives his Body and his Blood. Crossing over the threshold of death, he becomes living Bread, true manna, endless nourishment for eternity. The flesh becomes the Bread of Life.

In the Holy Thursday procession, the Church accompanies Jesus to the Mount of Olives: it is the authentic desire of the Church in prayer to keep watch with Jesus, not to abandon him in the night of the world, on the night of betrayal, on the night of the indifference of many people.

On the feast of *Corpus Domini*, we again go on this procession, but in the joy of the Resurrection. The Lord is risen and leads us.

In the narrations of the Resurrection there is a common and essential feature; the angels say: the Lord “goes ahead of you to Galilee, where you will see him” (Mt 28: 7).

Taking this into deep consideration, we can say that this “going ahead” of Jesus implies a two-way direction.

The first is, as we have heard, Galilee. In Israel, Galilee was considered to be the doorway to the pagan world. And in reality, precisely on the mountain in Galilee, the disciples see Jesus, the Lord, who tells them: “Go... and make disciples of all the nations” (Mt 28: 19).

The other preceding direction of the Risen One appears in the Gospel of St. John, in the words of Jesus to Mary Magdalene: “Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father” (Jn 20: 17).

Jesus goes before us next to the Father, rises to the heights of God and invites us to follow him. These two directions on the Risen One’s journey are not contradictory, for both indicate the path to follow Christ.

The true purpose of our journey is communion with God. He himself is the house of many dwelling places (cf. Jn 14: 2ff.); but we can be elevated to these dwelling places only by going “towards Galilee”, travelling on the pathways of the world, taking the Gospel to all nations, carrying the gift of his love to the men and women of all times.

*Benedict XVI, May 26th, 2005*

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