



Seton Home



Study School

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The Presentation of Mary

On November 21st, we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple. It is believed that Mary was only three years old when her parents, Joachim and Anne, took her to the Temple in order to dedicate her to the service of God. Her service would consist of intimate union with God through contemplative prayer until the time when Jesus was conceived, which would result in a greater union with God.

Mary was consecrated to God in the great Temple of Jerusalem. It was the heart and center of the worship of the one true God by the Jewish people and the one place where God would descend and indwell in a lesser way before the time of the descent of His only Son in the Incarnation.

Mary’s consecration in the great Temple signified that Mary was to be the one totally faithful daughter of Israel; she would hear and heed by faith the proclamation of the coming of the eternal Word as man by the angel Gabriel, and she would receive and nurture Him in her womb. She would be the beginning and nucleus of a new and greater “Temple.” She would thereby also become the one utterly faithful daughter of the new Israel, the Church.

While Mary would only know and choose in the mode of a three-year-old child, her freedom from all sin would still make a great difference in how she knew and desired as a little child. The Holy Spirit—the only source of true awareness, true freedom, and of all that is the opposite of sin—indwelt in Mary from the moment of her conception in Anne’s womb. The sustained and intense

presence of the indwelling Spirit, and the consequent freedom from sin, meant that the three-year-old Mary was aware of God and united with him in ways a sinner could not experience. What she most likely could not know and desire intellectually, she knew and desired in a love without barriers.

What follows from our meditation on the presentation of Mary to God in His Temple? First, as we cultivate an atmosphere of devout faith in our homes through family prayer, private devotions, sacramentals, and God-centered home education, we also want to cultivate innocence in our children. Innocence has a certain similarity to Mary’s freedom from sin; it helps our children to know and love God more readily and deeply. Of course, prayer and devotions in the home contribute to the innocence of our children. We also want to shelter and protect our children more deliberately from the evils of contemporary life. We want to emphasize the good things of our Faith in an atmosphere of affection.

Second, we not only want to cultivate innocence in our children, we also want to look for innocence in them and see Christ in them. In spite of the difficulties of everyday life in raising our children, our faith is able to help us perceive the deeper innocence and Christ-like beauty they have in imperfect but very real ways.

Third, we want to heed our Lord when he said that unless we become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. This exhortation is a reason we want to look for innocence and Christ-likeness in our children: seeing these things in them helps us to

understand how to cultivate childlike innocence in ourselves.

Finally, we want to make devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary one of the pillars of our domestic church along with prayer, striving for virtue, meditative hearing and reading of Scripture, frequent confession, and frequent reception of the Eucharist. We want to dedicate our children to Mary because she puts them on the path to holiness of life.

Let us ponder the words of the Byzantine Liturgy on the Feast of the Presentation of Mary, “When Anne was graced with the pure and ever-virgin Mary, she presented her to the Temple of God... And she said, “Go, my child, to the One who sent you to me, for you are promised to Him by vow, you are an incense of delicate fragrance. Enter into the veiled place and learn the mysteries of God. Prepare yourself to be a delightful dwelling place for Jesus, who grants great mercy to the world.”

We parents are graced with our children; let us give them back to the One who sent them to us. Let us keep our homes a “veiled place,” a domestic church, a temple of the home, so our children can learn the mysteries of God without the corrupting influences of the secular society surrounding them. Let us prepare our children, and ourselves, to be “delightful dwelling places for Jesus.”

- MKC

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Questions We Are Asked

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

How can I help my teenage son focus on his schoolwork? He always seems to be finding things to do other than his schooling.

There is no question that teens, especially those who help take care of the younger children or help with housework, have a difficult time focusing on their schoolwork. It is not easy for mother, who is busy home schooling the younger children, not to ask her teens to help with the chores and babysitting.

We home schooling moms need to be ready to give up our biggest helpers so that our teens can concentrate on their schoolwork, which is certainly not easy in high school. A student's high school learning, grades, and credits are important for the rest of the student's life. Good high school grades and a good score on the SAT or ACT will often mean easy acceptance to college and can even bring scholarship offers. The high school years need to be a time of dedicated academic work.

Consider having your teen go to work with Dad and work at his office a few days a week. Or consider having your teen work at the local college library for three or four days a week.

To keep their focus, some teens find it easier to spend more time on one subject. Some like to do only two subjects for a couple of months, get the courses finished, and earn two credits quickly. Some find it difficult to focus on six subjects each day, and there is an inevitable time loss simply switching between subjects, looking for books, finding new assignments, etc.

Have a meeting with your son and husband and try to work out a schedule and location that will help him improve in his study habits.

I have phoned the English counselors several times, but I still feel discouraged.

Our English counselors have found that the main reason parents or students call, especially for high school, to ask questions about the English assignments, is because they have not sufficiently read the lesson plans, or at least the section of the lesson plans that is appropriate for the assignment. Oftentimes problems are encountered because a student does not have a good grasp of what is expected in an assignment. But these expectations are clearly spelled out in the lesson plans. A bit of reading before doing an assignment can save hours of frustration later.

The high school English courses have appendices in the back which give more details, more examples, and answer keys. We suggest that for each appendix, you scotch tape a little post-it note alongside the outer margin. Write on the note the specific title for that section, such as Book Analysis, or Research Paper. Highlight the important points.

If possible, it is a good idea for the student to read the entire lesson plan to get an overview of what is expected in the course. Before calling a counselor, review the appropriate section again with your student. That should reduce your number of calls, and when you or your student do need to call, you both are more comfortable asking your question.

Students sometimes complain about assignments, saying they don't understand them, or they just can't do them. But assignments usually are not hard when students know what is expected. At that point, it is just a matter of plowing through, and the lesson of plowing through what needs to be done is one of the most important lessons that anyone can learn.

Am I required to send in the tests to be graded by Seton? I would like to grade some of them myself.

The short answer is that you do not need to send anything to Seton to be graded. That is entirely your choice.

Some parents want to grade assignments before they send them in to Seton. When parents grade assignments, we still review the assignments, but we usually accept the grade given by the parent. These grades are still considered Seton grades even though the item was initially graded by the parent.

Oftentimes problems are encountered because a student does not have a good grasp of what is expected in an assignment.

Other parents want to do all or most of the grading by themselves and not send the work in to Seton. The only drawback is that we cannot give a Seton grade for courses in which Seton does not grade the assignments, or at least confirm the grades given by the parents. If you don't send in any work at all, then we can't issue a report card or a high school transcript. If you don't send assignments to Seton, then you will need to create your own report cards and transcripts.

My husband does not want to have the internet in our home, but I know you have a lot of online resources.

Certainly whether or not to have internet access is a decision that every family must make. Along with many good things online, there are many very bad things. However, any young person entering college or the workforce needs to be acquainted with the internet to some extent. And if you

do decide to have internet access, there are many filtering systems available to block out undesirable material. Also, you can monitor and limit the use by your children. Even if you decide not to have the internet in your home, most libraries offer free internet access.

We use our web site to give our students additional resources for the courses, and to give an opportunity to take a number of tests online, or to send tests and other items to Seton over the internet. This saves time and money, and gives our graders the ability to grade tests more quickly. This gives you the opportunity to see the comments of the grader more quickly. It really is helpful to students to have test results immediately after they take a test, rather than saving up the tests and seeing how they are doing only after they have finished a quarter.

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There are so many benefits available on your My Seton page. You can use online courses, listen to audio lectures, view grade reports, download supplemental materials, and many other things. The internet really has proved to be an incredible resource for homeschooling.

My daughter and I are struggling with Grammar 9. I don't remember if I ever learned grammar, and I am having trouble learning it and teaching it.

There are several resources available for you. One option would be to obtain a lower level grammar book. We suggest that you purchase from our SEM department a copy of the Voyages in English 8. It covers all the material, including both grammar and composition. Just recently, we have been able to acquire a few more Warriner's English Grammar and Composition books. Be sure you order the key when you order the books.

For general grammar drill, you can try looking on the internet. The internet is filled with English Grammar exercises for students, and even exercises for teachers. Many of these exercises can be printed out, or can be done right on the computer. Purdue University Online Writing Lab (at owl.english.purdue.edu) has loads of drill sheets you can download. They even have interactive grammar exercises, all free. Their Verb Chart is really great!

Grammar is an important subject and an important skill to perfect. People do judge us on how we express ourselves, and grammar is an important part of that. Don't give up on proper grammar.

I have a boy enrolled in special services, and we are moving very slowly. What should I do if we need more than one year to complete a grade level?

Remember that we have no calendar. You should take as long as necessary for your child to learn the material. For Special Needs students, we anticipate that the school year is likely to take longer, perhaps even two years. We have no problem with that.

For social security, insurance agencies, or local school districts, we do recommend that you are careful to send to Seton at least every six months at least one quarter of work in the major subjects of English, Math, and Reading. This shows that your child is still enrolled and making progress.

For more information, we recommend that you go on our web site at www.setonhome.org, and click on Curriculum, then click on Special Services. You might want to order the book Home Schooling Children with

Special Needs. Also click on Most Frequently Asked Questions about our Special Needs Department, "Special Services for Special Kids with Special Needs."

And of course, our Special Needs counselors are available to answer your questions by phone or email.

My friend wants to home school because all her possessions were lost in the hurricane in Louisiana. Her husband does not yet have a job in his new location. Can you help her?

We have a number of new families as well as re-enrolled families who have lost everything, not only due to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but also due to the flooding in the northeast. We are asking for donations to help these families, and we ask you to pray that Dads can find jobs to support their families. Many of our Seton families are living with other families, and some of these host families are not very open to the concept of home schooling. Keep them in your prayers.

Home schooling is a good choice for families displaced by the hurricanes, since the school can come with them wherever they go. Home schooling will bring some stability to their lives.

My daughter is struggling with the Science 8 course. What do you suggest?

Like adults, students have their likes and dislikes, their strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes we just need to try to work with or around them. We do have other books available. For a student in Grade 8, we often can move the student into Earth Science, which is a high school course, and the student can earn a high school credit. This kind of incentive might help your daughter to focus more on the subject and try to do her best so she obtains a good grade on her high school transcript.

Many 8th grade students do take one or two high school credits early. If your student is getting good grades in the 7th and 8th grade subjects, she will likely do well in a high school course.

Educators Because They Are Parents

It is evident that the specific purpose of marriage is the procreation and education of children. Marriage is for the conception, birth, and education of new human persons made in the image of God. That Marriage is for children sets Marriage as a unique form of human association. A man and a woman become a husband and a wife in one flesh in order to become a father and a mother to their children.

The sober mind recognizes that the necessary connection between Marriage and children is a truth of the Natural Law. It is, in fact, a common or general principle of the Natural Law.

This Truth about Marriage being necessarily connected to children fits the criteria for good law. The criteria for good law, including Natural Law, are: first, good law is knowable; second, good law is mandatory—it is not merely advice or ideals; third, good law is reasonable, it makes sense according to the nature of things; fourth, good law is for the common good; and fifth, good law is authoritatively given.

First, the Truth that Marriage is ordained for the procreation and education of children is knowable in that it is known through immediate experience. It is also the common experience of mankind lived through the centuries.

Second, the Truth that Marriage is ordained for the procreation and education of children is mandatory in that it binds us in conscience to undertake Marriage only if we are open to its specific purpose of procreating and educating children. Indeed, a marriage in which the parties are able to have children but specifically intend completely to prevent the conception of any children is an invalid marriage.

Third, the Truth that Marriage is for the procreation and education of children is reasonable in that it is based on the permanent nature and purposes of the human being.

Fourth, the Truth that Marriage is for the procreation and education of children is for the common good is obvious in that children are necessary for the continuation of the human family.

Fifth, the Truth that Marriage is for the procreation and education of children is authoritative. That Marriage is essentially ordained of the procreation and education of children comes from God the Author of all, the Creator of all, and absolute Authority over all.

While the good-willed person can recognize the Natural Law that Marriage is for the procreation of children, he may have more difficulty in recognizing that Marriage is also for the education of children. His difficulty may come from the entrenched custom and attitude, one hundred and fifty years in the making in this country, that have encouraged parents to give up much of their important and essential duty to educate their own children. The belief or attitude that education is best done away from home has been carefully cultivated for many generations in this country.

This belief or attitude became an entrenched attitude and custom because the Industrial Revolution seemed to have demanded an educational counterpart to its factory—the classroom school. Modern governments pushed such schools because they were excellent tools for enforcing conformity and change according to the ideological agenda a government was following.

This entrenched attitude about schools has encouraged parents, almost unconsciously, to view their duty to educate their children as no more than to teach personal hygiene and social courtesies, and then send them off to school.

Most Catholic parents today, affected by the prevalent attitudes of the secular society, view catechesis or religious education as mainly the job of the religion class in the Catholic school, or of the religion class at the local parish church. For most Catholic parents, sending their children to a religion class, and for the family to go to Sunday Mass,

is the extent of their religious obligation, and the extent of religious instruction for the children.

The majority of governments in the world that have been in charge of schools in the past 150 years have not been governments influenced by Christian or Catholic principles. These governments have been militantly secular, anti-clerical, anti-Catholic, or even militantly atheistic governments.

Even in our own beloved America, where individual liberty has been more respected than in most European countries, the first government schools, or public schools, promoted a state religion with a Protestant character. Beginning in the 1960's, the government schools promoted an officially “neutral” position regarding religion. As we all know, completely ignoring the existence of God has resulted in an anti-Christian government-approved religion of secular humanism in the classrooms and textbooks of America.

To be neutral or indifferent to God is to be against Him. To omit or ignore the living Lord Jesus Christ is to deny Him.

In the nineteenth century, many of the Catholic bishops of the United States became worried about the influence on Catholic children of the government-approved Protestant religion in Catholic schools. At considerable cost and sacrifice, the Catholic bishops set up a separate Catholic school system. Unfortunately, the pervasive effects of the Industrial Revolution, the immigrant status of many Catholics, the English-dominated Protestant government, and a certain shortsightedness when the pope was warning about Americanism, made it impossible for Catholic clergy to see, and foresee, the need for Catholic home schooling as an option.

Before the 1960's, the Catholic schools tried to both catechize and educate by using Catholic textbooks in all areas of the curriculum, either from Catholic publishers or from Catholic divisions of secular publishers.

Since the late 1960's, however, Catholic schools began using the

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The Benefits of Frequent Family Confession

By Fr. Frank E. Papa, S.O.L.T., J.C.D.

Chaplain, Human Life International

Horses beget horses, cattle beget cattle, dogs beget dogs, cats beget cats, mice beget mice, ducks beget ducks, and donkeys beget donkeys! The wildest of animals beget offspring of their own kind (no contraception or abortion here); and once the offspring are born, their animal-parents shield, protect, feed, and shelter their young; and like the birds of the air, they instinctively train their young to survive in their (excuse the pun) “dog-eat-dog” world.

Now when it comes to animals, such preparation for life is sufficient, since life on this earth is the only existence an animal will ever have.

Not so with us human beings. We are not mere animals. Yes, we have bodies like the animals; but we are animated by a spiritual soul that is moral and immortal, and has reasoning-power and will-power as unique faculties. In other words, we humans are moral, immortal beings, capable of making decisions that have eternal consequences. We are eternal beings: from the moment of our conception, we are destined to live forever!

The question is: In what state or condition will we be? There are three possibilities: Heaven, Purgatory, or Hell. Those who have gone-before-us, are experiencing one or the other condition—eternal happiness, temporary purification, or eternal punishment—depending on how they lived their lives in this world.

How did we humans get into this situation? After all, we know that when God created this world, He saw that it was “good.” Now if everything God created is “good,” and God created every thing, how did some thing called “evil” get into the picture?

The answer is that Man, through Pride, thought that by disobeying God, he could become as great as God! And thus sin—the ultimate evil—entered this world. But sin is not another thing created by God. Sin is not a thing at all! Sin is the absence of something, the lack of something. Sin is the lack of goodness, the lack of holiness, the lack of godliness, and the lack of God.

So, God hates sin, because sin is the absence of what God is: Goodness and Holiness in Himself! Sin violates the very nature of God’s “Good” Creation.

Except for our Lord and His Immaculate Mother, all humans are sinners. We have “all sinned and done what is evil” in the sight of the Lord. Because of our fallen human nature, we all lean in the direction of sin, and we are all prone to sin.

And as every informed Catholic knows, the guilt of our sins makes us unholy, ungodly, and unworthy of entering into the Presence of God in Heaven for all Eternity. Were it not for the fact that God has instituted a remedy for our guilt, there would be no Heaven in store for any of us. Even the unholiness of our venial sins would stain our souls for all Eternity, and exclude us from the Presence of God in Heaven, Who is All-Holy!

The remedy? The Sacrament of Confession. Through the Sacrament of Confession, instituted by our Savior, the eradication of each man’s sins has been made possible by the merits of Christ’s Passion and Death. What rational creature, knowing this, would not avail himself of this remedy for sin? Sin, that evil which clings to us so closely! And what father or mother, entrusted with the upbringing of the children gifted to them, would deny themselves and their children this awesome and efficacious opportunity to be rid of their sins?

You, and each member of your Family, will gain tremendous spiritual benefits by going to Confession frequently:

- You get to know yourself better
- You grow in humility
- You are enabled to conquer your bad habits
- You are enabled to practice the spiritual life without becoming neglectful or lukewarm
- Your conscience is made pure
- Your will is strengthened
- You gain a healthy self-control
- You grow in God’s grace through

the Sacrament of Confession itself. (See the Encyclical of Pope Pius XII, entitled *Mystici Corporis*.)

Certainly loving parents would desire such benefits for their children. And should they not desire such benefits for themselves? Blessed is the child who sees his mother and father on their knees, going to Confession!

How often should the family go to Confession? Some people take this “spiritual bath” daily, others weekly, monthly, or yearly (I definitely don’t recommend taking any bath yearly!). Some Saints have gone to Confession daily. Many home schooling families go weekly. Some Catholics go monthly; others yearly; and some do not go at all! (God help them.)

The spirit of “frequency” would say: “Go often, go many times, go repeatedly.” It’s wise to be consistent. Spasmodic decisions to go to Confession do not promote the practice of frequent family Confession. It’s best to have a family rule that says: “Saturdays are family Confession day in our home”, or “In our family, the first Saturday of the Month is family Confession day.”

As a priest, I am blessed to hear many confessions every week, since I am assigned to one of the centers of home schooling in America! And what a joy it is to picture whole families, with as many as one to fourteen children, standing in line for Confession. Our Lord loves them for that! He is most pleased with that family, and I sense that His Face is shining on them all...mother, father, and children. “A humble, contrite heart I will not spurn,” says the Lord.

We cannot find happiness, peace and joy apart from God. All we have to do is look around us to become aware of the disastrous lives of those who try to live apart from God. They indulge in a few fleeting, empty pleasures, and sink into the depths of depression and despair; the peace and joy of Christ is not in them. It is only in keeping God’s Commandments, and remaining in His Grace, that we find true happiness!

Frequent family Confession promotes happiness, holiness and harmony in the home. Spiritually blessed is the family who goes to Confession frequently!

Flexibility During the Primary Years

by Ginny Seuffert

Last months' column introduced the idea that two words—standards and flexibility—hold the key to success in our home schools. On one hand, we must insist that our children strive to meet the high standards that have always characterized Catholic learning. At the same time, we make the most of the home schooling environment to adapt the program to meet the educational needs of each individual student. This balance, between standards and flexibility, might seem to be somewhat tricky during the primary years, kindergarten through third grade, but it really is quite simple.

Moving from the relaxed learning of the toddler years into a regular organized course of study is the goal of the primary years of education. More specific goals, like how well a student should be spelling at the end of first grade or when to introduce the five times table, can be found in Seton's lesson plans, which is why it is such a good idea for even experienced home schoolers to read the plans each new school year. Reviewing Seton's educational goals helps parents to formulate their own plans. Once you understand where you are going, it is easier to see how you can inject some flexibility.

We can be flexible about when we begin formal schooling.

I am absolutely convinced that many children, especially little boys, would benefit if kindergarten entrance were delayed until they are closer to six years old. Many children lack the concentration to apply themselves to academic work, the fine motor coordination to begin printing, and the ability to sit still for extended periods of time. It is almost criminal to ask these children to sit at a desk, stay on task, and form letters on paper, but usually it is mom who is punished for this "crime" with tears and defiance when she tries to force her little square peg into the round hole of formal schooling. The whole process will be a lot easier if mom takes an extra year to allow Junior to mature physically and emotionally, while she works on developing coordination and concentration skills.

At the same time many other children, often little girls, will sit for hours working on puzzles or coloring books, and beg to be allowed to do academic work, even at only four years old. While I would never suggest sending a four-year-old to an institutional school setting, I see no reason to delay home schooling with these little eager beavers!

Parents should remember that Seton allows a full two years for students to complete their kindergarten program. If after looking through the materials Mom is wondering, "What was I thinking!" she can put the box away and pull it out of the closet when her child is ready.

We can be flexible about our school schedule during the primary years.

One of the huge advantages of home education is that parents can pick the daily schedule that best fits their own circumstances. During the primary years, a shorter school day for more of the year might better suit your needs than the traditional model. If you have lots of little ones running around, try to assign some work in the morning when your students are fresh and babies and toddlers are less likely to be cranky. Take a break, and then hit the books during naptime, and perhaps again at night for a short time while dad watches the babies.

Don't forget that one important goal of the primary years is to transform your post-toddler into a serious and independent learner. Sometimes a student is capable of staying on task for only a couple of hours each day at the beginning of kindergarten, and often even this time must be broken up into shorter sessions. Accept this, but at the same time recognize that you must gradually tack on extra minutes to each session as the months go by. By the end of third grade, many children are working all morning, at least part of the afternoon, and sometimes even catching up once in a while in the evenings.

We can be flexible about how we present the work.

I want to be careful about this one because too many home schooling moms

and dads have been convinced that they must tailor each child's program, down to the tiniest detail, to exactly match the student's learning style. Sorry to contradict, but that's nonsense! There were 60 children in my first grade classroom and everybody learned to read, add and subtract and say their prayers just one way. This was during the so-called golden age of the parish schools, and these schools, with inferior facilities and often staffed by sisters with limited educations themselves, produced students who were the envy of the educational establishment of that time.

On the other hand, even large Catholic families are usually home schooling only a handful of students at a time, so we can add some fun and flexibility to our methods. If your kindergarten student just can't seem to fit those letters between the lines in the workbook, buy a whiteboard and markers. If your son balks at reading homey stories about family life, try to substitute some adventure stories or nature books. Drill catechism questions and answers, spelling words, and math facts in the car when the children are captive anyway. If your third-grader finds writing paragraphs laborious, buy a keyboarding program and let the student use a word processor for compositions. The lesson plans often give great ideas for enrichment. Just remember to use the work text and lesson plan guides for the material that should be covered.

We can be flexible about the material we cover.

I can remember, like it happened yesterday, sitting in that crowded first grade classroom and repeating the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be with the other students. Sister would call on random students for an oral quiz, and my six-year-old mind just could not get the point of the whole thing. Why was she asking us to repeat something that I presumed we all knew? My brothers and I said those prayers every night of our lives, so this classroom drill was a total waste of time for me, although I now suspect some students needed it.

If, like me, your children learned their prayers at mom's knee, there is

no need to review. On the other hand, if Junior and Janey loved learning about mammals, go to the library and get more books or plan some trips to the zoo. If your second grader breezed through the readers, and clearly understands the content, consider taking a trip to the library for more books.

We can be flexible about the time we spend on each subject.

If your child obviously knows his subtraction facts, let him test out of that chapter and move on. If your daughter clearly knows those letter sounds, let her finish the first half of the page and go on to more challenging work.

On the other hand, if at the end of the subtraction chapter, you son is still counting on his fingers, spend another week drilling with flash cards. If letter sounds are still a struggle, reviewing each one everyday at the beginning of phonics class. Sixteen years of home education have taught me that repetition is the key to learning difficult concepts. Take all the time your pupil needs.

As with everything else, having a clear vision of where you are going will smooth the way. Parents who understand the goals of a particular school year will better know where they can cut corners, reinforce concepts, or provide enrichment. Pray to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton for her intercession with this important work!

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same secular textbooks as the secular-humanistic government schools. In addition, the Catholic schools have followed more and more state standards for the government schools, such as in the area of sex education. Meanwhile, many parents have been unaware of these changes in the schools because mothers were forced by economic changes to take jobs outside the home, and focus more time on work rather than family.

The catechesis of Catholic schools since the 1960's has both caused and reflected the confusion in the Church for the past 30-plus years. Many religion teachers and textbooks have become more concerned about fashionable and dissident theology, psychology, sociology, and abstract social justice than about true doctrine, correct worship, the commandments for everyday life, regular private prayer, and salvation.

A few years ago, Archbishop Buechlein, as head of a "Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism," reported to his fellow bishops at their spring meeting that "there seem to be a number of doctrinal deficiencies common to many [catechisms]". Two of those listed were "Deficient teaching on

original sin and sin in general; and meager exposition of Christian moral life."

Pope Pius XI's encyclical letter "On Christian Marriage" repeats the constant teaching of the Church: "The blessing of offspring... is not completed by the mere begetting of them, but something else must be added, namely the proper education of the offspring. For the wise God would have failed to make sufficient provision for children that had been born...if He had not given to those to whom He had entrusted the power and right to beget them, also the power and the right to educate them."

So Catholic home schooling must not be concerned merely with math and science. Our Catholic home schooling must create an atmosphere in which a rich sacramental life flourishes, where our children practice Catholic devotions, attend Mass during the week as much as possible, as well as on Sundays, and go to Confession often. The combination of the sacraments and sacramentals, a strong daily prayer life, and a genuine concern for each other's welfare should be the result of a continuing reflection about the eternal salvation of each member of the family.

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WORLD YOUTH DAY, PART II

In our pilgrimage with the mysterious Magi from the East, we have arrived at the moment which St Matthew describes in his Gospel with these words: "Going into the house (over which the star had halted), they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him" (Mt 2:11). Outwardly, their journey was now over. They had reached their goal.

But at this point a new journey began for them, an inner pilgrimage which changed their whole lives. Their mental picture of the infant King they were expecting to find must have been very different. They had stopped at Jerusalem specifically in order to ask the King who lived there for news of the promised King who had been born. They knew that the world was in disorder, and for that reason their hearts were troubled...

The new King, to whom they now paid homage, was quite unlike what they were expecting. In this way they had to learn that God is not as we usually imagine him to be. This was where their inner journey began. It started at the very moment when they knelt down before this child and recognized him as the promised King. But they still had to assimilate these joyful gestures internally.

They had to change their ideas about power, about God and about man, and in so doing, they also had to change themselves. Now they were able to see that God's power is not like that of the powerful of this world. God's ways are not as we imagine them or as we might wish them to be.

God does not enter into competition with earthly powers in this world. He does not marshal his divisions alongside other divisions. God did not send 12 legions of angels to assist Jesus in the Garden of Olives (cf. Mt 26:53). He contrasts the noisy and ostentatious power of this world with the defenceless power of love, which succumbs to death on the Cross and dies ever anew throughout history; yet it is this same love which constitutes the new divine intervention that opposes injustice and ushers in the Kingdom of God.

...By serving and following him, they wanted, together with him, to serve the cause of good and the cause of justice in the world. In this they were right.

Now, though, they have to learn that this cannot be achieved simply through issuing commands from a throne on high. Now they have to learn to give themselves—no lesser gift would be sufficient for this King. Now they have to learn that their lives must be conformed to this divine way of exercising power, to God's own way of being.

They must become men of truth, of justice, of goodness, of forgiveness, of mercy. They will no longer ask: how can this serve me? Instead, they will have to ask: How can I serve God's presence in the world? They must learn to lose their life and in this way to find it. Having left Jerusalem behind, they must not deviate from the path marked out by the true King, as they follow Jesus.

Pope Benedict XVI, August 20, 2005

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