



Seton Home



Study School

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Saints of July

When we think of the word “saint,” many of us picture a person of great holiness, perhaps a person in religious life. We may think of a monk praying in a monastery, or a nun living a contemplative life. But whatever picture first comes to mind, it is an incomplete picture.

The saints throughout the ages have been people from all sorts of vocations doing work for the glory of God. The saints are as varied as the rest of the world, but have one thing in common: love of God and neighbor.

Just looking at the saints on the calendar for July, we see a great variety of people that can only be the fruit of the richness and fullness of the Catholic faith:

Bl. Junipero Serra (July 1): This apostle to California founded missions and towns along the West Coast, bringing thousands of native Americans to the Catholic faith. His contribution to the development of California is commemorated by a statue of Fr. Serra in the Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol.

Elizabeth of Portugal (July 4): Elizabeth was Queen of Portugal for many years, known for her kindness and charity towards the poor.

Maria Goretti (July 6): This “martyr to purity” was murdered by a local youth when she was a young girl. She forgave her murderer before she died, and he repented in prison of his crimes.

Benedict (July 11): The founder of many monasteries in Europe and famous

for the development of a monastic rule, he was proclaimed the patron saint of Europe by Pope Paul VI.

Kateri Tekakwitha (July 14): The “Lily of the Mohawks,” Kateri was born in 1656 in what would become the state of New York. For years she lived with a tribe in which no one else was a Christian and was scorned for her faith.

Bonaventure (July 15): St. Bonaventure was a great philosopher and Doctor of the Church. He was a good friend of Thomas Aquinas, and was very influential at the Council of Lyons in 1274.

Macrina (July 16): St. Macrina was the eldest of ten children. Her parents are both recognized as saints, and three of her brothers have been named saints, including Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa.

Joachim and Anne (July 26): These two saints were the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Anne promised that if God gave her a child, she would dedicate the child to God.

Ignatius of Loyola (July 31): St. Ignatius wanted to be a soldier but was injured in battle and confined to bed for a long period. He began reading books about the saints and decided to become a soldier for God, founding the Jesuit order.

From the stories of these saints, we can see that there is no single way to serve God and that He calls us each to a personal vocation. Each person has a distinctive role to play

in the spreading of the kingdom. In a large family, the children often look very much alike. But as parents, we quickly learn that their personalities are usually very different. For each child, parents could note several characteristics that make him or her unique.

The totality of what makes a person—genetic makeup, surroundings, experiences, likes and dislikes, reactions, the practice of virtue or vice, response to grace—can never be duplicated. Even twins, who share the same DNA, are only alike in part, not in whole.

Each of us is made in the image of God, so each of us reflects some small part of the infinite goodness of God. Since everyone is unique, and everyone is called to serve God, we must say that there are an infinite number of ways that God is to be served. The task of each person in life is to find that way of serving God to which he is called. This is our goal in Catholic home schooling. With this in mind, it is evident why this is a task of inestimable worth that we are undertaking. We must not lose sight of this goal and ask God and His saints for the grace to live our vocation and to guide our children to theirs.

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Questions We Are Asked

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

Summer is here but some of my children have not finished up. Should I finish up or take a summer break?

There is no general rule about this. If you have a high schooler, your student may want to finish up one or two subjects in the summer to get a final grade and high school credits on the report card. If he is taking a subject which is only into the first quarter, he may want to move it to next year's curriculum.

If you have an elementary student, you may want to continue some subjects through the summer, especially English and math. It is difficult for a student to be successful in these two subjects in the next grade level if the course has not been finished in the previous year. Other subjects you should consider continuing during the summer would be reading and religion. If you have a young student, you also want to keep up the phonics.

If for some reason you cannot continue teaching during the summer, or if your child is not old enough to continue some subjects on his own, I would suggest picking up where you left off in the major subjects. In this case, you might want to delay re-enrolling until you finish these up, then re-enroll in all the subjects for the next grade level.

One thing we hear from parents, for both the elementary and the high school students, is that if a parent re-enrolls a student before previous major courses or high school courses are finished, students tend to skip over the unfinished subjects to do the new courses. We have had situations with high school students who want to graduate with an unfinished ninth or tenth grade course. This causes enormous anxiety and difficulties when they need to go back and finish the courses in order to receive a diploma.

I am expecting a baby in December. How can I keep the kids on schedule? They will want to finish up in June as usual.

You need to prepare yourself and the children for the upcoming situation. It may be possible to start your school year a couple of weeks early, explaining the situation to the children.

On the other hand, you can also train your children to be a little more independent and set up the home schooling situation in anticipation of the blessed event. For instance, my children continued their home schooling on the floor and on my double bed when I was taking care of the new baby. Children can adjust, and even think it is fun to be with Mom and the new baby while they are doing their assignments.

Be alert to the fact that some children may need some quiet space and time to focus on their subjects. In those cases, the children can return to a "classroom" or learning center, or even a bedroom, to focus on their assignments.

No matter what arrangement you make, however, your high school students must continue their work and try to stay on schedule. Many mothers rely on their high schoolers for cooking and laundry and babysitting, but this puts quite a bit of pressure and anxiety on these students. Try to have a friend or a relative come and help to give your high schoolers the time they need to do their schoolwork.

Sometimes neighborly moms help a mother with a new baby in many different ways, such as fixing meals, taking care of the children, helping with the laundry. It would be a terrific gift for grandparents to arrange for someone to come in and help so the children can keep doing their schoolwork during the mornings.

I enrolled my high school student in two college courses, but now they are not being accepted by Seton. Can you tell me why?

Seton is trying to impart a traditional Catholic education to our students. There are certain core areas—such as English, Religion, and Social Studies—in which we emphasize distinctive Catholic beliefs. We want our students to complete these subjects using Catholic materials rather than the secular materials available at most colleges.

Before enrolling in a college course, parents or students should check with our high school counselors, especially our senior high school counselor, Mr. Bob Wiesner, to make sure we can accept the course toward a Seton diploma. Our policy is on our website under Curriculum, then under High School Catalog. It reads as follows:

*Children can adjust,
and even think it is
fun to be with Mom
and the new baby
while they are doing
their assignments.*

"Many of our students take college courses while still studying with Seton. Some wish to gain some college credit in basic courses, some find it easier to study certain courses in a classroom environment, and some simply wish to study a topic interesting to them in a more intensive fashion. Such courses are generally accepted by Seton as transfer credit. However, college courses in English, Religion, and Social Studies DO NOT fulfill Seton's requirements for the high school diploma. These courses must always be taken using Seton's curriculum and materials. Requirements in Foreign Language, Math, and Science (other than Biology) may be fulfilled by taking college courses. Before enrolling in any college course, please consult with our Senior Guidance Counselor."

We want to do two high school courses over the summer to get a head start, and also because my son wants a lighter load for his 12th grade.

This is really a great idea. Seniors are often anxious about their SAT tests, they are sending letters to colleges and looking for scholarships, and they often want to start working part-time jobs to save money for college. Starting early and adding a couple of credits to their transcript would definitely be helpful.

Another idea to consider is a college course over the summer, such as a second year foreign language course or a science course. It introduces students to the college environment and the expected demands of college courses. (See previous question for information about credits.)

Mass helps children understand, perhaps in a small way, the importance of home schooling and the Faith in shaping their lives.

You encourage daily Mass attendance but it's difficult with a large family. Do you have any suggestions?

It is great if all the family can attend Mass each day, but in a large family, with small children, and sometimes sick children, it may not be possible to go to Mass every day with all the children.

I suggest that, if at all possible, at least mother try to go to the daily Mass. Daily Mass provides the graces that mothers need to carry them through the challenges of the day. Bring whichever children you can. Mass provides the children with graces and opportunities to learn religious truths, hear the Bible read, and listen to homilies which can provide them with deeper insights related to the spiritual life.

Living in a culture gone chaotic and without any sense of stability or even of laws, Jesus Christ speaking through the prayers of the Mass, offers Truth and a foundation built on a rock. Mass helps children understand, perhaps in a small way, the importance of home schooling and the Faith in shaping their lives.

Another thing to consider, whether or not you attend Mass, is to relate your daily family life to the liturgical year. Each day, your children should be reminded about the saint for the day, or the holy day. There is a wonderful book which Seton sells for only \$8, a large 8 ½ by 11 soft cover book of 188 pages, titled *Saints and Feast Days*. The subtitle is *Lives of the Saints: with a Calendar and Ways to Celebrate*. The ways to celebrate are activities for children. It is filled with ideas, written by the teaching Sisters of Notre Dame some years ago. It not only contains a brief life of the saint, but it contains four or five ideas for activities for children for each saint, which is over 1500 activities! This is a great reference book which you can use for years with your children. It is a great bargain and a great book to make the saints come alive for your children.

My daughter is going into the 8th grade; her brother will be in ninth grade. Is it realistic for her to take any high school courses with her brother?

I suggest that before ordering ninth grade courses for your daughter that you look first at the textbook and the lessons for the ninth grade courses you are considering for your son. It may or may not be too much of a jump for your daughter. However, good students often do well in taking Earth Science or Religion 9. We do not recommend that you skip the Algebra ½ before giving the Algebra I, nor in skipping the English 8 before taking the English 9 or Grammar/Composition 9 classes.

You might also want to look at a practical course such as Keyboarding, since learning to type will be a great help throughout life to almost anyone.

I never thought my children were a discipline problem, but now that I am trying to home school them, I can see that they expect me to allow them to do whatever they want.

The main reason parents either don't home school or stop home schooling is because their children are not obedient. Discipline is important to instill from an early age. If children are not trained when they are young, they will not be obedient when they are older.

Steve Wood, a home schooling father of several children, conducted a survey of parents who said they did not want more children. While lack of money was the main reason given, the second most mentioned reason was because the children they had were so out of control and disrespectful. Since then, Steve has dedicated his life to helping parents, especially fathers, learn how to manage money and pay debts, as well as how to discipline children.

Seton sells a book called *Family Bonding Through Discipline*, a book published by Father Robert Fox who asked several parents of well-disciplined children to write their ideas of how they are raising their children. They give practical tips and specific suggestions that have worked for them. You can order it from our SEM department.

My son wants to go into the military after graduating from Seton, but I am hearing that it is difficult for home schooling students to be accepted in the military. What do you advise?

Students who graduate from Seton receive a diploma from an accredited school, which is different from many other home schoolers. However, as with every government agency, there is a certain bureaucracy of rules and regulations. The military prefers to accept young people coming from college which in itself is a recognition of higher learning skills. Therefore, we suggest that students interested in the military take at least 15 college credit hours, or even more if possible, before entering the military. The Department of Defense assigns possible recruits into three tiers based upon educational credentials. Students who have completed at least 15 college credit hours are placed in the highest tier, meaning they are most likely to be accepted by the military.

Manners: How Not To Be a Goop

by Mitchell Kalpakgian

Education cultivates in a person a knowledge of manners and morals. Lessons in manners form a foundation for the habits of virtue. If a child learns the difference between clean and dirty, proper and improper, respectful and disrespectful, modest and immodest, considerate and inconsiderate, and unselfish and selfish, then the realities of good and evil, beautiful and ugly, noble and ignoble, and true and false assume significance in the understanding of morals. If a child's education teaches him to grasp the real distinction between right and wrong in manners, then he will easily distinguish between good and evil in morals. The child will discern that real standards exist, absolute ideals rule, and high expectations prevail. There will be no gobbledygook about good and bad manners being a matter of opinion or taste, no nonsense like the words of the witches in *Macbeth* that "Fair is foul, and foul is fair."

Manners define the norms of human behavior in the realms of speech, dress, sociability, and eating and drinking, and human beings who learn and practice good manners possess the virtue of civility or courtesy, the mark of a civilized person that distinguishes refined human conduct from crude animal behavior. Many classics of literature illuminate the importance of manners as an essential aspect of education and human development.

Gelett Burgess' three books on the Goops (published by Dover Press)—*Goop Tales, Alphabetically Arranged, Goops and How to Be Them, More Goops and How Not to Be Them*—illuminate the important truths about manners for young children. From these tales they learn that good manners are attractive, beautiful, and charming, and they recognize that bad manners are ugly, offensive, and unappealing. A Goop is someone who spoils a meal, ruins a social occasion, or hurts someone's feelings by slovenly, rude, or selfish behavior. For example, Burgess uses this name to describe

children who shock guests by their messy manners in eating and drinking. Goblick violates all the family rules about table manners: "He licked his fingers, he licked his knife, you never saw such a sight in your life! He growled at the food, and he kicked at his chair, he wiped off his spoon and his fork on his hair! . . . He played with the salt, and he played with his food, his eating was horribly, horribly rude." Another Goop called Piejam "because he eats so much pie and jam and candy" upsets his mother by overindulging in sweets: "Piejam," she said, "today, to my certain knowledge, you have eaten, between meals, at least two tons of Goop-food." Nibolene, "always nibbling and eating between meals," provokes everyone's anger by gluttonously devouring a whole cake between meals and spoiling her own birthday: "She ate so much between meals that she seldom had any appetite at the table." From these stories children grasp the importance of restraint and moderation that manners require and learn the meaning of self-control as it relates to appetites.

The Goop Tales also portray the bad manners of talking inappropriately. Dowanto "had a Way/ Of grumbling, when he should Obey!" When company comes to his home and the child is asked to put a kite in the closet and go into the nursery, Dowanto can only scowl, scream, stamp his foot, and repeat "I don't want to." Yelcum's mother is entertaining guests when the boy bursts into the room yelling "This train for Baltimore, Toledo, and Northwest Territory!" He then proceeds to bang the piano with his shovel, causing a guest nearly to spill his cup. The moral of the tale concludes, "Yet I prefer Mild-Mannered Boys/Who do not Make such Awful Noise!" Askalotte is a Goop because of her incessant chatter and interruptions that prohibit all adult conversation: "Eth-el, why aren't you talking to Mr. Jack any more? Are you mad with Mr. Jack? Mr. Jack, why do you look so cross? Are with mad with Ethel? Eth-el, where is your ring?"

Gablia insists on talking when everyone wants to enjoy quiet and read with concentration. Even though Cousin Billy makes it perfectly clear that his attention is fixed on his book, Gablia talks nonstop: "We had an awful good time and we picked a quart of strawberries and we ate them half up and we drank the milk and I saw two cows . . ." In these tales yelling, babbling, interrupting, pouting, and using bad words (Another Goop is called Urapyg because he says to his sister "You're a pig!") reveal the offensiveness caused by the inappropriate forms of talking and language.

The Goop tales also provide excellent instruction on the importance of the art of pleasing, the quintessence of civility. Good manners require deference to another's desires and preferences—the opposite of willfulness and stubbornness. Abednego refuses to go to bed when asked, throwing his hat on the floor, stamping his foot, and insisting "I won't!" Zelfhina only wishes to please herself and is never considerate of others. Asked to be ready to go to church to be a flower girl, "she ran away instead, and hid in the pantry where her mother couldn't find her. Zelfhina, she was Selfish, Very!" Olwaynoy is always irritating her brothers, cat, and other children: "Olwaynoy is about the worst of all the Goops. She always does a thing once more, after you tell her to stop!" Carolesse, "the most heedless and careless Goop that ever lived," leaves the window open when it rains and lets the water soak the lace curtains and rug, and she is always too lazy to pick up her doll—exasperating behavior that provokes her mother to scold her: ". . . you can *never* be careful and take heed what you do!" Manners are intended to teach a child the art of pleasing others and the virtue of deference.

These simple lessons in manners and memorable examples of Goop behavior underscore the importance of courtesy as a virtue for all seasons and all occasions—at home, at school, at play, with adults, with friends. Social life is impossible without civility, and peace cannot reign in a home or in company without this art of controlling one's passions, appetites, moods, and language.

Grandparents and Homeschooling: To Support, Not Usurp

by Mary Claire Robinson

CCC 2221: “The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.” The right and duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable. (*Gravissimum educationis* 3 and *Familiaris consortio* 36)

CCC 1883: ... Excessive intervention by the state can threaten personal freedom and initiative. The teaching of the Church has elaborated the principle of subsidiarity, according to which “a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need ... always with a view to the common good.” (*Centessimus anno* 48 and *Quadragesimo anno* 1)

CCC 2219: “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged” (Proverbs 17:6) “With all humility and meekness, with patience, [support] one another in charity.” (Eph. 4:2)

The opportunity for children to know and love their grandparents is a great blessing. With more and more grandparents living longer and being physically active longer, grandparents can be a great help to the homeschooling family. But there is also the possibility of misunderstandings and hurt feelings if proper attitudes are not maintained.

The three quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* cited above provide an excellent framework for grandparents to understand how best to support the parents in homeschooling. Education is the parents’ right and duty, not the grandparents’ right and duty; the principle of subsidiarity (although CCC 1883 is referring to the state not interfering with the family) is also applicable to the role of patriarch and matriarch not interfering, but rather supporting the parents in their God given role; the role of grandparents is to support the parents in humility and meekness, with patience, in charity.

There are two readers of this article, parents and grandparents, and I hope to give some ideas to help them enter into a dialog with each other, which will be unique for each family and extended family.

I want to begin with a tale spanning five generations. My parents began parenting in the early 1950s and—due to 1950s parenting practices—I had a drugged birth and was bottle-fed. While my dad was both working and attending college, my grandparents of modest means provided housing for my parents during the first four years of my mom and dad’s marriage, first living with my mom’s parents’ and then in my dad’s parents’ rental. A tension developed between the new parents and both sets of grandparents about 1950’s detachment parenting. Without undermining my parents parenting style, my grandparents shared their wisdom charitably while still supporting the flawed method by warming up bottles in the wee hours of the night to spare my mother the cold trip downstairs. At the same time my grandmothers began an aggressive prayer campaign, which I am convinced led to my mother encouraging me to birth naturally and to breast-feed. My grandparents’ example in supporting my parents in their parenting style led to my mother charitably tolerating my decision to homeschool my six children. Now that the three oldest of my six are married and the sixth grandchild is due soon, I am drawing upon these models of charitable support not to usurp my children’s unique parenting styles.

We can support our children who are now parents and our grandchildren by prayer, quality time, and by sharing stories of family history, of success and of mistakes. Sometimes the culture has so changed that parents and grandparents feel they cannot relate to one another and communication may be tragically sparse. However grandchildren deserve to know

their grandparents so under prudent circumstances this should be encouraged. That is to say, if a grandparent might provide a negative influence on the children, caution should be exercised. Here our prayer life is a good indicator of our unity. If parents and grandparents share the same faith and have no serious spiritual differences, a close involvement may be possible. If grandparents have children or grandchildren who ignore the faith or attend other churches not in union with the Holy Father, then an evangelizing of a different sort is necessary. Whatever the faith status of our extended family, as grandparents, we can live a vigorous life of prayer and sacrifice for our offspring, offering our old age and failing bodies for them. We can try to attend Baptisms, First Communion and Confirmations. Our gifts can be books and games that encourage virtue and growth in the faith. Our greatest need after death is for their prayers for us in purgatory; we can encourage our children and grandchildren to pray for souls after death by together visiting the graves of our relatives and praying for them.

We as grandparents must be careful never to criticize our children as parents. They are learning, often by mistakes, just as we did, and are closer to the situation than we are. Praise all the good you see and wait to be asked before you give advice. When asked to give advice, remember the economy of love. Give advice sparingly and succinctly. Never suggest help that creates dependency. I may see a grandchild who is showing signs of readiness of toilet training and think that I could have the child out of diapers in a week, but that would create dependency upon grandma and hinder mom in her growth and confidence.

Many homeschooling families would welcome an offer of help from grandparents. The grandparent does not need to teach a class—though if the grandparent has a particular area of interest or skill, teaching a class may be very enjoyable for both grandparent and grandchildren. Just being around when needed, doing a little babysitting, or helping out with housework when a new baby is born, will be appreciated.

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Controlling the Electronics

by Ginny Seuffert

In March, *Time Magazine* published an article asking if our children are too “wired.” They were referring to American youth who are talking on their cell phones, while listening to their iPods, as they check their email. We all know children who do not want to come to dinner until a favorite TV show is over, and adults who invite friends to their homes and then spend the visit with one eye on the football game. It seems that in many homes, the family spends Sunday morning worshipping in church and Sunday afternoon worshipping in front of electronic altars. Old timers, like me, shake our heads and wistfully remember Sundays when the men played cards, as the women sat and chatted and the children played tag in the yard. What has happened to family life?

Many home school parents want to fight the good fight to keep TVs, computers, and other electronics in their proper place, but many are exhausted by the effort! Children whine to watch “just one favorite show.” Mom catches them doing schoolwork with earphones! Sitting at the computer to work on a book report is seen as an opportunity to check email or instant message friends. The Xbox that grandma and grandpa insisted on buying for Christmas seems to be on all the time, especially when there are chores to be done. Sometimes parents feel like private detectives snooping around to unearth unauthorized electronic use, but what else can they do?

Now might be a good time to consider just how hearty a welcome we have given to electronics in our own homes. Many houses I enter seem to be shrines to the television! All the furniture in the living room or family room is strategically centered to face the screen. Many families purchase cable connections offering literally hundreds of channels and the ability to record shows to be watched later, in case—God forbid!—we might miss a favorite program. It is not at all uncommon to have TV sets, some of which seem to be the size of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, in kitchens and bedrooms in

addition to family and living rooms. And they are turned on all the time!

Some young people may argue that this is not very different from the evenings of long ago when families gathered around the radio at night, listening to music, comedy, or the news. I would say there are several important distinctions. First, *families* gathered around the radio, laughing or groaning at the same jokes. Family members listened to news stories and shared their reactions. Because radio does not require the same level of attention as the tube, moms would mend, kids would play checkers, and dad would read the newspaper while listening.

Contrast that family time of years gone by with our modern glut of electronics in too many homes. Huge screen TV’s dominate our family rooms and demand our absolute attention. Anyone who dares to speak aloud is hushed as conversation is allowed only during commercials. Meals are taken on trays in front of the television and planned around the schedule of favorite programs. Teens sit with their fingers wrapped around video game controllers with their eyes locked on the screens. Children perform their household chores listening to music through their ear plugs, concentrating on songs sung by strangers while ignoring those who should mean the most to them.

Most parents are at least somewhat aware of the negative effects of electronics on family life and are doing their best to limit their use. Many moms—I’m one—would happily pitch the tube entirely if we had the chance, but are vetoed by dad who wants to watch Sports Center. Through the years, I have come up with some passive solutions that work pretty well to at least limit screen time in the house. This strategy mostly involves arranging your furniture and outfitting your space to discourage screen time while, at the same time, promoting more desirable activities.

Currently there are ten people living in the Seuffert homestead. Although we

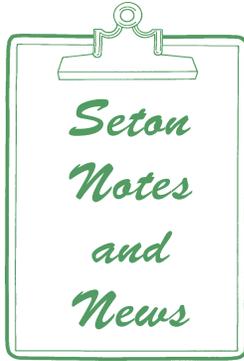
have a 30 foot living room, our medium screen TV is placed in a 9 X 12 family room with comfortable seating for only four people; any more than that and someone must sit on the floor! There is a teeny TV—rarely on—in the guest room. Neither of the rooms with a television has air-conditioning. We only subscribe to “basic” cable services to limit viewing options. Although the tube is still on more than I would like, I have made it as uncomfortable and inconvenient as possible.

On the other hand, our family home is chock full of comfortable spots to read alone or spend time together. We turned a large landing into a small reading room with a comfy chair and ottoman and a nice window seat. There is another chair and ottoman combination in our front hall, and of course the living room has lots of seating and no electronic distractions, great for reading or conversation. When daughter Katie is home, she often plays the piano for us there, or sometimes we will listen to CD’s that Dad plays in his study. Our old drop leaf table sits next to a large window in this room with a chess board set up all the time.

Our dining room table seats twelve comfortably. We have a large collection of board games and both young and old often play them in the evening. The teens love really complicated jigsaw puzzles. We often go through “jags” playing pinochle or Scrabble with a passion for a while, and then abandoning them for several months. For a while, the number game Sudoku was a big hit with the girls.

For seven months of the year, we have a lovely front porch with a swing, and there is even more relaxed seating to be found there. When the weather is nice, we gather on the porch for meals, or morning coffee. We often sit there and spend time together in the early evening before dinner, as family members return from work, college or activities. Son Chris bought a mini soccer net to play with the nephews on the side lawn, but sometimes the teens and adults steal the space for bocce ball. The backyard is still a work in progress, but it already has a picnic table and play

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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.

July 21-22, Atlanta, GA. Cultivating Catholic Families: Building The Domestic Church, Mary Our Queen Catholic Church, 6260 The Corners Parkway, Norcross, GA 30092. Hours: Fri.: 1 PM to 6 PM, Sat.: 8 AM (Mass) to 5 PM. Speakers include Dr. Mary Kay Clark. For more info call Michelle at 678-513-9275, or email mgrunk@bellsouth.net, or go to website www.gacatholicconference.org.

Electronics, from page 6

set for the grandchildren. Our family spaces, both inside and outside, are designed to support healthy and wholesome pursuits, with nary an electronic device in sight.

I talk to moms all the time who complain that children are not finishing their schoolwork because they are sitting in front of the tube or surfing the net when they should be writing a composition. One solution in many homes is to unplug the TV and stash it in the basement so the kids can reprogram themselves for more active forms of entertainment. PC's might need to be placed in more public areas so Mom and Dad can monitor their use. Let's make sure that the way we set up our homes encourages activities like reading, conversation, and study, and makes watching TV and playing electronic games as inconvenient as possible.

Finally, let's remember that one activity we really want to encourage is prayer. Our children will be more likely to remember to pray if we place gentle reminders, like statues, crucifixes, holy water fonts, and holy cards and pictures, in various spots around the house. These sacramentals might also help Mom and Dad to remember to pray for the ability to balance our family life against electronic time thieves.

Grandparents, from page 5

Sometimes grandparents oppose homeschooling, and this is really for the best of reasons. Grandparents want what is best for their grandchildren—and parents should be glad that they care. In such a case, grandparents need to be informed about homeschooling. Grandparents may be frightened about college prospects and socialization. Parents need to educate the grandparents on the college issue by letting them know that top colleges actively recruit home schoolers. Parents need to address the socialization issue by telling the grandparents about all the friends the grandchildren have. Have the grandchildren write to the grandparents about what they are learning, about their friends, about their sports teams, ballet, and so on.

If grandparents are predisposed against homeschooling, don't tell them your schooling problems. Emphasize the positive. By listening to the grandparents concerns, and yourselves staying calm and confident while communicating successes, the grandparents will likely move, over the years, from concern, to acceptance, to boasting about the fabulous job their children are doing raising their grandchildren.

Patience and charity, with prayer, for both parents and grandparents, conquers all.

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Pope Benedict XVI Homily in Poland

“Stand firm in your faith!” We have just heard the words of Jesus: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth” (Jn 14:15-17a). With these words Jesus reveals the profound link between faith and the profession of Divine Truth, between faith and dedication to Jesus Christ in love, between faith and the practice of a life inspired by the commandments. All three dimensions of faith are the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit. This action is manifested as an inner force that harmonizes the hearts of the disciples with the Heart of Christ and makes them capable of loving as he loved them. Hence faith is a gift, but at the same time it is a task.

“He will give you another Counsellor – the Spirit of truth.” Faith, as knowledge and profession of the truth about God and about man, “comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ”, as Saint Paul says (Rom 10:17). Throughout the history of the Church, the Apostles preached the word of Christ, taking care to hand it on intact to their successors, who in their turn transmitted it to subsequent generations until our own day. Many preachers of the Gospel gave their lives specifically because of their faithfulness to the truth of the word of Christ. And so solicitude for the truth gave birth to the Church’s Tradition. As in past centuries, so also today there are people or groups who obscure this centuries-old Tradition, seeking to falsify the Word of Christ and to remove from the Gospel those truths which in their view are too uncomfortable for modern man. They try to give the impression

that everything is relative: even the truths of faith would depend on the historical situation and on human evaluation. Yet the Church cannot silence the Spirit of Truth. The successors of the Apostles, together with the Pope, are responsible for the truth of the Gospel, and all Christians are called to share in this responsibility, accepting its authoritative indications. Every Christian is bound to confront his own convictions continually with the teachings of the Gospel and of the Church’s Tradition in the effort to remain faithful to the word of Christ, even when it is demanding and, humanly speaking, hard to understand. We must not yield to the temptation of relativism or of a subjectivist and selective interpretation of Sacred Scripture. Only the whole truth can open us to adherence to Christ, dead and risen for our salvation.

Christ says: “If you love me ... ” Faith does not just mean accepting a certain number of abstract truths about the mysteries of God, of man, of life and death, of future realities. Faith consists in an intimate relationship with Christ, a relationship based on love of him who loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:11), even to the total offering of himself. “God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). What other response can we give to a love so great, if not that of a heart that is open and ready to love? But what does it mean to love Christ? It means trusting him even in times of trial, following him faithfully even on the Via Crucis, in the hope that soon the morning of the Resurrection will come. Entrusting ourselves to Christ, we lose nothing, we gain everything.

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