



# Seton Home



# Study School

Volume XXIV, Number 7

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

July 2007

## *Miraculous Medal*

The Miraculous Medal has been a popular devotion among Catholics for the past 150 years. It is one of the most commonly worn medals and the one most well-known. It often appears on birthday cards and with ribbons to pin on a baby’s crib. It appears on rosaries and on holy cards. Many parishes have a Miraculous Medal novena or weekly Miraculous Medal devotions. There is a Miraculous Medal Association, and distributors of Miraculous Medal All-Assortment Cards.

Of course, the Miraculous Medal was not always so named. It earned its name through the many blessings that have been showered on believers through devotion to the Blessed Mother as symbolized on the Miraculous Medal.

The origin of the Miraculous Medal is itself miraculous. The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Catherine Labouré in 1830, when she was a novice in a convent of the Sisters of Charity in Paris. In the apparition, the Blessed Virgin Mary extended her hands toward the earth. St. Catherine wrote: “On each of her fingers were three precious stones of differing size, and from them came rays of light which fell upon the sphere at her feet. But from some of these stones, no rays at all were cast. Just as I was thinking of this, the Blessed Virgin turned her eyes to me and a Voice spoke within me: ‘The sphere which you see is the world... The rays of light which come from my hands are the graces which I shower on those who ask for them.’”

“Our Lady gave me to understand with what generosity and great joy she

dispensed grace. ‘But,’ she said, ‘there are graces for which I am not asked, and it is for this reason that some of the stones you see are not sending forth any rays of light.’”

A change took place in the vision. “An oval frame seemed to form, and in its upper portion, the following words were inscribed in semicircular form about the upper part of Our Lady’s body: O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”

“Once again the Voice made itself heard within my heart: ‘Have a medal made after this pattern. Those who wear it, blessed, about their necks and who confidently say this prayer, will receive great graces, and will enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God.’”

“Then the frame reversed itself to show me the other side of the medal. A large M, surmounted by a cross having a double bar underneath it. Beneath this M, the holy hearts of Jesus and Mary were placed side by side, the first being crowned with thorns, the other pierced by a sword. And round about were set twelve stars.”

The Blessed Mother told Catherine to have the medal struck, to spread the use of the medal, and to tell people that the Blessed Mother would grant great favors to those who wore the medal with devotion. Once the medals were struck, more than eleven million were distributed in the first four years, mainly in the countries of Europe. So many great miracles were attributed to this medal and the prayer that within two years, the people called it The Miraculous Medal.

As home schooling parents, we need daily graces for ourselves as we teach, and for our children as they study. We need to thank Jesus for the graces we have already received, especially the grace to realize the importance of being responsible for the Catholic education of our children. We need ongoing graces to continue, day after day, in spite of the difficulties.

We ask for graces not only for ourselves, but also for our children, for our spouse, for our brothers and sisters and their children and spouses. We ask for graces for our neighbors, for those in our town and county, in our state, in our country. We know that God’s generosity is infinite, and we need to be sure that our prayers are not restricted.

The Blessed Mother wants to be generous with the abundant graces she has to give. Let us home schooling families make it a practice to wear the medal and to pray: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” The Blessed Mother guarantees her great graces to those who wear the medal and pray the prayer. If we ask, our sweet Mother of Grace will grant us the graces we need to be successful in our homeschooling.

- MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**I am really afraid to home school my high school student. I don't feel I am up to the job. How can I do it?**

Take out your Bible and read Matthew 6, verse 25 and following:

Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment?

Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?

And which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature by one cubit?

And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin.

But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.

And if the grass of the field, which is to day, and to morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith?

Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?

For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.

Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Your apprehension is normal and understandable. However, you may be building up in your mind an obstacle that just doesn't exist. Some parents

think that they will homeschool for grade school but that high school is too important to be done at home. At Seton, we would say that high school is too important not to be done at home. If you want your child to score well on the SAT or ACT and be accepted at the college of his or her choice, homeschooling is the best choice.

At Seton, we hear all the time about the accolades, awards, and scholarships received by our graduates. We see them going on to fantastic success at college. We hear about them becoming leaders in the student government and graduating as valedictorian. Just a few issues ago in this newsletter, we reported on Jonathan Bate, who graduated first in his class at West Point. The fact is that home schooling is creating students who are extraordinarily well-prepared for college.

Surveys of every student and teacher will tell you that the most important qualification for teaching is caring about the student. Loving your child and wanting him to succeed, being patient, and persevering with helping him learn—these are the best qualifications to teach your children.

Look to your other sources of help. Consider asking your husband to help teach a subject or help out with a subject which may be of interest to him. It will help your child and your husband grow closer by working together. Teens want to have a good relationship with their dads.

Consider asking your parents to help. Grandparents love to be involved with their grandchildren. If one could come over once or twice a week to help with some assignments, they will enjoy it and so will the teens. Teens need to learn to appreciate the wisdom of older people,

especially as our society is so hardened against the elderly.

Remember to take advantage of the resources that Seton offers. We have subject-specific counselors who can help your student in math, English, foreign languages, etc. We also have a wide-range of study helps online. If you have Internet access, have your student take online tests so that you and he can have quick feedback.

Besides teaching help, you may want to look at household help to free you up to do more teaching. You might have a neighborhood teen come in and help clean for a couple of hours a week.

**What attracts me about devising my own program is that I can teach what I would like to teach and what my child would be interested in learning. Would you allow me to customize your program?**

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*The fact is that home schooling is creating students who are extraordinarily well-prepared for college.*

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We always say, "Adjust the program to fit the child, not the child to fit the program." In general, you can customize the Seton program. The only caveat would be that if you want to receive a grade from Seton, you would need to use our program enough for your child to be able take our tests.

At Seton, flexibility is very important to us. We try to accommodate parental and student wishes when at all possible. However, you do need to balance flexibility with structure. Both are important for the best education possible. Have you ever been to a car show where the car owners have changed and upgraded and decorated their cars in all different ways? They may have

different paint jobs and tail pipes and special seats, but all the cars still have an engine and four wheels. Once you have a good structural foundation, you can safely make necessary changes; but, if the structure is not sound, the changes have nothing to adhere to.

One thing to keep in mind is that we must give our children first and foremost a Catholic education. You don't want to choose materials from your public library, for instance, which present ideas contrary to the Faith. You will definitely have a problem finding Catholic-friendly materials. We are already familiar with the very limited materials available. In fact, we publish most of our material because Catholic textbooks that Catholic schools used in the past are out of print.

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*Make sure you wear a watch or otherwise know the time. This helps you to realize the passing of time and stay on schedule.*

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Also, you want to give your children an education which will help them live in society. Your children need to have math whether they want to learn it or not. So in some ways, the society dictates what our children need to learn to be good citizens and to be able to provide for themselves and their families when they become adults. This entails general subjects such as English, but also very technical subjects such as computer programming, geometry, and physics.

We do encourage you to teach subjects which are of interest to you and your children. Usually, these are extensions of the basic lessons being taught. For instance, it is important for children to learn basic facts from the beginning of American history to the present. But if your children are particularly interested in the American

Revolution, you could have enrichment lessons and activities in addition to the regular history lessons.

In high school, the textbooks need to be followed pretty closely. Colleges expect high school graduates to have mastered certain basic concepts. Achievement tests are based on certain concepts being taught. State legislators and departments of education expect certain concepts to be taught. Accreditation, in fact, gives assurance to colleges that certain educational material is being taught. If students entering college have not been enrolled in a high school with accreditation, students sometimes must take tests in subject areas, as well as the regular SAT tests, to give evidence of knowledge in these areas.

**I am not an organized person. I cannot seem to accomplish everything I should accomplish. What should I do?**

It is very difficult to achieve anything in these hectic times if we are not organized. The demands on the families are ever-increasing! You need to persevere in trying to get organized.

Look on the Internet or for books at the library about getting yourself organized. Look for books for homemakers. Much of your "disorganization" may relate to the general household management and upkeep. Involve your children and your husband, if possible. Schedule daily and weekly chores. Keeping on top of your homemaking duties will go a long way toward helping you become organized in your homeschooling.

If you refer to some of the past newsletters on the Seton web site, you can find articles which deal more specifically with household organization.

A good rule is to start the day early. Get up about an hour before the rest of the family. You will feel better about the day if you are dressed, the house is basically clean and organized, and you feel you are in control. During that hour, spend time in prayer.

Make sure you wear a watch or otherwise know the time. You can set

your watch or your cell-phone to beep every hour. This helps you to realize the passing of time and stay on schedule.

One of my favorite saints is St. Rita, the patroness of impossible cases. She had difficulty with her husband and sons. Eventually, through her prayers and sacrifices, she was instrumental in saving their souls. St. Rita was challenged by her household duties and her responsibilities toward her husband and sons. Her perseverance and prayer life obtained salvation for herself and her family.

**I find it difficult to teach several children at the elementary levels. What suggestions do you have?**

The most common suggestion I make is to consider teaching the same subject at one level for children in adjacent grades. The easiest subjects for this are the obvious: art, music, and physical education, but also religion, science, and history.

If you have children two grade levels apart, you may be able to move them closer together in one or two subject areas over a period of a year or two. This is worth it as you look ahead at the high school years.

For instance, if you have a student in 4th and in 6th, consider in what subjects could you move a 4th grader into 5th, either now or later in the year, and what subjects your 6th grader might benefit from reviewing at the 5th grade level. If you have a 4th grade student who could move ahead in math, and a 6th grader who is struggling in 6th, consider putting them both into 5th grade math.

Older children can help younger children. It should not be surprising that older children learn in the same way as the younger children. Older children often can explain a concept, especially in math or English, in a "childlike" way that a younger sibling might understand. This has been reported in some educational studies.

Studies also have shown that older children benefit from teaching younger children. This is because foundational concepts are strengthened as the older child explains it in his own words.

On Saturday, May 26th, 2007, Seton Home Study School held its first annual High School Graduation. Thirty-five graduates, out of approximately 400 in Seton's 12th grade class, attended and received diplomas.



Seton's 2008 graduation will be held on Saturday, May 24th. More information will be sent to 12th graders in January of 2008.



## Remarks of Dr. Mary Kay Clark, to the graduates ...

Reverend Fathers, graduates, parents, friends,

*Quo Vadis?* This traditional Latin phrase means “Where are you going?” It is a phrase that is said to and by each of us frequently. Where are you going after the game? Where are you going after work? For the graduates today, people will ask, “Where are you going to college?”

On a day such as a graduation, perhaps we should ask ourselves more deeply the question, *Quo Vadis?* Where are you going? Individually, but also collectively as a Community of Faith, where are WE going?

Today, there is a major crisis of faith in our society. There are those who say that the question, “Where are you going?” does not matter, because one destination is as good as the next. But, we Catholics know that one destination is not as good as the next. Indeed, in the deepest sense of the word, when a Catholic is asked, “Where are you going?” there is only one final, complete, answer. “Where am I going? I am going to Heaven.”

When we take a long and difficult journey, we first prepare. We take out maps and plot a course. We look for possible hazards along the way. We make sure that we have the proper supplies.

In this manner, dear graduates, your parents have prepared you for your journey through life. They have shown you the course that you should take, using the map of the teachings of Jesus Christ as handed down through His Church. They have pointed out to you the hazards along the way, those things that can draw you away from Christ. They

have taught you how to keep on course through reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. When you take a wrong turn on your journey through life, they have instructed you on how to resume your journey through the sacrament of Penance.

We live in a secular society where Christian truths are not respected. Secular humanism says that man is the measure of all things; that there is no right and wrong; that there are no responsibilities; that there is no Truth. To the question, “Where are you going?” our society gives a simple reply, “no where.”

Catholic home schooling families have the answer. The world stands outside the door of our homes and says, “Do whatever feels good. Serve yourself!” But the Catholic home schooling family, like Joshua in the Old Testament, says, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

We often talk of the “home schooling movement”. And it is right to call home schooling, especially Catholic home schooling, a movement - Because a movement, a change, a journey, a conversion, is the essence of the Christian life. We are always either moving toward the Good, or away from the Good, either toward God or away from God.

And so we come back to the question, *Quo vadis?* Where are you going? It is a question we must ask ourselves because the answer will profoundly affect the course of our lives. The answer we give will also affect those around us; for where we go, we do not go alone, and when we travel, we take others with us. Those who know neither the way nor the destination can be only followers. But those who know where they are headed are the leaders.

And so, I say to you graduates: you are the leaders of the future. And the first thing a leader must know is the destination. *Quo vadis?* Where are you going, and where are you leading?

We are counting on you, dear graduates, to be the leaders in a Catholic cultural revolution in this country, and to lead others to the final and eternal victory.

## Starting Pre-School at Home

by Ginny Seuffert

Last month's column explained why the best educational material for your preschooler is everyday life in your good Catholic home. Nevertheless, at the risk of contradicting myself, I will admit that there is some benefit to a more formal "preschool" in the home. After all, many young children beg to be included in lessons when they see older brothers and sisters hogging all the attention, and Mom is looking for activities to keep the toddlers busy during school time after they tire of duplos and the Noah's Ark play set. Finally, our own common sense tells us that parents should be taking an active role in developing our children's intellectual abilities. The trick is to find preschool educational activities that will interest and stimulate the child but do not cost a fortune or overly stress-out Mom.

After character development, the most important educational goal is to help your preschool children *enlarge and enrich their vocabulary*. This is instinctive in most families. Soon after baby learns to wave bye-bye and blow kisses, most families play a game of "Where's the baby's nose?" with loud cheers following a successful locating gesture. Before his second birthday, baby knows his basic body parts, the names of people he sees often, and can name familiar objects and places. This early vocabulary will expand as time goes by, but the process can be sped up by an easy process of breaking objects down into parts.

This is pretty simple in practice. Your toddler already knows the name of his arm for example. Now teach him hand, finger (thumb and pinky), knuckles, wrist, forearm, elbow and shoulder. A typical two or three-year old can certainly recognize a car. Now teach him windshield, steering wheel, glove compartment, tire, hood, engine, and trunk. He knows what a tree is; now point out the roots, trunk, bark, branches, twigs, leaves, and even veins on the leaves. As you can see, many objects can be broken into parts or categories, all of which have a name baby can use to expand word knowledge.

At the same time, try to teach description and variety. A young child might point to a pretty flower. Make sure you tell him that it is a tulip or a pansy. Describe it. It's a pink tulip, or a pretty tulip, or a drooping tulip. Get a picture book of local birds and look for robins or cardinals. Again have a conversation with your children. The cardinal is red; it is building a nest; it is singing; it is lively. Use lots of prepositions. The robin is on the branch, or under it, or next to it. By their third birthdays, your children should be *expressing themselves in full sentences* much of the time.

Once you expand your child's wordlist, start to use the words with specific educational goals in mind. I have found ordinary, garden variety index cards to be a thrifty but effective educational tool. Go to the scrap booking or school supply section of your local department store where you will find stickers for sale. Typically, a package contains several identical strips of animals, plants, or other common articles. Affix individual stickers from a strip on, for example, separate yellow index cards and then identical stickers on individual white index cards. The children have to match the giant panda on the yellow card with the giant panda on the white card. In addition to teaching the names of various objects (or flowers, zoo animals, etc.), this task improves *visual discrimination*.

Use index cards to teach crucial *thinking and classification* skills, as well. Make sets of cards with stickers, or pictures that you find in magazines or old children's books, and store sets of these classification or sorting cards in envelopes. Include tags made of index cards in the envelopes. The tags are placed side-by-side on the floor or table, and the children place cards that fall into the category in a line beneath the proper tag. One set of sorting cards that would be appropriate for younger toddlers would ask them to sort objects we would find in the yard, from objects we might find in the house. Another set might have ten cards with pictures of

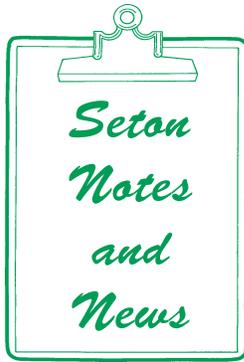
kitchen items to be sorted from ten other cards with pictures of things we find in the bathroom.

As the children get older, use more sophisticated ideas. Things we would find in the sky (birds, airplanes, clouds, lightening, helicopters, hot air balloons) and things we would see under the water (submarines, fish, divers, whales, dolphins, etc.) might be a set. Things that are silent versus things that make noise might be another. Others could include living versus non-living, plants versus animals, and farm animals versus zoo animals. As you can see the possibilities are almost endless, and often older children become interested in helping mom put together sets.

Most parents start teaching *number skills* almost by instinct. We count as baby learns to climb the stairs. We tell the toddler to, "Eat just two more," or, "Obey before I count to three." Once children understand the concept of numbers, it is easy to introduce the number symbols using checkers and 8 X 10 inch card stock. Using a marker, draw the same large numeral on both sides of the card. On one side trace an equal number of checkers. At first, the child has to match real checkers with the tracings, for example, placing three checkers on the card that says has the numeral "3" on it. As time goes by, the child has to place the checkers on the other side of the card, the side without the traced clues. You could introduce some early addition and subtraction using this same method.

Another fun activity is to draw the numbers 1- 10 outside with sidewalk chalk. At first, draw them in order and ask your toddler to jump on each number and holler out its name. Then have him go backwards. Extend the activity by asking him or her to put corresponding small stones on the numbers, or by drawing the numbers out of order. Get really tough and count by fives or tens. I learned how to count by fives and tens before I entered kindergarten because the person who was "it" counted that way when we played hide and seek.

Cont'd, mid page 7



## 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 13 & 14, Cleveland, OH.** Immaculate Heart of Mary Cleveland Conference, The Plaza Hotel, 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, OH. Friday 2pm - 8pm, Saturday 8:30am - 4pm. Email: [infocleveland@ihmconference.org](mailto:infocleveland@ihmconference.org), web-site: [www.ihmconference.org/cleveland](http://www.ihmconference.org/cleveland). Speakers include John Clark and Ginny Seuffert.

**July 21, Indianapolis, IN.** Indianapolis Catholic Home School Conference - 2007, Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Speakers will include Ginny Seuffert. For more information, go to website: [www.hfheindy.org](http://www.hfheindy.org).

**July 28, Roswell/Atlanta, GA.** The Northern Georgia Catholic Homeschool Conference, St. Andrew Catholic Church, 675 Riverside Road, Roswell, GA.

### Pre-School Cont'd from page 6

Encourage grandparents and other loved ones to buy educational toys for Christmas and birthdays. Puzzles help with visual discrimination and *small motor development*, and the ones with knobs are very good at teaching motor skills that are useful for learning how to write. Some puzzles help toddlers to *learn how to button, snap, lace and tie*. Others *teach the names of shapes*. Shape puzzle activities can be extended as the child gets closer to kindergarten age. Have the preschooler trace the various shapes onto a piece of construction paper and cut them out. Then he can paste the shapes onto another piece of construction paper. Mom can help him match and paste tags with the names of the shapes on the paper as well.

I am not a huge fan of most videos or video games, especially cartoons that

are marketing tools used to entice parents to buy overpriced toys, books and the like. On the other hand, this is an electronic generation, and some goodies have an educational benefit. A trip to your public library will often reward you with nature or history films that open a world to your child that he would not otherwise see. Because of videos, we are all able to see great performances, peek into a beehive, or travel the world—experiences that we might not be able to do otherwise. Be careful because some nature videos can contain some violent or graphic images, but they are worth investigating. There are also some quality interactive educational computer programs, and interested moms and dads can find reviews online or in children's magazines.

Take a look back through this column at the italicized skills these simple educational activities teach children. You can clearly see that it is possible to have a first rate preschool in your home for a tiny fraction of the cost of an institutional school. Establishing a regular "school time" for your preschooler, even if it is just thirty minutes every morning, teaches the child that part of each day is reserved for learning, stimulates the intellect, and makes him (or her) feel grown-up and important. Parents who spend just a half hour each day working with their preschooler will see a big educational return when the child starts kindergarten.

## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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1350 Progress Dr.

Front Royal, VA 22630  
Phone: (540) 636-9990  
Fax Machine: (540) 636-1602  
Internet: [www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)  
E-Mail: [info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

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Executive Editor:  
Dr. Mary Kay Clark

Editor:  
Kevin Clark

Assistant Editor:  
Sherry O'Donnell

## Seton Phone Numbers

(Seton main line: 540-636-9990)

Admissions, Enrollment, Re-Enrollment: 540-636-2039

Elementary: Bridget Reagan, 540-636-2342 or Ext. 118;  
Elizabeth Alcott, Ext. 120

Grading: Rhonda Way, Ext. 138

High School Course Approval: Gene McGuirk, Ext. 117

High School English: Sherry O'Donnell, Ext. 124 or  
540-636-1755; Christine Collins, Ext. 177

High School Math and Science: Tom Herlihy, Ext. 165 or  
540-636-1846; Don Valaike, Ext. 132

History: Bruce Clark, Ext. 122

Homeschooling Father: Gene McGuirk, Ext. 117

Independent Studies: Bob Wiesner, 540-636-2238

Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Constantine, Ext. 161

Senior Guidance & Enrollment: Bob Wiesner, 540-636-2238

Special Needs: Stephen Costanzo, Ext. 176 or  
Sharon Hines, Ext. 151

Testing (CAT): Clare Schmitt, Ext. 164

[www.setonhome.com](http://www.setonhome.com)

[counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org)

[admissions@setonhome.org](mailto:admissions@setonhome.org)

[grading@setonhome.org](mailto:grading@setonhome.org)

[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

[enrolled@setonhome.org](mailto:enrolled@setonhome.org)

[myseton@setonhome.org](mailto:myseton@setonhome.org)

[shipping@setonhome.org](mailto:shipping@setonhome.org)

[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)

[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)

## *Pope Benedict XVI's Address to the Youth of Sao Paulo, Brazil*

[As] I gaze at you young people here present—you who radiate so much joy and enthusiasm—I see you as Christ sees you: with a gaze of love and trust, in the certainty that you have found the true way. You are the youth of the Church. I send you out, therefore, on the great mission of evangelizing young men and women who have gone astray in this world like sheep without a shepherd. Be apostles of youth. Invite them to walk with you, to have the same experience of faith, hope, and love; to encounter Jesus so that they may feel truly loved, accepted, able to realize their full potential. May they too discover the sure ways of the commandments, and, by following them, come to God.

You can be the builders of a new society if you seek to put into practice a conduct inspired by universal moral values, but also a personal commitment to a vitally important human and spiritual formation. Men and women who are ill-prepared for the real challenges presented by a correct interpretation of the Christian life in their own surroundings will easily fall prey to all the assaults of materialism and secularism, which are more and more active at all levels.

Be men and women who are free and responsible; make the family a centre that radiates peace and joy; be promoters of life, from its beginning to its natural end; protect the elderly, since they deserve respect and admiration for the good they have done. The Pope also expects young people to seek to sanctify

their work, carrying it out with technical skill and diligence, so as to contribute to the progress of all their brothers and sisters, and to shed the light of the Word upon all human activities (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 36). But above all, the Pope wants them to set about building a more just and fraternal society, fulfilling their duties towards the State: respecting its laws; not allowing themselves to be swept along by hatred and violence; seeking to be an example of Christian conduct in their professional and social milieu, distinguishing themselves by the integrity of their social and professional relationships. They should remember that excessive ambition for wealth and power leads to corruption of oneself and others; there are no valid motives that would justify attempting to impose one's own worldly aspirations—economic or political—through fraud and deceit.

...Above all, have great respect for the institution of the sacrament of Matrimony. There cannot be true domestic happiness unless, at the same time, there is fidelity between spouses. Marriage is an institution of natural law, which has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament; it is a great gift that God has given to mankind: respect it and honour it. At the same time, God calls you to respect one another when you fall in love and become engaged, since conjugal life, reserved by divine ordinance to married couples, will bring happiness and peace only to the extent that you are able to build your future hopes upon chastity, both within and outside marriage.

### *Seton Home Study School*

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