



# Seton Home



# Study School

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## The Rosary

As we look at the state of the world and our nation, it can seem that problems are overwhelming. In Iraq, the war continues and more Americans and Iraqis are killed each day. As troops are rotated in and out, many families face the prospect of a long separation from father or mother. At home, we have the mortgage crisis, in which many families are either having difficulty paying their mortgage, or have actually faced the loss of their house for inability to pay. Individual families also have their own personal hardships, such as illness or marital problems.

Problems can seem overwhelming, but they need not be if we remember our daily Rosary. Besides being a prayer of praise to the Blessed Mother, the Rosary is also a meditation on the events of the Gospel, in the lives of Jesus and Mary. The Rosary is even called a Gospel Prayer. This month of May, we might especially consider the Joyful Mysteries. Last month, we celebrated the Annunciation, and this month, on May 31<sup>st</sup>, we celebrate the feast of the Visitation.

At Fatima, the Blessed Mother appeared to the children and instructed them to tell the world to pray, but especially to pray the Rosary every day. “Pray, pray a great deal, and make sacrifices.” And again “Let the people continue to say the Rosary every day to obtain the end of the war.” She asked the children to have a chapel built with a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary. In one of the apparitions, Mary appeared as Our Lady of the Rosary, and again instructed the children to tell people to “pray the Rosary every day.”

The Rosary is considered the church’s most important non-liturgical prayer. The Blessed Mother appeared with a Rosary in her apparition to St. Bernadette at Lourdes. The Blessed Mother herself gave the Rosary to St. Dominic in 1208. He led the people of Europe against the Albigensian Heresy. St. Dominic emphasized the importance of priests and laity being involved in the battle against heretics. The Rosary has inspired many saints, such as St. Alphonsus Liguori, who wrote meditations on *The Incarnation and Infancy of Jesus Christ*, and The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

St. Louis de Montfort was so devoted to the Rosary that he wrote *The Secret of the Rosary*, 50 little meditations presented as roses on each Hail Mary in a Rosary. It has been read and used by millions of Catholics. In *True Devotion to Our Lady*, St. Louis writes that after devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the “the holiest and solidest of all devotions” is devotion to Our Lady.

The Rosary was said regularly by soldiers of many nations before most battles. Christian victory over pagans in battle was often attributed to the Blessed Mother after special Rosary novenas. The Polish troops were especially known for their devotion to Mary and the Rosary; their early national banner included an image of her, and their “war song” was a hymn to Mary. Scottish knights are said to have left their “golden rosaries as a pledge of faith” in Our Lady’s chapels.

We are certainly living in a time of crisis. We might say, however, that every time is a time of crisis. In every age,

there are wars and rumors of wars. In every age there are hardships and sicknesses and famines. In every age, there is immorality and faithlessness.

There is always a tendency to look at our own times as the worst times, and our own problems as the worst problems. In the book *Lord of the Rings*, Frodo says to Gandalf, “I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had ever happened.” The wise Gandalf says in reply, “So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

The words of Gandalf are true for all people. We are not in control. We cannot decide what evils befall us. All we can do is decide how to react.

Prayer, especially the Rosary, gives us the strength to react with courage in the face of troubles. The Rosary reminds us that Jesus, and Mary, and Joseph led lives full of difficulties. They are not strangers to pain, whether emotional or physical. In our times of tribulations, we can turn to them, knowing that they understand even the unspoken longings within our hearts.

- MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**We are nearing the end of the school year and my children are doing well, but I am worried about their “losing” during the summer some of what they have learned during the school year.**

Many parents continue some of the studies for their children during the summer. It may be too burdensome to continue all the classes, and it may be better to continue to review some subject areas more informally during the summer. We highly recommend that your children continue during the summer to read books and work math drills or have math activities. School teachers often complain that in these areas, children fall behind if they have not kept up with their reading and math for three months.

Consider enrolling your children in a summer reading club at the library where they are encouraged in their reading without the structure of “school” classes.

As for math, you might ask your husband to devise some summer math activities, either oral or written. There are hundreds of math “games” available on the internet, or which can be purchased over the internet, and more are available at local teachers’ stores.

**We are about finished the school year, but have put off the book reports until the end. Are there any tips for finishing up quickly?**

It is difficult to think of any tips to finish a book report quickly. What is important is that your son read the discussion questions or the report questions before he starts reading the book. Too many times, students read the book without thinking about what they will need to be writing about in the report.

As he reads, he needs to mark in the book or at the top of the page anything which might be of help in writing his

report. He must look for examples of events or of things said or done which would “prove” his thesis or his position for the report.

If you read the book along with your son, and discuss it with him, he would certainly do very well, and you should be able to keep him on schedule so that he can finish up more quickly.

Some students read the book, but then put off completing the book report. This is not a good idea. The book report should be done while the book is still fresh in the student’s mind. If this is not done, then the student may end up needing to read the book a second time.

**I would like my child to learn good quality writing, not just correct writing. What do you suggest?**

The best way to learn good writing skills is to read and read and read and read good quality literature. We do sell Writing and Composition books through our SEM Catalog which certainly can help, plus we have writing assignments in many of our courses, especially in the reading and English courses. Nevertheless, it would be best to look at our book lists for each grade level, and obtain as many of these as possible, and have your child start reading. Before television and computers, students would regularly read a book a week. This would be a great goal if you want your child to be a quality writer.

**Why do you not allow the children to do a book report on any book they want to read?**

We need to limit the titles of the book reports and book analyses because our graders cannot properly grade the reports unless they have read the book. In addition, we have tried to select books which are appropriate for the particular assignment; for example, the book must

be strong in character development if the essay is on character development.

We do encourage reading, of course, and hope you can encourage your children to read a good book each week.

**I can’t keep up with what you have to offer for online supplemental help. Where can I find out what you have to offer?**

Log on to My Seton, and make sure your student’s name is in the upper right hand corner. Then click on Courses. All the courses in which your child is enrolled are listed if you scroll down. You will see icons to click on for uploading work or tests, and taking online tests. The little yellow notebook icons offer supplemental helps.

Supplemental helps are being added all the time. You will see crossword puzzles for every word in the spelling lessons for grades 5 through 8. As a means of motivating students, chapter notes are provided for the books being read for book reports. In most grades, additional grammar drill exercises are provided which match the exercises in the Seton English text-workbooks. The are also answer keys online for a number of books which Seton does not publish (these keys are usually in the back of the lesson plans as well).

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*As he reads, he must look for examples of events or of things said or done which would “prove” his thesis or his position for the report.*

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We are in the process of writing new math text workbooks. We have written them for levels Kindergarten, 1, and 2. The Grade 3 book is at the printer, and the Grade 4 is in the publication process. As we finish these books, we are adding drill pages (except for Kindergarten) on our web site that match the math pages in the textbook.

In Grades 5 and 6, we offer an alternate science unit, with science projects and activities, written by Dr. Gregory Townsend. The Grade 5 unit is based on the book *The Mystery of the Periodic Table*, and the Grade 6 unit is based on the book *Archimedes and the Door of Science*.

Though we already have the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution for the Grade 8 history course, we are considering adding some supplemental resources written by our historian Bruce Clark. As many high school students know, Mr. Clark has provided numerous audio lectures for the both the American History and the World History courses.

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*Our lesson plans give many assignments, but it is up to the parents to decide how much they want their child to do.*

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If you have a high school student, he or she might be interested in the weekly audio lectures provided for the foreign languages, for the English courses, for the history courses, and for some other courses as well.

**My son can't seem to sit still long enough to learn anything. Have you any ideas?**

God made boys so they don't want to sit still. Boys don't do as well in the classroom situation because they need to sit still for so long. Studies of young children have shown that children, especially boys, do better in their studies if they have opportunities to move. Consider having your son walk around or bounce a ball or, as my boys did, jump-rope while they are memorizing. Boys can study or even read while walking!

It was reported in Prevention magazine that a teacher put a trapeze in her classroom to provide just a minute of

exercise when a boy seemed to be mentally "slowing down." She said the boys' grades improved immediately.

Depending on the age and the maturity of your son, you might also try to involve him as much as possible in determining his lessons. If you can revolve his lessons around topics in which he is already interested, he may concentrate for a longer period of time.

**Do we need to do everything in the lesson plans?**

Our lesson plans give many lessons and assignments, but it is up to the parents to decide how much they want their child to do. Obviously, if the student does all the assignments, he will be achieving quite a bit. However, it is likely that there are some subjects for which a student does not need to do all the assignments, or some can be done orally. Some students might be able to spell all the spelling words and have them memorized in one day; it may not be necessary to do all the exercises in the workbook. Some good readers may learn the vocabulary words very quickly, and may want to do just the crossword puzzles and still obtain good grades.

The parent who knows the weaknesses and strengths of each of the children needs to make the decisions about what needs to be done, and what can be skipped. Seton wants to offer, however, as much as we can to help students who need to have more.

At the end of the year, when a student is trying to "catch up," it may seem like too much work. However, if the assignments are done each and every day, or work missed during the week is done on the weekend, the program is not too much work for most students.

The key is continuing the work each day and not skipping days, which can turn into skipped weeks. A student should approach his work with the same attitude that an athlete has to training. If training is done every day, then it is not hard. If an athlete skips a week of training, however, then starting up again is difficult.

**I don't always get a response from my e mails or my phone calls.**

At Seton, we receive several thousand emails every day. The majority of the emails are spam. We have a spam filter which attempts to block most of these annoying emails. It is possible, however, that some real emails are blocked as well. The first way to make sure email goes through is to have a subject heading which is recognizably meant for Seton. So, please use a subject heading such as "English 4" or "Grammar Question".

Many email programs allow you to request that when your email is delivered or read you will receive a notification. If you have any concerns about whether your email is getting through, it is a good idea to turn this feature on.

Another problem we sometimes run into is that families to whom we send email also have a spam filter or other blocking mechanism. In order to receive emails from Seton, please add Seton as a safe sender.

With phone calls, the main reason we cannot return calls is because either no phone number was given, or we cannot understand the phone number. Please give your phone number slowly and distinctly. Also, if you give the topic or question, our counselor may be able to find the answer before dialing your number.

**You seem to be more expensive than some other programs. Why is that?**

Actually, our research indicates that Seton is one of the lowest cost programs available. Sometimes other programs appear cheaper because they do not include the cost of books. Once you add in the cost of books and other extra services, they are actually more expensive than Seton.

Our tuition includes almost all the books as well as counseling help by phone, email, and Message Board. The tuition also includes grading, lesson plans, standardized tests, online lectures and many other features online. There is not another home study program that offers such extensive features at the price we charge.

## Teaching English in Primary Grades

by Mary Kay Clark

We often receive phone calls from parents who ask about teaching English to their children in grades one through three. They wonder why we teach English when it is not being taught in most schools, or at least, is not being taught to any great extent. The parents wonder why it is necessary, or are there lessons which can be skipped because the concepts are too difficult for their young children.

In the Catholic schools of the past, English was taught from first grade. The old Loyola *Voyages in English* series has been used for more than sixty years. Some Catholic schools today use the latest editions, though now they are very expensive and entirely secular. The series was known for its logical structured approach, and it still is.

Because the formerly excellent Loyola series is now secular, some years ago Seton began writing our own English series. Instead of a textbook and a workbook, we wrote text-workbooks, a combination which parents requested so they do not need to go from one book to the other.

We follow the same logical presentation as the Loyola series, and cover a fairly good number of English concepts, which is what the students of long ago studied. While it may seem “heavy” to some, these were the concepts which have been taught in these grade levels. Children of the past, who had less educational opportunity, were able to learn these concepts.

Nevertheless, children of the same grade level do not learn all their subjects at the same rate. Like adults, children have their own interests, strengths, and skills. At the primary level, the goal should be to introduce the concepts and to teach as much as you can.

Follow the lesson plans as best you can, starting at the beginning of the book. If there is a concept that your

child does not understand, try to explain it a little differently. You might try having an older sibling try to explain it; studies have shown that sometimes children a little older can help a younger one in this way. If you look on the Internet, you might find an explanation that may help you to explain the concept a different way.

Do use the lesson plans. They will give you a variety of teaching ideas. If your little one still does not understand a concept, we have experienced counselors available. Some of our counselors have home-schooled their children, others have worked with children with special needs, and others taught in Catholic schools.

Usually children in the primary grades easily understand capital letters, punctuation, and different kinds of sentences, but when it comes to some abstract ideas such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, they may stumble a little. If your child cannot understand a lesson, simply move on to another lesson in the book. You can come back to the difficult lesson later. Give the quarter test later after all the concepts for that quarter have been taught.

Because many of these English concepts are new for your child, it is important to have a daily review of past lessons. In fact, the daily review is more important than going on to a new lesson. If you are short of time, at least do the review. The daily review does not need to cover all previously learned concepts, but in a week’s time, they all should be reviewed. A review can mean simply going over some previous exercises.

In several of the grades, Seton has added English drill exercises on the Seton website. They are available for Grade 3. You will see the Preliminary Exercises, which means these exercises are simpler than the ones in the book. They can be used before assigning the exercises in the text-workbook, or they can be used as a review. You can print these for your student.

When you are teaching abstract concepts to young children, sometimes you need to make it more concrete. When you are teaching nouns, for instance, consider helping your child to understand that a noun stands for something concrete, usually something that can be seen or touched. Help your young child to touch a chair and to say the word “chair,” a noun because it stands for something.

Young children like activity, so give your child a noun activity by going around the house, touching things, and call its name a noun. Later, adjectives can be explained as words which describe nouns, so your young one can say “the noun is chair, the adjective is green.” In a diagram, once your child sees where the subject noun and object noun is placed, he can see the logic for an adjective to be placed under the noun it describes.

Consider making flashcards of nouns and asking your child to identify whether the word represents a person, place, or thing. Mix up flashcards with nouns, adjectives, and verbs and ask your child to identify the part of speech. You can have oral drills, such as identifying parts of speech, and later, giving sentences and identifying words in the sentences.

By second grade, we start diagramming, which helps young students to develop critical thinking skills, attention to detail, an understanding of sentence structure, and more precise vocabulary. Not all students are ready for this, but it is important to start early. You may need to go to another lesson and come back a few times to certain concepts, but eventually your student will understand.

Try not to show signs of being impatient or upset with your child, whether it is about English or any other subject. Your child will not learn as well if he sees you are upset. Try to relax, to take time, to be patient, yet to persevere. Most of all, pray to your child’s guardian angel and patron saint. They will work miracles for you and your child!

## *Academic and Spiritual Formation*

There is a necessary link between spiritual and academic formation. Academic instruction cannot be properly accomplished without spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is essential for excellent academic instruction. True academic instruction is dependent upon spiritual formation. For academic instruction to be successful, it must be done in the context of prayer, sacraments, sacramentals, religious art and music, Scripture, stories of the saints, inculcation of virtue, devotions, and so on.

Academic instruction is necessarily distorted if it is not immersed in and essentially dependent upon spiritual formation.

St. John teaches us that Jesus is the Light of men and the True Light which enlightens everyone (John 1:3, 9). Jesus said "I am the Light of the world" (John 9:5), "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," (John 14:6), and "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35). If Jesus is the Light, the Life, the Way, the Bread of Life, He simply cannot be ignored in such an important undertaking as academic instruction.

Academic instruction must be seen by young people to have a connection to what is important in life. It must be seen as having a "values" or moral dimension. Otherwise, academic instruction becomes merely a means to a utilitarian end, such as a job or a college. It becomes merely a "grind." Worse, we can see from the government schools, that academic instruction without God becomes a laboratory of false ideologies and immoral living.

If academics are seen as a window onto God's world, as the discovery of truth, if academics are linked to eternal salvation, then students and teachers alike will approach academics, to teach and to learn

academics, with a certain reverence, realizing they require seriousness and self-discipline, love and sacrifice.

The false thinking which has led the government educational institutions to reject God has resulted in poor academic education. We cannot allow this false thinking to establish itself in the homeschooling movement as well.

We Catholic homeschooling families need to stay the course, to be faithful to Catholic homeschooling. We need to understand the urgent moral and spiritual needs of our children, to continue to persevere, to be strong and faithful in the difficult battle to save the souls of our children, and not to support a system which is undermining Christian values.

We need to have our children hear the words of Pope John Paul II in his addresses to young people. When he spoke to the young people of Cuba in 1998, he said, "I have been impressed by the fidelity which many of you have shown to the faith handed down from your forebears, a faith often learned on the knee of your mothers and grandmothers during the last few decades when the Church's voice seemed silenced.

"The growing crisis of values being felt throughout the world is casting its shadow over the young people of this bright land. A dangerous crisis of identity is spreading, causing young people to live in meaninglessness, without direction, without plans for the future, suffocated by immediate concerns. There is a growing relativism, together with religious indifference and the lack of a clear moral sense. At the same time, people are tempted to worship the idols of the consumer society...

"Do not succumb to the lack of vision which leads to destroying one's

personality through alcoholism, drugs, sexual irresponsibility, the constant pursuit of new experiences...

"Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous. Let all that you do be done in love (Cor 16:13-14). But what does it mean to be courageous? It means to overcome evil in all its forms. The worst evil is sin, which causes all sorts of suffering and can even lurk within us, negatively affecting our behavior. And so, while it is right to be committed to the struggle against evil in its public and social manifestations, the first duty of believers is to fight against sin, the root of all forms of evil, which can take root in the human heart, and to resist its enticements with God's help....

"The Church's traditions, the sacramental life, and a constant recourse to prayer are not just duties or rites to be performed. Rather they are unfathomable sources of grace which can enliven your youth and help it grow in virtue, apostolic zeal, and true hope.

"Virtue is that inner strength which leads to self-sacrifice for love of what is good, and which enables people not only to do good deeds but also to give the very best of themselves. Virtuous young people are what makes a country great....

"I also wish to speak to you about commitment. Commitment is the courageous response of people who do not want to let life pass them by but rather seek to shape their own personal history and the history of the society around them. I encourage you to make a concrete commitment, however humble and simple, but one which, if carried out with perseverance, will be the best proof of your love and the best path to personal holiness. Make a responsible commitment to your families, to the life of your communities, to civil society, and when the time comes, to the future direction of your nation."

## Answering Relatives

*Ginny Seuffert is busy giving talks at conferences around the country, so she is taking a little “vacation” from writing her newsletter articles. A few years ago, she wrote a column “Answering Relatives.” The following article is based on her previous article.*

One of the difficulties we home schooling parents, and students, face is remarks by relatives who do not understand what we are doing by home schooling. Many relatives think home schooling is some sort of rejection of society, a sort of underground “Mother Earth” movement. Some relatives believe that our children will not be able to be successful in the modern society because our children will not be able to “deal” with other people in social situations. They wonder if our children will be able to get a job or support themselves.

As Ginny Seuffert pointed out in her article of December, 2004, society puts pressure on parents to “push the youngsters out the front door and onto the school bus at earlier and earlier ages.” The argument by most friends and relatives is to point out the social problems that these children will have by not being able to adjust to the classroom or by not adjusting to other children.

In recent weeks, we have seen some episodes on the news where students, even girls, are ganging together and beating up a single student. This is not new, but it is becoming more frequent, and more violent. Worse, the students doing the beatings videotape the beatings, and put it up on YouTube on the internet. There is no recognition that they have done something wrong; in fact, they are proud of it.

If friends or relatives bring up the “won’t adjust” argument, they are simply not keeping aware of the serious social problems that are going on in the schools and other “social”

events. Grandparents and others often judge the schools of today by what they remember from many years ago.

Probably more arguments against home schooling are about the “inability” of parents to teach their own children. The first thing to remember is that the Catholic Church has always recognized the ability and sacramental graces of parents to teach their own children, especially in the areas of the Faith, and living the Faith. Since the Church also has declared that all subjects should be taught in relation to the Faith, and should be integrated with the Faith, we home schooling parents have a strong argument for home schooling. Very few Catholic schools have any Catholic textbooks, while Seton has published Catholic home schooling textbooks in just about every subject area.

Secondly, if you are enrolled in Seton, we have lesson plans, online resources, and counselors available to answer questions and help with the teaching. In Ginny’s previous article, she wrote “That’s why I am enrolling Janie in an organized curriculum that was written for home schooling parents. The school is accredited, and teachers can be reached by phone or email for help anytime I might need it....I have lots of years to research how other home schooling families teach upper level [courses]. I know there is more help for students online now, and with our Seton program, counselors are available.”

When relatives continue to make unpleasant comments, consider having an “Open House” for the relatives to visit the home school “classroom” and see the work that the children are doing. You can make it a little “tea,” and give your children an opportunity to recite their poetry or read an essay, or show off their math and English papers. If your children are enrolled in a local music, art, or sports class, make a point of mentioning that.

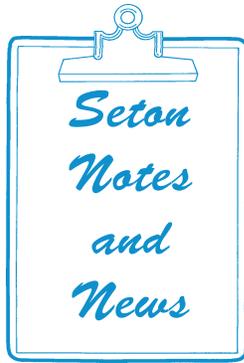
Ginny suggested another idea. “Frequently, the best way to showcase the benefits of home schooling to those

you love is by letting people interact with your family, especially with your intelligent, articulate, and courteous children. When people compliment me on my children, I never pass up the opportunity to credit Catholic home schooling for the way they are turning out. When neighbors say, ‘I don’t know how you do it!’ I always tell them what a joy it is to have the children with me during the day. When other moms indicate that they might be interested in home education, I tell them, ‘Do it! You will never be sorry.’”

Another argument that might come from relatives and friends is that a home schooling program cannot academically match what is being taught in the schools. You might point out that Seton gives standardized tests each year, and many home schooling families are giving these tests each year or every other year. Many states have regulations for frequent testing for students in schools and in home study. Students being home schooled consistently score in the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile, while public school children are at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Reassure your relatives that a parent who knows all the life experiences of her children, and understands the strengths and weaknesses of her children, can better teach her children than any teacher ever could. Teachers in the classroom have only one year of knowing a child, and even that is minimal with 20 or more children in the classroom. There can be no such thing as individualized instruction in a school classroom.

What makes home schooling so successful is that parents love their children and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices in time and energy and perseverance to give them their Faith, the practice of their Faith, and the academics they need to be a good citizen. Ask your relatives who are questioning you to come and be a part of this exciting adventure with your children. They will never regret it, just as you will never regret it. They will learn a new dimension to Catholic family life.



## Conferences

Many state and local groups are now sponsoring their own conferences, inviting various Catholic vendors and curriculum providers. Seton is happy to participate as a vendor. For more information, see our website at [www.setonhome.org/conferences](http://www.setonhome.org/conferences).

**Lafayette, LA.** May 3, 2008. Immaculate Heart of Mary Lafayette Home School and Parent Conference 2008, Cajundome & Convention Center, 444 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, LA. Speakers include Dr. Catherine Moran and Ginny Seuffert. 9 am - 4:30 pm. Information: 540-636-1946 or [lafayette@ihmconference.org](mailto:lafayette@ihmconference.org).

**Chantilly, VA (DC area).** June 13/14, 2008 (Fri./Sat.). 7th Annual Immaculate Heart of Mary National Home School

and Parent Conference 2008, Dulles Expo & Conference Center (North Hall), 4368 Chantilly Shopping Ctr., Chantilly, VA. Speakers include Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Fr. Constantine, Deacon Gene McGuirk, and Ginny Seuffert. Fri.: 9 AM - 9 PM, Sat.: 9 AM - 4:30 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

**Kansas City, KS.** June 13/14, 2008. Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers, Savior Pastoral Center, 12601 Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, KS. Fri.: 5 PM - 9 PM, Sat.: 7:15 AM - 4:30 PM. Info: Maribeth, 816-454-3729, or [www.kccatholichomeschooler.org](http://www.kccatholichomeschooler.org).

**Lansing, MI.** June 20/21, 2008. 14th Annual "It's Great to be Catholic!" Family and Home Education Conference and Book Fair, Lansing Center, 333 E Michigan Ave. (at Cedar), Lansing, MI. Fri.: 6 PM - 9:30 PM, Sat.: 8 AM - 4:30 PM. Info: Kelley, 248-828-0135, or [www.homeschoolcatholic.org](http://www.homeschoolcatholic.org).

**Cleveland, OH.** June 27/28, 2008. Immaculate Heart of Mary Home School and Parent Conference, Crowne Plaza, Cleveland Airport Hotel, 7230 Engle Rd., Middleburg Heights. Fri.: 2 PM - 8 PM; Sat.: 9 AM - 4 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or [www.ihmconference.org/cleveland](http://www.ihmconference.org/cleveland). Speakers include Ginny Seuffert.

**Phoenix, AZ.** June 27/28, 2008. Our Lady of Guadalupe Phoenix Catholic Home School Conference, Diocesan Pastoral Center, 400 E. Monroe Street, Phoenix. Fri.: 6 PM - 10 PM - Exhibits; Sat.: 8 AM - 5 PM, Holy Mass at 9 AM. Info: Veronica at [olghsc@cox.net](mailto:olghsc@cox.net). Speakers include Deacon Gene McGuirk from Seton.

**Chino Hills, CA.** June 28, 2008. Southern California Catholic Home Educators 8th Annual Conference and Curriculum Fair, St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, 14085 Peyton Drive, Chino Hills. Hours: 8 AM - 5 PM. For information call Sandy at 909-590-7224 or [www.scchehomepage.com](http://www.scchehomepage.com). Speakers include Dr. Mary Kay Clark.

**Arlington, TX.** July 18/19, 2008. Immaculate Heart of Mary Dallas Home School and Parent Conference 2008, Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington. Fri.: 2 PM - 8 PM; Sat.: 9 AM - 4:00 PM. For information call 540-636-1946 or [www.ihmconference.org/dallas](http://www.ihmconference.org/dallas). Speakers include Dr. Catherine Moran and Ginny Seuffert.

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## *Message of Pope Benedict XVI at the White House*

From the dawn of the Republic, America's quest for freedom has been guided by the conviction that the principles governing political and social life are intimately linked to a moral order based on the dominion of God the Creator. The framers of this nation's founding documents drew upon this conviction when they proclaimed the "self-evident truth" that all men are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights grounded in the laws of nature and of nature's God. The course of American history demonstrates the difficulties, the struggles, and the great intellectual and moral resolve which were demanded to shape a society which faithfully embodied these noble principles. In that process, which forged the soul of the nation, religious beliefs were a constant inspiration and driving force, as for example in the struggle against slavery and in the civil rights movement. In our time too, particularly in moments of crisis, Americans continue to find their strength in a commitment to this patrimony of shared ideals and aspirations.

In the next few days, I look forward to meeting not only with America's Catholic community, but with other Christian communities and representatives of the many religious traditions present in this country. Historically, not only Catholics, but all believers have found here the freedom to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, while at the same time being accepted as part of a commonwealth in which each individual and group can make its voice heard. As the nation faces the increasingly complex political and ethical issues of our

time, I am confident that the American people will find in their religious beliefs a precious source of insight and an inspiration to pursue reasoned, responsible and respectful dialogue in the effort to build a more humane and free society.

Freedom is not only a gift, but also a summons to personal responsibility. Americans know this from experience – almost every town in this country has its monuments honoring those who sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom, both at home and abroad. The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate. It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate. In a word, freedom is ever new. It is a challenge held out to each generation, and it must constantly be won over for the cause of good (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 24). Few have understood this as clearly as the late Pope John Paul II. In reflecting on the spiritual victory of freedom over totalitarianism in his native Poland and in eastern Europe, he reminded us that history shows, time and again, that "in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation", and a democracy without values can lose its very soul (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 46). Those prophetic words in some sense echo the conviction of President Washington, expressed in his Farewell Address, that religion and morality represent "indispensable supports" of political prosperity.

South Lawn of the White House  
April 16, 2008

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