



*Seton Home*



*Study School*

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## *The Assumption*

The Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother into Heaven, body and soul, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, is a reminder that we, too, will be given back our bodies in a glorified state, and will enjoy Heaven for all eternity, provided we live a life of love for God and of obedience to Him.

We home schooling families could reflect on one of the beautiful paintings of Our Blessed Mother’s Assumption and meditate on what it means for us and members of our family.

Mary brought Heaven to us by agreeing to be the Mother of the Son of God. With her agreement, Jesus came and lived among us, showing us how to live with each other, how to care for each other, and consequently, how to obtain our own “assumption” into Heaven by our cooperation with the grace of God.

Her Son granted Mary a special gift for being His Mother, by giving her an immediate assumption into Heaven when her body died. However, Mary has not been remote from us while she has been in Heaven. Without leaving Heaven, she has made numerous appearances back on earth, giving us messages through various saints, to encourage us to remain faithful to the Will of God.

For home schooling mothers and fathers, there is great consolation in having a mother who is totally concerned about us, both on this earth and for our eternal future. She is the most loving mother, the sweetest mother, the most tender mother, the most considerate of mothers. Because of her glorified state, body and soul, each of us is constantly present to her. She is able to focus on each and every one of us with eyes of love as we travel through our lives among the dangers of a secular society.

We often think of our Blessed Mother on the Feast of the Assumption as surrounded by the angels of Heaven, welcoming her to the throne of her Divine Son. She is the Queen of Angels as well as the Queen of Sinners. She is surely also, the Queen of Mothers and Fathers, a Queen concerned about those of us who are protecting our children and raising our own little angels in the Faith.

We must not forget that Mary suffered on this earth, and can understand our sufferings. She suffered when she was forced to travel on a donkey while expecting the Baby Jesus. She suffered when her Son was lost to her for three days. She suffered immeasurably when her Son was nailed to the Cross.

Mary’s glorious assumption gives us the hope and the expectation that as we suffer from minor frustrations and aggravations on a daily basis, and from major trials and tribulations that might last for years, she is with us, praying for us, guiding us, strengthening us, so that we may join her in the glory of Heaven on the last day, finally freed from every suffering.

O Mary, on the Feast of your Assumption, as we remember your glorious entrance into the heavenly home of your Son, thank you for not forsaking us. Thank you for praying for us and helping us to see how good God has been to us. Help us remember to thank your Son each day for all the good He has done for us. We beg you to continue to intercede for us. Help us to stay in grace. Next to your Son, we have placed our hope in you, O most glorious Virgin and Mother of God. Holy Mother of God, assumed into Heaven, pray for us.

- MKC

## *Inside . . .*

<i>Questions</i> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>Naval Academy</i> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Responding to Inquiries</i> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>What’s at Stake</i> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>World Youth Day 2008</i> .....	<b>8</b>



## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

### **My son has anxiety about writing the book reports and the research report. What can I do to help him?**

These assignments are ones that many students, especially boys, are concerned about because boys frequently do not like to write. We find as well, when students come to Seton after being in another school, many times they have had little if any paragraph writing experience.

The fear which some students have of writing causes them to have mental and emotional struggles. The only way to overcome this fear is to give the student daily writing assignments. Once the student realizes that he can be successful in writing, the fear will go away.

The Seton program encourages writing in many subjects, but whether or not there is an assignment for any day, give one yourself. For instance, have your son write a paragraph about what he has just read in his science book or history book. He could even write, in his own words, about a story in his reader or about a parable in the Bible or about an article in an encyclopedia, or, for high school students, about an essay or article of opinion in a Catholic newspaper. It is important that your son think about what he has read, and then put his thoughts down on paper.

Writing is a process that demands thinking and analysis and logical presentation. In fact, Seton insists that students write an outline before writing a paragraph or any other type of composition. Outlining and composing develop the brain in a way that nothing else can. In most courses, students memorize facts; in math and English, students memorize processes and learn how to use these processes to solve problems. It is basically deductive thinking.

Writing compositions demands inductive thinking and putting facts together in a logical way. It also helps students—and anyone for that matter—to understand what they themselves think and believe. If you cannot put on paper what you think, then it is probably not clear in your own mind.

### **The history tests seem long and difficult for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.**

We are likely more demanding than other schools when it comes to writing and when it comes to history. However, this is the kind of work that junior high and high school students should be doing to be successful—in fact, to be superior—in our current society. Your children may need to improve their study habits, making outlines or underlining their textbook chapters, or re-reading their chapters, so that the tests are not as difficult and won't take them as long.

We need to remember that the brain, just like muscles, needs to be stretched if it is to grow. Research has shown that mental activities actually build more synapses in the brain. For a student to receive the most benefit, schoolwork should involve a bit of a challenge. Just as athletes need to push themselves to achieve new goals, so do students.

We receive letters every day from students in college, in graduate school, and in professional work who say that they believe that Seton was instrumental in their accomplishing so much, not only scholastically but also in their spiritual lives. While they have given so much credit to Seton, actually it is the parents working with their children, giving them Catholic values, and demanding the best of their children, who deserve the credit.

### **Do we need to take all week to do the vocabulary and spelling assignments?**

You do not need to take all week to do these assignments, but for some students, it helps them to retain the definitions and the correct spelling. If your child is doing very well in these subject areas, she may be able to do Monday and Tuesday's assignments in one day, then Wednesday and Thursday's assignments in one day, and take the tests on Friday. The beauty of home schooling is that you are able to make such adjustments.

### **I did not have time to do the art and music assignments. Can my daughter advance to the next grade level without taking those courses?**

Yes. These are considered "minor" subjects in the elementary grades, so if you do not have a grade for these on your report card, you can still advance to the next grade level. Nevertheless, I encourage you to try to do something in these areas over the summer and next year. The art books we send are helpful in reinforcing our Catholic beliefs and culture.

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*If you cannot put on paper what you think, then it is probably not clear in your own mind.*

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Music is essential for the proper development of children's brains. Someone in the family should learn to read music, to play a musical instrument, and to teach others how to read and play music.

If you look on the Internet, you can read article after article talking about the importance of music in a child's proper intellectual development. Some schools require students to learn to play a musical instrument in school, or to be in a band or choir. In a survey reported on the Internet, high schools that require students to study music reported over a

ninety percent graduation rate as compared with a seventy-two percent graduation rate in schools that did not require a music course.

Throughout the Bible, we read about music and even about music in Heaven. Obviously, God thinks music is an important part of our spiritual lives.

### **Must I give the standardized achievement test?**

We give the standardized test as a placement test, and recommend the test as an end-of-year achievement test. Though we do not require it, we think it helps parents, and Seton, as one evaluation of progress. Obviously, parents are the best judge of how their children are succeeding, and, especially when children are in the early grades, sometimes the test scores are not accurate. In fact, experts recommend that educational decisions not be made solely on the basis of such test results.

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*Some parents have found that a student progresses quickly through some courses, but does not do as well in other courses.*

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These tests are beneficial because it gives evidence to questioning relatives that the children are progressing, and it is beneficial as practice to students who ultimately, in high school, will need to take standardized tests to enter college. Having taken such tests over the years helps students to be more relaxed and confident when they take college-entrance tests.

Some states require home schooling students to take achievement tests as a measurement of educational progress, which is actually easier than more intrusive requirements of some other states. However, these “testing” states

generally allow for other measures of progress, such as portfolios of work completed.

### **Since my daughter is doing so well, I would like to have her skip a grade level. What do you think?**

We rarely recommend skipping a grade level. There are just too many possibilities of something being missed. Rather than skip a grade, a student should take the next level courses more quickly. Daily assignments could be skipped, but end of week or end of quarter tests should be taken to be sure the student does know the material. Once the student “tests out” of the courses, the student could move on to the next level of courses.

Some parents have found that while a student progresses more quickly through some courses, the student does not do as well in other courses. Taking the regular next level of courses, a student could go on to a higher level in each course whenever he finishes it.

When I was home schooling my boys, I never advanced them to the next grade level ahead of schedule. Rather, I did more enrichment of what they were studying. For instance, in history or science, my boys would read more from the books at the library about what they were studying in their textbooks. They might look at a biography or a book on the city or state where events occurred.

Learning can and should be enjoyed and sometimes, by pushing ahead, some students do not have the opportunity to enjoy learning. Education really is as much about the journey as the destination.

### **My mother said that when she attended the Catholic schools many years ago when the nuns were teaching, the schools did not seem to have so many problems, even though the nuns had only a high school education.**

The secular culture today is much stronger than it was years ago, and the influence of the culture is pervasive. Years ago, we did not have television and the Internet, which spread the culture into almost every home. When we read

1984 in high school, we talked about Big Brother watching every family through a screen in every home. Today, the television and Internet brings the culture so thoroughly into the homes, and the schools, the secularists don't need to worry about the citizens at all. Everyone is affected, and if the culture misses a few, they are too few to matter.

Since the vast majority of the universities are controlled by the secular culturists, the children and young adults are manipulated into the beliefs of the secular culture. Those graduates from these thoroughly secularized colleges end up running for prestigious public offices, even for president, so the secular culture ideas are continually promoted in the public square and in the government schools.

We need to pray for our Catholic graduates, that they obtain teaching positions and political positions so they can work to hold back the secular culture wave that is drowning our society in a sea of sewer sludge.

### **My husband left us two years ago, but I keep struggling with home schooling and holding down a job. I wonder how long I can or should continue with the home schooling.**

As difficult and sometimes seemingly impossible, try to continue with the home schooling until your children graduate from high school. Since you likely don't have the money to send your children to a private school, at several thousand dollars per year per child, the secular public school culture will drive you more crazy than any problems you now face. If a child loses the Faith, or become involved with the drugs and sex culture, your heart will be broken. You don't want to lose your greatest treasure, your children, to the miserable life that might be inflicted on them as a result of the pressures of a public school.

Consider moving in with a relative who is willing to help during these difficult years when you are home schooling. Doing this would both cut down on your expenses and hopefully make more child care available.

## *God is My First Mate*

*by Deacon Eugene McGuirk*

There is a book and a movie called *God is My Co Pilot*, about Col. Robert L. Scott's duty in China during World War II. The name of the book indicates Col. Scott's recognition that God helped him during the war. This theme can be adapted for the US Navy and its graduates from the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD, even today. Hence, the title of this essay is a modified version of the title of Col. Scott's book.

On Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, I had reason to visit the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Bill Short, a retired Naval Officer of the class of 1973, gave me a personal guided tour. In addition to the Academy, we went to the active naval base nearby. The mission of this base is to support the Academy in its needs.

The tour took us through many buildings, starting with the dorms and the library. Everything is of immense scale. Bancroft Hall is the single largest dormitory in the world. It can hold over 4,400 midshipmen. The corridors are measured in miles, nearly 5, and the floor space in acres, over 30. Bancroft Hall is also the home of King Hall, the dining area for the midshipmen, and Memorial Hall. Memorial Hall holds many "relics" concerning the exploits of Academy graduates. When you enter the Rotunda of Bancroft Hall, after going up the impressive exterior staircase, you look up an impressive, indoor stairway that opens into Memorial Hall itself, where your eyes are greeted by a giant banner with the slogan "Don't Give Up the Ship". This dying command of Captain James Lawrence of the *USS Chesapeake*, during a battle in the War of 1812, has been an inspiration and a battle cry for the US Navy for nearly two centuries.

The most amazing part of this building is much smaller in scale, but much larger in importance. To the right of the stairway is a small corridor that leads to the tiny Blessed Sacrament Chapel. This chapel has a Tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament reposed therein. In front of the Tabernacle is a single prie-dieu. There

is just enough room there for a single chair on either side of the worship area. My guide said that this was his favorite place at the Academy.

In the short, narrow hallway leading to the Tabernacle, there were other surprises. There was an icon of Mother Seton, and a stained glass window of her, dedicated to an Academy graduate. This was a gift of the Class of 1949 to commemorate Fr. Thomas J. Donoher, a member of that class. (So far, I have been unable to find out more about Fr. Donoher.) There is also a plaque that explains the Catholic belief in the Real Presence within the Tabernacle, and a second plaque that tells something of the history of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. At the end, this plaque states:

"Elizabeth Ann Seton was beatified on March 17, 1963, and was canonized on September 14, 1975. She is the first native born North American to be so honored.

"Shortly after the canonization of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Rome on September 14, 1975 by Pope Paul VI, the then Chief of Navy Chaplains, Monsignor John J. O'Connor (who later became John Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York) took the initiative to proclaim Mother Seton 'Patroness of the Sea Services' for Catholic men and women in uniform—the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marine. Admiral James D. Watkins, then Chief of Naval Personnel, collaborated closely with Rear Admiral O'Connor in that effort and in 1977 they struck a medal honoring Mother Seton because of her two sons, William and Richard's naval service."

These two sons of Mother Seton, William and Richard, attended Mt. St. Mary's College, in Emmitsburg, Md. before going on to the navy. Richard Bayley Seton (1798 – 1823) joined the US Navy in 1822 but he died prematurely on board the ship *Oswego*, a year later while off the coast of Liberia, Africa. William Seton (1796 – 1868) also joined the US Navy, and received a commission

as a lieutenant in February of 1826. He married Emily Prime in 1832. One of their children became an Archbishop. When William ended his Navy career, he was a full captain.

There were two other surprises that I delightfully experienced during my tour. First, my guide, Bill, pointed out to me that the most prominent feature of the Academy is the chapel. The chapel is situated on a small rise in a centrally located spot. When seen from the naval base across the river, the chapel dome commands your attention. In fact, the Navy chapel is the most prominent focal point not just for the Academy, but also of the entire Annapolis area. The dome of the state Capitol building, which can also be seen from the naval base, is not as impressive as the Navy chapel's dome. There is a permanent Catholic chapel, called St. Andrew's Chapel, beneath the main, interdenominational chapel

After I entered the main chapel I was pleasantly surprised to find several stained glass windows, and in particular, on the left side, a large one of Mother Seton. This is much larger than the one in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and it appears to be from the original construction, which suggests a long history at the Academy of respect for this first of American saints.

Across from it, on the other side of the chapel, is a stained glass window with a midshipman in a white dress uniform opening his orders. Above him, to his right, stands Our Lord giving a blessing. I was told that this window represents the "Invisible Commission." This fits in with the Academy's mission statement, which proclaims in part that the mission of the Academy is to form midshipmen "morally, mentally and physically." I took particular note that here "morally" comes first, as indicated by the invisible commission given by Our Lord Himself.

I hope to be able to visit the US Naval Academy again in the future. I also hope to be able to learn more about its Catholic graduates and their contributions to our Faith and our nation. God bless the Naval Academy, and help it to succeed in its mission, especially in its mission to form moral leaders for our world.

## Responding to Inquiries

by Ginny Seuffert

Many parents were alarmed by the recent news from California when the Court of Appeals decided on February 28, 2008 to declare homeschooling illegal in California unless the parent is a certified teacher. The court is re-hearing this case and so the previous decision is no longer in effect. Nevertheless, the California case serves to remind us that government agents do not always know or understand home education laws and are frequently suspicious of people who educate outside the mainstream system of public, private, and parochial schools.

I am blessed to live in Illinois where the state and local school districts require virtually no reporting from homeschoolers. Many of you live in a place where that is not the case, but always remember that the actual right of parents to home school is not only Church law, but also the law of all fifty states as well as all the provinces of Canada. (We must not forget to pray for parents in the European Union, many of whom presently are denied this freedom.) At the same time, we must recognize that many public officials do not support home education, and we should be ready to protect our rights.

We had an illustration of this recently in suburban Chicago where a former home schooling mom was contacted by someone from the County Board of Health. The official was looking for the names of families who are not having their children vaccinated for various reasons, as well as contact information for other support groups. Thankfully, the mom who received the call had the presence of mind not to give out any information over the telephone. She encouraged the county agent to mail information to her home and promised to forward it to other families.

This episode reminds us that any family could be contacted by school officials. That being said, the likelihood of a particular family being contacted by the school system is low. Even so, it is good to give some thought to how to handle a contact if it comes.

When a telephone call comes out of the blue in the middle of your home schooling day, it can be easy to get frazzled and handle it in a way you might later regret. If this happens to you, try to remember the letter "C". Here are the principles:

**Be Calm and Courteous** – It is counterproductive to antagonize public officials and might move you to the top of their list.

**Consider Carefully** before you speak – No law requires you to give information over the telephone to a total stranger, who may or may not be who he or she claims to be.

**Control the Conversation** – Just because someone asks a question, does not mean that you must respond. It is a good practice not to give any information at all. No matter how concerned an official may sound, do not presume that he or she has your best interest at heart.

Here's how this works in practice. Let's say Mrs. Home Schooling Mom gets a call from the Truancy Control Officer at the local public school.

TCO: Mrs. HSM, I am Jane Smith from the school district. Are your children enrolled in school?

Mrs. HSM: Can you spell your name please? What exactly is your title?

TCO: It's Smith with an "i". I am the district Truancy Control Officer assistant. It is my job to ensure that children are in school or being home schooled according to state law. Can you tell me how your children are being educated? How old are they? Are they enrolled in a school?

Mrs. HSM: Please understand that I cannot give personal information to someone who has called me on the phone. I have no way of verifying if you are who you say you are. Would you please put any questions in a letter on school district letterhead and send it to me at home?

TCO: Is your address 123 Main Street?

Mrs. HSM: I am sorry, but I cannot give you my address when I am not sure who you are. Please send me an official letter of inquiry.

In our play-acting, notice that Mrs. HSM gave no information whatsoever to TCO, and did not even acknowledge having children. She also did not engage TCO in conversation, defend her right to home school, or quote state education law, all of which might unnecessarily antagonize the unknown caller. She did ask for the caller's name and title, which is important to know.

TCO may very well be ignorant of home schooling law in your state or province. It is easy to pick up the phone and call and ask for information that is beyond the scope of the law. Writing a letter requires more work and starts a paper trail, so Mrs. HSM may never hear from the district again. If the district follows up by sending a registered letter, it should be given to a lawyer or answered in consultation with HSLDA. It is always best to use the bureaucracy against the bureaucrats!

This issue is covered in greater detail in Dr. Mary Kay Clark's book, *Catholic Home Schooling, A Handbook for Parents*. Information about home schooling laws is available from the Home School Legal Defense Association website. There is a link to HSLDA in the Parent Resources section of Seton's website.

Let's be vigilant about our civil liberties and rights under the law.

**Tip of the Month:** Let the answering machine take your calls during the homeschool day. Caller ID will allow you to pick up the calls you want, from your husband for example, and allow you to call others back at your convenience, only if you want to, and when you are prepared. Many thanks to Juliette from Illinois for this terrific reminder.

## *What's At Stake*

*by John Clark*

Because I have the worst directional sense of anyone I know, last summer I bought a global positioning satellite (GPS) receiver for my car. Now, I never get lost driving, because I always know where I am. I can even “see” myself progressing up the road, and always be assured that I am on the right track. My destination is marked with a little checkered flag, and I can see my car moving right towards it.

Here's the problem with the GPS: it doesn't work for other areas of my life, like home schooling. For instance, I can't open the Seton History 8 book and see my children progressing on a direct route to Heaven as they read it. Maybe life for home schooling families would be easier if we could see this progression. Maybe it would be easier, but maybe that's where faith comes in.

Because we can't visualize our progression, and our children's progression, and because at times we lack faith, home schooling can sometimes seem like a burden too heavy to carry. If you're going through a period like this, let me offer you a piece of advice: remember your mission.

In the course of home schooling, if you forget why you began, it's all over but the shouting. It's said that couples should always remember why they fell in love. We fathers have to often remind ourselves why we home school in the first place. Although we all may have the same main reason for home schooling, each of us probably has a certain nuance as to why we chose this calling—this mission.

For me, the “why” was an incident that happened years ago with my daughter at breakfast. While staring at my young daughter eating a Pop Tart at breakfast, for some reason, I found myself pondering the idea that the devil not only wants me to go to hell, but also wants this young baby to go to hell.

When I thought about the fact that the devils wanted me to go to hell, that

bothered me. When I thought about the fact that demonic forces wanted my little daughter to go to hell, that angered me. Though I had always realized that I must protect all my children, I recognized at that moment that I must do everything in my reasonable power to protect her from moral danger.

Sometimes we fathers forget that. We must protect our children from moral danger as best we can.

That is one reason why home schooling is so important. I've heard many fathers make good arguments not to home school. Some fathers are concerned that if they home school, their boys will not be able to play sports in high school. Some fathers argue that their wives are not capable of teaching certain subjects. Others are worried that their peers will think of them as outcasts.

Fathers must ask themselves: what is our goal for our children, and what is at stake?

In my capacity as an investment professional, I work with hundreds of Catholic fathers on a regular basis. Many of my clients have grown children and they tell me heartbreaking stories about their adult children.

For the record, I have never heard a heartbreaking story about a child behind in math class. Parents don't say things like: “I have a heartbreaking story...my son is six months behind in Algebra.” Mothers don't sob themselves to sleep because their daughters didn't finish their Phonics 5 homework. I have never heard a heartbreaking story about a boy not making it to professional soccer.

Do you know what the heartbreaking stories are about? One thing: their children have lost the Catholic faith. That's the heartbreak.

I believe in the power of grace, but as a Catholic, I also believe that God gives us free will. A parent can do everything right, and his children still may lose the faith. However, we must take reasonable precautions to ensure that doesn't happen.

And home schooling is one of those ways.

Home schooling does not ensure salvation, it does not ensure sanctity, it doesn't even ensure a good education. For me, home schooling offers one guarantee, and only one—it guarantees that my daughters will not sit in a classroom apart from their parents for six hours a day, five days a week, thirty-six weeks a year for twelve years. Home schooling guarantees that one stranger after another does not teach my sons for the most influential twelve thousand, nine hundred and sixty hours of their childhoods. I know that my children will spend those hours, those weeks, those years with one of the saintliest women I know—their mother.

For me, that is what we call in sales: a “closer.”

It is not my place to tell every parent how to best meet the needs of their children, and I'm not suggesting that there are no Catholic schools that produce saints. After all, many saints were the products of formalized schooling.

I'm simply suggesting that fathers realize what's at stake. And remember this: one day, every one of your children will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And when they do, it may not be the soccer that mattered, and it certainly won't be the Algebra. It will matter how they spent those thirteen thousand hours.

So fathers, when the going gets tough, remind yourselves why you're doing this in the first place, and try to remember, that whether or not you see yourself and your family traveling toward your heavenly destination, you're on the right path.

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## *Boys Like Active Learning*

*by Dr. Mary Kay Clark*

Many of our calls come from moms who have active boys who don't want to sit down and do their schoolwork. Moms—as well as classroom teachers—know that boys don't like to sit still. Some teachers have even added stationary bicycles and other simple exercise equipment to give boys an opportunity to take a quick minute to get some exercise.

The fact is that most boys need movement while they learn. Studies have shown that babies progress mentally more rapidly if they move around frequently. Children's brains work better if the children are moving, if they are physically active at the same time they are studying. This seems to be more important for boys.

Boys like to bounce balls and play with something with their hands or shake a foot while they do their schoolwork or memory work. My boys would often jump-rope while they memorized their math tables or answered catechism questions. Sometimes mothers try to restrict this since they don't see how the

boys can learn while doing other activities. If the schoolwork is being done, though, mothers should be open to allowing the student to choose his optimal learning situation.

When I was teaching my boys, I would assign a chore between classes. My boys did not like "after-school" chores. By three o'clock, they wanted to go outside and play. So I would give them chores that gave them physical activity, such as putting in a load of laundry, sweeping the floor, vacuuming, picking up whatever.

We should remember the need for physical activity when our boys are saying their prayers during the day or at the dinner table. Why not have the children stand behind their chairs when saying grace before meals, or take a walk while saying the rosary?

Encourage your boys to be altar servers to give them the opportunity to use their natural inclination as active learners to grow more devout in the practice of their Catholic spiritual life. Boys love serving at the altar as they

learn the Mass prayers, and at the same time, they are receiving special graces.

Involve your sons and daughters in not only participating in the Mass with you, but also take them to Baptisms and Confirmations and Weddings.

Because boys learn better by being active learners, we must be sure to have home activities that celebrate the feast days. Religious Customs in the Family is a book by Father Weiser, who writes about the family religious activities which influenced him to become a priest.

For the busy mother, sometimes it is difficult to find the time for active lessons. I found that science projects books and the Mr. Wizard TV shows with home science projects kept my boys busy. (Seton Educational Media sells the Mr. Wizard TV science projects disks.) The projects were always simple and step by step, using materials found around the house. The Internet provides directions for thousands of free science projects, most categorized by age or grade level.

Let's be sure to give our boys and girls enough activity to keep them healthy, and use their desire for physical activity to help them learn.

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## *Message of Pope Benedict for World Youth Day 2008*

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). This is the theme of the Twenty-Third World Youth Day. How much our world needs a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit! There are still many who have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, while many others, for whatever reason, have not recognized in this Good News the saving truth that alone can satisfy the deepest longings of their hearts. The Psalmist prays: “when you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth” (Ps 104:30). It is my firm belief that young people are called to be instruments of that renewal, communicating to their peers the joy they have experienced through knowing and following Christ, and sharing with others the love that the Spirit pours into their hearts, so that they too will be filled with hope and with thanksgiving for all the good things they have received from God our heavenly Father.

Many young people today lack hope. They are perplexed by the questions that present themselves ever more urgently in a confusing world, and they are often uncertain which way to turn for answers. They see poverty and

injustice and they long to find solutions. They are challenged by the arguments of those who deny the existence of God and they wonder how to respond. They see great damage done to the natural environment through human greed and they struggle to find ways to live in greater harmony with nature and with one another.

Where can we look for answers? The Spirit points us towards the way that leads to life, to love and to truth. The Spirit points us towards Jesus Christ. There is a saying attributed to Saint Augustine: “If you wish to remain young, seek Christ”. In him we find the answers that we are seeking, we find the goals that are truly worth living for, we find the strength to pursue the path that will bring about a better world. Our hearts find no rest until they rest in the Lord, as Saint Augustine says at the beginning of the Confessions, the famous account of his own youth. My prayer is that the hearts of the young people who gather in Sydney for the celebration of World Youth Day will truly find rest in the Lord, and that they will be filled with joy and fervour for spreading the Good News among their friends, their families, and all whom they meet.

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