



# Seton Home



# Study School

Volume XXVI, Number 8

◆ *“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church*

◆ August 2009

## The Assumption

The Assumption, which we celebrate on August 15, is certainly one of the happiest and most glorious feast days in the Church. The Blessed Mother is raised, body and soul, to her heavenly reward!

How many paintings—showing Mary surrounded by angels being welcomed by God the Father, her Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—

have been devoted to this magnificent occasion!

Not only is it a glorious occasion for Mary, but it gives us consolation and hope for our own assumption into heaven, body and soul, at the end of time. Our assumption and the assumption of our children into Heaven to obtain their eternal heavenly glory is, after all, what the purpose of life in this world is all about.

of heaven! Your peaceful tomb has been opened by the Apostles and found to be empty. Beautiful flowers whose sweet fragrance scents the air fill the place where your body has lain, and heavenly music envelopes your empty tomb. The Apostles now realize that you have been taken up into heaven, soul and body.”

“MARY, it was fitting that you should be assumed into heaven with soul and body. By your Assumption, God honored your body that was always the temple in which He dwelt by grace. It was a gate through which the Son of God, the Divine Word, passed to earth and became Man. It was fitting that your holy and virginal body which gave flesh and blood to the God of all sanctity, the Victor over death, should never experience the corruption of the grave. Death and corruption are a result of original sin; but by your Immaculate Conception, you are preserved from original sin and its effects. You offered yourself to suffering and your beloved Son to death for the redemption of mankind; it was fitting that you should be united with Him in glory.” (www.intermirifica.org.)

Queen assumed into Heaven, pray for us

.- MKC



As we struggle with the daily aggravations or frustrations, as we deal with the pains and bumps of life, keeping in our minds a beautiful picture of the Blessed Mother’s Assumption into Heaven can give us strength to overcome and to remain faithful.

Father John Hardon, once a spiritual advisor for Seton and a regular speaker at our conferences, founded *Intermirifica*, an organization dedicated to teaching the Catholic Faith through home-study courses for adults. The following meditation-prayer appears on their website.

“As angels sing their hymns of praise, you are raised on high to the kingdom of glory by God’s own power. Who can tell the sweetness of that loving embrace whereby Jesus welcomes and admits you, His own Virgin Mother, to unending union with Him in the glory

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

**My daughter completed the first two book reports, but she seems to need more help with the saint book reports.**

All book reports in grades 4-8 have a similar format, but in the third and fourth quarters, students create their own topic sentences to use in the book reports.

- The introductory paragraph gives the book's title, the author, and the topics that will be discussed in the middle paragraphs.
- Each middle paragraph discusses one of the topics mentioned in the introductory paragraph.
- The concluding paragraph restates the topics that were mentioned in the introductory paragraph.

When writing book reports on saint books, students choose different virtues or qualities of the main character to use as topics. Since a fifth-grade book report needs three middle paragraphs, the student should choose three qualities or virtues, such as obedience, faith, and compassion. The report might include these paragraphs:

- (1) an introductory paragraph mentioning the title and author of the book, and stating that the saint shows the virtues of obedience, faith, and compassion;
- (2) a paragraph about what the saint does that shows obedience;
- (3) a paragraph about what the saint does that shows faith;
- (4) a paragraph about what the saint does that shows compassion;
- (5) a concluding paragraph that mentions obedience, faith, and compassion.

Note that a seventh or eighth grade book report also needs a thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. The thesis statement takes a position or view that the three topics will support.

Here are some sample qualities or virtues: bravery, charity, compassion, courage, courtesy, fairness, faith, honesty, hope, humility, innocence, justice, kindness, leadership, loyalty, meekness, modesty, obedience, patience, piety, prudence, purity, reverence, self-denial, selflessness.

Please see the lesson plans for each grade level for specific directions.

**Do you think I should advance my son a grade? He seems to be ahead of his grade level.**

Normally, a student should not be moved to the next grade except in the area of math. The reason is that eventually something will catch up with him, and it usually is a certain immaturity in intellectual development about 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade. High school can be a struggle for a child not really able to "read between the lines."

What I recommend, and did for my own family, is enrichment activities, lessons, or supplements. In history, we would find more books at the library or find library films we could borrow, or watch something on the History Channel, or visit a historical museum.

For reading, we would look at the places mentioned in the stories they read, and find picture books in the library travel section about those locations. Often we would find easy-to-read biographies in the library children's section on people we would read about in the readers or science or history books.

In those days before Internet search engines, we would look in the encyclopedia every day for something or someone we would be reading about. We regularly watched the Mr. Wizard science projects on films, which Seton now sells. My boys would do those projects on their own.

My boys also joined the local library reading club, for which they would receive certificates for the local ice cream store for the number of books they read and reported on to the librarian. Ask at your local library about the reading incentives they have for children.

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**The book analyses for the high school English courses seem demanding.**

Our English staff has developed a Handbook section in the back of most of the high school English courses. These contain a closer examination of what should be in the book analyses, and contain specific examples.

We have two big helps on our website for students as they think about and write their book analyses. The first help is our *Chapter Notes*, which you can find on your My Seton page under Course Resources. They are available for most of the books. We have been revising them to give more direction toward answering the questions relating to character development, plot, and theme.

In the Resources, we have presented an example of a Character Sketch, an example of a Conflict Essay, a Morality Essay, and a Theme Essay. By the way, our workbooks for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, Reading-Thinking skills, focus on helping students to prepare for writing these Book Analysis essays.

## *Making Ends Meet*

*by Ginny Seuffert*

Leaving my family on weekends during the spring and summer home school conference season is tough, but it affords me a unique opportunity to meet you – homeschooling parents – and to learn firsthand about your successes and challenges. This year, more than ever before, parents tell me they are struggling financially, and worry about their ability to continue home schooling when it is so difficult just to pay the bills. With twelve kids, mortgages, car payments, and on and on, I feel uniquely qualified to give advice on how to squeeze every nickel.

### *Put your grocery bill on a diet.*

When it comes to food, Americans typically eat too much of the wrong things, and our grocery bills are expanding as fast as our waistlines. A few simple tricks can help us provide meals that are cheaper, easier to prepare and more nutritious.

First, strictly limit the amount of prepared food you purchase. Besides having the nutritional value of library paste, pre-packaged, powdered, preserved food is tough on the wallet while remaining mushy in the mouth. Typically, for the same price as a box of powdered “potatoes au gratin,” you can buy ten pounds of fresh spuds.

Second, sugary treats should be an occasional luxury, not a major food group. Try to buy “mixes” for cakes, cookies and brownies. That way the children can enjoy an occasional goodie, but they have to take the time to prepare it first. Limit soda pop consumption to holidays, and serve ice water on a daily basis. I’m not sure that restricting sugar will improve your children’s behavior, but I guarantee it will not make it worse, and at the same time, will shrink waistlines and prevent shrinkage of your bank account.

Third, don’t waste food. If the bread gets stale, make bread crumbs and store them in the freezer. If the bananas get brown and mushy, make banana bread. If you have leftover meat, add it to pasta or rice and make a casserole. Every time you throw away spoiled food, dollar bills

go into the garbage can right along with it. Use leftovers before they grow a beard in your refrigerator.

Speaking of leftovers, planning ahead makes mealtime simpler and thriftier. Years ago when I was feeding eleven people on an annual income of less than \$25,000, I bought one turkey and one ham every week, and stretched them to last. Sunday, we had stuffed turkey; Monday, baked ham; Tuesday, turkey fricassee; Wednesday, ham, potato and cheese casserole, Thursday, turkey soup, Friday, macaroni and cheese; and Saturday pea soup or potato soup from the hambone. Don’t know how to prepare these types of meals? Look up recipes online.

Finally, meat is expensive and Americans eat way too much of it anyway. Try to base your meals around beans, or pasta or rice with meat in the sauce or as a garnish.

### *Curtail the Car*

For years I drove a fifteen passenger van. When the car died of old age, we didn’t replace it right away because we were broke that month. Twelve years have gone by and we never replaced it. That meant one less set of car payments, insurance bills, fuel bills, and repair bills. It has been a bit inconvenient through the years, but overall we simply got used to being a one-car family and tailored our habits accordingly. I shop on weekends when my husband is home or hitch a ride with someone else. My kids walked or rode their bikes to activities. When necessary, we would carpool by the kids riding with another family to the activity and I would do pick up after my husband was home with the car.

We are lucky enough to live in an urban area with nearby shops and public transportation. I realize many families simply must have a second car, but considering the price of gas and repairs, most of us should drive less. Try to set aside one time per week, maybe Friday afternoons, to schedule all your errands.

### *Be energy conscious*

Stop giving so many hard-earned dollars to utility companies. Use energy efficient light bulbs and lower wattage. Turn off overhead lights and lamps during the day. Keep the TV off unless someone is watching it. Unplug chargers when they are not in use.

Most of us are doing too much laundry because it is easier for the kids to throw a perfectly clean garment into the hamper rather than fold it and put it away. Tell kids that clean clothes will be confiscated by the laundry police and held hostage until they clean up their act. Install a towel rack in the bedrooms and ask the children to reuse their towel for a week. It’s only wet with clean water after a shower anyway.

For years I saved on natural gas by hanging my clothes during the warm weather months and found it to be more efficient in some ways. Because I was conscious of getting the laundry on the line early in the day, and bringing it in and folding it before darkness, laundry chores had a beginning and an end. Since I started using the dryer, it seems as if laundry is a never ending task, and I am still folding towels at midnight!

### *Say no!*

Nobody ever died from hearing the word “no.” In fact, denying oneself is good for the spiritual life and builds character. Most of us can live without the gizmos and gadgets, overstuffed drawers, resort vacations, and all the other stuff that surrounds us. Simplify your lives, and gain a new appreciation for the easy pleasures of good times spent with family and friends.

Our Faith teaches us that suffering has a purpose. It is just possible that our present hard times will teach us detachment from material things and to value a simpler way of life. Through the years, when I whined about our lack of discretionary income, and worried about paying this bill or that, I found it helpful to remember mothers in poorer countries who worry about feeding their children, and who have no hope for even the basic essentials of life. By meditating on their lives, and generously praying for them, we can gain a serene acceptance of the tribulations that come our way.

## Using Your My Seton Page

MySeton is a part of the Seton Home Study School website which is customized for your family. A very wide range of information and services are available online. Almost any information you could receive by calling Seton—grades, papers received, payments, etc.—can be found on your My Seton page. And many services, such as audio pronunciation guides and lectures, are available only on My Seton.

address, and if the address you enter matches what we have on file, the login information will be emailed to you. If we don't have your email address, then you will need to either fill out the help form online or call Seton.

### Course Resources

One of the most important features of your My Seton page is the supplemental course resources that are offered. The

### Grades Tab

Your children's grades are always available for review online. The Grades tab displays the courses and grades for your children in a grid. The left side shows the courses, the grades are in the middle, and a series of icons is on the right. The icons relate to different actions that are available for a particular course.

You will notice that each of the grades and courses listed is actually a link. If you click on one of these links, it will take you to a more detailed page for that course. Each course has specific items for each quarter that are either required or optional in order to receive a grade for the course. The items are grouped first by quarter, and then by whether they are parent-graded or Seton-graded items.

The parent-graded items are shown first for each quarter, and have either a yellow background or a box around them. You can record your parent grades for assignments here. To enter parent grades, click the link on the right side of the grid that says "Enter Parent Grades". The grades you enter here are grades that you give for assignments, and you can determine those grades in whatever way you wish. After you enter parent grades, click the button that says "Submit Parent Grades". Clicking this button saves the grades you have entered.

### Logging in to My Seton

In order to log in to My Seton, you first need to go to the My Seton web address of [www.setonhome.org/myseton](http://www.setonhome.org/myseton). You can either type this address in your browser or use the login from Seton's home page. The first time you log in to My Seton, you will be asked to supply your family number and password. The password and family number are found in bold print at the top right on the packing list that you received with your books.

After your first visit, you may not ever need to log in again. There is a check mark on the login page that says "Keep me logged in on this computer." If you check "Keep me logged in" then you will not need to login with your password on subsequent visits. If you are accessing My Seton from your home computer, you probably will want to have that checked. If you are accessing My Seton from a public computer, such as a library, you should be sure not to have that checked.

If you do not know your password or family number, click on the link that says "Retrieve Password". If Seton has your email address on file, you can receive login information immediately. You enter your email

New Resources tab will show you the new resources that have been uploaded for a student in the last month, based upon the courses in which the current student is enrolled. The All Resources tab will show you all resources that are available for the courses in which the current student is enrolled. Click on the underlined link to view any of the items. Items which are in Acrobat Reader format have the designation "pdf" after them. (PDF stands for "portable document format".)

Course	Rev	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Final	Resources
Algebra II	003	02	08	view	view		
American History	001	07	02	view	view		
American Literature	001	100	100	91	100	98	
English II	001	04	04	04	04	94	
Intro. to Computers	002	100	100	view	view	100	
Religion II	002	05	05	05	05	05	
Religion I	001	00	view	00	view		
<b>Independent Study</b>							
Geometry IV							

Click on one of the icons in the table above to perform the action for a particular course.

- Print Grade Report
- Upload Work (send work to Seton)
- Take Online Test
- View Electronically Submitted Work
- View Course Notes
- View Cumulative High School Grade Report
- Listen to Audio Lectures

### Online Tests

Online tests are tests that you can take through your My Seton site, rather than on paper. Online tests are available for many of the tests from high school down through the fourth grade. Almost all tests that are fill-in-the-blank, short answer, etc., are available online. Some tests, which are either entirely or almost entirely essay questions, are not available online. These items would need to be uploaded (see next section).

When a test consists entirely of objective questions, the computer can check all answers and give an immediate grade. When a test contains both objective and subjective parts, the computer will check the parts that are objective, and a human grader will grade the subjective parts. This means that a grade for the test is not immediately available, but may take a few days.

### Uploading Work to Seton

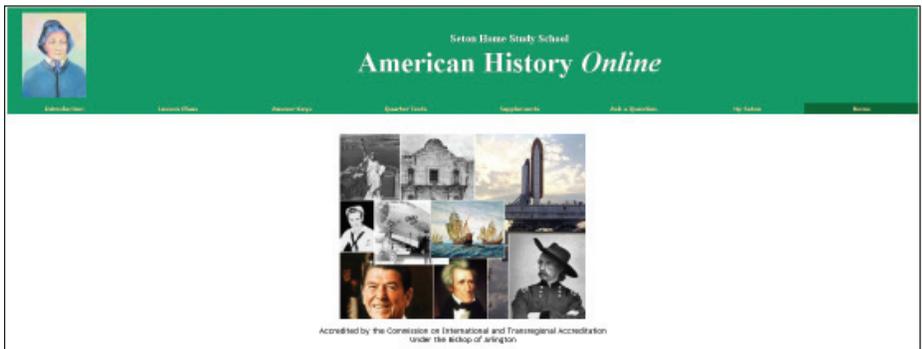
“Uploading” is the process of sending assignments or tests from your computer to Seton. Work that is uploaded to Seton is generally one of two things. It is either a file created in a word processor, such as Microsoft Word, or it is a workbook page or other non-computer file that has been scanned into an image. Uploading work to Seton will generally result in your student receiving a grade more quickly than if the same work were sent by mail.

### Printing Lesson Plans

Your My Seton page includes a full-featured web application that lets you customize and print lesson plans for your children. The Lesson Plan Creator comes in two somewhat different versions—the Weekly Creator and the Daily Creator. The Weekly Creator creates a week’s worth of lesson plans, while the Daily Creator creates lesson plans for a specified range of days.

The Weekly Creator will print out weeks as listed in the Lesson Plans. You can pick a different week for each subject, but the weeks are fixed according to what is printed in the lesson plans. This is great if you are keeping up pretty well on the weekly schedule.

The Daily Creator offers more flexibility because you can choose exact



days (or lessons) that you want. You can choose different days for each course.

After you create your lesson plans, you can load them into your word processor, and modify them as you like. Some families like to turn the daily lesson plans into a comprehensive daily calendar by adding such things as chores or outside classes.

### Checking Your Account Information

If you move to another address, change your email, get a new cell phone, etc., you can enter the new information here. This information is then checked at Seton for consistency and imported into our master list. When our master list has been updated, you will receive an email confirmation.

### CAT Test Results

New CAT Test results, plus results of most tests taken since 2004, are now available online. To see test results, click the drop-down box at the top right of the screen that says “I want To ...” and then choose “View Standardized Test Results”.

### Message Boards

Seton maintains a large number of online message boards that can be used by students and parents alike. As of this writing, the available message boards are:

- Parents
- Elementary Subject Counseling
- Special Services
- Spanish, Latin, French
- Science
- High School Math
- High School History
- English 9, 10, 11, and 12
- World and American Lit.
- Literary Analysis I and II
- American Government

- Biology
- Computer Courses

Each of the subject message boards is moderated either by a Seton counselor or by an expert in the subject who can help with answers to questions posted. In addition, students and parents can post messages to each other.

### Online Courses

Seton offers a large number of online high school courses. If the current student is enrolled in any course which has an online version, you access it through your My Seton page. The online courses all have online lesson plans. Other functionality of the online courses varies by course.

You do not need to enroll in an online version of a course to access the online courses. Enrolling in the standard version of the course gives you access to the online course as well. Remember, even when a course is not an online course, it often still has extensive online helps, such as weekly audio lectures.

### Weekly Lectures

For many high school courses, such as English, history, and foreign languages, Seton offers weekly audio lectures online. The lectures are offered in several different audio formats. These lectures are great supplements to the course, giving more information on concepts studied, or touching on topics of interest not covered in the text. For Spanish and Latin, we offer audio pronunciation guides online.

**For complete information about the services available on your My Seton page, please consult the *Parent Home School Handbook*, which comes with all new enrollments.**

## Decaf

by John Clark

During a recent medical exam, my physician recommended that I cut coffee from my diet. Apparently, he considered my life exciting enough without the added caffeine stimulus. This was no minor suggestion, as coffee had come to represent a significant facet of my life.

With the myriad of coffees, macchiatos, syrups, espressos, and double shots, some people are intimidated to go to coffee bars. I'm not. I'm the one you want to go with. Even with all the choices available at a typical shop, I routinely order "off the menu" and guide the baristas how to produce arabical brilliance in a cup. Over the years, I've become what is called a "coffee snob." I smugly dismiss those who call themselves "coffee drinkers," yet have the temerity to drink supermarket-bought coffee. I once found myself insulted when I brought a bag of coffee beans to the checkout at my local coffee store, and the woman behind the counter asked me if I wanted them ground (as if I didn't own a coffee grinder). I've even given serious consideration to roasting my own coffee beans.

Suffice it to say that giving up coffee was not exactly something that I had planned on doing. (And there is some question as to whether the local coffee shop would have expanded if they had known.) But since my doctor assured me that I could still drink de-caffeinated coffee, I thought I would give it a try. Specifically, he recommended that I cut my caffeinated coffee intake by one-half every few days until eliminated to zero. I assured him that this was a mathematical impossibility, but being a "spirit of the law" kind of guy, I played along.

So the next day, I went in to the local coffee shop and ordered a "half-caf with half and half." I quickly discovered another mathematical formula: one-half plus one-half plus one-half equals one: one headache. As the following days wore on, I noticed something else: it's a bit emasculating to order decaf coffee. Nobody's proud to order it. In terms of masculinity, ordering decaf coffee lies somewhere between ordering diet soda and non-alcoholic beer. If you order diet soda, people consider that a wise decision. If you order decaf coffee, people wonder what's wrong with you. So you start saying the word "decaf" in kind of an under-your-breath, or throat-clearing way: "Could you make that a (cough) decaf?" It's probably still better than ordering a non-alcoholic beer, but not by much.

Even my 14-year-old daughter has informed me that making decaf coffee is against her religion. (Yes, she's Catholic.) And if you think about it, she has a point. It seems unnatural. You're drinking something, but it's based on a lie. You tell yourself that you're drinking coffee, but you know that what you are drinking is not the fullness of what coffee has to offer.

As the following week ensued, and my headache started to dissipate along with my caffeine intake, a funny thing happened. I didn't need coffee any more. I used to get coffee headaches, meaning that if I didn't have a cup of coffee by ten o'clock in the morning, I'd get a headache. Getting a good cup of coffee every morning, regardless of circumstance, is not always an easy thing to do: sometimes it is almost impossible. Some days, it's not fun to race to the coffee shop—it can be a real inconvenience. But a week after my

coffee purge began, I noticed that I no longer needed it.

Because my beautiful, oft-pregnant wife has turned me into the kind of person who finds a spiritual meaning in any circumstance, I began to recognize something: this coffee story serves as a microcosm of Christianity. Eventually, we have to give up attachment to everything—everything except God. Before we can meet Christ, we have to free ourselves of all those things that separate us—habits, thoughts, sins. We have to desire what the Sacred Heart of Jesus desires...and nothing else.

It's not the coffee that gives you freedom—it's the *lack* of coffee that gives you freedom. Now it's certainly not a sin to drink coffee, and there are many things that are worse than coffee. Recent medical findings even suggest that there is some benefit to coffee drinking. But that's really not the point: the point is that attachment to so many things has to be given up. In the Eastern Liturgy, we pray for the grace to "set aside all earthly cares." This prayer signifies that it's not just the sins that often hold us back, it's the worldly things that may not be sins, but may be distractions, whether it's golf, television, or the internet.

Maybe the lesson is that we have to "de-caf" our lives. If it won't be in heaven with us, maybe we should stop paying so much attention to it now; and if it will be in heaven with us, maybe we should pay more attention to it now. There is no golf, television, or the internet in heaven; but there is love, there is family, and there is God. Fathers, as the new school year begins, remember that the sacrifices you make are for those things and those people that will be with you in heaven. Let's all pray that we remember that lesson when things get hard.

And please pray for me for strength the next time I pass Starbucks.

*Cont'd from page 2*

**I am still not finished this past year's work with my two children due to a difficult pregnancy. Should I advance my children into the next grade level even though we have not finished the assignments for this year?**

The best idea is to call a Seton counselor and discuss the situation with each child to determine what you should do in very specific terms for each child.

However, there are some general "rules." If you are talking about high school students, they definitely need to finish up their courses because they need high school credits. They also need good grades on their report cards which will be recorded on a transcript to be sent to a college at a later date.

To help your high school student move along more quickly, have him focus, full-time, on the course most nearly finished. Your student needs to feel successful quickly; high school students become depressed if they fall behind where they think they should be. If necessary, have an older sibling or your husband or even a retired teacher from your parish come, maybe an hour three times a week, to help your high schooler move along a little more quickly.

Once your high school student finishes a course, he can move to the next nearly-finished course and work on that full time. As your high school student obtains final grades and credits, he will be encouraged to work on the next subject.

To be successful in college, students must learn good study skills in high school. For next year, consider having your high school son do some of his school work at a college library or another quiet place a couple of afternoons a week where he can focus without distractions.

For a student in an elementary grade, there are core subjects that your child must complete successfully: math, English, reading, phonics, and religion. History and science can be read and studied with Dad before bed-time, or on the weekends.

Don't neglect the book reports. Book reports are very important because they help your child develop analytical skills. It is the hardest to accomplish because it demands your child stretches his brain!

Spelling and vocabulary are subjects you might catch up on next year, or ask someone to help. These are not as important right now because of your current health situation. You need to establish priorities.

**My husband has lost his job, and I am going to work nursing at the local hospital. My husband and I wonder if he should stay home and teach the children until he finds a job.**

It is important for you and your husband to pray about it, say a rosary novena, and make a list of the pros and cons. God will help you to make the best decision. The question is whether your husband plans to make looking for work his full-time job, or whether the job search is more relaxed, because of your job. Obviously, if your family needs an immediate income from your husband, he will not have time to stay home and teach. It could even become a source of conflict, if your husband feels he needs to be out finding a job, but feels pressured to stay home and teach instead.

However, it is certainly possible for many families to have the mother work and the father teach. We know of several home schooling fathers who take their home schooling job very seriously and do very well.

Encourage your husband to use the lesson plans. In addition, he can read my book for teaching ideas. If he needs help with discipline, he will get a laugh as well as practical suggestions with Dr. Ray Guarendi's book *Discipline That Lasts a Lifetime*. Give him Steve Wood's book *Legacy: A Father's Handbook for Raising Godly Children*.

If your husband has any questions, he can always call one of our academic counselors. Gene McGuirk and Manuel Vicente are two home schooling fathers on our staff who would be happy to speak with your husband at any time.

## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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## Seton Phone Numbers

(Seton main line: 540-636-9990,  
other numbers all 540 area code)

Admissions, Enrollment, Re-Enrollment: 540-636-2039  
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High School Course Approval: Gene McGuirk, 635-4728  
High School English: Walker Solis, 636-1755 or  
Christine Collins, 636-1633  
High School Math: Tom Herlihy, 540-636-1846  
High School Math/Science: Don Valaika, 636-1396  
History: Bruce Clark, 636-1199  
Homeschooling Father: Gene McGuirk, 635-4728  
Independent Studies: Bob Wiesner, 636-2238  
Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Constantine, 636-1527  
Senior Guidance & Enrollment: Bob Wiesner, 636-2238  
Special Needs: Stephen Costanzo, 622-5546 or  
Sharon Hines, 622-5542  
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[shipping@setonhome.org](mailto:shipping@setonhome.org)  
[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)  
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## *Seton Home Study School*

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Front Royal, VA 22630

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Non-Profit Organization  
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Elizabethtown, PA

### *Charity in Truth*

1. Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love — *caritas* — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth. Each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realize it fully: in this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free (cf. Jn 8:22). To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity. Charity, in fact, “rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6). All people feel the interior impulse to love authentically: love and truth never abandon them completely, because these are the vocations planted by God in the heart and mind of every human person. The search for love and truth is purified and liberated by Jesus Christ from the impoverishment that our humanity brings to it, and he reveals to us in all its fullness the initiative of love and the plan for true life that God has prepared for us. In Christ,

charity in truth becomes the Face of his Person, a vocation for us to love our brothers and sisters in the truth of his plan. Indeed, he himself is the Truth (cf. Jn 14:6).

2. Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36-40). It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbour; it is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones). For the Church, instructed by the Gospel, charity is everything because, as Saint John teaches (cf. 1 Jn 4:8, 16) and as I recalled in my first Encyclical Letter, “God is love” (*Deus Caritas Est*): everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope.

From the encyclical *Caritatis in veritate*,  
given June 29th, 2009  
by Pope Benedict XVI