



# Seton Home Study School

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

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## *Eucharistic Mother*

In January, Seton Home Study School honors its Patron Saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton, in a special way. The fourth of January was the day Mother Seton’s earthly life of weariness and toil drew to a close. Mother eagerly awaited that day, for she knew it would mark her spiritual rebirth, refreshed and gloriously renewed for all Eternity. No longer would she meet her Beloved Lord under disguise at the Altar. She would encounter Him, at last face to face, and behold His Presence forever more.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was very devoted to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacrament attracted her from her days of Protestantism, when she would take part in the “Lord’s Supper” in New York’s Trinity Church and yearn with all her heart that the bread and wine in which she partook could be more than just that. How surprised she was when she learned from her Catholic friends that the Blessed Sacrament in the Catholic Church was not merely symbolic, but was the Real Presence! And so, the Body and Blood of Jesus, so readily available to Catholics, would be her Pearl of Great Price.

Even before her conversion, the fervor in her showed the Divine Will’s mark upon this chosen soul. Once, while attending Mass with her Italian friends, a young English tourist turned to her during the sacred moment

of Consecration and in a rude, loud whisper said: “This is what they call their ‘Real Presence’.” How fiercely she felt those sharp words: “My very heart trembled with shame and sorrow for his unfeeling interruption of their sacred adoration.... Involuntarily I bent from him to the pavement and thought secretly on the words of St. Paul with starting tears, ‘They discern not the Lord’s Body’....”

The great desire in St. Elizabeth’s heart for the Body and Blood of Christ would not be quenched but only served to inflame her soul. This Love, coupled with her seemingly inexhaustible capacity to be attentive to the needs of her fellow man, without a doubt ensured that He who had begun this fine work would bring it to perfection. Divinely ordained, these qualities in her were to serve in a major way for the establishment of His True Church in America. The corporal works of mercy that Elizabeth had practiced since childhood and her devotion to Our Lord in the Sacrament of Love were the cornerstones for the Sisters of Charity. How could her order have achieved any success in the first without the Second?

In the throes of Mother’s final illness, Holy Communion was now, more than ever, all for which she ardently yearned. Fr. Bruté, her order’s spiritual advisor, relates how

anxiously she awaited his arrival so that she could be united with her Lord. He writes, “her joy was so uncommon that when I approached, and as I placed the ciborium upon the little table, she burst into tears, and sobbing aloud, covered her face with her two hands. I thought first it was some fear of sin and approaching her, I asked, ‘Be still, Mother! Peace, peace be to you! Here is the Lord of Peace! Have you any pain? Do you wish to confess?’ ‘No, no! Only give Him to me!’ ... she said with an ardor, a kind of exclamation, and her whole face so inflamed that I was much affected ....”

After Mother Seton’s death, Fr. Bruté wrote about her: “How profound her faith and how tender her piety! ...How great her goodness and kindness for all. Her distinguishing characteristic was compassion and indulgence for poor sinners ... O Mother, excellent Mother, I trust you are now in the enjoyment of bliss!”

- Jane S. Elliot

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*Questions We Are Asked*  
by Dr. Mary Kay Clark  
Director, Seton Home Study School

**Do you have any suggestions for encouraging my children to get back to a routine after the Christmas holidays?**

It is important to set goals on a daily basis. Children need short-term goals. You can explain that these short-term goals lead to the long-term goal of being finished with school assignments by a certain date.

Discuss the daily assignments, the importance of sticking with the daily assignments, and finishing up each day. Tell your children that anything not finished up at the end of the week must be done on Saturday morning. If it is still not finished up, then it must be finished up Saturday evening or Sunday evening.

Assuming that these daily and weekly goals are realistic for your children, they should be willing to accomplish these goals so they have their weekend free. Also remind them that if goals are not met, there will need to be assignments during the after-Easter holiday and/or in the month of June or July. Most children will respond and want to finish up their work rather than give up their weekends and holidays.

Throughout life, we all need to set short-term and long-term goals relating to all aspects of life. This kind of lesson is as important for your children as the concepts learned in the math and science books.

By the way, classroom teachers will tell you that it is important to insist on achieving daily and weekly goals during the January through March months. When the weather starts to grow warmer, it is more difficult for children to focus on their studies, so you want to accomplish as much as you can during the winter months.

**We are starting with Seton in the middle of the year. Where should we begin in the lesson plans?**

It would be worthwhile to review the Seton lesson plans for the first half of the year. You want to be sure your student learned the material in the first half of the year, especially reading, math, and English.

Take the time to go over the lessons for the first two quarters, even asking your student to do some of the end-of-chapter reviews. Your child will be the first to say, "Mom, I never learned this!" Don't even consider going on until you are sure your child knows previous lessons.

On the other hand, if your child does know the material in some subjects, move on ahead to the third quarter, where she can start doing the assignments and earning grades.

Don't be concerned if your student is not on the third quarter in all courses. The important thing is to start her where she is at in each subject. There is no point in her feeling unsuccessful or unhappy. Start her where she needs to start, subject by subject.

**Do you have any tips for my 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy who wants to do everything his own way?**

When boys and girls reach this age, they often want more independence, and some become rebellious and want to fight at every request for helping around the house or doing schoolwork. However, there are many Catholic home schooling families for whom this does not happen, and we can have comfort that our society's culture is not reaching all children.

Children want to be good. They are much happier when things are going

smoothly. Sometimes, however, they are influenced by other children or by the movies or by television or by the Internet.

Take your son to Mass every day, along with the rest of the family. Talk about the Mass prayers, the readings from the Bible, the Gospel. Read a Gospel story every day. Reading the Gospel stories from a simple children's book and then discussing the story and the message of the story will help your son start learning the lessons of Jesus.

Pray the Rosary with your children every day. Make the Rosary more interesting by having the boys and girls take turns leading and responding to the Rosary prayers. Schedule it at the same time each day or evening so it becomes

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*Discuss the daily assignments, the importance of sticking with the daily assignments, and finishing up each day.*

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a family routine. You might consider the family saying it along with EWTN. The children can watch the pictures of the places where the Mysteries of the Rosary took place.

Setting up a scheme of incentives can be very helpful. If your student can get his day's or week's or month's work done on time, give a reward.

You also want to get Dad involved, and make sure that the child knows how important Dad considers his home schooling. Dad also should also make clear that he expects all his children to show the utmost respect for their mother.

**Will you be producing a Grade 5 Math for Young Catholics?**

Yes, as with the previous MCP series, we intend to produce a Grade 5 and a Grade 6 *Math for Young Catholics*. The Grade 5 book should be available by the summer of 2010, the Grade 6 by the summer of 2011.

We should have available the *Vocabulary 5* and *Vocabulary 6 for Young Catholics* for the summer of 2010. *Phonics 2 for Young Catholics* should be available also for the summer of 2010.

**My daughter is not doing the A work she was doing last year. I think her maturity level may not be up to the new grade level. How should I proceed?**

First we need to accept the fact that children do not all mature at the same rate. The beauty of home schooling is that the curriculum can be adapted to the child's abilities.

Try to determine if all the subjects can not be taken at the grade level, or

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only some of them. In most cases, it is not all the subjects.

Once you have determined the subjects which your daughter cannot handle at the grade level, think about whether she can handle them if she simply slows down and takes more time to try to understand the concepts. In many cases, we have found with our Special Needs children that simply taking a full year to do a half year program solves the problem. The student is still learning at grade level but taking twice as long to learn it.

Another approach is for the student to re-take the material at the previous grade level to reinforce the lessons learned. Sometimes using the same textbook and lessons is effective, but using a different text covering the same material seems to be more helpful for some students.

In many cases, only two years at this slower pace solves the problem, and the student is able to progress at the normal rate in the next grade levels. There is less frustration and more is accomplished when the student is

working at the rate that is realistic for the child.

**Our local home school support group sponsors all kinds of sports, dance, music, and drama. It seems to be taking more and more time away from our home schooling.**

There certainly are advantages to these kinds of extra-curricular activities, but keeping them under control is very difficult, particularly in a large family. Some families are leaving the house every day to take a child to a baseball practice, another child to a music lesson, and another to a play practice. Too much of this interferes with the home schooling and the lessons. It even establishes an attitude that academic lessons take second place.

It takes a great deal of control and determination, but parents need to choose just a few activities so that Mom does not need to drive for a couple of hours each day. Just because a child starts ballet lessons does not mean she needs to take lessons for the next ten years! Johnny does not need to be on the basketball team every season until he is twenty-one.

In this current economic situation, it would be a good time to cut back on some of these activities. An inexpensive activity would be serving at Mass or finding volunteer work that needs to be done in your area.

**Starting in the third quarter, the student is to write his own topic sentences and determine which characteristics and events are important. Can you give me some tips about how to help my son?**

The lesson plans for the book reports should help you considerably. The first thing we recommend is for you to read the directions to your son, and discuss them. Unlike the first two quarter books, we leave it up to the student, with the parent's help, to determine the important characteristics of the saint based on what the saint did, or said, or wrote, or thought. Second, read the book along with your son, and discuss the events in

each chapter. Some of the characteristics or virtues of the saint should become obvious.

As you discuss each chapter, encourage your son to underline certain sentences, or to make notes or to put checkmarks in the margins. These are items which may be important later in writing a character analysis.

After the book has been read, discuss with your son the possible virtues and events in the book which "prove" that these virtues are evident. Help your son to make an outline of the important events to give evidence for each virtue.

Some parents take a week to work with the student on just the book report so that it is finished in a short time so the student does not forget the events from the first part of the book.

The book report is one of the most important assignments for your son because it encourages putting ideas together to prove a point. It demands inductive thinking. In today's secular society with the constant propaganda and politically-correct ideas being promoted, after religion, writing book reports might be the most important lessons for your son.

In some Catholic schools, students are encouraged to read a book a month. Back before television, students were reading a book a week. Consider rewarding your son for every book he reads. Encourage him to read and then discuss the book with you. Ask him about the characteristics or virtues of the main character, and have him prove his answers by giving examples of what the character said or did or thought, or what others said about the character.

During the summer, some libraries encourage children to read by giving them a coupon for ice cream for every book read and reported on. Try something similar all year long. You may be surprised at how many books your child can read and enjoy and discuss. It is time and money well spent. Check out the list of biographies and fiction books we sell through our Seton SEM department.

## *Energetic Reading* by John Clark

When I began my professional career, my schedule was a bit hectic. I would leave at 5:30AM, fight my way through traffic for about ninety minutes and arrive for work. Since I had no clients when I started my new job, I knew I needed to put in some serious hours, so I diligently worked until about 9PM and left for home. At night, there wasn't much traffic—all the sane people had left for home hours earlier. When I finally walked through the door at 10PM and called it a day—a sixteen and a half hour day—I didn't have much energy left. At that time, Lisa and I had only one child, but I wanted to be present for him. Lisa kept him up until about 11PM those days so he could see "Daddy" and play with me when I got home. The only energy I could muster was to take off my shirt and tie, throw them on the couch, and lie on the floor and let my little son climb on me, jump on me, and play wrestle with me on the carpet. I guess I was his favorite toy.

Even today, fifteen years later, though my schedule is a more normal 40 hour work week, I often come home tired. The work hours may have declined, but so has my energy level. I'm guessing a lot of dads feel that way. Let's face it, after a long day, few of us drive home with excitement at the prospect of administering a history lesson to our teenagers. We fathers are tired. But as a home schooling father, I still want to get involved with my children's academics, even if I'm out of breath from work. I was recently pondering this, and I kept asking myself, "What can I do to help my children with

their home schooling when my batteries are completely drained?" "What if I'm too tired to do *anything*?" Then, as I was perusing the nutritional information on the back of a box of *Fruit Loops*, the answer came to me: I can *listen* to my children read. It might take patience, but it doesn't take much energy. It's also a pretty good way to develop a love of reading for the children, and for the academic side of home schooling, there is probably no better thing we can impart to our kids than a love of reading.

My mom had an ingenious plan to get us to read. I think my mom's policy began when I asked her to let me stay up late and watch television and she refused. "Your bedtime is 8 o'clock Johnny," she said. I remember going to my brother Ken who saw I was upset, so Ken asked me what was wrong. Tearfully, I blurted out: "Mommy won't let me stay up and watch *Chico and the Man*." My oldest brother, Ken (perhaps in a foreshadowing of his future career as an attorney), suggested I speak to Mom and plead my case. Ken suggested that Mom must be unaware of a fundamental truth in American society. Ken said to explain to her: "Mom, prime time television is 8 o'clock to 11. I can't go to bed at 8 o'clock. I'm missing all the first-run TV shows." Though Ken had armed me with what, at the age of seven, seemed to be incontrovertible logic, she was not moved by my plea. However, she offered me a deal. I still had to go to bed at 8 o'clock, but I could stay up as late as I wanted to read books.

Thus, a lifelong long love affair with books was born. I used to read for one, two, and sometimes three hours at night. I read everything I could get my hands on—Narnia books, Encyclopedia Brown, Tolkien, Hardy Boys, Bible stories. While the world was watching TV, prime time reading for me lasted from 8 until 11.

Though my mom's method was clever, and I have used it over the years for my own children, I have been trying my own system. We go to the library during the week when I have some energy, and help the children pick out books they can read throughout the week to me. I like the idea because it gets me more involved. It also helps me monitor what they are reading, which is good, because children's books are sometimes full of ideology. Demetrius likes to read about animals, so yesterday I took him to the library to get a book about tigers. The book we picked up should have been called *Environmental Brainwashing for 12-Year-Olds*. The author saw fit to include such "tiger-specific" topics such as population control, global warming, yada, yada, yada. At least if we read propaganda together, I can correct these notions as we go along.

So the next time you get home after a long day, have your children read to you. Better yet, pick up a book at the library that you will enjoy together, and have your child read it to you. (Next week, Veronica's reading me *Going Rogue*.) Think of your children as a real life "books on tape" service. It will get your children reading, and you might find it more entertaining than you think.

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

We all agree on the vital necessity of teaching our children to read. Here are a few suggestions for helping our young children not only learn to read but discover the joys of reading.

Encourage enthusiasm for reading by reading to your child, beginning even in the first year. While we often tell stories to our young children without books, also be sure to read stories showing pictures in a picture book.

Read to your child stories of saints, stories of adventure, stories of exploration. Read non-fiction books, especially biographies of inventors and Indians and famous people from your city or state. Include picture books whenever possible.

Take turns reading with your child. Have him read one paragraph, you read the next paragraph. Discuss what you read, have your child talk to you about what you are both reading. Ask objective questions but also opinion questions. Make the questions personal, such as, "Would you have done that? What would we do today in a similar situation?"

As you go along, ask questions about what happened and why it happened? Could it have been different if something else happened first? Help your child think about cause and effect. Common sense thinking is not so common anymore; be sure you are teaching strong analysis skills even at an early age. Relate the events in a book to events in your family.

Repeat the title and author of the book or story you are reading. Ask your child to repeat the information, such as saying to someone in the room, "Yes, Jimmy and I are reading a really interesting book. Jimmy, tell Mrs. Smith the name and author of the book we are reading!" Talk about the book with Mrs. Smith, and ask Jimmy to tell a detail or two.

Remind your child of the time and location of the story as you read. Develop an appreciation and give thanks to God for what we have now in our own country.

Fill your home with good books. Visit the library at least once a week. Develop a love for good books, pretty books, illustrated books, books made with love and care, such as special edition Catholic Bibles and classics. Consider buying books, often clean and beautiful donated books, from library book sales. Check out used book stores for illustrated classics for a dollar.

Enroll your child in a book reading club at the library. Ask other home schooling moms if they would like to start a book reading club. Younger children and high school students could read the same book and discuss it. Encourage your student to talk about the books he is reading with other Seton students.

Encourage discussion of the daily Gospel readings as well as the regular Mass prayers. At Mass, the priest and congregation move along rather

quickly. Take the time to discuss the Mass prayers. Purchase a Mass book for your child and help him to underline or highlight prayers important to him.

When your child is studying a school book, have your child record his own reading of the chapter, and then listen to his reading. This way your child is learning not only the importance of good expression and pronunciation, but also learning to listen and to "study" his lessons from listening.

Dr. Robert Rice of Christendom College wrote an article for Seton, titled "Why Study Literature," which should encourage us to help our children learn to read and to enjoy reading both stories and non-fiction. In the article from our July, 1999, newsletter issue, Dr. Rice wrote:

"The student of literature vicariously experiences many lives in the comfort of his own home: the drama, excitement, and adventure of the lives of heroic explorers and missionaries on seven continents, the ordeals of questing knights and Crusaders in the Middle Ages, the suffering and glory of martyrs from first-century Rome to twentieth-century Sudan, the perspectives of artistic geniuses, the wisdom of great thinkers, the mystic insights of saints—in short, the misery and the majesty, the agony and the ecstasy, the squalor and the splendor of mankind in a multitude and variety of forms otherwise impossible for one person to experience on his own...."

"Furthermore, literature and history are mutually illuminating. The authors of great literature are both representative of their age and agents of its transformation; they at once reflect and mold our civilization's image of Man. The works offered by Seton's literature courses will help prepare the student to form a critical taste, enabling him to deal later in life with influential but pernicious works of literature."

The future of our children's lives as well as the life of our American society hinge not only on their lives of prayer and reliance on God, but also on their determination to be mature and analytical in their reading and thinking. Reading is fundamental.



## Using Seton for High School

by Ginny Seuffert

This column is intended to support and encourage Seton parents by giving practical tips based on my own two-decade experience home schooling with the Seton program. Occasionally, my spirit may inspire me to inspire you, but the major emphasis of this column has been to persuade Seton moms and dads to take the reins firmly in hand and maintain discipline, order, and academic excellence in the home. The presumption is that your children will be receiving the majority of their education in the home right through high school.

Sometimes parents are tempted to consider putting their high school age children in a free local public school. Whole books have been written (including one by the editor-in-chief of this newsletter) explaining why Catholic parents should home school their children. Many parents accept this premise, but feel that because their children have completed Seton's elementary school program, they are well-formed in the faith and ready to face the temptations of public high school.

Although the Seton K-8 program provides a strong faith foundation, the temptation of materialism and immorality will exert such tremendous pressure on your child that knowledge and good intentions likely will not be enough to resist it. Children need to grow in maturity in the nurturing environment of the home. At some point, they will need to participate more fully in American society, but many, if not most, 14-year-olds lack the self-assurance to be counter-cultural Catholics in a pagan world. And to do it alone!

Even many mature adults do not want to live and work in an environment that is constantly challenging their beliefs. That is why Catholic communities have sprung up around the country in places such as Front Royal, Steubenville, and Ave Maria. People want to live and work and raise their children in an

environment which supports them spiritually and morally.

Seton's high school religion course is challenging. Having spent eight years memorizing their catechism, students must now apply what they have learned and gain a deeper understanding. They do rigorous study in moral theology, liturgy and the sacraments, and scripture. They spend senior year studying apologetics and learning how to defend their Faith. No parish CCD program, no matter how orthodox, will come close to this program of study.

Catholic formation carries into other subjects as well. Students write about whether or not major characters in literature try to lead a moral life. They study the contributions of Catholics to Western Civilization. They spend an entire quarter of their mandatory government class critiquing the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion. Their assigned reading in all subjects reinforces Catholic values.

After high school, some students will go on to truly Catholic colleges where they will learn theology and philosophy in even more depth. Most students, however, will either enter the workforce or attend a secular or only nominal Catholic college. For many, high school will be the last opportunity to pursue a serious course of study of the Catholic Faith.

The problem is not only what Catholic public school students would miss in a public school; the greater problem is what they will *not* miss. They will be required to read politically-correct contemporary literature and encouraged to develop tolerant attitudes for a wide variety of activities that the Catholic Church teaches are mortal sins. Health students have been required to carry a sack of flour around, and treat it like a baby, to demonstrate what a pain the responsibility of parenthood is!

Students will participate in a Day of Silence, when neither teachers nor students are allowed to speak because gays have been silenced in society. Your

teen will rub shoulders, not with their caring brothers and sisters and other Catholic home schooled children, but with unhappy and frustrated students from dysfunctional families, or from two-mommy or two-daddy families. They will see classmates who are often neglected, or using drugs, or are sexually-active. There are plenty of terrific children in public schools who come from wonderful families, but you cannot control who your child may be forced to associate with in the classroom or lunchroom.

Many parents acknowledge the superiority of Seton's humanities studies, but feel inadequate to teach high school level math and science, and any foreign language. This column will continue to help parents each month, but let this high school graduate, with four Seton grads under my belt, assure you that, with the grace of God, teaching your high school student can be done, and can be done very well. Don't forget that Seton offers this newsletter, message boards, audio and video supplements, and our academic counselors to help parents and students with strategies for teaching and learning these subjects.

Moms who have lots of kids, but very little help around the house, sometimes struggle with guilt regarding their teens. They worry that their sophomore is changing diapers and doing dishes—he or she is a great kid—but too often the schoolwork is taking a backseat. There is a two-part answer to this dilemma. First, one of the primary functions of any educational setting should be to produce a graduate of strong character and virtue. As your teens care for younger siblings and shoulder the burden of household chores, they are growing in compassion, patience, responsibility, and industriousness. This contrasts sharply with a typical public school setting where students devote far too much time and effort to their wardrobes, texting on their cell phones, and discussing who is dating whom.

Parents have no greater responsibility than the spiritual development of their children. With Seton, this kind of

development is often included in the academic courses.

Parental responsibility carries over to household chores. While we all want a neat and orderly environment, we need to put this into perspective. We need to recognize our own limits and acknowledge that it is not the end of the world if the breakfast dishes sit in the sink every day until lunchtime. I prefer home schooling that includes a tidy house, but if forced to choose, I would rather live in squalor to keep the souls of my children clean and safe.

The most frequent reason for enrolling Catholic children in a public high school is that Mom admits she has lost control of her teen. Junior is difficult to get out of bed in the morning. Janey is on the computer or watching TV every time Mom's back is turned. Assignments are not completed on time and a super-smart 8<sup>th</sup> grader has morphed into a 10<sup>th</sup> grader who claims, "I don't understand any of it."

Mom tells her teens they would not get away with this nonsense in school, nor get half the individual attention, and the teens say, "Well, send me to school with my friends." Dad has enough worries about keeping his job[s] and paying the bills. When Mom complains, Dad figures the kids will get a wake-up call if they have to turn

assignments in on time. Tired parents may enroll their child in public high school, where really serious problems begin!

As a mother of twelve children, I am a wellspring of sympathy for any mother of an uncooperative teen. On the other hand, it is important to remember that disobedience and disrespect are sins against the Fourth Commandment. I do not know a single good Catholic parent who would tolerate a teen violating the Third Commandment and skipping Mass on Sunday. I cannot imagine putting up with an adolescent who steals and violates the Seventh Commandment. We must take the same unbending attitude toward enforcing the Fourth Commandment in our homes. It doesn't really matter if children are home schooled or attend a brick and mortar school, they must still honor and obey their parents, and their parents have a solemn obligation before God to insist on this respect.

My friends and I often hear a question that goes something like this, "All those children! All that work, and home schooling too! How do you do it?" With decades of home schooling among us, we agree that with daily prayer, especially the Rosary, we just do it! With daily prayer, you can do it too.

## Seton Alumni Website

Attention Seton Alumni (and soon-to-be Alumni)! We now have a website/message board just for you.

The board addresses issues of interest to those either out of high school or approaching graduation. Topics include Colleges, Careers, and Family Life.

Be sure to join the growing list of Seton alumni at:

[alumni.setonhome.org](http://alumni.setonhome.org)



### The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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### *Message for World Day of Peace Pope Benedict XVI*

At the beginning of this New Year, I wish to offer heartfelt greetings of peace to all Christian communities, international leaders, and people of good will throughout the world. For this XLIII World Day of Peace I have chosen the theme: *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*. Respect for creation is of immense consequence, not least because “creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God’s works”, and its preservation has now become essential for the pacific coexistence of mankind. Man’s inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development – wars, international and regional conflicts, acts of terrorism, and violations of human rights. Yet no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect – if not downright misuse – of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us. For this reason, it is imperative that mankind renew and strengthen “that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying”.

In my Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, I noted that integral human development is closely linked to the obligations which flow from man’s relationship with the natural environment. The environment must be seen as God’s gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity, especially the poor and future generations. I also observed that whenever nature, and human beings in particular, are seen merely as products of chance or an evolutionary determinism, our overall sense of responsibility wanes. On the other hand, seeing creation as God’s gift to humanity helps us understand our vocation and worth as human beings. With the Psalmist, we can exclaim with wonder: “When I look at your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you have established; what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:4-5). Contemplating the beauty of creation inspires us to recognize the love of the Creator, that Love which “moves the sun and the other stars”.