



# Seton Home Study School

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

March 2010

## *The Annunciation*

On March 25, we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to announce to her that God wished her to be the mother of His Son, the expected Messiah. The holy Virgin Mary did not understand how she would bear a child, but the Archangel Gabriel assured her that God the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and she would conceive the Divine Child.

In one of the Vespers prayers for the feast, we can read that Gabriel answered her, “Whenever God so desires, He can overcome the laws of nature; what is impossible to man may be accomplished by Him.”

We home schooling parents can reflect on this situation as it applies to our family. We cannot understand how we can adequately fulfill the responsibility to raise our children to be the saints God wants them to be. Our own inadequacies, as well as the weaknesses of our children, make us realize that we cannot do it ourselves. Only God Himself can accomplish in us what is naturally impossible.

With little understanding of her future role as Mother of the Savior,

Mary willingly accepted what was clearly God’s Will: that she become the Mother of the Son of God. With little understanding of the future and the demands of the role of home schooling parents, we accept God’s Will to fulfill the responsibility of teaching and living the Catholic Faith in order to raise our children to be saints for Him.

In one of the prayers, we read that Mary “accepted the greeting with faith.” This is how we home schooling parents accept the call to raise our children, with faith that the Blessed Mother and Jesus Himself will give us the support we and our children need.

Again, we read, “God is ineffably joined to mankind....The Virgin has accepted the joyful news, the earth has become Heaven...”. Jesus, by joining mankind, brought His Heavenly Love to earth to show us how much He loves us and wants us with Him.

Jesus, the Son of God, has lived on earth. In the Gospels, we read how He cares about the poor and hungry, multiplying fish and bread for the crowds following Him. He cares about the crippled, whom He cures. He cares about the blind and the deaf, whom He cures. He cares

about parents and sisters who cry for those who died, and He raises the dead to life. He touches those He heals.

The message to us parents is that He is still here on earth with us, and wants to cure us of any doubts or sufferings so that we can be successful in the teaching of our children. He will help our children to see and to hear that what we teach is what Jesus taught.

What a joy for the Holy Virgin Mary when she received the Son of God! What a joy for us parents and our children as we receive the Son of God in Holy Communion! Heaven comes to earth! Jesus comes to us! As Mary became God’s Temple, we become His Temple also when we receive Him in Holy Communion.

Jesus, through the prayers of Mary, Your Mother, have mercy on us. Amen.

- MKC

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

**With only about three months to go, how do I finish up by June so we can all have a vacation?**

You need to establish priorities. You know that religion, math, English, reading, and phonics are essential, and build on previous concepts. You cannot skip lessons in these subjects and expect your student to do well in tests and/or in understanding following concepts. Book reports and composition assignments in reading and English cannot be skipped.

It is possible, however, for you and your student to look over a forthcoming test and see if it can be taken after only two days of study instead of five. Some students can take a spelling, vocabulary, phonics, or religion test after only two days of study because they are already familiar with the material. The student may not be able to do this for many chapters, but even for two or three chapters, it gives the student time to “catch up.”

Science and history are two subject areas which have more importance in upper grades. In high school, these courses are essential. In the elementary levels, parents can decide how much the student needs to do. It may not be necessary to write the answers for all the end-of-chapter questions, but the parent will need to make sure the student has learned enough to pass the chapter or quarter test.

Consider discussing the matter with your children. Ask them if they would agree to work a few hours on a Saturday so that they can “catch up” to have their normal vacation time start in June. Perhaps you can give your children the “easier” assignments on a Saturday morning when their focus may not be at its peak.

Another idea is for the children to do a workbook assignment after

dinner or before bedtime. Many students could do their spelling or vocabulary assignment without your help. Perhaps reading the science or history assignment with Dad after dinner will help the student move along more quickly.

It does not hurt for children to learn to be flexible when necessary. It could help in future years when things don’t always go according to plan, and helps to teach patience and remaining calm enough to work out a different solution from the original schedule.

Be sure that you and your children are praying together every day. Especially include various school assignments in the prayers.

**We have enrolled late in the school year. While I appreciate your sending the full year of lesson plans, I don’t know where my daughter should begin.**

One reason we send the full year of lesson plans even if you are enrolling later in the year is because you and your daughter need to evaluate just what she has already learned in the first half of the year. In the subject areas that build from year to year, especially in math and English, you want to be sure your daughter has learned these concepts. She may need to go back and learn these so that she will obtain good grades right from the start.

If your daughter has good grades in most subjects, she should be able to start at the Third Quarter. However, if her grades are not good, you may want her to review substantially any areas where she needs to improve in order to begin at the Third Quarter.

Since we do not have a “school year” calendar, she can begin the Third Quarter when you believe she is able to be successful. Remember, she does not

need to be on the same week of study for every course.

For subjects such as history and science, as well as all “minor” subjects at the elementary level, just go ahead and start at the Third Quarter. During the summer, your student can go back and read the first chapters in the textbooks.

**My husband and I run a small business, but I still want to home school my children. What can I do to make home schooling possible?**

Since the beginning of time, parents have provided for their families as well as taught and trained their children. The Book of Proverbs is quite clear about that, even giving specifics about what fathers should expect of their

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children. When parents discipline their children to be obedient in the matter of studies and chores, home schooling is successful even when the family has a small business.

The key is that the children help with the business as well.

Some parents arrange for the children to do their schoolwork at the business location for a half day, and spend the second half of the day helping the business in some way. Children and parents often do a certain amount of schoolwork after dinner to make up for time at the business. Sometimes, because of the necessity of spreading out the school work and the business work, the school year is on a year-round basis.

There are many advantages for children in learning the family business. One advantage is that the children realize the importance of what they are learning in their studies. In a business, they need to read, to understand, to write an order, to service people of different ages and personalities, and to know their math. Even young children can help with shelving or counting

inventory, or a variety of simple tasks. Perhaps the best advantage is the building of a caring relationship that the family members develop as they work together. They learn the value of work and the relationship between work and family happiness.

Be sure to include daily prayer both at work and at home. St. Joseph is the patron of workers. Your family might start the work day with a Litany to St. Joseph.

**My daughter wants to have a part-time job in the nearby animal shelter. Should she take time off her schoolwork to do this?**

Depending on how it is handled, a job can be either a good or bad experience. Sometimes a job like this,

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which may be an interest in regard to a future career, could help her realize the importance of her current studies for future endeavors. Studies have shown that a part-time job can be a positive experience, as long as the hours worked are kept under twenty per week. However, sometimes these little part-time jobs end up taking much more time than anticipated and the studies begin to suffer.

Before you allow her to take a job, write down the rules and regulations you want for her: no more than so many hours a week on the job, and no fewer than so many hours a week on the studies. As time goes by, you may find yourself arguing with her as she tries to work more hours. You need to stay firm about this while emphasizing that there is no future in any career without a good education.

Schedule your daughter to do some schoolwork, especially research, at the local college library. The atmosphere at the college library projects seriousness about studies and education. She needs to be reminded about this frequently

and regularly. Talk to her also about taking the SAT test before she goes to college. Private colleges accept only students with certain scores. You might purchase an SAT study guide which we sell through our SEM catalog; check on our website. Keeping the college future in her mind helps her to focus on academics, not just on a temporary part-time job.

**Will your staff please remember our family in their prayers?**

Requests for prayer come in every day. We have a daily staff meeting during which we pray for our families. As Father Constantine celebrates Mass every day here at Seton, he remembers all our families in his prayers. We have a prayer request book under the altar.

As you pray for your family, consider this: The Blessed Mother, when she appeared to Catherine Labouré in her convent, asked Catherine to have a medal made to distribute to people. The Blessed Mother showed Catherine the medal which we now call the Miraculous Medal. Catherine asked about the meaning of the rays coming forth from Mary's fingers. The Blessed Mother said that her Son has given her permission to distribute graces to those who ask for them. The rays represent those graces which she has to distribute but which are not requested.

As you pray for your family, pray also for the unasked-for graces to be distributed to Catholic home schooling families. Every time people receive Communion, they are given graces, but sometimes people don't ask for graces even at Communion time. Ask Jesus and His Blessed Mother for all the unasked-for graces to be given to Catholic home schooling families.

Ask for the children to receive the graces to be receptive to their parents' teaching, and ask for the parents to be given the necessary graces to be successful with teaching their children.

**How can I help my high school son receive better grades while I am working with the younger children?**

Your husband is the key. Young men need their fathers to give them direction, to be good role models, to teach them that a Catholic education is

the key for a good future on this earth and in the next world. Your husband and your son might read the Book of Proverbs together.

Your husband should spend some time with your son, being directly involved in at least one or two subjects of his choice. Even if your husband could spend 30 minutes a day, that would accomplish a good deal. Some busy dads spend Sunday afternoon or evenings helping out with home schooling.

Your husband might take your son to the local college or public library to find more information. He might take him to work with him once a week so he is there to help your son. Some truck-driving fathers take a high school son along on trips so that they can talk about school subjects without interruption. Help your husband to think about ways to encourage your son to improve his grades.

**Why does Seton require four book reports a year?**

The book reports are important because students are required not simply to report, but to analyze. They are to prove a statement about the character or about a theme of the book by choosing events or activities or statements to show the truth of the statement. It is a skill of fundamental importance throughout life to be able to read and understand and analyze.

We encourage our families to have the children join a book club at the library or to create a book club in the local home schooling support group. At dinnertime, encourage your children to talk about a book they have read. Consider paying a small reward for every book read. Parents can check the internet to find discussion questions for some books. Catholic novels and historical fiction are especially popular.

Seton has been ordering fiction books for students to meet parents' requests for good children's books. There are many books for children that are not friendly to Christian values; be sure to skim read any book your child wants to read.

## *Who's Got You?*

*by John Clark*

During the recent blizzard that befell the state of Virginia—a storm that dumped about three feet of snow on the little hamlet of Front Royal—our house lost electric power for hours at a time. The children excitedly hunted down the emergency flashlights and prepared for nighttime with their new trusted, illuminating friends. As dusk waned, however, the novelty of flashlights wore off, as it dawned on the children that they would be sleeping in the dark. Ten minutes after Lisa and I put the children to bed, my little two-year-old daughter Immaculata called me from her bedroom, and whimpered, “Daddy, I’m scared.” I went into her room, gave her a hug, and assured her that I would protect her, reminding her: “I’m with you, Immaculata. I’m watching over you. Nothing bad will happen to you tonight.”

Whatever bogeymen haunted her thoughts were no match for her Daddy. The nighttime world of shadows and gloomy uncertainty were overcome by the knowledge that her Daddy was in the next room, ready to dispel any unwelcome visitors, seen or unseen. As I relate this story, keep in mind, I have no delusions of grandeur. I have no special powers of defense beyond that of mortal man. I have no heroic ability. I have one qualification that made Immaculata feel safe, and only one: I am her Daddy, and that’s a pretty big deal.

I was once in her shoes (or slippers, as the case may be). I still remember dozing off to sleep as a little boy, hearing my dad in the next room, whether talking to my mom, doing some carpentry, or playing the piano. Whatever my dad was doing, he was there in the house; and with him there, nothing bad would happen to me tonight.

What I didn’t realize as a little boy, and what most little children

don’t realize, is that their daddies have times *they* feel scared, too. Some bogeymen are real. They may not lurk in closets or under the bed, but they manifest themselves in other ways, as when their children are sick, when their jobs are insecure, or when the home schooling falls behind. Sometimes, the financial monsters seem so big against defenseless paychecks. Sometimes the bogeyman whispers to daddies to give up—that they can’t do it all anymore. Yes, Daddies get scared, too. And yet, we fathers have to be the rock of stability. We are expected to be superheroes at times when just being mild-mannered men seems a struggle.

In the 1977 movie version of *Superman*, there is a scene in which damsel-in-distress Lois Lane falls helplessly off a tall building to her seemingly certain death. As she screams in terror, Clark Kent quickly changes into Superman garb, flies up to Lois, holds her and says, “Don’t worry, I’ve got you!” Lois responds with a very natural question, crying out: “You’ve got me? Who’s got you?” Superman responds with a look of supreme confidence that says to her: “I know you’re worried, but the truth is—you’ve never been safer in your life.”

Immaculata never asked Lois’ question, but she would have every right to ask. “Who’s got you?” With all the troubles we fathers have in this life—this vale of tears—why don’t they ask: “Who’s got you?”

Maybe it is because they already know, or at least *sense*, the answer, because there *is* an answer to the question. The reason that we can look in our children’s worried eyes and answer with confidence just as Superman did is because we fathers know the answer too.

“Who’s got me?”

“*God* has me.”

That is the *secret* of our strength; that is the *source* of our strength: God has me.

Of course, there are ways that we can get closer to Him. None of us fathers seems to have much time, but we can all incorporate three things that take about ten minutes each that will bring us much closer to Jesus: Confession, Adoration, and the Rosary.

Sin pushes God away, but sacramental Confession brings Him closer to us. In one glorious moment, a lifetime of sin can be absolved, and God is always close to a repentant heart. Make monthly confession a habit, and you’ll discover that peace becomes a habit.

Take a few minutes each day, or at least a few times a week, to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament and tell Jesus your troubles. Sanctifying grace makes us friends with Jesus, and this friendship was purchased by Him at a great price. Time spent with Jesus is quality time.

Spend time in the Rosary asking Mary to help you glorify her Divine Son. Leading the family Rosary is a reminder to the children where your strength *really* comes from.

In these times of war, financial hardship, and other forms of uncertainty, life has been coming at us pretty fast. But instead of letting things overwhelm us, let’s pray for the grace to “walk by faith, not by sight.” Let’s take a few minutes to think about all those times that worried us before, and yet, God was with us, and He helped us overcome them. Those difficulties were no match for a loving God, and neither are the difficulties we have now. Jesus is holding us faithful Christians to His Sacred Heart, and gently whispering to us, “I know you’re worried, but you’ve never been safer than you are right now.”

## *Why Should I Study That?* by Deacon Gene McGuirk

We sometimes receive calls asking “Why should I study Algebra? I’ll never use it again,” or “Why should I study literature? There’s nothing practical in it,” or “Why should I study Latin? It’s a dead language,” and we recently had a new one, “Why should I study diagramming? My mom and dad never had to.”

When I coach basketball, I use pushups for minor infractions and for incentives in competitive drills. I do explain to the players that pushups are not a punishment, but an important part of basketball development. Pushups use, and therefore strengthen, the triceps muscles. It is the triceps, not the biceps, that are the primary muscles used to throw a baseball, or shoot a basketball. The triceps straighten out a bent arm, so the arm, bent holding a basketball, must straighten out to shoot the ball. The stronger and better conditioned the triceps are, the farther the player can shoot the basketball and the longer he can do that during a game. Pushups are like some of these courses; you never do pushups in the game but they help you play better. Some course materials may never again be used in life, but they help you live better and smarter.

In the movie, *The Karate Kid*, Mr. Miyagi has his Karate student, Daniel-San, washing cars, sanding floors, and painting fences, to move his arms through Karate movements. Daniel-san doesn’t understand this at first. He thinks Mr. Miyagi is using him to get work done around the house while Mr. Miyagi is out having fun somewhere.

The work projects give Daniel a focus to work through to completion. If he had been told to take a Karate stand and swing his arms and shout ‘Hy-uh’ from dawn to dark, Daniel would soon have given in to boredom or to fatigue and stopped, but with the task of painting the fence, he continued to finish his assignment. Daniel finally confronts Mr. Miyagi

and learns the truth about his Karate training.

No basketball player will ever do pushups in the middle of a game, but in training they are important. As Daniel-san learned, all education is not about content alone. A good education involves facts and figures and concepts, but it also involves learning how to think. A well-educated person not only knows how to read the lines, but also how to read between the lines.

Catholic education is not just practical “job” education. It is important to learn concepts and skills that will help a person support himself, but that is not all there is to an education, or even the most important part. Parents are called to train their children for Heaven, not Harvard. Although it is possible to do both, Heaven comes first. Catholic education is meant to train hearts and minds to seek God and His ways. However, God is a Mystery to us in many ways, and we need various skills to help us to understand even parts of His Mysteries.

Algebra, diagramming, Latin, and literature all have their places in this. God is transcendent above all things and ideas. In many ways, He and His Mysteries are abstract. Algebra teaches us to think abstractly. In dealing with variables, we learn to deal with missing parts; this helps us to develop thinking skills that aid us in understanding the mysteries of God.

If you do a web search on “diagramming sentences,” you will find articles about people who actually use this skill in business to make sure they understand the particulars in a contract. There are others who do diagramming while reading novels to make sure they understand particularly difficult sentences. I know others who use diagramming techniques to help understand foreign languages. However, I have to admit that after I finished Catholic grammar school,

I never diagrammed a sentence again. But this does not mean that diagramming is a useless study or a waste of time. Diagramming, like the study of Logic, helps a student to understand the proper usage of words, and how to think clearly. It also helps the student to write, automatically, proper sentences, which is an important skill for written assignments in school, as well as for good communications in business, or for writing letters to the editor to sway public opinion on important matters.

Latin may be a “dead” language, but it is a most important language nevertheless. The College Board, which provides the S.A.T. college admission test, keeps statistics that concern the S.A.T. tests. Their statistics prove that the study of any foreign language in high school helps students on the English S.A.T. test. Students who take Spanish or Italian have average verbal scores higher than those for students who never take a foreign language. Students who take French or German score higher than those who take Spanish or Italian, but students who take Latin have the highest verbal scores of all, averaging nearly 660 out of 800. Latin is also the official language of the Church, as well as an important language for medicine, science and law. Perhaps it is not so dead after all!

Catholic education is more than the relating of worldly facts in a safe environment. Catholic education seeks to train the whole man for his ultimate destiny in Heaven. To do this, facts, figures, and concepts have their place, but there is more. The Catholic student must learn how to think, how to organize thoughts, as well as how to recognize that God has made all things, and each thing has a place in His plan of salvation. Some parts of our education are more geared to these other values and may never be used directly in our every day lives, but they are important building blocks that provide the skills for putting the facts and figures to good use in a Catholic way.

## *Social Whirlwind*

*by Ginny Seuffert*

I spoke to a Midwestern mom not too long ago who inspired me to write this column. This mom loves home schooling and loves Seton, but she wishes she had more opportunities to meet and socialize with other home schooling, or even just observant, Catholic families. The conversation reminded me that many Catholics have not spent their lives near heavily populated major metropolitan areas. For some families, it is too far to travel to a home school support group, and if a parish does not offer activities outside of Mass and devotions, a family can feel isolated from other practicing Catholics. Often home schooling moms, especially with lots of children, feel that it is tough to keep the house “guest-ready” on top of her other responsibilities. Should home educators just write off socialization as one of those sacrifices we need to make in order to have the time to teach our children at home?

Absolutely not!

Like bees and ants, God made humans to be social creatures. Our children need companions. In large families, their best buddies will be their brothers and sisters, but their lives will also be enriched by cousins and other friends their own age. Children will naturally seek age-appropriate acquaintances on their own. Wise parents try to steer them towards pals from families with the same values, knowing they will enjoy peace of mind when the same principles of good behavior they try to instill are reinforced in the homes of friends. Sharing good times with friends is something children eagerly anticipate, enjoy immensely, and remember fondly.

Adults, too, benefit from fun times with extended family and friends. In most parts of our country, being an observant Catholic is counter-cultural. Neighbors and acquaintances question—sometimes rudely—how we are called to live. Just ask parents with more than two or three children, how often they are asked, “Is this it?” when a new baby arrives. Total strangers on the grocery store checkout line have asked me if I

could give my children the “attention they deserve.” While we need bravely to live up to the demands of the Gospel, it is very relaxing occasionally to be in the company of adults who are not asking us to defend our lifestyles.

Of course, it is one thing to be convinced that sharing good times with like-minded people is important, and quite another to find some free time and make plans. Here are a few ideas that have worked for me and my friends.

### **Breakfast Club**

A group of home schooling moms formed an informal support group and met on the second Saturday morning of each month for breakfast. They chose a reasonably priced casual dining establishment so everyone could afford it. The only rule was that attendance was restricted to moms and new babies; the point was for moms to get away from husbands and childcare and have a few laughs.

This worked on several levels. First, Saturday morning was a good choice because most husbands were home, eliminating the need for childcare. Second, by meeting for breakfast, busy moms still had enough hours in the day to go grocery shopping and clean the house. By making the breakfast a regular monthly occurrence, it was easy to remember. Because it was such an informal gathering, if only a few moms showed up, those few could still share a fun time. Finally, these relaxed get-togethers were an ideal opportunity to introduce a mother who was contemplating home schooling, to mothers who were actually doing it.

A mothers’ breakfast club is economical, fun, and no one must clean her house!

### **Sunday Brunch**

House cleaning is often put on the back burner during the week in a busy home schooling household; there are just not enough hours in the day. As many of us play catch-up on Saturday, our best shot for a clean house is on

Sunday morning. A very good way to take advantage of this occasional cleanliness, and a no fuss, no muss, social opportunity, is Sunday-after-Mass brunch.

Invite some nice families you would like to know, or like to know better, to your house after morning Mass. All you need is coffee, tea, milk for the kiddies, and some baked goods. My sister, my daughter-in-law, and I rotated houses for several years and it was very easy and low-key. If you can make this a regular affair, have each family bring a box of doughnuts or bagels, and have the host supply the beverages and some fruit.

To save on clean up time, use paper plates and cups, and move the brunch outside during the warm weather months.

### **Holy Day Parties**

I am putting the finishing touches on this column on Fat Tuesday (or Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras). Tonight we have invited a few people over. I planned a dinner that can be put on platters on the table, and we bought some *paczki*, a Polish traditional pastry that gives one a little taste of Heaven before starting Lent. Gathering together to eat fish on Christmas Eve or St. Joseph’s bread on March 19 reminds us of Catholic cultural traditions that have almost disappeared since the Second Vatican Council. Try to plan just one event a year around a Catholic celebration: sweets on St. Valentine’s Day or a saint dress-up party for All Saints’ Day.

As a final thought, moms, do not be like the author of this column. Too often, I turned down an opportunity to entertain because my furniture was threadbare, or the door was falling off the bathroom vanity, and I was ashamed for people to see my house. I waited until we could save the money to make our house more presentable. Through the years I have learned that Catholics who are eager to spend time with like-minded families really do not care what your home looks like. They just want some shared time and support. You will never regret time spent with other Catholic families.

## Conferences

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

**Memphis, TN.** March 19-20, 2010 (Fri./Sat.) 11th Annual Homeschool Conference and Curriculum Fair, St. Louis Catholic Church, 203 South White Station Rd., Memphis. Fri.: 2 PM - 10 PM (Curriculum Fair: 2 PM - 5 PM, Opening Prayer and Remarks: 5:30 PM, Workshops: 6 PM, Keynote Address: 7:30 PM). Sat.: 8:45AM - 3:30PM. Info: Kim at 901-758-5032 or [blessedsacramenthomeschool.org](http://blessedsacramenthomeschool.org)

**St. Louis, MO.** March 26-27, 2010 (Fri./Sat.) 2010 St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference, Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Dr. Fri.: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (Exhibits only), Sat.: after 8 AM Mass - 4:30 PM. Info: Debbie at 314-544-1339 or [www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com](http://www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com)

**Berlin, NJ.** April 10, 2010 (Sat.) 11th Annual CHAPLET Catholic Homeschool Conference, Mater Ecclesiae Roman Catholic Church, 261 Cross Keys Road, Berlin. 9 AM

- 5 PM. Info: Kelly at 856-393-4223. [kellymantoan@yahoo.com](mailto:kellymantoan@yahoo.com) or [chaplet@podbean.com](mailto:chaplet@podbean.com) or [www.chaplet.org](http://www.chaplet.org)

**Covington, LA.** April 10, 2010 (Sat.) Roman Catholic Home School Association of Louisiana, Catholic Home Schooling: A Way of Life. St. Peter's Catholic Church (St. Mary's Hall), 125 E. 19th Ave., Covington. After 8 AM Mass-5 PM, Info: Beth at 985-796-1274 or [beth@montelepre.com](mailto:beth@montelepre.com) or [rchalinfo@rchal.org](mailto:rchalinfo@rchal.org) or [www.rchal.org](http://www.rchal.org)

**Houston, TX.** April 16-17, 2010 (Fri.-Sat.) 20th Annual Book Fair and Speakers Conference (Sponsored by ARCH Catholic Homeschoolers of Houston). University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Blvd., Houston. Fri.: 6 PM - 9 PM. Special college info workshop with St. Thomas staff prior to conference. Sat.: 8 AM (Mass) - 5 PM. Info: 281-797-5578 (leave message) or [info@arch-homeschool.org](mailto:info@arch-homeschool.org) or [www.arch-homeschool.org](http://www.arch-homeschool.org)

**Washington, DC.** June 11-12, 2010 (Fri./Sat.) 9th Annual Immaculate Heart of Mary National Home School and Parent Conference. Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly, VA. Info: 540-636-1946 or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

## Seton Graduation

Seton Home Study School will hold a high school graduation ceremony in Front Royal, Virginia, on May 29, 2010.

In order to be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony, students must meet eligibility requirements. Generally, a student must have completed, or expect to complete, high school work in the 2010 calendar year, with sufficient credits to graduate from Seton.

If you are unsure as to your credits or courses, please contact our high school guidance counselor, Bob Wiesner, either at 540-636-2238 or [BWiesner@setonhome.org](mailto:BWiesner@setonhome.org).

For complete information about the graduation, and to register to participate in the 2010 graduation ceremony, go to:

[www.setonhome.org/grad2010](http://www.setonhome.org/grad2010)



## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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### *Message for Lent from Pope Benedict XVI*

The Christian Good News responds positively to man's thirst for justice, as Saint Paul affirms in the Letter to the Romans: "But now the justice of God has been manifested apart from law ... the justice of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (3, 21-25). What then is the justice of Christ? Above all, it is the justice that comes from grace, where it is not man who makes amends, heals himself and others. The fact that "expiation" flows from the "blood" of Christ signifies that it is not man's sacrifices that free him from the weight of his faults, but the loving act of God who opens Himself in the extreme, even to the point of bearing in Himself the "curse" due to man so as to give in return the "blessing" due to God (cf. Gal 3, 13-14). But this raises an immediate objection: what kind of justice is this where the just man dies for the guilty and the guilty receives in return the blessing due to the just one? Would this not mean that each one receives the contrary of his "due"? In reality, here we discover divine justice, which is so profoundly different from its human counterpart. God has paid for us the price of the exchange in His Son, a price that is truly exorbitant. Before the justice of the Cross, man may rebel for this reveals how man is not a self-sufficient being, but in need of Another in

order to realize himself fully. Conversion to Christ, believing in the Gospel, ultimately means this: to exit the illusion of self-sufficiency in order to discover and accept one's own need – the need of others and God, the need of His forgiveness and His friendship. So we understand how faith is altogether different from a natural, good-feeling, obvious fact: humility is required to accept that I need Another to free me from "what is mine," to give me gratuitously "what is His." This happens especially in the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Thanks to Christ's action, we may enter into the "greatest" justice, which is that of love (cf. Rm 13, 8-10), the justice that recognises itself in every case more a debtor than a creditor, because it has received more than could ever have been expected. Strengthened by this very experience, the Christian is moved to contribute to creating just societies, where all receive what is necessary to live according to the dignity proper to the human person and where justice is enlivened by love.

Dear brothers and sisters, Lent culminates in the Paschal Triduum, in which this year, too, we shall celebrate divine justice – the fullness of charity, gift, salvation. May this penitential season be for every Christian a time of authentic conversion and intense knowledge of the mystery of Christ, who came to fulfill every justice. With these sentiments, I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.