



Seton Home Study School

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Our Lady of Lourdes

The wonderful feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes is celebrated on February 11, the day in 1858 when the Blessed Mother made her first appearance to St. Bernadette in a small grotto in Lourdes, France.

In all of the Blessed Mother’s appearances, she has a message, calling people to holiness. The appearances at Lourdes were different than the others because she appeared eighteen times, more than any other officially-approved apparition.

An unusual aspect of her appearances at Lourdes was the miraculous spring she asked Bernadette to dig for in the ground. This spring continues today to cure both bodies and souls when people make the journey to the Lourdes Shrine.

Perhaps the most memorable event at Lourdes was that the Blessed Mother announced who she is: “I am the Immaculate Conception.” It was only four years earlier that the pope announced the dogma, already believed by Catholics, that the Blessed Mother was conceived without Original Sin.

This doctrine is important for many reasons but especially because, in a world where abortion is common, her words emphasized that life begins at conception. The situation in the world today is one of great disregard for human life, and in our own country, especially for unborn human life. Not only are unborn babies being killed on a regular basis, but our country even exports abortifacient drugs and other

contraceptives to nations around the world.

During this month of February especially, we home schooling families who dedicate our lives to educating our children need to remind ourselves and our children about the value of life. God is essentially the Creator. It is our duty to appreciate and to love as He loves. We have no right to destroy what He has created, and especially the precious life of a human being whom He wants to live eternally with Him.

The Blessed Mother always appeared to Bernadette with a white rosary and asked Bernadette to say the rosary and to “Pray, pray, pray for poor sinners!”

There is no question that our daily rosary should be for all the causes we have for our family, for our friends, for our community, for the Church. Among all our prayers, we need to include sinners, especially those who sin against God’s plan to create souls for eternity. We trust that even when the unborn are not allowed to live in this world, their souls will see the glory of God eternally.

Besides praying for those who take the lives of the tiny ones God has created, we need to pray for the mothers, most of whom do not realize what they are doing. When or if they do realize, they suffer for the rest of their lives.

As Bernadette obeyed the Blessed Mother and dug in the mud in

obedience to the Blessed Mother’s command, so we need to be obedient to the Blessed Mother in saying the Rosary and praying for mothers and those “doctors” who take the lives of the unborn. As Bernadette dug in the mud, those around her thought she was crazy, but eventually, the healing spring water appeared and has healed thousands since that day.

Those in our secular society may see our prayers and our home schooling as “crazy,” but we know that God will use our prayers and our home schooling in His special plan to bring souls home to Him, to eternal life with Him.

We know the will of God is to strengthen the Faith and Family in home schooling our children. We need to keep the Faith that our efforts are being used by Him to bring more souls to eternal happiness.

Our Lady of Lourdes, help us home schooling parents to remind ourselves of our dedication to God’s plan of creation. Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

- MKC

Inside . . .

<i>Questions</i>	2
<i>Detective Work</i>	4
<i>The Blue Zone</i>	5
<i>A Night Out</i>	6
<i>World Day of Peace</i>	8



Questions We Are Asked

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

Our family has been attending Mass every day, but with the price of gas, I'm not sure we can afford to keep going.

The priest shortage in many rural areas, combined with the high cost of gasoline, has made it a definite hardship for many families just to get to Mass. When driving a large SUV or van, a trip to Mass and back might cost \$10 or more. We all want to attend daily Mass, but in the current economic situation, the cost may be more than your family is able to pay.

You may be able to solve this problem partially either by going larger or going smaller. By going larger, you might take the largest car you can and fit the most people you can. For example, two families might be able to fit in a large SUV or van and split the cost of gas. By going smaller, you might take just a few people in a compact car that gets better gas mileage. With these ideas, even if you can't go everyday, perhaps you can afford to attend two or three days a week.

We have a large family, and I feel like I don't have enough time or ability to tutor my son in algebra. What help is available?

We do sell lesson-by-lesson tutoring computer disks. The D.I.V.E. CD-ROMs have proven to be a huge help for busy parents. The CDs present each lesson in about 10 to 20 minutes. The representative problems are explained on a blackboard, and can be listened to and watched over and over again on the computer screen until the student learns the new concept. Each course CD-ROM is available for \$50.

Recently, a new program on CD has been made available by the producers of Saxon, called Saxon Teacher. Each tutoring lesson is about 20 to 30 minutes, and the actual problems in the

textbook are worked out. The Saxon Teacher may have 4 or 5 CDs per Saxon textbook, and costs \$75. If that cost is too much, you might look for a used copy, or see if your local support group would purchase a copy to lend out to members.

Our Seton counselors are available for help, but they cannot spend a long time going over each and every problem. You might start with the D.I.V.E. and see how it goes, and call a math counselor if you still need help.

I have been enrolled for several years. It seems like you are producing new books every year. What will be new for the next school year?

New titles for next year are *Phonics 2 for Young Catholics*, *Vocabulary 6 for Young Catholics*, and *Witness to the Faith*, a new Grade 8 Church History textbook. The *Art 5 Rosary in Art* book has a new section on the Luminous Mysteries, and *Composition for Young Catholics* (for grade 8) has a new paragraph writing section for the first half of the book. At the request of parents, we have added three new chapters to the Grade 1 History book: *Paul Revere*, *Betsy Ross*, and the *Boston Tea Party*.

In the years to come, we will complete the Catholic vocabulary series, the final phonics book for Grade 3, and some Catholic science books. Many years ago, when we first started producing the kind of Catholic books that were not available anywhere else, we had no idea that we would produce so many books.

As my children get older, I am becoming increasingly concerned about college. We need financial aid for my children who want to attend college. What should I do?

The cost of a college education continues to increase, but there are many sources of help available. Colleges want all the students they can enroll and are your best source for financial aid, in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, or workstudy.

Another source of help is your extended family, particularly grandparents. There are several financial vehicles available to those who want to help pay for college. A federal program called the Coverdell Education Savings Account is available nationwide, and

It is a problem in our society that many students are graduating from college with a crushing burden of loans.

many states have their own programs. For grandparents with more resources, an educational trust can be established.

It is a problem in our society that many students are graduating from college with a crushing burden of loans. The average 4-year college graduate in 2008 owed \$27,803 in loans. The average student graduating with a doctoral degree owed nearly \$60,000. For students at prestigious private universities, loans can easily exceed \$100,000. This debt puts a massive burden on people just starting out in careers. It means that many couples postpone marriage and children until these debts can be paid.

We at Seton are highly supportive of Catholic colleges, and we know the value of four years at a good Catholic college. However, in-state public universities are far less expensive, costing between one-half and one-fourth of private college fees. When families cannot afford four-years at a Catholic college, we suggest that students take at least some courses—such as science, math, and language—at a public university or local community college and transfer the credits toward graduation. If you can reduce the years to three instead of four at the expensive

Catholic college, that can be a huge savings.

Not to be overlooked as well is the fact that very good students will be offered more scholarship opportunities than average or below-average students. While we hope that students work hard in high school because they understand the importance of a good Catholic education, the truth is that students who maintain a good GPA and do well on the SAT or ACT will pay less for college.

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My friend said we do not need to do all the assignments in the lesson plans. Is that true?

We give daily lessons that we think are reasonable for the average student, based on our experiences as teachers and home schooling parents. However, the ultimate decision for what lessons need to be done is always up to the parents. Only the parents can determine what is best for their child.

Parents may believe that certain lessons in the vocabulary can be covered more quickly because their student has a good grasp of the vocabulary words. Parents may give only two of the several exercises, and once the student has shown he knows the meaning of the words, the parent may decide to omit the other exercises and proceed to give the test for that lesson.

At the same time, a parent may decide that more time needs to be spent on the English lessons. The parents realize their student simply does not understand the concepts in the English book. They may even decide to order a lower level English book and go through that first, thus extending the lessons into the summer; or they may decide to double up on the time each day, or have an extra lesson on Saturday

until the student can get back to the grade level English book.

The point is that each parent is in charge of each student and must make the best decisions regarding each subject. Seton sends lessons that we believe are reasonable, but assume parents will make appropriate changes as needed.

Nevertheless, if a student does all the exercises in the vocabulary book, and all the exercises in the English book, and all the exercises in all the courses, at whatever rate is appropriate, the student will obtain a very good solid Catholic education. And that is the goal for all of us.

Please note that to receive a grade for a course, students must complete the Seton-graded assignments.

We are half-way through the school year but not half-way through the lessons. How can I prepare now so we can be finished with the lessons by June?

By this time of the year, you are pretty much aware of the courses in which your child is doing very well. What you might consider is moving along more quickly in those courses. For instance, if your daughter is obtaining perfect scores in spelling every week, consider having her do two spelling chapters each week. Take a look at other areas which can be adjusted to move along more quickly.

Another idea is to assign some work on a weekend. One year when we had moved and lost some time, my boys were very agreeable to doing schoolwork on Saturday mornings so they could be finished by June.

Ask your husband if he might be able to take over a class to help move it along more quickly. If a student is moving slowly in a subject, perhaps ask a neighbor high school student to come in two or three times a week and help with the history or science class.

If you have any further questions, or want ideas for a specific subject area, please call one of our elementary counselors. You can dial the regular phone number, and, for the elementary counselors, you can dial extension 120 for Elizabeth, 118 for Sharon, or 119 for Cecilia.

My high school son has fallen behind in his high school English course.

We have several tips for the student who falls behind in English. The first thing he can do is cut back on some of his other courses while he catches up on English. English tends to be a more time-consuming course, and it is often helpful to spend a few weeks focusing almost exclusively on the English work, a technique known as blocking. While Algebra lessons and foreign language practice should continue so that those skills won't be lost, some of the other courses can be put on hold until the student has been able to make headway in English.

We also suggest that students focus only on the required assignments. Daily paragraphs, vocabulary lessons, etc., can be eliminated for a period of time, while major assignments like tests and book analyses are completed.

A big help is doing the quizzes and discussion questions out loud instead of as written work.

Since English is a very analytical subject, it suffers greatly from constant interruption. We recommend that English coursework be done in a secluded, quiet location. If an isolated, quiet room is not available in your home, you might try the local library or Dad's office. This will help the work to progress with greater speed and efficiency.

Goal-setting is always important. Identify what remains to be sent in for grading. Set a deadline for each assignment. Break up each assignment into smaller, easily achievable steps, and write these steps down on a big sheet of paper that can be posted on the wall. Mark off each step as it is completed, and arrange for some sort of small reward after each assignment has been finished. Often, it's just a matter of getting organized so that the student doesn't feel so overwhelmed, and when he sees tangible evidence of progress by marking off lists and achieving rewards, he will feel more motivated to get the job done.

Finally, if there is a specific problem, be sure to phone or email an English counselor. Mrs. Smitha is available at cmsmitha@setonhome.org. Mr. Solis is available at wsolis@setonhome.org.

Book Report Detective Work

Book reports are demanding of the student because they require analytical thinking. They require that the student come to a conclusion based on evidence, and then prove the conclusion by writing about the evidence.

We parents can help our children realize that a book report is like detective work. Just as Sherlock Holmes or Father Brown collects all the clues—hidden and obvious—and then comes to a conclusion, so does the book report writer.

As children, most of us were told not to write in books. For book reports, the opposite is encouraged (as long as your child is not using a library book). Students should mark up the assigned book in the margins, with a word or two noting the importance of specific paragraphs or sections.

At the first reading, perhaps students would mark only a few incidents which look like they might be important. Until the book is read to the end, it is difficult for the student to know every important point, since the importance of early passages might not be clear until the end.

When a student has read through the entire book once, it is time to go back and skim-read and recognize incidents or conversations which would prove their conclusion. These incidents are what the characters did and the conversations are what help to prove the conclusion.

Authors usually try to show what a character is like, rather than telling what he is like. For example, consider the following two passages:

- 1) Jimmy was always helpful.
- 2) Mom walked in the door holding two bags of groceries. "I've got more bags in the car," she said. "I'll get them, Mom," Jimmy replied.

The first passage merely asserts that Jimmy was helpful, but the second passage shows Jimmy actually being helpful. The author doesn't need to *tell* us that Jimmy is helpful because we *see* it for ourselves.

What others say about the main character is also important. For example, if the tenants of the apartment report that the night watchman was "hanging around" a little too much, he might be a potential suspect.

The book reports ask the students to come up with three main characteristics, one for each middle paragraph. Then the student should find three examples or proofs for each of these characteristics. They may be something the character said or did, but could include something others said about what the character said or did.

The authors of the books we assign make the examples or proofs very clear and very strong, so the student

should find the strongest proofs. The student should have three or four or five examples of each characteristic he is considering to prove. Then the student should make a list of things under each characteristic, itemizing what the character did or said, or what others said about the character. This kind of analysis will eventually show the student the three most clear and strong characteristics.

Your student should discuss the book with you so he can clarify his thoughts. If you read, or skim-read the book yourself, you can help your student decide which are the most important proofs.

Writing book reports can be an exciting detective adventure! Join in the fun!

Videos and Barcodes

We are pleased to announce that Seton has produced several video tutorials for our students. We currently have tutorials available for English, Math, and Accounting. In the coming months, it is our plan to increase the video tutorials we have for these subjects, as well as produce videos for other subjects.

So far, the response to the videos has been overwhelmingly positive. 80% of the students who have watched these videos have considered them helpful.

To reach all these videos, log in to your My Seton page, then click on Resources, then on Video Tutorials.

One exciting aspect of the iPhone and other smartphones is their ability to play audio and video from the Internet. By using the scanning capability of these phones, along with embedded barcodes in our lesson plans, we hope to make it easier for students to access supplemental materials. Instead of simply telling students in the lesson plans that an online resource is available for a certain lesson, we can embed a barcode for the student to scan which will immediately start playing the audio or video supplement.

To scan barcodes, you will need a scanning application, such as NeoReader. Some phones come with a scanning application pre-installed, but some phones will require you to download and install the scanning application.

Once you have a scanning application installed on your phone, try the barcode on the right.



The Blue Zone by Ginny Seuffert

Faithful Catholic home schooling parents understand the value of our lifestyles in forming souls for eternity. Recently, however, I read a book that hints we may enjoy a real advantage here and now—living to our 90s or even 100s. In *The Blue Zones*, Dan Buettner shares the results of his research in four areas of the world that have a large population of centenarians: Sardinia, Okinawa, Loma Linda CA, and Costa Rica. Some of his findings and recommendations are expected: eat less, and base your diet on mostly unprocessed, plant-based foods. Drink lots of water. Build vigorous physical activity into daily life. Other, more surprising results, point to the value of daily life in the typical Catholic home school family, and suggest that it may actually be adding years to our lives on earth.

Today's centenarians grew up at a time when families were large and close. *The Blue Zones* explains how such a family adds years of healthy living. In three out of the four zones studied, centenarians almost always lived with their children or grandchildren. These younger people gave the older ones a sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging. One Sardinian grandmother, who was on the verge of death at the age of 100, announced she would not die until her grandson finished university. A Costa Rican man of 101 purchases and prepares Sunday dinner for his extended family each week. One study concluded that a man gains 75 weeks of life for every daughter he has. The Church's admonition to be generous with life may lead to an abundant reward of healthy years.

Home school moms and dads frequently feel overwhelmed by everything they have to get done each day. That may not be a bad thing. One Costa Rican farmer said, "You have to keep busy. When people have too much time they get involved with vices... We stay busy enough to keep the devil away but not so much that we get stressed.

It's a clean pure life." Okinawans have an *ikigai* and Costa Ricans a *plan de vida*. Both can be simply translated as a reason to get out of bed in the morning. We home schooling parents have an important purpose to our days. The work is hard, but very satisfying, as we watch our children grow into fine men and women.

These vigorous elderly people enjoy a strong social network. They took the time to share meals, a cup of tea, or even a glass of wine. Friends and neighbors provided many benefits. They reinforced healthy habits because they shared the same virtues. They gave each other an opportunity to reduce stress by sharing problems within the community. They allowed older people to remain connected to the world outside their own homes and even provided practical help as well. One-hundred-year-old Panchita lives by herself in rural Costa Rica. She prepares food for her eighty year-old son who comes to visit her daily and still does most of her own chores. A neighbor boy helps her catch her chickens and another young woman stops by to help her sweep her floors.

Home schoolers also benefit from the friendship of like-minded people, friends at church and in our support group. There is nothing quite so nice as hearing, "How wonderful!" when you announce your eighth pregnancy. It is important to be able to crab about your messy house or the household decibel level without hearing unwanted advice to put the children in school or even to stop having any more of them. Elderly Okinawan ladies meet every day in a group known as a *maoi*. More than gossip and jokes, the *maoi* is a safety net for the community. "If you get sick or a spouse dies or you run out of money, we know someone will step in and help." Catholics often help one another by preparing meals for a new mom, or taking the kids for an overwhelmed buddy. We offer sympathy when there is a death in

the family or just drop off a plate of cookies to show our affection. I can tell you from experience that this type of friendship is a treasure beyond price.

Only two of the blue zone populations, Sardinians and Costa Ricans, are Catholic, but all are religious. One peer-reviewed study showed that people who attend religious services as infrequently as once a month reduced their risk of death during the study period by one-third. It was as effective as regular moderate exercise. (As I am a daily communicant, I might live to see the end of the world!) The book offers lots of possible reasons for this effect, but the bottom line is that religious people are both healthier and happier than their unobservant neighbors.

Speaking from a health perspective, observing the Lord's Day reaps immense rewards by reinforcing strong family life, and community connections, as well as offering a respite from daily cares. At Sunday Mass, we Catholics run into old friends and meet new acquaintances who share a common faith. The Lord's Day is a tremendous stress reliever as the faithful pray for Divine assistance, all the while accepting that there is a higher plan behind life's ups and downs. For those of us who worry about school deadlines, or little Junior who can't seem to master long division, the Lord's Day is an enforced break from these cares.

I have heard faithful Catholics joke that we do not need to eat health food and jog five miles a day, since, unlike atheists, death is not an end to us, but an eagerly anticipated beginning of new life with our loved ones, standing before the face of God forever. Stories I hear of the serene deaths of daily communicants are a testament to this. Nevertheless, Sacred Scripture tells us that old age is a blessing. Educating our children, guiding their spiritual growth, sharing good times with friends and family, and worshiping God—all these aspects of life in a home school family may actually help us to be blessed with many years.

A Night Out by John Clark

When we were first married, Lisa and I made a pact to go out on a date at least once a week. And, more or less, we've been faithful to this promise.

There was a time when these dates were glamorous. When we went out on dates in the first two years of marriage, we would both get dressed up, hire a babysitter for Athan and go out to dinner. We had a favorite restaurant that was about fifteen miles from our house. It was a quaint little restaurant that was so tucked away that only a few people knew about. The owners served food that was so exceptional it didn't matter what you ordered—you knew it would always taste fantastic. The conversation was as light as the pastry before us, as Lisa would tell me something funny that little Athan did during the day, or something that he had just learned to do. We'd set aside about two hours for the experience, casually working our way through appetizers, gently sipping our wine—usually a California Cabernet Sauvignon—until the final bite of our dessert and the last sip of our coffee was finished. After dinner, on summer nights, we would open the windows to our car and smell the wafts of fresh-cut grass, and feel the warm night air as we drove over the magnificent lush green hills of the Shenandoah Valley to make our way back home.

As I said, we've been faithful to that weekly promise, but as time has gone by, the definition of "date" has degenerated to include almost anything. What amounts to a date these days? What about a trip to the hardware store to get a new drill, and stopping for a cup of coffee on the way home? That's a date. What

about a trip to pick up the boys at basketball practice and grabbing an ice cream cone? That counts.

However, one recent "date" pushed reasonable boundaries. The idea for the date was hatched when we learned that our washing machine was broken. For obvious reasons, few things strike more fear in a mother of nine than a broken washing machine. After a few days, we were forced to make a decision: wear dirty clothes, or "outsource" our laundry needs (meaning, in less thrilling terms, going to a laundromat). We opted for the latter, and as we were loading our clothes in our SUV, Lisa and I announced to the children that we were going on a date—a laundry date.

If you haven't been to a Laundromat in a few years, let me fill you in. Other than bowling alleys, it would be difficult to cut yourself a slice of Americana more easily than visiting a laundromat. Laundromats show you how people *really* are. That's not necessarily good. Most people in America spend at least a few seconds grooming before going somewhere; they don't necessarily primp, but at least they'll wear clean clothes and comb their hair. Not so with laundromats. People seem to take it as a given that they will not run into anyone they know.

There are unstated rules of laundromats. For instance, every one I have visited in the past 15 years has had a *Ms. Pac Man* machine. *Ms. Pac Man* machines are as common as the ubiquitous Buddha statues in nail salons. No one really knows *why* they're there, but you can expect one when you go.

There are also *stated* rules. *First*, you are not allowed to dye clothes

in their washing machines. Every once in a while, you might think to yourself: "You know, I think I'd look good in brown. Why not dye all my clothes that color?" Perhaps a great idea, but don't expect to be able to do it in a laundromat. *Second*, alcohol is generally not allowed. That's a shame, because you really haven't lived until you've mixed drinks on a clothes-folding table. So leave the cocktail shaker at home. *Third*, pets are not allowed. This rule is an inconvenience to say the least. The summer after high school, I got to be friends with a girl who trained tiny Capuchin monkeys to assist people. Now you're telling people that they can't bring their monkeys to help with the folding and sorting? Who, pray tell, should do this work?

Two hours after we'd arrived, as we loaded the clothes back into the car and drove home, there were a few similarities with those early dates that only the most hardened cynic would fail to see. Instead of the smell of fresh-cut grass, we could enjoy the smell of fabric softener wafting through our car. Instead of wine, we drank orange Gatorade. Instead of the scenery of rollicking hills and plains, we could enjoy the understated ambiance of an unlit alley. Of course, we still had a great time. And maybe, in the grand scheme of things, the most important part of the date to me was the constant in the equation—my constant: Lisa. I'm guessing that many of us home-schooling fathers have "dates" likes this from time to time. The next time you do, remember my twofold piece of advice: *first*, try to remember that the "who" is more important than the "what" in many of life's activities, and *second*, bring a lot of quarters.

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, or email conferences@setonhome.org.

Memphis, TN. March 18-19, 2011 (Fri./Sat.). 12th Annual Homeschool Conference and Curriculum Fair, St. Louis Catholic Church, 203 South White Station Rd., Memphis. Fri.: 2:00pm - 10:00pm; Sat.: 8:45am - 3:30pm. Info: Kelley, 901-552-3579 or kgstuppy@hotmail.com or www.blessedsacramenthomeschool.org

Atlanta, GA. April 2, 2011 (Sat.). 2011 North Georgia Catholic Home School and Family Conference, St. Andrew Catholic Church, 675 Riverside Road, Roswell, GA. 9 AM - 5 PM. Ginny Seuffert will be speaking. Info: Michelle at 678-513-9275 or michelle@chswebmaster.com or www.chsconferencega.com

Covington, LA. April 2, 2011 (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 Avenue, Covington,

LA. After 8:30 AM Mass - 5 PM. Info: Beth at 985-796-1274 or 504-220-4626, or beth@montelepre.com or rchalinfo@rchal.org or www.rchal.org

PA, Harrisburg. April 2, 2011 (Sat.), 17th Annual Catholic Homeschool Conference & Curriculum Fair, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 6190 Allentown Boulevard (Route 22 West), Harrisburg, PA. 8:30 AM - 5 PM. Info: Ellen, 717-866-5425 or conference@catholichomeschoolpa.org or www.catholichomeschoolpa.org/ccf.html.

St. Louis, MO. April 15-16, 2011 (Fri./Sat.). 2011 St. Louis Catholic Homeschool Conference, Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Drive, St. Louis, MO. Fri.: 6:00 PM-9:00 PM (Exhibits only); Sat.: 9:00 AM -4:30 PM. Info: Cassie at 636-398-4001 or www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com

Houston, TX. April 29-30, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.). 21st Annual Book Fair and Speakers Conference, sponsored by ARCH Catholic Homeschoolers of Houston, University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX. Fri.: 6 PM - 9 PM; Sat.: 8 AM (Mass) - 5 PM. Info: 281-797-5578 (leave message) or info@arch-homeschool.org or www.arch-homeschool.org

Milwaukee, WI. April 29-30, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Celebrate the Faith 2011: Catholic Homeschool Conference and Vendor Fair, sponsored by Greater Milwaukee Catholic Home Educators (GMCHE), Thomas G. Thompson Youth Center, (State Fairgrounds - North End), 640 South 84th Street, West Allis, WI. Fri.: 3:30 PM - 9 PM; Sat.: 8 AM - 5 PM. Info: Mary-Eileen meswart@sbcglobal.net or Margharita: 262-327-6298 or www.gmche.com.

Berlin, NJ. April 30, 2011 (Sat.) 12th Annual CHAPLET Catholic Homeschool Conference, Mater Ecclesiae Roman Catholic Church, 261 Cross Keys Road, Berlin, NJ. 8 AM - 5 PM 8 AM-5 PM. Info: www.chaplet.org

Chicago, IL. May 6-7, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Père Marquette Home School and Parent Conference, North Central College-Residence Hall/Recreation Center, 440 South Brainard Street, Naperville, IL. Fri.: 1 PM - 9 PM; Sat.: 9 AM - 4 PM. Sponsored by the Illinois Association of Roman Catholic Home Educators (IL ARCHE). Info: TBA.

Indianapolis, IN. May 14, 2011 (Sat.). 2011 Quo Vadis Catholic Home School Conference, Holy Rosary Catholic Parish, 520 Stevens St, Indianapolis, IN. 8:30-5:00. Info: hfheindy@yahoo.com or www.hfheindy.org.

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World Day of Peace

A freedom which is hostile or indifferent to God becomes self-negating and does not guarantee full respect for others. A will which believes itself radically incapable of seeking truth and goodness has no objective reasons or motives for acting save those imposed by its fleeting and contingent interests; it does not have an “identity” to safeguard and build up through truly free and conscious decisions. As a result, it cannot demand respect from other “wills”, which are themselves detached from their own deepest being and thus capable of imposing other “reasons” or, for that matter, no “reason” at all. **The illusion that moral relativism provides the key for peaceful coexistence is actually the origin of divisions and the denial of the dignity of human beings.** Hence we can see the need for recognition of a twofold dimension within the unity of the human person: a religious dimension and a social dimension. In this regard, “it is inconceivable that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves – their faith – in order to be active citizens. It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one’s rights”.^[6]

If religious freedom is the path to peace, **religious education is the highway** which leads new generations to see others as their brothers and sisters, with whom they are

called to journey and work together so that all will feel that they are living members of the one human family, from which no one is to be excluded.

The family founded on marriage, as the expression of the close union and complementarity between a man and a woman, **finds its place here as the first school for the social, cultural, moral, and spiritual formation and growth of children,** who should always be able to see in their father and mother the first witnesses of a life directed to the pursuit of truth and the love of God. **Parents must be always free to transmit to their children, responsibly and without constraints, their heritage of faith, values and culture.** The family, the first cell of human society, remains the primary training ground for harmonious relations at every level of coexistence, human, national and international. Wisdom suggests that this is the road to building a strong and fraternal social fabric, in which young people can be prepared to assume their proper responsibilities in life, in a free society, and in a spirit of understanding and peace.

Message for World Day of Peace 2011,
Benedict XVI