



Seton Home Study School

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

May 2011

Mary’s Miraculous Medal

May has traditionally been dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God. It is a month when we ask the Blessed Mother for special favors and graces. The Blessed Mother showed us a special way to ask for special favors and graces when she appeared to St. Catherine Labouré, a young French nun.

The Blessed Mother showed Catherine the design of a special medal she wanted made. After the medal was produced and given away in great numbers, so many prayers were answered that it became known as The Miraculous Medal.

The Miraculous Medal pictures the Blessed Mother holding out her hands with rays streaming forth from her fingers. Mary explained to St. Catherine that the rays represent the graces she wants to give to those who ask for her help. Her Divine son has given His Mother the special mission to deliver graces to help those who ask for her help in prayer, especially to those who wear the medal.

The medal contains a very short prayer: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” This very short prayer may be said at any time, asking Mary to give us the graces we need to accomplish her Son’s holy will.

The holy will of Jesus for us parents is to fulfill our responsibilities for the children He has created for us. The Church teaches that from the sacrament of matrimony, we receive the sacramental graces needed to fulfill the responsibilities for our marriage and for raising our children. These responsibilities include not only helping our spouse to reach heaven, but also teaching our children to live the life of holiness so they may spend eternity in happiness in heaven with Him, for whom they were created.

With such a tremendous responsibility, we want to turn to the Mother of Mothers for assistance. The vocation of motherhood and fatherhood is the means God chose to have young souls shaped for sainthood. While our secular society continues to demean the family and the role of parents, while the secularists continue to wrest educational authority from parents, we Catholic parents must listen to the Church and recognize the inestimable value of our parental vocation. Jesus has taught us through His own family life, through His words, through His Church, through the teachings and examples of His saints, that an education “permeated” with the Faith and with living the Faith is necessary for the salvation of our children. In fulfilling this

teaching, we contribute to our own sanctification and ultimate salvation.

The Church calls the home “the domestic church,” meaning that our home should be a place where we live according to the teachings of the Church, where we say our daily prayers together. The domestic church is where we teach our children how to be Christian through the way we treat each other.

Our daily home schooling can be lifted to heavenly heights by starting the day with the Morning Offering, offering up everything during the day, the joys as well as the frustrations, aggravations, sometimes sufferings, for His greater honor and glory. While staying in constant prayer, abandoning ourselves to His Divine Will, receiving the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist as often as possible, praying the daily Rosary, wearing the Miraculous Medal, let’s ask the Blessed Mother for her prayers, her special protection, and her wisdom as our heavenly and eternally caring mother.

-MKC

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

I am nervous about my children using the Internet, even for their studies.

Parents certainly need to be seriously concerned about the dangers of the Internet. It seems to be a law of the universe that things which have a great capacity to be used for good also have a great capacity to be used for bad. The Internet is no different. In fact, the dangers of the Internet come from the fact that it is so astoundingly useful.

For those who use it everyday, especially for business purposes, it is hard to imagine getting by without the Internet. It's not enough to say that people did without it in the past and we can just go back to that. The world has rearranged itself around the Internet. People are now expected to check their email regularly. If families don't have Internet, they won't receive necessary information that used to be given out by phone but is now given out online.

The Internet is a tool, just like a telephone or a hammer. A tool isn't good or bad in itself. It becomes good or bad only insofar as how it is used. The challenge for parents is to make sure that the tool is used properly.

Many parents have instituted rules about using the Internet, such as it being used only when the parents are home. Some families have put the computer in a "public" area, such as in the living room, or family room, or even in the dining room. Putting it in an area where parents and others walking by can observe what is on the screen serves as a monitoring plan.

Besides these common-sense ideas, you can also install software on your computer to monitor use. There are many such programs available, including Windows Live Family Safety 2011 from Microsoft and Norton

Online Family from Symantec, both of which are free.

Seton offers quite a bit of information and many study resources on our website. Besides text and audio resources, we are now producing video resources. In addition, in the high grade levels, students can take their tests over the Internet, and parents can receive their students' corrected tests and papers back over the Internet.

The Internet offers faster service for accessing information from Seton, whether it be grades or tests or lesson plans or updated information. The Seton online Message Board offers an opportunity for students and parents to talk with the Seton counselors, and to talk with each other. The Seton email offers a quick and cheap way for students, parents, and counselors to communicate?

I live in a small town in a rural area. How can I promote Catholic home schooling in my area without having an expensive conference.

The best way to promote Catholic home schooling in a rural area is to work through a parish church. Find other home schooling parents, even if only one other couple, and approach the pastor about having a Catholic book display in a meeting room between Masses. If there is a parish school, just promote the books. If there is not a school, you can promote home schooling along with the books.

Many parents who believe they cannot teach their children full-time at home are still interested in Catholic textbooks, as well as good Catholic fiction and biographies. Many parents have never seen Catholic textbooks and are quite amazed, and many will want to buy some. Grandparents often have

extra money to spend on books for their grandchildren, so be sure they are invited. If the pastor allows it, you can advertise in the Church bulletin.

Meeting other parents interested in home schooling may encourage a Catholic home schooling support group. Once you have a group going, your group might sponsor a Saturday morning "mini-conference" at which two or three of you might be on a panel to talk or to answer questions. You could serve coffee and donuts after Mass. Home schooling parents could bring

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their own children's Catholic books to show them to others.

You don't need 200 people to have a mini-conference. If only five or ten people come, you will be successful.

My children would like to be finished with the school year by June, yet they still have quite a bit to finish.

Contact a Seton counselor and discuss the specifics for each course for each student. In general, some things can be skipped over in the elementary levels, but less can be skipped at the high school level.

At the elementary level, the major subjects need to be covered. The major subjects are religion, reading, phonics, English, and math. If you skip some concepts in these areas, there will be problems later. However, even in these areas, you may be able to proceed more quickly. For instance, in reading, if your child is reading well, you may be able to skip over a selection or have the student answer the questions orally.

At the high school level, it is a different situation because the students need to show good and completed grades on their high school transcripts.

You might have your high schoolers concentrate on one or two subjects at a time, taking one all morning and one all afternoon. They will progress more quickly this way. One subject may be delayed and finished up over the summer. If one subject has barely been started, perhaps that subject could be started over again next year, as one of the courses for the next grade level.

For book analyses, it may be helpful for your students to take a whole week to finish up their reading and write their report so it does not drag on. Chapter

The Catholic Church has long been the world's greatest defender of parental rights.

notes for the Book Report books are available on the Seton website under Resources.

It would be helpful if you could look over the tests for the high school courses and give your students directions about what they should focus on for their study time.

Be sure that you are starting each day with prayer with your children. Ask the Blessed Mother and the children's patron saints to help your children to finish their work in a timely manner.

I know that studies show that children do better when they don't have a long summer break. What do you suggest for a limited program of summer school?

This really depends on the interest and the abilities of your students. You might have a little girl who loves to read her history book. She might do that over the summer and take the tests as she goes along. You might have a little boy who loves math and would like to "get ahead" and, perhaps working with Dad over the summer, could do a whole year in three months, taking the tests as he moves along.

Consider having a family summertime book club, encouraging your children to do their book reports over the summer. In some areas, the summer afternoons are too hot to play outside, and the children might like to read the fiction or biographies from Seton. You might have ice cream "certificates" for certain accomplishments, such as reading at least one book in a week. Your local library might have a Reading Club for students over the summer.

Doing a little bit of reading, a little bit of math, a little bit of science can keep concepts fresh in students' minds and mean less review time at the beginning of the next year.

When I told a new parishioner at church that I was home schooling, she asked, "Can you do that? I thought we are required to send our children to the parish school!"

The Catholic Church has long been the world's greatest defender of parental rights. It would make little sense to defend staunchly parental rights and then turn around and tell parents they are obligated to use a parish school. In fact, parents have the right and duty to choose the proper educational setting for their child. That may be the parish school, but it may be something else.

Please refer your friend to our website. From our Home Page, tell her to scroll down to Parent Resources. The first thing listed is Church Teaching. She can learn what the Church teaches about parents rights in home schooling.

For more documentation, we sell a little booklet for \$2 called *Responsibilities and Rights of Parents in Religious Education*. That booklet is filled with references to official Catholic documents.

You might point out that many of the Catholic home school support groups have a priest who is their advisor and who often helps the groups with a religion class, or a graduation ceremony. At this point, there are a number of priests and religious who were home schooled and, of course, many seminarians were home schooled.

How important are the book reports? My children seem to struggle with them.

The most important part of a Catholic curriculum is Religion, learning the catechism and learning the Bible. The second most important is learning to read, and then reading good literature, including good Catholic literature and the stories of saints which help us all to learn how to live the Catholic life. The third most important part is book reports, because they demand analytical thinking and writing skills.

Writing a book report is intellectually demanding. Students first must think about the *meaning* of what they are reading, not just the "concrete" events. They sometimes must learn to "read between the lines." Instead of studying and memorizing facts, a book report requires thinking about what characters say in the book, how they act in the book, what influences them in their thinking, how do the other characters act in the book, and what conclusion the reader can come to about the character's thinking and moral viewpoint.

Young Catholics must do more than simply follow others in our society. Our Catholic students must be thinkers and leaders, not just for their own benefit but also to influence others to think correctly. Our society is untethered from basic Christian beliefs and it will take above-average analytical thinking skills to turn our society around to Christian values.

Our students often go to college on scholarships, and many are hired by the colleges to tutor other students, not only in writing skills but also in English and Science classes for which critical thinking is important.

We regularly receive *Thank You* letters from our graduates in college or after college. They tell us that they considered the Seton English and writing classes difficult, but found that they were far above the students in their Freshman college classes.

Ever Ancient, Ever New #3

by Dr. Mitchell Kalpakgian

“It is not enough that your actions are good. You must take care that they appear so.” In Henry Fielding’s novel *Tom Jones*, the wise Squire Allworthy offers this advice to the young who are often negligent of the importance of manners, public appearances, and first impressions.

Jane Austen’s classic *Pride and Prejudice*, originally entitled “First Impressions,” offers much wisdom on this aspect of social life that cultivates or frustrates human relationships. Her novel shows that the one judging and the one being judged both have obligations in situations where first impressions are formed. In the opening chapters of the novel Mr. Darcy attends a ball at Netherfield but refuses to converse, to socialize, or to dance even though many of the young ladies have no partners for several of the dances. He even comments in a voice loud enough to be heard by Elizabeth Bennet to whom he is referring, “She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt *me*, and I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.” He creates bad first impressions, provoking such thoughts among the ladies as “He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped he would never come there again.”

Foolishly and carelessly Darcy ignores the importance of first impressions and puts himself in a bad light because, as his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam comments, “It is because he will not give himself the trouble.” Because manners reflect morals, Darcy’s bad manners create the impression of an insensitive, tactless, unrefined person—a false image that belies his true character as a man of honor and integrity.

Darcy errs because he assumes that first impressions do not matter and that moral character and social manners have nothing in common. Because his closest friends and family

recognize his magnanimity, Darcy does not feel any obligation to demonstrate a gentleman’s civility in unfamiliar company. He overlooks the common wisdom that teaches that a person must not only be good but also *appear* to be good because people judge on the basis of first impressions, the only criterion they have.

However, the one judging on the basis of first impressions also has a duty, the acknowledgement that first impressions are not final judgments. First impressions are often misleading and do not tell the whole story. While Darcy needs to make a more conscientious effort to be agreeable and civil, those judging Darcy need to give him a second chance and not make rash judgments on the basis of one occasion.

While Elizabeth was naturally offended by Darcy’s inconsiderate comment that she was “not handsome enough” to interest him in dancing, she changed her mind when she accidentally met Darcy at Pemberley Woods when she received a “second” first impression. Visiting Darcy’s home and estate on a tour with her aunt and uncle at a time when Darcy is normally living in London, Elizabeth is surprised at Darcy’s unexpected return. On this occasion Darcy acts like an amiable gentleman with the most gracious, inviting manners: “And his behavior, so strikingly altered,—what could it mean? That he should even speak to her was amazing—but to speak with such civility, to enquire after her family! Never in her life had she seen his manners so little dignified, never had he spoken with such gentleness as on this unexpected meeting.”

A proud man who would not deign to dance learns to act with the manners of a gentleman because he learned from the blunder of his bad first impressions. A woman he ignored and avoided later “attracted him more than he liked” and “bewitched” him with her beautiful eyes. However,

no woman is attracted to a man who lacks civility. Bad manners never lead to romance. A prejudiced woman who formed an immediate, final judgment on the basis of one encounter changes her mind. Every person deserves a second chance, and a person who errs and apologizes deserves forgiveness. Rash judgment—like poor manners—always defeats romance. The man who offended her at the ball impresses her as a magnanimous man at Pemberley.

All human relationships and all romances begin with first impressions at social occasions like dances and visits. For friendships and romances to occur everyone must observe the propriety of good manners so that first impressions allow true perceptions and communicate clear knowledge. On the one hand, the person being judged must not only be moral in private but also appear civil in public so that courteous manners reflect good morals. On the other hand, the person judging must never equate first impressions with absolute certainty but also take into account second or third impressions to discover the real truth that requires more than one piece of evidence.

Civilization depends on men and women conducting themselves as gentlemen and ladies on all occasions and toward all people, whether or not they like the company. There is no excuse for the pride of Darcy or the prejudice of Elizabeth when men and women meet for the social events of life.

St. Francis de Sales, the saint of *savoir-faire*, vowed early in his life always to speak to everyone at all social functions that he attended. The mark of a gentleman, Cardinal Newman observed in *The Idea of a University*, is “never to give offense” by word, silence, or conduct. And St. Paul in his discourse on love said that love is always patient and that “love is never rude.” To pretend that one can possess good morals without good manners or that one can be all-knowing on the basis of first impressions is like boasting that one can love God without loving one’s neighbor—an outright contradiction as the letter of St. John states.

Remarks of Cardinal Sanchez to a Home Schooling Convention

Several years ago, His Excellency Cardinal Jose Sanchez was the featured speaker at the Catholic Home Education conference in Manassas, Virginia. He had traveled from Rome in his position as Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy to give support to Catholic home schooling parents.

Cardinal Sanchez encouraged parents to educate their children in the Catholic Faith, as they are encouraged by the documents of the Second Vatican Council, which teaches not only that they are the primary educators of their children, but also that the Church is present in families through parents teaching their children.

The family is the “proper place” to grow in the Faith, said the Cardinal. The family is the domestic church and through the family’s educational activities along with the ordinary events of daily life, it can best teach a knowledge and understanding of God, veneration and worship of God, a love of neighbor, and living a community life. “This is started and developed in the family itself.”

“Family catechesis can give the first lessons, the ABCs of Catholic doctrine.” The parents can best teach the meaning of God the Father, of God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and that we all belong to one family in Faith, which is the Church. Parishes should support parents by providing them with lesson plans or other materials to make catechetical instruction in the family successful.

Cardinal Sanchez gave parents several ideas about teaching the Faith in the home. “Teaching is not just transmitting truth, but giving witness, because teaching the truth without witness is not effective.” He pointed out that Our Lord at His Ascension told His disciples that “You shall be witnesses to Me.” Parents must not be just formal teachers but “give witness to the Faith.”

Witnessing is a “silent teaching” in the growth of the Faith. Parents give witness when they take their children to be baptized, or go to Holy Communion each Sunday, when they show respect for each other, or do charitable works for family or community members. The growth of the Faith in children is strengthened by adding witness to verbal teaching. This witnessing is “felt more strongly in the family. Covering several chapters in the catechism is important, but witnessing gives strength to the teaching.”

While verbal teaching and witnessing are most important, parents need to take advantage of daily occasions to teach. For instance, when an event or item is read in the newspaper, take the occasion to teach Catholic doctrine.

Parents need to be constantly aware and alert for occasions to teach, as well as conscious of their responsibility to teach the Faith on a continuing basis to their children. Parents should develop a sort of “spontaneous” response to take advantage of every situation to teach Catholic doctrine. All circumstances can be interpreted as occasions to teach the Faith. In this spontaneous response to every opportunity to teach the Catholic Faith in the family, children will develop a strong Faith and resist temptations.

Signs and symbols should be displayed in the home as a reminder of our Catholic beliefs. For instance, crucifixes should have a prominent place. Images of Our Lord and the saints should be displayed. Holy water should be in our homes. Holy Scripture should have a “place of honor” for this is the book that reminds us “we are pilgrims and this is the book that guides us.”

We should have certain practices as well as signs and symbols. Parents should supervise children, as a regular practice, in what they “see and hear, what comes into their minds” which can strengthen or weaken their

awareness of Jesus Christ in their lives. Parents have a Christian duty to have more of those things which will help our children grow in the Christian life, and avoid those things which produce a negative effect.

Parents need courage and fortitude when outsiders are critical, but we need to set an example as a family to other families, and not be ashamed to practice our Faith in public. Being faithful to the Lord, even in public, is how people became saints.

Another practice for the family is reading the Word of God. The family should have a practice of reading the Bible as a family. This is not only a wholesome practice, but teaches our children that the Bible is a source of our Catholic doctrines and the teachings are a source of strength in difficult times. Children could take turns reading, and parents should encourage spontaneous reflection on what is being read.

The family can also participate in the liturgical celebrations “at home, reading the Gospel and other readings of the Mass each day, or on Sunday, encouraging discussion and reflection.” Thus the children better participate in the Mass and in the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

The family must have a life of prayer. The law of prayer is the law of Faith. Prayer is a summary of Catholic doctrines, such as the Incarnation and Redemption. If there is serious meditation on the prayers, it will eventually be a review of the whole doctrine of the Catholic Church. Prayer strengthens our wills to do good.

All these things may require a certain reorganization of our habits. Make the home once again the center of family life. “But the things of God can only be done with the help of God’s grace. The thing which makes a man Christian is the grace of God. ... I hope our Christian families can become centers for the growth of the Faith, and give witness to the Faith, which will be the source and also the strength of the society and of the Church.”

No Rest for the Weary by John Clark

When you're growing up, you can always count on your Mom to help you feel better when you're sick. Moms instinctively know how to help their children. It has been said that no thermometer is as accurate as a mother's hand. There is a lot of truth to that saying. Moms seem to be able to "feel" how well or how sick their children are in a way that surpasses the limits of mere medical instrumentation. When I was sick as a little boy, my mom used to buy me throat lozenges, make soup for me, comfort me, and reassure me that I'd be out playing with the other boys very soon. If I had a fever, she would bring me cool washcloths to put on my forehead to bring down my temperature. If I didn't feel like reading, she'd let me lie on the couch in front of the television, where I could enjoy the best game shows that the 1970's culture could muster: *The Price is Right*, *The Joker's Wild*, and *Tic Tac Dough*. With my mom in charge of my recovery process, I knew I would get better. Though I may have been ill, this level of attention made me feel like a king. In fact, when you're little, there's probably no time in your life that you feel more protected and more pampered than when you're sick.

Sickness is a little different when you're 40. First of all, my mom is at work. And that's not good, because like my wife always says: "It doesn't matter how old you are, whether you are 4 or 40, you still want your mom when you're sick." I'd like to call my mom and let her know when I am sick, but since she's helping thousands of Catholic parents educate their children, I'd probably feel guilty asking her to drive over to my house with some *Sucrets*. (On the other hand, if I really got something serious, she's on my speed dial.)

When you're a parent of nine children, getting sick is a luxury you can't afford. This became apparent to me recently when I succumbed to the ravages of winter. What you'd like to do when you're "under the weather" is to lie in bed, have someone bring you lots of fluids, fluff your pillows, and generally maintain a quiet atmosphere, conducive to getting healthy. Reality doesn't work out quite that well.

Children like to "check on" sick parents—usually when they have finally been able to fall asleep. Example:

Child: "Daddy... *Daddy*... Daddy?"

Father: "Yes, sweetie. Are you OK?"

Child: "I'm fine. Mommy wants to know if you are asleep yet."

Daddy: "Tell Mommy I'm fine. I'll feel better soon, and then we'll play with your Pet Shop Toys."

Child: "OK, Daddy. Have a good sleep."

Rinse and repeat in one hour.

Children *do* seem to want to do their home schooling near their sick parent. When I was lying in bed, my seven-year-old daughter, Dominica, and my nine-year-old daughter, Philomena came in with their violins and violin stand and proceeded to practice the new classical pieces they are learning. It was truly a virtuoso performance, but violin and nausea don't mix.

Also, when children have disagreements that need officiating, and they need the wise advice of a parent, they are faced with a question: "Should I ask the healthy parent or the sick parent?" In this case, the sick parent is suddenly viewed by the

children as King Solomon. Only the sick parent who is lying in bed seems capable of answering disputes of titanic importance that have a clear immediacy, such as: "Which of us did Daddy buy the magenta crayon for?"

When you're eight years old, you don't go back to school until you feel better. When you're forty, when you decide to get up and go back to work, it's not necessarily because you're feeling better—it's because you've reached the stage in which you realize that you're not going to get any better by lying in bed.

There are few things in life that make you feel more special than a little three-year-old coming into your room with a concerned, slightly-sad look on her face, asking you if you feel better, and wanting you to play—even when you'd rather be sleeping your way to recovery. But this recent bout with illness has got me thinking that perhaps Lisa and I should incorporate a nursing class to the home schooling regimen. Maybe as Seton considers adding new courses, parents can suggest that they add the class. Maybe it can be written by moms to show the rest of the non-Mom home-schooling world how to take care of people.

There is another lesson I've learned. When you are sick as a father, it is much better to be sick *yourself* than to see one of your children sick. As a father, seeing a child suffer with illness has never been easy for me. I doubt it's ever easy for most fathers. I'm sure many of us fathers, upon seeing our sick children, have prayed that we could suffer in their place. I think that this is just a prayer of instinctive fatherhood. And as winter finally ends and spring and summer take their rightful place, let's pray that new seasons of health are on the way.

One thing I *have* decided with all this—the next time I'm sick, I'm calling my mom.

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.

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: hfhindy@yahoo.com or www.hfhindy.org.

Buffalo, NY. May 21, 2011 (Sat.) 3rd Annual Buffalo Catholic Home Schooling Conference, Christ the King Seminary, 711 Knox Road, East Aurora, NY. 8 AM - 5 PM. Info: Tracy at 716-337-2337 or 716-337-2404, email buffalocatholicsc@yahoo.com or www.buffalocatholicsc.org.

Dallas, TX. May 27-28, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Fourth Annual Immaculate Heart of Mary North Texas Home School and Parent Conference, Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington, TX. Fri. 2 PM - 8 PM, Sat. 9 AM - 4 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or email dallas@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org

Radcliff, KY. June 3-4, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Second Annual Kentucky Catholic Homeschooling Conference, St. Christopher Catholic Church, Parish Life Center, 1225 S. Wilson Road, Radcliff, KY. Fri.: 4 PM - 8 PM, Sat.: After 8 AM Mass - 4 PM. Information: kycathhsing@yahoo.com or www.kycatholichomeschooling.org.

St. Paul, MN. June 3-4, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) 13th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair, University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN. Fri.: 4 PM - 8:30 PM, Sat.: 8 AM - 5 PM. Info: Deb at info@mnconference.org or debandbradnelson@msn.com or www.mnconference.org.

Herndon, VA (Washington DC). June 10-11, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) 10th Annual Immaculate Heart of Mary National Home School and Parent Conference 2011, Hilton Washington Dulles Airport Hotel (note new location), 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon, VA. Fri.: 9 AM - 9 PM, Sat.: 9 AM - 4:30 PM. Information: 540-636-1946 or info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org.

Seattle, WA. June 10-11, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Northwest Catholic Family Education Conference, Seattle Police Athletic Association Pavilion, 11030 E.

Marginal Way South, Tukwila, WA. Fri.: 8:45 AM - 7 PM, Sat.: 8:45 AM - 5:30 PM. Info: Katherine at 206-230-0455, or info@nwcatholicconference.com or www.nwcatholicconference.com

Kansas City, KS. June 17-18, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) 2011 Kansas City Catholic Home Educators Conference, St. James Academy, 24505 Prairie Star Pkwy, Lenexa, KS. Fri.: 3 PM - 9:30 PM, Sat.: 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM. For information: call Maribeth at 816-454-3729, or jmjchambermusic@sbcglobal.net, or www.kccatholichomeschooler.org

Lansing, MI. June 17-18, 2011 (Fri./Sat.) Michigan Catholic Home-Educators 17th Annual "It's Great to be Catholic!" Family and Home Education Seminar, Book and Curriculum Fair, Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave (at Cedar), Lansing, MI. Fri.: 6 PM - 9:30 PM, Sat.: 8 AM - 4:30 PM. Information: Kelley at 248-828-0135, or mchemails@gmail.com or www.homeschoolcatholic.org

Cleveland, OH. June 24-25, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Immaculate Heart of Mary Cleveland Home School and Parent Conference 2011, St. Adalbert Church - Keller Center, 66 Adalbert Street, Berea, OH. Fri.: 4 PM - 9 PM, Sat.: 9 AM - 4 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org

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Message for World Day of the Sick

I still have in my heart the moment when, during the course of the pastoral visit to Turin, I was able to pause in reflection and prayer before the Holy Shroud, before that suffering face, which invites us to reflect on He who took upon himself the passion of man, of every time and place, even our sufferings, our difficulties, our sins. How many faithful, during the course of history, have passed in front of that burial cloth, which enveloped the body of a crucified man, and which completely corresponds to what the Gospels hand down to us about the passion and death of Jesus! To contemplate it is an invitation to reflect upon what St. Peter writes: ‘By his wounds you have been healed’ (1 Pt 2:24). The Son of God suffered, died, but rose again, and precisely because of this those wounds become the sign of our redemption, of forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father; however they also become a test for the faith of the disciples and our faith: every time that the Lord speaks about his passion and death, they do not understand, they reject it, they oppose it. For them, as for us, suffering is always charged with mystery, difficult to accept and to bear. The two disciples of Emmaus walk sadly because of the events that had taken place in those days in Jerusalem, and only when the Risen One walks along the road with them do they open up to a new vision (cf. Lk 24:13-31). Even the apostle Thomas manifests the difficulty of believing in the way of redemptive passion: “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (Jn 20:25). But before Christ who shows his wounds, his response is transformed into a moving profession of faith: “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28). What was at first an insurmountable obstacle, because it was a sign of Jesus’ apparent failure, becomes, in the encounter with the Risen One, proof of a victorious love: “Only a God who loves us to the extent of taking upon himself our wounds and our pain, especially innocent suffering, is worthy of faith.”

Benedict XVI