



Seton Home Study School

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Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

This year we celebrate the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on July 1. This feast day, though not a Holy Day of Obligation, nevertheless is surely one of the most revered of all feast days. There are likely more people dedicated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus than to all the saints combined. It is a devotion that even Protestants practice, as evidenced by the many pictures of the Sacred Heart in their homes.

The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus represents, of course, the infinite and spectacular love Jesus has for all of us in spite of our sins. Those who commit sins are led to repentance because of the great love Jesus showed to us while on earth, both in the miracles of healing and in His sufferings for the redemption of us all. He gave forgiveness to the Samaritan woman at the well and the woman who was about to be stoned, telling them to sin no more.

Even after Peter denied Jesus three times, He forgave Peter when he was sorry for his sins. No one can measure the Divine Love Jesus has for those who repent.

How can we show our love for Jesus, Who loves us in such a mysterious infinite Love? Jesus appeared many times in 1923 to Sister Josefa Menendez, a Spanish nun who entered a French Convent of the Sacred Heart. During the Lent of 1923, Jesus revealed His thoughts

during each aspect of His Passion. His words of infinite love and mercy were written down as dictated by Our Lord, and can be read in *The Way of Divine Love*.

“When you submit yourself generously to the Will of God in spite of natural interior opposition ... the resistance of your family... the judgments of the world...when you have given yourself generously to the Will of God, then shall you be closely united to Him and taste ineffable sweetness. ...

“...your happiness and perfection do not lie... in living known or unknown, ...in using or hiding your talents...in having good health or not... but only and solely in embracing with love God’s Will, and being in perfect conformity with it in all it requires of you for His glory and your holiness.”

“Listen to My voice... Be without fear for the past; all has been swallowed up in the abyss of My mercy, and My love is preparing new graces for you.you cannot give Me a greater proof of affection than to count on My full pardon and to believe that your sins will never be as great as My mercy, which is infinite. ...I will forgive you. Take up again your life of fervor, and you will have back your lost merits, and My grace will never fail you.”

The lives and messages of the saints show us how small acts of

reparation can be acts of love and can merit grace for ourselves, for our family, and others. As we do these little actions, we need to tell Jesus “I offer up this small action as a gift of love. Use whatever graces may be obtained from it in reparation for my sins, for the sins of members of my family, and for souls who may be in danger of sin.”

The Morning Offering is a prayer that tells Jesus at the beginning of the day that we want our daily actions to be gifts to Him Who loves us with an infinite Love. “O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of Your Most Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our home schooling families, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father for this month.”

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

- MKC

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Questions We Are Asked

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

My son seems to have difficulty writing a paragraph or anything longer.

The only way to learn to ride a bike is to ride, the only way to learn to read is to read, and the only way to learn to write is to write. Just like riding a bike or reading, writing is a skill that needs to be practiced. The more it is practiced, the easier it becomes.

To practice writing, an English professor at Christendom College suggests that students keep a journal. She points out that “ironically, the only way to lessen the painful nature of writing is by writing everyday. Perhaps the easiest way to facilitate this practice is by encouraging your child to keep a journal. A journal is a notebook in which the child writes about specific events or ideas; or it may be a place where he fights out personal battles, or reflects on people or events.

“The journal is a place for practice writing... Writing in the journal gives the child practice in putting on paper the ideas which are floating in his brain... Just let him practice. Let him become accustomed to the written word, its powers and its deficiencies. Have your child carry his journal in his pocket on his daily excursions to the store or to the park or wherever. Encourage him to write about what he sees or thinks. The next time the dinner table becomes the scene for a discussion, ask him to present his perspective on the issue.”

Besides a paper journal, there is also the possibility of keeping a journal on the computer, or even posting in a blog.

The goal is to have your son become accustomed to writing everyday and not be afraid of writing. Ask him to say a prayer to his guardian angel as he begins to write.

You don’t need to look at his spelling or punctuation. Just have him

write his own thoughts and ideas, using his own words. The hardest part about this assignment is that *you* need to be patient. The first hurdle is simply to have your son get used to writing and not be afraid of writing. Believe it or not, his writing will improve, but for now, just be happy he is actually writing and is not fearful of writing or expressing himself in words, whether on paper or on the computer.

How should I advise my boys to answer the review questions in their books?

The first thing they need to do is read and reread the relevant paragraphs carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully. Simply reading the words without understanding them leads nowhere. To answer questions well, a student needs to read well. This is probably the major stumbling block. Some students don’t want to make the effort to read, and perhaps reread, until the selection can be understood. If the selection is difficult to understand, the student needs to find someone to discuss the selection with him.

When it comes time to write the answer, the question needs to be read carefully. Many times students write anything, not really focusing or even trying to focus on what specifically the question is asking. Students may need parents to help them at first to analyze the question itself, to break it down into parts. Is the question asking for the theme, or for the significance, or for examples? These days, in many schools, the questions ask for only one word answers, but at Seton, often the questions ask for more analysis, for a sentence or for a paragraph.

By the way, recent studies about learning have proved what many of us have known for a long time: the brain

can retain concepts better and longer if the answers are written out by hand, and not just typed into a computer.

As a newcomer to Catholic home schooling, I am becoming more aware of the need to make my home Catholic. Have you any suggestions?

The two things that Father John Hardon—who is now being considered for beatification—used to talk about at home schooling conferences are the importance of the family having a sacramental life and being a family of prayer.

To practice writing, an English professor at Christendom College suggests that students keep a journal.

Having a sacramental life means attending Mass every day if possible and receiving the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; taking our family to Confession at least once a month; attending Baptisms or Confirmations, as well as novenas or other religious activities at church.

The Bible talks about being a family of prayer by being in constant awareness of what we believe, by living it, and by being a good example to others in the family. We are to teach our children constantly, according to the Bible, when we are sitting, when we are walking, when we are at rest, when we rise in the morning. As we work with our hands and work with our minds, we are teaching our children by example.

The Catholic home has been called “the domestic church” in the Church documents. Our domestic church should have pictures and statues of Jesus and Mary and patron saints, to remind us of those saintly virtues we need to be practicing. We should have our house blessed, and have an altar where our family prays the Rosary every day. We should be saying novenas for our daily needs, especially for the sick.

How can I be more efficient with my time and household management?

Start out by asking the Blessed Mother for help. You might find a short prayer you can say every day specifically for this goal. You might ask St. Ann for help.

One of our elementary counselors advises: Most moms don't have too much time during the busy school year to assess the current situation and consider other ideas. Summertime is a good time to reflect on how the past year went, what was successful and what was not. Not only should there be

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reflection and prayer, but also perhaps some reading of helps by other home schooling parents, as well as looking at our Seton message boards for further ideas.

Efficiency is related to good organization. Getting your home and your school supplies organized helps to keep things in their proper places. You need a place for everything, and need to tell the kids to keep their school books and supplies in their proper place.

Take a look at your home and see what you can throw out, and then consider what you need for better organization. Some moms like each child to have one of those big plastic laundry baskets to keep their school supplies. Other moms have bookshelves. Some moms keep things in the bedrooms; some moms have one room as a classroom. Some families "build" a classroom in the basement; some convert the garage to the schoolroom.

Have your older students involved in getting organized. Purchasing new colorful laundry baskets can make the next year seem new and different. Paint the classroom a different color. Purchase new or used furniture to change the atmosphere from last year.

Change the schedule a little bit! Have grandma or grandpa come over once a week to help. Use paper plates and cups for breakfast and lunch to reduce cleanup time.

Ginny Seuffert has written a great little book called *Home Management Essentials*. This short book gives ten practical suggestions for quickly improving the situation in your home. Printed copies are available from Seton Educational Media for \$7.95, or you can download the Kindle version for only \$3.95.

My husband does not really want to be involved with the home schooling.

Say a prayer to St. Joseph, and to your husband's patron saint, that he not only sees the importance of being involved, but that he may come to realize what happiness he can have as he interacts with his children in this very special way.

Cardinal Gagnon gave a speech to home schooling families some years ago, and he talked about the importance of children seeing parents working together to teach them. "Home schooling contributes to the visible sacramentality of the family. It is not the work of the father or of the mother alone. It is difficult if there is no unity, no collaboration of both parents. Love is a gift of each other, but at the same time, Love is a unity in making a gift to others.

"...[parents] working together to give perfection to life, you are giving your children their education, working together without delegating your authority to others, but working at it together, is immense proof of love for each other, for the children, and for the Church.

"...[together] you give certainty about things. ...during these years of confusion, when we are being taught [by society] that nothing is certain, society was being destroyed. But you make Christ known to His children as the Word of His Father...You give a sense of security in life. You teach the truth with confidence and certainty to children you love.

"...When you teach persons who are flesh of your flesh and whom you love, you do not teach doubt, you teach

truth, and with certainty. ...That sense of certainty should be a characteristic of the education you give."

God never meant for fathers to be only providers or protectors for their families. He meant for fathers as well as mothers to be actively engaged in teaching their children. Nevertheless, we need to remember that parents are teaching all the time as they deal with everyday issues in a Catholic way.

I have a student who is a daydreamer. What can I do?

Consider saying special prayers or making a novena to saints who had trouble as students, such as St. Joseph of Cupertino.

A daydreamer may need to learn self-discipline techniques, such as a clock on his desk with a timer that goes off every 15 minutes to pull him back to the assignment sitting on his desk under his hand!

Perhaps his work is too easy in a particular subject. Give him some chapter tests, and if he knows the information already, perhaps you need to move him to more challenging chapters, or even move him up a grade level in a subject.

Some young students are not ready for sustained study. Perhaps you need to break up the work in 20 minute segments. Another idea is for him to work along with a sibling who can help keep him focused on the work if, for instance, they are reciting spelling words aloud.

If your student is being lazy, consider having him do some missed assignments on a Saturday morning. He might "perk up" during the week if he thinks he will need to work on Saturday.

It may be that your student daydreams because he has a deep interest in a certain area, such as drawing. If that is the case, then try to work his interest into the lessons. For example, for science class, the student might draw the solar systems or how an electric motor works. For history, perhaps include art history. Whenever possible, try to work with a student's natural inclinations, rather than against them.

Ever Ancient, Ever New #5

by Dr. Mitchell Kalpakgian

“It’s knowing what to do with things that counts.”—Robert Frost, “At Woodward’s Gardens”

In Frost’s poem, “At Woodward’s Gardens,” a boy visiting a zoo carries a magnifying glass. From his study of science he has apparently learned to use the glass not only to magnify objects for better vision but also to concentrate the rays of the sun to create heat and fire.

This boy, “presuming on his intellect,” decides to torment the monkeys. Scientific man, gifted with the power of knowledge, decides to experiment upon the hapless monkeys lacking man’s reason. So the boy chooses to use the glass as a weapon as he concentrates the rays of the sun through the lens and burns the noses of the caged monkeys: “He made the sun a pin-point on the nose/ Of first one, then the other till it brought/ A look of puzzled dimness to their eyes/ That blinking could not seem to blink away.” Sensing danger and reacting with animal instinct, the scalded monkeys respond with self-defense as they touch their noses “And exchanged troubled glances over life.” Of course they have no idea of the cause of the pain or the physics of light as a source of heat and fire as they act disoriented “as if perhaps /Within a million years of an idea.” The boy with the glass lords it over the defenseless monkeys who have no means for resisting the enemy.

As the boy gloats over the secret power of his weapon and the success of his experiment, he feels the natural superiority that man enjoys over animals by virtue of his intelligence and technology: “The already known had once more been confirmed/ By psychological experiment.”

The monkeys, however, despite their ignorance of the source of the attack and their confinement behind cages, act with decisiveness: “There was a sudden flash of arm, a snatch, /

And the glass was the monkeys’, not the boy’s.” The monkeys’ sudden move shifts the balance of power as they now possess the weapon that inflicted pain upon them. The monkeys do not understand the use of the magnifying glass and regard it as a strange object incomprehensible to their limited understanding. They too carry on their experiments to make sense of this new thing: “They bit the glass and listened for the flavor. They broke the handle and listened for the flavor.”

Even though their five senses do not inform them of any possible uses for the glass by way of food or enjoyment, the monkeys do grasp one irrefutable fact about the lens: it is harmful and threatening to monkeys. Hence, they “hid it in their bedding straw” rather than return it to the boy.

Using only their animal instincts and five senses, the monkeys demonstrate more common sense and good judgment than the educated boy with his knowledge of science. Although the animals do not discover the cause behind the effect and cannot comprehend the use of a magnifying glass, they know it is evil and reject it without any doubts or afterthought.

Ironically, the monkeys as members of the animal species reveal more wisdom than the boy, *homo sapiens*. Man as rational animal often is more irrational than intelligent, more foolish than wise. The mark of wisdom is the proper use of things for their intended natural or God-given purposes. To misuse the magnifying glass to burn animals rather than see small print is perverse, the abuse of power rather than use for its true end. The monkeys show more wisdom than enlightened man because “They might not understand a burning glass. / They might not understand the sun itself. / It’s knowing what to do with things that counts.”

Educated man with his science and technology often does not comprehend

what the monkeys know. It is not natural to use knowledge or power to harm or destroy the good. The human mind is created to use knowledge to serve man and ennoble human life. Sophisticated modern man does not know “what to do with things” that simple monkeys instinctually sense. For example, with his higher education man tortures the meaning of words to invent “rights” to do evil or deny nature such as legalized abortion and same-sex marriage. With his scientific research man uses medical knowledge to prescribe contraceptive drugs, discover abortion bills like RU-486, perform tubal ligations and vasectomies, and engage in fetal harvesting and stem-cell research that are anti-life, anti-human, and anti-natural. With university degrees man exercises his mind to deny God, truth, moral law, and perennial philosophy and uses intelligence to teach that nothing is true and all is relative and subjective.

Common sense, right reason, and human wisdom know “what to do with things.” Man and woman exist for love and marriage. Love and marriage exist for families and children. Homes exist to create civilized societies and rich cultures. Civilization exists so that man learns to live *well* rather than merely live or survive—to live a human, moral, abundant life filled with goodness, beauty, and truth. The end of a moral, holy life is the blessedness of the Beatific Vision in Heaven.

Prideful educated man, with his weapons and instruments, perversely rejects the self-evident and willfully deconstructs what God has beautifully ordered. Like the boy intoxicated with the sense of power the magnifying glass gives him over the monkeys, man with his almighty degrees and higher learning would rather redesign the world and reinvent new and unnatural uses for the mind and body rather than acknowledge the nature of things. To have a mind and not to know is as perverse as having a magnifying glass and refusing to see.

Discipline by Ginny Seuffert

There's no question about it! Discipline is the hot topic in Catholic home schooling circles today. I receive calls about discipline problems every week.

I believe that worry about discipline is the most common reason people hesitate to begin teaching their children at home. "What if they don't listen to me and do their work?" is a common question.

Judging from my phone calls, discipline may also be the most frequent reason Catholics put their children back into school. I have heard, "My house was a zoo, it was a fight to get them to do any schoolwork, and I'm just stressed out."

I also hear, and have experienced myself, support group activities where some of the children were simply out of control and ruined everybody's good time.

Where does it come from?

The television commercial shows a young innocent face, the eyes welling up with tears. In the background you hear raving adult voices, "I can't take you anymore!" Then the voiceover, "Words hurt! Think before you speak."

Many Catholic families have been influenced by modern American social thought which tends to blur the distinction between child *correction* and child *abuse*. The inference from commercials like the one I've described is that yelling at your children is a form of abuse and will scar them for life. Never mind that the kid just poured a can of Comet into the fishbowl!

There are other sources for the discipline problem though, that start closer to home. Many Catholics are attempting to return their families to a more natural state. These moms have unmedicated births, often at home. They breastfeed their children, feed them unprocessed foods and allow them to sleep in a "family" bed with the parents. Many of these ideas have considerable merit and will give

a young child a good healthy start on life.

The problems begin, however, when parents form the idea that these practices will somehow produce children of such natural goodness that they will not need further correction. Thus many parents view children wandering around church at Mass as just a display of their "natural curiosity." They fail to see that others may view such behavior as distracting and disrespectful. These parents forget what Holy Mother Church has always taught about the effects of original sin.

What's the truth?

The truth concerning discipline in the Catholic family is not difficult to discern. As any Seton student can tell you, the Fourth Commandment of God is, "Honor thy father and thy mother." Therefore we have a serious obligation to teach our children to be respectful and obedient. For their part, our children have a serious obligation to be respectful and obedient to their parents and to any other person who might have legitimate authority over them. Our children must be taught to obey all the Commandments, including the Fourth. They must learn that deliberate disobedience or lack of outward respect to a parent is sinful and should be confessed. Failure, by the parents, to teach or enforce this commandment is also sinful and should be confessed. I am always amazed to meet wonderful Catholic parents who would be appalled if their children snatched a candy bar from the local drug store (breaking the Seventh Commandment), but who tolerate routine, habitual disrespect.

Is there an answer?

The solution to this problem is correct early, correct often. As soon as a child is old enough to understand, about 18 months, they must be taught that certain behaviors are unacceptable in your family. Often the words, "No, no!" spoken in a firm tone are enough

to make a small child realize that he should not touch something. As soon as the child begins to speak, she must learn common courtesy. "Gimme a cookie" should be answered with, "May I have a cookie, please" and the cookie withheld until the sentence is repeated. When you give the baby something, have him repeat a "thank you" to you. Teach your children to greet adults politely and by name, "Good morning, Mrs. Clark."

Any willful behavior or early show of temper must be corrected immediately. My husband and I had a real problem with one of my daughters who was a very fussy infant. By 18 months she had started screaming and throwing herself on the floor when she didn't get her own way. We never, *repeat never*, allowed ourselves to give in to her. If we thought her tantrum was from being overtired, she was put to bed. If it was just willfulness, we picked her up and placed her on a couch in another room with the instructions to "Just sit there until you can be a good girl." Had we doubted ourselves, and given in to her displays of temper, I am convinced this particular child could have been one of those children you see screaming in checkout lines at the grocery store. Instead, I can say, with complete honesty, that she is a cheerful and cooperative kid—a pleasure to be with.

Who will help?

Remember that the Blessed Mother is always ready to help us with our family responsibilities. Pray to her often about your children's behavior. Don't forget their Guardian Angels either. We often pray to our own angels, but can certainly talk to the children's angels, as well. Be specific! Ask Johnny's angel for help with that fresh mouth of his. Ask Janie's angel to help her not to be lazy.

We home schooling parents have a unique opportunity, as well as the serious responsibility, to be the primary moral educators of our children. Dedicate this task to the Holy Family of Nazareth and you will be ready to meet this challenge.



GRADUATION 2011

Seton Home Study School



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.

Denver, CO. July 15-16, 2011 (Sat.) Rocky Mountain Catholic Home Educators Conference, St. Thomas More Parish, 8035 South Quebec Street, Centennial, CO. Fri.: 3:30 PM - 7:30 PM; Sat.: 8 AM - 5 PM. Info: info@rmchec.org or www.rmchec.org

Tampa, FL. July 22-23, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) Immaculate Heart of Mary Tampa Home School and Parent Conference 2011, St. Lawrence Church & Parish, 5225 N. Himes Avenue, Tampa, FL. Fri.: 2 PM - 8 PM; Sat.: 9 AM - 4 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or info@ihmconference.org or www.ihmconference.org.

Tarrytown, NY. August 5-6, 2011 (Fri.-Sat.) IHM New York Catholic Home School & Parent Conference, Doubletree Hotel, 455 S. Broadway, Tarrytown, NY. Fri.: 2 PM-8 PM; Sat.: 9 AM-4 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or www.ihmconference.org or email info@ihmconference.org.

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Message for World Day of Peace, 2011

Religious freedom is at the origin of moral freedom. Openness to truth and perfect goodness, openness to God, is rooted in human nature; it confers full dignity on each individual and is the guarantee of full mutual respect between persons. Religious freedom should be understood, then, not merely as immunity from coercion, but even more fundamentally as an ability to order one's own choices in accordance with truth.

Freedom and respect are inseparable; indeed, "in exercising their rights, individuals and social groups are bound by the moral law to have regard for the rights of others, their own duties to others and the common good of all."

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."