



# Seton Home

# Study School

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

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## *Our Lady of Lourdes*

We celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11th. The shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes is likely one of the most visited shrines on earth. At the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, countless numbers of people have been healed with the water from the miraculous spring. People suffering from physical ailments as well as spiritual maladies have testified to their cures.

Young Bernadette herself suffered as she was accused of making up the story of the apparitions of a beautiful woman. Bernadette suffered from her own family members who would not believe what she said. She suffered as she dug in the ground and wiped her face with the mud. Certainly the turning point came when a woman was cured on March 1, 1858, as the muddy waters from the miraculous spring touched her.

We can read about the first miracle cure on the Lourdes website, as follows:

12th Apparition: Monday 1st. March: The First Miracle: Over one thousand five hundred people assembled and among them, for the first time, a priest. In the night, Catherine Latapie, a friend from Lourdes, went to the Grotto, she plunged her dislocated arm into the water of the Spring: her arm and her hand regained their movement.

Bernadette saw the Blessed Mother for the first time on February 11, 1858, as she stopped to take off her shoes near a stream. As she looked up, she saw the

apparition of a beautiful lady standing in front of a cave. She held a Rosary in her hand. Bernadette said the Rosary in front of her.

From February until mid-July, there were eighteen apparitions of the Blessed Mother. She gave several messages to Bernadette, one of them being *“Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners.”* By this time, thousands of people were attending and taking photographs, and listening to the messages as Bernadette repeated them.

The most famous message that young Bernadette received from the Blessed Mother was given on March 25, the feast of the Immaculate Conception: *“Would you kindly tell me who you are?”* Her answer was one Bernadette did not understand: *“I am the Immaculate Conception.”*

This message not only confirmed what the Church had officially proclaimed, but gave great solace and support to those who dedicate their lives to proclaiming that life begins at conception, and to fighting the evil of abortion.

Bernadette eventually joined a convent and lived there for more than twenty years. Meanwhile, a chapel requested by the Blessed Mother was built to accommodate the many visitors who came for graces and for cures.

In 1908, Bernadette’s body was exhumed by an official Church commission, which discovered her body intact and uncorrupted. By 1933,

the Church proclaimed her a saint, and many people visit her preserved body in the convent chapel. Countless thousands have visited the Lourdes shrine, now a basilica.

Lourdes water is offered in small containers to people all over the world who are praying for help in some way. We certainly encourage all homeschooling families to have a container of Lourdes water. If you access the Lourdes shrine on the Internet, you can not only learn more about it, you can send in a prayer petition to be placed before the altar. If you want to see the incredibly beautiful incorrupt body of St. Bernadette, you can easily find it on the Internet.

St. Bernadette, through your intercession with Jesus and Mary, petition that my children receive the grace of praying on the occasions of temptation. Blessed Mother, with your Divine Son, grant my family the grace of being constantly aware of Your Son’s holy presence. Help our family to keep a heroic Faith along with a confidence in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. St. Bernadette, pray for us.

-MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

### **How do I prepare my son to take a Seton test?**

The first step is to be sure your student reads and follows the directions in the lesson plans. One problem we see is that the student “short cuts” the daily assignments. The assignments may include reading the chapter, studying any outline in the chapter, highlighting or underlining important points, answering the end of chapter review questions, and making a chapter outline if there is not one. One thing we are doing when we write our high school textbooks is adding an outline at the beginning of each chapter.

When your son thinks he is ready to take a test, let him show you the chapter he has been studying. Do you see underlining or highlighting? Do you see the paperwork for answering the chapter review questions?

Finally, when your son says he is ready to take the test, take a look at the upcoming test and review with him what he needs to know. You don’t need to take a long time and go over every single question/area, but take 15 minutes to note: “You need to know about Carthage; you need to know about the battle at Cannae,” and so on. These are the kinds of things classroom teachers tell their students before a test.

One thing we do not recommend is that the parent makes a study guide or outline. Your son will learn the material when *he* makes the outline.

### **My son is resisting writing paragraphs and book reports.**

Writing is an inductive exercise. This means the student must use his brain in a different way than he usually uses it. In math, he learns how to add and subtract, and follows the instructions in the problems. In

spelling and vocabulary, he studies the spelling or the meaning and simply writes the words or identifies the meaning. In science and history, he memorizes the definitions or names and dates, and writes an answer. In English, he learns the definition of a noun and finds one in a sentence. Study, memorize, repeat.

However, writing a paragraph or writing a book report that is NOT a recitation of the events in the story takes inductive thinking, a process that does not come easily for the inexperienced! You cannot expect your son to learn this quickly, or immediately like it, because it is more demanding on the brain power!

The way to train your child’s brain for inductive thinking and writing is to have his brain practice this kind of thinking and writing *every day*.

Have your son start a daily journal, writing at least a page in the journal every day. Purchase some sort of attractive notebook that he can carry around. Have him write down his adventures, experiences, thoughts about what happens every day. He can paste in pictures or draw pictures.

After a while, ask him to write on what he thinks about what happens every day. Ask him to write about a party he attended, and then what he liked or did not like. Ask him to write about the sermon the priest gave at Mass. Ask him to write what he liked or did not like about a movie, and about what he thinks about a particular Bible story, or about what Jesus said to His apostles in the boat, and so on.

Eventually, you will ask him to write a paragraph for a school assignment, or a report about a book he read. Eventually, he will not resist writing school assignments because he

will be doing it anyway. And you will have a new little thinker in your house!

### **My daughter is taking Physical Science in 9th grade. Can she switch to another science?**

We do allow high school students to switch between semesters from one science course to another. If your daughter has not reached the end of the second quarter, please call Gene McGuirk, head of counseling, and ask him about any other options, such as Earth Science.

Only two science courses are required by Seton at this time: Biology

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*Have your son start a daily journal, writing at least a page in the journal every day.*

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and either Earth Science or Physical Science.

We do recommend, however, that students check with the college they plan to attend to see if they would require a third science, especially if the student intends to major in a science or math in college. Some students like to take a science course over the summer to lighten their course load the following school year and try to obtain a higher grade point average (GPA) for college entrance.

### **My children in 2nd and 4th grade lack good handwriting skills.**

One problem is that young children often think of handwriting as a sort of drawing skill. You might consider giving your children pens, and have them do all their handwriting with pens. This gives them a clear understanding that this is different from drawing. It is a different skill.

Don’t allow your child to hold the pen any way he wants to hold it. You must teach him to hold it correctly. You also must teach him to write the letters correctly. At first, this will slow him up, and he won’t want to do his writing assignments because his brain

will be racing ahead of his handwriting. However, in the long run, your child will be much better off.

Think of it this way. Suppose someone took golf lessons. The instructor would insist upon a proper grip of the club, even if the grip at first felt uncomfortable for the student. The student might progress very slowly at first, and even feel like abandoning the proper grip; but only by practicing correctly can real mastery be achieved.

Bright children will want to get on the computer early, but if they have not mastered their handwriting skills, they will never learn once they are on

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## *Seton's goal is to strengthen the Catholic Faith in families and as families.*

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the computer. Be sure your children master their handwriting skills first. If they are already on the computer for typing letters or messages, tell them their school assignments must be in handwriting with a pen.

### **How important are hands-on activities?**

It depends on the subject and on the student. Hands-on activities reinforce concepts so they are especially important in the area of science, for which many concepts are not clear until and unless the student “sees” them. Seton has just started selling science kits for homeschooling families, and they are very popular. We also have a large number of *Mr. Wizard* DVDs which teach children how to do many, many different science projects. Some of these projects the children can do on their own, or with Dad on a weekend! We also have lab manuals for students taking high school biology, chemistry, or physics courses. Please call Gene McGuirk for further information about this, or go on our SEM book catalog ([www.setonbooks.com](http://www.setonbooks.com)).

It is beneficial for children to learn to play a musical instrument,

an important hands-on activity which helps develop the brain for math and reading skills. Studies have shown that children, even high school students, who learn a musical instrument—which demands attention to several details at once, such as listening for timing and notes—do much better in all their subjects.

If you search on the internet “why should you learn to play a musical instrument,” you will be amazed at the reasons. For example: *Learning an Instrument and hence playing music teaches you many things including:*

- the use of many parts of the brain
- improved performance in all areas of the curriculum - listening, memory, communication, coordination, concentration, critical thinking, team and social skills- imagination and creativity
- e.g. improvisation and composition - cooperation and commitment e.g. in lessons and group playing - the development of self esteem and confidence. (Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/4754081>)

Students at a younger age, from birth through the first three or four grade levels, learn best by hands-on activities. Everyone, at every age, can add to their learning through hands-on activities.

### **If we can use an alternate text book for math, why can't I use an alternate text book for other subjects?**

Seton's goal is to strengthen the Catholic Faith in families and as families. Since our math books above the primary grades are not specifically Catholic, we have no problem with parents choosing other books. However, because we want our students to learn the Faith and to practice the Faith, we want them to learn from Catholic materials whenever possible. In fact, many of the textbooks being used in the schools are not simply not Catholic; they often are actively anti-Catholic. While the material is not always a direct assault on Catholic values, the “indirect” or “couched” perspective is generally picked up by students. This is why the Catholic school system was started in the first place. St. John Neumann, cardinal of Philadelphia,

insisted Catholic schools be built even before the church building because the Catholic students were losing their Faith in the public schools.

### **I heard that Seton will be having lessons on videos. Is that correct?**

Yes and no. We will be having supplemental explanations on video. Students will still use their textbook and their lesson plans. The videos will be weekly presentations to explain further any concepts or questions we have received on the phone from our parents and students. Right now, we have a whole series of diagramming videos, and we have started making video presentations for Religion 9, Spanish I, Computer Programming, and English 9.

We currently have a number of *audio* presentations up on our website. Students and parents can access them now. We have audios for all the high school English courses, as well as for American and World History, Spanish, Latin, and French.

We are working on adding a Catholic Biology text and a Catholic Earth Science text online, with embedded images and videos. A few Biology chapters are currently available online.

Please note that we will not have video courses; that is, the replacement of printed texts with video only. The Idaho Department of Education did a survey of their regular schools and charter schools, both the ones actually attended, and the ones online, called “virtual.” The completion rate or success rate when high school students were doing *strictly online* courses was very low. A survey in Minnesota found the same results. The data from both states show that students taking strictly-online courses do only half as well, and the dropout rate is dramatically higher than for students in a brick-and-mortar public school. The point is that parents still need to be involved with their children's education, and while online courses may be successful for students at the college level, they are not appropriate for either elementary or high school students.

## *Perseverance* by Ginny Seuffert

My personal pet peeves include books and authors who present homeschooling as an always fun and sunny alternative to institutional schools. If you believe some of what is written, you might easily think that our homeschooled children are sitting at their tidy desks, in their neat school clothes, diligently hammering at the books, while begging for more challenging work. Let's face it: sometimes the truth is not quite so pretty, making it easy to lose sight of our goals.

My children preferred to run around in the yard and sometimes had to be dragged to their desks. If they finished their assignments, and occasionally even before they finished, they valued play over work. We kept a pretty strict schedule, but plenty of times, our day was interrupted by family emergencies, unexpected guests or phone calls, and sickness. All of this is part of life, but I have to admit that, at times, cheerfulness can be a struggle for Mom.

To help you cope at these times, Dr. Mary Kay Clark often suggests that parents write down the reasons they decided to homeschool. Be specific with yourselves, make a list, and tape it to a kitchen cabinet. It might say:

- Passing on the Faith is the most important goal of parenting.
- We want our children to grow up to be adults of noble character and impeccable integrity.
- Our children need a solid academic education to be able to participate fully as citizens and future saints.
- Sending our children to public schools has them spending the majority of their time in an environment that does not foster our family's objectives.

When Mom is exhausted after a particularly frustrating day, it is a good practice to look at the list and remind yourself what you are accomplishing in spite of your difficulties. Your children learn in a truly Catholic, virtue-building setting. They are receiving top-flight academic preparation from a school with a proven record of excellence. You

are reducing their exposure to a host of modern evils rampant in public schools. Not too bad, after all!

It might also help to take a moment to remember the sacrifices of American Catholics who fought for the right to educate their children in an era of rampant anti-Catholic sentiment. Most parish schools were built by the sacrificial contributions of first generation blue-collar immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Providing Catholic education was not simply a duty of every parent, but also the responsibility of the whole Church, and these Catholics took it seriously. Theirs is an inspiring story.

The first Catholic school was established in 1606 in St. Augustine Florida, and hopefully Seton parents and students are aware of the accomplishments of our school patron, Mother Seton, in establishing Catholic schools in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The parochial school system, as we know it, was instituted in the United States as a reaction against a growing structure of publicly-funded schools that were essentially Protestant. In 1839 and 1840, during the heart of the so-called Nativist movement, the American Bible Society pledged that, "The Bible would be read in every classroom in the nation." Naturally they meant the King James Version of the Scriptures. The Eliot School rebellion occurred in 1859, when Catholic 10-year-old Thomas Whall was beaten for refusing to read aloud the King James version of the Ten Commandments in a Boston public school. The assistant principal beat Whall's hand with a rattan stick for 30 minutes until it was cut and bleeding. The principal then told all boys who would refuse to recite the King James version of the Commandments to leave the school. One hundred boys left that day. Three hundred left the following day. Some boys reported to school with copies of the Vulgate Commandments, although they were refused admittance. This led to the creation of the first parochial school in Massachusetts.

By the mid 1960s, Catholic education reached its peak with 4.5

million elementary school pupils, and another million students in Catholic high schools. It is no wonder they were so popular, as they had an extraordinary record of accomplishment. During these times Catholics maintained a strong religious identity. Strong Catholic schools produced Catholics who, when compared to the general population, were less likely to divorce, contracept, abort their children, or marry outside the Faith. Catholics knew who they were and what they stood for.

Today we hear excuses from professional educators for their failure to teach children from certain socio-economic groups. Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, Catholic schools provided a first rate education to students who, at first glance, seemed unlikely candidates for it. In a single generation, they gave the children of virtually illiterate, poverty stricken, mostly non-English immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Germany, and Poland a college preparatory education and moved them into the mainstream of society.

Catholic schools kept alive a scholastic vision of education, a vision that extolled excellence, diligence and order. Catholic school students could think. Their textbooks exposed them to the greatest thinkers of the Western civilization and gave them pride in the role Catholics had played in its history.

Catholic schools provided rigorous religious formation that led to strong families and robust vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. They fostered an appreciation for the Catholic patrimony of sacred art, music, and literature, truly the high point of beauty, culture, and refinement.

The next time you have a really tough day, take a moment to reflect that you and your children are part of something much bigger than your own home school. You are the latest of a group of dedicated educators and students who kept Catholics vigorous in the practice of their faith, and involved in the important issues of American society. Be inspired to persevere, with God's grace, and see the race through to the end.

## Gingerbread Houses and Nightlights

by John Clark

Someday, I'll have to grow up. But not today.

I was married when I was 21 years old, and I have been a father since I was 22. I've often thought that this meant that I had to grow up fast. However, I have recently considered the notion that it meant quite the contrary. Whether growing up in my parents' home or becoming a parent myself, I have been surrounded by little children my entire life. In fact, there has been at least one child under three-years-old in my home for almost every moment of my adult life.

As Jesus taught us, "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." This quote from Our Lord could be understood in a number of different ways, but it is perhaps of special poignancy to those who are actually *around* little children all day long. Unless you are spiritually tone-deaf, the mere presence of children has the effect of conveying dulcet innocence upon you. That is a great grace. The blessing I have received is that my life is directed to the things of children, and consequently, away from the secular culture of adults.

For instance, I hear names of pop-culture figures bantered about. I don't know much about who they are or what they've done to achieve fame. However, I *do* know a lot about Pet Shop Toys, Dora-the-Explorer, dolls, Legos, Charlie Brown and Snoopy, snow-cone machines, grammar workbooks, roller coasters, strollers, Yertle the Turtle, night lights, phonics, computer golf, ballet shoes, miniature cupcake baking machines, and violin "twinkles." My heart and soul are immersed in the innocence of children.

Being so involved in the lives of nine children, I have so little interaction with the things of the adult world that at times it's...*fantastic!*

Having our children with us allows us to steep our hearts and souls in innocence. People occasionally compliment homeschooling parents for

their willingness to teach their children at home. It's not a bad idea to stop for a few moments every once in a while to consider what *they* bring to the table. Life is beautiful, and if we listen, they remind us every day.

For instance, a few weeks before Christmas, I took the girls to an upscale mall outside of Washington, D.C. to enjoy the yuletide sights and sounds. (I know that some people don't appreciate the liturgical *faux pas* of decorating weeks *before* Christmas, but I've never had a problem with it. To me, the celebration of, and devotion to, the Infant Jesus transcends the calendar. What strikes me as strange is when people decorate for Halloween *months* before the last day in October.) At the mall, I marveled at the Ferrari and Lamborghini cars that were parked inside. The girls were more interested in the magnificent decorations. They were awed by the huge green fir trees, the blue and pink ornaments, the sparkling lights, the wrapped presents, and the delicious Christmas chocolates.

In this same shopping complex, the Ritz-Carlton had built a life-size gingerbread house room that you could actually walk in, smell the gingerbread, have your picture taken, and shop for goodies. I noticed that some of the children (not mine) had eaten some of the gum drops off the wall.

As we walked back to the car, I asked Philomena if she had the time of her life.

Half-jokingly, I asked her: "Was this a top-ten moment, Philomena?"

Philomena answered: "More like top *five*."

"Seriously? Top five, Philomena?"

She looked at me, puzzled, as though I had inexplicably missed the grand significance of what had just transpired, and explained, "Daddy, we went *inside* a gingerbread house!"

"I see your point, Honey," I responded.

Recently, as the rest of the world debated politics, finance, or whatever was the *cause célèbre du jour*, the members

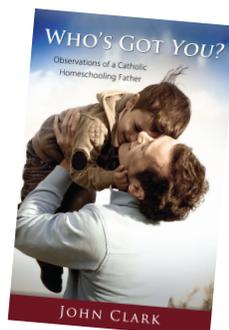
of our family were thinking different thoughts. As we drove to liturgy for the feast of the Epiphany, I asked the children a question that seemed pretty important, at least to us. I posited the question: "If the *Man with the Yellow Hat* (from the Curious George books) drove a yellow sports car, would he come to be known as the *Man with the Yellow Car*?" I argued the case, but was voted down, and with some pretty compelling arguments.

We're not trying to answer the mysteries of quantum mechanics or solve the riddles of theoretical astronomy. We'll let other people worry about those trivial things. We've got fish to fry.

Feastdays are a pretty big deal in our house. Lisa and I like to illustrate the importance of remembering who the children are named after, so that they may emulate the saints. I recently took our eight-year-old daughter, Dominica, to the *Build-A-Bear Workshop* for her feast day. For those of you who haven't been there, you search through the store, pick out a bear or another animal, put a heart inside, and press on a machine to "stuff" the bear. Then you can shop for accessories for the newly-stuffed animal. If I didn't have children, I don't know what I'd be doing. But I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be stuffing bears, and I really doubt I'd be helping to pick out clothes for them.

My *face* looks every day of 41 years, but my *heart* knows better. It's a young world, and it's a young life. Homeschooling our children means simply more time spent with them—more time learning about the world of children. That is an under-appreciated blessing. So the next time you get out the phonics workbooks and first grade math flash cards, remember that the biggest lesson in these exercises might be yours to learn.

John Clark's new book *Who's Got You? Observations of a Catholic Homeschooling Father* is currently available through Seton Educational Media ([www.setonbooks.com](http://www.setonbooks.com)). It is also available as an ebook for Kindle through Amazon.



## *Homeschooling: A Teenager's Point of View* by Jacquelyn Chausse

I never knew how much I didn't know until I was homeschooled. I have been an "A-B" student since kindergarten, and I have attended private schools since second grade. I've always enjoyed the classroom atmosphere, and at this time last year, I would never have given it up for anything. I loved cheerleading, I loved sports and I loved to have fun. I was in every club and every contest; I was always on the run with my activities. At this time last year, I had just had my cap-and-gown 8th grade graduation, and I was trying to decide which of my three high school options was best for my needs, both socially and academically.

Just when I had thought I made up my mind, my mother discovered homeschooling from a friend of hers. She was interested, and, like she does with everything interesting, she researched it. The more she found out, the more she liked it. She, at first, looked into it for my younger siblings, ages 3 and 5 at the time. Then she found out that high schoolers could be homeschooled, too. After much prayer and debating with herself, God, and particularly me, she decided that I and my sisters and brother would be homeschooled.

I was furious at my mother. I wanted to go to high school with my friends! I had always dreamed of being Homecoming Queen, of my first Prom, of parties, friends, dances. I was angry at her for taking away my dream. Yet I knew that it was pointless to argue now that my mother had made up her mind. So, I decided that I should take it with a smile, and bury my anger inside.

As I chose my courses, I realized that I could choose my courses to fit my needs and interests, and I had never been able to do that before. I had always loved English and literature, so I was glad when I could take Shakespeare. I wanted to be a doctor, so I chose Latin. I had taken Algebra 1 in 8th grade, so I chose Algebra 2. I chose the required English 9 and Religion 9, and Physical Science. I had thought these would be easy, for I had always been an "A-B" student. I still held that principle when I received my books, except for Algebra. I ended

up returning Algebra 2 for Algebra 1, realizing that my Algebra 1 course the year before wasn't as thorough as I'd thought.

As I struggled through my first few weeks of homeschooling, I realized that I wasn't as smart as I thought I was. I learned that I was never taught my basic math principles and that Latin wasn't as easy as I had thought it would be. I had a very hard time with learning math basics, and I was constantly on the phone with Seton's Latin tutor, Father Constantine. I had become very frustrated with my work, and slacked off. I began to miss the classroom atmosphere and everything in relation to it. I was lonely and I wanted to be with my friends again.

I began to sulk. I cried all the time in the privacy of my bedroom/classroom. I rebelled and fought my parents, trying to make them understand how hard this was for me to adjust to. I told them I wanted to go back to school. They made arrangements, and I was sent to my local public high school. My parents were very distraught over this, and felt awful at having to send their oldest daughter to school, but they knew it was the only way I would learn to appreciate the work they'd done for me in homeschooling.

The four days I spent there was enough. I had seen things there that I had never seen, I was treated in ways I'd never been treated, and I was more scared than I had ever been before. Yes, I had gotten back my "A-B" average, but that was only because the classes were not of a high school caliber. I never knew how low, though, until my Algebra 1 Honors class was easy. Then I knew that this wouldn't get me anywhere. I came back home.

This time, I began to appreciate what my mother was trying to do for her children, and I tried much harder to honor that. School was hard, but I worked harder than ever. Though my grades weren't as high as I had always gotten, I knew that I was learning more than I ever had, in more ways than one. I have learned so much more about God and myself in this past year than I have in the past 8 years.

As I worked through my school days, I began to think about what I was doing and what I was part of. Now that I was alone and busy for only about 4 hours a day, I had so much more time to think about who I am, what I believe and why, what I wanted and how to get it. I began to discover who my friends were. I began to see who and what was important and why.

I found who my real friends were. I also had the advantage of seeing everything from a distance. I saw how much all my friends had changed, and I knew that I was no longer a part of them. I saw what they put up as goals and compared them to my own. There was never a comparison though. While I strive for college, others strive for the latest skirt. While I look for myself, others look for ways to become more like the "in" crowd. I look and patiently wait for the trustworthy and devoted man that I am destined to wed, but others fight for the guy with the worst reputation. It hurt to see how much my friends had changed for the worse, but I knew there was nothing I could do. They had become molded in society's definition of "peer pressure." They were trying to grow and mature and learn while trying to please their peers and teachers.

My parents have given me the greatest gift I have ever received—the chance to grow and learn in an environment where I don't have to worry about what others think. I have been given the chance to learn and grow in an environment with my family's love and support. I have been able to work at my own pace and learn my subjects thoroughly. I have been given true freedom and the chance to step back and really look at my surroundings.

If I had never been homeschooled, I never would have known any of what I do now. I am very grateful to my parents and what they're trying to do. I have so much more respect for them and for all parents around the world who homeschool their children. All the children and teenagers who are going through the same situation I had gone through in the beginning, well, I understand. Homeschooling will be hard, especially if you've been in school for your entire life like I had been. It's worth it though. You might find out that you don't even know half of what you thought you knew.

## 2012 Conferences

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

**Jacksonville, FL.** March 16 (Fri.). Immaculate Heart of Mary Jacksonville Homeschool and Parent Conference, Embassy Suites Jacksonville-Baymeadows, 9300 Baymeadows Rd, Jacksonville, FL. 2:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org) or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

**Covington, LA.** March 24, 2012 (Sat.). Roman Catholic Homeschool Association of Louisiana “Catholic Homeschooling: 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 [beth@montelepre.com](mailto:beth@montelepre.com) or [rchalinfo@rchal.org](mailto:rchalinfo@rchal.org) or [www.rchal.org](http://www.rchal.org).

**St. Louis, MO.** March 30-31 (Fri.-Sat.). 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.: After 8:00 AM Mass–4:30 PM. Info: Cassie at 636-398-4001 or [www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com](http://www.stlouiscatholichomeschool.com).

**Santa Clara, CA.** April 13-14, (Fri.-Sat.). Northern California Catholic Homeschooling Conference, Our Lady of Peace Shrine, 2800 Mission College Blvd, Santa Clara, CA. Fri.: 2 PM – 9 PM; Sat.: After 8 AM Mass – 5 PM. Info: 408-980-9825.

**Houston, TX.** April 20-21, 2012 (Fri.-Sat.). IHM Houston Homeschool & Parent Conference, University of St. Thomas, Jerabeck Athletic Center, 3800 Montrose Blvd, Houston, TX. Fri.: 2 PM – 8 PM; Sat.: 9 AM – 4 PM. Info: [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org) or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

**Berlin, NJ.** April 21, 2012 (Sat.). 12th Annual CHAPLET Catholic Homeschool Conference, Mater Ecclesiae Roman Catholic Church, 261 Cross Keys Road, Berlin, NJ (actually in Pine Hill w/Berlin mailing address). 9 AM – 5 PM. Info: [www.chaplet.org](http://www.chaplet.org) or [conference@chaplet.org](mailto:conference@chaplet.org). Directions: [www.materecclesiae.org/directions.html](http://www.materecclesiae.org/directions.html)

**Milwaukee, WI.** April 27-28 (Fri.-Sat.). Celebrate the Faith 2012: 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.: 2:30 PM – 9 PM; Sat.: 8 AM – 5 PM. Info: [info@gmcheconference.com](mailto:info@gmcheconference.com) or [www.gmcheconference.com](http://www.gmcheconference.com)

**Harrisburg, PA.** April 28 (Sat.). 18th Annual Catholic Homeschool Conference & Curriculum Fair, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 6190 Allentown Blvd, Harrisburg, PA. After 8:30 AM Mass – 5 PM. Info: Ellen at (717) 866-5425. Info: [www.CatholicHomeschoolPA.org](http://www.CatholicHomeschoolPA.org) [conference@CatholicHomeschoolPA.org](mailto:conference@CatholicHomeschoolPA.org)

**Indianapolis, IN.** May 5 (Sat.). *Quo Vadis* Catholic Homeschool Conference. Sponsored by Holy Family Home Educators and co-hosted by Holy Rosary Catholic Parish, 520 Stevens Street, Indianapolis, IN. 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM Info: [info@hfheindy.org](mailto:info@hfheindy.org) or [www.hfheindy.org](http://www.hfheindy.org).

**Green Bay, WI.** May 12 (Sat.). Immaculate Heart of Mary Green Bay Catholic Homeschool & Parent Conference, St. Agnes Parish, 1484 Ninth St., Green Bay, WI. 9:30 AM – 4 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org) or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

### The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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### *Pope Benedict to the U.S. Bishops*

One of the most memorable aspects of my Pastoral Visit to the United States was the opportunity it afforded me to reflect on America's historical experience of religious freedom, and specifically the relationship between religion and culture. At the heart of every culture, whether perceived or not, is a consensus about the nature of reality and the moral good, and thus about the conditions for human flourishing. In America, that consensus, as enshrined in your nation's founding documents, was grounded in a worldview shaped not only by faith but a commitment to certain ethical principles deriving from nature and nature's God. Today that consensus has eroded significantly in the face of powerful new cultural currents which are not only directly opposed to core moral teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but increasingly hostile to Christianity as such.

For her part, the Church in the United States is called, in season and out of season, to proclaim a Gospel which not only proposes unchanging moral truths but proposes them precisely as the key to human happiness and social prospering (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 10). To the extent that some current cultural trends contain elements that would curtail the proclamation of these truths, whether constricting it within the limits of a merely scientific rationality, or suppressing it in the name of political power or majority rule, they represent a threat not just to Christian faith, but also to humanity itself and to the deepest truth about our being and ultimate vocation, our relationship to God. When

a culture attempts to suppress the dimension of ultimate mystery, and to close the doors to transcendent truth, it inevitably becomes impoverished and falls prey, as the late Pope John Paul II so clearly saw, to reductionist and totalitarian readings of the human person and the nature of society.

With her long tradition of respect for the right relationship between faith and reason, the Church has a critical role to play in countering cultural currents which, on the basis of an extreme individualism, seek to promote notions of freedom detached from moral truth. Our tradition does not speak from blind faith, but from a rational perspective which links our commitment to building an authentically just, humane and prosperous society to our ultimate assurance that the cosmos is possessed of an inner logic accessible to human reasoning. The Church's defense of a moral reasoning based on the natural law is grounded on her conviction that this law is not a threat to our freedom, but rather a "language" which enables us to understand ourselves and the truth of our being, and so to shape a more just and humane world. She thus proposes her moral teaching as a message not of constraint but of liberation, and as the basis for building a secure future.

**Pope Benedict XVI,**  
January 19, 2012