



# Seton Home Study School

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## Our Lady of Fatima

We Catholics think of May as Mary’s month, the month we decorate our May altars and rededicate ourselves to saying the daily Rosary. For many of us, May is the month we recall the wonderful apparitions of the Blessed Mother to the three children, Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco, in the year 1917 in Fatima, a village north of Lisbon, Portugal. The most fantastic miracle was the “dancing” of the sun, seen by thousands of people. There were three other visions in the sky at the sixth apparition which many saw, and there were many cures and healings.

Father Robert Fox, now deceased, was dedicated to promoting the prayers of the Rosary and to teaching about the apparitions of Fatima. For years, Father traveled with Catholics, especially teens, on pilgrimages to Fatima. In addition, he promoted Catholic homeschooling, and wrote the preface to my book, *Catholic Home Schooling*.

When Father Fox visited us some years ago in Front Royal on May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, Father Fox spoke about the Blessed Mother’s promise for the conversion of Russia if people would pray and sacrifice, but especially to pray the Rosary. Father believed that the changes we have seen in Russia and Eastern Europe are the miraculous consequences of the mercy of Our Lord and Our Lady, especially in response to the many Rosaries being prayed by people all over the world.

Father Fox said that the messages of Fatima are so rich for meditation that one could read them over and over, slowly and with openness to the deep meaning which can be conveyed through

Mary herself. It was at Fatima where the Blessed Mother herself taught us the prayer to include in the Rosary between the mysteries: “O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell. Bring all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need.”

At another apparition, the Blessed Mother told the three children: “Continue to say the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace for the world and the end of war.” When a mother in Fatima asked for a cure for her little boy, the Blessed Lady said, “He must say the Rosary every day with his family.” Many homeschooling families say the rosary together every day in response to Mary’s request.

At one of her apparitions, the Blessed Mother asked that we attend Mass and receive Communion on five consecutive first Saturdays of the month to pray for “the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart.”

While the local government authorities tried to intimidate the three children and their parents, Ti Marto, the father of Jacinta and Francisco, protected his children as best he could. According to Msgr. William C. McGrath, in his book *A Woman Clothed with the Sun*, Ti Marto “refused to be swayed by the storm of ridicule and unbelief. ... From beginning to end, he was a tower of strength to all three children and, in spite of his lack of formal education, proved to be a man of sound judgment...”

When Ti Marto went to his parish priest to tell him about the miraculous apparition of the Blessed Mother to the

three children, the priest was “hostile and resentful.” Mr. Marto said, “But Father, you seem more ready to believe the lies that are being uttered than the facts of the case. I have come to you with nothing but the best of intentions, not to cause you any trouble, but only to find out what is best for us to do.” In spite of the pastor’s opposition, Ti Marto stood beside his children at the Cova when Our Lady made her appearances there.

Our Lady appeared six times to the children. She asked that a chapel be built in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary. She said people must “mend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins.”

The Blessed Mother gave a message to Lucia at Fatima which she gave also to all of us: *Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish the Devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by myself to adorn His throne.*”

Pray for all homeschooling parents, that we listen to the messages from Our Lady of Fatima to pray the Family Rosary for peace in the world, in our country, and in our families.

- MKC

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## *Questions We Are Asked*

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

### **May I adjust the program for my 8th grade boy toward easier courses, or less time-consuming courses?**

One thing to remember is that boys go through a growth spurt in the junior high years, and once they settle down in high school to their studies, they become better students.

You might consider asking your husband to be more involved with your son and his studies. Sons often have the same learning style as their father, so fathers can be especially helpful. Some dads spend an hour before they go to work helping their son with perhaps a math lesson. When they come home, they look over some of the work that has been done during the day. Often Dad can help for a while on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon. Some fathers are able to take phone calls at work, especially if the father is traveling in his car rather than working in an office.

You ask about less time-consuming courses, but remember that we don't have a schedule. We give you lesson plans based on weekly assignments, but those are to be adjusted according to the needs and abilities of the individual student. If he needs more time in one subject, English for instance, give him that necessary time. He may be able to "make up" that time because he works more quickly in math. Some students find it easier to do only two or three classes for a half year, then take two or three others for the second half of the year. Such flexibility is one of the great benefits of homeschooling.

### **Why do you allow alternate books in some courses, not in others?**

At Seton, we attempt to provide a Catholic perspective in all of our books and courses. Whenever possible, we either purchase good Catholic books or

we write them ourselves. If we have a textbook which is not Catholic, we do our best to incorporate our Faith in the lesson plans.

We believe that the primary reason for homeschooling is to impart Catholic values to our children. Homeschooling is a sacrifice that requires much parental time and effort. Why make this sacrifice if the child is not learning Catholic values?

We do offer some alternative book selections to parents. For example, many of the math courses are offered either with Saxon math or alternative math books. Several of the science courses now have the Apologia books as an alternative text. However, we can't offer every possible book for every course, because our graders cannot grade tests which are written for a book we have not even seen.

If a parent finds an alternative book which really suits a student's learning style, we suggest that the book be used as a supplement.

### **Why do I need to listen to my children read in their readers?**

There are two aspects to reading. One is simply to pronounce the letters and words correctly, which is taught in phonics. The other aspect of reading is to show comprehension when reading sentences and paragraphs. As the parent listens to the reading, to the expression, and to the tone of voice, the parent can ascertain if the student is comprehending what he is reading. Parents need to ask comprehension questions of their children, even up to high school, to make sure they understand what they are reading. A student must be mentally engaged in trying to understand what he is reading, or there may be some sort of reading or learning problem.

Parents might ask an older sibling or a grandparent to listen to the reading of a student. It is not necessary to listen to every reading assignment, but you should consider listening every day to students in the primary levels, a couple of times a week for students in the intermediate grades, and once a week for students in junior high.

### **Your high school English courses seem pretty demanding.**

Many high schools these days are doing a disservice to their students

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*Many high schools these days are doing a disservice to their students in not preparing them for college.*

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in not preparing them for college. According to a study by Alliance for Excellent Education, up to one-third of new college students require remedial courses in English or math—to learn what they should have learned in high school. A Washington Post article from 2010 reports that when one community college professor asked her English students if high school had prepared them for a college writing course, only 23% thought they were well-prepared.

Many high schools have abandoned the teaching of rigorous grammar, such as sentence diagramming. They have also abandoned requiring lengthy research papers for high school—which is especially damaging to students since colleges will certainly require such research papers.

High school is a preparation for college, but 7th and 8th grades are a preparation for high school. One of the reasons we encourage families to enroll their students in Seton at least by 7th or 8th grade is so that they gain some experience in doing the kind of work we expect in high school.

If your student has enrolled with us in high school and is struggling with the book analyses, you may want to look over some of the English and Reading books from the 7th and 8th grades, especially the Reading Thinking Skills text-workbooks.

### How can I help my child to prepare for history and science tests?

Our lesson plans have specific directions for learning and studying each chapter. We find that when students are having difficulties being

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## *Often when students are having difficulties, they are not following the basic procedures for learning.*

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successful, they are not following the basic procedures for learning. Learning is a straightforward procedure, but it takes time, effort, and focus. Students must realize that there is a process that works. Students must use willpower and self-discipline to work through the process as explained below.

**Survey** or skim through the whole chapter. Look over the headings, the subheadings, the pictures, the maps, the graphs. **Read** the questions at the end of the chapter. The Review Questions indicate the important points to remember and are likely to be on the chapter test. **Question or turn the headings into questions** that the following section should answer. **Read aloud the chapter**, carefully and thoughtfully, checking the Chapter Review questions as you read.

Write your own **Outline** for studying the important points. *Your own outline for study purposes is essential. If you don't have an outline, you cannot study properly.* **Recite** aloud the ideas for each section; try to remember enough to recite the important points without looking at the text. **Review** the previous day's assignment before reading the

next assignment; review each week, and just before taking a test.

This is called the SQ3R method, for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. It really works, and students who use this method will likely do well in their studies.

### My children cannot sit still for more than fifteen minutes!

That is not uncommon. I used to keep my boys moving along with their studies as much as I could. They would jump rope and say their spelling words or whatever, and run up and down the stairs getting dirty laundry or putting away clean laundry. I had a blackboard they could stand at while writing on it. Some children can read while they are walking!

The trick is to make sure they are accomplishing a good deal during the fifteen minutes they do sit still. Write out a schedule: fifteen or twenty minutes on a subject, then 10 minutes doing something active. Let them help you make the schedule. Put it up on the wall where they can see it. Have a clock nearby. Likely, they will do their schoolwork watching the clock, and then run around during their recess time. Then they must come back and do their schoolwork on time, or they don't get their next recess.

Look on the internet under "jump rope tricks for kids." You would be amazed how good the kids can get, and how much they like it, and how long they can stay at it!

### Why are we teaching handwriting anymore since we have computers with word processing?

For children, handwriting is important because using the hands helps in the learning process. We all know that the more senses used by children when learning concepts, the more quickly the young student will learn and retain what he has learned. We have children draw pictures, cut out pictures, sing songs, and hop scotch onto chalk-drawn states. Science projects and activities are popular and great for children to learn concepts. The more active children can be in the

learning process, the better they learn and the longer they will retain what they have learned.

Handwriting helps especially with learning spelling and reading. The hands and fingers are being directed by the brain to shape the letters and the mouth to sound out the letters. The brain relates the letters to the sounds, and eventually to reading words and understanding sentences. Handwriting sentences, as well as letters and words, is a powerful learning technique.

Many young children are using the computer for games and even learning math or spelling on the computer, but there is still a place for children to use their hands and fingers for shaping letters and words. Parents need to make the decision about what is best for their own children, and at what age they can begin to use the computer for outlining, for making notes, and for writing sentences and paragraphs.

Sometimes children spend too much time sitting at a computer with games, even educational games, and are not getting adequate physical exercise. Some children may start developing eye problems or sight problems or carpal tunnel problems, or problems related to sitting improperly for long periods of time. Children may take longer to learn accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation because the computer fixes it for them. With an online dictionary and thesaurus correcting or improving sentences as they type, how much is being learned by the student? School districts still include letter writing in their programs; letter writing is still included in national standardized tests.

There is a time when children should start using the computer. Most parents are encouraging their children to use the computer for school work at the 7th or 8th grade, and using it much more extensively in high school. At a certain age, the use of the computer will help some students to learn more quickly and to produce their work more quickly, but it needs to be the decision of the parents when that will be.

## *The College Maze*

*by Bob Wiesner*

*Seton High School Guidance Counselor*

Parents with homeschooled students are often daunted by the whole college entrance experience. The process can be rather complicated, but if it is taken step by step, families can survive and ensure that the students attend a good college without breaking the bank.

The first step in the process is usually taking the PSAT, also known as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, or NMSQT. This test is sometimes taken as early as 9<sup>th</sup> grade, more often in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but the time it actually counts for scholarship purposes is the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. This test is given only in October each year, so parents need to be aware of the deadlines and arrange with a nearby school to take the test. It is best to contact a school as soon as the guidance office opens in the Fall, since they need to know early in the academic year just how many tests to order.

The National Merit Scholarships are awarded from funds donated mostly by foundations and corporations. The amounts range from a few hundred dollars up to and including a full tuition, full room and board award. Some of the awards are based solely on the scholastic background and performance of the student. Others might be conditional awards; for instance, a chemical company might fund the education of a student who would major in chemistry and then work a few years for that company after graduation.

These scholarships are awarded on a state-by-state basis. Generally speaking, the top two percent of the students in any given state become semi-finalists in the competition, with half of those becoming the finalists and receiving awards. Students in the top ten percent are considered commended students; they often receive scholarship offers as well.

Since the competition is by state, students should NOT use the Seton school code on this test. Each state has a homeschool code and that is the number homeschooled students should use on this test only. The state codes are available on the Seton web site. Using

the Seton code on this test would place the student in the Virginia pool of students.

The SAT and ACT tests are the two primary college entrance exams. These should be taken no later than the second semester of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, although they too may be taken as early as 9<sup>th</sup> grade for practice purposes. You should contact colleges to find out which they would prefer to see; most colleges these days will accept either, but generally have a preference for one or the other.

The SAT, or Scholastic Aptitude Test, is just as its name implies, an aptitude test. This test is designed to make some prediction of how well a student will perform academically in college. The score is (loosely) meant to have 500 as the average baseline. This will vary a bit from year to year, but the benchmark will always be in that neighborhood. The higher a score goes above 500, the better off a student will fare in college entrance and scholarship possibilities. There are three sections to the SAT, Verbal, Math and Writing; the top score on the SAT is 2400.

ACT stands for American College Testing. The ACT is designed as an achievement test, measuring how well a student has performed thus far in the academic arena. Thus, the test looks backward at a student's career rather than forward, like the SAT. The ACT has four sections, English, Math, Reading and Science, with an optional section in Writing. The top score possible in each section is 36; the test is scored overall as a composite average, so the top score is 36. The national average is usually 20 or 21.

The scholarship search is the most complex part of college admissions and the part that will be the most work for the family. Setting up a systematic, step-by-step program is the best policy.

The Internet is by far your best resource for finding scholarships. There are too many available opportunities for any one person to dig through it all in search of qualifying programs. A website such as [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) can help you winnow out programs which

would not apply to your situation. Once you enter your specific information, this program will eliminate a lot of work for you by giving you a selection of possible choices to pursue.

Other than the Internet, families should investigate a few other avenues. First, family employers often have programs designed to help dependents with their education. If a student has a job, especially at a large business, the employer might have a scholarship program available.

The family circumstances might qualify for some financial aid. Farming families, for instance, have some funds available. The Internet again is your resource here. If you put in search terms such as "Farming family scholarship aid" you may very well come up with a program that fits your profile.

Professional organizations often have programs to aid dependents of members. The American Medical Association, nursing organizations, unions, and legal associations are all worth checking. Military families should check into anything that might be available to them.

Fraternal organizations sometimes have programs. The Knights of Columbus, for instance, has a program for members which will provide funds for students attending Catholic colleges. Elks, Moose, and veteran's organizations are all worth checking. Sometimes dioceses and even parishes have funds available to help students from their localities attend Catholic colleges.

Another great resource is the financial aid offices of colleges. Every college has a certain amount of financial aid available for attracting good students to their institution. This might take the form of outright scholarships and grants, or a program of loans, work-study or other forms of service to the school. If a college sees an excellent prospective student, it is often willing to put forth quite an effort to help that student attend their school.

The general rule is to be creative in your thinking. Whatever your family circumstances might be, the chances are very good indeed that there is a program that would fit you and fill some of your financial aid needs.

## *To Tailor or Not To Tailor the Curriculum* by Ginny Seuffert

For many years, Seton lesson plans included a piece of paper—hot pink to catch parental attention—that reminded parents to “change the program to fit the child and NOT try to change the child to fit the program.” Today, the lesson plans often remind parents that they are proceeding at a pace that is appropriate for that age and grade, but that parents can feel free to accelerate or apply the brakes if necessary. Clearly, modifying a curriculum plan to suit an individual student’s talents and abilities is an essential benefit of home schooling, but just how accommodating should a wise parent be? Is there such a thing as too much customizing, and how do we know? Here are some simple ideas to help you.

### **Finding the Correct Grade Level**

Seton will help you by providing placements tests, but grade placement can be trickier than it sounds. Most children are not at the same grade level in every subject, and parents may be tempted to “fine-tune” the curriculum across grades to suit each child’s individual need. This is not necessarily beneficial. For example, it is not uncommon for a smart home-schooled seven-year-old to be reading at fifth or even sixth grade level, but that child should certainly not be enrolled in fifth grade reading. At that level, the students must write multi-paragraph book reports, above the skill set of most bright seven-year-olds. Also, many of the themes in the fifth grade assigned reading are simply too complex for such a young child. Finally some of the assigned work in middle school reading presumes knowledge of history or religion that even a good young reader would probably lack.

A better solution is to allow the child to read the *Faith and Freedom* readers for second grade, and write a one or two sentence story description in a notebook. If the student breezes through the readers, take the recommended reading list from the lesson plans to the local library and encourage your child to pick several each week. (Seton sells many fiction books precisely to promote healthy reading.) If your student has an interest in history or science, ask the librarian for help in locating age-appropriate books on these topics. Your child’s skills will still be climbing at a brisk clip.

### **Locating appropriate materials**

Some homeschool literature encourages parents to seek out educational materials that fit the learning style of each individual student. Taken to an extreme, this could mean that a mother of four children would need to develop four individualized curricula, with four customized lesson plans, and be forced to purchase from a large number of publishers or providers.

This type of customized curriculum would truly only be necessary for a child with specific disabilities. The rest of us need to prepare our children for the real world by giving them strategies to cope with learning differences. Even if a child is mainly an auditory or a kinesthetic learner, he or she must be able to learn in other ways as well. If you tailor every last lesson to the child’s specific learning style, then what happens when the child encounters less fine-tuned materials? Remember that your children’s future college professors or bosses are not going to care that they were auditory or kinesthetic learners. They need to complete assigned work on schedule with no excuses.

A better approach is to locate high quality materials that use a multi-sensory approach to teach the concepts, and then work with them. For example, an elementary spelling lesson might have the children classify this week’s words using phonetic rules. The next day, they might fit the words into sentences by context, and the following day, see the words used in written paragraphs. The students should see the words, say the words, write the words, and use the words in context. That is enough for many young spellers to master the lesson. Some visual learners will just see the words and fix them into their memory.

Other children might need a bit more. An auditory learner can repeat the words and spellings aloud, so he hears them as he says them. A kinesthetic learner can write the words on a white board or even on the sidewalk with chalk, putting them into his “muscle memory.” All of this can be accomplished using the materials on hand, but it accomplishes another goal. The students are learning to compensate for their learning differences, a skill that will serve them well through the years.

### **It just doesn’t fit our family dynamic**

One popular homeschooling author wrote that she ordered a “high-quality, and well-organized” curriculum for her first grade son, but within three or four days realized it was “not working out” and moved to un-schooling. When I read this, I wondered if the problem was simply that the author did not stick with the program long enough to give it a chance to work. Any new thing is hard, and if students are not used to serious academic work, they will find it hard. That’s not a reason to quit.

Things that are worth doing are often difficult. My grandson really struggled with penmanship in Kindergarten, a common problem with little boys. His parents could have told him he did not have to do it. After all, what are computer keyboards for? However, his dad went in the other direction, insisting on even more practice. By the end of first grade, his handwriting is well above average, and the little guy is proud of his accomplishment.

Yes, if a task is difficult and a student rebels against doing the work, the parent can give in because of the complaining. But then the children miss out on some very important lessons. They don’t learn to respect and obey their parents, as commanded by God. They don’t learn to apply themselves diligently to accomplish a difficult or frustrating task. They develop an incomplete view of the world where they can dictate the terms. Allowing students to direct educational methods can deny them an opportunity to build character.

### **Is there a rule to remember about tailoring the curriculum?**

Former homeschooled student Thomas Alva Edison famously said, “Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” We homeschooling parents do not know what plan God has in mind for our children. We can only prepare them to be equal to any task, and that means giving them a rigorous academic and religious formation. So when we consider customizing a curriculum, an examination of conscience is in order. The only question we need to ask ourselves is “Am I making this change because it will enhance my child’s educational accomplishments?” If the answer is, “No,” we need to think twice about making the change.

## *Wrong Address* by John Clark

While attending Christendom College, sometime between Metaphysics and Economics class, I decided that I wanted to become a stockbroker. Many brokers begin their careers when they are a bit older—some of them start the business when they are in their 40s or 50s, and are moving on from a successful career somewhere else. But, even though I attended a small Catholic college and was only in my early 20s, I was determined to make it. So I sent out resumes, made phone calls, and tried to set up appointments with the hope of breaking in to this prestigious business. Presumably, most of my correspondence was immediately filed in the place that these would-be employers saw fit: the trash can. But after two years of searching, I was eventually hired by a firm.

To become a broker, you must pass a series of tests that are incredibly difficult; to pass these tests, you must have a comprehensive knowledge of a variety of aspects of finance, as well as a mathematical mind in which to calculate economic formulas. After studying for about six months, I took and passed my exams. Shortly thereafter, with a broker's license in hand, ready to take on the world, I got on the phone and started introducing myself to the wealthy people of Northern Virginia. After driving a three-hour commute to work each day, and making a few hundred phone calls, I set up my first appointment.

I was so excited. After the phone call, I ran in to tell my manager of my good fortune. Then I called Lisa to tell her the good news. "A business appointment! How great is that! Someone in the world is actually looking forward to having *me* manage their money! This business is for me!" Lisa was excited too, because when I

started my career as an investment consultant, she had just given birth to Athanasius, so I was beginning a commission-only sales career that needed to support a young family of three. She congratulated me and re-affirmed that this was my calling. (In twenty years of marriage, Lisa's emotional and spiritual belief in me has never wavered. Frankly, at times, her confidence in me has bordered on the absurd. That's pretty cool.)

So a couple of days passed, and as I continued to make phone calls and tried to set up new appointments, I kept thinking about how well I would do on my first appointment. The day finally came, and as I made my calls in the morning, I kept a careful eye on the clock. "I can't be late for my first appointment," I thought. When the time came to leave, I announced to the other "rookie" brokers that I was on my way out to see new a new client, and land a big new account.

I hopped in my little white Mazda Protégé, and drove to the address that the man had given me, but when I got out of my car, I noticed something strange. The house didn't look like it belonged to a wealthy person; it looked quite the opposite. Stranger still was the fact that there wasn't even a car in the driveway—in fact, it looked as though no one actually lived in the house. As I walked toward the porch, I noticed that the front door had a yellow sign posted to it. As I got closer, I was able to make out the word: **CONDEMNED**

As I tell this next part of the story, keep in mind that I was about 22 years old, had just graduated from a Catholic college, and believed that people were basically good. I tried to console myself, thinking that this must have been an honest mistake on the man's part. "I probably just took down the wrong address," I

reasoned. So I pulled out my cell phone, called the client, and said that I had arrived at the house, but that I must be at the wrong address.

The man said: "Oh, yeah. That's an old address. I tell you what. Drive to the other side of town to the Exxon station, and I'll meet you there in about twenty minutes."

So I got in my car, dutifully fought my way through traffic, and somehow arrived on time. But the man wasn't there, and I couldn't get hold of him by phone. I waited at the gas station for an hour, during which time I slowly realized that he wasn't coming. Realistically, he never had any intention of coming. However, after the hour had passed, I did something that would shape the rest of my career: I got back in my car, drove back to my office, walked in the door, sat down, and got right back on the phone. I learned a lesson that day: anyone can thrive on success, but if you learn to thrive on failure, you are a winner.

Fathers, and especially young fathers, I relate this story for a few reasons. First, don't become jaded because of others. There are people in this world who will delight in making you miserable; that's their problem—don't make it yours. Return unkindness with love, and you win. Second, you may have to work a job that is frustrating, tedious, or unpleasant—you will get "knocked down" at work. Get up, and work hard again. Sadly, many people don't work hard—oftentimes, people mentally "quit" their jobs long before they ever leave their employer. That's not fair to them, or to you. Use all the talents God gave you, every single day. Third, take solace in homeschooling your children. Your work may not seem rewarding during business hours, but try to find its reward in the hearts and minds of your wife and children. And when you do come home after a hard day's work, come home. Turn off the worker, and turn on the Daddy.

## 2012 Conferences

Many state and local groups sponsor 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).

**Indianapolis, IN.** May 5 (Sat.). *Quo Vadis* Catholic Homeschool Conference. Holy Rosary Catholic Parish, 520 Stevens Street, Indianapolis, IN. After 8:00 AM Mass–5:00 PM Info: [www.hfheindy.org](http://www.hfheindy.org) or email [hfheindy@yahoo.com](mailto:hfheindy@yahoo.com).

**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).

**San Antonio, TX.** May 19, 2012 (Sat.). San Antonio Catholic Homeschooling Conference & Book Fair, Antonian College Preparatory, 6425 West Ave., San Antonio. 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. Info: [sacatholichomeschool.org](http://sacatholichomeschool.org)

**Boston, MA.** May 19, 2012 (Sat.). 4th Annual New England Catholic Homeschool Conference, St. Monica Parish, 212 Lawrence St., Methuen, MA. 9:30 AM – 4 PM. Info: Mark Schwerdt, 603-880-8308, ext. 14 or [www.newenglandhomeschool.com](http://www.newenglandhomeschool.com)

**Belmont, NC.** May 25, 2012 (Fri.). IHM Carolina Homeschool & Parent Conference, Belmont Abbey College, Student Commons, 100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Rd, Belmont, NC. 12 PM – 8 PM. Information: 540-636-1946 or [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org) or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org).

**St. Paul, MN.** June 1-2, 2012 (Fri.-Sat.) 14th Annual Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference and Curriculum Fair, University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul. Fri.: 4 PM – 8:30 PM; Sat.: 8 AM – 5 PM. Info: [info@mnconference.org](mailto:info@mnconference.org) or [debandbradnelson@msn.com](mailto:debandbradnelson@msn.com) or [www.mnconference.org](http://www.mnconference.org)

**Lafayette, LA.** June 8, 2012 (Fri.) IHM Lafayette Homeschool & Parent Conference, Cajundome and Convention Center, 444 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette. 2 PM–8 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org) or [www.ihmconference.org](http://www.ihmconference.org)

**Kansas City, KS.** June 15-16, 2012 (Fri.-Sat.) Kansas City Conference for Catholic Homeschoolers 2012, St. James Academy, 24505 Prairie Star Pkwy, Lenexa. Fri.: 3:00 PM – 9:00 PM; Sat.: 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM. Info: Maribeth at 816-454-3729 or [www.kccatholichomeschooler.org](http://www.kccatholichomeschooler.org)

**MI, Lansing.** June 15-16, 2012 (Fri.-Sat.) “It’s Great to be Catholic” Family and Home Education Conference, Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. Fri.: 6:00 PM – 9:30 PM; Sat.: 8:00 AM–4:30 PM. Info: Kelly at 248-828-0135 or [mchemails@gmail.com](mailto:mchemails@gmail.com) or [www.homeschoolcatholic.org](http://www.homeschoolcatholic.org)

**Fredericksburg, VA.** (\*Note new location\*) June 22-23, 2012 (Fri.-Sat.). Immaculate Heart of Mary National Homeschool and Parent Conference 2012, Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center, 2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway, Fredericksburg. Fri.: 9 AM–9 PM; Sat.: 9 AM–4:30 PM. Info: 540-636-1946 or [info@ihmconference.org](mailto:info@ihmconference.org) or [www.ihmconference.org/national](http://www.ihmconference.org/national)

**Alhambra, CA.** June 23, 2012 (Sat.) SCCHE 13th Annual Conference & Curriculum Fair; Sacred Heart Retreat Center, 920 E. Alhambra Rd., Alhambra. After 8:30 AM Mass–6 PM. Info: [www.sccchehomepage.com](http://www.sccchehomepage.com) or Rita at (714) 998-7515 or Sandy at (909) 590-7224

### The Seton Home Study Newsletter

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### *Pope Benedict XVI Urbi et Orbi Message*

May the jubilant voice of the Church reach all of you with the words which the ancient hymn puts on the lips of Mary Magdalene, the first to encounter the risen Jesus on Easter morning. She ran to the other disciples and breathlessly announced: "I have seen the Lord!" (Jn 20:18). We too, who have journeyed through the desert of Lent and the sorrowful days of the Passion, today raise the cry of victory: "He has risen! He has truly risen!"

Every Christian relives the experience of Mary Magdalene. It involves an encounter which changes our lives: the encounter with a unique Man who lets us experience all God's goodness and truth, who frees us from evil not in a superficial and fleeting way, but sets us free radically, heals us completely and restores our dignity. This is why Mary Magdalene calls Jesus "my hope": he was the one who allowed her to be reborn, who gave her a new future, a life of goodness and freedom from evil. "Christ my hope" means that all my yearnings for goodness find in him a real possibility of fulfilment: with him I can hope for a life that is good, full and eternal, for God himself has drawn near to us, even sharing our humanity.

But Mary Magdalene, like the other disciples, was to see Jesus rejected by the leaders of the people, arrested, scourged, condemned to death and crucified. It must have been unbearable to see Goodness in person subjected to

human malice, truth derided by falsehood, mercy abused by vengeance. With Jesus' death, the hope of all those who had put their trust in him seemed doomed. But that faith never completely failed: especially in the heart of the Virgin Mary, Jesus' Mother, its flame burned even in the dark of night. In this world, hope can not avoid confronting the harshness of evil. It is not thwarted by the wall of death alone, but even more by the barbs of envy and pride, falsehood and violence. Jesus passed through this mortal mesh in order to open a path to the kingdom of life. For a moment Jesus seemed vanquished: darkness had invaded the land, the silence of God was complete, hope a seemingly empty word.

And lo, on the dawn of the day after the Sabbath, the tomb is found empty. Jesus then shows himself to Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to his disciples. Faith is born anew, more alive and strong than ever, now invincible since it is based on a decisive experience: "Death with life contended: combat strangely ended! Life's own champion, slain, now lives to reign". The signs of the resurrection testify to the victory of life over death, love over hatred, mercy over vengeance: "The tomb the living did enclose, I saw Christ's glory as he rose! The angels there attesting, shroud with grave-clothes resting".

Easter Sunday, 2012