

Mother of Divine Grace Newsletter

Volume 12, Issue 3

March 2012—Spring Issue

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Keeping Our Children Safe in the Digital Age by Cyndi Montanaro

In recent years, the use of computers and the internet has become ubiquitous in our homes. Who could have imagined that those first PC's we bought back in the early nineties would have morphed into the powerful tools which we now use daily without much thought. We love our computers for the great welter of possibilities they bring to our lives.

They allow our children to participate in Learning Support classes, and add ease and efficiency to our Mother of Divine Grace experience as teachers, students and consultants. Many wonderful resources, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, are at our fingertips as never before. MODG students might even use a smart phone to practice math facts and poetry as they travel to various activities.

As is often the case, however, these goods come with a price. The very movement of our lives in general, and our school in particular, to embrace this modern technology, brings with it a grave responsibility, for those things capable of the greatest good are most likely to be twisted and perverted by the evil one. As parents we are faced with a particular challenge in this information age. How do we

prepare our children to live in a world where they must be savvy and able to use technology, and at the same time protect them from finding the avenues to serious habits of mortal sin which these tools provide?

The greatest particular risk which comes about through internet access is the risk that our children, particularly our

dren's lives.

As their parents, we must be vigilant guardians, first protecting a child's purity and then developing habits of chastity. In order to adequately prepare ourselves to protect our children, we must begin by knowing our enemy, which is why I began my research by speaking with a number of young men and women, priests and parents. I learned a great deal from these people, and, though I will not name them due to the sensitivity of the material, I want to thank all who contributed to my understanding. Through my discussions, I came to a deeper realization of the extent to which every child of this age is at risk of falling into the traps set by those who would harm him. I found that, almost universally, men and older boys were extremely aware of the risk present in their daily lives. Mothers, on the other hand, tended to believe their boys would be good boys, and that homeschooling them, keeping them out of the mainstream and away from those who promoted such behavior, would be enough to make viewing pornography unappealing. I learned that as a part of normal development, most growing boys develop an interest in the female as such

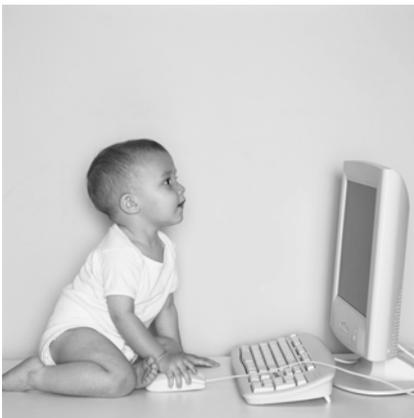


boys, will fall into serious habits of impurity associated with viewing the pornography so easily found on the internet. This scourge has been present in human society in some form throughout history, but never has it been so readily available as it is in these days. It used to be that there was a certain shame attached to the procurement of these materials, and that they were hard for teens to obtain. Now, the most debased and perverted materials are just a click away from ruining our young chil-

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somewhere in the early teens. Because of the sexualization of our culture, having this interest piqued is unavoidable. Perhaps a banner ad will lead them to be curious, or perhaps a billboard on the side of the road. One parish priest told me he had found in his ministry that the viewing of pornographic materials by means of the internet in the home is the rule rather than the exception, and that this is just as true in situations where children are taught at home as in homes where the children attend traditional schools. A young lady with whom I spoke said, "Your generation has no idea how bad this problem is. I have to assume that nearly every young man I meet has been compromised by pornography." In order to be good guardians, we must avoid naiveté and understand the seriousness and scope of the problem. It is everywhere, it causes serious psychological damage, and it causes serious moral damage.

With all the dangers to our children



which can be found on the internet, it might seem prudent to pull back from it entirely for safety's sake. Unfortunately, this option, while keeping our children safe in the short term, is likely in the long term to cause more problems than it solves. At some point as teens or young adults, at a friend's house, at work or with a college roommate, they will encounter the internet for the first time, but they will

not have ingrained habits which allow them to use it in a moderate and wholesome manner. In addition, having some skill with technology is generally necessary once they enter the working world, and this skill is hard to gain without access to computers in the home and the classroom. Aristotle once said that the virtue lies in the mean, and this is as true with technology as it is in other areas of our lives. While granting unfettered access to the internet is certainly imprudent, granting none may be equally so.

We face a further problem in this generation, for the development of technology has proceeded at such a pace that our children are far more fluent in the language of computers than we are. We therefore tend to rely on them to assist us, just as an immigrant who does not speak fluent English relies on her child to translate for her. One of the most important things we, as parents, can do to protect our children is to become as fluent in the use of modern technology as we are able to. One should not depend on her teenaged son to fix her computer hardware, or to install her software (especially filtering software... if he installs it, it will be very easy for him to get around it). We tend to be so busy living our adult lives that we seldom explore the full potential of our tools, but even for busy homeschooling parents, it can and should be done. It may be as simple as reading tech related news articles and blogs which contain a wealth of information. Even if that information is somewhat random, it will help us become comfortable with the vocabulary and language of technology, and will build our knowledge base. For some of us who do not have an aptitude, all the good will in the world may not be enough to allow us to become fluent in the language of computers. For those in this situation, a knowledgeable adult, perhaps a young uncle or aunt who comes from the

techie generation, is an invaluable resource. That person can assist in securing our technological devices and in teaching us to understand how that security works.

Too often, filtering software and parental controls are seen as the only approach to keeping our children safe, but by themselves, they cannot achieve this goal. A tech savvy teen can always find a way around the filters. If you doubt this, go to you tube and type in "disable parental controls iPhone." I tried this, and found a young boy, perhaps thirteen years old, giving his buddies a tutorial on how to do just that. So, while filtering is a key element of security, it should not be the only one. I recommend taking a layered approach to securing our technology.

The first "layer" in our system is to encourage in our children habits of prayer, a deep awareness of sin and an ongoing conversation with God in their hearts. Our homes are often busy and chaotic, and it is very easy to focus on the goods of this world (finishing thirty-two weeks of school, dance class or baseball) at the expense of prayerful habits. Monthly confession, even weekly for young men, is a very good place to start. Confession not only forgives sin, but gives actual graces which protect us from evil. A strong commitment to attending daily Mass and receiving Holy Communion is another key element. If Mass is not a possibility, a fervent spiritual communion should be made at home. A family rosary each day should be said if possible. We also need to introduce our children to mental prayer and contemplation. For boys, fathers should be directly involved in the teaching process. They can achieve a great deal by spending a few minutes each evening with their sons discussing the spiritual life and giving practical suggestions as to how to grow in their faith. Among other things, fathers should practice and teach their boys

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to practice custody of the eyes (this is the practice of looking away immediately when a visual temptation is presented to one), the particular examination of conscience (the practice of examining the conscience several times a day in one particular area which gives trouble), short ejaculations (vocal prayers such as “My Jesus, Mercy”) at the moment of temptation and the art of mental prayer. Several men have told me that the time in bed before going to sleep is a time when temptations are likely to occur. Boys might be encouraged to combat this by praying the Divine Mercy chaplet as they are falling asleep. The website <http://chastity.com/>, written from a strongly Catholic point of view, provides a treasury of helpful information for our young men. I strongly suggest that parents, especially fathers, become familiar with the extremely helpful information provided here, and use it to teach their sons. Grown sons may be directed to it themselves.

Although we tend to focus first on our sons, as they are in the more dangerous situation, we must be vigilant for our daughters as well. The single most important thing we can do for our daughters is to give them a strong sense of their own self-worth and a deep prayer life. We should teach them that they are, in fact, their brothers’ keepers, and that it is their right and obligation to require of them a high standard of conduct. It is important for them to understand how the way in which they dress and act affects the men in their lives. Too often, young girls are not given enough information, and have no idea of the effect of their clothes on the men around them. We mothers must set them a good example. We can do this by making a practice of dressing not only modestly, but also attractively. The attractive element is quite important. A girl who feels well dressed and stylish will be far less likely to feel she must be edgy in order to be fash-

ionable. Girls are often at a loss to know what constitutes appropriate clothing, especially as the fashion world is constantly shifting. I recently found an amazing resource which allows a girl to understand what goes on in a young man’s head because she hears it in his own words. This website, <http://www.therebelution.com/modestysurvey/>, is a compilation of information provided by a large number of well meaning, young, Christian men regarding what specific types of dress cause problems for them and what do not. I urge every mother to study the site herself, and also to encourage her older daughters to use it as a resource.

In addition to developing children’s interior attitudes, there are a number of practical steps parents can take to guard their children. The first set of steps centers around hardware security. Parents should always know where any internet capable devices are in the home and who has access to them. Access should never be unrestricted. One father with whom I spoke who works in the technology industry suggests having only laptop or notebook type computers in the home, rather than desktops. That way, they can be collected at night and brought to the parents’ bedroom or even to a holding safe. If desktops are used, he suggests that a lightweight monitor be purchased, and that this be disconnected and secured at night. Cell phones, especially those which are internet capable, should be kept near the owner at all times. Those apps which lead to the internet should be password protected (for my android based phone, I use a free app called Applock to do this). Apple products, such as iPhones and iPads have extremely user friendly parental controls, and there are numerous YouTube tutorials to help parents set them up. There is also no rush for teens to own smart phone type devices. A “dumb phone” is both less expensive and safer. Dedi-

cated gaming devices such as the X-box can also go on the internet these days, as can smart TV’s. These are a little tougher to control since they aren’t as portable, but a lock on the TV cabinet can be a good solution. Another solution is to keep them out of the home altogether. Dedicated entertainment devices are not a necessary part of any child’s education. Even eReaders such as the Nook or



Kindle have a browser on them, and often one which is hard to secure. Smaller electronics such as these may be charged at night in the parents’ room. Parents should make a habit of noting that they are connected to their chargers before going to bed. Nighttime security is especially important, for the middle of the night is a very dangerous time for internet activity. No child should be on the computer when his parents are sleeping. On a final hardware note, the parent who struggles to remember secure passwords might consider investing in a biometric device for his computer which replaces passwords in most cases. In order to access anything password protected, the parent’s thumbprint would be required. I was able to locate a number of these devices by searching “USB fingerprint reader” on Amazon.com.

Many of the devices mentioned above also contain built in security,

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such as parental controls and password technology, which can add another “layer” to our approach. All windows computers are capable of being password protected. eReaders, cell phones and iPads can also be protected in this manner. An eReader which gets only Wi-Fi can be secured by putting it in airplane mode and causing it to forget your wireless network key, though one must be sure there are no unsecured Wi-Fi networks in the area. In addition, there are parental controls for the services available on many devices, such as televisions, which will prevent exposure at the source. Most people are aware that cable television can be set so that children will be unable to view



inappropriate materials, but who knew that Netflix has the same capability? Verizon will set up your child’s phone so that even the small browser on the dumb phone cannot access the internet, nor will he be able to download games or ringtones. Research each new device or service which enters the home, and be sure to take advantage of all available security options.

There are also a number of excellent software solutions which can assist parents in avoiding first or accidental exposure. How secure these solutions are will vary depending on the determination and technological knowhow of a particular child. For the younger child, or the child who is not a natural with computer technology, they will be a big help, but for the older, more tech savvy teen, they should be considered only as a deterrent. Nevertheless, these are important tools. There are several different types of software which can and should be used. The most general type, which should be installed on every computer in the home, is filtering software. Filtering software works within whatever browser or browsers you have installed on your machine to “black list” that browser. When a person tries to access a website containing malicious content, the blocking software, using search engines and ratings which its company provides, prevents the computer from going to that website. While a good baseline, this type of software is not foolproof. It is better at recognizing text than image, so things can slip through. There are a number of companies which provide such products. Research shows K-9 internet security works quite well. In addition, it is available for home use at no cost, is customizable, and has an excellent night filter. With this software, there are very few “false positives,” making it less irritating for a computer used mainly by an adult. It can be found at: <http://www.k9webprotection.com/>. Another basic protection which prevents visual temptation, but also just generally prevents annoyance, is ad blocking software installed on the browser. This software must be installed separately for any browser you own. We like one called adblock plus which can be found here: <http://adblockplus.org/en/>

For computers that will be used primarily by children, parents can take

the filtering a step further with special, kid friendly browsers such as Mobicip (<http://www.mobicip.com/>) and Kidzui (<http://www.kidzui.com/>). With these browsers, which actually replace the computer’s standard browser, the browser itself will not even search inappropriate terms. Many schools rely on this type of technology, which can be set to grammar, middle or high school levels. Mobicip is available for PC’s and Apple products for a reasonable price, and can also be set to send a detailed report of a child’s internet activity to the parent. It is a very restrictive “black list” type browser. Kidzui takes things a step further. It is what is known as a “white list” type browser. It will go only to websites which have each been reviewed and approved by a panel of parents and teachers, but, since not every parent or teacher will have the same concerns as you, if you use it, you must familiarize yourself with it and must continue to supervise your child. For either of these to be effective, a computer’s native browser, such as internet explorer, must be disabled.

For situations where parents want to maintain an even closer level of control, such as a schoolroom computer which is intended entirely for the children’s use, one can create a custom “white list” browser. One way to do this is by downloading the Mozilla Firefox browser to the children’s laptop, and with it a plug in called ProCon Latte. Once the plug in is installed, the parent will be able to set up a list of approved websites (for a MODG family, this list might include Adobe Connect, Proboards and the MODG family website, as well as a few other safe sites). In order for this to be effective, one must first disable the computer’s native browser. There are a number of ways to do this, which can be found easily with a Google search. For the iPad, there is a similar browser app available, called the B.O.B. browser, and available on iTunes at no charge. Kidzone, an app

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available for Android operating systems, is a very restrictive solution for Android based phones and tablets. With it a parent can choose to allow the child access only to those apps he has chosen. It can be launched and disabled depending on who is using the device.

Even on computers which have restrictive browsers, it is good to follow the practice of using them only in public areas of the house (ours live in our kitchen classroom). For LS classes, if the public area is very noisy, students might be allowed to take the laptop to an adjoining room, bringing with them a buddy, another child who will be quietly working on his schoolwork nearby. This buddy system has the happy side effect of preventing students from doing a little side surfing during class, and is especially necessary in families where social media is allowed to any extent. Facebook posting during class can really prevent your student from optimizing his LS time.

The area of social media presents a particular problem. Open ended resources such as Facebook, Google plus, Twitter and the like are quite difficult to monitor. While such resources are not evil in themselves, they do require adult level prudence in their use, so in our home they are not allowed until students are close to college age. Instant messaging and chat rooms are barred for the same reason. YouTube, while a delightful and fascinating way to learn just about anything, poses a particular danger, for images cannot be filtered as effectively as words. If a child receives a link directing him to a YouTube clip, it may be forwarded to a parent's computer, and watched first by and then with that parent. Another resource which poses a particular danger is Wikipedia, which, by its very nature, is an open ended resource with little to no oversight of content. Wikipedia should generally not be used for formal research in any case, as it is not accepta-

ble in the academic community. In general, if a student needs to do research, a parent should first review websites which might be helpful, then allow them on the child's computer. Open research should not be allowed unless an adult is sitting with the child.

Internet gaming is another dangerous venue. If not avoided entirely, it should be allowed only within strict limits and under close supervision. One reason for this is that the other players are, essentially, instant messaging your child as they play the game, and that can be nearly impossible to monitor. Another is that gaming late at night can be quite addictive, cutting into a student's sleeping hours and productivity, and causing the formation of habits which can be quite life destroying.

Every parent should take the time to share the journey with their children. Not only in the realm of technology, but in other areas of their lives as well, parents must always be willing to join in their children's interests and activities with joy. If a child's friends are reading a new novel or watching a movie, parents should read or watch it first, and talk to him about any questionable material (or veto it altogether if, in their judgment, it's inappropriate). When it comes to technology, the philosophy is no different. Whether the child is interested in some form of game, a YouTube clip, or a new app for an iPad, Mom should understand what the child is doing, which means learning about it herself. If the child wants to try out a game his friends have told him about, Dad might learn to play it. If a child wants to belong to Proboards, Mom might make a regular habit of logging on to his account to see what the kids are saying to each other. There is now, more than ever, no substitute for being a deeply involved parent.

I recently rediscovered a quotation from GK Chesterton's great work of poetry, *The Ballad of the White Horse*,

which gave me, as a parent, great comfort;

"The men of the East may spell the stars,
And times and triumphs mark,
But the men signed of the cross of Christ
Go gaily in the dark..."

Parents learning about internet risks and security for the first time may find it a bit overwhelming, but should re-



member that in this area, as in all areas of their parenting, they do not walk alone. Parents must be diligent and watchful, but God is ultimately in charge of their children's lives. He loves them more than any human parent can, and He desires their salvation. Pray regularly to your children's guardian angels for their protection, daily recite the St. Michael prayer to ward off evil, and pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance when making prudential decisions. Having done all you can, go gaily in the dark knowing that the Lord walks at your side. May the Lord bless each of your families, and give you as parents the grace to keep your children safe as you prepare them to enter the adult world in the digital age.

Student Awards

Jan Hemstad (Graduate '08) won a 70% scholarship to the MBA program at John Paul the Great Catholic University which he is now attending.

Gregory Waddle (Graduate '09) was awarded an academic scholarship to Benedictine College and has been on the Dean's List every single semester since the first semester of his Freshman year. He was also elected Freshman Class President and served the student government association the first year. These last two years he served on the staff for Residence Life as a Residence Assistant for his dorm. This is a difficult position to acquire as there are 100s of applicants each year and only 40 positions. Additionally, he worked for the Grounds Crew his Freshman year and the Admissions Department giving tours to potential students and their parents during his Sophomore and Junior years. He is currently majoring in Philosophy and Business Management with a minor in Theology. Additionally, he served on the Camp Staff for the John Paul II Adventure Camp, Camp Wojtyła, located in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado for the entire Summer of 2010. He was hired as a college intern for the summer of 2011 at Lincoln Industries in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Katarina Hemstad (Graduate '10) was recently named to the President's List at Benedictine College for the fall semester. The President's List recognizes students who have distinguished themselves academically during the last semester. To achieve this, students must carry a minimum of 12 credit hours and have a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Of the 1,630 undergraduate students on campus for the 2011-2012 academic year, only 59 made the President's List. Katarina also received a \$36,000

undergrad scholarships.

Martin Beers (Graduate '11) received the General Carl A Spatz award. This is the highest achievement for cadets in the Civil Air Patrol. Cadets must complete all 16 achievements in the program and pass a rigorous four-part examination consisting of written exams in aerospace, education and leadership, a written essay and a physical fitness test. This award is earned by less than 1% of CAP cadets who enter the program. Fewer than 2000 cadets have received this award since 1964.

Megan Gallipeau (Graduate '11) is now a freshman at Ave Maria University. She was offered generous scholarships by several Catholic colleges and awarded the full amount of Bright Futures (merit based state of Florida scholarship). She did very well on the National Latin exams in high school and won a Bronze medal for the National Mythology Exam in junior year. She played the harp at church and had her art work on public display several times as well. In high school she also participated in Lego League and her team went to the state finals twice. She even sold some of her art work. She also taught first grade CCD classes at her parish during her senior year.

Joseph Pueyo (12th Grade) achieved his Eagle Scout rank 12/1/2011 after 5 years of scouting. His Eagle Scout project was the installation of structured wiring for data and video services for a 4-H meeting house. His leadership roles have included Chaplain's Aide, Instructor, Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol leader and Senior Patrol Leader. He was also voted by his peers to be a member of the Order of the Arrow.

Alexander Rohm (12th Grade) won one of the ten presidential scholarships at Benedictine College (full tuition all four years).

Emily White (12th Grade) received a \$10,000 scholarship from PACCAR. The Paul Pigott Scholarship Foundation provides scholarships to daughters and sons of PACCAR employees for their college freshman year.

Thomas Becher (10th Grade) had a letter to the editor published in the Santa Paula Times. Thomas wrote protesting recent government mandated health care decisions and placed these invasions of personal and religious freedom within the context of America rich history of fighting for freedom from tyranny, freedom of religion and freedom to follow one's conscience.

Kyle Gallipeau (10th Grade) has had his art work on public display and has sold some of his art. He also participated in Lego League (in middle school) and went to the state finals twice. He currently is working on his own website where his art work is uploaded and he designs products for sale: (his website) <http://www.cafepress.com/greatgraphix>

Luke Chasuk (9th Grade) received Summa Cum Laude on the National Latin Exam in Latin I

Mary Rose Gallipeau (8th Grade) plays the harp, piano and viola and has played the piano at church a number of times. She has been selected to play concerts at various nursing homes (a program sponsored by a local piano store). Her art has also been on public display.

Re-Enrollment Reminder by Steven Hayden

April is upon us and with our WASC visit behind us, I wanted to bring re-enrollment to your attention. If you don't read any further than this, I'd like to ask everyone to re-enroll before May 1 or as soon after as possible. I will explain in some length below why this is a little later than usual and why this date is important for us, but this is the most important thing to take away from the email.

When I started working for Mother of Divine Grace School in 2006 enrollment was handled differently than it is today. If your family has been with us for 6 years or more, you may remember that our enrollment opened up in April or May and we filled up very quickly. It may have taken a while to hear back from us, but shortly after we opened enrollment, we had as many families as we could accept. Other families that tried to enroll had to wait until the following January to enroll in our early enrollment. Re-enrolling was very critical at this time, because if a family didn't enroll prior to our acceptance of new families, we wouldn't be able to accept the family's re-enrollment. (Sometimes the consultant was willing to go above her planned number of families and take the family back.)

New enrollments are handled differently now. Within the last couple of years we have increased the number of the wonderful consultants that work for us. We currently accept families throughout the year and are able to accept families for second semester. We have been improving the time that it takes to process enrollments as well. For several years, we asked that you send in your re-enrollment by April 1. This gave us a month to process enrollments and follow up with families that hadn't re-enrolled to make sure that they could maintain their enrollment with us and not be replaced by a new family enrolling after May 1.

What we have discovered, however, is that most families were able to enroll, even if they submitted their forms after the April 1 deadline. This led us to discuss whether there should be a deadline for re-enrolling families, and exactly what

this deadline would mean for the families.

We always do whatever we can to ensure that a re-enrolling family can continue with us in the following school year, so as a matter of fact it is likely that if you enroll at any time during the summer we will be able to accept you into the school. However, there are at least three things that you will miss if you don't enroll in the spring.

First, you may not be able to stay with your consultant if you enroll after May 1st. Whenever possible, we try to keep your family with the same consultant year after year. Sometimes a consultant retires from her work with us or has to reduce the number of families that she works with throughout the school year, but normally we'd like the same person to work with your family year after year.

This is how we accommodate this: our consultants tell us how many families that they would like to work with, and we reserve those 'spots' for her re-enrolling families first. Beginning May 1, however, we start to assign new families to consultants without regard to whether they have families that have not re-enrolled, so there's a chance that if you re-enroll after that, your current consultant won't be available to work with you.

Second, beginning in April, families enrolled in 2012-2013 will be able to order paper copies of syllabi at a 30% discount. To participate in these discounts, you'll need to re-enroll your family. This year we'll have our online syllabi available to you, although these won't be available until the summer. Once these are up and running, the syllabi that are available to you will depend upon the courses for 2012-2013 that your consultant records in our computer system. It is very helpful for your consultant to be able to enter the planned courses for next year at the end of current school year, however, if you have not re-enrolled prior to your last consultation, the consultant will not have the ability to enter this information during the consultation. To avoid any delays in accessing the online syllabi, it would be best to re-enroll prior to your

last consultation.

Third, delaying enrollment can also affect the availability of some of our programs. The Special Services program continues to fill up each year. Access to this program might be limited with a later enrollment date. It also may mean that Level 2 Service is not available for your family. Access to the TA/TD and Learning Support (LS) program may be affected as well.

We'll be sending out information about the LS classes and TA/TD enrollment in early June and making online enrollment available. If you are not enrolled for the next year, you won't receive the sign up information for these courses or have access to enrollment. Although we try to make the LS classes available to all students, the classes can fill up. It is always best to get your forms in early.

After we thought about some of these factors, we decided to recommend a May 1 deadline for re-enrollment. You can see that it's not a strict deadline, but we think that by getting your things in by this date it will give us time to process your registration and make sure that you have access to all of the services and benefits of being enrolled in MODG!

Re-enrollments are done online this year through your page on the family site. It can be accessed through the banner at the top of your family's page. (First go to <https://families.motherofdivinegrace.org/> and log-in.) Feel free to email Monica (receptionist@motherofdivinegrace.org) if you need help.

I recognize that times are difficult financially for many families. If you have been delaying re-enrolling for financial reasons, but want to make sure that you don't miss out, feel free to contact Ann (billing@motherofdivinegrace.org) to work out a customized payment plan. We can usually work out a monthly payment plan that fits your needs. If you include a proposed plan, or let us know how much you think you can afford, we'll try to set up something that can work for your family.

MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE SCHOOL

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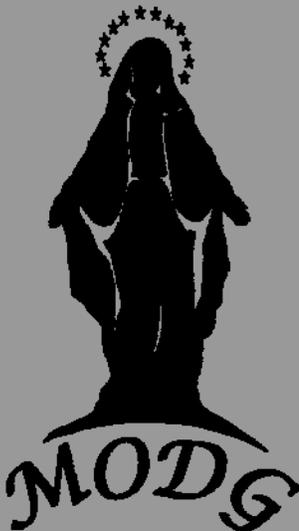
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**“FOR THE SOLE
TRUE END OF EDU-
CATION IS SIMPLY
THIS: TO TEACH
MEN HOW TO
LEARN FOR THEM-
SELVES; AND WHAT-
EVER INSTRUCTION
FAILS TO DO THIS IS
EFFORT SPENT IN
VAIN.”**

**DOROTHY SAYERS
LOST TOOLS OF
LEARNING**



A Tradition in Independent Study

Mother of Divine Grace School was founded in 1995 to provide parents with the information, resources, and support necessary to educate their children according to the classical tradition. Laura Berquist's book, *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum*, had aroused the interest of thousands and she responded to their requests by developing an independent study program and offering home schooling consulting services. As with her book, the emphasis of the study program and the consulting services is to help parents to teach their children the tools of learning. Located in Ojai, CA, Mother of Divine Grace School serves over 3,800 students.

Mother of Divine Grace School offers a Catholic, classical approach to home schooling. It is a program that has been developed by "trial and error". In other words, it has had a test run. Mother of Divine Grace School understands the challenges that homeschoolers face and thus offers different levels of service. Mother of Divine Grace School wants to meet the needs of each individual family, and realizes that these needs will vary from family to family. The consultants, teachers, lesson plans, materials, standardized testing, and assessments can provide families with clear educational goals, the appropriate level of support, as well as the needed structure and flexibility. These will lead to academic success.

Mother of Divine Grace: Expected School-Wide Learning Goals

By the time students leave Mother of Divine Grace School, they will be

Active Learners

- ♦ MODG students possess the knowledge to perform independent research.
- ♦ All of the MODG students have the opportunity to do self-directed projects using a variety of resources.
- ♦ MODG students are able to recognize, articulate, and implement their own learning styles to enhance the learning process.

Effective Communicators

- ♦ MODG students are able to read and comprehend diverse written materials.
- ♦ All students demonstrate rhetorical and analytical skills in their written work.
- ♦ MODG students express themselves with confidence in written communication.

Independent Thinkers

- ♦ All MODG students are able to analyze information, form their own opinions, and provide evidence for those opinions.
- ♦ MODG students consider multiple perspectives when drawing conclusions.

Multifaceted Individuals

- ♦ At MODG, students pursue a wide range of academic and personal interests.
- ♦ Through interdisciplinary studies, core requirements, and elective credits, Mother of Divine Grace students develop an awareness of themselves as members of a universal Catholic community.