



Our Mother's Mantle

Issue 1
Sept/Oct 2023

A monthly newsletter for Catholic mothers educating at home.

"We cover ourselves in Our Lady's Mantle so that we in turn may cover our families in ours."



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Feast Day Celebrations!

Don't forget to celebrate not only liturgical feasts, but name-day feasts! Go through your calendar and mark all the feast days for you and your children, including some special ones you want to celebrate. With three sons, we always celebrated the Feast of St. George in grand style. In the days leading up you can do saint study, historical context, art & music, and home-ec by preparing decorations and food for the day, and more!

*Our St. George Feast a few years ago. Notice the band around the glass with crosses.
No stone left unturned!*



NEW Services

NEED HELP WITH TRANSCRIPTS, ID CARDS,
HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE PLANNING, AND MORE?

I now offer **parent-partner services** to non-enrolled families!

www.rca-resources.org

Laura Loroña-Kays, Director

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All Children Have Special Needs

by Celeste Cuellar

Homeschoolers know that all their children have special needs. One needs to have quiet to study, another needs music. One needs to talk it all out with you and one needs to process internally. One needs a structured/defined place to work, and one needs a more flexible arrangement. Of course, these preferences are not what is typically meant by special needs and so the importance of identifying your children's special needs is generally up to you as the primary educator.

The beauty of homeschooling is that parents can attempt to create an environment where each child is most likely to be successful in school and—more importantly—in life. However, as every homeschooling mom knows, if you have multiple children in multiple grade levels, it's not possible to meet all their learning needs 100%. Or even 50%! And that's okay. Because other than Heaven no place exists that will meet all our needs perfectly and we need to make peace with that here on earth.

Figuring out how your children learn best is important, but equally important is for you to figure out how you teach best. And then you find the best compromise you can, and you pray for God's mercy and grace for you and your children. But remember that you are not alone! Please reach out to those who can offer insight and guidance and support.

Regina Caeli, ora pro nobis!

Celeste Cuellar spent 10 years with a well-known Catholic homeschool curriculum provider as the special needs advisor and dean of students. She keeps a special place in her heart for home educators and has been actively involved in homeschooling five of her grandchildren. Today, she is hoping to bring together her love of literature and history in a unique way to the benefit of Catholic home educators across the country.

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The Refined Schoolhouse

I recently found [The Refined Schoolhouse](#) and immediately fell in love with their offerings. They provide “...simple, beautiful, educational materials so your children's education can be simple and beautiful too.” I agree.

My two favorite materials are the “Classic Cards Set” and “Baking With Books.” While the cards are a little pricey, they are a set of 148 4x6 full-color cards that introduce children to classical music, art, and poetry, using a combination of original artwork, quotes, and QR codes linking to additional resources. Truly an entire free-standing curriculum!

“Baking with Books” combines literature and recipes on a monthly basis and is a digital download, as are many of the resources. For Fall, I downloaded the “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” unit study and love that it’s applicable for students of any age using comprehension questions, recipes, lots of ideas for celebration, and excellent artwork.

The artwork used by TRS caught my eye precisely for its simplicity and beauty, invoking a warmth in my heart on many levels, not least of which was to revisit our own home and make any changes I could to continue providing a comforting and inviting home for my family. And this is exactly what “home education” is all about....it’s not just teaching from books, it’s creating an entire lifestyle for our families, reflecting His Beauty.

The Refined Schoolhouse can be found in my [Elementary Resources](#) listings, or by visiting their website directly.



Fun artwork from the “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” unit study.

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St. Meinrad Archabbey & Seminary and The Shrine of Monte Cassino



This month I was fortunate to accompany my husband to an arts conference and as we drove home from Indiana to Kansas, we took a detour and happened upon the Archabbey of St. Meinrad and Monte Cassino Shrine in Indiana. I have a special devotion to St. Benedict and discovering St. Meinrad was a very special way to celebrate our Sunday.

“Saint Meinrad Archabbey was founded in 1854 by monks from Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland. They came to southern Indiana at the request of a local priest who was seeking help to serve the pastoral needs of the growing German-speaking Catholic population and to prepare local men to be priests. The history of Monte Cassino Shrine tells how a novena to Our Lady of Monte Cassino is credited for saving the village of St. Meinrad from a smallpox epidemic in 1871.”

The architecture, artwork, and hilltop grounds of both the Shrine and Abbey are incredibly majestic and peaceful and I would think it impossible not to be transformed by the Glory of Our Lord after visiting, staying, or studying there. It was overwhelming to find such an old and historic town that was founded by Catholics and still proud of and practicing their Faith after centuries.

I was grateful to be able to enshrine the intentions of not only my family, but of all the Regina Caeli Academy families at both the Shrine and the Abbey. Know that you are being prayed for by these good Monks and wonderful parishioners and visitors of St. Meinrad, Indiana.

[St. Meinrad Archabbey and Monte Cassino Shrine](#)



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**Marian garden at Monte
Cassino Shrine**

Pulpit for outdoor services



Altar and Ceiling



Special Class!

Reading Tragedy as Comedy: A Catholic Perspective of Shakespeare's King Lear and Hamlet

Online Class for 11th-12th Grades

October 9, 16, 23, & 30, 2023

\$40 per student



The lamentations of Job, the exile of Israel in the desert, the Passion and Crucifixion. As Catholics, can we read tragedy? Should we even believe that tragedy is capable of existing in a world where death is not the final word?

Over the course of four online sessions, students will read through William Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Hamlet*, studying both works as drama and coming to understand their place in the history of poetry and the performing arts.

Brief excerpts from Aristotle's *Poetics* and essays by Dr. Louise Cowan and other leading literary scholars will also help students answer the question: ***Can there be such a thing as Catholic tragedy?***

Details and Registration:

www.rcacademypsp.org/shakespeare

Presented by Humanities at Regina Caeli Academy

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The Imperfect Homeschooler

or, how we raised pretty good kids despite our bunglings.



We fell into homeschooling because there was NO WAY we'd send our kids to California public schools and there was NO WAY we could afford to send them to private schools – which aren't much better anyway.

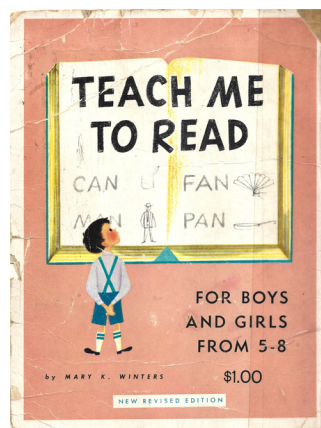
I had run into homeschoolers in the 90s, having created educational outreach programs and for some reason a good number of students turned out to be homeschooled. I even lived next door to a homeschooling family and they seemed to have a pretty great life, telling me about their days in the garden or at the beach collecting shells and studying the tides, helping their dad fix their boat, or about the Olders writing stories and acting them out for the Littles. They were also the only kids who could carry on a decent conversation with adults and they left an impression.



*“They left
an impression.”*

When it came time to start thinking about our first born and school, we decided to try a Charter because even though hubby graduated from Pepperdine, I lasted only half a semester at a community college and what did I know from anything? Who cared that I had been working in arts administration and education, I wasn't a bonafide teacher! The Charter lasted a couple of weeks before I told Dan, "Well heck, I can do that." And he said, "Well alright then, do." And so we did.

There wasn't much in the way of Catholic homeschooling material at that time so I cobbled together a collection of resources on my own. I grew up surrounded by books and music, the daughter of a school librarian and a true Renaissance man, so our shelves were overflowing with everything we needed.



I taught our boys to read using the same book my mom bought in the '60s for \$1.00 to teach us, still THE best reader I've ever found to date. Our learning took place on the sofa, on the bed, in the car, at the park, even on the floor of the chiropractor's office when I had to go in for regular treatments for an injury.

There's no "perfect" to homeschooling. No perfect curriculum, no perfect setting. Homeschooling is life: ever-changing, neat, messy, quiet, loud, happy, sad, using beautiful materials or repaired books that have seen better days. I guess my point is that those of us without the seemingly "perfect" conditions can still be competent parents and teachers in raising and educating our children.

We just graduated our youngest and all three of our sons are beautiful, faithful young men who are following Our Lord and their own passions. We obviously did something right...so I know the "right" is that we did it imperfectly with Our Lord, for our Lord, with Our Blessed Mother as our guide...and they are the only Perfect we need.



I enjoy sharing with you my life experiences as a veteran Catholic home educator and program administrator, as well as my wisdom gained as an NG college admissions director, member of the Classic Learning Test launch team, and as a museum and arts executive.

Thank you for spending this time with me!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura", positioned below the thank you message.

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