INTERCEDE

May mothers receive help and support as they pursue their educational goals.

PRAY

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECT

Sadly, our culture often pits a mother *against* her children, portraying a false "either/or" choice between her children and her dreams. Inaccurate messages spread the idea that a woman's life is "over" once she becomes a mother.

But we know that countless young mothers have become unexpectedly pregnant and have continued to pursue education. And arguably, they do so not in spite of their children, but *because of their children*. Even if things don't go exactly according to plan—timelines may shift, and dreams may change—the twists and turns can bring unexpected joy, purpose, and growth.

In *The Gospel of Life*, Pope St. John Paul II commends "brave mothers… who are ready to make any effort, to face any sacrifice, in order to pass on to [their children] the best of themselves" (*EV* 86). As members of the Body of Christ, we have a responsibility to help mothers do just that. And there are simple ways we can help mothers who desire to pursue educational achievements.

We can offer to babysit or do the grocery shopping, so a mom has time to attend an evening class or study for an exam. We can advocate for colleges and universities to provide flexibility for parenting students. We can do these and so many other things. Most importantly, we can pray for mothers to be given the grace and the support they need, and for the wisdom to know how we can help.

ACT *(choose one)*

- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a widowed mother of 5 children and is considered the founder of the Catholic school system in the U.S. Offer this prayer, often prayed by her, for the featured intention: setonshrine.org/prayers-anima-christi.

- Fast from one meal today.

- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do for the featured intention.

ONE STEP FURTHER

A mother of four who had her first baby in college offers tips on providing support to women facing unexpected pregnancies. Read: "10 Ways to Support Her When She's Unexpectedly Expecting" (respectlife.org/support-her).