

Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for Catholic homeschooling families



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EDITORIAL

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We would like to thank the generous people who took the time to write articles or send in useful and interesting information. Extra-special thanks to all the regular writers who can always be counted upon to come up with something interesting at a moment's notice. Without you, we wouldn't have a publication.

We would like to encourage all families (especially those who have never contributed before) and anyone who supports homeschooling to send in something for *Keeping In Touch*.

Please share your thoughts, ideas, useful information, hints and resources, poems, stories and drawings. Articles on homeschooling, spiritual and family life topics, as well as children's contributions, are most welcome.

By contributing to *Keeping In Touch* you will be supporting, encouraging, entertaining and helping other homeschoolers. Your contribution is worth the effort!

If you would like to **edit the next edition of *Keeping In Touch***, please contact Andy and Sue Elvis as soon as possible. They will gratefully accept your offer!

Please send contributions for **Term 2** of *Keeping in Touch* for 2009 to

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PUBLICATION

KEEPING IN TOUCH is published about the end of the fifth week of each term.

Please send contributions on A4 paper, or (preferably) in Microsoft Word via email where possible.

MATERIAL DEADLINE

Please note that the deadline for contributions from readers is the **end of the second week of each term.**

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you would like to receive *Keeping in Touch* via Australia Post, please contact Veronica Brandt
8 Beauford Street
Woodford
NSW 2778
Email: veronica@brandt.id.au
Subscriptions are \$10 for 4 issues.

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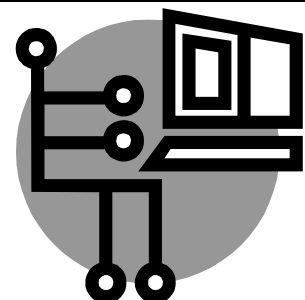
Father James Tierney's publications:
Bush Boys and Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys combined edition \$16.50
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Grief, Love and Hope by Sue Elvis \$10

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TERM ONE 2009

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THE INSPECTOR CALLS

A good many years ago, when all the world was young, my mother used to teach in small one and two teacher schools in country NSW. I remember her telling me of one occasion when, as she was preparing to eat breakfast, a small and breathless child appeared at the door: "Miss Wills, Miss Wills, Mr. So-and-So says can you come as quick as you can, the Inspector's coming!" - whereupon my mother had to abandon breakfast, saddle her horse and trot off to school, to help prepare for the unexpected visit of that dreaded being. "And," she remarked, "teaching Latin to farm boys who had no interest in it and less use was a hard task."

Well, I don't have the task of teaching Latin to farm boys (I wish I could teach Latin at all!) but over our years of homeschooling the inspector's visit has never produced that sense of dread. One hears nightmare stories of terrible 'visits', but actually in our experience all the visiting officials with whom we have dealt have been reasonable, helpful, interested and interesting individuals.

Our first ever inspection was chiefly memorable for the reams of stuff I had prepared as I waited nervously to convince this visitation from officialdom of my competence to educate my nine year-old and six year-old (and three year-old, except that no-one ever asked for my credentials as to competence in rearing my babies!). The lady who visited us was considerate and encouraging, although she did rather floor me with the question "How do you plan to deal with metaphor and simile?" - how indeed? Hope?

There was another 'visit' when the inspector - sorry, authorised person, for the moment anyway - glanced over his notes and said to our then twelve-year-old daughter "Hmnn, let's see, what haven't I covered... creative arts and technology. What do you do for them?"

"Nothing," she replied.

I remember him looking at her over the top of his glasses and saying "Do you cook?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you sew?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you dance?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you play an instrument?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well," said he, "I think that about covers that, then!"

Or the occasion when the inspector asked one of our sons "So how much time would you say you spend on your lessons?"

"Oh, as little as possible," the boy replied seriously. "I hate school work."

However, the inspector's visit has never been anything but a source of pleasure for the children, who enjoy being asked questions and required to show off their

work. The younger ones have eagerly awaited their turn to be old enough to 'have the inspector'. Chatting with the inspector has been informative and often cheering. I admire the willingness these people have to share their experience with me, and their dedication to their job.

I just hope that they never felt as unwelcome as they might have done, had they heard one of our youngsters who had observed the visitor crossing the yard, and bellowed from the front door:

"MUM! It's that man again!"

SARAH FANNING

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY DON'T WANT TO LEARN ANYMORE?

Now we all know homeschooling can and should be a joyful experience. But what do we do about week eight or so into a term and the shine has rubbed off, you are worn out and the house is in dire need of your attention? I pondered over this last week, as that is exactly the scenario with which I was faced.

It would be wonderful to take a week off, get the house in tip top shape, let the children recover and then, theoretically, return to studies refreshed and ready to go. But is it worth the risk? Will it turn out that way or will we have just lost a week, which will need to be caught up later? Who knows? I certainly don't but I am not willing to take the risk this term.

So what are my options then? I need to get the kids to keep going when we all don't feel like it. Well, really this is not so different to everyday life. It's a bit like getting babies through the last prayers and hymn of Mass or getting toddlers through the last half hour or so of a long trip or doing some tedious aspect of housework - we need distraction and variation.

I have found that if the children work somewhere different it may keep them going longer - like the front verandah or under a tree. Sometimes a bit of variety is needed to keep going like doing creative writing by playing a piece of music and getting

them to write the story that this piece evokes. Or what about quizzes? Kids love these and it's a less painful way of reviewing work often.

I would love to hear other people's solutions to the above problem if anyone wanted to share their secrets. Especially is there anyone out there who has taken a week off and found it beneficial? We all need support, prayers and ideas to keep going.

MICHELLE VIEIRA

"GOD LOVES TO BE ASKED FOR WHAT HE WISHES TO GIVE"

Pope Benedict Addresses Parents in Cameroon, Africa

"Dear fathers and mothers here today, do you have trust in God who has called you to be the fathers and mothers of his adopted children? Do you accept that he is counting on you to pass on to your children the human and spiritual values that you yourselves have received and which will prepare them to live with love and respect for his holy name? At a time when so many people have no qualms about trying to impose the tyranny of materialism, with scant concern for the most deprived, you must be very careful. Africa in general, and Cameroon in particular, place themselves at risk if they do not recognize the True Author of Life! Brothers and sisters in Cameroon and throughout Africa, you who have received from God so many human virtues, take care of your souls! Do not let yourselves be captivated by selfish illusions and false ideals! Believe - yes! - continue to believe in God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - he alone truly loves you in the way you yearn to be loved, he alone can satisfy you, can bring stability to your lives. Only Christ is the way of Life.

God alone could grant Joseph the strength to trust the Angel. God alone will give you, dear married couples, the strength to raise your family as he wants. Ask it of him! God loves to be asked for what he wishes to give. Ask him for the grace of a true and ever more faithful love patterned after his own. As the Psalm magnificently puts it: his "love is established for ever, his loyalty will stand as long as the heavens" (Ps 88:3).

Just as on other continents, the family today - in your country and across Africa - is experiencing a difficult time; but fidelity to God will help see it through."

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20090319_instrlabor-africa_en.html

WHERE DID MY PRAYER END UP?

A lot of people ask themselves why prayers don't get answered. We may see governments passing very anti-Christian policies or imposing unethical obligations, and that's after we prayed for the opposite to happen. We see in our own lives that our prayers often seem to go astray.

First of all, we must remember that we pray because God is good, the source of all good. He is infinite goodness, unbounded goodness and He wants to pour His goodness upon the whole of creation.

There are some things God will give us, even if we never ask for them. None of us asked to be born, but here we are. There are some things God will never give us, even if we ask for them. And there's another type of good which God offers us: things which He will give us if we pray for them. We might say that some of God's blessings are conditioned on our prayers.

"Praying for something doesn't change God's mind. Rather it opens Our hearts to His blessings."

When we pray to God to ask for something, we are not trying to change His mind or draw His attention to some special need He may not be aware of. "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matthew 6:10). So if God already knows, what's the point of asking Him, or even talking to Him at all? Quite simply, when we ask God for something, we are changing our own heart, or rather responding to God's grace to open our hearts to His blessings. We see something similar when parents make their children ask politely for something which the parents always intended to give. "What's the magic word?" Well, why is "please" a magic word? Because it opens the child's heart and opens the parents' hands. God is always ready to give to us, but we must be ready to receive His gifts, recognising them as His gifts and recognising our own dependence and love.

St. Paul tells the Romans "for those who love God, all things work together unto the good" (Rom. 8). He goes on to explain that those who love God are those who are called to be His saints. So the first condition of any sincere prayer must be the desire to love God. He is the source of all good and so it's the most natural thing in the world to love Him above all things.

Our prayers sometimes seem to go unanswered because, as St. James reminds us, "you ask amiss." God wants to pour all sorts of gifts upon us, but those gifts are dependent on our heart's capacity to receive them. If He doesn't give the blessing we are asking for, or the consolation or encouragement we think we need so urgently, it is usually in order to make our hearts be a little more open to other blessings. He answers every prayer, but it sometimes takes a while to realise that we may have been a bit chicken-hearted, asking for something which in the end would not have led us to be His saints. He can foresee (from the Latin *pro-videre*) all the good things He can give, all the millions of ways He can make us living images of His own generosity. Our prayers are most effective, most easily answered, when we see everything in the light of God's all-embracing providence. St. Peter tried to stop Jesus going to His brutal death, but Jesus had a greater view. St. Peter's prayer went unanswered, and as a result we have Christ's sacrifice which has opened up the gates of Heaven to all who follow Him to the cross and Resurrection.

"It is lawful to pray for what it is lawful to desire"

St. Augustine says it is lawful to pray for what it is lawful to desire. So we can ask to win the lottery (or even to win it without going in it, which happened recently to a widow who found her husband's winning ticket shortly after he died). We should pray for our enemies because we love God and they are called to be God's friends ("as we forgive those who trespass against us"). We can pray for temporal things ("our daily bread"), material goods, health, a high-paying job, success in exams or anything that is not sinful to desire. Most importantly, if we pray to co-operate with God's grace ("Thy will be done"), then we can be sure we are praying for the very best thing God wants for us: our salvation and the eternal happiness of everyone. We can be sure our prayers will be answered when we pray sincerely, perseveringly for the very best things God can give: to be living imitations of His generosity.

ANTHONY ENGLISH

ANOTHER ACT OF MERCY

One cold, windswept summer evening in London about thirty years ago I was standing outside a theatre with my family waiting for transport home, wearing a very pretty summery dress of which I was particularly fond. I was very cold. My brother offered me his jacket, and perversely, I refused, so instead shivered on until the car finally arrived.

Before we all went to bed, my mother took me aside and said "My dear, you must have the humility to accept help when it is offered, and the charity to allow another person the pleasure of being able to help. Don't be so ungracious." It is a suggestion which has remained with me since, because so frequently I am too proud to allow another the pleasure of helping me, even when (as all those years ago) I would indeed benefit from the help. I sometimes have to deliberately quell the instant response of "No, thank you" and humble myself to reply instead "yes, please". It is extraordinary how resistant I find myself to the notion. Perhaps I feel it is demeaning to need help; I don't really know. But it is a difficult virtue to be able to offer help in a fashion that is unassuming, altruistic and easily accepted. I suppose it is a branch of charity, just as – as my mother pointed out to me – accepting help graciously is a branch of charity.

Charity is a wonderful virtue. I just wish I had more of it. Over and over again I realise I have failed in charity, in all sorts of ways, and it is a frustrating realisation. If only I could catch myself in time! It reminds me of St. James's instructions on bridling one's tongue. Such a little instrument to do such great harm, and with what rapidity! Someone once suggested to me that if I feel I am about to utter an uncharitable remark, I should pause and under my breath utter the little prayer 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph' – not a bad suggestion, in as much as it causes us to pause and often that is all that is needed in prevention, but it could be taken the wrong way: the mother of a friend of mine was using that ejaculation privately whilst in labour, when, caught unawares by a sudden strong contraction she involuntarily cried it aloud, to be rebuked by the Catholic assisting midwife for her unsuitable language!

But misunderstandings aside, we do indeed need charity, as we do need the assistance of the Holy Family, and every Lent I make that good resolution... and every Lent I fail... but I guess I have to keep trying. There isn't another option, really. Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

SARAH FANNING

TO SUCH AS THESE BELONGS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Grief, Love and Hope is a moving account of the short life of Thomas Augustine Elvis. Thomas died of a diaphragmatic hernia the day after he was born in November 1999. This very powerful diary from his mother, Sue, was officially launched in Merrylands parish on Sunday 26th October.

The professional presentation of the book launch was combined with a homely, heartfelt sharing of the trials of losing a child. The launch, like the book, was much more than a recounting of a time of great sorrow. As the book's title says, it tells the story of the loss of Thomas, but also of the value and impact of his short life. As the author pointed out, we only have grief because we love. Great grief springs from great love.

For those of us who have not suffered a trial such as losing a baby, the book may at first seem to be applicable to a (fortunately) very small group of people who have faced this trial. In fact, this particular sorrow is much more common than we might think. This small but powerful account has a lot to offer everyone. It provides some very helpful advice on how to maintain a friendship with someone suffering a great sorrow of any kind. For those called to walk alongside a friend going through great pain, it can be a temptation to avoid the subject and perhaps avoid the person who is grieving. After all, we wouldn't know what to say. This silence and avoidance can simply compound the isolation and suffering.

We can also have an expectation that the person will "get over it". People who haven't experienced intense grief may at times become insensitive to the pain, often providing comments which are, at best, unhelpful. The blessing of this book is that it offers a perspective of what really can be some light in the midst of darkness and depression. To comfort the sorrowful is one of the great works of mercy, and Christian charity urges us to do so when the opportunity arises. *Grief, Love and Hope* will give a lot of help in this mission of mercy.

The book launch was very much a family affair. There was a collage of photos and a "memory box" of the little things associated with baby Thomas. All the family who could be present sang a hymn, which had last been sung on the day of the funeral, some nine years ago. It was moving to hear Sue's husband Andy read a chapter on how Sue took her then little Imogen out to

buy a dress for her brother's funeral. In her childlike simplicity, Imogen looked on the day as a great social occasion, and this is Sue's most treasured memory of that most difficult day.

The book is a lot more than a diary of a mother's grief. It contains some most elevating articles as Sue walks the long path of hope and healing. A simple question such as "how many children do you have?" is a reminder of the loss, but grief is not triumphant. The reader is able to see how peace and healing can come through human friendship and the grace of God. These chapters will have something for anyone suffering sorrow, be it from the death of a newborn, a miscarriage or other crosses which God might allow. The book will offer courage to parents who are facing a difficult diagnosis during pregnancy, and it will be a blessing for children whose parents are able to learn from Sue and Andy's experiences.

Thomas' eldest brother, Duncan, had written a most moving memory of the shock he felt at his little brother's dying. We naturally focus on the parents, and more especially on the mother who bore the child, it is important that we remember that the grief of losing a child is something that will touch each family member differently, and all of them profoundly.

The book is also an expression of gratitude, for doctors, priests and friends who walked the path of the cross with Sue and Andy Elvis. Some of the words of consolation showed the great depth of the virtue of mercy, and we are glad to know there are people who have opened their hearts so deeply in the face of another's sufferings.

Dr Catherine Lennon of Doctors for Life presented an award to Sue Elvis for her courageous account. It is courageous to have to bear one's wounds for the benefit of others, and it was no surprise to me to see this book being given the award of Doctors for Life' 2008 *Book of the Year*. Sue was also nominated as a *Friend of Matercare* in appreciation of the book. Matercare is an international association of Catholic doctors and nurses who are working towards better health care for babies and mothers around the world, especially in poorer countries such as East Timor.

We all owe the Elvis family a debt of gratitude for teaching us how to love in the midst of great suffering. They have welcomed us into their home, allowed us to witness their sufferings and showed us how to move from grief to

hope. *Grief, Love and Hope* is available from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources (ph: 02 9637 9406 <http://www.cardinalnewman.com.au>).

Reading it will certainly move you to tears, and it will lead you to a greater trust in the merciful God who has prepared a Heavenly home for those who become like little children. In an age where children are valued so little, it is a timely reminder that whatever we do to the least of Christ's brothers, we do to Christ Himself.

ANTHONY ENGLISH

LOSS

He was dying and there was nothing I could do about it.

He lay within the confines of the plastic walls, his young, new-born form, thin and somehow twisted. Tubes clustered around his face, while wires gripped his hands. His skin was unbroken and perfect, but drained to a pale colour. Did his shirt hide pumps and medical equipment, or the shape of a deformed chest? An unknown meter wailed continuously, with each note boding a horrid failure.

I should have tried to prepare myself for this, I should have realised this would happen. I had known months ago of his predicted health, but I had been optimistic, perhaps naive. I had fed myself with false hope that things would work themselves out, that he could be saved. That was all fantasy.

They had him removed and dressed him in a white gown and covered his sparse locks with a bonnet. They wrapped him in a blanket and tucked him into a wooden box. I stood and looked down upon him, his fingers were curled up into little balls and his mouth was open as though anticipating a suckle. He didn't look up at me, he never opened his eyes. He never would.

Things should have ended then, I wanted them too. A rocking chair gave off a little comfort as I sat. He was lost and I could not help it. I cried to have never known him.

DUNCAN ELVIS

SQUIGGLES AND SQUINTER AND THE BUSHRANGERS

FATHER JAMES TIERNEY, the author of this new book, recalls the foreground and background of its composition.

FOREGROUND

Page 3 is headed with the dedication:

For Julian Vieira (aged 5)

This book was written for him during his three weeks in the Westmead Children's Hospital, Sydney. In this time he had five operations on his left hand, the longest of five hours, after the car accident on New Year's Day, 2008. His story was faxed to him at a chapter a day, and read to him by his mother or siblings.

Actually, earlier that New Year's morning, there was a lesser disaster, though potentially a greater one. The cattle on the Vieira family's 50 acre hobby farm, in desperation for fodder, broke through an old fence into the home-paddock and then escaped through an even older fence onto the high speed road from Goulburn to Taralga, hence- Oberon. Traffic barrels through at speeds of up to 140 kph.

So for the first half of that January, Fr Tierney, spent several hours a morning, with the help of John-Paul Vieira and his cousins, and Jim Fanning, his friend trots up the road, building a brand new seven wire cattle fence, three barb and four plain wires.

In the afternoons, he would churn out a two-page chapter of *Squiggles and Squinter and the Bushrangers*, with pages the size of those in his more recent Bush Boys books. The Connor Court production has superior spacing at 2½ pages per chapter, plus a picture, making 4 pages a chapter.

Each chapter was faxed through to Julian's ward in the hospital where it possibly brought a smile to some of the staff and delivered to Julian before bedtime.

A difficulty was that his stay in hospital was estimated at two months, for which Fr Tierney envisaged 60 chapters. It was hard to construct a suitably balanced plot in such uncertainty, and, in the event, due to the rapidity of his recovery and the sustained skills of surgeons and nurses, he was there only 20 days. (He's had several lesser operations since, and there is still one to go.) On his triumphant homecoming, the story was quickly wound up.

In Julian's absence, his next siblings Joseph (8) and Monica (10) were a great help as critics to guide the author. However, Joe wanted nothing but lots of Bang-Bang-Bushrangers, which was hard to sustain, especially as Fr Tierney wanted to get in some farm life on the twins' family's free selection of 40 acres. For this, he used his own father's experiences on 80 acres in the 1890s at Eurunderee near Mudgee NSW, where his Dad had ploughed acres behind two horses by late moonlight, before setting out for a day at the one-teacher primary school, and where "the old hands" had viewed the

Tierney family's trendy acquisition of a wood-burning fuel stove with the deepest suspicions and much shaking of their heads. The open range was good enough for them. As Tolkien would say, "the fanning prospects were not much worse than usual."

Julian, however, did not object to 4 chapters of bushrangers alternating with 4 chapters of farm life.

BACKGROUND

After the dedication on p. 3 of *Squiggles and Squinter* is a background note:

For purposes of this story, the mischievous twins were nicknamed Squiggles and Squinter by their older brother, who had borrowed the names from their cousin's twin rabbits in the Big City.

Originally, however, Squiggles and Squinter were the twin rabbits in bedtime stories told in 1941 by John L. Tierney to two of his sons.

However Fr Tierney quickly decided that he could never sustain the brilliance of his father's animal fable, so he simply kept the names as a memorial of his father and wrote something kindred to Bush Boys. LONG, LONG AGO,..

The following reminiscence from Fr. Tierney's childhood might help the reader of *Squiggles and Squinter* to appreciate the nostalgia of their names. This was originally published in the Cardinal Newman Catechist Centre Newsletter n. 90 of 25th October, 1990, as an apologetic for a priest writing Fiction like *Bush Boys, An Outdoor Adventure*.

When my brother and I were very young, Dad used to tell us bedtime stories. Sometimes he plagiarized well-known works like *The Wind in the Willows*, freely embellishing the tale with his own literary genius. We loved Toad, probably because of his naughtiness — I scarcely remember Mole or Rat,

But Dad made up his own stories too: his Squiggles and Squinter were twin rabbits, very mischievous, causing endless trouble to their parents and teacher, and to school friends like Lily Lamb, in whose pigtails they tied knots during class. Further, they were often rescued from their outdoor scrapes and adventures with an awful villain called Oyce (species, definitely human) by Sergeant Koala and Constable Kangaroo-Rat, who tore round the bush on a motor bike with side-car, and brought Staketty before the sleepy old judge, Silas Bull, who snored in court.

Occasionally Squiggles and Squinter would have a brief bout of being good — which seemed very dull to us and made us restless — then there would come

the change in Dad's voice (the stories were told in the darkened bedroom, with only a little light coming in through the door: it was before Pearl Harbour and the nightly anti-bombing blackout), "But...." and we would wriggle in our beds with delight, because some new wickedness was about to begin, and wickedness was much more entertaining!

Dad would be very, very tired, and sometimes go to sleep telling the stories.

He now reminds me of a seminary lecturer who was later chosen to be a bishop in spite of his going to sleep giving a lecture in dogmatic theology, This future bishop had often put his classes to sleep, but on one memorable occasion — and three independent witnesses testify to it — he did put himself to sleep!

Well, in 1940-41, the years when I turned 5 and 6, Dad had been teaching high school all day and often technical college [now TAFE] in the early evening, so his dozing off was understandable, but my brother and I simply would wake him up — without mercy.

Further, if he finished an evening's episode at a really exciting climax, we refused to let him stop there, We would seize his arms and legs and demand more, at once, now! No waiting till tomorrow night!

So he would have to rescue the twins from whatever crisis he had left them in, and give us another five minutes, to slop at a slightly less exciting point.

The next night, Dad might not remember where he was up to — he was so tired — but we would! We would brief him on the situation, and off he would go again.

Mum wanted Dad to write the stories down, but unfortunately, hi never did. This was before 1942 when, on his 50th birthday, Dad had the first of many short stories on farming and rural town life published in the old *Sydney Bulletin* — the radical weekly journal in which Lawson and Paterson had cut their literary teeth some 30, 40 and 50 years before.

Dad's children's stories might have rivalled anything ever published for children, and would only have needed an illustrator.

Alas, my brother cannot remember the details at all, and my sister was already reading big books for herself, and my second young brother who died in late 1942 was but a babe in arms.

Later on, when I was in 5th and 6th class at Beecroft Public School, 1946-1947, I used to entertain my classmates in the shelter shed (where we spent time on wet days) with stories about monsters. I have absolutely no recollection of doing this, but, at our school re-union in 1984, the others assured me that I did, and that I

SQUIGGLES AND SQUINTER AND THE BUSHRANGERS

kept them enthralled.

FEATURES OF SQUIGGLES & SQUINTER

THIS BOOK is Connor Court's first venture into fiction, and children's fiction at that. It is also the first time a mainstream publisher has produced one of the author's books, whether religious or fiction — all his others have been published "in-house" by the Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc.

The great strength of this book, as assessed by an older sister in a big family (see back cover blurb), is in being an exciting and easy-to-read adventure.

The author's summary (also back-cover) is:

The twins Squiggles and Squinter live on a family farm in Victoria. Nearest neighbours are newly arrived, desperate for help, yet hours away by foot, or on or behind a horse. There are no cans, mobiles, nothing electric, but lots to eat, fun in the creek, chopping down trees with father, mother's school on the kitchen table, and board games by candlelight — the world of 1875. A world with bushrangers and new adventures as the twins encounter them with lots of BANG BANG in this fast-moving story of boys and bushrangers.

There is also a low-key presentation of Catholic life. The author has declined, in the teeth of the prevailing political correctness, to privatize Christianity by silence — which would be to relativize it, exactly what Pope Benedict XVI is warning us against. Any adventure story, children's or otherwise, should be capable of portraying the life of the characters. Now Christianity was part of the life of most 19th century Australians. And it is a vita! part of the lives of the two families in this story.

Hence the boys say their prayers, and parents are ready to call down blessings from God on them.

Divided Christianity was, and still is, a fact of life. When Squiggles and Squinter stay over Saturday night at the Protestant family's farm, and they are invited to the family's Sunday Worship, their older sister politely declines, and instead, reads her brothers the Epistle and Gospel for the day, and leads them in the Rosary.

Further, the story brings out the tyrannies of time and distance with Sunday Mass. The weekly parish Mass is 35 miles away, a mere 60 km, but this is a four hour journey each way in a horse-drawn sulky. Each month there is Sunday Mass an hour away, but even then, one of the family, taking turn-about, must miss out, to mind the farm and deal with any crises with the animals.

The items on p, 6, Who's Who and What's What in 1875, help the reader situate himself in the story.

As might be expected, *Squiggles and Squinter* shares many features with the author's Bush Boy books. Perhaps the latter are a subliminal longing for those earlier days, when family life generally, and boyhood in particular, were greatly honoured.

Even this briefest of stories has some interesting characters, ranging from Old Ben Axletree, the coachman, to Miss Margaret Montmorency, the governess, who carries a small revolver in her bosom.

In addition to the heroic twins, the new boy from the city, Fred, makes an interesting extra for the story.

The bushrangers Nifty Ned and Nasty Nat are fairly much stereotypes, but that is allowable in such fiction.

What with the concluding mention of more visitors coming soon, the story cries out for a sequel. New characters are the dynamic for new "story-lines".

Squiggles and Squinter and the Bushrangers, James Tierney, Connor Court Publishing 2009, copiously illustrated by Ian James, 100 pages, **\$19.95.**

Order from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources, or in Victoria, or for bookshops from the publisher, PO Box 1, Ballan, Vic 3342.

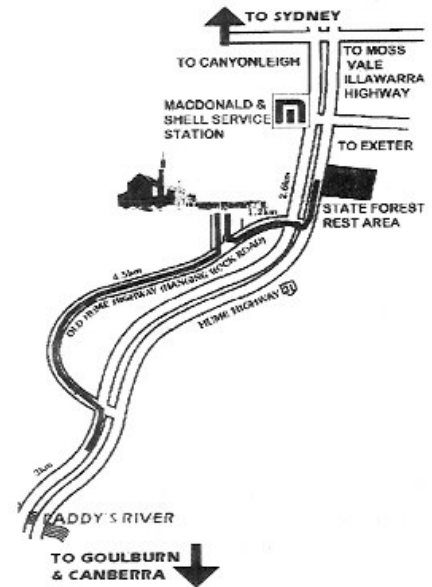
FR. JAMES TIERNEY

A book launch for *Squiggles and Squinter* will be held on Sunday 17 May 2009 at 2pm in the assembly marquee at the Pauline Fathers' monastery, Penrose Park. Everyone is invited to attend and we hope to see you there to celebrate another wonderful publication from Fr Tierney. Directions to the monastery from Sydney are provided below.

DIRECTIONS TO PENROSE PARK FROM SYDNEY

- ◆ Drive south towards Goulburn on the Hume Highway.
- ◆ The first landmark is Sally's Corner Road at the second petrol-and-comfort stop.
- ◆ After that is a State Forest picnic area (on the left).
- ◆ Then on the long downhill, get in the right lane to turn right into Hanging Rock Road (which is the Old Hume Highway) and follow the signs to the monastery.

NOTE: McDonalds and Shell Service Station, shown is on both sides of the Hume Highway.



KITE

KITE or Keeping in Touch by Email

What is KITE?

KITE or Keeping in Touch by Email is a network of homeschoolers and their supporters who want to keep in touch via email between editions of KIT.

What information can be sent via KITE?

Homeschoolers can share their success stories, recommended resources, news items, ideas, thoughts, opinions, questions, help and support, feelings etc

How does KITE work?

Members can email their contributions to a central email address. The coordinator will then pass these emails on through the network.

Will members inboxes fill up with unwanted forwards?

No. Only material originating with one of the members will be passed through the system.

Will members' email addresses become public knowledge?

No. By using a central coordinator, email addresses can remain confidential and the privacy of all members is ensured.

How can I join KITE?

Email Andy and Sue Elvis at: elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au

Would you like to win a copy of Squiggles and Squinter?

Write a story about or draw a picture of a real or made up bushranger.

Send your entries to:

Squiggles and Squinter Competition, c/o Elvis family, PO Box 968, Mittagong, NSW 2575

Include your name, address and age on a separate piece of paper

PASSIONFRUIT

This article has been taken from the publication *Bush Boys Explorers*, autumn 2009 edition. *Bush Boys Explorers* is the official magazine of Fr James Tierney's Bush Boys series. Each edition is full of interesting articles inspired by quotes from Fr Tierney's books. Although the articles can be read purely for enjoyment there are also suggestions for further activities which could be used for homeschooling. Back copies of *Bush Boys Explorers* are available from the downloads page at www.cardinalnewman.com.au

A Flower and the Passion

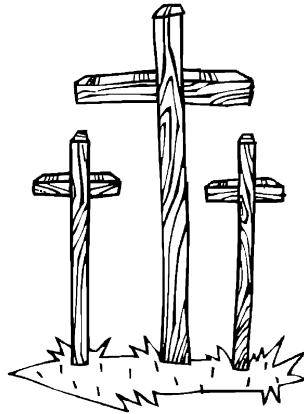
Most likely you are very familiar with the passionfruit, that smooth, round, purple fruit which is filled with sweet pulp, juice and seeds. But have you ever looked closely at a passionfruit plant and its flower? Spanish missionaries did. It was the 15th century and the Spanish had discovered the passionfruit in South America. You might look at a flower and see petals and leaves and seeds. However, these missionaries saw the 5 wounds of Christ, the Crown of Thorns, and other symbols of Christ's Passion on the cross. Every part of the passionfruit reminded them of the Crucifixion of Jesus.

If we look at a passion flower we will see:

- ◆ 5 petals alternating with 5 sepals. Both sepals and petals look very similar except a sepal has a green hook or awn at its tips. These represent the 10 faithful apostles – Peter who denied Jesus and Judas Iscariot, the betrayer are not included.
- ◆ 100 or more filaments radiating out from the centre of the flower. These change colour along their length producing different coloured concentric rings which probably guide insects and humming birds to the nectar at the centre of the flower. This corona of filaments represents the Crown of Thorns. If they are blue and white they represent heaven and purity.
- ◆ 3 stigmas which are the female reproductive parts. These accept the pollen onto their sticky tips. Each stigma is supported by a style which are joined together just above the ovary. The three stigmas represent the three nails that nailed Jesus to the cross. The joined styles call to mind the pillar to which Jesus was bound during His scourging.
- ◆ the seed producing chalice-shaped ovary supported on its receptacle.

This represents a hammer or the chalice used at the Last Supper.

- ◆ 5 anthers beneath the ovary. These are the male pollen producing organs. Each anther is supported by a filament. We think of the 5 Wounds of Christ when we see the anthers.



Looking at the passion plant we see:

- ◆ tendrils. The passionfruit grows on very vigorous, fast growing vines and has little tendrils which the plant uses to wrap itself around anything it comes into contact with, enabling it to climb to great heights. These tendrils are a symbol of the whips used in the scourging.
- ◆ large 3-lobed leaves with pointed tips. These tips represent the Holy Lance.

Now it is obvious why this plant is called the passionfruit. Different countries have other variations on this name. It is also known as Christ's Crown, Christ's Bouquet, Crown of Thorn's, Jesus' Passion, Passion, Mother-Of-God's-Star and Christ's Thorn. This plant also has at least two non-Christian names: in Japan it is known as the clock plant and the Israelis know it as the clock flower. Both names come from the regularly shaped flowers which remind people of the face of a clock.

For spectacular photographs showing all these flower structures clearly, visit www.org.uk/mag/artsep06/bj-passion-flower.html

Line drawings from Fr. Tierney's *New Boys in the Bush* are now available for download to colour in from the Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc. website www.cardinalnewman.com.au

ENJOYING PASSIONFRUIT

Passionfruit Toast

- Mix cream cheese and passionfruit pulp.
- Spread onto slices of raisin toast. Sprinkle with finely chopped pecans.

Passionfruit Cream in Meringue Cups

- Mix passionfruit pulp with apricot yogurt.
- Spoon into meringue shells.
- Decorate with strawberries and kiwifruit.
- Sprinkle with grated chocolate.

BUSH BOYS ENJOY PASSIONFRUIT

Jim was pensive. "The twins love passion fruit..."

Jack grinned. "You mean as a peace offering?"

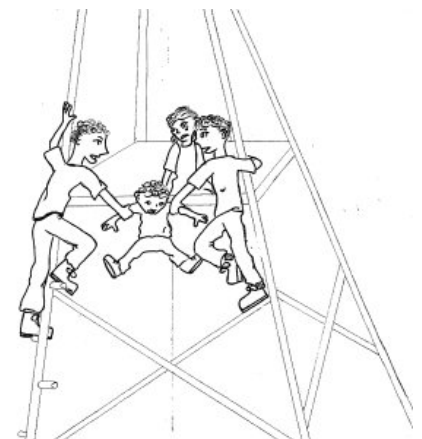
"Pity we haven't a sugar bag," said Jim, "but we can toss 'em loose in the back of the Rover."

"Better test 'em first," said Joe.

His brothers didn't bother to remind him he had already tested one. They were too busy, biting in half and squelching out the pulp. The taste was great...

...The supply of fruit seemed limitless. They only picked ones turning violet. Anything a bit green was for next time. They ate as they worked, "Quality control," Jim called it. All were uniformly good.

From *New Boys in the Bush*, Chapter 20: The Tumbledown, page 183



GRIEF, LOVE AND HOPE: A REVIEW

In this modern age, when society prides itself on mentioning the unmentionable (indeed, publicly displays huge billboards designed only towards that end, or subjects unfortunate students of literature to endless seminars on themes of perversion) there remains one subject which is rarely discussed, and that is death. To a prayerful Catholic, of course, death is a common daily theme: *now, and at the hour of our death...* yet despite that, death remains largely a closed topic. Although we might endeavour to live as though this were merely a passing moment in anticipation of eternity, it is pretty difficult to do. Dying is such a private thing.

I largely grew up in what would have then I think have been described as a Third World country (it is so no longer) and this has had its useful side, quite apart from the joys I experienced as a child without television, pop stars or peer pressure. One of these is an easy companionability with dirt (there is a lot of dirt about in poverty). Another is a delight in food. A third benefit, however, is a familiarity with death. Not that my family did much of it, apart from the odd uncle or aunt barely known and scarcely remembered: but when people died, it was an open thing. I remember as a kindergarten child in church filing past the open coffin of one of the nuns from school who had died; another soul gone to God. I remember visiting the family of a friend, whose grandfather had died, and paying respects to the body laid out in state on a table in the one 'living room' of that house, shared by three generations. I watched and attended colourful funerals in which everyone abandoned themselves to whole-hearted grief.

Later, many, many years later, I visited the body of my father in the funeral parlour (I believe that is what they are called), with my children. It was a strange experience, gazing at this cold, empty body. It looked like my father; yet quite clearly it was not. But he was seventy four. The death of a child is an unmentionable.

When Sue knocked on our door one day nine years ago and wept out her account of the ultrasound she had had, I didn't know what to say. We can never respond fully to so grave a situation when we have not experienced it ourselves, and I stumbled along for the next few months utterly in the dark, hoping that my words would not wound, might offer some comfort: but how can you ever truly comfort a mother mourning the

child who should be in her empty arms? Even now, I shudder to consider it: the desperate yearning for the unattainable, the return of one's dead baby; the despair of loss, the anger that it should happen, the challenge to faith and hope. Sue and Andy must have found so much of what we said inappropriate and unhelpful. How do you reach out to such suffering? How presumptuous to even proffer a word! And yet you cannot remain silent; you have to try. One thing of which it made me aware, looking at this from the point of those who are doing the suffering, is how difficult it is to accept help. We tend to rebuff it, for complicated reasons. It is so important to *permit* others to help, for their own sake if not ours, as Andy and Sue so charitably did for us despite their intense grief.

Sue and Andy coped. I suppose we would all have to, but I don't know how well I'd do it. *Grief, Love and Hope: the Death of Our Baby Thomas* is a beautiful, touching and sincere book. It is also charming and uplifting (through the tears). There are so many people whom you unexpectedly find have suffered this sort of loss, and selfishly, I find Sue's book a great asset, something concrete I can offer (even to those who claim no faith in God) and say, look, this is how my friend lived through it; perhaps this can help. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Sue and Andy and the children for allowing us into a small corner of this private pilgrimage of grace.

SARAH FANNING

GRIEF, LOVE AND HOPE: A REVIEW

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 www.cardinalnewman.com.au

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In her deeply personal account of the brief Earthly life of "our baby Thomas" Sue Elvis has provided a candid account of her struggles, both with her Faith and her human emotions, after the early death of Thomas. Her writing rings very true to one who has been through the same human trauma – our son Justin, born prematurely, though fully developed, died after 10 days from a hospital pathogen.

In reading her book, I found myself nodding in agreement as I turned the pages. Questions about God's love for us; the point of suffering by the innocent; a sense of guilt and failure; the dislike of endlessly repeating the story to well-intended acquaintances; the cutting, casual remarks made by the indifferent and uncaring – all these pains rush back upon me even after 20 years. What would my son be doing *now*? Would he be married, have a family, have died as a teenager, what would he look like, what would his voice sound like, would he be famous or infamous?

All these are natural speculations, and I think, quite proper to any parent in our situation. And yet, they are perhaps irrelevant to my son's life because they are not part of his life. His life is now eternally elsewhere – in Heaven, before God and, because he now possesses perfect charity, is ever aware and attentive to the needs of his parents, and his brothers and sisters.

So for us, like that of Sue and Andy Elvis, our vocation as parents is a success.

But what can one say to all the many thousands of other families who have suffered this same human loss but Heavenly gain? First, read this book. Second, pray for peace of mind and soul. And third, always make the departed child part of your family. Talk to your other children about their brother or sister. Encourage them to pray to him or her, particularly in times of trouble. It will bring them much comfort.

I warmly thank Sue Elvis for writing this book and most sincerely hope that it would become an automatic bereavement and counselling 'gift' for all suffering parents, perhaps made available to them by the staff at the hospital that cared for their dead child. In my view, regardless of a person's Faith or lack thereof, they will gain much help, consolation and encouragement from this heroic book.

JOHN WILKS B.Pharm.M.P.S. M.A.A.C.P.
 26th September 2008

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN CATHOLIC IN A SECULAR WORLD

My name is Sue Hill and I have homeschooled on and off for the past 13 years with my 11 children. My talk is to discuss with you how to integrate our children with the secular world and still keep them Catholic. I am no expert and everyone of you would have ideas about this that are equally as good and better than mine. I will attempt to tell you a little about what we have done over the time and about some of the mistakes we have made.

We have tried to involve our children in extra curricular activity and have been involved over the time in soccer, surf lifesaving, netball, drama, choir, art classes, dancing etc. etc. We have also practised various Catholic devotions which have supported our faith. We managed over these last 13 years to come to most of the camps, either full time or at least visiting. My husband who works all week and travels 1/2 an hour each way to town to do so, did not want to travel up to the mountains on weekends. As a result we didn't get to socialize too much in between camps with the Catholic homeschoolers.

We always have attended the First Saturday of the Month Devotions in honour of Our Lady of Fatima and we have said the Rosary each day. For a while it was a fragmented type of affair, but as we started to see some problems developing with one of our teenage sons, we moved it to the morning. Since this time we have managed to say it together every day. We get up and make it the first thing of the day. Even if some have to go elsewhere we as a group follow that person so they can prepare to get ready, brush teeth, dress etc. while we say it. I have found it to be a most powerful prayer that has brought many graces both temporal and spiritual to us all.

I feel as though our family has changed over the time. Although we seemed strong in our faith it was not until we saw the danger of one of us possibly losing it, that we realised just how serious it was to remain focused on our goal to get to heaven. I think it is important to remember that we cannot become smug and complacent in our journey. There are no guarantees for our children to keep their faith just because we have put in effort for them to do so. They ultimately have to choose it for themselves when they reach a certain age. I also think that we have to balance our children's interaction with secular society in order for them to be able to deal with challenges that they will come up against as they grow into adults. For example as a young child we would not expose them to swearing in sport clubs and the like. However as they grow older they have to learn not to swear themselves, even if they hear it. They have to choose sometimes to do what is right without us protecting them from the choices. It is a difficult thing to balance, but prayer and common sense usually prevails. I think it is important for young people to have some

time to do things by themselves. Just to have a little chance to say, go for a swim, or a surf, or a jog, or for a walk with some friends. Around 16 years old or so they do need chances to do some mixing with other young people or they can become very lonely. The challenge is to find the right people. That is why the Catholic homeschooling movement and other movements like ACSA (The Australian Catholic Students Association) and well as other orthodox Catholic groups are so important for them as well as sporting groups and the like.

Within our time of homeschooling we became more devout as a family, (although we obviously still have a huge way to go). I suppose realising the great pressures on our children to grow up with a faith in our secularized world had a lot to do with that. I started to spend more of my free time in holy hours and as a result some of my children followed suit (not all but some) and so many blessings in the spiritual line have come to us. These blessings can often be overlooked but in light of what our final goal is, heaven, they are so obvious and precious: Children who practise and love the faith, a good marriage (with conversion to the faith), hard working young adults and especially young people who have the same aspiration to reach heaven.

There seemed to be a change with us all when we decided to join the Lay Missionaries of Charity. This is a lay branch of the Mother Teresa order and encourages helping the poorest of the poor, beginning with your family first. Then it encourages you to branch out to others in your neighbourhood or people God may send to you. This seems to have made such a difference to the children's faith. To be a part of spreading the faith in action or word seems to concrete it all. I don't think we should be afraid to take some time to try and spread our faith to others. The most unexpected things happen when we become open to this. For instance I had a girl ring me one day from our town, who I knew of by sight only. She had a Catholic grandmother who had died when she was 4 years old. For many years she had been searching for the truth. She had a dream one night of Our Lady and awoke with a smell of roses. She rang me as the only Catholic she knew of and she wanted to find nuns!!!! I befriended her and after about 12 months she was confirmed and made her first holy communion. The strange thing was that she was the most unlikely person to find this grace. God calls who he will and it is often not who we expect. She was the world model for Billabong and into a life of bikini billboards and the like. She has since found the emptiness in this. Another lady rode by just recently on a horse!! She had a reputation in our town as a topless waitress and was a very hard sort of lady. She had had some dreadful relationships with men in her life, how-

ever she had kept a miraculous medal given to her some time before. She had developed a relationship with Christ and was talking to me about this, because the children wanted to pat her horse. As it turned out her mother's cousin was Blessed Mother Mary Mckillop and her whole family was Catholic, with many religious in her line. I invited her to learn about her Catholic Heritage. To date she has come over with a book from the library on Marian Shrines and amongst her rough exterior there is a real longing and love for Our Lord. I feel that God sends us these people. They are a wonderful gift and after I spoke to her I felt full of joy.

There are a lot of other things I could mention about reaching out to others within our vocation, without compromising our first duty to our spouses and children. I never like to leave the house for meetings and the like. I managed a retreat over the last couple of years and did not like to be away from the family too long. But I must admit it made a difference to my mothering and my role as wife. One brainstorm that came from one of these prayer sessions was to foster a child. We didn't feel in the position to foster a child permanently. (They wouldn't let us anyway as we had a baby at the time). I thought of maybe Uncles and Aunties, which is a group that allows you to help a child out by having them over once a month for a day or a weekend. After a lot of prayer and discernment we put in and were allocated the cutest little boy who was then 3 years old. He was an only child and his mother had depression. They lived in a very low socio-economic area but he was very well looked after. We told the social worker that we needed a child who would not negatively affect our children. He has been a real blessing to us. We don't do much at all except let him interact and he brings us a lot of joy. His story was an unusual one as well. His mother was told to abort him all through her pregnancy due to medication she was on. The medical staff convinced her that she was going to have a severely retarded child. This girl's mother however had had a dream that she gave birth to a baby boy and Jesus was holding him in the dream. These stories make the whole tragedy of abortion so real and we could see Our Lady, through the Rosary, answering our prayers by sending him.

I think we all have our own stories to tell. We just need to have the eyes of faith to see the wonderful works of grace in our lives. We struggle like all people do. Nothing that you do, that is worth anything of value, is ever easy. We make mistakes and hopefully learn from them and we are still changing and learning all the time. All we can pray for is the grace to persevere and keep trying. I can't stress enough how helpful and wonderful Our Lady's Rosary and the visits to our Lord have been for us. God bless you all...keep praying... "prayer obtains all things."

SUE HILL

OPERATION ORGANISATION

Life for us is relatively easy at the moment. Our house is clean, tidy and organised, we all have washed and ironed clothes waiting to be worn, meals appear on time three times a day and the children are being educated without too much drama. We even find time to have fun and enjoy being a family. But things weren't always this way. I used to wonder if it was possible to homeschool and cope with babies, keep a clean house, cook meals and remain sane. Surrounded by mess, with a crying baby on my knee, a couple of children wanting immediate help with their maths, a toddler demanding what was for morning tea and the phone ringing, I would despair and threaten to send my children to school. I never did send them to school. I didn't even get as far as enquiring about schools. What I did do was get organised.

I used to despise routines and organisation. How boring life would become if ruled by routine. Wasn't this one of the reasons we decided to homeschool: to avoid the daily sandwich making session, the rush for the school bus, the pick up and the drop off, the homework that had to be handed in on time, the busy school timetable, the ringing bells? Yes, we enjoyed determining our own schedule each day. If it was a sunny day we could pack a picnic and drive to the beach. If someone was sick we could stay home and read books. If we were enjoying a subject we could spend hours immersed in it instead of moving onto something else. But one day I realised that we weren't getting as far as the fun and interesting stuff. We were bogged down with the more mundane aspects of life such as trying to find clean matching socks and endeavouring to make a meal out of what was in the pantry minutes before dinner time. If we made it as far as school work we were held up because no one could find a pencil or a sharpener or the book we were reading just yesterday...

I have come to the conclusion that life is far more enjoyable when we are organised. Some sort of routine is needed as a framework to family life. Routine holds the family together enabling everyone to carry out their duties efficiently and smoothly. But routine needn't be boring. I discovered that when all the necessary, but maybe not very exciting, tasks are accomplished there is plenty of time left over for the more interesting and fun aspects of life. One way of dealing with a messy house and overwhelming circumstances is escape: "I've had enough. Get your shoes on and grab a hat. Let's go on a picnic." Of course, there are whoops of delight from the children and everyone's mood improves dramatically. However, there is the mess to return to at the end of the day. It doesn't magically disappear while everyone is out. It's so much nicer being able to enjoy time together knowing all

the beds have been made, washing is fluttering on the line, a good day's school work was achieved the previous day and dinner, if not prepared in advance, has at least been planned.

So how did we get from chaos to a smoothly running household? Despite my negative feelings about routine, I decided I would have to write a daily schedule for our family. What should be included in the schedule? First, I thought about our family's priorities. Top of the list was prayer which provides the foundation for a God focused and joyful family. The eternal question is: should we or should we not go to daily Mass? I took an honest look at our situation. We were in the habit of going to daily Mass but for us daily Mass had become a daily struggle: I'd get grumpy with our sleepy, slow moving little ones; there was never time to do the chores before we rushed out the door and so we'd return to a messy house; school work would start late especially if we were waylaid by a friendly parishioner. I decided not to feel guilty or pressured and removed daily Mass from our routine. Instead, we put in its place a daily family prayer and Bible reading time. (We endeavour to celebrate an extra Mass every now and then). I feel very peaceful about this decision especially as I can see many benefits from having this quiet prayer time as a family each morning. (I am not suggesting each family give up daily Mass but that each family should make their own decisions based on their circumstances.)

With prayer scheduled in, I moved onto our other priorities. Of course, educating our children at home is a number one priority. We need chunks of free uninterrupted time to devote to learning. We also need to allow time for outside lessons and activities that occur regularly each week. But being realistic, I knew we couldn't just get up each day and begin homeschooling. I could not see us working in our pyjamas surrounded by mess. I am not relaxed enough to do that. (In fact, I couldn't see myself doing anything without first having a shower, dressing in ironed clothes and blow drying my hair.) For us, housework would have to be a priority before we could even think of schooling. So the chief aim of my first schedule was to get the housework under control so that we could at least begin homeschooling each day.

I made a list of jobs that I wanted done each morning in order to achieve the clean, relaxed environment that I thought would encourage good learning. My list included: beds made, bedrooms reasonably tidy, breakfast dishes washed and put away, floors swept, bathrooms cleaned, washing on the line. But who would do each job (I wasn't

willing to do everything on my own) and how would I ensure that the jobs were done each day?

Writing a job roster solved the question of who does what. A roster ensures that the jobs are distributed amongst all family members. I even gave jobs to the little ones. There are plenty of small tasks they are able to do. In fact, I have found that the younger members of a family are very eager to copy their older siblings and join in with the work. It's only as they get older that the attraction of doing chores wears off and getting children to do their jobs becomes a bit of a battle.

So how to make sure everyone actually does their jobs? I resorted to a family talk where I explained what being a family means and what I expected of each of the family members. We all enjoy the fun and good times of being a family but we also have to share the work of being a family. If our children will not work then they cannot share in the pleasures. Of course, family life is not all work and we make sure we have lots of treats and fun activities to ensure a balance. I think our children work very hard, perhaps harder than many children. One day while visiting, my mother caught sight of my job roster fixed to the fridge door. She looked at all the tasks I expected to be done each day and remarked, "What do *you* do? I assured her there was no danger of me becoming lazy: there are so many things that need attention in a large growing homeschooling family. No, I do not feel guilty about sharing out the work of being a family. I don't think it's a mother's job to be a servant to her children. It's her job to make sure her children learn all the skills needed to live an independent life including how to wash, cook, clean...

The job roster in itself isn't foolproof. I discovered that jobs needed to be completed within a certain time otherwise we were no better off. Our school work would start later and later each morning because we were waiting for Captain Slow to finish his chores. If chores could be stretched out long enough then morning tea time might arrive before any learning had taken place. The children soon realised that Mum would never miss her morning coffee just because the schedule was running behind time.

I decided that our children needed to get up early to complete their various tasks by a certain time so we could start school work at an appropriate hour. I had some guilty feelings thinking I was a hard mother. Other mothers seemed to have a much gentler mothering style: enjoying leisurely breakfasts when each child had fulfilled their sleep needs. Then I read Father Tierney's article* about the value of early rising, how it encourages discipline. Each morning I would do the rounds waking each child. Then one day I

OPERATION ORGANISATION

read something further by Father Tierney (or did I just miss it the first time round?) Father stated that early rising is good discipline but discipline is only valuable if it comes from oneself. Would my children rise early if I didn't knock on their doors each morning? Would they continue these good habits if I wasn't around? Would they be able to get themselves up and off to work each morning when living away from home? I decided that I wouldn't wake our children any more but expect them to get up on their own at the same hour. Contrary to my expectations, we are all early risers in our house. I don't know how the older ones get themselves up. Perhaps they set an alarm? The younger ones, I think, wake when they hear noise in the kitchen. Father Tierney also made the point that if you want to get up early you need to get to bed on time.

Even if everyone has got up at the correct time there is always someone who is tempted to hide away in her bedroom so she can read a page or two of a current book instead of getting on with the work at hand. To discourage this I have found it helps to tick off the completed roster tasks at a certain time each morning. For us, this happens to be after our morning prayers. If a child has not finished his jobs during the allotted time then he is expected to do them during our scheduled morning tea break. Captain Slow quickly turns into Captain Speedy when his morning tea is under threat. And just because the job is completed quickly doesn't mean that it doesn't have to be done properly. Inspecting the quality of a job and insisting on it being done again if necessary really pays off. Sometimes I feel like a real Sergeant Major but keep telling myself that it is all good training.

While I am ticking off roster jobs, I decide on what to cook for the evening meal. Each day I have a cook's helper who helps with this decision, searches the freezer for meat and who is expected to reappear after the day's schooling to help prepare the dinner. Usually, I end up assisting the cook's helper instead of them helping me. Knowing that dinner has been planned takes a great stress away from the day.

Getting children to cooperate with a new schedule can take time. Insisting that children show self discipline is not easy. Sometimes, for a mother, it can all seem too hard. Changing a routine slowly, one thing at a time, gives children time to adjust and they gradually learn that mum is serious and this is how life is going to be from now on. But it is not only the children who have to be disciplined. I have found that I have to show a good example. No lying in bed in the morning regardless of how much or little sleep I receive each night. No, when the clock (and the schedule) says it's time to get up, I have to swing my legs over the side of the bed and move. How difficult that can be!

A family schedule is not written once and for all. Ours has changed over the years as the needs of the family have changed. For example, a baby in the family or a family crisis changes all a family's priorities. There have been times when we've had to cross things off our schedule and prune back to the basics. Certainly our family schedule today, with our youngest child five years of age, is very different from that we followed when we were overwhelmed with a crying baby, sleepless nights and a fretful toddler. These days we do not have to schedule in afternoon sleeps or cut back housework to the minimum or coincide prayer and spiritual reading with breastfeeding. Driving sessions with our learner drivers, exercise for parents and one-on-one time with teenagers are more of a priority.

Operation Organisation has got our lives into order. Perhaps too much order? Maybe the Elvis household sounds more like the army than a family? Could we all be a little bit too obsessed with order, routine and cleanliness? No, I don't think so. I am a real routine convert. With everyone working hard together we can get the more mundane tasks of life completed in relatively little time. Then we are free to get on with homeschooling, a family outing, enjoy some free time or whatever else we have thought important enough to schedule into our day.

We have finished lunch and, while the children get on with the post-lunch chores, I am using my free time to finish this article. Soon, one by one, as jobs are completed, each child will appear to say, "Reporting for duty!" "Free time, soldier," I will reply, returning the family salute. (What was that I said about the army?)

By the way, I reorganised the way we learn too. But how we found an enjoyable way of education that takes into account babies, phones and simultaneous questions is a whole new story!

SUE ELVIS

REGIMEN OF RISING

Extract from Father James Tierney's 'Handouts No. 49: *More From the Daily Log*, available to download from: www.cardinalnewman.com.au

REGIMEN OF RISING

Regimen means a manner of living, especially a daily programme, diet or government rule, from Latin, *regere* = to rule, cf. regimentation, regime etc. (English speakers limp without a bit of Latin.)

Spiritual writers insist on a daily regimen with a fixed hour of rising for prayer. A rock-bottom minimum for morning prayer (to keep out of Hell) is to make the Sign of the Cross in mid-air jumping out of bed. But spiritual writers would not countenance that!

Growing boys and young men need early rising.

- It strengthens them against mere whims and feelings by helping them act contrary to their inclinations, hence taking a step towards maturity.
- The Devil exploits whims and feelings, and tempts souls, without their even being aware of it. He specializes in assassination and stabs in the back.
- The discipline of early rising rather than lying abed helps build up self-control against unruly male urges and temptations (as do Lenten penances that are also self-denial).
- It requires the further self-discipline of putting oneself to bed the night before.
- Hence it helps the growth to maturity measured by the capacity to defer plans and desires according to a scale of good priorities.
- It helps develop the self-discipline of punctuality for meals and meetings. Being on time is part of justice and charity, in that it is consideration for others, and not making them waste time waiting.
- Claims for consideration of 'morning persons' and 'night persons' might not be relevant here. It is quite feasible to will oneself to become an early riser, given the motivation, for instance, keeping a job.
- Early rising is the recipe used in seminaries, the army, boot camps etc. But it doesn't work unless the imposed discipline becomes self-discipline. Otherwise, it is useful only for its own time, and not lifelong — hence unpunctual and disobedient priests.
- Besides, it's in *Biggles*: time lost at the beginning of the day is never made up.
- Daylight saving is a veiled tribute to early rising, with everyone fooled by the clock and carried along by the crowd to get up an hour earlier.

BEDE'S JOURNAL

Bede's Journal refers to a recent debate on the website of *The Guardian*.

A.C. Grayling, professor of philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London, had recently laid down a challenge:

"According to Madeleine Bunting, Christianity has fostered learning and science in Europe for hundreds of years. Really?

The impression of confusion is heightened by Ms Bunting's version of history, which she opposed to mine by name. She tells us that Christianity has "fostered learning and science" in Europe for "hundreds of years".

I challenge her to name one - even one small - contribution to science made by Christianity in its two thousand years; just one."

The "debate" can be followed at:
http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/a_c_grayling/2007/01/bunting_on_science_and_history.html

It is fair to say that Grayling lost his challenge as you might expect.

However, two of the responses, one by the author of Bede's Journal, usefully set out shortly, cogently and in a civilised manner the response to the type of challenge now being faced. The challenge is to face the argument that somehow people who are Christians, and in particular, Catholics, are somehow unable to reconcile themselves to science, and that Science and Christianity are irreconcilable.

There are other responses, of course. But the following two rest on historical fact and are difficult to refute:

"peterNW1 Comment No. 401923: January 29 16:36

A.C Grayling writes ...

"I challenge her to name one - even one small - contribution to science made by Christianity in its two thousand years; just one"

May I take up the challenge on Madeleine's behalf?

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), who first proposed the heliocentric universe, was a Polish Catholic priest.

Gregor Mendel, the father of genetics, was an Austrian Catholic monk.

The Jesuit astronomer Christopher Scheiner (1575-1650) discovered sunspots before Galileo.

Jesuit Pietro Angelo Secchi (1818-1878) discovered 4,000 new stars. His system for star classification is the basis of the Harvard system.

In fact there are no fewer than 35 craters on the moon named after Jesuit scientists alone.

The Big Bang Theory was proposed in 1927 by Georges Lemaitre (1894-1966), a Belgian Catholic priest.

The Jesuit Giambattista Riccioli was the first person to determine the rate of acceleration of a free-falling body, and the first to make a pendulum that was so accurate he was able to calculate the gravitational constant.

Another Jesuit priest, Francesco Maria Grimaldi, discovered the diffraction of light. Grimaldi's discovery led to hypotheses on the wavelike character of light and to Isaac Newton's interest in optics.

The lightning rod was invented by a Norbertine priest named Procopius Divisch (1698-1765).

French Catholic priest Rene-Just Haey (1743-1822) was the father of modern crystallography.

But why just list priests? Some scientists who were laymen and convinced and practicing Catholics ...

The founder of bacteriology, Louis Pasteur. Andre Ampere. Alessandra Volta. Charles Coulomb.

How about mathematician Blaise Pascal, who when he wasn't inventing calculators was writing the *Pensees*, a defence of Catholicism?

I am amazed that A.C Grayling has landed himself a job as Professor of Philosophy if he is able to ask such a dumb question.

James Hannam:Comment No. 401878: January 29 16:19

Heliocentricism was finally accepted not due to Galileo's advocacy, but thanks to the stunning success that Keplers Rudolphine tables saved the planetary movements. Kepler, of course, was driven to his elliptical orbits precisely by his belief in a God

who didn't get the orbit of Mars wrong by a few minutes. All his science was informed and inspired by his religious belief. So, Professor Grayling asks for one contribution to science made by Christianity. I offer Kepler's laws.

There are many other possibilities. Taxonomy is directly descended from the scientific studies of Noah's Ark in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The need to determine the number of animals led to the concept of a member of one species as something that couldn't reproduce with a member of another. Likewise, very many early taxonomies were attempts to count how many animals were on the ark and how big it had to be.

An even more surprising connection is the way that concerns about grace spread into the mathematics of change. Fourteenth century scholars wanted to understand how the Holy Spirit imparted grace to individuals. Quite quickly, the techniques they had adopted were turned to thinking about other kinds of change. They also moved on to motion and cracked the problem of uniformly accelerated motion over two centuries before Galileo.

In fact, as I have found, Christianity had an important impact on every step of the road to modern science. Let me now summarise exactly what they were:

The preservation of literacy in the Dark Ages

Because it is a literary religion based on sacred texts and informed by the writings of the early church fathers, Christianity was exclusively responsible for the preservation of literacy and learning after the fall of the Western Empire. This meant not only that the Latin classics were preserved but also that there were sufficient men of learning to take Greek thought forward when it was rediscovered.

The doctrine of the lawfulness of nature

As they believed in a law abiding creator God, even before the rediscovery of Greek thought, twelfth century Christians felt they could investigate the natural world for secondary causes rather than put everything down to fate (like the ancients) or the will of Allah (like Moslems). Although we see a respect for the powers of reason by Arab scholars they did not seem to make the step of looking for universal laws of nature.

The need to examine the real world rather than rely on pure reason

Christians insisted that God could have created the world any way he liked and so Aristotle's insistence that the world was the way it was because it had to be was successfully challenged. This meant that his ideas started to be tested and abandoned if they did not measure up.

The belief that science was a sacred duty

This is not so much covered in this essay, but features again and again in scientific writing. The early modern scientists were inspired by their faith to make their discoveries and saw studying the creation of God as a form of worship. This led to a respect for nature and the attempt to find simple, economical solutions to problems. Hence Copernicus felt he could propose a heliocentric model for no better reason that it seemed more elegant.

Not all these factors were unique to Christianity but they all came together in Western Europe to give the world its only case of scientific take off which has since seen its ideas spread to the rest of the world.

BEING AN ADULT

I am now an adult. I must be (despite feeling quite inadequate to the task) because our son is getting married. And he's not the first one. Our oldest son got married last year, and celebrates his first anniversary on Easter Sunday this year. I am constantly amazed by these facts!

Many years ago Michele (Vieira) started the Catholic Homeschooling Camp with a tent camp at Wombeyan Caves. I didn't go - I was at home with a week-old baby - but Shaun took our children of the time, Benedict and Michael and Mary Rose. Michele of course took her children, seven of them at that stage, including one five year old daughter Elizabeth. Over the years we have expressed to each other the idea that we hoped the camps would provide an opportunity for many children to meet other young Catholics and eventually perhaps spouses, if marriage were our children's vocation in life. (This was a function which used to be fulfilled by such organisations as the Catholic Youth Club or the Catholic Bushwalkers Association.) Now, nearly thirteen years later, it is indeed bearing fruit! Benedict met Rachael, his wife, through the camp at Fitzroy Falls and homeschooling connections, and

Michael is marrying Elizabeth. Michele's eldest, Stephen, met his wife Emma at Father Murphy's camp in the Snowy Mountains. I daily thank God for having provided such charming young women, strong in their faith, for my sons.

Thanks should also be given to Michele and Daniel, and to Helen and Michael Brearley, for their commitment to the Fitzroy Falls Camps.

SARAH FANNING

CONGRATULATIONS MICK AND ELIZABETH

Elizabeth Vieira and Michael Fanning will be married on Saturday 18th April, at Goulburn Cathedral.

Mick and Elizabeth, may God shower His blessings upon you. Congratulations!

RIGHT-HANDED MAN

MAN IS NATURALLY RIGHT-HANDED (with few exceptions) and that proves he should **DRIVE ON THE LEFT OF THE ROAD**.

It comes about like this. Right-handed man sheathed his sword in a scabbard on his left. A long sword would be impossible to get out if worn on the right. So swords were drawn out cross-body.

To mount a horse, a man needed to swing his leg across - his right leg, to avoid tangling with his scabbard. So he mounted on the horse's left, and horses now expect it. It was quicker to ride off without a U-turn. There-fore he rode on the left of the road. Q.E.D.

Men who mounted across the road were going the other way. So everyone kept to his own left.

Moreover, this was better for sword-fighting an enemy coming the other way.

Horse-drawn vehicles kept to the left of the road, too. Their drivers had more room for their whip-hands, and for their whip-elbows. And it was better for using their whips on the oncoming traffic...

No wonder early motorcars drove on the left - except in countries where revolutions turned the established order upside down and they felt they had to do something different, to justify themselves and assert their new independent spirit. Corollary: Spiral staircases go up anti-clockwise, so a defender had his sword arm away from the wall; while attackers were disadvantaged fighting cross-body.

SHIPS AND AEROPLANES, however, keep to the right. But the basic reason is still the same, because man is right-handed.

Why the difference?

The earliest boats were steered by a board over the side, with a tiller or lever attached. Which side? Right side, of course, because a man wanted to steer with his right hand on the tiller.

Thus the right side of a ship was called **starboard**, the side where the **steering-board** was.

For a while, the left side was called **larboard**: L for left, in place of ST, add "arboard". and you've got it

When ships came "into port" and moored alongside a wharf, they protected their steering-boards by having their larboard sides against the wharf. This was nearest 'the port', **hence the left side got called port**.

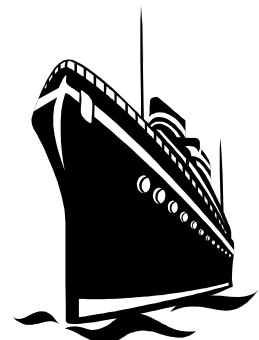
When two ships were meeting head-on, they both steered to starboard, to avoid their steering-boards getting scraped off if they should touch, and so the international rule became that you pass 'port-to-port'.

Also, they gave the right-of-way to the ship on their right (which used be so on our roads, prior to give-way signs) to protect their steering-boards in a collision.

Finally, aircraft simply followed suit.

P.S. A dictionary and Northcote Parkinson helped me put this little essay together!

FR. JAMES TIERNEY



THE BEST OF KEEPING IN TOUCH

Keeping in Touch has entertained, helped and inspired homeschooling families for a number of years. Many of the articles contained in the numerous editions are worth reading again and again. We'd like to feature a couple of past articles which we hope you will enjoy.

We have chosen to revisit Callum Elvis' pet articles in the hope that it will inspire all children to write about their own pets for next term's edition of KIT.

Feathers Fur Or Fins, And Something Else

You would think that living in a rented house (no pets allowed), I wouldn't have much to do with pets. I haven't had a cat or a dog but I have had plenty of other animals.

Pet one: It started with fish. I borrowed money off Felicity (I never paid her back) and bought a black bubble eye and called it Sauron. I thought keeping fish would be easy and fun. Several dead fish later, I changed my mind.

Pet two: I then turned to a new pet, an axolotl. (Using more borrowed money, never paid back), I then bought a tank and one big black axolotl. In case you have not seen one, an axolotl looks like a big fat lizard, about ten centimetres long, and with gills that look like little twigs of pine situated on either side of the head. The fantasy wore off pretty quick and was then turned to horror as one day I found the axolotl (which I called Jaws) sitting on top of the filter, head out of the water gasping for breath. Not long after that, I changed its name to Sweetheart and then to Bruce, but at the end of all the flipping and switching, I settled on Sweetheart. I then had a devious plan. I gave the axolotl to Duncan, ensuring that Sweetheart would be well fed without me paying and that all I had to do was watch and leave all the work to Duncan. Soon everyone wanted an axolotl, so me, Imogen and Felicity all bought new axolotls: Mozart, Folgrim and Gimpey. We all had so many that we had to buy two new tanks, the boys' animals in one and the girls' in another, and the spare one for the fish.

Pet three: Now, not long after we got Sweetheart, Felicity got a pair of finches. They were called Rosy and Sam (after the characters from Lord of the Rings). We hung them in the sunroom. They were trouble on wings from the moment we brought them home. As soon as we got their box open to transfer them to the cage, they were out like a shot and flew every which-way. It took us a whole half an hour to get the birds into the cage. They lived there happily finching away, chirping, and making a mess. All was fine until one day we found that Rosy had laid some eggs. We eagerly waited to see if the eggs would hatch. Alas, it was false hope. We looked in and found that out of the three eggs, there was only one, and a day or two later that disappeared too. We were happy until winter. That was when the deaths started. First, it was Rosy. She died of the cold, her poor little body frozen stiff. I had to bury her (I had now become an interspecies undertaker). Then the replacement bird, and then poor old Sam, all died of the cold.

Pet four: We now had one empty birdcage. Some months later, I was out visiting a friend who shall be nameless (Jimmy) and when I got back, I found that Imogen had bought a budgie, all with her money!!! She calls it Bobby and it lived in the finch cage. It is a lively and noisy bird. I have been trying to tame him, but he has other ideas though! I hope one day, to let him out of the cage so that he can fly around.

Pet five: Is a canary. It is Charlotte's and is one of the newest additions to our little zoo. We bought a new cage for Bobby as the finch cage was quite small and Charlotte got her canary to fill the empty cage. Charlotte calls her new canary Sunbeam, and it is her most coveted possession. Sunbeam is yellow and has mismatched legs, one, pink, and one black. Sophie thinks that it burned its leg. We had more fun getting the bird into its cage when it first arrived home. Imogen claimed that she was going to grab the bird out of its box and put it in its cage, so she opened the box and put her hand into the box that Sunbeam had come in. Sunbeam started to hop like mad, and Imogen ripped her hand out crying, "I'M FRIGHTENED!" She was so scared that when I asked for the box, she practically threw it at me. That was when Sunbeam made his dash for freedom, shooting out of the box and flying up around the

ceiling. After chasing Sunbeam around for a while, I was totally fed up and made a leap in the air, grabbing Sunbeam and popping him in the cage.

Pet six: For pet number six we have mice. They have always fascinated me and long before I got one, I promised myself that one day I would have and keep one as my own. This is how I got my mouse: It was a rainy day in the holidays and Felicity had been out walking. She popped into Vinnies to escape from a shower and found a huge cage for sale. Thinking we could find another pet to put in it, she lugged it all the way from the shops. Anyway, it had a house and a wheel and was so tall that it had three levels, a bottom, middle and a top. I cried, "A mouse cage!" and then I beset upon Mum wheedling and whining until she could not resist. She went out and brought home some mice despite previously insisting that we had enough mice living in our house already. (Dad regularly does battle with the mousetraps). Mice are a lot of fun. You can take them out of the cage and hold them. It is a lot of fun to have one on your head. When I first put them in the cage, I had to up end the box in the cage and out they both tumbled. But mine, (called Jerry), started to climb the wire sides of the cage up towards me as I struggled to get the top on. Mum brought home two mice (one for me and one for Sophie), then Felicity brought home two mice, one for herself and one for Duncan. So we now have Jerry, Mousie, Rincewind and Dibbler.

Right from the word go, escape was all the thing for the mice. They instantly started to explore the cage, hatching a deadly plan. They waited until dark to pull off their escape. Nine o'clock at night Dad comes in and says, "Which side of the cage are these mice supposed to live on?" Jumping out of bed, I then rushed into the study, breaking the world record for five metre dashes. And sure enough, on the outside of the cage was Sophie's mouse, Mousie. It is the smallest of all the mice. I rumbled them that time, but I was worried how long could I keep this up. One day there would be a time that I wouldn't be there to stop them getting out and Dad would get them with his mousetrap. They kept up the escapes, foiling all my plans to find out where they were escaping. All the worry eventually turned to stress and I found that I could not sleep at night. I eventually found a single cage bar that was stretched farther than the others. Closing it stopped the escapes for good. Two weeks later, I took Duncan's

mouse Rincewind out of the cage, and put him on my arm. Since then all the mice have been a lot happier around me and they all love to be held and to run up my arm, so I think that mice are great.

Pet seven: This is Dad's pet. Dad does not like animals as a rule, but this is just his pet. It has a steely nature, eats no food, does not have a cage, and does not move. All it does is sit and nod. Mum and me came by it in a garden centre. It's a dog made from steel and it has a neck made out of a spring. Dad called it K-9. It is the only pet that is custom made for Dad.

That is our entire menagerie. Keeping pets is fun and what pet next who knows? (Do you think the lady from Century 21 will notice 4 axolotls, 11 fish, 2 birds and 4 mice when she visits next!!!)?

**CALLUM ELVIS
KIT TERM 3 2004**

FINN

I have always had an obsession with pets (even if these crazes do not last long). But most of my enterprises have never passed the \$7.50 rat. However, shortly before February 2006 I caught wind of an opportunity to acquire one of my fascinations. I researched, read and provided facts, and slowly twisted Mum and Dad around.

Finally they agreed, but on one condition: I must clean my room before my birthday. I agreed thinking, hah! How easy! But on Wednesday 14 of February (four days before my birthday), I was still to be found with a bedroom currently occupying the state of "Disaster Zone". Hurriedly I went into overdrive, picking up rubbish at a rate of three pieces a minute. Mum was getting angry, "You'll get no presents at this rate!" she warned (she really meant it.). But by Friday afternoon, I felt that I had completed this somewhat mammoth task. Every shelf and side was scrubbed, the floor visible and even vacuumed!

Saturday morning was bright and cheerful. After something of a hesitant start the day began to race along. After lunch, Mum proposed that we should go look for this "Wonder Pet" that I wished to buy. Alas, we went from pet store to pet store, but not a wonder pet was to be found. Dejectedly we went home. Then Dad had brilliant idea: we would ring up and see if my pet could be ordered. Welby pet store said, "Yes"

and that the pet would be in on Monday. I was elated and eagerly ticked off the days until Monday with great anticipation.

Monday morning we received the news that my pet had arrived. That afternoon we rushed over to buy it. The shop doors practically burst as I rushed through them. There, near the counter, was the object of my desire, a pair of white ferrets! The lady took them out to show me. I had to choose one. There really wasn't much of a choice: they were both practically the same. Both were snowy white with red eyes. I chose and hurried to the counter. Somewhere in between those two points, we managed also to get a house, a ferret keeping book, and 2kg of food. I puffed up with pride as the ferret was boxed and paid for.

We housed him in the guinea pigs' old indoor cage (they had been recently turfed out to a hutch outside). From the start he was trouble. I was "slightly" afraid of him biting and he was bursting with excitement. When we let him out, he cavorted around the room leaping and flaring. I was terrified and could not bring myself to pick him up, thinking that he would attack me. This problem was solved by me buying a leather gardening glove and Mum buying some stop chew: a bitter foul-tasting acidic spray that we sprayed on our hands. We had one more problem, a name. No one had any very good ideas. Then I decided that he'd be called Glorfindle. This worked for a while, until Mum began to call him Doorhandle. I endured this for a while, but then, in desperation shortened his name to Finn. Since then he has acquired the nick-name "Ferret Features".

Finn is very smelly (so says everyone but me!). Dad says it's a furry smell. And I have to give him a bath every now and then. He hates it. When he is splashed with water, you can see how thin he is. He looks very much like a drowned rat!

Finn sleeps for twenty hours out of each day. He curls up under the rag I've given him and doesn't make a sound. All you can see is a covered lump, gently rising and falling with each breath.

Finn is a carnivore and he eats ferret food (or kitten food): both are dried meat shapes.

Exercise is great fun. My bedroom is his play area. When I put Finn down, he at once runs off. He has a curious

walk: he walks with his back arched and stretches out, then arches his back again. This movement is very much like that of a slinky. He loves to explore: he is always into everything he can get at. I once even caught him "ferreting" through my drawers. When he's happy, he lets out a quiet "dook, dook" noise, a bit like a chicken! Sometimes I take him for walks, using the guinea pigs' leash. He loves it outside. He finds the grass excellent to burrow in.

Not long ago, Mum decided that I wasn't paying enough attention to Finn: he kept trying to chew his way out of his cage, through metal bars. I protested, but Mum decided to see about selling him. We obtained permission to put a notice into the Welby pet shop. But meanwhile (as I dragged the notice writing out as long as I could) a larger cage arrived, ordered by Mum (and forgotten about) some time ago. We put Finn into this and he was perfectly happy (I still haven't written the notice).

Just a few days ago, Mum saw a mouse in the living room while Dad, Imogen, and I were out (at choir). When we got home, she told us. We rubbed our hands with glee. At last Finn could earn his keep. We fetched him from his cage and set him down near the chair. He went wild, bouncing around the room. But he didn't catch the mouse. It happened again. The mouse was seen scooting under one of the living room chairs. We again fetched Finn. This time we placed him near the chair and lifted it up. The mouse burst from underneath, running straight for Finn. He leaped three feet into the air and bolted, too scared to attack.

Ferrets breed only once a year, around Christmas. If you do want to buy a ferret, think carefully. Can you stand the smell? A ferret may not be the best thing to have around if you have little children/brothers and sisters or mothers (I've found out from experience). Finn likes to nip at my little sister's ankles and he tries to hang off the bottom of Mum's skirt. Do you have the energy to exercise him every day?

Finn and I are on good terms. The glove has become a play-thing and there are no more remarks about selling him (yet). I think a ferret is an exciting, amusing pet but a lot of work!

**CALLUM ELVIS
KIT TERM 2 2006**

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- Seton readers
- *Our Friends from Other Lands* (Daughters of St Paul)
- *Lingua Mater Language Lessons from Literature*
- Catholic History Readers
- ABeka Science Series
- *Christ the King, Lord of History*
- Fr Murphy's sacramental preparation booklets

Top Read Aloud or Just to Enjoy Books:

- *Trapp Family Singers*
- *Cottage at Bantry Bay* Series
- *The Boundary Riders and The Family Conspiracy* (Joan Phipson)
- *For the Term of His Natural Life*
- *Bush Boys* series
- *Sun on the Stubble*
- *Seven Little Australians*
- Bethlehem books
- *Letzenstein Chronicles* (Meriol Trevor)
- *Narnia* series
- *The Hobbit*
- *The Lord of the Rings*

MICHELLE VIEIRA**Favourite Books:**

- *The Holy Bible*
- *The Secret of the Rosary* (St. Louis de Montfort)
- *The Love of Eternal Wisdom* (St. Louis de Montfort)
- *The Glories of Mary* (St. Alphonsus di Liguori)
- *Preparation for Death* (St. Alphonsus di Liguori)
- *Saddle for a Throne* (William Ogilvy)

DAVID OBEID**FAVOURITE BOOKS:**

- *Swiss Family Robinson*
- *Little Red Train* series by Benedict Blathwayt
- *Happy Little Family* by Rebecca Caudill
- *Bush Boys* (all of them!) by Rev. James Tierney
- *Brave Buffalo Fighter* by John D. Fitzgerald
- *Famous Five* by Enid Blyton
- *Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- *The Secret Book of Gnomes*
- *Charles Kingsford Smith*
- *Little Grey Rabbit* books by Allison Uttley
- *Frog and Toad* series by Arnold Lobel
- *St. Thomas Aquinas* by Mary Fabyan Windeatt

THOMAS ENGLISH (6 YEARS OLD)**Favourite Books:**

- *The Cure of Ars* by Abbe Trochu
- All Jane Austen novels
- *Real Learning* by Elizabeth Foss
- *Wind in the Willows*
- *A Christmas Carol*
- *Les Miserables*
- *St. Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain
- The Poems of Gerald Manley Hopkins

LISA ENGLISH**What are your favourite books?**

- *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkein
- *The Ranger's Apprentice* series by John Flanagan
- *Bush Boys* series by Fr. Jim
- *Biggles* books by Captain W.E. Johns

JIM FANNING

- *Bush Boys* by Fr. Jim
- *Cappy* by Fr. O'Neill
- *Trixie Belden* books
- *Jennings* books by Anthony Buckeridge (although all the children like these)
- *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell
- *Saddlers Wells* series by Lorna Hill
- *Five Little Peppers* by Margaret Sydney

NAOMI FANNING**Favourite Books:**

- *Swiss Family Robinson*
- *Famous Five* by Enid Blyton
- *The Cure of Ars*
- *The Secret Garden*
- *Five Pioneer Girls* (The Complete Little House series)
- *The Magic Schoolbus* series by Joanna Cole
- *Bush Boys*
- *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce
- *The Sheep Pig* by Dick King-Smith
- B. Paterson poems

MARY ENGLISH (8 YEARS OLD)

Favourite books for homeschooling:

- *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*
- *The Harp and Laurel Wreath* - Laura Berquist - poetry
- *The Magical Music Box* - Marshall Cavendish - classical music
- *The Great Artists Collection* - Marshall Cavendish
- *Australian Nature Studies* - Leach
- *Charlotte Mason Companion* - Karen Andreola
- *A History of Christendom* series - Warren Carroll
- *The Usborne Complete Book of Art Ideas* - Fiona Watt
- *The Cambridge Latin Course*
- *The Body Book: Easy to Make Hands on Models that Teach* - Donald Silver and Patricia Wynne
- *The Catholic Catechisms* of Fr James Tierney

SUE ELVIS

- The *Happy Little Family* series by Rebecca Caudill
- *Noisy Village* series by Astrid Lingstrom
- *The Family From One End Street* by Eve Garnett
- *Miss Happiness and Miss Flower* by Rumer Godden
- *Milly Molly Mandy* books by Joyce Lankester Brisley
- *Katy* series by Susan Coolidge

KATIE FANNING

- *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge
- *The Lark and the Laurel* by Barbara Willard
- *The Little Princess* by Francis Hodgson Burnett
- *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde
- *The Little Prince* by Oscar Wilde
- Cynthia Harnett's novels
- James Herriot's original books (later ones were less good)
- *The Silver Sword* by Ian Serraillier
- *I am David* by Ann Holm

SARAH FANNING

What are your favourite books?

FAVOURITE BOOKS WE HAVE READ ALOUD TO OUR FAMILY:

- *The Bush Boys* series - Fr James Tierney
- *The Little House on the Prairie* series - Laura Ingalls Wilder
- *The Narnia* series - C.S. Lewis
- *I, Juan de Pareja* - Elizabeth Borton Trevino
- *Sophie's Adventures* - Dick King Smith
- Lewis Carroll books including Sophie and Bruno
- George MacDonald books
- *The Adventure* series - Willard Price
- *The Lord of the Rings* - Tolkien
- *The Tom Playfair series* - Fr Francis Finn
- Books by Mark Twain

SUE ELVIS

FAVOURITE SPIRITUAL BOOKS:

- *I Believe in Love* - Fr Jean d'Elbee
- *Self abandonment to Divine Providence* - Fr J.P. Caussade
- *The Public Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ* - Archbishop Goodier
- *The Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ* - Archbishop Goodier
- *Collected Works of St John of the Cross*
- *Collected Works of St Teresa of Avila*
- *The Hidden Power of Kindness* - Fr Lawrence G. Lovasik
- *Treading the Winepress with Christ in His Passion* - William Stephenson

SUE ELVIS

- Books by Hilda Van Stockum
- *The Wool Pack* by Cynthia Harnett
- *Reb and the Red Coats* by Constance Savery
- *Mardie* by Astrid Lingstrom
- *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge

ELISABETH FANNING

Question for Term 2 2009's edition of KIT:

What are your favourite poems?

Please send your list to the editor.

MORE FAVOURITE BOOKS

- *Homeschooling with Gentleness: A Catholic Discovers Unschooling* by Suzie Andres
- *Designing Your Own Catholic Curriculum* by Laura Berquist
- Music of Silence by David Steindl-Rast
- *I Believe in Love* Fr. D'Elbee
- *A Philosophy of Education* by Charlotte Mason, heavily abridged through hamblesideonline.org
- I suspect *Real Learning* by Elizabeth Foss would be up here too, but I haven't read it yet
- Beverley Paine has written some books about homeschooling in Australia
- *Around the Year with the Trapp Family* by Maria von Trapp is great for ideas about living the Church's year in the home
- Any Elizabeth Goudge books you can lay hands on - great novels to reveal the beauty of the vocation of wife and mother
- Fr. Tierney's *Bush Boys* for a look at home education with lots of info for Australian bushcraft

VERONICA BRANDT

GROWN AND GONE

Question put to 'grown and gone' homeschoolers:

What are the good and bad points about homeschooling?

Good:	Learning the Faith so they have defence against the secular world when they come into contact with it Good academic standard Don't feel so pressured by fashion Good socialisation
Bad:	Lends itself to extremism Danger of kids not learning balance People can become too sure of them being the judge and standard -our way is the only way Kids can be too sheltered You can't lock out the outside world.

Good:	Two minute noodles rather than vegemite sandwiches Being able to ride your bike! No time wasted on crowd control
Bad:	Can't get away from the teacher if you've not completed your work! Feeling inferior because you're different from most people

Good:	Great family bonding Instant status in any gathering as a genuine scientific curiosity (or perhaps monstrosity) for never having gone to school
Bad:	No competition, so uncertainty as to how you compare with school kids Excess naivety

Good:	Security of good family relationships Protection from many unpleasant facts of school life such as drugs Good peer pressure (to conform to what is virtuous)
Bad:	Lack of confidence Lack of specialist teaching

FR TIERNEY'S CATECHETICAL HANDOUTS

Riches in the Catholic Family Catechism	Handout No. 45
Exiles, Come Home	Handout No. 46
Kneel, Genuflect, Bow	Handout No. 47
Driving with Goodwill	Handout No. 48
More from the Daily Log	Handout No. 49
Gospel Kneeling to Jesus	Handout No. 50
Praying to Saints and Honouring Relics	Handout No. 51
Married to the Church	Handout No. 52
Altars with Tabernacles	Handout No. 53
Bush Boys Books - More Than Adventures	Handout No. 54
Papal Gems and Lesser Treasures	Handout No. 55
The Apostles' Creed	Handout No. 56
No Errors in the Bible	Handout No. 57
Shonky	Handout No. 58
Post-Advent Resolutions for a New Year & Lent	Handout No. 59
Fairies, Faith and Fantasy	Handout No. 60
The Church of the 1950s Revisited	Handout No. 61
New Translations for Mass in English	Handout No. 62

