

Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for Catholic homeschooling families



AMDG

JMJ

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Keeping In Touch* was edited by:

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About eleven years ago, Sarah Fanning asked me to write an article for *Keeping in Touch*. "I can't write articles," I protested. "But you can write letters," Sarah replied. "Just pretend you're writing a letter." So I thought about this and decided to give it a go.

Yes, it was quite scary at first putting my thoughts and ideas into words but KIT readers have been very kind. Even though I am sure not everyone agrees with all I write, everyone has been very accepting. I don't suppose Sarah ever imagined that her invitation for me to write for KIT would result in a never ending stream of articles. Once started, she hasn't been able to keep me quiet!

Sarah was also responsible for our first adventure into editing KIT. "But we haven't got a computer Sarah!" The Fannings fixed that problem by giving us an old computer they no longer needed. All excuses out of the way, we agreed to edit our first edition. Editing wasn't as difficult as we'd imagined and we all enjoyed the challenge of learning a new skill.

Now it is our turn to encourage other would-be writers and editors. *Keeping in Touch* needs fresh ideas and input. It is time for us to stand aside and let other families have a go at editing. **Please consider getting involved.**

An editor's job is always easier when contributions flow in without the need to search for material. We would like to encourage all families, 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. And writing isn't as difficult as you might imagine! It is actually very rewarding. Sue Elvis

Please send contributions for **Term 3** of *Keeping in Touch* for 2009 to

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A big **thank you** to everyone who contributed to this edition.

MATERIAL DEADLINE

KEEPING IN TOUCH is published about the end of the fifth week of each term. Please note that the deadline for contributions from readers is the **end of the second week of each term.**

NEWMAN PUBLICATIONS

Father James Tierney's publications:
Bush Boys and *Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys* combined edition \$16.50
Bush Boys and Bush Rangers \$13
Bush Boys on the Move \$16
New Boys in the Bush \$16.50
Catholic Family Catechism large pocket sized Apostles' edition \$5
Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition \$5
Fr Peter Murphy's Workbooks for children preparing for the sacraments
Sacrament of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation \$4 each
Grief, Love and Hope by Sue Elvis \$10
www.cardinalnewman.com.au
Tel. 02 9367 9406

TERM TWO 2009

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A QUESTION OF DEFINITION

I was very disappointed, and rather hurt, recently when talking to an esteemed friend about a mutual (and on my side, little known) acquaintance.

"Oh yes, she's rather interesting," observed my friend. "I think it's a mental illness of some kind. Manic depression."

Well, I speak as the close relative of a manic depressive, and I was upset by this statement. Generally it springs from lack of familiarity with various psychiatric problems, but I want to make a plea: Charity in all things.

Psychiatric problems are little different from physical problems, except inasmuch as to some degree they are not material. If you have a broken leg, or an ear infection, people on the whole will be sympathetic. They feel at ease with these problems and happy to understand. Not so with psychiatric difficulties. I think sometimes people are scared lest they be infected too. Well, rest easy: psychiatric difficulties by and large are inherited, or instituted, not infectious. Many people with psychiatric problems are reluctant to admit to them, because they still carry a very real stigma. Yet most of these people are not responsible for their problems, and what they most require is understanding and a helping hand. Please, make it easier for those who suffer in this way (for the suffering is very real, and not easily subject to the will): it isn't *interesting* at all, just very hard. Offer sufferers of mental illness kindness, not rejection.

Which of us hasn't at some time been ill? Can any of us realistically control that? Physical illness is not different from mental illness. Neither can we control that. If you know someone whom you think suffers from a mental illness, do not back off, any more than you would if you knew that person had the flu. Truly, it is not their fault, not their choice. Help them.

SARAH FANNING

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR CATHOLICS

There really are enough hours in the day. After all, time is God's gift to enable us to achieve what He wants us to. If God really wants us to get something done, He will provide everything we need to do it: the money, the ability, the knowledge ... and the time.

If you find yourself forever running behind, then *Time Management for Catholics* is for you. This very readable book gives some practical tips on how to set your priorities so that you can make good use of the time God has given you. The author, Dave Durand, makes some ambitious recommendations, using common-sense principles which might allow you to take up daily Mass and meditation, fix that screen door, clean that room or write that novel. The book is made up of very short chapters, and it is best read with a notebook and pen handy.

There is some wise and occasionally humbling advice on how to stop procrastinating, how to set real priorities in line with your vocation, and how to set a daily schedule and aim to achieve it by midday.

We might be tempted to think that this approach is too regimented, that we will become a slave to lists and schedules, or that a time management book might not allow us time to relax and enjoy the world or have time for others. But even a simple, short examination of our day will highlight perhaps a large chunk of time which was simply wasted, and which left us feeling rushed and pressured. That can lead to tiredness and short tempers. And when you think about it, any time gained can be used for all sorts of good things, like smelling flowers or learning Hebrew.

Time Management for Catholics doesn't try to help the reader take control of his life. That's what makes this time management book different. It's aimed at showing Catholics how to work with God to manage priorities and responsibilities within the time He has given them. After all, as the foreword explains, time

management is simply an application of the petition: "Thy will be done."

Even reading a single chapter was enough for me to buy back some worthwhile time slots throughout the day. Reading this book has helped me to be much calmer in my approach to time pressures. That's primarily because I'm recognising time as a gift which God has given me and seeing that even time spent waiting for a late running bus is provided, or at least permitted by God. Time is a gift which, like free will, can be used well and wisely and actually provide a lot more free time for things which I was too busy to do before.

There is a Spanish saying which goes: "God gives the little birds the food they need, but He doesn't put it into their beaks." We have to do our part as well. That's what time is about: our time is also God's time. Thinking of it that way means every good work is completely from God and completely from us, just as a statue is 100% from the sculptor and 100% from the chisel.

There is a chapter explaining how TV can be a direct and indirect drain on time and money. There are frequent reminders that sins are always a misuse of our God-given time, although the greater danger is that they will lead us to lose our God-given eternity. There is some sensible advice on avoiding idle conversations, giving the right time for decisions, organising papers and how to diffuse those "time bombs" which can bring the best projects unstuck. It all begins by an honest evaluation of how we use our time now, and a revision of that in the light of Christ's mission for us.

There is so much that we can gain from organising ourselves a little more, and many will benefit from the suggestions which Dave Durand makes in this remarkably helpful guide.

REVIEWED BY ANTHONY ENGLISH

MICK AND BIL'S WEDDING

When my sister Mary Rose told someone that her brother Mick was marrying Bil, they looked a bit worried – until she said, Oh, it's alright, Bil is short for Elizabeth! Ben and Rachael's first wedding anniversary occurred a week before Mick and Bil's wedding. Both Mick and Ben are my brothers. I think Mick and Bil should have got married a week earlier, but there you have it.

Now, the week before the wedding was what you might call stressful. Well, mainly that was so in the Vieira household, it being the bride's home. Our place wasn't so bad. I mean, it was a bit tense at times, but for the most part it was fine.

The morning of the wedding was interesting, and very full. The wedding itself was beautiful. All the bridesmaids looked very pretty, the groomsmen very resplendent and all that blah. It was quite funny, in the sacristy of the cathedral where they got married – oh, which I forgot to add was on 18/4/09, but to return to my point – in the sacristy there is a large hole in the floor which leads underground to the crypt. I know that because John Paul and I served for the Mass. Good job no-one fell in.

The bride arrived late according to tradition. Father Tony Percy celebrated the Mass, but then he had to return to the seminary in Sydney soon after the wedding, so we didn't get a chance to talk to him, which would have been rather good if we could have. Anyway, after the wedding Mass we went over to St Bridget's hall and had refreshments. We ate lots of sandwiches and some cake, then we went home to get some stuff and make sure everything was alright at home, because some of the Brearleys, the Browns, some of our cousins, some of the Elvises, and some of the Gales were staying at our place.

The reception was held at the Old Brewery in Goulburn. It is a

charming place much in need of repair and looking after. It is a place with lots of unexpected corners. There are a lot of strange things in it in the second storey, because it is a museum too; an Egyptian museum. The speeches were interesting; some of it was funny, some of it was more tributes to Mick and Elizabeth. The dancing was good, but what I hadn't seen before was that first Mr Vieira danced with Elizabeth, then Mick took her from him to dance with. But I haven't been to many weddings. I don't think the quantity of food was that good, though. Each member of the bridal party got a glass inscribed with 'thank you' and a tiny bottle of Bundaberg rum! Unfortunately I wasn't included.

Waking up the following morning and having to get ready for the camp was rather annoying. Weddings are rather stressful. They often go on rather long, but they are beautiful. Getting rid of my brothers? Haven't managed it yet, they're still there! Acquiring two sisters – well, it's good. They're both nice. Mick's house is packed with wedding presents. He said people were just so generous, he could never have bought all that stuff. Well, I reckon I'll just have to wait for Elizabeth to get into that cook-book

JIM FANNING



THE WEDDING

In the morning I got up, and Rach went to get Monica so she could do her hair too but she was not ready. So Rach came back and did my hair. Then Mr Vieira dropped Monica off and we did Katy's hair. Monica had to go home at ten o'clock so then Rach did Monica's hair too. After that Rach did Tid's hair, and then we went to the Vieiras' Aunty June's place and got dressed there with the big girls. While Monica, Tid, Katy and I were getting our hair done the bigger girls were at the hairdresser. A few minutes later all the others arrived at Aunty June's place and then they all got dressed. Then we went to the wedding.

It was very exciting. Bil's dress was like – well, it was very plain. It was all white. It did not have anything on it, but it had a long trailing end. For the bridesmaids they had gold and silver dresses. There were flowers on it and it was called oriental brocade, and the junior bridesmaids had almost the same. Theirs was gold. Katy and I were the flower girls. We each had a white dress with three green ribbons across the waist and we had in our hair little green bows. We had our hair in pony tails with curls and glittery combs. On the bottom of our skirts were little green bows too. The shoes we had were gold satin with bumpy gold ruffly stuff. The junior bridesmaids had the same shoes. The bridesmaids had high-heeled shoes that were silver, the same as Bil.

After the wedding we had a little party (*for about 300 people!* Ed.) in the hall just outside the church, then after that we went to the place where the reception was held. It was called the Old Goulburn Brewery. The person who built it was called Francis the convict. That wedding was very tiring but it was fun. The day after we had to get ready to go to the camp, and it was my brother Benedict's birthday. He was twenty five. Now Ben and Rach have gone to Canada and Mick and Bil live in Wagga Wagga.

MIMI FANNING

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

Parents show children how: A husband honours their mother! A wife honours their father!

MY FATHER used say, "The bulk of mankind are in the greatest possible need of **compassion**." I have made this part of my priestly ministry, plus the adage, "People need **encouragement**," for which St Barnabas is my patron, for his name means "son of encouragement", cf. Acts 4:36; 11:25-26.

EXCELSIOR!

All of us in the **improvement industries** — and that includes husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, priests and other teachers, and also doctors (the word means "teacher", since they teach bodily health) — need to radiate and receive compassion and encouragement.

All vocations dedicated to "improvement" bristle with difficulties. Others often seemingly reject our good efforts for their improvement. They do not like suggestions. Children ignore them with disobedience or even brush them off with anger and contempt, while spouses and friends take affront and have to be soothed. Tact and sensitivity are essential.

How easy it is to see the improvements needed in others! How hard it is to make improvements in myself! And often, the same improvements are needed in me as in the others: how hard to improve temper tantrums in others when I indulge in them...

While I live I grow — to improve myself and others.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

The sacraments which keep the Church going as a family of God and a people of God are called social sacraments, or sacraments of communion [as in 'the communion of saints']:-

Holy Orders and Matrimony — The Sacraments at the Service of Communion — are **directed towards the salvation of others**; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so.

Catechism of the Catholic Church §1534

- Parents labour so hard and faithfully to make saints of their children and of each other. Their two directions of effort are interdependent: "The first duty of parents to their

children is that they love each other as husband and wife."

- Breadwinners: don't be sweet at work and a bear at home; homemakers: don't be sweet on the street and sharp with husband and children; St Bernard was a "mellifluous doctor" of honeyed words; St John Chrysostom "golden-mouthed" and St Peter Chrysologus "golden worded".

PARENTS ARE SOMETHING LIKE GOD!

- as procreators, using the powers given them by the Creator;
- giving a one-way gift a child cannot give back to his parents;
- freely risking that parental love will be rejected or mocked;
- loving their wayward children into repentance;
- having a sympathetic understanding of fallen human nature.

PARENTS ARE TARGETED BY SATAN

The Devil wages war on spouses and parents, the engaged and unmarried, and bishops and priests. Our apostolate is to implement the Resurrection against him and against his latest wiles to make us fail our testing time, be damned, or at least unhappy and ineffectual.

BAGGAGE

WHEN A BISHOP is sent to a diocese by the Pope, willy-nilly he inherits the baggage of his predecessor. No matter how graced and gifted, he must start from where the previous bishop left things, including the various skeletons in diocesan cupboards. So too a new parish priest cannot just move in and change things in what he considers to be improvements.

Getting married, having children, means facing up to the baggage carried by one's spouse, and vice-versa:-

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

As well, each must carry his own baggage, from his parents, his upbringing, and the sins and mistakes of his youth. Everything is labelled, "For better or for worse."

SPIRITUAL GENETICS

Not only does each parent give us our early environment with daily examples of virtue and vice, but also each gives 23 chromosomes with their myriad of genes.

Spiritual Genetics is in the First Commandment:-

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me**, but showing mercy unto thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:1-6

As "the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children" so also are the sins of the mothers.

Furthermore, and more positively, **the virtues of the fathers and mothers are also visited upon the children**. Such are the social consequences of sin and virtue through a sort of spiritual genetics.

So we "make allowances" for other people, especially spouses for their spouse. It is why we must guard our minds and tongues against rash judgements or uncharitable comment on those present or absent, and even more so against detraction, which is revealing the faults of others without necessity.

Grown up children need help to make allowances for their parents. Blessed are the younger children who are not aware of any defects in their parents...

See *Handouts* n. 58, "Shonky": God is accustomed to working with extremely shonky material — in the world and in the Church — and we, like Him must do wonders in bringing good out of weakness and evil.

See old *Catechetical News* n. 183 pp. 5-8: **Mrs Parkinson's Law** by Cyril Northcote Parkinson:-

Create an adult society to which the young will clamour for admission. A start can be made, however, in any family where the need for

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responsibility is recognized.

BRINGING UP CHILDREN IS HARD WORK

It always was, and it gets harder as they get older.

As I see it — and write in my children's Bush Boy books — the two practical rules of the *Australian Bush Catechism of Camping*) are basic to a successful upbringing at home, formulated or unformulated:-

38. What are the two rules for good discipline ?

The two rules for good discipline are 'Answer properly when you're spoken to' and 'Obey, straight away'.

DISCIPLES ARE ON L-PLATES

Discipline literally means learning, with an implication too of **being taught**; note the interrelationships:-

- **tutor**, teach, instruct, educate, school, train;
- **correction** of mind, morals, manners, also punishment;
- **will power**, self-discipline, self-control, self restraint;
- a branch of **knowledge**, a programme of training.

Good discipline is closely related to good manners. Good manners of children towards parents and siblings depend on good manners practised between the parents themselves: "What you are doing is shouting louder than what you are saying".

Good discipline is also essential for "Safety First":-

37. What is essential for bush safety and happiness?

Good discipline is essential for bush safety and happiness.

Body language — or "non-verbal communication" — ranges from cuddles to spankings, a pat on the back to a slap lower down. **Be kind, be firm** — they complement each other, like soft-hearted and hard-headed.

N.B. Corporal punishment is a psycho-sacramental, part of the parent-child relationship, and has proven a helpful part of most successful upbringings, because:

- continuing waywardness from original sin despite Baptism;
- a message which is felt is better

heard and heeded;

- the Bible insists on it: Proverbs 13:24 etc; Hebrews 12:5-11.
- the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* believes in it:-
He who loves his son will not spare the rod.... He who disciplines his son will profit by him.
Ecclesiasticus 30:1-2 in CCC §2223; full context §§2214-2231.

SOME PRACTICAL PRECAUTIONS

- The fewer the DOs and DON'Ts the more effective;
- Be forgiving, but slap for flagrant disobedience of vital commands like No! Stop! Come! Go! or for defiance.
- Avoid pejorative language: not hit/beat but smack/slap/spank.
- Never criticize your wife or husband in front of the children.
- Teach courtesy, patience, responsibility by practising them.
- Insist on things being put back where they came from.
- "Clean up the mess you make," progress to not making a mess and to the ultimate of cleaning up the world's messes.
- Banish "It's boring" and make what seems tedious a grace.
- Be patient, be kind, or it is not love; 1 Corinthians 13:4.
- Be temperate with rewards/praise, punishment/ restrictions.
- A little permissiveness works if there are hidden strengths.
- Behaviour is purposive and actions have consequences.
- Reduce confrontations by personal self-control.
- Practise moderation: some mischief is better ignored:-
Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Ephesians 6:4.

IDEAS for high IDEALS — "Be ye perfect"

- Think big: make virtues, not vices, the "default settings".
- Aim: **a secure child, an eager adolescent, a mature adult:** the alternatives are all too often:

- ♦ undisciplined peevish children;
- ♦ sullen resentful teenagers;
- ♦ irresponsible purposeless 'grown-up' teenager @ 18!

- Are some of apparently new emotional problems induced or exacerbated by an undisciplined upbringing? Have obedience and manners been sacrificed to Dr Spock?

Some of the little terrors who are unmanageable... are mistakenly believed to have emotional problems. The greatest social disaster of the [twentieth] century is the belief that abundant love makes discipline unnecessary.

Dare to Discipline by Dr James Dobson, p. 21

- Maturity plans activities according to a scale of priorities, and defers or even rejects acting on one's own mere feelings.
- Defuse the time-bomb of adolescent turbulence in advance through a disciplined upbringing in childhood.
- Help children and adolescents to have sympathy for the feelings of others, without being dominated by their own.
- Be merciful to all the poor souls partly imprisoned by Satan. Tactfully, help them to "get out of it" and be free.
- Better than saying "You're a failure" is saying "There's another way of doing that." Unstated is the implication that the latter is the better choice — but don't say so.
- Each day is a new start: practise daily prayers, at least weekly Holy Communion at Mass, monthly Confession.
- Count your blessings — there is every reason to hope.
- Family catechetics (= homeschooling in the Catholic faith) goes hand-in-hand with personal Bible reading: use the carefully selected texts in the *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition II* **set out in full with each of the 50 Questions & Answers, plus the lists of texts to look up:-**

- ♦ Bible Texts to Read and Know: pp. 28, 29, 30.
- ♦ The Public Life of Christ: pp. 34-

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35.

- ◆ Mysteries of Christ's Passion and Death: p. 36.
- ◆ Resurrection Triumph: p. 39.
- ◆ Bible on the Holy Spirit: p. 42; what He does p. 43.
- ◆ The Church: pp. 44, 45.
- ◆ What must I do to be saved? p. 56.
- ◆ The Second Coming of Jesus Christ: p. 57.
- ◆ The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy: p. 103.
- ◆ Seven Corporal Works of Mercy: p107

NEVER LOSE HEART

- Do what's right even if it's unpopular.
- Popularity is not a Christian virtue, or any other sort.
- When children and adolescents are wayward...

Yea, a sword shall pierce thy own soul also...

Luke 2:25

A man had two sons... [1. prodigal; 2. proud]

Luke 15:11...

the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.

Luke 22:61

PEOPLE NEED PRIESTS — pray for them

He said to them: "Show yourselves to the priests."

Luke 17:14

The priest's lips should keep knowledge... for he is the messenger of the Lord of host.

Malachi 2:7

Art thou not a master in Israel and knowest not these things?

John 3:10

FR JAMES TIERNEY

This article is available as Handouts no. 65, see Downloads www.cardinalnewman.com.au



DEAD FLOWERS

I spent the week before my daughter's June wedding running last-minute trips to the caterer, florist, tuxedo shop, and the church about forty miles away.

As happy as I was that Patsy was marrying a good Christian young man, I felt laden with responsibilities as I watched my budget dwindle.

So many details, so many bills, and so little time. My son Jack was away at college, but he said he would be there to walk his younger sister down the aisle, taking the place of his dad who had died a few years before. He teased Patsy, saying he'd wanted to give her away since she was about three years old!

To save money, I gathered blossoms from several friends who had large magnolia trees. Their luscious, creamy-white blooms and slick green leaves would make beautiful arrangements against the rich dark wood inside the church.

After the rehearsal dinner the night before the wedding, we banked the podium area and choir loft with magnolias. As we left just before midnight, I felt tired but satisfied this would be the best wedding any bride had ever had! The music, the ceremony, the reception - and especially the flowers—would be remembered for years.

The big day arrived - the busiest day of my life - and while her bridesmaids helped Patsy to dress, her fiance Tim walked with me to the sanctuary to do a final check. When we opened the door and felt a rush of hot air, I almost fainted; and then I saw them - all the beautiful white flowers were black. Funeral black. An electrical storm during the night had knocked out the air conditioning system, and on that hot summer day, the flowers had wilted and died.

I panicked, knowing I didn't have time to drive back to our hometown, gather more flowers, and return in time for the wedding.

Tim turned to me. 'Edna, can you get more flowers? I'll throw away these dead ones and put fresh flowers in these arrangements.'

I mumbled, 'Sure,' as he be-bopped down the hall to put on his cuff links.

Alone in the large sanctuary, I looked up at the dark wooden beams in the

arched ceiling. 'Lord,' I prayed, 'please help me. I don't know anyone in this town. Help me find someone willing to give me flowers - in a hurry!'

I scurried out praying for four things: the blessing of white magnolias, courage to find them in an unfamiliar yard, safety from any dog that may bite my leg, and a nice person who would not get out a shotgun when I asked to cut his tree to shreds.

As I left the church, I saw magnolia trees in the distance. I approached a house...No dog in sight. I knocked on the door and an older man answered. So far so good. No shotgun. When I stated my plea the man beamed, 'I'd be happy to!'

He climbed a stepladder and cut large boughs and handed them down to me. Minutes later, as I lifted the last armload into my car trunk, I said, 'Sir, you've made the mother of a bride happy today.'

'No, Ma'am,' he said. 'You don't understand what's happening here.'

'What?' I asked.

'You see, my wife of sixty-seven years died on Monday. On Tuesday I received friends at the funeral home, and on Wednesday . . . He paused. I saw tears welling up in his eyes.

'On Wednesday I buried her.' He looked away. 'On Thursday most of my out-of-town relatives went back home, and on Friday - yesterday - my children left.'

I nodded.

'This morning,' he continued, 'I was sitting in my den crying out loud. I miss her so much. For the last sixteen years, as her health got worse, she needed me. But now nobody needs me. This morning I cried, 'Who needs an eighty-six-year-old wore-out man? Nobody!' I began to cry louder. 'Nobody needs me!' About that time, you knocked, and said, 'Sir, I need you.'

I stood with my mouth open.

He asked, 'Are you an angel? The way the light shone around your head into my dark living room...'

I assured him I was no angel.

He smiled. 'Do you know what I was thinking when I handed you those magnolias?'

DEAD FLOWERS

'No.'

'I decided I'm needed. My flowers are needed. Why, I might have a flower ministry! I could give them to everyone! Some caskets at the funeral home have no flowers. People need flowers at times like that and I have lots of them. They're all over the backyard! I can give them to hospitals, churches - all sorts of places. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to serve the Lord until the day He calls me home!'

I drove back to the church, filled with wonder. On Patsy's wedding day, if anyone had asked me to encourage someone who was hurting, I would have said, 'Forget it! It's my only daughter's wedding, for goodness' sake! There is no way I can minister to anyone today.'

But God found a way - through dead flowers.

'Life is not the way it's supposed to be. It's the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference.'

~by Edna Ellison~

Books by Edna Ellison <http://tinyurl.com/ccr2ta>

SENT IN BY THE LETCHFORD FAMILY



MICK AND BIL'S WEDDING

I can't remember too much from before the wedding except the day before the wedding and that everybody was feeling very stressed. The day before the wedding we went to the Vieiras for Mass, and then we had a cake for Julian because it was his birthday and his First Communion. Then Mimi, Katy, Mons and I put the sugared almonds in the little boxes. The little boxes were very cute. For the boys there were little black boxes which were made to look like suits. For the girls there were little white boxes which were made to look like wedding dresses. After putting the sugared almonds into the little boxes we iced lots of little cakes and put sprinkles on top of them. While we did this, Catherine decorated the wedding cake. Then we all went for the rehearsal in the cathedral, but when we got there nobody had got the key to the choir loft, so the musicians had to climb over the gate and then break into the organ (which was quite easy because it was a very simple lock)!

After the wedding rehearsal the older kids went to the Brewery to decorate the place. The next day all the senior bridesmaids went to the hairdressers. Mimi, Katy, Monica and I got our hair done at home by Rachael. Then we all went to the Vieiras' Aunty June's place to get dressed. After the older ones had got their hair done they came back and got dressed with us. I don't know what happened to the groomsmen. When we were all ready, we drove to the church. We had a few photos outside the cathedral, but then we had to get ready to go in. When we walked up the aisle, Mimi and Julian went first, then Katy and Joseph, then Monica and myself, and after us came the bridesmaids. The groomsmen were already up there. Then came the bride with Mr Vieira. She looked really pretty. The Mass was so beautiful, but the most exciting

part was when they actually got married. (Daddy wanted John Pat to carry the rings, but he wouldn't. It is probably just as well, because he might have got cross and thrown them at Father instead. He often does things like that. He fired a rubber band at Fr. Jim in Mass and hit him right in the middle of his chasuble.) After feeling happy for Mick and Bil, the next thing I thought was 'Yay, yay, everybody can stop stressing now'.

At the end, when we were walking out, they took some photos, then we all ran up and hugged Mick and Bil - Mr and Mrs Fanning! Straight after the wedding there was a sort of lunch in St Bridget's tea rooms, with sandwiches and sausage rolls and salami and olives and cakes and all sorts of things for everybody. We think there were about 350 people there, because during the Mass Fr. Percy almost ran out of hosts completely, even though he kept breaking them into smaller and smaller and smaller pieces! (In the end only crumbs were left, and finally not even those.)

I talked and played with lots of my friends, and then we had the cake. It was chocolate. Afterwards Mons and I found some lolly snakes, which we ate. Then our flowers were about to die, so we put them into water. After that we had to go home for a while, because lots of other kids were staying at our place while their parents went to the formal reception. They got to watch films and eat lollies and chips. When we got to the Old Brewery, only the Vieira kids and some of the relatives were there. Mick and Bil came pretty quickly, the same with the groomsmen, but the bridesmaids weren't there, and everyone was getting a bit anxious because the light was fading and we couldn't get photos once it was dark. And the bridesmaids STILL weren't there - so I was wrong, because everyone was still stressing! When the bridesmaids did finally get there, we had family photos and some others with Mick and Bil. After that everybody went inside and sat and talked for a

MICK AND BIL'S WEDDING

while. A lot of people went and got drinks. Then the bridesmaids and groomsmen came in (they were Felicity and Francis, Catherine and William, Brigid and Chris, and Posy and Ben; all of them were brothers and sisters except for Will and Chris). After that we all had dinner.

Because the adults took so long eating their dinner, we kids went out and played in a bush outside. The bush was so cool: it was really puffy. Kate lost her green hair bow. You could run up and dive into it without hurting yourself, although I ripped my stockings. Then they called us in for the speeches. The first speech was Mr. Vieira's. His was about how they'd known Mick for a quite a while and he was a good bloke and he felt he was losing Elizabeth. The next was Daddy, all I remember about his speech was that he said some lovely things about Bil and also some stuff about how Mick hadn't wanted her around when they were all little. It was quite funny. Then it was Will, I can't remember what he said except that this would really change their relationship. Ben said that he thought Mick was a good brother and that he and Elizabeth would be very happy. Mick's speech was last, all about thanking lots of people and people that had been a good example. All I can remember about all of the speeches was that there were a lot of toasts and I had nothing in my glass!

Next they had the wedding waltz. First Mr. Vieira danced with Bil, then he handed her over to Mick. After them all the bridal party joined in. Then the parents did. Last of all everybody who wanted to joined in. I did a bit of dancing but most of the time I went around taking photos with Monica and (accidentally) spilling drinks. At the end of it everybody stood in a circle and Mick and Bil walked around saying goodbye. Mick was waiting for Bil, he said "how long does it take to say goodbye to people?". Then they drove away in the wedding car, and all the kids

chased it until it had gone. Then we went home to bed. The older kids stayed a bit longer then they all came home too. In the morning it was funny, there were people sleeping all over the place. The chapel was crammed for Mass that morning.

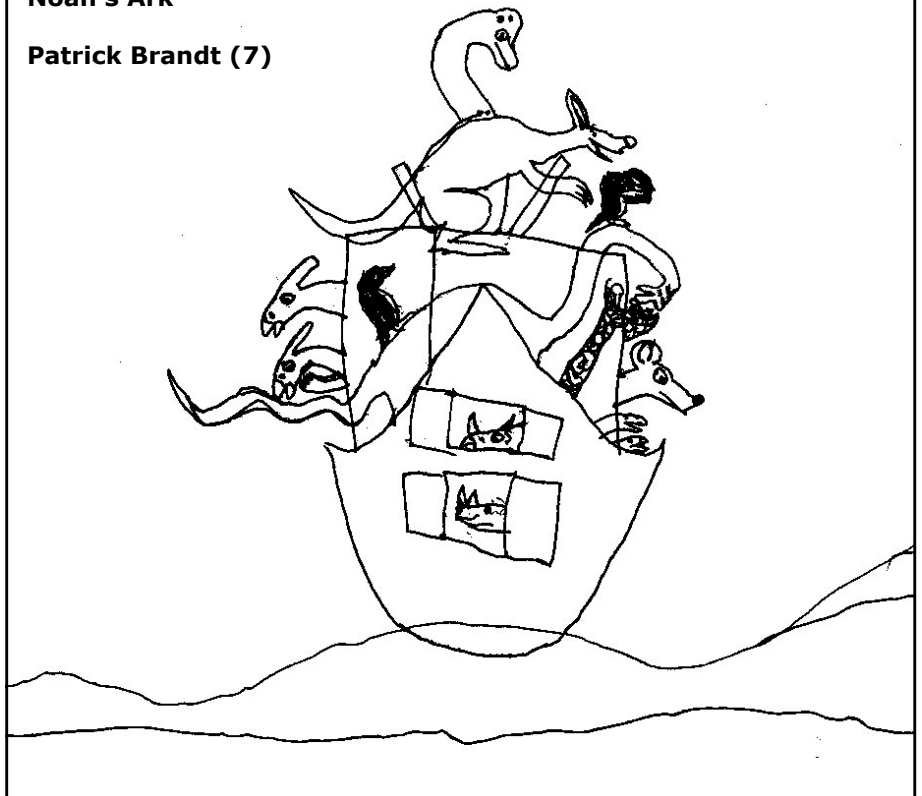
came back to Goulburn the next morning and collected them. Then they went to Cairns. We all had a birthday party for Ben at our neighbours' place and packed and went off to the camp. Everyone was exhausted.

ELISABETH FANNING

Bil left her phone and her wallet and stuff in Francis's car so they

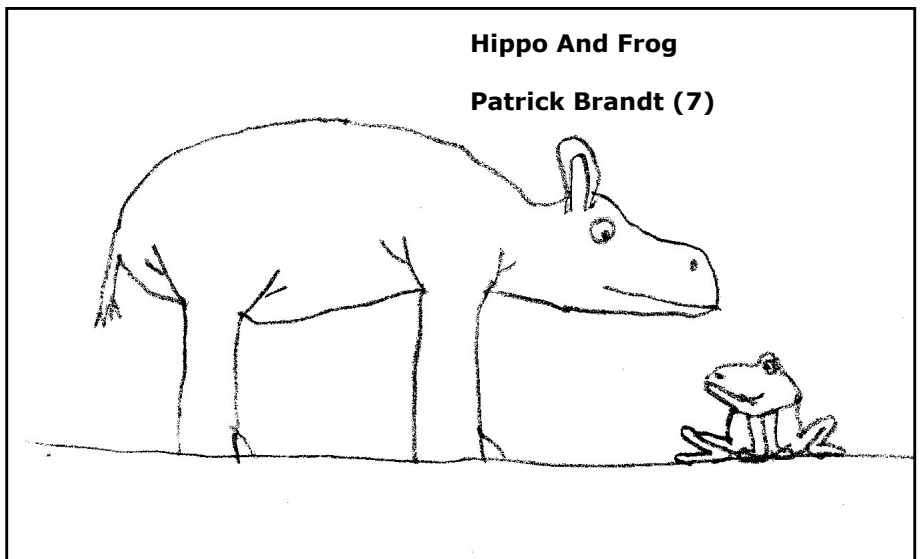
Noah's Ark

Patrick Brandt (7)



Hippo And Frog

Patrick Brandt (7)



NEVER TOO LATE

My children visit the dentist every six months. They don't mind at all having their teeth examined. In fact, they all look forward to their check-ups: sitting in the huge dentist's chair, wearing the dark glasses, trying to chat with the dentist while his fingers are stuffed in their mouths. It is all rather interesting.

I am pleased dentist check-ups are not viewed as traumatic. It was a totally different story when I was a young child. As soon as my mother had made the appointment I would start worrying, and by the time I actually arrived at the dentist's, my heart would be thumping violently and I'd feel clammy and sick. After a few unfortunate appointments with less than sympathetic dentists I decided, that when I had the choice, I would never ever again voluntarily open my mouth for an examination.

In this way I solved an enormous problem: I didn't have to worry about the pain or more significantly, the humiliating comments I might receive while in the dentist's chair. However, this way with dealing with my fear gave me a new problem: I began to worry about the state of my teeth. Was my front tooth a bit loose? Did that pain mean my tooth was decaying? Did my wisdom teeth ever appear? Was there a chance that I'd be lucky and not need them removed? Yes, my teeth were quite often the cause of anxiety. I certainly said a lot of prayers, asking for St Appollonia's intercession, in the hope my teeth would stay in good condition and never need the attention of a dentist.

One day while the children were having their usual check-ups, the dental assistant remarked, "We've never examined your teeth." Not meeting her eyes, and trying to talk without opening my mouth too far so she couldn't see much of my teeth, I muttered, "I don't have check-ups. I had some bad experiences with dentists as a child and I'm too frightened to sit in the chair."

The dental assistant was most sympathetic and assured me that this dentist was a real pussy cat and very, very gentle. Of course, he would understand my fears. I digested all this but still did not make an appointment.

A few months later, I was forced to acknowledge that there was a rather uncomfortable feeling in my lower jaw. I cautiously opened my mouth in front of the mirror and leapt back with fear. Wow! All my teeth looked like they were decayed. Should I conquer my fear and make that appointment? I debated with myself for a couple more weeks. Then I decided to look at the situation logically. What was the worst that could happen? Maybe all my teeth would have to be removed. Would that kill me? Of course not. All my grandparents had survived quite happily without teeth of their own. And anyway, even if that course of action were needed, no one could yank out all my teeth without permission. I could simply walk out of the dental surgery if I wanted. But what if I decided to follow the dentist's advice? What about the pain? I imagined the long, sharp needle burying its way into my tender gum and enormous steel pliers gripping and twisting and yanking. After gulping a few times, I resolutely pushed these images of horror far from my mind and decided that the dentist could inflict no pain greater than that of childbirth. And I had survived that eight times. That convinced me. Women are brave. We are strong and there is nothing we cannot endure. A simple dental examination should be a piece of cake.

So appointment made, I turned up on the correct day pleased that I was still resolved to go through with it. I'd warned the receptionist: "My teeth are in an awful state. They'll need lots of work but I'll only be able to have a little bit done at a time due to the expense."

"That's fine," she soothed as she ushered me through the surgery door.

I climbed up onto the huge chair, hid myself behind the dark glasses and clasped my shaking hands tightly together on my chest.

"I haven't been to the dentist for years. I've been too afraid. My childhood experience was horrific. You'll find lots wrong", I babbled all in one breath. There!: I'd prepared the dentist for whatever horrors he'd find.

Mirrors and scrapers and fingers were stuffed into my mouth and I closed my eyes and tried to pretend I was elsewhere.

After a few minutes: "How long ago did you say your last examination was?"

Was the news bad? "Over 20 years" (nearer 25).

"Well, your teeth are looking pretty good. You've looked after them well." Pretty good? What about all that decay? It *wasn't* decay? Just old silver fillings?

"There's a couple of small cavities in your upper wisdom teeth that will need filling. I'll be very gentle. I'll take it slowly and explain every step of the procedure." I opened my eyes and saw the prepared needle heading towards my mouth. I thought about fainting but decided I wouldn't live that one down if my children ever got to hear about it. So instead I reminded myself that I was a brave woman. A few minutes passed before I realised that I was surviving. I was in a dentist chair having treatment and I was quite OK.

Twenty minutes later, my teeth were perfect and all they needed was a de-scale and polish. Just as I was about to hop off the chair I suddenly thought about that pain in my lower jaw, the one that had prompted my appointment in the first place. Should I mention it or count myself lucky and escape while I could? No, I had to ask. "Oh you have just been a bit too

NEVER TOO LATE

enthusiastic with the dental floss. You've irritated the gums between your teeth." I'd plucked up all that courage to come to the dentist because of a pain associated with a sore gum? But I didn't care. It was all over. I was on my way back out to reception.

The receptionist glanced at me anxiously as I approached her desk to pay my bill. "Are you OK?" "Oh yes, fine," I grinned at her. "Dr A was a real pussy cat just as you said."

"When can you come for your next appointment?"

"I don't need to come back. Dr A did everything today. Just two tiny fillings."

I floated home feeling absolutely wonderful. "Only two tiny fillings," I announced to my children who'd been rather bemused by my fear of dentists. "Do you want to see my beautiful teeth?"

So I have conquered a fear, a fear that had been bothering me for many, many years. I can look in the mirror without avoiding my open mouth. I can smile while talking to the dentist as he examines my children's teeth. Really there was nothing to worry about: my teeth were in reasonable shape, the dentist didn't accuse me of neglecting my teeth, he didn't make me feel helpless and frightened, and the pain was negligible. Dentistry and dentists have come a long way since my childhood.

Our own childhood experiences often influence what we want for our own children. I certainly didn't want mine to experience my fear of dentists. It seems I have been successful in that area. I have also been successful in another way. I have proved that it is never too late to conquer a fear. Now I am going through the list of my other fears. What shall I tackle next? Driving alone through the centre of Sydney? Exposing my tuneless voice to the instruction of a singing teacher? Perhaps I should put on my swimmers, brave the water and take diving lessons? One thing is definite: we all have

hidden resources. We are stronger than we think. We just need to make the first step.

SUE ELVIS

OUR CONSTANTLY CHANGING MENAGERIE

Since my brother Callum wrote his two articles about our family's pets, reprinted in the last edition of KIT, many changes have taken place in our menagerie.

Birds: After I acquired my budgie, Bobby, Sophie declared she wanted one too. So Mum bought her a green budgie which we called Jack. He lived in the same cage as my budgie, until Bobby decided that Jack was invading his territory and murdered him by pushing him off the perch. Sophie was distraught so Mum bought her another bird. He was called Jack no. 2 or Spiderbird as he climbed everywhere. We got up one morning a couple of days later and Bobby's second victim was on the bottom of the cage. Sophie was sad but we gave up the idea of a cage mate for Bobby

About a year ago Bobby, like his victims, died. One of his feet had shrivelled and for the last few weeks he had been hopping round the cage. He looked so sad and pathetic that it was rather a relief when he died. Duncan buried my bird while the girls and I stood by and cried.

Charlotte's canary was our next victim. We were all in the family room when Dad suddenly told us that, he too, had expired. We hadn't even noticed! The girls watched as he was buried but this time I refused. Charlotte was really sad that her loved pet was gone.

At that point it seemed that this was the end of our line of birds. But it wasn't. While Callum and I were working in the garden of a friend, someone spotted a green bird that seemed to be tame. We caught it and acquired a new pet, a hand reared scaly-breasted lorikeet. At first he was Callum's bird and was named Jeremy or Jezza. However, Callum went to a camp a few weeks later, and I was given the job of feeding and exercising Jezza. By the time Callum came back, Jezza was more my bird than his. I looked after him carefully for a few months. He had to come out of his cage every day for exercise, and liked half an apple with his breakfast. Jezza didn't like to be on his own and would get us out of bed with his insistent calling. He became rather hard to catch but I liked him. He would sit on the back of the sofa and pull my hair or sit on my shoulder and click his beak in my ear. Sometimes, when he was in a good mood, he would let me scratch his head. One day though, I had him out of the cage and someone left the sliding door to the garden open. Like a flash he was through that door without a second thought. I stayed outside for hours, trying to catch him. Finally, as it grew dark, I had to give up. I was devastated but the rest of the family were secretly glad he was gone!

The Ferret: The ferret, Finn, is gone too. He required more hours of exercise and care than there seemed to be in a day. Mum decided it would be better for all concerned, especially the terrified ones like me, if we got rid of him. Callum unwillingly put an ad in the pet shop window but no one seemed to want him. It seemed like we would be stuck with him forever. Finally though, we actually found someone who agreed to take him. It was a man who wanted a ferret for rabbiting. We were so relieved to have found a home for Finn. The next thing I heard, he had wiped out the entire rabbit population on the farm. We were amazed! After Finn had gone we never dared to ask how he was in case the man tried to give him back.

OUR CONSTANTLY CHANGING MENAGERIE

Mice: The mice were our big mistake. At first we were content with just the four male mice. They were happy enough. Then we had our 'great' idea: The pet shops were finding it hard to get mice to sell. So we bought two female mice and another cage then bred them. (We convinced Dad this would be a good science experiment.) The baby mice were so cute as they staggered around the cage. That was OK. When the time came to sell them to the pet shops however, we found to our dismay that they no longer wanted our mice. We now had a problem: we had a cage full of young mice with nowhere to go. Finally in desperation, we sorted the mice by sex as best we could, then freed the young male mice in the fields at the back of our house. That didn't fix the problem. We had overlooked one male mouse and now we had more babies. To top it off the male mice were scrapping. In the end our interspecies undertaker took them into the field behind the house and let them all go. I cried; Charlotte cried; the little girls cried; we were all very sad. Now I wonder what the mice thought when they found themselves free: they were now field mice. No more full feed bowl.

Guinea Pigs: The guinea pigs are our best pets yet. They sit in their cages and mow the grass: the only really useful pets we have had.

We used to have two guineas pigs but now we have four. Our first two guinea pigs, Hercules and Scarlatti, are getting on in years now. Both of them are almost completely grey. As they are five years old I suppose it is not surprising. In human years they would be old age pensioners. Being rather stiff they waddle, rather than run, except when you move their cage to a patch of fresh grass and they get rather excited. They have survived two moves, first from Mittagong to Bowral and then to our very own house in Hill Top.

Shortly before we left our house in Mittagong, we acquired two female guinea pigs, Pia and Angelica.

Having learnt from the mice we keep them separate from the boys. Recently we realised that our guinea pigs were overweight. On further inquiry we found that more than one person was feeding them everyday and topping up the feed bowl. The guinea pigs thought it was great until we put them on a diet.

Dad's Pets: You may remember Dad's dog K-9, the low maintenance pet. A couple of years after giving him K-9 we gave him a cat. It too has a bobby head and a steely nature. Dad has never named this pet. To us it is just The Cat.

Last Christmas Mum and I found the perfect pets for Dad: A pottery snail and a tortoise. Dad loves them. He called the snail 'Brian' after a favourite character from a children's program he used to watch: *The Magic Roundabout*. The tortoise he called 'Flash' after a pet tortoise he used to have as a child. All Dad's pets sit outside the front door, in rain or shine.

What next?: We have had a lot of pets as you can see. So what pets will we have next?

Next door to us live two Chihuahuas, Timmy and Choco. Timmy is a young Chihuahua who feels the need to protect his territory every time we set foot outside our door. It is funny: such a big noise from such a little dog. Choco helps him but, as he is partly blind, he always runs half way down the garden before he realises he's missed us.

At the moment we are trying to convince Dad that getting a Chihuahua is a good idea. He keeps finding something to object to but I think we'll convince him in the end.

IMOGEN ELVIS

INTERNET RESOURCES

AUDIO FILES - HOMILIES

www.audiosancto.org

VERONICA BRANDT

I recently saw an interview with a Fr Robert Spitzer on EWTN television on Life Principles and was so excited about it that I wanted to spread the word. Articles can be freely downloaded from his website - www.lifeprinciples.net.

There is also an article on his website in the Reflections Archive called "Something profoundly right" written by a mother of a severely disabled child. Her poem made me cry.

GABRIELLA DE BATTISTA

A KNITTING BOOK

I love to knit. I am always looking for new knitting books. I found this one in my search:

How to Knit by Fiona Watt is a book of gift ideas. In it there are scarves, hats and beanies, mobile phone covers, handbags, purses, ordinary bags, toys and decorations. For decorating projects there are knitted flowers, leaves, felted flowers, buttons, bows and more. There are cushions, pretty little bags and cushion covers. There are over 25 ideas with something for everyone.

There is a simple guide to learning how to knit. It has easy to understand instructions. It shows all the types of stitches you will need including rib stitch, moss stitch and basket weave stitch. It has pictures of all the projects plus illustrated instructions.

I have made a stripey bag. It is rather big and has light and dark blue stripes. I am going to make more things from this book. I like knitting because I like to make things.

CHARLOTTE ELVIS

WHY FATHER TIERNEY'S FICTION FAVOURS FROCKS

Unless otherwise stated, quotes are from Fr Tierney's children's fiction and his *Catholic Family Catechism*.

Some girls of the Wild Bush Mountains Grammar school in the long dresses of their uniform, beamed on Colleen and Kathleen in skirts as full and flowing as their own, and at young Tilly, with a pinafore over her frock... Later, the boys heard Dad telling Mum, "A dress makes a bloke look up to a woman."

New Boys in the Bush p.125

Howbeit, in Fr Tierney's fiction, Colleen and Kathleen wear shorts for tennis, and their mother says they can wear jeans riding horses, but they choose culottes.

New Boys in the Bush, pp. 73,240; cf. *Bush Boys and Bush Rangers* p. 07, 108

1. Some women and girls consciously aim to build esteem for femininity by preferring a dress to trousers. They are counter-cultural Christians, affirming the complementarity of the two sexes against the currently politically-correct unisex. They also refuse to imitate such weakness of the male sex as crudities in speech.

2. Some mothers are more reserved than others in breast-feeding; some consider that the virtue of Christian modesty is not as well upheld in cultures where women are bare-topped.

3. Some are more careful not to show their cleavage and, indeed, conceal most of their bosoms. This helps men and adolescent boys in their struggle to keep the custody of their eyes against the lusts of the flesh.

4. Many are mindful of the difference in Satan's temptations for males and females, and his threefold weaponry: (a) the remaining effects of original sin after Baptism; (b) the particular snares he sets for each soul; and (c), his long term strategies for each generation.

5. There are two inter-related aspects of modesty:

Modesty means not boasting or showing off, and also not showing off with one's body in a way that leads self or others toward impurity.

Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition
p. 110

The tendency to turn women into men and girls into boys, in speech, dress, deeds and work weakens the complementarity of the sexes and the capacity of women to ennoble men – hence weakening of marriage, family and civilization. Cf. Genesis 1:27; 2:24; 5:2; 1 Peter 3:7

"Make full allowance for the difference of sex and for the particular role which Providence has appointed to each sex in the family and in society," (Vatican II, GE §8)

Make allowance for other **people's character weaknesses** regarding speech, viewing, amusements, reading, dress etc: Even things where "All things are lawful for me," St Paul added, "but not all edify," (1 Corinthians 10:23).

ibid. p. 111, 3rd, 4th, and 5th bullet points

6. Father Peter Murphy refers to *Love and Responsibility* by Cardinal Carol Wojtyla for this assertion:

Girls seem to need more training [than men] in the ways of modesty... Girls who are less sensual may not be aware of their lack of modesty and thus need to be instructed regarding an appropriate dress code.

Pure Attraction, a guide to human sexuality, p. 78

see also Colleen Hammond's *Dressing with Dignity*.

FR JAMES TIERNEY



MY FAVOURITE POEM

Asking for a favourite poem is like asking for a favourite tool. You have to be more specific. What is it for? How will it be used? Why do you want it? What are you trying to do with it?

I have a few favourite poets: most of Chesterton's verse – some of it very funny, some poignant, some rousing – most of Gerard Manley Hopkins's shorter poems, a few of TS Eliot, many of Walter de la Mare's wistful, charming works, Thomas Aquinas's hymns in translation because I can't read Latin at all, many snippets of Ogden Nash, whose 'Very Like A Whale' made me laugh so much I couldn't speak – how can one offer a favourite poem? Much of Banjo Paterson, John O'Brien, some of Auden, one or two of Yeats, most of Shakespeare, a good deal of the Bible; how could you not favour John Donne's religious poetry, with its deep-seated sense of desperation: you just keep on and on, thinking, oh yes, and that one: oh, what about that: don't forget such and such ...

I think the only way to like poetry is to read it. Back in the mists of time (BC, before children) I used often to read poetry. Now, I occasionally get out one of the anthologies and read some, mostly in the bath! because that's where the children aren't and I have some time on my own. (For the same reasons it is where I do a lot of my private mental prayer). I am not especially keen on modern poets, chiefly because I lack familiarity with them and no longer read the sorts of publications where I am likely to run across them. As I get older I care less about convention, which is always useful when assessing poetry or art; you no longer are concerned about maintaining a canon, more about deciding whether it appeals or not. There is always the shock of recognition when one finds a new poem that one really likes: it is like meeting someone for the first time and thinking, yes, here is a friend. It happens rarely.

MY FAVOURITE POEM

I go through phases where I read poetry to the children each day. Each child has a turn to choose, and we read that poem daily for the week. Some choices prove favourites, others fall flat. It is hard to tell which will be which. *The Galloping Cat* was an instant family favourite, as was *Tarantella* by Hilaire Belloc, or *The Highway Man* by Alfred Noyes (heartily disapproved of by a Catholic homeschooling friend). In 'A Return to Poetry 2000', where ten Australians chose ten of their favourite poems, I came across *The Spell against Spelling* by George Starbuck, which opens:

My favourite student lately is the one who wrote about feeling clumsy. I mean if he wanted to say how it feels to be all thumbs he Certainly picked the write language to right it in the first place.

I've never read anything by George Starbuck before but I was hooked. Years ago I was reading 'The Ant', by Ogden Nash, to our two older boys:

The modern ant, when trod upon,
Exclaims "I'll be son-of-a-gun!"
Not so its ancestor, the emmet
Which perished crying "Zounds!" or
"Demmit!"

We were laughing so much we cried. Every time we began to get it under control someone would say "Demmit!" and we'd be off again. Impossible to explain why it is so funny. Their friend, standing with us, was merely puzzled. Poetry, like prayer, is a personal matter.

SARAH FANNING



FAVOURITE POEMS

Hymns in Latin and English

Day of Wrath (Dies Irae)
At the Cross her station keeping
(Stabat Mater dolorosa)
Sing my tongue of warfare ended
(Pange lingua of the Passion)
Sing my tongue the glorious
body (Pange lingua of Blessed Sacram)
O come all ye faithful (Adeste, fideles)

Hebrew / Latin / English

Psalm 94 Venite exultemus
(includes verse "Come, let us adore")
Psalm 50 Have mercy on me (Miserere)
Psalm 129 Out of the depths (De profundis)
Gospel Canticles in St Luke
Magnificat, Benedictus, Nunc dimittis

Hymns in English

Onward Christian Soldiers
The Dream of Gerontius (Firmly I Believe and Praise to Holiest God of Our Fathers (Kipling's Recessional)

Kipling

Ballad of East and West
If (...you'll be a Man. My son)

Lord Macaulay

Horatius (How Horatius kept the bridge, in the brave days of old)

Paterson

The Man from Snowy River
Clancy
The Road to Hogan's Gap
Johnson's (Snakebite) Antidote
The Man from Ironbark
Mulga Bill's Bicycle
Saltbush Bill (5 poems)
Over the Range ("Little Bush Maiden")

Lawson

Harry Dale the Drover
The Roaring Days

FR JAMES TIERNEY

With poetry I'm enjoying the selection from Amblesideonline.org for children.

G. K. Chesterton's poems - *Lepanto, The Donkey, Triolet*, all big favourites.
Ballad of the White Horse too.

I had a teacher at high school who loved Robert Browning. *My Last Duchess* is one we enjoyed.

Also Robert Frost -
Natures first green is gold,
her hardest hue to hold,
her early leaf's a flower,
but only so an hour,
so leaf subsides to leaf,
so Eden sank to grief,
so dawn goes into day,
Nothing gold can stay.

I came across a poem which described looking forwards like waiting for gilded merchant vessels, but the only one sure to come was the black ship of death.

Poems can describe things like that so beautifully - but taken apart into prose like that seems quite flat

VERONICA BRANDT

Journey of the Magi by T.S. Eliot

Poems by John O'Brien including *The Trimmin's on the Rosary* and *The Parting Rosary*

Little Boy Blue by Eugene Field

Poems by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow including *The Legend Beautiful* and *The Children's Hour*

Out, Out- by Robert Frost

Young Woman Gathering Lemons by Jan Owen

My Last Duchess by Robert Browning

Five Days Old by Francis Webb

SUE ELVIS

AN EASY WAY TO DISCOVER THE DELIGHTS OF POETRY

In a stone cell, a monk prays on his knees with deep sorrow for his sins of indecision. Suddenly, a most splendid, supernatural light appears and the monk opens his eyes to see Our Lord before him. Wondering, worshipping, adoring: the monk is lost in rapture. The convent bell begins to peel and the monk hesitates. He knows he should be on his way to the gate to distribute alms to the poor and needy but he doesn't want to leave the vision of Our Lord. What should he do? As the ringing bell persists, he overcomes his indecision, and reluctantly and slowly makes his way to the iron grating. As the monk distributes the food, an inner voice whispers, "Whatever thing thou doest to the least of mine and lowest, that thou doest unto me." He ponders this thought: if the Vision had appeared to him in beggar's clothing and had implored his help, would he have turned away in loathing? An hour later, the monk hurries back to his cell and to his awe and joy, he discovers Jesus waiting for him with these words, "Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled."

In a wood called Rouge Bouquet, during World War I, many young Irish soldiers were fighting to free the occupied country of France. No doubt all the men hoped to survive the war and return to their homeland and families and once again experience happy times of laughter, love and summer. But one day, an enemy shell flew through the air into the dugout, causing the earth to fall upon those brave men. Death claimed every young man, burying each one beneath ten metres of soil. Now over this grave, three volleys are fired and the bugle is blown in honour of those who had nobly fought and nobly died. The bugle notes drift up to heaven where the saints and the angels stand smiling, as the heroes' souls are welcomed into heaven. The young men are at rest. Their work on earth has been completed. Now they are asked to watch over their comrades who remain below.

There once was a little boy. His favourite toys were a dog and a soldier carrying a musket in his hands. Every night before bed, the little boy would place these toys in their accustomed places. He would kiss them and tell them not to make a noise or move until he returned for them in the morning. Now many years later, the toys are old and covered with dust. They still stand obediently and silently in their places awaiting their young master. Do they wonder why the little child does not come? Did they hear the angel song that awakened the boy many years ago?

Three stories: each very different but equally absorbing. Are these stories familiar to you? Perhaps you have read the poems each story is based on? The first comes from the poem, *The Legend Beautiful* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The second is told in the poem *Rouge Bouquet* by Joyce Kilmer and the last one can be found in *Little Boy Blue* by Eugene Field. My retelling of each story is nothing compared to the original poems. If you have never read the poems, I urge you to look them up. I am sure, like me and my children, you will enjoy these poems very much. The stories, contained within the stanzas, have been enhanced by a careful choice of words and their arrangement.

Before we began homeschooling, I knew very little about poetry. When I thought about sharing poetry with my own children, I wasn't exactly bursting with confidence and enthusiasm. Actually, I wondered if anyone would notice if I quietly omitted this topic from our curriculum. But then I began to wonder if we'd be missing something of value and I set out to discover what poetry is all about.

This is the story of how a poetry-deprived mother helped her children, to not only appreciate, but also enjoy, a form of

literature which is sometimes labelled as difficult or irrelevant or an unnecessary extra to an already overcrowded homeschool curriculum.

We began our great poetry adventure by searching for a good book of poetry. One of our most valuable acquisitions was a copy of Laura Berquist's *The Harp and Laurel Wreath*. This volume contains "poetry and dictation for the classical curriculum" and, if you are a poetry novice like me, such a book will take the hard work out of studying this subject. The only fault with this book is that it is American and therefore does not contain all the wonderful Australian poetry of such people as Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson.

For us, Tuesday morning is poetry morning. Minutes before we are scheduled to study a poem, someone will hunt out *The Harp and Laurel Wreath*. Two poems need to be selected: one for the younger girls and one for the older ones. We take it in turn to browse the book for suitable poems and then someone is sent off to the photocopier to make copies for each of us.

Gemma-Rose (5) and Sophie (8) are enjoying Laura Berquist's choice for younger children including the Robert Louis Stevenson's poems. All his poems are easily understood and most tell of things associated with childhood. These poems can also be found in the book *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Stevenson. The girls have memorised a few of the poems and they take great delight in reciting such lines as:

*The friendly cow all red and white,
I love with all my heart;
She gives me cream with all her
might,
To eat with apple tart.*

After Sophie has read her poem to me, she starts to write out her favourite stanza to practice her handwriting. She and Gemma-Rose will then draw illustrations to go

AN EASY WAY TO DISCOVER THE DELIGHTS OF POETRY

with the poem. They will trim their photocopied poem to a suitable size and paste it onto a coloured piece of paper which will be filed, together with their drawings, into their own poetry collection folder.

Once the younger girls are busy with this task, Imogen(14), Charlotte(11) and sometimes Callum(17), and I start to decipher our more complicated poem. Many of the poems in *The Harp and Laurel Wreath* have study guide questions and, more importantly, answers to these questions. These can be a great help in working out what the poem is all about. I have become very adept at quickly scanning these questions and answers so that I have at least some idea about the meaning of the poem. It is good to get a head-start on the children and look a little more knowledgeable than I feel.

We begin by reading the poem, taking it in turns to recite a stanza. Some poems literally fall off the tongue and are a pure delight to verbalise. But before we look at the various poetic devices which make the poem such a pleasure to read, we try to make some sense of it. It is a relatively easy task to discover the meaning of many poems but there are some which are rather mysterious. However, by going through the poem line by line, looking up any unfamiliar words and pooling our ideas, we are able to come to a fairly good understanding of each poem.

Many poems contain ideas worthy of discussion. For example, we read Christopher Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*. In this poem, Marlowe explores what he believes are the kinds of joys essential to happiness, especially happiness in marriage. Next, we looked at Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd*, a poem in which Raleigh gives his own views on the subject. The third poem we studied was Shakespeare's *Sonnet CXVI* which gave us yet more food for thought on the subject of what love is all

about. Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* are another rich source of ideas expressed within poetry.

Many poems engage our emotions such as *Little Boy Blue* by Eugene Fields. Others also contain historical facts like Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* or Joyce Kilmer's *Rouge Bouquet*. We might do a little research to find out more about the background of a poem.

Some poems make us see something in a different way. Robert Southwell's *The Burning Babe* is an unusual Christmas poem and did you ever wonder how the Wise Men coped when they returned to their own land after seeing God? T.S Eliot thought about this and composed *The Journey of the Magi*.

Most poems make use of various poetic devices. In *The Harp and Laurel Wreath* there is an explanation of these devices which is very useful because I keep forgetting the difference between such things as assonance and alliteration. For each poem we study, we look to see if the poet has used any special techniques and how they affect the sound, the imagery, the mood or the feeling of the poem. We also look to see if the poem has a particular form or style: is it a sonnet, or a ballad, or a lyrical or romantic poem? Also, does the poem have a set rhyming pattern or meter. It could sound like our investigation into the poem is becoming a little complicated. However, we try to keep things quick and simple. Our aim is to enjoy a poem rather than analyse it in all its depth.

We usually take up to half an hour to discuss and enjoy a poem before the girls follow their younger siblings' example by writing out a stanza and illustrating it. All poems are placed in a very treasured folder. Every now and then, the girls get

out their folders and flip through the pages enjoying once again each poem. It is like visiting old friends. Favourites are shared in an end-of-term recital.

Usually we pick poems at random but occasionally, if we particularly like a poem, we go in search of others by the same poet. The Internet is a good source of poetry. Some sites have commentaries on the different works of various poets which can help in understanding the meaning of the poems. Also, we have come to realise that, although *The Harp and Laurel Wreath* is an excellent collection of poetry, there is a wealth of poems not contained within its covers. We have begun to browse other volumes of poetry as well as searching for poems recommended by fellow poetry lovers.

We are probably all more familiar with poetry than we realise. If you read the psalms or enjoy Shakespeare's plays then you are already enjoying poetry. Contained in the psalms and canticles are such images as mountains melting like wax. I like the image of how a life coming to an end is described as being taken from the loom and rolled up.

My children will never achieve an 'A' grade in HSC poetry. That is not our aim. But I do hope they will always enjoy poetry and the beauty, the emotions, the ideas and the stories contained within each poem. I hope they will always be eager to add new treasures to their collections.

SUE ELVIS

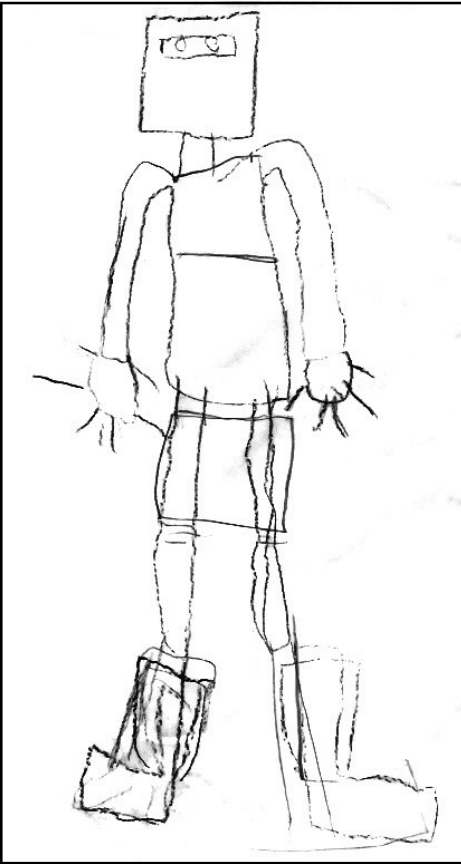


SQUIGGLES AND SQUINTER COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Doodeman family, worthy winners of the Squiggles and Squinter competition.

Here are their stories and drawings about bushrangers

MATT, ROSE AND THE BUSHRANGERS!!!



AMBROSE DOODEMAN (7)

"We're here! We're here!!" cried Rose as the Dead family approached the campsite. "That's a relief," said Matt, "That path was very bumpy." "Come on," said Dad, "We've got to unload the cart."

When the cart was unloaded Rose asked Mum, "Can I go for a walk?" "Yes dear, but don't go too far," said Mum. "Yes Mum," replied Rose as she entered the bush. She closed her eyes and listened to the sound of the bush. She walked for about a kilometre when bang! She fell!

It was getting dark when Matt asked, "Where's Rose?" "Gosh," said Mum, "I thought she had returned." "No," said Matt, "I think I'd better go back and find her. Which way did she go?" "In the bush," replied Mum, "Should I come with you?" asked Dad. "I'll be alright," answered Matt heading towards the bush.

Brad and this is Stinky Pete, Galloping Corey, Amazing Aaron, Mighty Mick and Moonlight Joe," said one. "I've made beds for you," said Nurse Tess coming out, "so in you go."

They were in the tent and tucked in when Nurse Tess asked, "Shall I blow the lantern out?" "Not yet," they replied, "we haven't said our prayers yet." "Can you tell me when you've finished?" "It won't take long," said Matt. "Alright, I'll stay," said Nurse Tess. So they began their prayers.

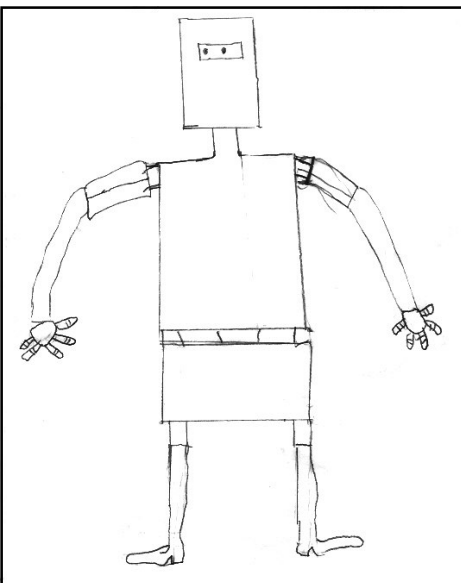
DEAR GOD.

O HEAVENLY FATHER, WE THANK YOU FOR THIS DAY,
THESE PEOPLE,
AND FOR KIND NURSE TESS.
GOD BLESS MUM,
GOD BLESS DAD.
PLEASE HELP US TO GET BACK HOME.
THROUGH JESUS' NAME,
AMEN.

"Hm" thought Nurse Tess while the children were praying. She didn't even know that the children had finished their prayers until Rose called, "Nurse Tess" "Oh I'll turn off the lantern. Goodnight."

The next morning when Matt and Rose got up they found everyone awake and waiting for them. "Good morning children," said Nurse Tess. "Guess what? The bushrangers prayed for you last night, and they want you to teach them more." "How?" asked Matt, "I liked it so much I asked them to pray too."

So over the next few days the kids taught the bushrangers how to pray the Angelus, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Rosary and many more prayers until one morning Matt asked, "What day is it?" "Sunday," answered Amazing Aaron. "Oh no!" said Rose, "We are meant to be going home today." "I'll be glad to take you to your camp," said Stinky Pete, "once we have



MATTHIAS DOODEMAN (8)

He walked for some time when he found her under a tree. "Where... where... where am I?" asked Rose suddenly. "Rose, thank God you're not dead. Now let me think," said Matt. "Hm," he thought, "it's too far to go back. Maybe we can find a camp in the bush. There's got to be one around here. So they looked and looked until they found a camp with lots of men laughing around it, "What about this one?" asked Matt pointing to their camp. "Sure," she said, "There are a lot of people and they seem pretty nice." So it was arranged. Matt said, "Hello, I'm Matt and this is my sister Rose. Can you help us?" "We can't help you but we know someone who can. NURSE TESS NURSE TESS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" "What do you want now?" asked Nurse Tess, "Oh poor little dearies. Now boys, have you introduced yourselves?" "No," they said. "Okay, you introduce yourselves while I make beds for them," said Nurse Tess. "I'm Nasty

MATT, ROSE AND THE BUSHRANGERS!!!

finished our breakfast." Once they had finished their breakfast Stinky Pete got ready to go. Just as they were about to go Matt had an idea. "Why don't you all come with us." he said, "There's a job for a nurse and there's some old houses you can live in." "We'll go," they said.

Meanwhile, back at the camp Mum and Dad were getting worried. "It's nearly time to go," said Dad, "I can't stand leaving without them." "What's that?" asked Mum. "My, oh my, it's the children." "Mum!!! Dad!!! It's you!" they cried. "Matt, Rose I can't believe it's you!" "It's us alright," said Matt, "and these people are coming with us." said Rose.

"This is Brad, Corey, Joe, Pete, Mick, Aaron and Tess." "We'll be grateful to take them with us," they said.

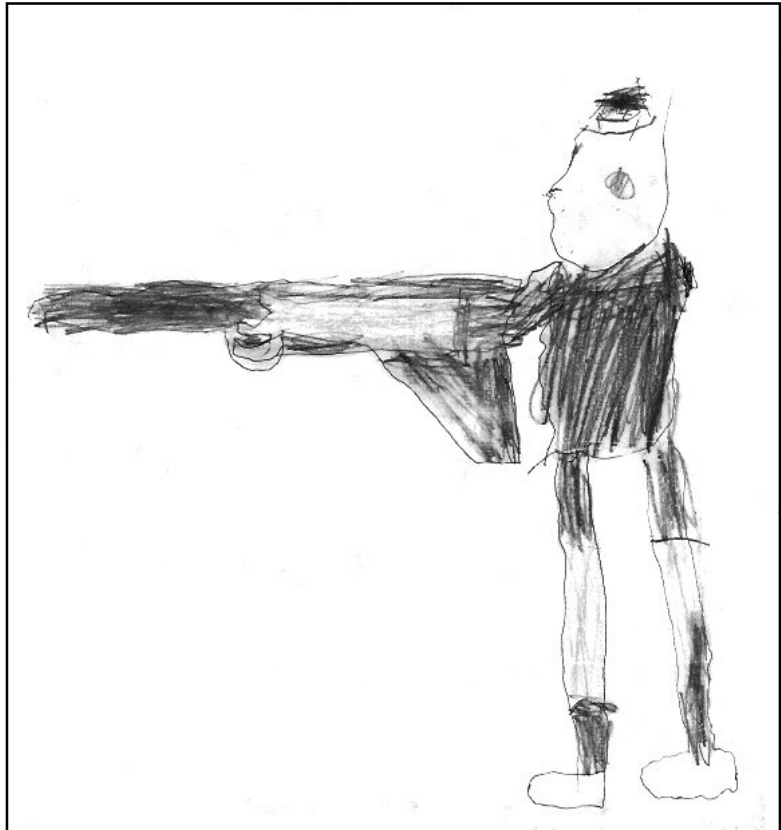
THE END

SIMON-PIETER DOODEMAN (10)

BUSHRANGING WITH NED KELLY!!!

"Attack!" roared Bill Jerriken's to his new bushranging team as the mail carriage came round the bend. Almost straight after there was another yell of - "Attack!" It was the famous Kelly gang with Ned in the lead. Two bushranger teams were on both sides of the mail carriage. Bang! Bang! went the guns as Ned's team grabbed the gold. Bang! Bang! went the guns as Bill's team grabbed the mail. Nobody noticed the other team until this very minute.

They stared in wonder for five whole minutes. The driver escaped and got the troopers. The troopers came round the bend just as the five minutes were up. "Troopers!" yelled Steve Hart, one of Ned's gang. It was a little late for one of Ned's crew with a bang of a gun James Cranor fell dead to the ground. It was too late for three troopers who were injured with shots. Sergeant Glennis went



JEROME DOODEMAN (5)

up to James and cut his head off and put it in his 'head bag' as the troopers called it, (the bushrangers called it the 'dead bag' as that's where the dead heads go) to be taken to Lieutenant William McGuff who would pay this Sergeant. Sergeant was used to this as he had already killed quite a few bushrangers in his days.

He looked around, "The gold's still here and the mail as well! But the passengers are all," taking off hat in reverence, "gone up to the Almighty." They placed the dead in the luggage compartment in the wagon and brought it back to town.

"How could you do this!" roared Bill to his team-Ted, Danny and Harry. "You left all the gold and mail behind. We could've been rich!" "The other gang has probably got it all," muttered Harry. "Bill, wasn't that the famous Kelly gang? It looked just like the 'WANTED EDWARD (Ned) KELLY' sign on O'Riley's saloon," asked Ted. "Yes it was!"

exclaimed Bill. "Did you hear what they did last time?" Danny asked. "Didn't he hold up the banks at Euroa and Jerilderie?" asked Harry. "He did," replied Danny. "We've got to get them back," Bill thought. KILL NED! KILL NED! KILL NED! "Ah!" "Why don't we stop being bushrangers, track down Ned, kill him and we will be rich!" Bill shouted. "BILL! BILL! BILL!"

"We've got to get that bushranging team back," said Ned Kelly to his gang. "We shall do that after we go to Glenrowan. We will do what we've planned there and be after them." "Aren't they offering £8,000 for us?" asked Joe Byrnes. "They are, aren't they, Ned?" Dan Kelly asked his older brother. "Yes they are offering £8,000 for us," Ned replied. "We've got to be careful. Those Aborigine trackers are after us," Steve Hart said matter-of-factly. "Three cheers for Ned! HIPIP, HOORAY! HIPIP, HOORAY! HIPIP, HOORAY! LONG LIVE NED!" they all yelled.

"Hey, listen to this," Danny called to the gang as they came out of

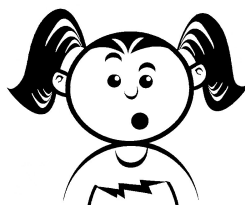
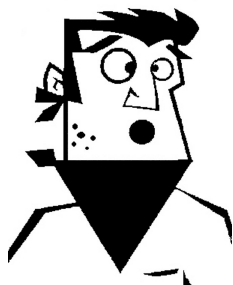
BUSHRANGING WITH NED KELLY!!!

the saloon. "I bought the local newspaper and guess what Ned's done now!" "It says," read Bill, "On Sunday 27th of June Ned Kelly captured the railway station at Glenrowan. The rest of the gang herded the townsfolk into Mrs Jones' hotel. Thomas Curnow (a school teacher) escaped and got the troopers. They came and surrounded the hotel. Ned came out dressed in iron, homemade armour. They shot at each other for quite a while. Finally Ned had to take off his armour. A trooper shot Ned in the legs. They ran up and captured him. Meanwhile some of the people were trying to escape unsuccessfully. A trooper went up and put the hotel on fire. Later on they pulled out the bodies of Ned's gang. Ned is to be hanged in November."

'LET THIS BE A WARNING TO ALL BUSHRANGERS!'

"Serves them right," Harry said. "I'd rather be anything except a bushranger," Danny said decidedly. "We were right to stop bushranging, Bill," Ted said. "I heard that there's a church down the road," Bill said, "What do you think?" Bill eyed them suspiciously. "Okay," "No worries," "Why not." Next Sunday they went to church and started settling down, honestly.

THERESE DOODEMAN (12)

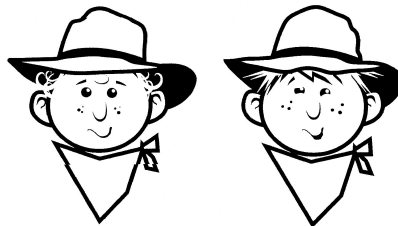


SQUIGGLES AND SQUINTER BOOK REVIEWS

From the same author who inspired me to call myself "Jack Lawson", a character in the fifth book in the Bush Boys series, comes yet another exciting adventure book—Squiggles and Squinter.

The characters in this book are courageous, helpful and catholic! When the twins' friend Freddy's father broke his leg, their non-believing friends offered to take the boys to an Anglican Sunday service but the boys politely refused. This shows strength of character in the boys. Indeed this character building book helps catholic children improve and strengthen their faith.

PETER CURTIS (9)



Imagine outwitting the robbers with their own weapons. Using the virtue of courage to defend the innocents and your own life. Enjoy this action-packed suspense novella which is imbued with aspects of country life and colloquial language.

A character-building book where exemplary characters are practicing catholic boys and girls who are unafraid to live their catholic devotions amidst their protestant friends.

CLARA CURTIS

Squiggles and Squinter were twins who lived in the wild bush in the 1800s, far from towns and cities.

And when notorious bush rangers come, what next? Gunfights, ambushes and robberies, Squiggles and Squinter is a rip-roaring adventure!

Out now in all good book stalls.

JOSEPH CURTIS (10)

A CHALLENGE

Many names of rooms have a Latin origin, for example:

- Laboratory - from labor (work)
- Lavatory - from lavare (to wash)
- Oratory - from orare (to pray)

Check out these names:
Observatory, refectory, dormitory, vestry

How many more can you think of?

Send your list to next term's editor

SENT IN BY VERONICA BRANDT



Squiggles and Squinter bookmarks, stickers and posters now available from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc.

www.cardinalnewman.com.au
Tel 02 9637 9406

Buy them now with your copy of *Squiggles and Squinter!*

GOD DESIGNED US WITH MATHS

CHILDREN'S SURFACE AREA & VOLUME

CHILDREN ON BUSHWALKS in very hot and very cold weather are at greater risk than adults. They get dried out quicker in hot weather, and they get cold quicker at lower temperatures, so they are a deal more prone to dehydration, heat exhaustion, hypothermia and hyperthermia.

The reason is the proportion of their surface area to their volume. It is a deal greater. See below.

Dehydration increases with surface area, not with depth or with volume. If there is a bigger volume, dehydration goes on for a longer time, but the rate of dehydration, depends on the area.

Just think of shallow dams with less water in them than deeper dams. Compare the shallow Pejar Dam at Goulburn with the deep Warragamba Dam near Sydney. The Pejar Dam dries right up quite easily.

Think too of how much quicker it is to cool a hot cup of tea by pouring it into the saucer. This, by the way, was the original purpose of saucers, to cool the tea quickly and to drink out of them!

Of course, the surface area of a child is smaller than of an adult, but the child's weight is much smaller too. and not proportionate to the area of his skin.

Peeling onions in the kitchen gives a hint of this. There is a lot less peeling to do with a couple of big onions than a lot of smaller ones that add up to the same weight of onion. Ask any mother.

MATHS WITHOUT TEARS...

A cube (e.g. from a box of blocks) with a side S
has an area $A = 6S^2$ because its 6 sides are S^2 each
and a volume $V = S^3$
therefore for a cube $A/V = 6/S$

A sphere (e.g. a ball or marble) with diameter D
has an area $A = \pi D^2$
and a volume $V = \pi D^3/6$
therefore for a sphere $A/V = 6/D$.
(Don't be put off by a formula using the diameter: it's more practical than a radius for an engineer to measure.)

A cylinder (a squat one) with height H and diameter H has an area $3\pi H^2/2$
(N.B. counting the curved surface as well as both ends)
and a volume $V = \pi H^3/4$,
therefore for a cylinder $A/V = 6/H$.

For all three shapes, the bigger the size, whether it's S , D or H , the smaller the area needed to pack into it a given volume.

Put abstractly, area to volume is inversely proportional to size, Area depends on the square of a length (or the multiplying of two lengths), whereas the volume depends on cubing a length (or multiplying three lengths together).

FURTHER READING: see article in *Keeping in Touch* called **Try some 'hands-on' Science, Maths, Prayer**. One part of it showed how the ratios of the volumes of a cube to a sphere to a cylinder to a cone are about 4:3:2:1, or expressed exactly $12/\pi:3:2:1$

FR JAMES TIERNEY

SEE, JUDGE, ACT

SEE

The facts are that a liberal arts degree once included some maths, In 1817, Cardinal Newman studied it as an undergraduate, and so did J.L. Tierney in 1912.

JUDGE

They had a richer tertiary schooling in those days. So could we today, if we resisted the brainwashing against maths by our peers. Their prejudices make it so hard for maths teachers and nigh to impossible for a lot of secondary students.

ACT

Be counter-cultural and politically incorrect: Refuse to be bullied and bluffed by know-all. Don't turn to jelly at the sight of numbers, algebra and geometry.

Drop boredom and discover hidden beauty and truth.

There *are* people who can teach it interestingly and some wonderfully well-written books. Fax me for help.

WHAT THE POPE SAID ON MATHS

THE POPE TOLD his young questioners in 2006 that the great Galileo said that God wrote the book of nature in the form of the language of mathematics.

He was convinced that God has given us two books: **the book of Sacred Scripture and the book of nature**. [See picture p. 19 of the *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition II*.] And the **language of nature - it was his conviction - is mathematics**, so it is a language of God, a language of the Creator.

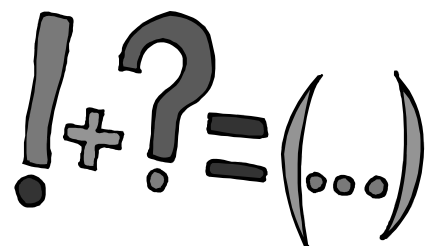
The surprising thing is that **this invention of our human intellect is truly the key to understanding nature**, that nature is truly structured in a mathematical way, and that **our mathematics, invented by our human mind, is truly the instrument for working with nature**, to put it at our service, to use it through technology.

It seems to me almost incredible that an invention of the human mind and the structure of the universe coincide. Mathematics, which we invented, really gives us access to the nature of the universe and makes it possible for us to use it.

Therefore, the intellectual structure of the human subject and the objective structure of reality coincide: the subjective reason and the objective reason of nature are identical. I think that this coincidence between what we thought up and how nature is fulfilled and behaves is a great enigma and a great challenge, for we see that, in the end, it is **'one' reason that links them both**.

One reason could not discover this other reason were there not an identical antecedent reason for both. In this sense it really seems to me that **mathematics** - in which as such God cannot appear - **shows us the intelligent structure of the universe**. Now there are also theories of chaos, but they are limited because if chaos had the upper hand, all technology would become impossible. Only because our mathematics is reliable, it technology reliable..

FR JAMES TIERNEY



SEPTEMBER CAMP 2009

Did you know that there is a homeschoolers' camp on at Fitzroy Falls Conference Centre from **September 28th until October 2nd**? This camp aims to be a school week for the children and an in-service both spiritually and academically for the parents. There will be daily Mass, Benediction and Rosary with times allocated for Confessions and Eucharistic Adoration as well as for a Eucharistic Procession. There will be times of organised games as well as free time for sport, recreation and fun.

The children will be divided into groups according to age, much like in a small school, and every day they will receive a lesson in Religion followed by two other sessions. These sessions are still being organised but I can give a little sneak preview – the primary school aged children will be having a book theme. The boys will be doing a Bush Boys unit while the girls will be doing a unit on the Little House on the Prairie.

Each family will be accommodated in a family cabin or a bunk room with en-suite. There is a communal dining room for meals and outdoor and indoor games areas. There is a bush chapel through a short bush path.

If you would like to register your family, please send a \$50 cheque, made out to Homeschooling Catholics, to Mrs Michele Vieira, 1585 Taralga Rd, Tarlo. NSW 2580

If you would prefer bank details for a direct deposit or for any further information please phone Michele Vieira on (02) 48290113, preferably between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. or between 8:15 a.m. and 9 a.m., or email on dansfarm@harboursat.com.au

SQUIGGLES AND SQUINTER - A RIPPING YARN

Squiggles and Squinter
By Father James Tierney
Illustrated By Ian James
Connor Court Publishing

Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc.
PO Box 697 Merrylands NSW 2160
Telephone: 02 9637 9406
Facsimile: 02 9637 3351
100pp; \$19.95 (plus packaging and postage)

It had been a week of wild weather in the Southern Highlands preceding the book launch, with southerly busters battering the local hamlets and villages. Things were not looking very promising as the day approached for the launch of Fr Tierney's (more affectionately known as Father Jim) latest book (*Squiggles and Squinter*)

But, as if by divine intervention, Sunday dawned bright and clear, all the clouds, and a fair amount of washing despatched by the savage winds. Penrose Park, the chosen venue for the launch, had even given its visitors a reprieve from its normally "chilly" reception.

Thankfully the change in the weather was going to alleviate a minor double-booking issue with the Pauline Fathers' permanent marquee, where the launch was originally planned to be held. This was going to be a ridgey-didge, informal country launch, outside the Monastery at Penrose Park, befitting the rural backdrop to Father Jim's *Squiggles and Squinter*.

The logistics involved with a book launch are not to be under-estimated, however by 1.00pm the organisational efforts of Helen and Michael Brearley

were in full effect. Calling upon resources from within the Highlands, Tablelands and Sydney, the set-up for the book launch came to terms with the change in venue and all was set. The Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc. bookshop, represented by Marie McNulty, Helen and John Gordon had made the journey south from Merrylands to the book launch, to provide the attendees with the opportunity to purchase copies of the new book and to peruse other publications of interest available from the bookshop.

The key address was given by Michael Baker who, as well as being a lawyer and himself a published author, has a shared love of bushwalking with Father Jim. Michael stated that Father Jim has reinvented the genre of 'ripping yarns' for boys and girls, adding to it his own unsurpassed detail in bushcraft and camping, drawing on his memories of bedtime tales recounted by his father to Father Jim and his brother. Indeed the very names, Squiggles and Squinter, were formerly used by Father Jim's own father in his stories.

In setting the context and reasons for *Squiggles and Squinter* being written, Michael drew upon the principle of philosophy that "nothing is without a reason of being". He explained how the book was dedicated to Julian Vieira, who was injured in a car accident on New Years Day in 2008, and how Father Jim had written a chapter of the book each day to be faxed to Westmead Hospital and read to Julian before bedtime. Comparing Father Jim's writing style to Charles Dickens, Michael Baker saw the

similarities in their writing in episodes, usually with cliffhanger endings.

Michael Baker concluded his speech with the observation that our children will have more to deal with now that society in general has moved from a belief in God to a belief in no God. He called upon parents to raise their children carefully and that part of the answer lay in training the will, where Father Jim has specialised, with *Squiggles and Squinter* being one more step.

The audience was then treated to a delightful re-enactment of Chapter 11 from *Squiggles and Squinter*, this being "The Invasion of Moorabool", by an ensemble of Doodeman and Vieira children. This short skit actually featured Julian Vieira as the character "Squiggles", and was ably narrated by Simon Pieter Doodeman, with credit going to Lisa Doodeman and Michele Vieira's direction. This was a shining example of how Father Jim's writing captures the imagination of young children, helped no doubt by the presence of bushrangers and weapons in the storyline.

The book launch of *Squiggles and Squinter* concluded with a poem by Fr O'Neill. Recited from memory by Peter Curtis (9 years old), the poem, "Starch" features Father Jim, capturing his character so eloquently and clearly. At the conclusion of proceedings everyone was then invited to partake of afternoon refreshments organised by Helen Gordon and Helen Brearley, and obtain their copy of *Squiggles and Squinter*.

ANDY ELVIS