



# Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for Catholic homeschooling families

AMDG

JMJ

## EDITORIAL

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## PUBLICATION

**KEEPING IN TOUCH** is published about the end of the fifth week of each term. Contributions are invited from Catholic homeschooling families and from priests, religious and laity supporting them. Children's poems, stories and book reviews are very welcome.

Please send contributions on A4 paper, or (preferably) e-mail where possible.

## MATERIAL DEADLINE

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

## USEFUL WEBSITES

Some recommended websites in this issue:

- [www.classicsforkids.com](http://www.classicsforkids.com)
- [www.abcnews.net.au/classic/keys/](http://www.abcnews.net.au/classic/keys/)
- <http://www.childrenofhope.org/>
- [http://www.mostholysrosary.org/childjesus/childrens\\_holy\\_hour.htm](http://www.mostholysrosary.org/childjesus/childrens_holy_hour.htm)
- [www.cardinalnewman.com.au](http://www.cardinalnewman.com.au)
- [admin@fountainresources.com.au](mailto:admin@fountainresources.com.au)
- <http://www.brandt.id.au/garb.html>

## USEFUL BOOKS

Some recommended books in this issue:

- The Bush Boys** Fr. J.Tierney
- A Mother's Rule** H.Pierlot
- Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church**
- Little House books** Laura Ingalls Wilder
- One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich** A.Solzhenitsyn
- All About the Angels** Fr P. O'Sullivan
- In Search of Shakespeare** M.Woods
- Cambridge School Shakespeare Editions**



## TERM THREE 2005

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## Home-schooling for One

The majority of home-schooling families have two or more children learning at home.

We have one. The good Lord did not grant us more than that.

Having started in kindergarten, we are now mid-way through Yr 2, and have finished sacramental initiation, and are now working on growing in worthy reception of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.

On the occasional bad day, I recall why home-schooling is a blessing compared to the alternatives.

- I can give Vincent a grounding in Catholic thought and the Catechism, and I will not have to contend with a school system confusing that teaching.
- I can be sure that he has had preparation prior to each sacrament.
- The family has a layer of peace that it would not otherwise have, because if Vincent was at school I strongly suspect that I would be continually tussling with teachers and principal.
- I can make sure that Vincent learns phonics, times tables, spelling and other essentials.
- We have the opportunity to learn some Latin together, and maybe other languages later on.
- I know precisely what he is up to, and which areas of learning need work, and we can work at Vincent's pace, and choose texts that harmonise with that.
- We are protected from most schoolyard woes, and the latest 'must have' toy crazes.
- We can finish each segment of school work before going on to the next one.

We have good days and bad days like everyone else. Bad days happen when 100 + 10 becomes a problem impossible to solve (when generally he can do it in a flash). Good days happen most days. Last week I went back and had a look at some of the work we did in Kindergarten, and was surprised at just how much we had covered, and how far we had come in two years.

Definitely I am getting a better education with Vincent than I recall from my own school days. In the first part of the day we read together from a catechism or something like it, eg. for May, we have been reading about the apparitions of Our Lady. Then a short life of the Saint for today and the Gospel reading for tomorrow. Everyday we work on some addition or multiplication times tables. Depending on the day, we might watch some of the good schools programs on ABC television. Then I read to Vincent from three non-fiction books from the library. We are currently reading about steam trains, astronomy and shipping transport in

*By Cathy Cavanagh*

Australia, but we have read about ice tundra, tunnels, the dairy industry, asthma, wetlands, Australian scientists and bushrangers, earthquakes and much more (and that's just 2005). Each day we work from one of the Ladybird readers, and when we finish them towards the end of 2005, we will probably look seriously at the Premier's Reading Challenge List. After that come the workbooks for Maths, English, Spelling and everything else, and special activities for each day to cover the other key learning areas.

Most of all I enjoy learning with Vincent, often we laugh about things. I enjoy seeking him concentrate and complete a task. There is still plenty of 'do we have to' and 'how much more till we finish' to contend with, but once

he gets started the grizzling stops, although he may choose to go on the 'go slow' which increases teacher frustration. I often wonder, given how often I need to get him to refocus on a task, just how much goes through to the keeper in a regular classroom situation. Probably the hardest part of home schooling is the isolation, as there is not much time left for socialisation with other mums and friends and telephone calls at the end of the day. But that will pass, the results so far are more than worth it.



### Dear Friends in Homeschooling and the Faith,

We are a homeschooling family who have just discovered your newsletter and have really enjoyed reading it. Well done. We look forward to reading each issue as it comes out.

I just thought I would send you these links in case others may be interested in this very special event to celebrate the close of the Year of the Eucharist.

We, as a family, have been following this form of Children's Adoration for a year or two and our children have really enjoyed it and gained a great deal from this guided form of adoration. We were blessed to be able to have an hour of our own on a roster of adoration, so we used this time (initially only 20 minutes) to do our special adoration. As no-one else was there, it was not disturbing others, and the children really loved being so close to Jesus.

Anyway, if you have a look at the links, you will see for yourself what is involved. It is of course, a guide, but I feel it is a wonderful way to celebrate the Year of the Eucharist, as well as a great way to introduce the children to their own holy hour.

<http://www.childrenofhope.org/>

[http://www.mostholysacrament.org/childjesus/childrens\\_holy\\_hour.htm](http://www.mostholysacrament.org/childjesus/childrens_holy_hour.htm)

God Bless your work,

Beth and family

Immediately following his election to the papacy, Pope Benedict XVI said 'Dear friends, this deep gratitude for a gift of divine mercy is uppermost in my heart in spite of all. And I consider it a special grace which my Venerable Predecessor, John Paul II, has obtained for me. I seem to feel his strong hand clasping mine; I seem to see his smiling eyes and hear his words, at this moment addressed specifically to me, "Do not be afraid!"

## Making the transition from school to home-school

By Christine French

*My name is Christine French. I live on the Central Coast NSW with my husband Bernard and our seven children. This is my first year of homeschooling and so far it has proved to be both challenging and rewarding. Here's a bit of our background.*

Bernard and I had a new house built last year which we moved in in April 2004. With our new home came a new baby, Joseph, who was born in March of this year. Our two eldest boys Ben and Jacob at present attend the local Catholic high school. They are in years 11 and 9 respectively. Samuel and Matthew I have begun homeschooling this year and are in years 7 and 5, Gemma and John are aged four and two. I have been looking at homeschooling for a number of years particularly since I sponsored a friend of mine, who homeschools, through the RCIA program. She became a Catholic about 8 years ago. It was here I had my first experience of children being taught at home. Initially my reaction was one of amazement, how could this be a possibility? I.e. Homeschooling and running the home at the same time. I remember thinking it to be all too hard in my own situation. However as the years went by the desire to have a go at this grew. I spoke to Bernard about this. He was most supportive of this right from the beginning and has helped a lot with the transition into this lifestyle. I began speaking more to my friend and started emailing and speaking to other women asking them copious questions about programming, household

management etc. I am very grateful for their patience and helpful responses. I also read a number of homeschooling books which enlightened me more. Most recently I have been reading Holly Pierlot's "A Mothers Rule of Life" which I recommend.



In July of last year I began writing lesson plans around what I felt would be a balanced curriculum for my children incorporating Catholic literature wherever possible. As we have quite a number of children in our home it became very apparent this would take some organization. I wrote out a basic timetable, however since homeschooling has begun this has changed somewhat. We are managing a reasonable routine. School is arranged around morning tea and lunch breaks. I have found the consistency of meal times helps the children focus and helps the flow of the day. Samuel and Matthew are working well. The boys miss their school friends however we are trying to make sure they have regular contact with them on the weekends through sport etc., and they play with their siblings and the neighbourhood children in the afternoons. We are fortunate we have grandparents next door whom they see most days and their other grandparents visit once a week.

Something that Bernard and I have both noticed is an increase in the maturity level of both boys in this short span of time. Initially I spent a fair bit of time explaining the program however gradually they are taking on more responsibility for their own work. The older boys too are benefiting from our new venture as we are endeavouring to cover basic catechism questions each night at the dinner table which supplements what they are learning at school. The younger ones are beginning to mimic their older brothers and want to do school themselves. They have their own desks and colour, draw, or paint most days.

**School is arranged around morning tea and lunch breaks.**

Some days work to clock work, other days are frustrating. This morning for example, the toddlers were unsettled, one of the boys was displaying challenging behaviour and the baby cried most of the morning. However by lunch time all settled down and the toddlers and baby went to sleep, the boys finished their worked and went outside to make billy tea (as shown in the Bush boys series by Fr. Tierney) and I managed to have some prayer time. A wonderful blessing. At this point in time we are not sure how long we will homeschool however at present the formation they/we are receiving through attending Mass regularly, reading good Catholic literature and developing closer relationships within the family I'm sure will benefit us for the years ahead.

### 'All about the Angels'

When I looked at the half-torn book on the angels I was going to read for my schoolwork, I wondered what I was in for. But, the book quickly became my favourite subject. The book - which is called 'All about the Angels' (Fr. Paul O'Sullivan) tells about events during which God sent down His messengers to help His people.

I learned about instances where angels have appeared and saved small children from extreme dangers. My favourite part of the book is the part where the Archangel Raphael accompanies a young man named Tobias,



though the desert and does him many favours on the journey. First of all, he saved Tobias from a fierce fish. Then, he found Tobias a wife before going himself to the dangerous city of Medes, where he fought for the money which Tobias was seeking. He then brought Tobias and his wife back home, where he cured his father of his blindness. When they were all home, Raphael made himself known and went back to Heaven.

Angels are the glorious princes of Heaven, and deserve a lot more credit than they get.

**Carrie Leach**

## Bibles and Commentaries

### BIBLE READING FROM A CATECHISM

**THE Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition** (CFCDE) can be used for **Bible reading** because it is chock-a-block with Bible texts, and the rest of the catechism is a commentary on them.

Each of its carefully crafted 50 Questions-&-Answers has its own (or several) carefully chosen Bible text:

- **partly proof**
- **partly piety**
- **partly persuasion**
- **partly explanation.**

While its 50 Q&As average 25 words per answer (not counting Creed, Commandments, *Our Father* and *Hail, Mary*), it has far more words in its Bible texts.

Its Bible translation is more or less *Douay-Rheims*. Disputed texts were settled with the Church's official Latin Bible, the *New Vulgate*, (1979/1986). Thus it rejects the usual modern translation of Ephesians 3:15, "every family on earth takes its name from God..." and favours Douay-Rheims and the new Latin, "God, from Whom all fatherhood on earth is named".

The CFCDE has made a special effort to quote those Bible texts which Protestants think Catholics ignore or find embarrassing. It is ecumenical, in the right way.

The CFCDE is only \$5, with discounts for quantity.

### CHOICE OF TRANSLATION

**IN THIS CONTEXT** of the CFCDE and Bible reading, here is guidance on **translations** and **commentaries**.

A Catholic translation of the Bible must be: approved by the Catholic Church with *Imprimatur*; equipped with explanatory notes (canon 825); include the books of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) and Maccabees, etc., which are omitted in a Protestant Old Testament.

A translation should be:

- readable;
- convey "the sense of the sacred"; the Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE) uses Thou, Thee, Thy and Thine for God; the Douay-Rheims uses them also for people -- which conveys the meaning more accurately, e.g. comparing Matthew 16:19 with 18:18; and distinguishing St Peter from the other apostles in Luke 22:31-32.

In defence of "old-fashioned language", we might heed the authoritative words of Rome's "*Authentic Liturgy*" n. 27 (7th May, 2001), which stated that authentic translations of the liturgy "should be free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression. If indeed, in the liturgical texts, words or expressions are sometimes employed which differ somewhat from usual and everyday speech, it is often enough by virtue of this very fact that the texts become truly memorable and capably of expressing heavenly realities... contribute to the gradual development of a *sacred style* that will come to be recognized as proper to liturgical language. Thus it will happen that a certain manner of speech which has come to be considered somewhat obsolete in daily usage may continue to be maintained in the liturgical context."

### CHECK-UP VERSES

These verses typify entire translations: Does your Bible preserve the traditional Catholic words? Or substitute bland and secular words? Has it surrendered to the feminist *newspeak* "inclusive language"?

**Psalm 1:1:** A good translation does not desacralize "blessed" as "happy". This rules out the Grail Psalms (often called Gelineau) used in the Breviary and in the responsorial psalms and antiphons at Mass. And *The Jerusalem Bible* (JB), also used at Mass, reduces "blessed" to "happy" in the Beatitudes, (Matthew 5:2ff).

**Luke 1:27:** "grace" should not be reduced to "highly favoured" the way JB does. Thirty five years ago, trendy religious education eliminated "grace" and "sanctifying grace", though "grace" was briefly revived by singing "*Amazing Grace*", a Protestant hymn, whose tune had a soulful swing. For many, "grace" is now only a prayer before and after meals.

**Ephesians 1:1:** A good Bible translation does not desacralize "saints" as "people of God" the way the Good News Bible does (i.e. Today's English Version). "Holy Ones" is quite acceptable in earlier editions of the *New American Bible* (which falls down elsewhere).

**Matthew 16: 24:** A good translation does not bend the knee to the feminist philosophy and its unisex interchangeability by eliminating "man" and "he" as generics. Similarly in Psalm 1:1, a good translation does not pluralize "man" to "they" the way the Lectionary at Mass does, and also the *New Revised Standard Version*. (N.B. Beware of getting kindred names mixed up: RSV, RSVCE, and NRSV.)

### RECOMMENDED

A modern but "traditional" translation is the **REVISED STANDARD VERSION CATHOLIC EDITION** (RSVCE). It might yet replace the JB for the readings at Mass.

**Ignatius Press** offers a soft cover RSVCE in a cheapish edition with cross-references, sketchy notes, and very tight margins, \$36.

There is an even cheaper version, a **Protestant RSV**, which, of course, lacks some of the OT books. Nevertheless, it has helpful subheadings and 500 line drawings/maps on history/geography/culture. Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc (CNFRI) supplies a page of Catholic alterations to bring it into accord with the RSVCE. Hardcover, \$18.75.

**My Daily Catholic Bible** sets out the *entire* Bible as 20 minutes devotional readings, with an OT and a NT passage for each of the 365 days a year, headed by a quote from a saint. CNFRI supplies an index. Excellent value for piety. Paperback \$45.

**Scepter Press** (*Opus Dei*) has a leather cover with easy opening, excellent central margins, index, cross-references, sketchy notes, but no subheadings. \$91. There is also a smaller print, bonded, leather-covered edition for \$51.

**Navarre Bible** (*Opus Dei*) has its New Testament books as separate paperback volumes, with Latin and **extensive commentary** (much more than half each page), \$357. Individual New Testament (NT) books in paperback range up to \$31; some are combined, so that 12 volumes span the 27 books of the NT. In hardcover, the Gospels with Acts is \$86.50. Much of the Old Testament is now available, also with Latin and commentary, with similar pricing to the New Testament for the paperbacks of individual books, or hardcovers for groups of books.

The **DOUAY-RHEIMS** translation is to English-speaking Catholics what the *King James Bible*

("Authorised Version") is to Protestants. It is named after the two towns in northern France where Catholic scholars from England went "off-shore", not to avoid taxation but to avoid being hung, drawn and quartered.

**Douay-Rheims Bible** quality bound in hardcover and easy-opening without subheadings but with good margins, basic cross-references, synopsis of each chapter, and very brief notes: \$75.

**The Holy Catholic Bible** edited by Father George Haydock dating from 1850, with separate A4-volumes for Old and New Testaments (not sold separately, and one inch and two inches thick, respectively) in vinyl covers, \$170. There is an **extensive commentary** in many more words than the Bible text in small print and on the same page as the text; it quotes extensively from the ancient fathers of the Church like St Jerome, St Augustine and St John Chrysostom, and medieval theologians like St Thomas Aquinas, and more modern commentators like Bossuet and St Alphonsus, plus some Protestant comment, too. It is amazing how much of it anticipates modern commentary. Most of the cross-references are in the commentary.

The illustrations amidst the Bible text are quaint by modern standards, yet with their own charm.

The New Testament volume includes "An Historical and Chronological Index to the New Testament", a "Useful Table of References" directing the reader to the Bible verses and accompanying footnotes with "Catholic truths here deduced out of the Holy Scriptures; "An Illustrated and Comprehensive Bible Dictionary" (glossary); "A Comprehensive History of the Books of the Holy Catholic Bible" also artistically illustrated, with a variety of old woodcut pictures.

The hardcover binding in one volume is \$220.

### OTHER BIBLES

Over the years, the *Good News Bible*, i.e. *Today's English Version*, has become even blander and less accurate, indeed, more of a paraphrase, including its Catholic editions. Its strengths are in the subheadings and simple drawings, and these are useful even while reading from other versions.

### OTHER COMMENTARIES

Finding a really helpful Bible commentary has always been a problem. Like Murphy's Law, something always goes wrong, and your commentary lacks answers on the only things you are looking for.

Apart from those mentioned above, commentaries mostly are separate from the Bible text. Such is *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1953/57, which older priests have in their libraries. It has lots of useful material which complements the Navarre Bible's and Haydock's commentaries.

The full edition of *The Jerusalem Bible* 1966 has briefer notes than these, plus lots of cross-references.

*The Jerome Biblical Commentary* of 1969/1972 abets the demythologizers and is not recommended.

### COMPUTERIZED BIBLES

Computerized Bibles are highly recommended for family catechetics and homeschoolers. They are a more powerful tool than a book concordance for finding texts. The latest computerized Bibles search a dozen translations at once. Even the earlier ones will do fancy searches, including "both-and" or "'either-or". And you can print out the texts you want.

However, most computerized Bibles are Protestant, hence you buy them at Protestant shops, such as the Bible Society. Their modern translations tend to suffer the same defects as modern Catholic translations.

Being Protestant, they lack what Protestants call the Apocrypha and we call the Deutero-canonical books. However, there is at least one programme called *The Word Processor* with the Protestant edition of RSV along with their "apocrypha".

*Douay-Rheims* on computer is available from John XXIII Co-op, but its hypertext is poorly done.

### PURCHASING

The above Bibles and many more are available from the Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc, PO Box 697 Merrylands NSW 2160; fax 02 0637 3351; phone 02 9637 9406; email <fr@cardinalnewman.com.au>.

Father James Tierney

### Papal criticism of *Harry Potter*

When Benedict XVI was simply Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he praised a German author warning against "Harry Potter" in *Harry Potter -- Good or Evil?*

He wrote to its author, 7th March, 2003: "It is good that you [have] enlightened people about **Harry Potter**, because those are subtle seductions, which act unnoticed and by this deeply distort Christianity in the soul, before it can grow properly."

### Question & Answer Catechisms even when not memorized...

"Today, specialists in medicine, engineering and chemistry arm themselves with questions & answer manuals to check themselves on recent developments in their respective fields. Far from lagging behind the pedagogical times [= the art of teaching], therefore, the Catholic Church is in the forefront of teaching technique when she espouses the use of questions & answers as one of the most successful means of passing on the faith to generation upon generation.

"Good catechetical style requires **precision and brevity**. Vague authors, therefore, eschew [= shun] it, either because their thoughts are muddled or because they are wily enough not to put down what they really hold in black and white. Prolix [= waffly] authors avoid a question & answer approach because its success depends on succinct, incisive replies which are beyond them."

Thus wrote **Cardinal Silvio Oddi**, as his foreword of 28th June, 1981, in Father John Hardon's *The Question & Answer Catholic Catechism*, with its 1701 Q&As. His words apply to the new *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* with its 598 Q&As, or to the *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition* with its mere 50 Q&As.

Incidentally, the In-Brief paragraphs in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* total 20,000 words, whereas the answers in the *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition*, without the Creed, Commandments, Our Father and Hail Mary, have 1150 words, and without the italicized extra lines in the Answers, have only 644 words. That's brevity and precision!

## How Many Children Do You Have? (Part 2)



by Sue Elvis

*When our son Thomas died in 1999, we were left with a dilemma: How many children did we have? Was it five or was it six? (You may remember me mulling over this problem in KIT Term 4, 2000 ) Now we have a new dilemma: Do we have seven children or is it eight? Of course, the answer is eight! Since Thomas' death, God has blessed us with two more gorgeous girls, Sophie and Gemma-Rose!*

In the months following Thomas' death, it seemed to me that every second woman I saw, was pregnant. Most of my friends were too. I remember thinking that I would never again hold a precious newborn baby of my own in my arms. It was difficult to see past the suffering. Eventually, I came to understand that it was not important what I wanted. To be happy and at peace it was important to accept what God had decided was best for me. After accepting this, God in His goodness blessed us with more children. I am very aware that not everyone that loses a child is given another baby, let alone two.



Having eight children is nothing extraordinary in our circle of Catholic homeschoolers. Many families are much larger. I tend to forget that society on the whole, regards our family size as unusual. But we *have* had a few occasions when our family size has raised eyebrows and led to some interesting conversation!

I was in the chemist shortly after Sophie was born. All the children were with me, milling around the pram like bees around the honey pot. As they were continually on the move, the bewildered assistant asked, "Just exactly how many of you are there?" Our eldest son, Duncan (thirteen at the time), glanced around and then with a puzzled look on his face answered, "I'm not sure. How many children do we have Mum?" That response proved that the answer was "Too Many" as far as the assistant was concerned!

We had great fun after Gemma-Rose was born. I was in the habit of taking our four youngest daughters shopping on a Saturday morning. One day Felicity, our eldest child, said she'd come along too. "You're in for a fun morning," I told her and proceeded to explain what would happen in every shop we visited: We'd enter a shop, three girls at my heels and baby in a sling. The first question would be, "Is the baby a girl or a boy?" Then there'd be commiserations over the fact that Gemma-Rose wasn't a boy. "I expect you'd have liked a boy". "Oh no", Charlotte would answer. "We already have three brothers". "And another sister at home", Imogen would add. The looks on people's faces said it all!

Sometimes, my husband Andy and I sneak out to a café for a cup of coffee, taking only Gemma-Rose with us. We pretend we are a career couple having our first child later in life. We fool everyone until someone tries to engage us in conversation. "Oh what a cute child! Is she your first?" says the fellow coffee drinker leaning towards us with a friendly smile on his face. "Oh no she is our eighth child," I reply with a huge smile on my face. Our new acquaintance draws back quickly and mutters, "Rather you than me". I reassure him that we are exceedingly happy with our children but he seems unconvinced and quickly hurries off. What a pity he doesn't realise what he has missed out on.

I am sure our experiences are not unusual. Any family with four or more children will have similar tales to tell. We are very fortunate that we feel our family is accepted in our community. We regard any criticisms and unkind comments with amusement. We certainly wouldn't swap our gifts from God for the convenience of a quiet life. And anyway, life wouldn't be half as interesting without our children and the funny stories that result from having a larger than average family!

### Master Artists

**Byzantine era.** This era saw the first flowering of Christian iconography. The mosaics, and sculptures are worthy of study.

**Blessed Fra Angelico.** He was declared the patron of Christian artists in 1984, so he is well worth studying. It would be good to compare the work of this most holy Franciscan to others of the pre-renaissance, to see the difference that holiness makes.

**The Impressionists.** Their work has delighted generations of viewers. Monet, Manet, etc. They explored new ways of depicting light in a scene.

Cathy Cavanagh

### Preferred Poets

**T.S. Eliot** \_Because in his poetry he uses a lot of imagery from the bible, and because several lines have stuck in my memory (some 20 years later)

**John Donne** To teach about sonnets and other poetry in distinctive formats, and because of his use of biblical imagery and subject matter

**George Herbert** He is included mainly because I have not come across a poem of his that I did not like. He, too, uses biblical imagery.

All three introduced me to the concept of allusions, which was very important for understanding Sacred Scripture, which is so full of allusions. All three of these poets have poems printed in the back of the Divine Office.

Cathy Cavanagh

### Favourite Composers

**Gregorian Chant.** Should have at least a little study, as it is a living part of our Catholic musical heritage.

**Johann Sebastian Bach.** Because he not only composed music, and a great deal of church music, but seriously studied it himself. He also seems to have lived a happy family life, which is not at all usual compared with his musical peers.

**Chopin.** Chosen mostly because some of his pieces are quite simple, and good for young learners.

Cathy Cavanagh

## Compendium of the Catechism

By Anthony English

On June 28 this year, Pope Benedict XVI presented the *Compendium* of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This *Compendium*, or summary, is in question and answer format, and being a summary, will make the contents of the larger *Catechism* more accessible.

The *Compendium*, said the Holy Father, "is a faithful and sure synthesis of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It contains, in concise form, all the essential and fundamental elements of the Church's faith." There are 598 questions in a handy format of around 200 pages. It is only available in Italian at present, and is being sold in Italy, even in supermarkets and newsagencies.

I am sure the *Compendium* itself will be widely read and a great help for us all in understanding and digesting the contents of the faith, equipping us to live it better and pass it on more effectively.

In addition to the text itself, which seeks "to reproduce an imaginary dialogue between master and disciple", a point or two are worth noting about the context of the *Compendium*. First of all, the work of summarising the *Catechism* was entrusted in 2003 to a Commission of Cardinals, over which Cardinal Ratzinger presided. This new volume is very much stamped with his personal influence as well as his new Apostolic Authority as Successor of Peter. In the light of this, two aspects of the *Compendium* are particularly refreshing. One is the presence of Sacred Art, because, as His Holiness explains,



*Art always "speaks", at least implicitly, of the divine, of the infinite beauty of God, reflected in the Icon par excellence: Christ the Lord, Image of the invisible God.*

*Sacred images, with their beauty, are also announcers of the Gospel and express the splendour of Catholic truth, showing the supreme harmony between the good and the beautiful, between the via veritatis and the via pulchritudinis.*

These sacred images will be found in all the translations of the *Compendium*. This is particularly

### Things I Like by Charlotte Elvis

I like my sisters because they share,  
I like my friends because they play with me,  
I like my mum and dad because they love me,  
I like the books on the bookshelf,  
I like my toys in the bedroom,  
I like my brothers because they help me,  
I like the trees out side.



Nothing useless is, or low;  
Each thing in its place is best;  
And what seems but idle show  
Strengthens and supports the rest.  
*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

*When I grow up,...* I want to be a  
princess and a mermaid.  
*Bethany Leach, 4*

refreshing to those of us who were educated in schools with a mimimalistic outlook on art, in particular religious art, in which stick drawings and vague images were the norm. Artistic beauty or works of art presenting the supernatural mysteries rarely crept into the liturgical books or religious texts.

### Latin Prayers

A second noteworthy aspect of the *Compendio* is the presence of common prayers and catechetical formulae at the end. These prayers will be presented in Latin as well as the language into which the *Compendium* is translated. As the Pope observes, learning these prayers even in Latin, will "facilitate praying together" when the faithful of various languages come together. The Pope here is recognising the Church's official language as a unifying factor.

### Translations

Finally, a word about translations. Many of us remember that the original *Catechism* was published in French in 1992, but it was a full two years before the English translation was made available. This was due to a major discussion (to use a polite term) about so-called "gender-inclusive language." Cardinal Ratzinger played a key role in insisting that the English translation be faithful to the original French, and not succumb to a politicisation and doctrinal compromise of a pro-feminist translation. Significantly, the debate about the translation of this *Compendium* is unlikely even to happen. The Vatican is working on translations into eight major languages (the big *Catechism* has been translated into over 50 languages), and at the time of writing in early July 2005, the hope is that a faithful translation will be made available for World Youth Day in Cologne in August.

Catholics ought to welcome the *Compendium* of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It is a summary of the *Catechism*, not a substitute for it. As we have seen with some of the excellent work done by Father Tierney and others over the years, catechisms can and ought to be a sure means of passing the faith on from one generation to the next. I am sure it will be worth ordering several copies once it becomes available.

## Limits

By David Obeid

The mathematical concept of a limit is difficult for a lot of people. This explanation doesn't pretend to be perfect, so don't decide to throw the towel in and give up if you don't "get it" after working through this.

Let's say that you were a faithful disciple who would do whatever your master asked for. Your master (Master Po) just asked you to run infinity metres and bring back a blade of grass from infinity metres away (he is testing the hypothesis about why the grass always appears greener). Before you head off (you actually plan to head off, because you strive to be the perfect disciple who does whatever his master commands), you point out to the master that you can't actually run infinity metres, because infinity doesn't actually exist, it is a concept that demonstrates the limitlessness of numbers.

Wise as he is, the master knows that the grass isn't really always greener and so he says, "Well Grasshopper, if you were to go infinity metres and bring back a blade of grass, what would that blade of grass be like?"

You aren't too shabby in the wisdom box yourself, so you answer, "Like the grass anywhere else."

Your ability to intuit the state of grass at infinity implies that you should be able to get limits as a concept. Good for you!

Let's look at an example:

A grasshopper (no relation) has a particular mathematical bent and always does things in patterns of one form or another. One day he decides to see how far he can leap in a single hop. Putting everything into his springy little legs he hurtles forwards and manages to hop 3m. Exhausted, but still mathematically fixated, the grasshopper decides that these 3m hops are only for the foolhardy, so decides to only jump half as far on his next hop. Locked into a pattern now, the grasshopper continues to jump half the distance of each of his previous hops as per this diagram:



Now just as it was impossible for us to travel infinity metres to retrieve Master Po's blade of grass it will be impossible for our grasshopper to complete infinity hops (in spite of whatever mathematical fixation he has). But let's get abstract for a moment (this isn't asking too much, since you have made it this far accepting the hypothetical existence of a nerdy grasshopper). Let's consider what would happen if the grasshopper *did* do infinity hops.

He would cover  $3 + 1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{4} + \frac{3}{8} + \frac{3}{16} + \frac{3}{32} + \frac{3}{64} + \frac{3}{128} + \frac{3}{256} + \frac{3}{512} + \frac{3}{1024} + \frac{3}{2048} + \dots$  m.

If we add up just those terms shown then we see that the grasshopper covers  $5\frac{682}{683}$  m. This is very close to 6m.

In fact, if we keep going we find that our grasshopper gets closer and closer to 6m, but doesn't seem to ever actually get there.

Taking another look at our grasshopper's jumping pattern we could describe his pattern of jumps in a different way, with exactly the same result.

Let's say that instead of jumping 3m for the sake of it, our grasshopper started his adventure exactly 6m away from an attractive pure white marble. Drawn to the marble, but needing to get to it stealthily the grasshopper decides to approach it by jumping exactly half as far as whatever his current distance is. So he jumps 3m, then half of that, then half of that and so on. It isn't hard to see that the pattern of jumps once again is:

$3 + 1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{4} + \frac{3}{8} + \frac{3}{16} + \frac{3}{32} + \frac{3}{64} + \frac{3}{128} + \frac{3}{256} + \frac{3}{512} + \frac{3}{1024} + \frac{3}{2048} + \dots$

As you can see, if the grasshopper is always only jumping half the distance to the marble that he will (perhaps sadly) never get to his goal. Even if he has one billionth of a micrometre to go, his next jump will only cover half that distance.

Continued page9

## Keeping in Touch

But there is a limit, a definite boundary to all of his jumping. Even if he jumps an infinite amount of times (remember we are speaking theoretically) he will never get further than 6m. In fact, if he did pull off infinity jumps he would go exactly 6m.

In quasi-math-speak, his limit is 6m. ■



*When I grow up, ... I want to be a sportsman.  
Adam Leach,7*

*From the writings of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI*

*submitted by Cathy Cavanagh*

'With our move to Traunstein, however, new and serious concerns entered my life. A few days after our arrival the school opened its doors. I now entered the first class in the 'humanistic gymnasium', what today would be called the 'gymnasium for classical languages'. I had to walk about a half hour to get to school, which gave me ample time for looking about and reflecting, but also for reviewing what I had learned in school...Latin, as the foundation of one's whole education, was then taught with old-fashioned rigor and thoroughness, something I have remained grateful for all my life. As a student of theology later on, I had no difficulty in studying the sources in Latin and Greek, and, at the time of the Council in Rome, although I had never attended lectures in Latin, I was quickly able to take part in the discussions conducted in the theological Latin then spoken.

In the meantime, national Socialism had not yet been able to change any more in the Traunstein gymnasium than it had in my school in Aschau. Not one of the professors of classical studies who belonged to the old guard had joined the Party, despite the considerable pressure exerted on government employees. Soon after I arrived at the gymnasium, the second headmaster was removed from his post because he did not bend to the new masters. In retrospect it seems to me that an education in Greek and Latin antiquity created a mental attitude that resisted seduction by a totalitarian ideology.'

*From Chapter 3, 'Milestones', by Cardinal Ratzinger (Now Pope Benedict XVI)*

'They remained steadfast in the breaking of bread. A parish priest of this diocese, who died this year, once told me, in a most moving way, how he had personally experienced this saying. As a soldier he took part in the invasion of Crete and went to look

for a billet in a house. he noticed there how the man who met him was having a struggle because he was suffering on account of this trampling upon his homeland and because he knew that he himself would be in danger if he offered hospitality in this case. But he saw how in the end the man overcame his feelings, invited him to sit at the table, took a piece of bread, broke it in two, and gave him a piece of bread. And he noticed that this was more than a mere gesture; he realised what it meant: I accept you as a guest, as a brother; this is my life, you are protected by my life, just as I accept the danger to myself. He had noticed how, when the man was tearing the bread up, it was as if he were really sharing out his own life, giving of his own without taking notice of the danger threatening him. And still, after nearly forty years, the emotion of this experience, of how that life was shared out with the bread, still made him tremble.

Christ genuinely shared Himself out, gave Himself with the torn-up bread, so that His life might be ours: that is the incredible event that occurs ever anew. Herein lies the great significance of the Eucharist, and that is why it is no game, but quite real. When death comes onstage the game is at an end. Man is set before the truth. But only when this encounter reaches right down unto death can true hope rise for man. Christ shares Himself with us. Let us take this to heart again and again, so that we may share Him out; it is immediately clear that we can devote ourselves to the breaking of the bread only if we ourselves become breakers of bread in the fullest sense. Hence the Eucharist is the true motive power for all social transformation in the world.'

*From 'A homily on Acts 2:42' (1980) within the book 'God is near us' by Cardinal Ratzinger (Now Pope Benedict XVI)*

### Bush Boys Competition

WANTED: a Bush Boys slogan suitable for putting on a car bumper sticker.

If you have any creative ideas, please send them to Mrs Sue Elvis, Po Box 968, Mittagong, NSW 2575 or [elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au](mailto:elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au)

**Closing date: end of week 1 term 4**  
Please include your name and age.

There will be a prize awarded to the best entry and you will be able to see your slogan on the backs of all our vehicles!

### Music Resources

*Sue Elvis*

Recommended sites for music appreciation:

[www.classicsforkids.com](http://www.classicsforkids.com)

Different composer featured every week. Listen to a featured piece of music, find out about the composer, do a quiz, activity sheets, games and more. Past programs available

ABC Classic FM

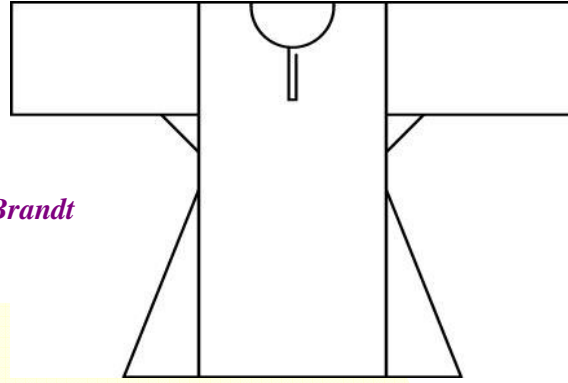
9.05 am Saturdays: Keys to Music

Discusses composers, explores pieces of music, making Classical music accessible for everyone  
Current and recent programs available online:

[www.abcnews.net.au/classic/keys/](http://www.abcnews.net.au/classic/keys/)

## Clothes for Medieval Day

By Veronica Brandt



Sometime in September there is a Medieval Day held at Lewisham in Sydney's inner west. As this day approaches I start daydreaming about the new costumes I will make this time.

Alas, the day arrives all too soon and if you do come you will probably see me in the red dress I made almost three years ago. Nevertheless, if I can share my daydream with you, perhaps someone else can realise them.

### The T-Tunic

The first thing you come across on the Internet when looking for easy garb to make is the T-tunic. And the first thing I thought when I saw it was 'It looks so boring! If I'm going to the trouble of sewing something I want to sew something interesting!'. Since then I have made lots of T-tunics. Do not fear the T-tunic, the T-tunic is your friend.

'The T-tunic is a bag with holes for your arms and your head.' - Ragnar Torfason

The simplest way to make a T-tunic is to cut out a big T-shape then sew up the sides leaving a hole for your head. The authentic way involves cutting out rectangles and triangles (see fig 1). This way drafting a pattern is easy. The other bonus is it doesn't waste as much fabric.

Trimming your T-tunic can make all the difference. Trim needn't be expensive. Make a braid out of any old embroidery threads or knitting wool and there you have your own unique trim. Trimming is also good for hiding any less than perfect seams or hems.

### Accessories

There's nothing like a hat and cloak to make a simple outfit something really special. A hooded cloak gives you the best of both worlds. Curtain material, without the thermal backing, makes a good cloak. See what you can find in offcuts.

A really simple cloak is a rectangle of fabric fastened with some sort of pin or brooch. One way is to keep the pin up on your right shoulder, (if you're right handed) leaving your sword arm free. It also seems more comfortable like that, with less tendency for the cloak to try to strangle you.

Hats are fun to make. Veils are good for girls - a circle of floaty material plus a headband to keep it on. I'm guessing hoods would be popular, going by the costumes in Lord of the Rings. Big hoods are fun to hide in, looking moody and mysterious.

Other accessories include belts, a little drawstring bag to dangle off your belt, gaiters to cover your shoes and make them look like boots, or even some jewelry (nothing too valuable though). Last year there were quite a few plastic swords and shields wielded most enthusiastically by fearsome four foot knights.

### Make it up

Medieval people didn't have fashion magazines or department stores dictating to them what to wear. They made it up as they went along and so can you. There are all sorts of books to give you ideas. Of course books devoted to Medieval clothing would be ideal, but all sorts of books including pictures of illuminated manuscripts, statues and woodcuts of

the time can be a source of inspiration.

Commercial sewing patterns sometimes have patterns for 'medieval style' dresses. These are notorious for being unauthentic and sometimes downright impractical. Nevertheless, if you're more used to working from patterns like that, go for it.

If at first you do succeed, try to hide your astonishment!

Don't despair. Mistakes happen. That's what unpickers are for. I'm no great seamstress, and it felt like I had to make everything over at least twice before it was wearable. Still the hems on my clothes are too short at the back, but noone seemed to notice. (Now I'll have to fix that before September or all my gentle readers will be pointing at me on the day)

One good thing about having three boys close together is that whatever I make is bound to fit one of them. Even if you can't finish complete outfits for everyone, whatever you do make will be a boon. If it doesn't fit anybody in your house, you're welcome to bring it along on the day for the proposed garb hire stall.

Lastly, remember to have fun. It's not a competition (though there was a prize for the fairest in the land last year). A smile is your best accessory.

For more on this topic see my web page:

<http://www.brandt.id.au/garb.html>  
It also includes lots of links to other helpful articles.

Next Medieval Day: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2005. Further details available from Veronica Brandt on 02 4758 7945 or by email: [veronica@brandt.id.au](mailto:veronica@brandt.id.au)

## Patron Saint for the Absent-Minded

By Anthony English

Those of us who have a propensity to absent-mindedness occasionally find it leads to little inconveniences. There's nothing wrong with being a bit detached from some of the practical details of life (I like to call it the "professor syndrome") but it does lead to a little bit of forgetfulness and, let's admit, losing things. Losing things means losing time, and that calls for action.

It's a funny thing when you lose something. A thorough search of the house is rarely the way you find it, and if you do end up locating it, it's always in the very last place you look. (Why is it always like that?) Sometimes, though, it just isn't there. Obviously, supernatural help is usually more likely to lead to success. There are two approaches here: one is the ascetic, the other is more mystical.



Being absent-minded myself and being named after Saint Anthony means I tend to call on him often. The results can be amazing. Over the last couple of days, my son Thomas (not yet three years old) and his Dad have been praying for two things which have gone missing. One was a little toy caravan, the other a security card for work. (In case you were wondering, Thomas was looking for the caravan). We asked Saint Anthony with our favourite prayer:

*Great Saint Anthony,  
Pillar of grace,  
Put the [missing item]  
Back in its place.*

The ascetic approach to lost items can be summed up in one word: detachment. Convince yourself that whatever it is you lost is really not that important. Perhaps it can be replaced, but maybe the world will still turn without it. If, on the other hand, the missing object is the sort of thing you wished you'd grabbed as you escaped from your burning house, then a more mystical approach is for you.

We started looking, without success, then Mum announced she'd lost a cooking appliance. (This appliance wasn't something large and obvious, like an oven. Anyway, after recent kitchen renovations things are still popping up, like the toaster.). Once I started looking again, I found first the appliance, then the caravan straight afterwards. As for the security card I felt a kind of supernatural hint "I wonder if it's near that book." I hadn't even thought of looking there before. We found the three items all within five minutes. It was wonderful! Thomas and I went to thank Saint Anthony for his intercession, once we found his statue.

When you can't find something which you really, truly need, you can call on God's helper. Saint Anthony of Padua is the patron saint of finding lost things. That traces back to a time he lost a treasured hand-written commentary on the psalms. One of the novices had left the monastery, tired of the religious life, and taken the book with him. Saint Anthony prayed fervently for the salvation of the novice-thief, who returned repentant, begging for re-admission to the order.

*I praise You, so wonderfully You made me; wonderful are Your works!*

*Psalm 139*

*Indeed You love truth in the heart;  
Then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.*

*Psalm 50 (51)*

### *Come, Share Your Master's Joy* Vicky Leach

Recently, I took up my passion for drawing, after a lapse of nearly two years during which time my youngest daughter was born.

The joy that I felt, as I sketched and contemplated, brought the sort of peace that comes when one's soul has melted in the Lord. And the feelings continued long after the session had ended, when contact with the hustle and bustle had once more been restored.

All of this led me to reflect upon, not only the need for busy mums to refresh once in while, but also the responsibility which we each have to make use of our individual gifts, for the glory of God. The Parable of the Talents immediately sprung to mind - *for to the one who has more will be given...* But as for the lazy servant - *throw this useless servant into the darkness outside...* I ponder on how this might relate to our non-spiritual gifts as well as the spiritual.

### *Favourite Artists, Poets, Authors & Composers*

**artists:** Pieter Bruegel, Frederick McCubbin, Claude Monet (all very different, all excellent for story writing, all excellent paintings)

**poets:** Henry Lawson, Banjo Paterson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**authors:** Lewis Carroll, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens

**composers:** more difficult to give three. I would recommend particular pieces rather than particular composers.

*Elvis Family*

### Shakespeare Resources:

*Sue Elvis*

*Cambridge School Shakespeare editions of the plays:* These are the best editions I have found. Excellent scene summaries, glossary, activities and suggestions on how to read or act out each scene.

*In Search of Shakespeare by Michael Woods:* book based on BBC series of the same name. Explores all aspects of Shakespeare's life, discussion of the question, "Was Shakespeare Catholic?" Very interesting.

*NB. Some of these resources are rated PG and may not be suitable for children in their entirety.*

## Playing, Learning and Living Books

by Sue Elvis

Four of the girls are dressed in long faded skirts which are threatening to trip them up. Their little faces peer out from behind bonnets. They have draped a blanket over a table to make a wagon which is led by two tricycles disguised as mustangs. "Mary! Laura! Baby Carrie! come and get some corn cakes," calls Mother Caroline. The two older girls come obediently, but "Baby Carrie" pulls at the wagon cover and tries to drag it off and her sisters shout in protest. An absorbing game of *Little House on the Prairie* is in progress.

There was great excitement last Christmas. One of our daughters received the complete *Little House* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder. No more searching the library for the next book in the series. We can read and re-read the books as often as we want. Most of you will agree that these books are a wonderful addition to any homeschooling library. They are what Charlotte Mason would describe as "living books": books that are written by an author who has a passion for his subject; books containing both facts and ideas presented in story form which engages the emotions of both the writer and the reader.

At the moment, Charlotte and I are reading the *Little House* books together. Charlotte is totally absorbed by the adventures of Mary, Laura and Carrie. These girls are like special friends waiting inside the pages of the books to share their lives. During our reading we have learnt about life on the prairies: the dangers of wolves, how to construct a log house and make maple sugar. We have felt Laura's fear as she met her first Indian, her reluctance to share her precious Indian beads and her frustration that Mary seems more beautiful and good-natured than herself. The story of Laura Ingalls has so captured the imagination of the girls that I have observed them playing "wagons" and "log cabins", using all the facts, ideas and feelings they have absorbed through their reading.

It recently occurred to me, that another series of living books has had a profound effect on my children. This series is not only based on Australian children, but the children are Catholic and homeschoolers as well! I am sure many of you are already familiar with Father James Tierney's *Bush Boys* series. You have probably read and re-read, to your children, the exciting camping adventures of Peter and John, Greg and Bernie. The books are probably family favourites. But have you ever thought of these books as living books which could be used as

part of your home education curriculum?

It is obvious that the *Bush Boys* have the same appeal as the *Little House* books. Your children like mine, probably dress up as Bush Boys in their khaki shirts (long sleeved of course!), boots and bush hats. The children spend hours outside trying to construct the perfect tent, making bows and arrows and navigating their way round using a compass and homemade maps. Perhaps your Bush Boys have real camping adventures and stride through the bush with their staffs, observing nature and building safe campfires.

Watching their activities and listening to their play, it soon becomes apparent that the children have absorbed many facts and ideas from the *Bush Boys* books. So what can a child learn from the Bush Boys? Firstly, they learn that all Bush Boys say grace before settling down to their camp sausages and Deb potato and steaming mugs of tea! All Bush Boys must uphold the virtues of truthfulness and honesty, loyalty and obedience, purity and modesty, cheerfulness and kindness. They must have



gratitude, be non-violent and have clean speech. There are not many books portraying such good role models for our children. And don't think that the Bush Boys are too good for our children to identify with. The Bush Boys get into just enough mischief to seem realistic. The young reader will be encouraged to rise above his own faults after witnessing the

Bush Boys own struggles with sin.

The setting for the *Bush Boys* is the beautiful Wild Bush Mountains. Fr Tierney has woven into his tales many facts about National Parks, flora and fauna, geographical features....There are additional pages jam packed with information about Morse code, knots, first aid, safety and preventing accidents, pulleys, wheels and cogs.....

With the *Little House* books, my children absorbed much information simply by enjoying the stories. However, I have found that it was very easy to extend this knowledge by doing some additional reading and related activities. I have visited a number of web sites relating to the *Little House* books and there are many suggestions on how to incorporate these books into an educational curriculum: instructions for making a calico pocket, recipes for using maple syrup, unusual vocabulary words explained, word searches, crosswords and quizzes, links to find out more about animals, take a virtual tour of a maple syrup farm....All the activities that we attempted, my girls thoroughly enjoyed.

Similarly, with no help from me, the children have accumulated a wealth of knowledge from the *Bush Boys* books. But, I am sure it would be a worthwhile exercise to organise a few special *Bush Boys'* activities. Fr Tierney has included in his *Bush Boy* books, many pages relating to such activities. By browsing the contents pages of each book, you will find out how to make a damper, how to tie knots and make a rope ladder, how to make a simple sun compass, first aid instructions, the phonetic alphabet chart, the Bush Catechism and much, much more.

Recently, my husband, Andy, has been involved in an exciting project: redesigning the Cardinal Newman web site. One of the features Andy has added to the site is a children's section. Using this space, I would like

Continued page 13

to post up various suggestions for activities based on the *Bush Boys* books; have cross words, word searches and quizzes; give links so that our children can find out more about National Parks, our native wildlife, first aid and safety....In short, I'd like to make some suggestions on how everyone can use the *Bush Boys*

books as a resource in the education of our children.

If you already own the *Bush Boys* series, dig them out and have another look at all the wonderful information Fr Tierney has packed in amongst his exciting tales of adventure. If you haven't yet read the books, but like the

idea of your children reading good Catholic living books, please consider buying a set. If you would like to give them the "Living Book Test", the first few chapters of *Bush Boys* are available online at the web address below. And don't forget to keep checking the web site for *Bush Boys* children's activities! Coming Soon!

*Little House* books by *Laura Ingalls Wilder* available from *Fountain Resources* [admin@fountainresos](mailto:admin@fountainresos)  
Tel (08) 8365 8921  
*Bush Boys* (\$5), *Cuthbert joins the Bush Boys* (\$2), *Bush Boys and Bush Rangers* (\$10) and *Bush Boys Move* (\$15) or \$30 the complete set, all available from *Cardinal Newman Faith Resources*  
[www.cardinalnewman.com.au](http://www.cardinalnewman.com.au) PO Box 697, Merrylands, NSW 2160 Tel 02 9637 9406



**Recommended Composers**

We study a few works of each composer but there are so many composers with works worth studying. Each composer has a particular piece we love eg Ravel (Mother Goose Suite), Saint Saens (Carnival of the Animals), Tchaikovsky (Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake), Smetana (Moldau), Holst (Peer Gynt Suite) etc etc . We are exploring famous but lesser known (to us) composers like Smetana, instead of the usual Beethoven. But I guess I would still recommend Beethoven, Chopin, Handel, Tchaikovsky...

**Sue Elvis**

*When I grow up, ... I want to be a paramedic.*  
*Callum Elvis, 13.*

**GOODWILL**

*This ditty was prompted by the very strict family rule mentioned by Mrs Sue Elvis that name-calling is not allowed in their home, and by Mrs Veronica Brandt's translation of the hymn asking St John the Baptist to loose us from the stain of polluted lips, (see Keeping in Touch Term2 2005).*

They say that sticks and stones break bones,  
But names will never hurt you;  
Yet nasty names, to speaker's shame,  
Show how his soul's lost virtue.

How foolish 'tis to copy him,  
And breed a deal more evil;  
We must keep showing our goodwill,  
When bad wills make upheaval.

The war of words does not stop there,  
Soon names with blows get blended;  
Blest those indeed who hold their tongues,  
'Cos least said's soonest mended.

Father James Tierney  
Author of the *Catholic Family Catechism*

*Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.*



*The Lord is my shepherd.*



**Summer Rain**

The sun scorches all the crops  
And all the sugar cane.  
We wait so long for soft moist soil.  
We wait for summer rain.

The rain pelts over all the land  
All the crops stand up straight.  
The blossoms bloom, the lilies open  
This summer rain is great.

The farmer comes and cuts the wheat.  
And sends it to the mill.  
The pasture just sits there so silent so still.

**The Beach**

by Matthew French

The crabs are in the dusty sand  
The waves are bellowing over.  
Oh! What a wonderful sight  
Better than a four leaved clover.

Children in the sandy dunes  
Umbrellas keeping shade  
The beach is full of excitement.  
Oh what a beautiful day.

**The Jungle**

by Matthew French

All the birds flee out of their trees  
At the sound of the lions roar.  
The snakes slither into their holes  
At the snap of the crocodiles jaw.

The monkeys swing from vine to vine.  
With the elephants feet pounding.  
If you look closely into the jungle.  
You'll find that it's astounding.

The crops and cane just sit there  
Very healthy, good and ripe.  
What a wonderful thing the summer rain is  
To bring the fields to life.

by Samuel French

### Pondering on the teaching methods of Jesus

Jesus choose 12 disciples to be his Apostles and close companions. The Twelve, of course, represented the new tribes of Israel, but if we ponder a little on the way Jesus taught the Twelve, we may find encouragement on our home schooling journey.

If you look back into your family history, it is not unusual to find families with more than seven children in rural regions. Even having nine children (or more) was not that uncommon. So, in essence, when Jesus took the Twelve with him from place to place, He was taking his chosen family, the Church, with Him.

Just like a human family, the Twelve did not suddenly appear at once, they came, when called, in ones and twos. And just like a human family, with each new member, they had to adjust a bit to accommodate them.

They were also of different ages, and just like a family, the young ones, the middle aged ones and the older ones all had to get along together, help each other, and be patient with each other. We know they had different temperaments, too, Andrew was gentle, Peter was inclined to rush into things, John and James had cause to be nicknamed 'sons of thunder'.

So how did Jesus teach them? Firstly, by letting them spend time with him, watching and observing what He did and how He did it, and letting them ask Him questions. As we have learnt ourselves through life, the moral character of the person teaching us teaches us just as much as the content of the formal lesson. He would also have had one on one time with them, when they came to ask private questions, or to ask for forgiveness, or even as they walked in small groups along the dusty tracks of Israel.

Secondly, He taught them through lessons and discussions just for them, and they listened to him preach to the crowds in various places, and also to families in their homes in the various villages, when they were given hospitality. He used parables, stories that required pondering and that would linger in their memories.

Thirdly, Jesus sent them out in twos for various tasks, often to villages to prepare them to receive the teaching of Jesus. Even today we honour some of the apostles in pairs, eg. Simon and Jude, Phillip and James. Perhaps they brought out the best in each other, or worked well together as a team.



Later on Jesus trained them in miracles and in curing the sick. The apostles helped with transmitting the messages in large crowds, and with getting sick people to Jesus, and in keeping Jesus from being

crushed in the crowds. So they had regular chores, as well as practical work.

Jesus also taught them how to pray. We know that He regularly went to the Synagogue on the Sabbath, and would have taken His apostles with Him. They went with Him on the pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the religious festivals. They would have sung the Psalms together.

The apostles journeyed with Jesus from place to place. We know they squabbled at times. We can be sure that at times they said 'Do we have to?', and 'Are we finished at this place yet?' We also know from the Gospels that sometimes Jesus had difficulty getting his apostles to learn the lessons He wanted to teach them.

The apostles included Judas. Now the apostles probably wished Judas elsewhere, but Jesus chose him. If you are all getting along well together, how do you grow in love?, or in patience? without having someone around who stretches and tests those virtues in us? We can surmise that having Judas around certainly helped the apostles grow in being able to forgive, and in being charitable and kind. The apostles probably learnt more valuable lessons from their relationship with Judas than from each other.

So be encouraged, and call on the help of Jesus with more confidence as you home school your family.

*Cathy Cavanagh*

Here's a puzzle to test your knowledge of Latin from the Mass.

Match the numbered Latin Phrases to the lettered English phrases to decode the secret message at the end.

1. Per omnia saecula saeculorum
2. Gloria in excelsis Deo
3. In nomine Domini
4. Domine non sum dignus
5. Libera nos a malo
6. Oremus
7. Clamor meus ad Te veniat
8. Qui fecit caelum et terram
9. Orate fratres
0. Deo gratias

### Latin Puzzle

- e. In the name of the Lord
- s. Deliver us from evil
- t. For ever and ever
- i. Let my cry come unto Thee
- o. Who hath made heaven and earth
- v. Thanks be to God
- y. Lord, I am not worthy
- h. Glory to God in the highest
- a. Pray brethren
- l. Let us pray



by  
**Veronica  
Brandt**

Secret message:

Angels can fly because  
1234 19k2 123m536035 58 67g2164

**Brothers, Prose and Classroom Data**



*When I grow up, ... I want to be an architect* **Carrie Leach, 12**

**We Three Brothers, So Different Are**

**By Callum Elvis**

As different as chalk and cheese, me and my brothers get along splendidly. I am thirteen, short and stocky with a love for singing and expressing my views on everything. While Duncan is sixteen, tall and thin, a devout pray-er: he is always whispering prayers to himself. He is very quiet and spends a lot of time walking to and fro cogitating on the many ideas that he has for making films with Mum's video camera. Thomas is better yet. He is nearly six years old and already a saint! having died the day after his birth. I think that he is a great blessing to our family and the knowledge that he is praying for me is very comforting.

Duncan and I spend a lot of time together. We spend hours walking around the garden, rain or shine having talks. During some home videos, you can see me and my brother stalking along at a brisk pace in earnest conversation.

My family and I remember Thomas' birthday every year and one year I bought a special flower from a gift shop, and when I was buying the flower, the lady on the counter asked if the flower was for my mother, I replied no it was for my brother who was dead, at which a tear appeared in her eye and a lump in my throat. Thomas holds a special place in my heart. I can still remember him as I last saw him, tiny and innocent but so peaceful and nothing has changed that image. To me he is still the tiny baby.

Children love Duncan. He is always inventing games to play with them and sometimes he prefers to play with babies rather than to play with people his own age. He will spend hours playing with Gemma-Rose in the garden while Mum does the jobs she needs to do.

I have a sort of honorary third brother. He is Mr Tulip my rat who is a two-time murderer. He sits in his messy cage in my equally messy bedroom. Mum says sometimes that we are all boys together, all of us living in our cages. My rat's bedding and my bed aren't very different, both are messy and dirty and both are used to keep things in or sleep in.

I often think how it is not fair how my brother can eat what he likes and stay rake-thin, while I (who am a little chubby) have been told time and again to watch what I eat and despite much exercise and Mum's encouragement of "You'll lose weight soon", I haven't seen any change.

Duncan is nearly six feet tall while I've only just passed five feet. You might think that is discouraging. It was, until the day I got a pair of new boots. When measuring my feet, the lady found that I had size eight feet on size six and a half legs. This, she said was a sure sign that I was going to grow tall. Those words made my day. I've always wanted not to have to look up at my brother while talking to him. I wonder what Thomas would look like now that he is nearly six years old.

I don't deserve Duncan: he is always being so kind to me, even when Duncan and I were little. He used to lie in my bed and stroke my back and tell me stories until I went to sleep. When I was going to be confirmed, I chose Duncan as my sponsor even though he was only fourteen at the time. Our parish priest didn't mind. He said that Duncan was so tall and mature that no one would notice that he wasn't the usual age

**G.K.Chesterton.** At school we read through one or two of his essays, and I was impressed with the clarity of his thought and argument. He wrote from the perspective of Catholic thought. In recent times I have heard of several people beginning their journey into the Catholic faith through reading his works.

**Pope John Paul II.** Each of his writings, encyclicals and apostolic letters, are well crafted. He often uses a gospel story as a theme to link the whole of his argument/teaching.

**St Bernard of Clairvaux.** The sermons that have come down to us from St Bernard are full of clarity and reasoned argument, and worthy of study.

**Cathy Cavanagh Writers of Prose**

**Classroom Data**

Particularly in Mathematics, every so often, workbooks ask for data from each member of a classroom, usually in order to make a tally or graph of some kind. This exercise is still valuable for homeschoolers. You may like to try these ideas.

**Favourite Fruit:** Do a tally of the different kinds of fruit in the fridge/in the fruit bowl.

**Favourite Sport:** Do a tally of the different sports reported in the sports pages of 5-6 newspapers.

**Hair Colour:** Do a tally of the colour of children's hair in a women's magazine.

**Favourite Colour:** For boys the colours on their toy cars, for girls the colours of the dresses in a fashion magazine. **Cathy Cavanagh**

**Favourite Novelists** **Colin Dexter**

(Inspector Morse mysteries). Each chapter of his mysteries begins with a quotation from a poem, play etc, and each chapter is densely constructed. When I read his works, I realise how uneducated I am. The quotations are a good springboard for further study, and sum up the essence of each chapter.

**Alexander Solzhenitsyn** (One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich) Because the novel taught so much about appreciating life at each moment, and about what true freedom means.

**Jules Verne.** Because in high school, his were the novels that made me forget where I was, more than any other writer.

**Homer.** He constructed Classical Greek stories that have more than stood the test of time.

**Cathy Cavanagh**

for a sponsor. The actual reason that I chose Duncan as my sponsor is that I knew that I would have someone who would always pray for me, thus ensuring another aid on my way to heaven.

With a saint in heaven and a saint on earth for brothers, how can I possibly fail to become a saint myself?

## Schooling Begins at Home

*Cathy and her husband, Ian, began withdrawing their three boys from schools three years ago. The boys had been in Catholic and state schools but Cathy says, "Schools did not work for our kids. The school environment did not suit the needs of our children." Cathy mentions some dissatisfactions such as larger classes, children not being able to get help when needed, Children not getting the work done, the children falling behind in their learning, the nature of the reading material and the time taken by teachers to control classroom behaviour.*

According to Cathy, education at home has many advantages. "The children work better at home. They can work at their own pace. They get individual attention and a higher level of supervision of their learning activities. They have flexibility, not allowed by the organisational constraints of schools, to vary their daily timetable to follow an interest or complete a project that requires a little more time. There are no school issues to distract them from their learning. More importantly it gives us more time together as a family and opportunities to strengthen our faith. We go to the Cathedral for Mass at least three times a week and this is the core of our day. The boys actively participate in the Eucharist as altar servers and are learning their faith through experience rather than by texts alone. They have also developed friendships within the community by mixing with the congregation, help set up for Mass and clearing up afterwards.

Ian in Year 3, Kieran in Year 5 and Rees in Year 7 have a specific room in their home dedicated to schoolwork, although Cathy and Ian ensure that where possible everything they do is a learning experience. When the boys were asked their attitude to being educated at home, they said they really enjoy and appreciate learning at home. In particular they mentioned being able to concentrate on getting their work done without distractions and having more variety in their learning programme. They consider that not only are they learning more but they are also learning at a faster rate.

When asked about the demands of home schooling, Cathy said, "The first challenge is to de-school the students. You have to get them out of the habit

of waiting to be told what to do and when to do it. It takes about six months to make them self-directed learners who accept responsibility for their own progress. Of course you have to be highly organised. I design my own curriculum based on Board of Studies syllabi. Half of each school I spend on planning. Each week the curriculum has to be broken down to a detailed learning programme for each of the boys. The learning of the boys at three different levels has to be constantly monitored. The hardest part is evenly distributing the time over the different learning areas. Home schooling requires a huge lifestyle change and you have to give up all that you previously did between about 8 am and 4 pm each school day. Despite these demands, I am a new person. It has changed my personality and the whole family is more strongly bonded together. Education has become a way of life for us as we grow together in faith and love.

Application for registration for home schooling has to be made to the Board of Studies. A board inspector visits to check the facilities, the teaching programmes and the work done by the students. Cathy says, "The inspector's visits are a motivating force, giving the boys something to work towards. They want to show off their work and appreciate the encouragement and feedback he gives them."

It was put to Cathy that some say that home schooling withdraws



students from the real world and can socially disadvantage them. Cathy strongly disagrees with this view and in fact puts an opposing view. "The school playground is not the real world. Students at school mix only with their own age group. They do not mix with younger and older students or adults. Their social skills are stunted. I have seen both schooling and home schooling and have observed much better social development through home schooling. Groups of home schoolers get together for a range of activities such as concerts, drama camps and sports carnivals. They don't have any trouble playing with others or mixing with people of all ages."

There are many support groups for home schoolers. Locally there is the Hunter Home Educators. Based around Sydney and the Goulbourn area is the Catholic Home School Group. As far as Cathy knows, her family is the only Catholic home educator in the immediate Newcastle area.

At present the Powells are taking one year at a time but they are aiming to produce independent, self-directed learners who live their faith and make it the centre of their life. Cathy says, "God is a very important part of our life. When life gets hard or things go wrong we would like the first reaction to be to pray."

Cathy is happy to be contacted by email: [cathy.powell@pacific.net.au](mailto:cathy.powell@pacific.net.au)

**Chris Welbourne**

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*When I grow up, ...I want to be a cricket player and a worker in a chocolate factory.* *Cameron Leach, 10*

*The Lord my God is my strength. He makes me leap like the deer, He guides me to high places.* *Habakkuk 3:18-19*

*"Our Lord takes pleasure in doing the will of those who love Him." –* *Saint John Vianney*

*My favourite career is to be... a writer.* *Duncan Elvis*

*My favourite career is to be... a journalist.* *Felicity Elvis*

## Lesson Plans



*Like many home schoolers, our family's experience of home educating has been an education in itself. We have experimented with different methods, read much and, for many years, adopted a system of trial and error. Whether by chance or by the silent hand of the Lord, this process of vague goals and fluctuating work patterns appeared to reap rewards which confirmed in our hearts and minds that our home schooling was pleasing to God. However, long-term consistency was still our goal and, the belief that we were doing God's will, whilst sufficient motive for persevering, was not always sufficient for creating a harmonious, happy and productive environment during the inevitable periods of educational dryness.*

Finding a method that suited us has been a gradual process, with certain stages of enlightenment which called for a marked and happy change in direction. The first of these occurred during a home schooling convention in November 2001, at which time I first heard of both Charlotte Mason and Dorothy Sayers. After studying the methods of these two educators, I was able to articulate, at last, the conclusions I had stumbled upon through my own experience and also incorporate many new ideas into the formulation of a plan for the development of the minds, souls and bodies of my own children.

Initially, I used a timetable to organize our daily activities. The mornings consisted of short, intense lessons and the afternoons were pretty relaxed, depending on the level of cooperation each child was willing to contribute. We managed to achieve a lot this way but the method had its shortcomings. For a start, the timetable was not flexible. If a washing machine or computer malfunction required a morning drive across town or one of the littlies was particularly needy, a whole day's work could be lost. Psychologically, this was damaging to motivation and, ultimately, to the whole concept of home schooling.

The second major problem with the timetable was that it led to burnout. Periods of intense activity followed by periods of lethargy and inertia were tiring and discouraging. They were also inconsistent with my ideas of a natural and balanced lifestyle, which incorporated education into a progressive and moderate form of Christian living.

The impetus for yet another change in direction came from my teenage daughter. Over the years, Megan has provided enough challenges to rival an entire classroom of self-willed, multi-directional chimpanzees whose brain development, unfortunately, appears to be inversely related to that of the poor home educator! Megan, as time has proved, is easily bored and does not like to 'waste' her days with useless tasks of someone else's choosing. It was a great disappointment to me that home schooling was somewhat less exciting to her than it was to me. Instead of

diving headfirst into the fascinating depths of human discovery, Megan was diving back under the blankets in the morning and, instead of spending her days fulfilling an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge, she was filling her days with moans and groans as to the emptiness of her existence. Much of this was directly related to her particular age, I know, but I couldn't deny that some of it was due to an inadequacy in the chosen method of parental guidance and education.

The solution to the problem came from Megan herself. In an effort to self-analyse and renew her interest in learning, she suggested that we enrol her in a correspondence course so that she might have more control and involvement in the planning of her schoolwork. However, a study of curricula indicated a discrepancy



between the goals and teaching methods of organizations offering courses and those of our own family. A further discrepancy existed between the monetary value attached to such courses and that of our own budget!

Thus, the challenge emerged to create our own, personal curricula in the form of individual lesson plans designed around the needs of each child and the family as a whole. Our first attempts were largely experimental. However, from the outset, the children took pride in contributing to their planning and achieving the goals set out for them. Presentation was seen as a priority so the plans were printed in the form of a colourful booklet, with beautiful spiritual pictures and inspiring bible verses for each week. For the second term, the booklets were expanded to include a section for the term's poetry, dictation and vocabulary, etc. This solved the frustrating problem of lengthy book searches and disorganization. Developing from this improvement was the formation of simple, personalized activity books for certain subjects and tables for daily memory work, which is a fun, family exercise.

For me, writing and producing a plan for each child requires time and effort but it is satisfying work and, once done, I can relax and enjoy the school term with a greater freedom than was possible under our old system. There have also been other benefits which have made our school day more relaxed and enjoyable. For example, the system is more flexible than the old timetable as we are no longer governed by the clock. If the day is plagued by a stream of minor distractions or if a major disruption rules out worthwhile endeavours, then lessons can be timed to each individual's convenience.

This has encouraged the development of time management skills and independence for all the children. Other skills, such as goal setting and planning, have also been possible. The mere fact that we now plan in detail has had many advantages, including that of fulfilling each child's various needs and interests more completely. And, of course, now that each task is set out in print, the monotony of compiling tedious records for the Board of Studies is no longer an issue. The children themselves are responsible for their own record keeping with a simple tick as each activity is completed.

It may appear that such a system of organization would involve the use of rigid, school-like methods and is far removed from the philosophy of Charlotte Mason, but that is not the case. Simply setting a plan for the term's work does not determine the methods chosen and flexibility can be introduced by either keeping detail to a minimum or by providing a table for recording additional or supplementary work. An examination of Charlotte Mason's school timetables shows that her lessons were highly organized. The content of those lessons was very carefully formulated to foster a love of learning and optimise achievement levels. Individual lesson plans, which work well in the home school environment, can be designed in much the same way. For example, the plan may contain a predominance of good literature to be read both silently and aloud in a family group. Thus, forward planning

Continued page16

## Keeping in Touch

and record keeping need not be equated with a textbook style of learning.

Another presumption may be that an increase in planning can only occur at the expense of spontaneity and interaction. Again, with the experience of previous plans to aid the understanding of each child's needs, this should not be a problem. To begin with, I don't think anyone should be a slave to the plan. If a course of work is failing, then it should be abandoned and the experience used to create a better plan for the next term. However, with appropriate record keeping, this need not render the overall plan useless. Tables and pages for notes in the back of the booklet are useful for changes or additions to the original plan.

The workload for each child is another important consideration which can be perfected with experience. Too much work and the child is apt to hate school work. Too little and the child will not be challenged to reach his potential.

In my experience, the plan must allow time for further research if a certain subject proves particularly stimulating or unexpectedly challenging. It must also be sympathetic to unforeseen circumstances which invariably occur during the home schooling



week. A balance needs to be struck so that the child is not forever catching up (this is stressful and destroys motivation) and so that goals continue to be attained. I think the key here is to order priorities at the planning stage. Then, the details and methods of record keeping can be determined according to the desired flexibility or level of importance attached to each topic. I have found that, after using plans

for a number of terms, I am now more sensitive to the needs, interests and abilities of my children and am thus able to achieve all I wish in a manner that suits them and the family as a whole.

This system is not for everyone. Much work is involved in the planning stages and it takes practice to formulate tasks in a way that is both practical and faithful to one's principles. However, with prayer and commitment, it is possible to achieve a program which operates without stress, encompasses a wide spectrum of educational opportunities and, most exciting, is spiritually uplifting and rewarding. No doubt, for us, this method will undergo the inevitable process of growth and development but the present is enjoyable and the future, though unknown, is an exciting prospect.

**By Vicky Leach**

## *The Holy Spirit*

*We are all filled with the Holy Spirit, but at Confirmation, we receive Him and His gifts to the full. For us, it is sometimes hard to understand the gifts and the power behind them, but as I was learning about them, I understood them, but not to the full. To grow close to the Holy Spirit and to understand about the Holy Spirit, we must fill ourselves with Him through prayer and love Him to the full.*

The gifts help us to understand God, help us to love Him, and want to be like Him in all we do in all we say and in all we think. They are hard to understand but as we grow we slowly learn about them. There may be things we do not fully understand but we must trust in God and we must pray for the wisdom that we lack to fully understand them and all they can do for us. The gifts do many wonderful things for us that we do not see, things that help us everyday. In our everyday work, in all the things we do, at least one of the gifts would help you.

There was a story I read, about a girl. The girl's name was Joanna. She saw a girl being teased because her father was

in prison, and though she was scared, she told them to stop. It must have taken a lot of courage to do that. If you saw a person being ill treated like in the story of Joanna, what would you do? Would you walk away thinking it was none of your business or would you try to stop them. Moreover, if you did try, what gifts would be helping you? In that story, I could very easily see the Holy Spirit working in Joanna as she tried to help the girl.

The Holy Spirit is in all of us working in many different ways. He works in many little ways but he cannot force us to do what he wants us to do because we have a free will so we have to choose to do what is right. We must learn to use the gifts in their right ways. When you receive a birthday present, what would you do with it? Would you lock it away in a safe place? No, you would use it as it is meant for. Likewise, you must use the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If you lock them away in a drawer for special occasions, they will vanish. So use them as they are meant to be used. Put them on display for every body to see. Use them for the good of all. Do not waste them in a safe place.

Use them and enjoy them but never for one second forget who gave them to you.

Come Holy Spirit and enlighten the minds of your faithful. Banish the darkness in their minds and make their souls radiant with your glory. Shed your light on us your faithful.

Never leave us in the danger of the Devil.

Help us to understand You and Your gifts to the full of our ability and help us to never stray from the path to heaven be it rough or smooth.

We ask this in all hope that You will answer our prayer.

Amen

**By Imogen Elvis**



**Mother:** Cam, lay the table please.

**Cam:**

**Mother:** Have you laid that table, yet, Cam?

**Cam:**

**Mother:** Cam? Where are you?

**Cam:**

**Mother:** Come on, Cam, it's dinner-time, already.

**Cam:**

**Mother:** Dinnertime!!

**Cam:**

**Mother:** We've got pudding afterwards...

**Cam:** COMING!!!!!!

It's an odd thing about reminder notes. After a while, we fail to notice them. The idea of a re-*mind*-er is to put into the front of our minds what has somehow slipped to the back, or maybe out of our minds altogether. Human beings seem to specialise in getting used to things, so we need to refocus constantly on the things that are important.

Of course, there are some advantages in routine. We wouldn't get much done if we had to learn every day how to do up our buttons or how to chew and swallow. However, some things are too important to become stale. A wife has every reason to complain that her husband doesn't tell her he loves her. His defence may be "why state the obvious?" or "I show my love through my actions." True enough, but she still needs to hear it. It's partly for her sake, but also for his. He had better not say "I told you I loved you on our wedding day, didn't I?" It bears repeating, for as often as he says "I love you", if he means it, his love grows, and that is good for the marriage.

In the spiritual life our love for God needs to grow. That means we need to have reminders of God's love for us, and make acts of love for Him. It's not that God needs to hear it from us. We don't change God by our prayer. It is we who are changed when we open our minds and hearts more to God by acts of love. Those acts may be the formal prayers of the act of charity which we (hopefully) know very well, or they may be done with other words or actions. A single interior nod towards God can make us grow in love immediately. It could be enough to convert an entire city.

In order to grow in love with God, we have to keep up regular contact with Him. The *practice of the presence of God* consists in recalling as often as possible that

From a homily by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Munich 1978, entitled 'The presence of the Lord in the Sacrament'

"We all know what a difference there is between a church that is always prayed in and one that has become a museum. There is a great danger today of our churches becoming museums and suffering the fate of museums: if they are not locked, they are looted. They are no longer alive. The measure of life in the Church, the measure of her inner openness, will be seen in that she will be able to keep her doors open, because she is a praying Church. I ask you all therefore from the heart, let us make a new start at this. Let us again recollect that the Church is always alive, that within her evermore the Lord comes to meet us. The Eucharist, and its fellowship, will be all the more complete, the more we prepare ourselves for Him in silent prayer before the eucharistic presence of the Lord, the more we truly receive Communion. Adoration such as that is always more than just talking with God in a general way. But against that could then rightly be voiced the objection that is always to be heard: I can just as well pray in the forest, in the freedom of nature. Certainly, anyone can. But if it were only a matter of that, then the initiative in prayer would lie entirely with us, then God would be a mental hypothesis - whether He answers, whether He can answer or wants to, would remain open. The Eucharist means, God has answered: The Eucharist is God as an answer, as an answering presence. Now the initiative no longer lies with us, in the God-man relationship, but with Him, and it now becomes really serious.



## Reminder: God is Here

By Anthony English

God is in all places, working in all circumstances, and that everything we do is seen by God. These are three ways God is present: by *essence*, *presence* and *power*. God is present by essence because He gives existence to all things and preserves them in existence. He is omnipresent, which means all things are naked and open to His eyes. All things are subject to God's power. Apart from these there is His *sacramental* presence in the Eucharist, the true body and blood of Christ, who is God. This leads us to think of God's presence in the sacred humanity of Christ. This is called His *hypostatic* or *personal* presence.

We perhaps more often hear of God's presence by *indwelling of the Holy Spirit*. God dwells in the soul who is in a state of grace, which makes us truly *God-bearers*. "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and *make our dwelling place in him*." (John 14:23).

### Benefits of the practice

There are four principal consequences of the practice of the presence of God.

#### **It urges us to avoid even the slightest deliberate fault.**

We are careful of our behaviour in the presence of superiors and those we truly love. It follows that the more we recall God's presence, the less likely we are to do anything to offend Him whom we love, and who, as we know, loves us.

**It enables us to do things with greater love.** This truth – that we can do even little things with great love for God – can lead souls very quickly to the heights of sanctity. The reason is that sanctity – holiness – is nothing other than perfect union with God through charity.

That is why, in the sphere of eucharistic adoration, prayer attains a new level; now it is two-way, and so now it really is a serious business. Indeed, it is now not just two-way, but all-inclusive: whenever we pray in the eucharistic presence, we are never alone. Then the whole of the Church, which celebrates the Eucharist, is praying with us. Then we are praying within the sphere of God's gracious hearing, because we are praying within the sphere of death and resurrection, that is, where the real petition in all our petitions has been heard: the petition for the victory over death; the petition for the love that is stronger than death.

In this prayer we no longer stand before an imagined God but before the God who has truly given Himself to us; before the God who has become for us Communion and who thus frees us and draws us from the margin into communion and leads us on to resurrection. We have to seek again this kind of prayer. The fruit of Lent should be that we become once more a praying Church and, thereby, an open Church. Only the praying Church is open. Only she is alive and invites people in; she offers them fellowship and at the same time a place of silence."

## Contemplating Home schooling

*I sense from the Holy Spirit a call to homeschool. I have fears and insecurities about homeschooling. It's countercultural enough to attend weekday mass and not be sending my daughter to preschool. It's another thing to be going against another majority in education as well.*

To even contemplate this decision is radical. I want my children to actually know something about their faith and morals and what being a human is really about. (It seems ironic that to do this is radical, this is what should be happening!) To live your life loving God and others and not loving self and stuff, isn't popular. But the alternative isn't worth mentioning. So, - there,- I decided, HOMESCHOOLING ALL ROUND.

A few more musings....

I struggle with returning to work and trying to manage a household. Some have coined this 'the juggle struggle.' I don't want to juggle or struggle. I don't want to throw my 'balls' (symbolically representative of prayer, church, children, work, to name a few) in the air away from my attention. I'd rather sit down and play with them and learn and grow myself. I guess in homeschooling I'd be adding a larger ball. At this stage it would seem to me to be one of those really heavy leather fitness balls. But in time with experience and practice and encouragement, I'm sure it would be more manageable.

Recently I read an article on "Australia's Catholic Bishops – Catholic education and moral matters." It spoke of the mounting failures of the Catholic education system and I have since found it difficult to think of sending my child into this organisation. The article states that what is being taught "is not the Catholic faith at all, but what can be described as Catholicism and water." It goes on to say that "the delicate flower of Catholic faith is drowned in a Modernist sea." I can only see that that this can be changed through prayer, fasting, and more Catholic parents taking the radical decision to homeschool.

My fears regarding homeschooling are real and made more frustratingly so by others doubts and

questions. I 'only' have one three-year-old girl at this stage. More children are hopefully to come. Does this add more balls to the mix? Definitely. More fears? Absolutely. I find it awkward sometimes to tell God believing friends that I do doubt and question certain directions God seems to be pointing our life in. I sense that I'm not trusting enough. I say to myself, just look at scripture and be consoled. Sometimes I need Jesus with skin on. AKA: another person; to discuss and be encouraged and see a lived example of this homeschooling reality unfolding.

Despite being a faithful Catholic, I do doubt my abilities, and whether I'll have what it takes. Trusting in the fact that I know my child best, their strengths and weaknesses, their way of learning...this is just touching the surface. This information will help me to teach them, love them, know them and contribute to the kind of people they'll be. I think a large part of the doubt is hoping that I will not be the only person in their lives. Knowing *my* weaknesses and hoping that

by the grace of God they'll grow up to be faith filled loving people. To know that I'm the best one for the job, with help; to have a balanced approach. To not be perfectionistic about it. Knowing full well there will be difficult days and with the prayers of Jesus, Mary, the Holy Spirit and every saint, especially on tough days, that it has to be better.

I can see the many, many benefits of home schooling. I don't know if I've convinced myself that homeschooling is the way. It's a work in progress. I just hope my self-doubt doesn't override the obvious choice. I'm sure in pursuing a home filled with learning, encouragement, play, discipline, and God as the centre, there is bound to be fruit aplenty. Not just more balls to toss.

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.superflumina.org/acb\\_duty-6.html](http://www.superflumina.org/acb_duty-6.html)

*Yvonne Scanlan*



*Three-year-old Clare Scanlan and a friend*

*By day the Lord will send  
His Loving kindness;  
By night I will sing to Him,  
Praise the God of my life.*

*Psalm 41 (42)*

### **Record Keeping**

Record keeping is invaluable for planning and analysing but it needs to be concise and relevant to the task in mind. For regular or planned activities, a schedule with boxes to tick may be useful. For irregular or spontaneous activities, it may help to construct a table with rows of activities, columns of numbered weeks and a tally system for recording progress. Sometimes, a task warrants or requires further explanation. Here, a page for dated notes may be necessary. Other forms of record keeping include photographs, diaries, portfolios or projects but, whatever the chosen method, it needs to be efficient so that it remains a means and not an end in itself. **Vicky Leach**