



Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for Catholic homeschooling families

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EDITORIAL

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

Andy & Sue Elvis
 PO Box 968
 Mittagong NSW 2575
 Tel. 02 4871 3798
 Email: elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au

We would like to thank the generous people who took the time to write articles or send in useful and interesting information.

We would like to encourage all families (both parents and children) and anyone who supports homeschooling to have a go at writing for *Keeping In Touch*.

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

By contributing to *Keeping In Touch* you will be supporting, encouraging, entertaining and helping other homeschoolers.

If you would like to edit a future edition of *Keeping In Touch*, please contact us for more information.

We hope that you enjoy this edition. Any complaints and criticisms will be cheerfully considered if accompanied by an article for next term's *Keeping In Touch*!

Please send contributions for **Term 4** of *Keeping in Touch* for 2006 to:

Mrs Veronica Brandt
 8 Beauford Street
 Woodford NSW 2778
 Tel. 02 4758 7945
 Email: veronica@brandt.id.au

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.

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

Books mentioned in this edition of *Keeping in Touch*

The Bush Boys
 Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys
 Bush Boys and Bush Rangers
 Bush Boys on the Move
 The Catholic Family Catechism

The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Case for a Creator

All available from:
www.cardinalnewman.com.au
 Tel: 02 9637 9406

TERM THREE 2006

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HELPING OUR CHILDREN TO TAKE THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD

As Catholic home-schoolers we have taken personally the responsibility of our children's education. While we may use the help of others, paid or otherwise, to assist us in our task, we are the primary educators of our children. As our children approach adulthood, we no longer have to teach them how to read and write. However, we have a very important role in their education still. We have to prepare them to be adults in the world.

Now of course we try to help them achieve the necessary level of education for whatever field they enter in which they are going to serve God and man in this world. However we all know it's hard going. Imagine if we were home-schooling and had no support anywhere - no-one who in the slightest way felt as we do or thought as we do. No "kindred spirit" as Anne from *Anne of Green Gables* liked to call it. Even if we are physically isolated from other Catholic home-schoolers, the very fact that we read *Keeping in Touch* and other publications and books shows that we appreciate hearing from others who, in some way, are kindred spirits to us.

Likewise our children need to feel this oasis of kindred spirits from whom to draw strength and encouragement as they venture out into the world. Of course, their first and most important soul mate should be God Himself. So we need to help our children to get into the habit of turning to Our Lord all through the day, each and every day. To speak with Him of their joys and disappointments, to ask His help for their needs and those of others. To learn to be still in His presence and to trust Him.

Secondly it is good to have a group of friends with whom to share time who will help our children in their walk with God in this world. So, in their senior secondary years, it is important that they start to be involved in such groups, so they have a spiritual oasis when they leave home. Many young

people end up studying or working in a pagan environment and they need the support and love and prayers of others to help them live their lives for God in these situations.

Be careful not to thwart God's leadings of your children in this regard. We may feel very attracted to a particular spirituality, place of prayer, apostolate or group of people. In our enthusiasm we may try to force our children to be involved when that child's taste or calling from God may be to a very different group or place. One of the greatest things about being a Catholic is that there are all sorts of different, legitimate "flavours" of Catholicism. Let us rejoice in the great variety of people, groups, and spiritualities out there in the Catholic world, trying to love and serve Our Lord. Find out the truth about the different groups with which you come in contact- don't go by hearsay and rumour.

Young people thrive on challenge. Encourage them to give some of their time and youthful exuberance and energy to a worthwhile cause. This helps them to break out of the myopic self-pity which is often just around the corner to teenagers. Help them to see all they do, as work which can be offered to God and be pleasing to Him. And, help and encourage them to make frequent use of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion.

In this way we hope to ease our children into an adult walk with Our Lord.

MICHELE VIEIRA

BUILDING THE CHILD'S MORAL UNIVERSE

Parents are the first evangelizers of children, a precious gift from the Creator (cf. Gaudium et Spes, n. 50), and begin by teaching them to say their first prayers. In this way a moral universe is built up, rooted in the will of God, where the child grows in the human and Christian values that give life its full meaning.

– Pope Benedict XVI.

TERRIFIC COMPETITION MAYBE NOT

One of the ironies about the development of language is that a term can come to mean the very opposite of what it originally meant. Take, for example, the word "terrific." Today its usual meaning is "excellent" or "extremely good." We might also use it to refer to a great amount of something: "there was a terrific amount of rain last night." The word "terrific" has a much more frightening origin. Your Grandparents used "terrific" to refer to something which caused terror. Your Grandfather may have thought your Grandmother was the girl he had always dreamed of, which is why he would never have called her "terrific."

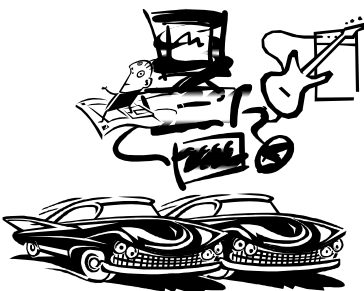
Another such word is *competition*. Our competitors are the people who want to establish their superiority over us, and who we ourselves want to defeat. So we speak of a competitive streak or even unfair competition, especially in business. In fact, the word "compete" has far friendlier roots. It comes from the Latin *competere*, which itself is made up of *com-* 'together' and *petere* 'aim at, seek'. So, true competitors aren't striving *against* each other. They are striving *for* the same goal and, most importantly, they are striving for it *together*.

ANTHONY ENGLISH

STUFF

“Mum, can I get a...guitar...mouse... skateboard? I really want one!”
 Children that go from one craze to another can get themselves into trouble. Going from one thing to another, they are never really dedicated to what they buy. All their stuff gets a brief run in the sun, then gets thrown on an ever growing pile of mess.

This trait generally develops while the child is still young. At first this is no problem. But...as the child grows older, he gets less and less restrained. He stops caring for his things and treats everything as replaceable. When a child gets what he wants, then he soon comes to the realisation that this thing doesn't truly satisfy. Sometimes this trait is carried on into adulthood and you get adults who buy stuff because they think that it will make them happy.



Pets, they can be a source of immense temptation for a child. They seem to be the ideal playmates, a source of fun. But most pets will not work to a time schedule. At first the pet is wonderful and enjoyable. But within the next few days, attention wanes, the excitement wears off and certain unenjoyable traits appear. The pets then take on a negative effect as the child finds that his pet smells, is messy, violent, bites, or destroys things. This will shorten a child's interest in his pet. Now it falls to the parents, they either have to take charge of the pet themselves, or shout themselves hoarse trying to get the child to feed, water, and exercise his pet.

Sometimes a child's wants can be expensive. Maybe this child might want to learn the guitar and soon an unforeseen element comes up: *practice*. Such an expensive instrument can easily become an expensive piece of mess, unused and unwanted.

When a child is captivated by a thing, his fixation rarely remains for long, soon he is after some new thing. But, sometimes a child will keep nagging about one thing for a long time tricking some into thinking that he genuinely wants what he's asking for.

The problems a craze wracked child can cause: messes, unwanted pets, disused instruments... Uh oh, I think Mum's calling me. Better stumble through my clothes on the floor, knock over my guitar in my haste, and fight my way through my mess to the door.

CALLUM ELVIS

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

Maybe you did not know that the novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help carries many indulgences. There is a confraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

If you wish to join send your name to Director, Confraternity of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Liguori Publications, One Liguori Drive, Liguori, Missouri 63057 Please write to above address if you wish to start the novena in your parish. The feast day of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is June 27th.

THE GALE FAMILY

FOOTY TALK FOR ANCIENT GREEK SCHOOLBOYS

“*Pedant*. Noun. A person who is excessively concerned with minor details or rules.”

When I read that dictionary definition it made me excessively concerned with the minor detail of the origin of the word “pedant.” My first guess was that it had to do with *pedes*, the Latin word for foot. I know lots of footy words:

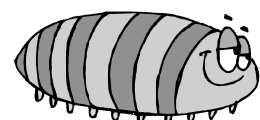
- *pedal* is a foot-operated lever,
- a *pedestrian* is someone travelling on foot,
- a *centipede* has 100 feet, although they usually have only half that number
- an *impediment* (literally “a thing that shackles the foot”) is a hindrance or obstruction in doing something.

I naturally concluded that a pedant goes step by step, or watches his step a little too closely, taking a worm's eye's view instead of being more far sighted. Of course I couldn't stop by guessing the origin of the word. I had to be pedantic about it, so I looked a little further.

It turns out my hunch was wrong. The word *pedant* has nothing to do with feet. The Oxford English Dictionary says pedant comes from the French *pedant* which in term is from Italian *pedante* “perhaps from the Latin *paedagogus* (see *pedagogue*)”. Another minute of my life spent (or, to be precise, 60 seconds). Up the page is *pedagogy*. That's something about the method and practice of teaching. What does that have to do with feet? See *pedagogue*.

Next word up on the dictionary page. Pedagogue comes via Latin from Greek *paidagogos*, denoting a slave who accompanied a child to school (from *pais*, paid- ‘boy + *agosos* ‘guide’).

ANTHONY ENGLISH



MEDITATION

Question: Why did God make us?

Answer: God made us to know, love and serve him on earth and to see and enjoy him forever in heaven. This question is number six of Fr. Tierney's *Catholic Family Catechism* and is one I often find myself pondering. "How is it Lord you want me to know, love and serve you so that I may (with all my family) see and enjoy you forever in heaven?" Having taught this question and answer to a young nephew while he was homeschooling with us one day, I again asked this question of the Lord. That afternoon I received an answer, "*Be still and know that I am God.*" Psalm 46:10. This one liner jumped off the page as I was flicking through Laura Berquist's book, *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum*. "OK Lord," I thought. "How am I to be still and know that you are God?" It so happened the next day I was invited by a good friend to a day on Christian Meditation. In the past I have been skeptical of this type of thing, primarily as it, for me, conjures up thoughts of New Age Spirituality. However since the day was titled *Be still* and I was asked by a good and trusted friend and my husband was quite happy for me to go for the day, I thought I would give it a try.

My friend and I arrived at the venue, registered and seated ourselves. The main speaker for the day was an Interfaith Minister who had been ordained in New York by the name of Stephanie Dowrick. "Hmm!" I thought. "Interfaith minister. Lord, why am I here? This is so unfamiliar. I'm used to going to Mass, saying the Rosary, spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, going to Confession, you know, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the Catholic way! Am I on the wrong path, is this a mistake? I will remain open."

As the day progressed some of my fears dispelled as in amongst mention of a number of world religions including ones I had never heard of, there was mention of the Benedictine monks and their form of meditation and right at the end of the day, the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration were

mentioned and how, long ago, they meditated on their knees constantly before the Blessed Sacrament. "OK," I thought, "the Benedictines were mentioned. Pope Benedict is our spiritual leader, all is well." So I continued to listen with an open heart.

First of all we were instructed to sit like a mountain. "Hmm. Mountains are fully earthed, I can do this. OK, I'll sit like a mountain." Back straight, feet on the floor with hands open. Next we were instructed to focus on our breathing. Breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth. Focus only on your breathing. Any other thoughts that come gently let them go bringing your whole attention back to the breathing. Don't judge your thoughts, no need for force. Try not to focus on anything but the breathing. We did this for awhile. "Quite relaxing," I thought. Later in the day we were encouraged to follow the preceding steps and then add a Mantra. A mantra being a word or phrase which includes a divine name. For example, "Maranatha" which is Aramaic for "Come Lord Jesus", or simply "Jesus" or "Lord have mercy" or another one "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner." These words or phrases are to be simply focused on as we breathe in and out. I had heard of mantras before and in fact often said my own, however not so much in this still, quiet way. I found that by simply breathing and focusing on the mantra and allowing thoughts to gently leave without force and by my refocus again on the words of the mantra this was something new. After we'd done this for a while I felt quite relaxed and refreshed. Towards the day's end we were encouraged to sit like a mountain (by now I was used to this phrase) back straight, hands open and visualize something of God be it Mary, the face of Jesus etc. My favourite visualization at the moment can be found in the Chapel of the "Mother of the Redeemer, Vatican City and is titled "Redemptoris Mater." This is represented in the latest *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, page 79. Here Christ

is on the Cross, blood and water gushing from his side and Our Lady is embracing the cross from behind collecting the blood and water from Jesus in her hand. I meditated on this for a while gently refocusing every time thoughts tried to invade and then I simply meditated on the blood and water gushing from Christ's side. At the end of this session I felt very refreshed.

Overall I felt the day was successful in that it broke down a few barriers for me in terms of ecumenical thought and it gave me a new way of meditation. Since that time I am trying to commit myself to a time each day to use this meditation technique, generally five minutes before I start my more formal prayers. In the short time I have been using this technique I believe it has helped me become a more focused and hopefully better prayer. I bought a book titled *Word made Flesh*, by John Main which I have found to be very helpful in gaining a greater insight into this very simple type of prayer. John Main was a Benedictine monk who recovered the Christian tradition of meditation from the teachings of the Desert Fathers. One more aspect I would like to mention is that this way of praying has also helped me focus my attention, in small ways, on daily tasks e.g. reading to the children, washing up etc. Enabling me to try and give myself fully to these tasks. Living in the present moment rather than allowing thoughts of the past or future to dominate my thinking. Doing all of this, of course, in a gentle way.

Coming back to the question posed at the beginning of this article, "How can I come to know, love and serve you more Lord?" The answer first and foremost this week has been to deepen my prayer life. This particular week I believe the Lord has shown me a particular way in which I can do this for his glory and for this I am deeply grateful.

CHRISTINE FRENCH

IN DEFENSE OF BARBIE

I have something rather shocking to admit, so I'll whisper: my girls are Barbie girls. What's that, you say: **Barbie girls?** Yes, I say, looking around to see who's listening. My girls play with Barbie dolls. Well, now it's out in the open. My reputation is probably ruined forever but at least we no longer have to keep the dolls hidden behind closed doors.

Barbie entered our home quietly without a lot of fuss. Felicity received a 'My First Barbie' as a third birthday present from her auntie. This gift brought back enjoyable memories of my own Barbie days and prompted me to dig out my old childhood friends. Before we knew it, Barbie games had become part of our girls' recreation. Gradually however, we became aware that not all people are Barbie fans and that some folk even find this doll objectionable.

Once, one of my daughters wanted to give a small gift to her friend and without my knowledge, she photocopied some pages of her Barbie colouring book. She was most distressed when the pages were refused with the words, "My mum doesn't let us have Barbies." I explained to my daughter that some parents disapprove of Barbie dolls and perhaps we'd better keep the dolls to ourselves. If guests came to play, the girls were not to get them out for fear of offending anyone. They were to be an "at home alone" toy.

My girls don't understand what is wrong with Barbie dolls but they accept that different families have different rules. I, also, accept and respect the decisions of other families. These differences in opinion have caused me to reflect on the subject: are Barbies harmful? One objection that could be made is that Barbie has an unrealistic body shape and this may cause girls to have distorted ideas about their body image. Yes, Barbie is a strange shape but so far, none of my five girls yearns to be

Barbie. I don't think the younger ones attach much importance to Barbie's fashion model figure. To them, she is just a pretty doll. But are they absorbing subtle messages? Both myself and our eldest daughter have arrived safely at adulthood without acquiring the ambition to be a human Barbie so I am not really worried.

"Let's play Barbies," one of the girls suggests and soon the bedroom floor is covered with a dozen or more dolls, a mountain of clothes, a car, a camper van and other Barbie 'stuff'. It is amazing what the modern Barbie owns. She has numerous pairs of shoes including ice skates, roller blades, sandals, slippers, high heels and sneakers. She has an extensive range of personal articles like a toothbrush, a hairdryer and soap. Of course, she needs an iron, a camera, a kettle and many items of food including a box of six eggs to place in her very own fridge. Before you start to imagine we are victims of the Barbie merchandise machine and we are making Mattel a very wealthy company at a very fast rate, I will tell you that all Barbie's belongings have arrived in the same manner as herself: off the shelf of that wonderful shop, Vinnies (with the exception of a few items given by loving relatives as gifts). Once a game is in progress it can last all day.

One of the attractions of a Barbie game is the opportunity to dress Barbie. Her clothes are changed frequently as the game progresses. I cannot deny that the average Barbie tends to enjoy parading about in skimpy little outfits. It seems rather miraculous to me that anyone is able to put together such small items of clothing using a sewing machine. Fortunately, our Barbie's clothes budget doesn't allow her to shop for off the rack clothes like those found in such glamour boutiques as Toyworld. She has to rely on her own

dressmaker who designs pretty but decidedly less revealing skirts and dresses. And when she can't wait for a dress to be run up, she shops at Vinnies like all the Elvises. Barbie and Ken have inherited a few heirlooms from my own childhood. Imagine Ken in a seventies inspired flowered shirt, flares and leather fringed vest.

I have observed many Barbie games and witnessed many weddings between Barbie and Ken. Admittedly, the same Ken doll has married many different Barbie dolls but I think the problem lies in the unequal ratio of Kens to Barbies and doesn't show a lack of appreciation for the sacred and eternal bond of matrimony. Barbie and Ken do their best to bring up and homeschool their children (the Kelly and Tommy dolls), ensuring they always say grace before meals and go to Mass regularly. I have never heard Ken and Barbie's surname but by observing their lifestyle, it very well may be Elvis.

I have come to the conclusion that sometimes it is the game children play with a toy that is objectionable and not the toy itself. A few years ago, we lived in the same street as a non-Catholic homeschooling family. One day, seven year old Ashton arrived on our doorstep with the announcement she'd come to play. On entering our home, she was delighted to discover that a huge Barbie game was in full swing. She helped herself to a couple of Barbie dolls and was soon directing the course of play. As I eavesdropped, I could hear Ashton saying, "Let's make Ken and your Barbie break up. Now Ken's going out with my Barbie." My girls looked rather blank not understanding the concept of "breaking up" and I was rather relieved when I heard Ashton's mother calling for her to come home. I expected Ashton to be a regular visitor to our house now that she'd discovered our girls and their dolls, but she never returned. Perhaps she told her mother how Barbie and Ken went to Mass and this confirmed

IN DEFENSE OF BARBIE

her mother's opinion that we are rather a weird family.

We all know that Barbie has had many different careers: she has been a teacher, an air hostess, a skater, a ballerina, a doctor and even a scientist. But our Barbie, together with Ken, is a Catholic homeschooling parent. Her life is played out in our girls' bedroom. I will admit that she is rather more physically beautiful than your average Catholic homeschooling mother. (Don't I wish I looked so young and glamorous as I face the daily challenge of educating and raising our children?).

However, it is this beauty which is the chief attraction of the doll. My girls love anything pretty; their favourite colour is pink; they enjoy all things 'girly'. To me, possessing beauty and 'girly-ness' is a positive feature of Barbies. I like to see our girls being real girls. There are many games that are enjoyed by both girls and boys, but rarely have I seen a boy completely absorbed in a Barbie game. It is a truly feminine past time.

I once heard a discussion of how beauty is associated with good while evil has always been traditionally portrayed by ugliness. Movies like *Shrek* are very confusing because this association has been turned upside down. This is the reason I will not let my girls have Bratz dolls. To me they are unattractive with their heavy dark makeup and drably coloured clothes. I do not want our daughters to absorb the idea that ugly is really beautiful. It could lead to the thought that evil is really good and there is nothing wrong with sin.

No, we'll stick to the good old fashioned Barbie who won't be seen with her face plastered with a thick layer of black and purple make-up. We'll have a Barbie who never pierces any part of her body except for her delicate ears. At least, I've never seen such a Barbie. Our trips to the Barbie aisle of the toyshop are so

rare, I may have missed such a doll. But even if our girls were allowed to purchase any brand new Barbie still in her protective box, I am sure they wouldn't choose Tattoo Barbie. Their first choice would be a Princess Barbie, maybe Swan Lake Barbie complete with her handsome Prince: a real fairytale doll. To us, that is what Barbie is: a fairytale who lives in a world where good is beautiful including hard working homeschool mothers.



Now many of you may disagree with these opinions. I am not out to convince you. I am no authority. Like everyone else, I am bumbling my way through the challenges of child rearing, trying to do my best to bring up our children the best way I can. So next time you see me, don't give me a shocked look but be tolerant of this woman who has the courage (or folly) to reveal a controversial secret. Oh and by the way, if your girls are fellow Barbie lovers, please come and visit us. We'll put the kettle on and enjoy a chat about homeschooling while we sew beautiful modest creations for Barbie, who no doubt will be in the middle of a homeschooling picnic with her husband Ken and their numerous children.

SUE ELVIS

WORD WHYS

ANONYMOUS

You often see a poem or a song signed by Anon. He's a prolific writer, but what a funny name! Why would you call your child "Anon"? It's from the Greek *anonimos*. No, he wasn't named after a saint. Its origin is from *an-* 'without' + *onoma* 'name.' I'm not too keen on the name myself. I think his parents would have been better to leave him without any name at all.

UNANIMOUS

Absolutely no one would argue with the fact that the word *unanimous* is a very agreeable sort of a word. It comes from Latin (*unus* 'one' + *animus* 'mind'). We're all delighted when everyone is of the one mind, provided they see things as we do.

ANTHONY ENGLISH

BIT AND PIECES

Some Venerables and Blesseds you may like to look up next time you use the internet.

Blessed Vasyli- Ukrainian martyr,
Redemptorist
Venerable Solanus Casey, Capuchin
Venerable Matt Talbot
Venerable Edel Quinn

All these emerged from the twentieth Century.

THE GALE FAMILY



THE CASE FOR A CREATOR

Science has made a new and wonderful discovery. It stretches through virtually every scientific field, genetics, astronomy, biochemistry, even neurosurgery. It is a discovery that has changed the lives of its discoverers. It is called God. Former evolutionary journalist, Lee Strobel has taken the plunge and interviewed several contemporary scientists asking them: Are science and faith doomed always to be at war? Does the latest scientific evidence tend to point towards or away from the existence of God? And has science really dissolved Christianity in a vat of nitric acid?

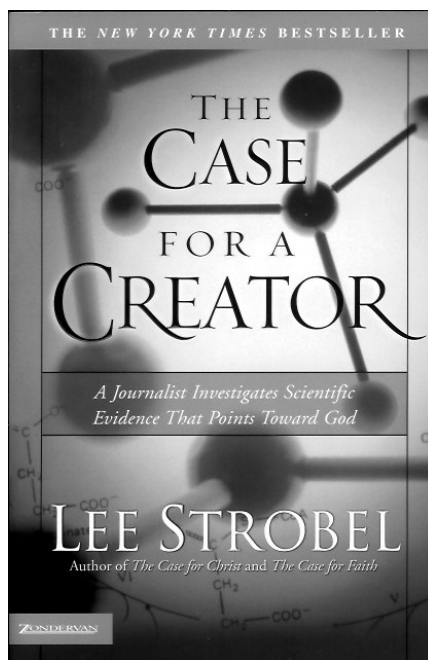
The Case for a Creator starts the investigation by looking at the all-famous text book icons that have convinced many, including Strobel, of the reality of evolution. Readers will be in for a surprise as scientist Jonathan Wells unmasks Java man, reveals the true story of Haeckel's embryos, and uproots Darwin's tree of life. Readers will be shocked at the revelations in store for them as one after another, the comfortable images of evolution are torn down.

Strobel then probes further afield into cosmology and astronomy. Here the existence of the human race, the habitability of planet Earth, and the universe itself, are reduced to numbers and evaluated. What are the chances of a successful Big Bang? What part do continents play in the preservation of life? The unique status of Earth comes to light as more and more inhospitable worlds of other stars loom up, barren and lifeless.

The scientists reveal that the physical universe came into being at a certain point in time and that it came with a cause. There is no such thing as infinite time, nor is the universe as we know it eternal. The earth is shown not only to be perfect for life, but incredibly convenient too. Not only is there a fully functioning atmosphere, a magnetic field and a stable orbit. But there are

glaciers which measure time, precious ores placed close to the earth's surface, an optimal place for astronomy, and a moon that does a perfect eclipse. If all things have a cause, than what caused all this?

Genetics and biology are great rulers in the world of science these days so *The Case for a Creator* naturally drops in to see which side they support. Looking into the depths of test tubes, the simplicity of the cell is heavily challenged, as is its evolution. By the grace of the controversial mousetrap illustration, the cell, while being both perfect in every way, is shown to be irreducibly complex.



In other words, the cell cannot get any simpler without failing to function. There are no lesser ancestors for these small organisms.

DNA has been called a blueprint, been compared with a library, and thought of as a computer program. Science now suggests that it is essentially the same. No process of natural organising or repetitive chemical reactions can explain the mountainous mass of instructions that DNA contains. Like blueprints,

libraries and computers, DNA screams: information. But if DNA is a book, than who wrote it?

Not content with exploring evolution, the universe, and life, Lee Strobel makes one last investigation: a scientific investigation into the nature of the consciousness. By the aid of scientific reasoning, it is possible to prove that the brain is not all there is to a person. Could consciousness come out of dead matter? Are the body and mind separate from each other? What is consciousness any way? All these questions are asked and analysed as *The Case for A Creator* probes into the further reaches of science to where neurosurgery stops and the private "self" begins.

What does all this mean? The complex organisms, the immaterial consciousness, the genetic information, and the hopelessly unlikely but habitable earth? One word: Design. And who could have designed such marvels? Only God matches the finger prints of such a creator. This is not the story of a religiously minded writer preaching about God, nor a tale of an all-out anti-evolutionist looking for holes in Darwin's theory. It is a tale of an atheist on a search for truth, both the truth about evolution and the truth about God. And this story can prove that science and religion are not to be eternally at war with one another, for scientists show that when God made the world he signed it.

DUNCAN ELVIS

The Case for a Creator
by Lee Strobel

Available from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc. \$8

www.cardinalnewman.com.au

Tel: 02 9637 9406

MAKING BULLET WOUNDS AND OTHER FUN STUFF

I am very excited. Tonight my brothers, younger sister and I are going to St John Ambulance. This is our no uniform night and we are doing Casualty Simulation. As I step out of the car I can feel excitement mounting up. Charlotte and I fairly race up the path. We know exactly where Joan is; she is in her office preparing for a busy night. She hears us come in and calls to my brothers to get out the heaters. Now Mr and Mrs Scott have arrived. While we wait for the others to arrive we are chatting.

Joan has just come in, with the boys behind her carrying boxes of Casualty Simulation equipment. This is the first casualty simulation night and everyone is trying their hand at wound making. Mrs Scott is my victim. I take a lump of play dough (coloured with coffee) and stick it on her hand. Now I have a knife, the only one in all of the boxes, and try to spread Vaseline over the play dough. I decide that fingers are the best tool and start to smooth the play dough. Now I have, horror of horrors, a piece of RED CAR LIGHT. I thrust it in the play dough skin. "O bother!" I say. "I need some more play dough. Can you hold this for me?" So now the casualty is helping make her own wound. Finally, I spill blood on the wound (don't worry it's only fake).

"Now", says Mr Scott, "I want to see you treat it". As I have never done this before, Mrs Scott helps me. And now she has a hand which looks like she is wearing a boxing glove because she has a doughnut bandage and a roller bandage on it. Now I have finished, I am going to look at what Duncan has been working on all evening. Yikes! Charlotte's hand is covered in bits of paper clip and safety pins and goodness knows what else. Callum is saying, "It looks like a shrapnel bomb has gone off next to her". Luckily it is time to clean up before Duncan has to decide how to treat the wound. I don't

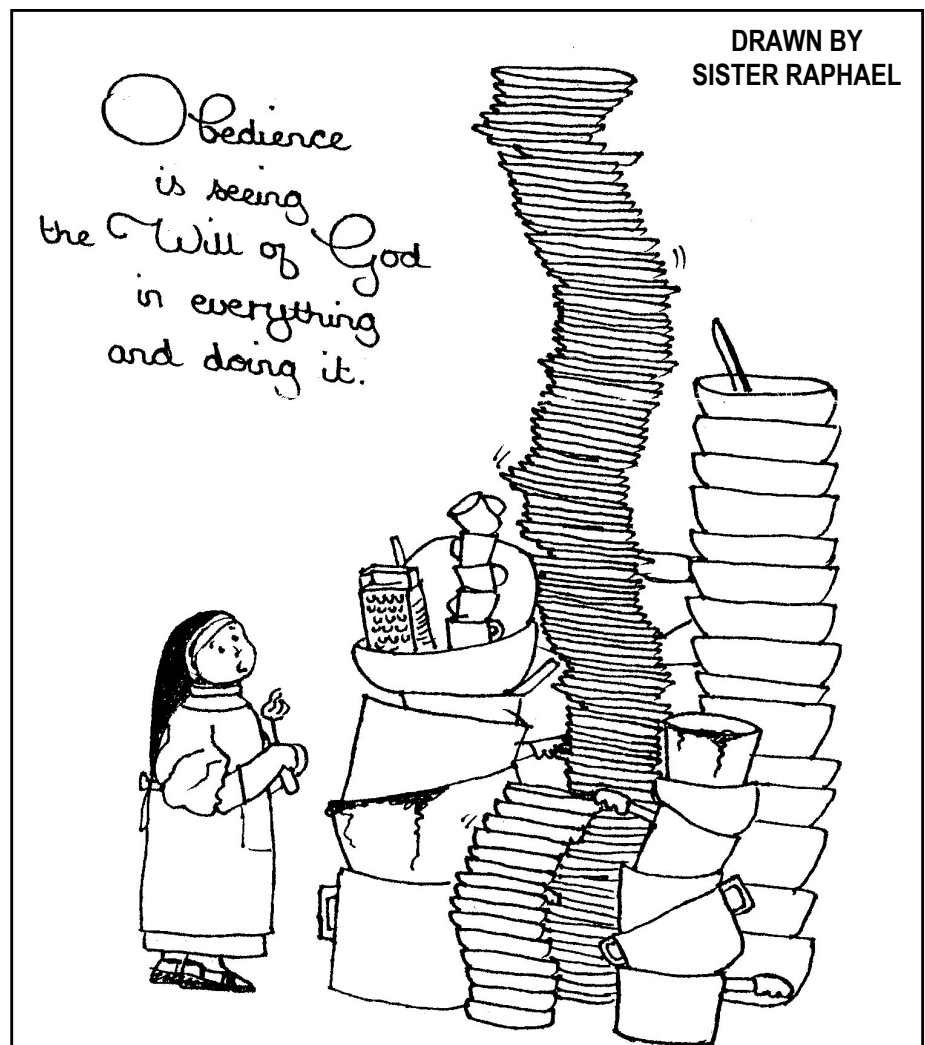
think anyone here knows how to treat a shrapnel bomb wound. We have to treat whatever wound we make. On Charlotte's other hand she has a bullet wound made by Callum and she has decided to take it home.

It is after supper and Dad has arrived. Charlotte is running to show him her bullet wound. Dad cries, "Aaaaaahhhhhhhh. What is it?" and Charlotte is telling him all about it. Dad says, "Wow! That's very realistic". Now it is time to go home.

We all really enjoy belonging to the St John Ambulance Association. Here are some of the things we do. The first and third Fridays of the month are uniform nights when we have a parade then we settle down to some

book work. The second and fourth Fridays are badge nights where we earn our badges. There are plenty of badges to earn including: casualty simulation, child care, cookery and nutrition and home care. We divide up into three groups. The ages are: eight to eleven, eleven to fourteen and fourteen to eighteen. You can stay with the children's group when you are eighteen only if you become a leader. If you want to join, the contact details are:
For NSW:
www.stjohnnsw.com.au
phone: 133 360 455

IMOGEN ELVIS



HUMAN IDEAS ABOUT GOD

God has no parts. He is utterly simple. God understands Himself in one simple, complete, idea. God's idea of God is infinite. This idea He has of Himself lacks nothing. It embraces everything there is about God. This one, uncreated, eternal idea, is God Himself. St. John calls this idea the Word: "In the beginning, the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Our ideas of God are not divine ideas. They are human. When we poor human beings try to understand God, we have to do so in small, digestible, thoughts. We may have true ideas, in as much as they get to some truth about God, but nevertheless they are incomplete. That is why we need so many ideas about God. We have to cut Him up, so to speak, in order to grasp who God is. So we have one idea that God is Creator, and another idea that tells us He is infinite. We know that God is mercy, infinitely just, eternal and so on. We have many ideas about God because one single idea is unable to grasp all that He is.

If our minds were strong enough to grasp God in one single idea, we wouldn't need many. We only have many ideas because one is not enough for us. In this life, someone may need to go through hundreds of steps to come to a mathematical truth. A great mathematician might understand the same truth with a single thought. The higher the intellect, the fewer the ideas. Having lots of ideas is nothing to boast about.

We know that in Heaven we will see God face to face. As the Gospel of John tells us, "this is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Jn 17:3). We will see Who He is, understanding Him in one idea. Since our intellects are finite, they are not able to contain an infinite idea, so how will we be able to see God? Our minds will be strengthened, elevated, to "tune in" to God's own understanding of Himself. We will understand, not by our own ideas, but by God's own idea of Himself. Our Lord spoke of the rewards prepared for those who loved even the

least of His brothers. The expression He used is a key one: "Come, enter into your Master's joy." We will enter into God's vision of Himself and enter into His own joy.

In Heaven we will see God in His essence – we will know who God is, what God is, without the need for any comparisons or any created ideas. Although everyone will be seeing the same God, some will have a greater power to see Him. They will see God more clearly, in greater depth. As St. Paul says, "Star differs from star in glory."

Since the vision of God is an intellectual vision, many people wonder if those with better minds will see Him more perfectly. After all, in this life, two people may see the same truth, but the one with a better mind might have a more penetrating insight into it. It is true that in Heaven one intellect will have a greater power or faculty to see God than another. However, that power doesn't come from the intellectual power with which someone is naturally endowed in this life. The power to see God is given by the light of glory. As St. Thomas explains: "the intellect which has more of the light of glory will see God the more perfectly; and he will have a fuller participation of the light of glory who has more charity; because *where there is the greater charity, there is the more desire* [to see God]; and desire in a certain degree makes the one desiring apt and prepared to receive the object desired."

The words of St. Thomas are encouraging, for they show that even those who are not so gifted with intellectual ability can be great saints

and have a deeper vision of God. As St. Thomas explains, "He who possesses the more charity, will see God the more perfectly, and will be the more beatified."

ANTHONY ENGLISH

FEAR OF DOGS

Once when I was a one year old, we had a dog called Rocket and Rocket would try to herd me around by nipping at my ankles. Rocket was even bigger than me and she was very jumpy but I wasn't afraid of her. We had Rocket for only six months, then we had to move house and that meant that we had to find a person that would take Rocket in. We did find a home for Rocket with a person who had lots of land. We hoped she might not find out that Rocket was a jumpy old dog.

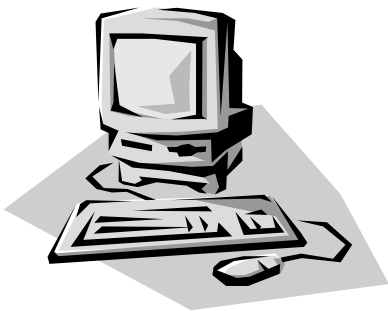
We have never had another dog. I can not remember Rocket and I have always been afraid of dogs. At the Browns' awhile ago, I realised how much fun I was missing out on because I was afraid of Dog and her puppy. On one visit I had been a wimp and stayed inside and watched the fun through the door. So the next time we visited, I went outside the Browns' house and made friends with Dog and the puppy.

There are lots of dogs I am still afraid of like the Fannings' and the Vieiras' dogs. Last time we went to the Vieiras' their dog barked. It made so much noise it sounded scary. Even though I was afraid of it, I walked straight past it and it didn't hurt me.

CHARLOTTE ELVIS

DOING A PUBLICATION ON THE COMPUTER FOR SCHOOLWORK

Have you ever thought of how smart a well presented newsletter looks? Lately I have been using Microsoft Publisher to make my own publications. I was inspired by the *Bush Boys Explorers* magazine which can be found at www.cardinalnewman.com.au. At the beginning of term, I choose a subject, perhaps something from human biology, or a certain time in history, and present it to Mum. Once she has approved it, I then start. Each morning, after prayers, maths, and morning tea, I start on my topic. Mum helps me find some good books and these become the basis on which I work. I will write various pieces on my subject and place them in a Publisher publication much like *Keeping In Touch*.



Often I will have a quick browse of the book, read an interesting section, then sit down at the computer and write something about it. From that there can be multitudes of other questions and subjects. Last term I did human biology. But human biology is such a huge and fascinating thing that I could not possibly study it all in a single term. I used the heart as a bridge to all sorts of questions. Like, "How do we breathe?", "How does blood clot?", and "What is a protein?"

Choosing your topic

When I choose a topic I make sure that it's something that really interests me. World War II had fascinated me for a long time and I was able to work hard on it. Once you get started, you will be amazed at what you can find. I find that my work is often easier if I let it take its own direction. Soon a pattern starts to

emerge and a centre point appears. Asking questions is good. It inspires me to find out more about my work.

Beginning

If your topic has no defined beginning (like biology), pick a single part that strikes you as interesting. From there ask questions about that thing and find related information.

Filling your publication.

Add your writings to the publication as you go. Don't leave it all to the end otherwise you can spend ages simply adding your pieces. You can write short essays for lots of information and biographies to focus on special people, but also it's good to write lists and mini articles about certain aspects of your topic. If you are using a preset design on the computer, which is a fast efficient way to make a publication, feel free to modify it to suit yourself.

Images

The Internet is a wonderful place for images. Your publication doesn't have to be only writing. Appropriate images are good for additional information, making your subject clearer and the publication more attractive. You can add maps of places mentioned, pictures of famous people to go with your biographies, or simply pictures of the subject you are writing about eg. the heart.

Glossary/Reading list

Adding a glossary to the back of your publication can be good for explaining special words to do with the topic. A reading list is good to add so that you can keep a record of what you read. Also, anyone who reads your publication is able to go to the same books you read and read more about that topic.

Finishing off

Make sure that your publication is in a

readable font with all the spelling and grammar correct. It may be easier to print a fast greyscale version of your work to be proofread before the final print so you can pick out any mistakes.

Some uses for the Publication

Doing schoolwork this way can help develop essay skills and help with your spelling and grammar. It is also an attractive way of presenting your work and is fun to put together. Fitting everything evenly on the pages can present a nice challenge and experimenting with fonts and colours makes it personal.

CALLUM ELVIS

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

This year 2006 marks 160 years since Our Blessed Lady appeared to Melanie and Maximin at La Salette in France. This happened on Saturday, 19th September 1846. Here the Blessed Virgin Mary was weeping for the irreligion and blasphemy.

This is very pertinent to today where the modern world has become very secular and materialistic

The Blessed Virgin came from heaven to this place only the once. Neither Melanie nor Maximin married.

2007, next year will mark 90 years since Fatima. This year marks 90 years since the Guardian Angel of Portugal came to Blessed Jacinta and Francisco and Lucy.

2008 marks 150 years since Our Lady came to Lourdes and spoke to Bernadette.

2008 marks 40 years since *Humanae Vitae*.

2009 is the centenary year of the death of Blessed Mary Mackillop.

THE GALE FAMILY

THE "RED PRIEST"

Antonio Vivaldi was born in 1678 in Venice, Italy. On the day of his birth, an earthquake struck Venice. Because his life was in danger, he was given an emergency baptism.

Vivaldi's father was a violinist in the orchestra of St Mark's Cathedral and often, while still a child, Vivaldi would play in his father's place.

Vivaldi trained for the priesthood and was ordained in 1703. Although his calling from God may have been genuine, some biographers express their doubts because of the fact that it was common for talented boys of humble origins to use the priesthood as a means of getting on in the world. Vivaldi was known as the 'Red Priest' because of his flowing red hair. Soon after his ordination, he ceased to say Mass because of ill health, possibly angina or asthma.

He took the position of violin teacher at a girls' orphanage in Venice, the Ospedale dello Pietà. He wrote a number of sacred works for the Pietà girls and he made the girls' orchestra one of the most admired and accomplished in Europe.

Vivaldi's job allowed him time to compose and give weekly concerts which were so successful that he soon became a celebrity. He began writing operas and he travelled all over Italy supervising their performance. Vivaldi composed 45 operas, one of which (Tito Manlio) he completed in just five days. He also composed 450 concertos, most taking only a day to write.

Towards the end of his life, Vivaldi's music became unfashionable. He died in Vienna in 1741, poor and forgotten. The young Joseph Haydn was one of the choirboys who sang at his Requiem Mass.

Only a fraction of Vivaldi's work was published in his lifetime. Most of it was discovered and became popular after his death. As late as 1973, some previously unknown works were discovered in Manchester, Great Britain.

RESEARCHED BY SUE ELVIS

THAT TONY VIVALDI

"Can we hear that Tony Vivaldi again?" My little son Thomas may have shocked Don Antonio a little with his overly familiar manner, but his mum wasn't complaining. It gave me such delight to hear the enthusiasm in my four-year-old's voice and to know he is beginning to appreciate fine music.

How did we get to this happy situation? The answer is in some wonderful recordings which we have found. They are all designed to inspire children with a love for great music and to introduce the world's best composers to them.

The three major series are the *Music Masters*, the *First Discovery – Music* series and the *Classical Kids* series.

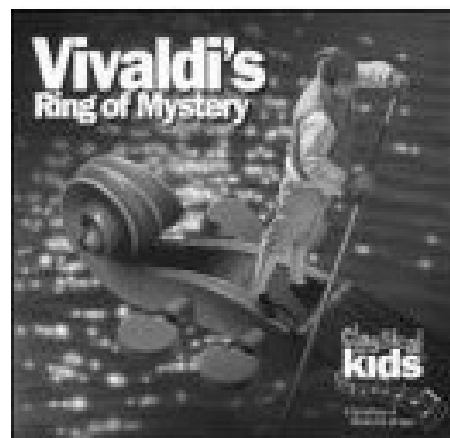
Music Masters is a set of CDs which intersperse the life of the composer with excerpts from his greatest works. The great bonus of this series is the inclusion of a complete piece (often the composer's most popular) at the end of the biography. This set is not as suitable for very little children as the other two, but the little ones will still pick up some interesting facts.

First Discovery – Music is a series of picture books (hardcover) with a CD included. The text of the book and the CD are exactly the same so the children can read along. There are appealing cartoon-style illustrations, photos of instruments, fine art related to the story and fun ideas for the children to try at home, whether or not they play an instrument. Similar to the *Music Masters*, there are highlights of the composer's work blended throughout, with lovely, quality recordings.

The *Classical Kids* series is a **must have**. Each composer's life is presented in a dramatised way with a mixture of fact and fiction. The fictional part involves children encountering the composer in some wonderful way, and this really gets our children in. As

we know, kids love to hear about other kids experiencing something exciting. The music is very cleverly chosen to complement the story, and our children Mary (5), Thomas (4) and Christina (2) are becoming familiar with the beautiful pieces and recognising which composer wrote them.

Our family's favourite is *Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery* from the *Classical Kids* series. It traces the path of an orphan girl who is sent to the *Pietà* in Venice, an orphanage whose music director is the Catholic priest, Don Antonio Vivaldi. Vivaldi is a very fatherly figure and the story of the girl's mysterious ring and the family connection is movingly interwoven with Vivaldi's music.



All three series are well worth the investment as they can be enjoyed over and over again. They're terrific for car trips. They appeal to different ages. Importantly, all three are respectful towards the Christian faith. For example, they mention Beethoven's baptism, Vivaldi's love of the Mass and Bach's desire to write his music for the glory of God.

At a time when pop music seems to be hitting an all-time low, what can we as

THAT TONY VIVALDI

parents do to refine our children's tastes? If we start them young with lots of family experiences of truly beautiful music then hopefully we are starting them on the road to a lifelong love of fine music.

LISA ENGLISH



SUGGESTED MUSIC RESOURCES

From the article "That Tony Vivaldi!"

Music Masters – <http://www.bywayofthefamily.com>

A narrator discusses the composer's life, and specially selected music is played.

Set includes: Bach, Mozart, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schuman & Grieg. Handel, Beethoven, Haydn, Wagner, Vivaldi & Corelli, Dvorak. Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Strauss, Foster & Sousa, Berlioz, and Verdi

First Discovery Music – Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
<http://www.abrsmpublishing.com/>

Uses pictures, music and words to tell the story of the composer's life. The book and accompanying CD includes a narrated version of the story.

Classical Kids – The Children's Group <http://www.childrensgroup.com>

A dramatic story, a little bit of history and the world's best-loved classical music set the scene for these fun-filled musical adventures.

Some other fine music recordings for children

The Nutcracker - story by E.T.A. Hoffman, music by Prokofiev. Narrated by Jane Harders <http://abcshop.com.au>

Instruments of the Orchestra Featuring Yehudi Menuhin. EMI Classics Recording – various distributors online.

Romeo and Juliet (Prokofiev) – Narrated by June Whitfield. NAXOS recording. Various distributors online.

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame. Read by John Gaden. This and other classic literature, beautifully read and interspersed with fine music.
<http://abcshop.com.au>

Tubby the Tuba and Peewee the Piccolo with Rolf Harris. Fun stories told in Rolf's zany style.
<http://abcshop.com.au>

COMPILED BY LISA ENGLISH

WORD WHYS

Where does money come from?

Bank comes from the Italian *banca* meaning bench. The word *bank* originally denoted a money dealer's table or bench. If the bank went out of business its bench was actually broken. The Italian term for this sounds dramatic: *banca rotta*, from which we get the English word *bankrupt*.

Finance originally came from Old French *finer*, to finalise a debt. The meaning today is not quite so pleasant, as we take out finance when we begin a debt.

Cash comes from Italian *cassa*, 'box' or 'chest.' It was the place where the bankers kept your savings when you had nothing better to spend it on.

Coins used to be made from the corner, wedge, or die used to stamp money.

Economy comes from the Greek *oikonomia*, meaning household management, based on *oikos* 'house' and *nemein* 'manage'.

Finally, **money** takes its name from the Latin word *moneta* meaning mint or money. It was originally a title of the goddess Juno, in whose temple in Rome money was minted.

So, that's where 'money' comes from. You thought it grew on trees, didn't you?

ANTHONY ENGLISH



MAKING FEMININE FASHIONS

Some Hints for the Inexperienced Sewer by a Failed Dressmaker

Have you noticed how girls' fashions change dramatically for sizes nine and above? Gone are the pretty dresses and in their place are more adult designs especially jeans and pants. Searching for a pretty dress or skirt, larger than size eight, most seasons, is an incredibly difficult task.

Our girls love dressing up in pretty clothes. Once they are approaching nine or ten, they may prefer skirts to dresses, but they still want to look feminine. It is so easy to dress the younger girls, but it is almost impossible to find pretty modest clothes for the older ones. There have been many fruitless shopping trips when I have despaired of finding anything suitable. I set out knowing exactly what I am looking for but I return empty-handed.

One day I came to the realization that I would just have to make my girls' clothes myself. Now this was rather a frightening decision to have to come to. You see, I am not known as the world's greatest dressmaker. In fact I failed this subject at school. I shall never forget one particular sewing class where we were constructing Peter Pan collars. I was sitting at my sewing machine, head bent over my fabric when I could sense the presence of the teacher behind me. She reached over and snatched up my collar, roaring, "And what is this supposed to be?" All my fellow students looked up to see me turning red with embarrassment and mumbling something about a Peter Pan collar. "This is *not* a Peter Pan collar," the teacher said scornfully. I instantly decided I wasn't cut out to be a sewer and would forever more buy clothes off the rack.

It was the example of Helen Brearley and Sarah Fanning which gave me the courage to attempt dressmaking. When I had trouble finding a suitable dress for

our eldest daughter, Felicity, for her First Holy Communion, Helen said, "No problem! Buy some fabric and we'll run one up between us." We spent a day together and with Helen doing most of the work, we soon had one beautiful white dress completed. By the time Felicity's Confirmation came along, I had the confidence to make her a dress by myself.

But I still found many excuses not to sew: It's difficult to sew with a baby in the family. You can't sew in a messy house. I haven't really got the time. I might make a mess of the fabric. It will look home-made. I used to spend so much time thinking about sewing and never actually making a start, that I hardly ever made a thing.

One day I observed Helen making a habit for Sister Bede. With no proper pattern, only an old habit to use as a guide, I would have found the task impossible. But not for Helen. I watched in amazement as she grabbed the scissors and confidently attacked the fabric. Soon a habit was taking shape under her skilful fingers. I would have spent all day thinking about where to begin and I would have achieved nothing. Similarly, I have seen Sarah turning out beautiful creations in the midst of noise, babies and other distractions. The lesson I learnt is that if you want to sew you can. Helen and Sarah could have used any of the excuses on my "why I can't sew" list but they didn't. My sewing might not be as skilful as Helen's and Sarah's but I could at least try. (Of course, there are periods in every mother's life when taking on any extra activity is out of the question.)

If I can sew anyone can. Perhaps you too are frustrated by the lack of feminine clothes available in the

shops for your daughters. I will share what I have learnt. Now these hints on how to produce pretty clothes for your girls are not for experienced and skilful dressmakers. They are for anyone who thinks she is a completely incompetent sewer and who thinks she can't produce a reasonable garment that her daughter will want to wear.

The most important item in an inexperienced dressmaker's tool kit is a simple but reliable sewing machine: something which runs smoothly, has straight stitch, zig zag, a button hole stitch, maybe stretch stitch and a zipper foot. An automatic threader device may appeal if you are losing your near-sight like me! There is nothing more frustrating than using a machine where the thread snaps every few minutes and needs rethreading. Investing in a good machine is worth the money.

Choice of fabric is important. I try to buy good quality material which hangs well and washes well. If I am going to put in lots of time and energy constructing a garment then I want it to look good. We live in a small town with only one expensive fabric shop and buying fabric can be a problem. Occasionally, we take a trip to the city to visit Spotlight and I will stock up by buying a couple of metres each of a selection of fabrics. I have discovered that you can purchase Spotlight fabrics by mail order for a very low postage charge. By becoming a VIP member, catalogues and specials can be regularly received by email. My other source of fabric is Vinnies. Our local stores often have remnants for sale. I have even turned pieces of curtaining into skirts.

The next important item is a pattern. Helen makes her own patterns using existing items of clothing as a guide, but my skills aren't up to that. I have collected several multi sized patterns

MAKING FEMININE FASHIONS

which are fairly simple. Simple is the key word. I started with a straight skirt cut on the bias which fell nicely. It had a half elastic waist which was very easy to construct. Just recently, I have had the confidence to advance to zips. My zip insertion is really horrific but my girls don't seem to notice and I am sure I will get better with practice! Several weeks ago, I found a pattern for a wrap-over skirt with a buckle fastening. I'm really getting adventurous now!

With one pattern, I have made many skirts and they all look individual because of the different fabrics or the addition of some embellishment such as beading, buttons or a touch of embroidery.

My girls love it when I get the sewing machine out. They excitedly ask who I'm sewing for. To them it is a miraculous process as I turn a piece of fabric into a garment created especially for them. Our girls aren't really concerned about fashion and wearing the latest trendy clothes. However, it is possible to combine the best of what is available in the shops with some home-made creations. At the start of a season, I take a tour through our Country Target store to see what is available. I decide what I could possibly buy off the rack and what items I will definitely have to make. Last winter, I was able to purchase a number of beautiful jumpers and jackets and only needed to make skirts. Home-made skirts can be made to look fashionable by choosing colours and fabrics or embellishments that are in style. For example, it was easy to copy the beading and sequins on last summer's floaty skirts. In fact we bought a few of these skirts ready made. With a few tucks along the waistband to bring the waistline higher and the addition of a petticoat to compensate for the flimsy fabric, I really didn't have to do much sewing at all.

Accessories are wonderful for completing an outfit and making it special. Shoes and boots, jewellery, hats, tights and scarves are all easily available and can transform home-made into designer-made.

Still feel your sewing skills aren't up to attempting a garment? Do what I did and find a generous friend who will share her sewing secrets, who will insert that tricky zip or show you the easiest way to turn up a hem. And once you are confidently sewing don't forget to pass on your skills to your daughters. Get them involved in choosing fabrics and patterns. Before long they will be making their own clothes.

Whether we like it or not, clothes are important. What we choose to wear reveals to a certain extent who we are. Thinking about what we wear, dressing well and appropriately isn't mere vanity. As far as our daughters are concerned, I think it is appropriate to encourage them to think about their choice of clothes and to even enjoy the very womanly pleasure of dressing up.

SUE ELVIS

THE SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS

What is the SCTA?

The Society of Catholic Teachers Australia Inc. (SCTA) is an organisation of lay Catholic educators (primary, secondary and tertiary teachers, catechists, apologists and homeschoolers) testifying that Christ is the heart of education, its means and its end.

SCTA supports the noble vocation of Catholic educators so that they resemble this same Christ "the unique

teacher, by their lives as well as their teaching." (Gravissium Educationis 8)

SWCTA was founded in 1999 in Perth, Western Australia by four secondary school teachers, with the blessing of His Grace Archbishop Barry James Hickey. It became an incorporated body in April 2002 and is governed by a constitutionally elected executive committee.

What Can the SCTA do for Me?

SCTA is more than a provider of teaching resources. Through the society's website or through its various social and spiritual activities, SCTA is a vehicle of prayer support, information, inspiration and interaction with the wider local and Australian Catholic community.

SCTA is a forum for members and all those who wish to:

- Share academic papers and lesson plans as well as inspirational true stories and testimonies to the power of prayer, love of God and the dignity of the human person.
- Recommend useful Catholic and other web links
- Communicate ideas through the email list
- Deepen one's love of the Catholic Faith
- Submit prayer requests and pray for the needs of others
- Participate in local and national SCTA events, whether they be academic, social or spiritual
- Encourage their students/ children to take part in competitions
- Learn more about our rich Catholic heritage

SCTA
National Executive
PO Box 279
North Perth
WA 6906
Ph: 04 2810 6481

Web: www.scta.org.au

**** BUSH BOYS COMPETITION ****

For *Keeping In Touch*, Term 1 2005, I put together a Bush Boys Competition. It was a quiz based on the first of Fr. Tierney's books—*The Bush Boys, A Camping Adventure*. Once I knew *Keeping In Touch* was online, I eagerly looked forward to my inbox and mailbox filling up with entries from interested Bush Boys and Bush Girls.

Alas, the weeks and then the months went by and I received not one entry. Eventually I forgot all about the competition until one day Mrs. Christine French phoned to say that her son, Matthew, had completed the quiz. Of course, Matthew claimed the prize which had been waiting for a winner for over a year.

Congratulations Matthew!

If you had a go at the quiz and would like the answers, please write to me at elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au and I will email them to you.

I am bravely attempting a second competition – **PLEASE ENTER !!** There will be a prize for the winner.

MAKE AS MANY WORDS AS POSSIBLE FROM THE LETTERS -

“BUSH BOYS EXPLORERS”

Rules:

1. Letters can only be used as many times as they appear in the above title for each word eg. Each word can have up to 1 'h', 2 'b's, 3 's's etc.
2. Words formed by adding an 's' eg. plurals and words showing ownership (holes and ours) will not be accepted.
3. Made up words and abbreviations will not be accepted.
4. Names of people and places will not be accepted eg. Bess
5. The judges decision will be final

You should be able to get well over 100 words. See if you can find them all.

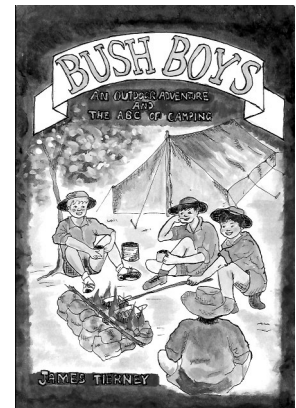
Please mail your entries to me with your name, address and age -

Mrs. Sue Elvis
PO Box 968
MITTAGONG NSW 2575

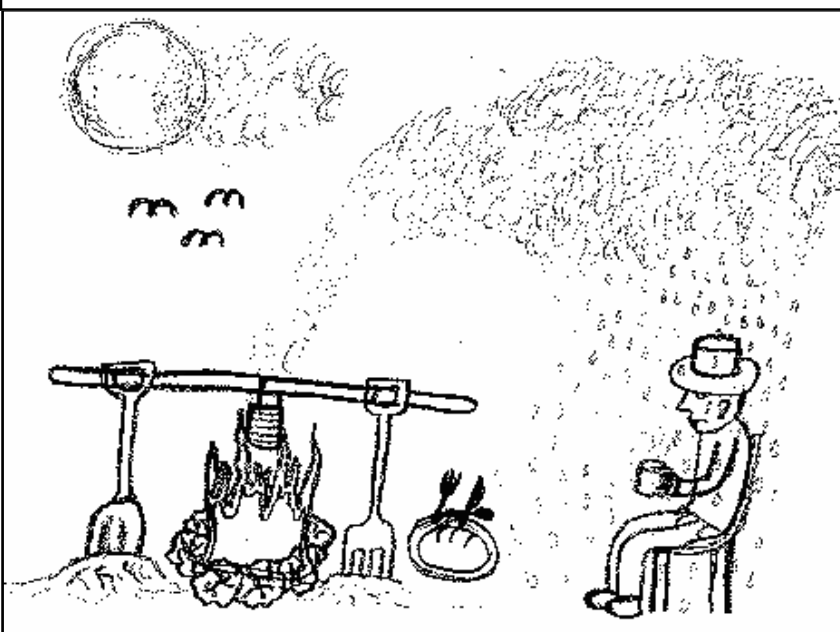
Or by email to -

elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au

SUE ELVIS



DRAWING BY MATTHEW FRENCH



ADJUSTING TO LIFE AS A TYBURN NUN

I sat on the white bed, put my bag on the floor, and looked around the room. It was very clean and very plain, containing just a bed, a desk and a cupboard. A small medal hung about my neck on a black cord and my short black veil was beginning to twist crookedly on my head. "This is it!" I thought. "I'm a nun!! Well, if not quite a nun, I was really on my way to it. Half an hour before, I had formally entered the Congregation of the Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Montmartre, Order of St Benedict, as a postulant. I was eighteen. I had never been away from my family for more than three weeks at a time.

I was excited and convinced that I was doing what God wanted. I was sure He wanted me to become a Tyburn nun. Still, I wondered how I would cope with the demands of the unfamiliar monastic life. Would I miss my family? How would I adjust living with a multinational community of nuns? Would I miss things from my old life? And once I had settled in, wouldn't contemplative religious life become a bit...routine? Even ...boring? I couldn't know for certain until I tried.

I was right when I had thought of the monastic life as being demanding. It is more than that; it is different in almost every way to life 'in the world'. Right from the beginning I had to learn how to do things the 'monastic way', to be formed inwardly and outwardly into a Tyburn nun. I was eager to learn, but still the volume of instructions poured on me was almost overwhelming. From meals (where I drank from a bowl and ate my fruit with a knife and fork) to prayers (where I sang the Divine Office with the sisters or knelt motionless on complaining knees before the Blessed Sacrament) everything was new and interesting. I threw myself into learning, hurrying hither and thither in obedience to commanding bells, remembering to bow to superiors, nod to other sisters

and kneel for corrections. All this (along with the 4.40 am rising time!) left me exhausted at the end of every day. One day, when I was particularly tired, my Prioress sent me to bed right after supper. I trudged to my cell and fell on my bed, intending to rest for just a minute before washing and brushing my teeth. Instead I fell asleep fully dressed, including my glasses, sandals and postulant's veil!

Adjusting to a monastic lifestyle, along with a lingering 'holiday' feeling, meant that I didn't feel particularly homesick during the first few weeks at the monastery. I had entered in November, during the last weeks of Ordinary Time. As the liturgical year closed and Advent began, I realized that I was not on holiday. I was not going to pack my bag and return to my family. I was here – forever. I began to miss my family, and this only got worse as Christmas approached. The crisis came on Christmas Eve. It was supper-time. Because I had had special duties, I was eating my supper after the rest of the community. I was miserable and I must have looked it, because the only other sister in the room smiled at me and said, "Your mum will be missing you, won't she?"

My mum wasn't just missing me; I was missing her! "Ye-es!" I choked and burst into tears over my fruit salad. The sister must have gone and told Mother Prioress, because in a few minutes she came. "Would you like to ring your family?" she asked. Phone calls require special permission to make and receive. I had not thought that I would be allowed. Still snivelling, I rang my mum and spoke to her for fifteen glorious weepy minutes. I felt much better afterwards and homesickness gradually faded away from then on.

It's not the same as my family but the community here has become my

'monastic' family. I remember wondering if I would cope living with strangers. What if they were difficult? It was such a relief and a joy to find that every one of the nuns was ready to accept and love me, right from the beginning. As I flailed around in my efforts to learn, they would encourage and help me. Each of the sisters has a totally different background and nationality (from German to Filipino) and their ages range from late seventies to early twenties. Each one of them has helped me to fit into monastic life in their own way. One of my first duties was to turn a hot water urn on and off to ensure that we had hot water at every meal. One morning I forgot to turn the urn on so that there would be hot water for dinner. I remembered just as we got into the chapel for Sext. I couldn't go out and so I worried and worried. But one of the sisters had checked before Sext and turned on the urn for me. Because of her help, I didn't end up in hot water after all!

Gradually I grew to love my monastic family. As the months passed, I became impatient to progress on my journey to full religious life. The next formal step I would make would be entering the novitiate. As a novice I would receive the black and white Benedictine habit and a religious name. I yearned for the habit and all it stood for. I had to wait out six months of postulancy before I could be admitted to the novitiate. It seemed to take FOREVER! By this time, I knew I wanted to be a Tyburn nun and it seemed hard that I should have to wait. As the end of my postulancy approached and I started to go for fittings for my new habit, my impatience grew. "Can't I just keep wearing it?" I asked the sister who was crawling round the floor pinning up the hem.

"No, I haven't sewn the hem", she replied firmly. And I had to curb my patience and wait until May 5th when, in

ADJUSTING TO LIFE AS A TYBURN NUN

a private ceremony, I received my (fully sewn) habit and religious name Sister Mary Raphael. Probably it was good for me to wait.

I have been here for over nine months now. I am now familiar (or at least no longer surprised) by monastic ways. Even my habit and new name have become normal parts of my life. Is life becoming routine, boring then? Well, boredom is usually an attitude of the mind, but I don't think I've had a single day in which I've been tempted to boredom. I have been sad, happy, confused, tired, excited and very, very joyful but never bored. I don't miss my old life at all. I love being here and I am so grateful that the Lord called me to the contemplative religious life. With His grace, I will stay here until I die. AMEN, ALLELUIA!

**SISTER MARY RAPHAEL
(FELICITY ELVIS)**

THE TYBURN NUNS

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A BALANCED DIET FOR THE SOUL

Having recently volunteered to play music for our parish's vigil Mass, I was confronted with the ongoing question of which songs to play and where to play them. For those of you who volunteer your services for this worthy cause, I'd like to share with you an idea that came to me after being inspired by Fr. Tierney's *Catholic Family Catechism*. Why not base hymn selection around the four forms of prayer of the church; contrition, petition, adoration and thanksgiving? That way we could have balanced, spiritual nourishment that complements the progression of the Mass.

For example, the first hymn could be the contrition prayer (turning away from sin, acknowledging our own need for God in everything), and could also reflect the theme of the Mass found in the readings. Hymns could be; *Amazing Grace, Christ Be Our Light, Come to the Water, Like a Shepherd, Hosea, God gives His People Strength, By Your Kingly Power, O Purest of Creatures*.

The second ties in with the offertory and is the petition prayer – asking God for His gifts, and could include; *Blessing Song, A Trusting Psalm, Fill My House, Seek Ye First, Jesus in Your Heart We Find, Make Me a Channel of Your Peace, Soul of My Saviour, Grant to Us O Lord a Heart Renewed, Take Our Bread*.

The third is Communion. As we receive our Lord I prefer either silence or quiet music then, when we've returned to our seat, a hymn of profound adoration. This hymn could also reflect the theme of the Mass if the first hymn didn't do a good enough job. Examples might include; *How Great Thou Art, I Believe in Jesus, Hail Redeemer King Divine, Spirit of the Living God, I Love you Lord, Be Thou My Vision*.

The last hymn thanks God for everything, acknowledges his omnipotence over all situations and could also include commissioning of

the faithful. Examples are; *Though the Mountains May Fall, Now Thank We All Our God, Glory and Praise, They'll Know We are Christians, For All the Saints, We Stand for God*.

A final word about selection of modern songs. Songs that are scripture put to music generally can't be in error unless they have been extremely paraphrased and lose their original meaning.

I sincerely wish all those of you involved in church music a most rewarding time as you magnify your own personal prayer through group worship and double that by putting it into song.

GABRIELLA DE BATTISTA

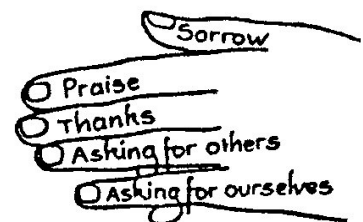
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FIVE FINGERS OF PRAYER

From *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition with 50 Questions and Answers*, pp118-119

Bush Boys Explorers Magazine Autumn 2006

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Christmas 2005 and the Elvis family had managed to consume what seemed like enough food to sustain a small African nation for a year. I sat, as most people do at New Year, pondering my navel and more specifically, the size of the stomach in which my navel was residing. I had to face the fact that I was FAT! Not just a little chubby or carrying remnants of my "Puppy Fat", but just plain fat.

It's amazing how easily you can fool yourself into thinking that you're in control of your weight and that you can easily carry those extra couple of kilos. But this deception can continue for many years, and I realised that I wasn't the man I used to be: I was about 1½ times the man I used to be. And I was certainly not the man my wife married.

I had long given up regular sport or any kind of sport really, and a broken leg about 8 years ago proved the perfect excuse to avoid social activities - "Can't run very well, see". Buying bigger clothes wasn't the answer and the thought of a future of elasticated waistbands in my trousers wasn't the most thrilling. The answer was staring at my stomach - GO ON A DIET.

I'd never been on a proper diet and some research was needed. Fortunately my wife came to the rescue, as always, or I probably wouldn't have gone any further. Homeschooling mothers are renowned for their knowledge of the local libraries and I was soon presented with the Readers Digest *Change One* diet book and several low fat cookbooks.

Deciding to go on a diet is one thing but first you need to know how much weight you actually have to lose. Since it was no good saying that I only wanted to look like one elephant instead of two, I jumped onto the internet to investigate the new fangled measurement of "Body Mass Index" or BMI to those of us in the know. This index calculates your ideal weight against your height. I plucked up the courage to get on the scales and

promptly fainted when the scale had finally stopped moving. Armed with this information (modesty prevents me from telling you my weight), I plugged the figure into the online BMI calculator.

My start weight came back OBESE !! I never liked computers anyway and this wasn't helping. I then kept plugging lower weight figures until the computer reckoned I would be only "normal". By my reckoning, the only way I was going to lose that much weight was to chop my leg off. A bit too serious that idea.

Still I had a target and despite me thinking that I would have to subsist on tons of rabbit food, my diet was simplified to -

- Reducing the amount of food at a meal
- Reducing the fat content
- More regular eating patterns

Imagine a diet that advocated eating more often, mind you this was tempered somewhat by portions that were about the same as my five year old daughter's. You see, the older you get, the less growing you're going to do, so the less food you need. The book even suggested using a side plate or bowl to control your portion sizes and gave easily understandable serving sizes of food, like no more than a CD size serving of meat in a meal or only a tennis ball of rice.

Well one thing was for sure, if I was going to suffer then the whole Elvis family could as well. Shopping took on a new dimension, as I interrogated all the food labels to see which had the least fat content. I became a low fat zealot.

The first couple of weeks didn't go well and weight wasn't exactly falling off like leaves in autumn. It seemed that my body was quite happy the way it was.

Time to raise the stakes and move to

Stage Two of the Battle of the Bulge: regular exercise. I warmed to the thought of relaxed strolls around our country neighbourhood taking in the sights and discussing the day's events with my wife. Sadly I was mistaken as strolls with my wife turned into time trials.

We worked out a series of local routes to prevent boredom, short sprint walks and longer endurance walks. Talk about no pain no gain, I never thought that a 45 minute walk could be so exhausting. I became increasingly familiar with the back of my wife's head as she powered away from me.

But it was working and I was losing weight consistently, even if it was only a kilo a week. As we got used to the increased pace of walking, I remembered on one particular evening, that I used to be quite athletic as a boy and I tried a jog. It must have only been about 100metres but the image of my wife sprinting away from me as I performed this sort of disjointed shuffle pains me even now. I thought my chest was going to explode .

Just as I had started to look forward to our walks every evening and the weekly weigh-in, autumn came and it became too dark to walk. Back to plain old dieting, and winter meals are not conducive to weight loss. Still the battle goes on. The change in eating habits and exercising when possible are changes I will need to retain for life.

So if you need to do something about your weight, I encourage you to stop thinking and take action. The rewards are enormous. Once again I can run around the football field with my teenage sons, and my younger daughters will no longer ask why they got the old and worn out dad. And my wife can put up with such comments as "Have you been starving your husband?" because she is pleased I am more like the man she married.

"LOW FAT " ANDY ELVIS