

Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for Catholic Homeschooling Families



Getting Keeping In Touch

Keeping in Touch is available from the web site of Cardinal Newman Faith Resources, Inc.

www.cardinalnewman.com.au/KIT.html If you would like to be notified by email when a new issue of KIT is coming online, please advise Mr. Shaun Fanning, who maintains the address list. He can be contacted by email at tarlohill@bigpond.com

Keeping in Touch is written and edited by Catholic families. If you would like to contribute something or if your family would like to volunteer to edit an issue, please contact the next issue's editor.

From the Editor's desk

By Anthony English

It has been a delight to be able to edit Keeping in Touch for the first time. It is particularly encouraging to receive contributions from some first timers. This issue begins with a moving account of how the Doodeman family dealt with the loss of their daughter, [Miriam](#) who was miscarried two years ago. It is an article which shows forth great practical wisdom founded on faith. The Elvis family have provided some promotion of Fr. Jim Tierney's well loved [Bush Boy books](#), available at everyone's favourite bookshop, Cardinal Newman Faith Resources. Clare Power, a supporter of homeschooling, provides some thoughtful [reflections on homeschooling](#) and life in a secondary school. She also runs a [Home Education Support service](#), including marking, which you will see advertised on the following page. There you will also find details of the [Home Zone](#) magazine for home schooling children.

In the spirit of hope and joy following the election of Cardinal Ratzinger as Supreme Pontiff, we reproduce a lighter look at how some might welcome [Pope Benedict XVI](#). On the more serious side, we provide a quote from him on the [Church as the Vessel of Hope](#). If you think [teaching Shakespeare](#) is beyond you, you must read Sue Elvis' article on how to make your home school a world stage. It is an uplifting article, and it also will help you to look educated when you want to insult someone with style. From Shakespeare to the Sound of Music, we have a taste of [Our Favourite Things](#), which was sung by the Doodeman family at the Fitzroy Falls Camp recently. Then Mrs Veronica Brandt offers a most enlightening background to the [Do-Re-Mi](#) we all know and love. She explains its origins trace back a millennium, when a choirmaster was teaching some boys Gregorian Chant for the feast of St. John the Baptist. Veronica has produced a [New Book of Old Hymns](#), which is also available from the Newman Centre. Shaun Fanning gives his inimitable report of the [Fitzroy Falls Catholic Homeschoolers' Camp](#) for 2005. He was lucky to get it past the editor, whose legal advisors are still considering further action. Vicky Leach (who will be editing the next edition with her family) and Sonja Hooker have written very homely articles about the practical [time management](#) and [advantages](#) of homeschooling. Finally, for the Catholic homeschoolers in Sydney, a plug for the [Expressive Arts Workshop](#) for little children. For older ones, you will find some information about [Campion College](#), which is due to open in 2006..

This issue of *Keeping in Touch* was edited by the English family. Compliments, praise and gratitude (limit 5000 words) should be sent to anthony@tardis.com.au. Complaints should be marked "Complaints and Criticisms" and sent to spam@delete-without-opening.com

Contributions for the next issue

The next edition of *Keeping in Touch* will be edited by the Leach family. Submit any contributions by the second week of next term to: leachav@optusnet.com.au

Miriam

This article is about our daughter, Miriam, who was miscarried two years ago and what we did. We are writing this in response to the many people who have said to us 'I wish I knew I could have done that'.

On Tuesday evening the 8th of April 2003 we were 12 weeks pregnant when Lisa started to spot. It stopped within half an hour. This does not always mean that there are problems but we were worried. We had an appointment to see an obstetrician that was still three weeks away. When the spotting began again in the early hours of Wednesday morning Lisa rang our G.P. He suggested ringing the obstetrician to get an earlier appointment. He also told us that Lisa would probably go on to have a miscarriage and there was nothing we could do. The obstetrician was unable to see Lisa but gave us a referral to have an ultrasound.

We had to wait until Friday morning before we could be fitted in for the ultrasound. The news was not good. Miriam had no heartbeat and judging by her size had probably died three weeks earlier. The obstetrician saw us and gave us the option of going to the hospital for a curette or going home to wait for things to happen naturally. We took the second option.

After the ultrasound Gerard went to see our parish priest, Fr Albert, to discuss funeral options. We knew from friends that we could have some kind of memorial service and burial. Upon reading the rubrics for the Requiem Mass Fr Albert, who never had experienced a case like ours before, found that there were prayers within the ritual for an unbaptised child. That afternoon we chose readings and prayers for Miriam's Requiem Mass.

The next morning, at 4:45am, nature took its course and Miriam was 'born'. After a conditional baptism we gathered her remains and wrapped them in a white hand towel, placed the towel in an ice-

cream container and put it in the fridge.

Saturday was a busy day. We told the children as they awoke about their little sister and answered the questions they asked as best we could. The funeral arrangements were finalised with Father and it was set down for Monday. He also organised a child's plot at our local Catholic cemetery.

Gerard went to the shops to buy a 'coffin' for Miriam. Where do you go to buy a coffin for such a small child? He finally found an appropriate box in a kitchen shop. It was a wooden box intended to sit on a kitchen bench. He then went to a hardware store and bought some nails. Flowers were also ordered.

Sunday was Passion Sunday and we spent it with friends performing in a Passion play. It was good to have the support. Afterwards friends helped us to dig the grave.

Monday morning consisted of getting everything ready for the funeral. We picked up the flowers and prepared the coffin. We placed Miriam in her white hand towel into the box with Lisa's rosary beads. A Miraculous Medal and crucifix, which Gerard usually wore, were nailed to the top and a wooden crucifix glued onto the side. We then each hammered some nails into the lid to close the coffin. This was a very difficult and healing thing to do.

The Requiem Mass was beautiful with friends supplying the music and family and friends supporting us. Miriam was laid to rest in the adjoining cemetery with each of our other children participating by throwing dirt and flowers onto the coffin as it was buried.

Each time we drive past the cemetery, which is every workday for Gerard, we remember our daughter and sister.

We often say to each other that while what happened to us was sad,

God was good to us in the way it happened. We don't know why it happened but we continue to trust in God's plan for our lives.

Each family will cope with a miscarriage in their own way. We hope that by sharing our story, others will learn of what may be some of their options.

Gerard and Lisa Doodeman

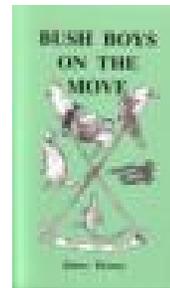


Calling all Bush Boys and Girls!

We are looking for a Bush Boys Quiz Champion. You will need to hunt out your copy of Father James Tierney's *Bush Boys: An Outdoor Adventure and the ABC of Camping*, (see below if you haven't got a copy). Write out your answers and send them to Mrs Sue Elvis, PO Box 968, Mittagong, NSW 2575 for your chance to win a prize. Include your name, age and address. Entries close week 1 term 3.

Conditions of entry: the Judge's decision will be final, no arguments!

1. Name all the children of the mountains Cumberland family. (extra points for nicknames and listing in order of age!)
2. Name the 7 Deadly Hazards which lead to death in the bush.
3. What is the nickname of Peter's teacher?
4. The Cumberlands' home is called *The Hills of Home*. What was its former name?
5. What is John's favourite animal?
6. Name Greg and Bernie's favourite swimming spot.
7. What is the caption on the Jollife cartoon located on the wall inside The Hut?
8. Finish this sentence found on a notice in The Hut: If you catch a rat, take it out of the trap, reset the trap and feed the rat to...?
9. What is Mr Matthew Cumberland's profession?
10. What did Peter leave at The Hut?
11. What three names did the Bush Boys call the skinny youth or yahoo?
12. What are the two rules for good discipline?
13. What kind of snake bit one of the yahoos when he fell from the ladder at the cave?
14. What were the yahoos' real names?
15. The yahoos stole some exam papers. What subject were they on?
16. What day was the exam set for?
17. Which youth was built for "luxury not speed"?
18. What sort of explosion injured the yahoos?
19. What was the name of Greg's friend, the Ranger?
20. What was the first sign that alerted the Bush Boys to the fact that The Hut had been invaded by the yahoos?
21. What is a bushy salute?
22. What is the ideal size for a boys' camping group?
23. Which yahoo made a fresh start?
24. What happened to the other yahoos at the end of the book?
25. Say in a short paragraph what you enjoyed most about the book *The Bush Boys*



Did you know that Fr Tierney has written 4 Bush Boys books? The good news is these books are now available at heavily discounted prices.

Bush Boys \$5,
Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys \$2,
Bush Boys and Bush Rangers \$10 and
Bush Boys on the Move \$15

The complete set \$30

Available from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources inc ph (02) 9637 9406 or
 email: fr@cardinalnewman.com.au or visit the web site www.cardinalnewman.com.au

These books would make ideal presents. Order some today!

Home and Heart and Mind

Reflections of a home education supporter

Home is where the heart is educated, and the mind and the will.

Parents make the choice to home school for a variety of reasons. It is good to explore the positive benefits of home education but it may also be beneficial every now and then to reflect on why it may be best **not** to send a child to an educational institution (commonly known as a school).

It disturbs me when I hear of previously home-educated children being sent to school, including those being sent to school for secondary education.

Now I hasten to say here that parents who have made a decision to send a child to school may well have made the best decision for their child in their particular circumstances and it is their right and duty to make decisions about such matters.

But I would like to reflect on why it can be dangerous for some children to be sent to some secondary schools. (This reflection is partly stemming from my earlier experience as a teacher at secondary colleges, as well as other experiences. I would be interested to hear from other people with both differing and similar experiences.)

These young people, for several hours each day, for 40 weeks each year, are being subjected to the opinions of several teachers and many other young people. Teachers nowadays are typically ignorant of the Church's teachings, though they themselves may think otherwise if they have received training in the Catholic system, either before or during employment. In many cases teachers' personal lives will be deviating in significant ways from what they should be like, e.g. as

regards Mass attendance and marital life. Due to their lack of moral development, teachers may well be advising students who confide in them to take up, or continue with, practices that are immoral. We must always keep in mind that the teacher can have a very great influence on his students, both inside and outside the classroom.

Fellow students are potentially another bad influence. The majority of students will not be attending weekly Mass and will be engaging in illicit relationships (or **at least** giving their peers the impression that they agree with such behaviour).

You may well say that your child is well formed and has a strong character and won't be influenced by these people, and you may well be right. But remember that he is only human. Remember that he will be surrounded by these influences for a large part of each school day. He may be at an age when he will form his own opinions which he will not necessarily discuss with his parents, and may even be going through the stage that I have been told some (particularly boys) do, of thinking that his father knows

nothing. Your child may well be influenced in an undesirable way by the people he rubs shoulders with at school.

One belief which at least used to be prevalent amongst senior secondary students is the belief that there is no objective truth – that everything is a matter of opinion. This apparently had been frequently taught them by their teachers. This idea certainly causes difficulties when trying to teach morality and religion.

A little contact with people whom you would not like your child to emulate may be good if thereby he learns to cope in the outside world, but such contact needs to be balanced with abundant contact with good role models, both family members and others outside the family.

Adults are influenced by the company they keep; can we expect our children not to be?

Submitted by **Clare Power**

See advertisement on next page for Home Education Support.

Home Education Support

Are you educating your children at home and

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Contact: Clare Power B.Sc., Dip.Ed.
by phone: 03 9483 8930 (message service)
mail: 37 Russell St, Gordon, Victoria, 3345
or e-mail: adgesa@vic.chariot.net.au

Home Zone magazine

The *Home Zone* is the newest homeschool magazine for kids. It gives kids an opportunity to get their stories and articles published. Now thanks to the Home Zone magazine your children will be encouraged to write. With most articles published you are more or less guaranteed to see your article in the magazine. If you submit articles you will get notification if your article has been placed or not. Unfortunately due to the growing number of contributors your article may be delayed for a couple of issues. The Home Zone magazine accepts articles and stories from parents too. Parents are encouraged to write about their work and older brothers and sisters may write about their studies at university. The cost of this wonderful 20 page magazine for homeschoolers is only \$1.00 to cover the production costs.

Pricing:

Individual: \$1.00 (available from Homeschool Chess and Debating clubs)
4 issues by post: \$7.00
4 issues by email: \$2.00
1 issue by mail: \$1.50
1 issue by email: 50c

Payable by cheque and in 50c postage stamps

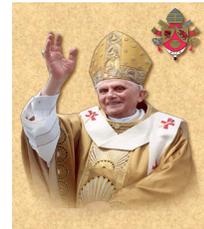
Contact details:

3 Fraser St.
Windsor Gardens SA 5087

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Web: www.homezone.cjb.net
Email: email@homezone.cjb.net

B16
(Benedict XVI)

Studies have conclusively proven that people taking B16 daily will continue to have smooth running and orthodox metabolism for years to come. B16 in trials has proven not to be harsh or difficult as had been initially reported.



You might have been told in the past that Humanae Vitaemins were not good for you or that if your conscience decided you didn't need Humanae Vitaemins you could safely ignore them. Latest cultural medical studies have proven the link between lack of Humanae Vitaemins and the lack of children. These studies show the extreme cultural malnutrition from not getting their RDA (Ratzinger Daily Allowance) of required spiritual nutrition.

Now with B16, Ut Unum Sintrum, has all the required nutrients you have relied on in the past and more. B16 works well with and expands with needed daily intake such as VatII and JP2 (Beta-Karoltene) and will not interfere in any way with them. In fact the synergetic effect will only enhance your spiritual metabolism.

The B16 caplets have a special smooth coating allowing you to swallow them without any water. Yet it is true with B16 you do not have to water it down in any way. Our B16 is doctrinally pure with no heretical impurities such as those found in anti-Humanae Vitaemins. Studies have conclusively proven that people taking B16 daily will continue to have smooth running and orthodox metabolism for years to come. B16 in trials has proven not to be harsh or difficult as had been initially reported.

We are also introducing Ut Unum Sintrum for children since your children are never too young to start off with proper spiritual growth. Parents will be pleased to know that our Humanae Vitaemins are not sugar coated, just like everything else we offer with B16 in it. Guaranteed not to cause truth decay or any form of spiritual rot. The children's tablets come in fun shapes like German Shepherds and Rottweilers.

B16 has been known to cause allergies, shrill behavior, and coughing fits to some theologians, clergy, religious, and laity. Especially those who have had Spirit of Vatican Flu in the past. Tell your health care provider if you are dissident and they can help you overcome your deficient diet and prepare you for true health with full dosages of B16. Or contact your local Orthodoxpedic surgeon for further information.

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The Vessel of the Church is the Ship of Hope

"In this world much can be taken away from the Church, and she can suffer great and painful defeats. There is also much in the Church that repeatedly estranges her from what she really is, and this is constantly being taken out of her hands. She herself, however, does not go under. On the contrary, through all this what is truly hers emerges anew and gathers momentum. The vessel of the Church is the ship of hope. We can board it with confidence. The Lord of the world himself steers it and watches over it."

- Cardinal Ratzinger, A New Song for the Lord, 1996.

Shakespeare: To Teach or not to Teach, That is the Question

By Sue Elvis

With her hands on her hips and her eyes flashing, Imogen swung round to face Callum.

“Thou liest, thou shag-ear’d villain!” The reply came swiftly

” What, you egg? Young fry of treachery.”

“Surely that’s not Shakespeare,” I interjected.

“Oh yes, it’s from *MacBeth*”, Callum assured me.

“Shag ear’d villain?” We all laughed and the angry feelings dissipated instantly. There is one very strict rule in our home: name-calling is *not* allowed...unless of course you use a quote from Shakespeare!

We are all probably familiar with Shakespeare from our school days. My own memories are not very favourable. I can remember the teacher announcing that we would be going on a school excursion to see a film version of *Hamlet*. My first thought was: I hope I will be able to understand what is going on. Words I would have associated with Shakespeare include boring, difficult and irrelevant. Despite my unhappy association with Shakespeare, I felt I should introduce my own children to this playwright. The idea that an education without Shakespeare is an incomplete education, had been drummed into me. I thought that we should at least give Shakespeare “a go”.

With my own children, Shakespeare is one of the highlights of the week. Whenever we are reading a play and I call a halt for the day, they start to wheedle, “A bit more Mum...please!” I know you all think I’m exaggerating! But no, not even the promise of lunch will resign them to closing their books quietly. (This is all true. Just ask my children!) I am sure many of you have discovered the wonderful treasures of Shakespeare’s plays. But for those who are a bit hesitant at tackling what has sometimes been labelled boring and difficult, I will share a few of our experiences.

Why should we study Shakespeare (apart from the reason it looks impressive on our records)? Firstly, each play is highly entertaining. They are full of interesting and complex characters whose speeches are full of rich and diverse language. Children have a natural ability to memorise and Shakespeare’s plays are stuffed full of quotes worth remembering. I never ask our children to memorise particular lines; they naturally store away what strikes them as witty, clever, thought provoking etc. I am sure all of us are well acquainted with many Shakespearean quotes: “To be or not to be, that is the question” or “Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo?” or “Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio”. Or even, “Get thee to a nunnery”. (Particularly useful for a Catholic daughter!) But these quotes are only the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of lesser-known but even more interesting lines. Every time we read a play, we discover something new. It’s a little like becoming increasingly familiar with a piece of music. Some Shakespearean quotes are so familiar that they are part of our everyday English usage. A list of the more famous quotations from each play can be downloaded from the Internet.

I remember reading a review of a book that explored the question: Was Shakespeare a secret Catholic? I never read the book so I cannot tell you much.

However, Shakespeare lived in Protestant Elizabethan times when it was dangerous to be openly Catholic. The author of this particular book says that by examining Shakespeare’s plays, we can see that he was a true Catholic. Even without the benefit of such a book, Shakespeare’s plays have generated much discussion on moral and spiritual issues. His characters are a complex mix of vice and virtue. They have their weaknesses and strengths which come to light as we see them deal with the twists and turns of each play’s plot. Before we started reading *Romeo and Juliet*, we believed it to be the greatest love story ever told, a romance that ended in sorrow. Well, this play *is* a romantic tragedy but we learnt so much more as we read, discussed and re-read the play. At first, we dismissed the play as soppy but now we regard it as our favourite of all the Shakespearean plays with which we are familiar. There were plenty of issues to discuss: the meaning of true love, mortal sin and suicide, praying for the dead and forgiveness were only a few of our discussion topics. Currently, we are studying *Hamlet* and the issues of revenge, forgiveness, purgatory and confession have surfaced.



Many of Shakespeare’s plays are historical. When we read *Julius Caesar*, we also read Plutarch’s *Lives* which Shakespeare had used as a starting point for his drama. We did other research too to find out how accurate Shakespeare’s portrayal of Julius was.

You may be looking for the chance to discuss the vices and virtues of man and spiritual issues. Perhaps you’d like to find out more about characters in history, or experience the beauty of the English language. Maybe you just want to be entertained by a good story. These are some very good reasons why you should consider studying Shakespeare.

Now that I have convinced you that you should make Shakespeare part of your curriculum, where should you start? First, you will need to choose a play. (There are 38

to choose from!) The first Shakespeare play we ever read was "*Midsummer Night's Dream*". I vaguely recollected that this play was a comedy and I was hoping it would not require too much intellectual input from me to explain it. Well, it turned out to be a good choice: all the children loved it!

Once we have decided on a play, I visit the second hand bookshop to purchase a copy of the script for each child and one for myself. I am well-known at our local shop and I have stripped the shelf bare of all copies of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *MacBeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*.....I buy whatever editions are available, but some books have better footnotes than others. Generally, I pay \$3 for each copy.

Before we begin reading the play, I like to do a little research. Using the Internet, I find a scene-by-scene summary of the play. (There is no shortage of Shakespearean web sites.) I print out a copy of these summaries. Mary and Charles Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare* re-tells many of Shakespeare's plays in more simple everyday language. This might be a good starting point for the study of a play. Also, in our library we have available, a series of audiocassettes by Leon Garfield. Each cassette tells the story of one play using a liberal sprinkling of quotes from the script of the play.

Time to begin! I read the summary of Act 1 Scene 1 aloud and then after a little discussion over who will be which character, we are off. We all know how rich the language of Shakespeare is. Sometimes, his use of words is so delightful. At other times, it is difficult to decipher just what he is trying to say. This is where a book with good footnotes comes into play. A Shakespearean glossary can also be a useful tool. I used to worry about understanding every word in every line, but this approach soon bogged us down and our reading would lose momentum. Now, we aim for a general understanding of each scene. We linger over any lines we especially like. At the end of each scene, we might change characters so that everyone has an equal chance at reading aloud.

As well as reading each play aloud, we do some written work on each act. These are a few of the activities we have tried:

- Draw the characters of the play
- Write out your favourite quotes from each scene and illustrate
- Summarise each scene using only two sentences
- Summarise each scene using headlines as you would find in a newspaper
- Re-tell a scene as a newspaper article
- Write a diary entry of one of the characters re-telling the action of a particular scene
- Summarise each scene using cartoons
- Draw the scenery and props for each scene
- You might like to assign an essay topic or two for older students. Essay topics can be found on the many Shakespearean web sites.

These ideas have worked with my own children aged 8 and up, with everyone doing the drawing and writing activities at their own level. Younger children, who may not be able to cope with reading Shakespeare aloud at an appropriate speed, may still enjoy the children's versions of the plays.

Typically, a play will take us ten weeks to read allowing time for drawing and writing activities as well. We all look forward to the last week of term when I will endeavour to find a copy of the play on video or DVD. We have located a number of plays in the classics section of our local video stores. Sometimes a number of different productions are available. You may want to check the viewing rating before choosing what to watch. Our favourite production so far is definitely Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a beautiful film despite one inappropriate scene, and we never get tired of watching it. Recently, I found out that the BBC has made films of all Shakespeare's plays and these are available from ABC shops. Our library also has recordings of a number of plays on cassette. It is important to give the children a chance to hear professional Shakespearean actors in order to hear the beauty of the language. It can be quite a contrast to our stumbling efforts!

You could leave the study of your chosen play there, or you may like the challenge of acting all or part of it out. Probably one or two scenes will be adequate for budding first time Shakespearean actors. My children attempted to act out the play-within-the-play from *Midsummer Night's Dream*. One of the children adapted the play making it less complicated and combining roles to correspond with the number of available actors. The result was hilarious! If the thought of memorising lines or making costumes sounds too difficult, try acting out a scene using simple puppets. Whether you use real actors or puppets, the scenes can be recorded using a camcorder if a live audience is unavailable. Or you could use a cassette recorder to make a radio play recording.

If you are not already a Shakespeare fan, you may be thinking how difficult it all sounds. Start small by perhaps reading the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare* or listening to a Leon Garfield audiocassette of the play. Then choose a play and start reading. Don't worry about understanding everything the first time. Just aim for a taste of the play and return to the play again and again. Each time you dip into a play you will become more and more familiar with the characters, the plot, the language and the themes presented. Start a Shakespeare DVD collection. Soon your children will be enjoying Shakespeare too and making his language part of their own. But whatever you do, *never* suggest that Shakespeare is boring or difficult. It's not!

Sue Elvis

Our Favourite Things

Catholic priests who follow the Pope
Give us direction and offer us hope.
Then to the Mass it is Jesus they bring.
These are a few of our favourite things.

First Fridays each month and third Sundays as well.
Homeschooling camps in September and April.
Friends that support us and choirs that sing.
These are a few of our favourite things.

Girls in white dresses in Holy processions.
Boys on the sanctuary in albs and their cinctures.
Mothers and fathers and babies they bring.
These are a few of our favourite things.

When the world scoffs!
When the relies whinge!
When we're feeling sad.
We simply remember our favourite things
And then we don't feel so bad.

These are the lyrics of the song performed by the Doodemans at the recent Fitzroy Falls camp. It was sung to the tune of 'My Favourite Things' from the Sound of Music.

A New Book of Old Hymns

Lots of Gregorian chant hymns, all with translations, plus a number of favourite English hymns and a few rounds for good measure.

\$5 for the book, including postage in Australia.

\$10 for the book and a CD with 28 tracks of Gregorian chant.

Available from Cardinal Newman Faith Resources inc ph (02) 9637 9406 or
email: fr@cardinalnewman.com.au or visit the web site www.cardinalnewman.com.au

This book was put together by Mrs Veronica Brandt. See next page for her article on the background to Gregorian Chant and the Sound of Music.

St. John the Baptist and the Sound of Music

The birthday of St. John the Baptist is celebrated on the 24th of June, six months before the birth of Christ. At Vespers on that day the Church sings a very important hymn that has shaped the way we teach music today. The hymn was written by an Italian, Paolo Diacono (circa 720 - 790).

U T que-ant laxis re-sona-re fibris Mi-ra gesto-
 rum famu-li tu-o-rum, Sol-ve pollu-ti labi-i re-a-tum,
 Sancte Io-annes.

Here is the first of five verses:

*Ut queant laxis,
 Resonare fibris,
 Mira gestorum,
 Famuli tuorum,
 Solve polluti,
 Labii reatum, Sancte Ioannes.*

An English translation from the Wikipedia runs:

*So that (Ut) these your servants
 (Fa) may, with all their voice,
 resound (Re) your
 marvelous (Mi) exploits,
 clean (Sol) the guilt from
 our stained lips (La), O Saint John.*

If you have a look at the music you'll notice that the first syllable of each phrase is sung one note higher than the last. If you put these syllables together you get the scale **Ut Re Mi Fa Sol La**. Sound familiar yet?

About 200 years after this hymn was written a man called Guido d'Arezzo (990-1050) was teaching choir boys to sing Gregorian chant. At that time it took about 10 years to teach all the chants for the divine liturgy. Why so long? Because the music wasn't written down. All the tunes had to be memorised.

Guido taught the boys to sing from sight. He trained them to sing the *Ut Re Mi* scale, then used his fingers to indicate which note in the scale came next. This worked so well that he cut down the time it took to train choirboys to two years.

Now the scale has changed somewhat over the years. *Ut* was changed to *Do* to make it easier to sing and a seventh note was added to complete the octave. They called the seventh note *Si* as an acronym of *Sancte Ioannes*, the last

phrase in the hymn, but it was later changed to *Ti* so that each syllable would start with a different letter.

So next time you hear or sing *Do Re Mi*, spare a thought for the choirboys and monks who spent their years preserving the oral traditions of the Church for us today.

Here is the translation of Paolo Diacono's hymn from the St. Andrew's Missal:

Unloose, great Baptist, our sin-fettered lips;
 That with enfranchis'd voice we may proclaim
 The miracles of thy transcendent life,
 Thy deeds of matchless fame.

Oh, lot sublime! An angel quits the skies,
 Thy birth, thy name, thy glory to declare
 Unto thy priestly sire; while to the Lord
 He offers Israel's prayer.

Mistrustful of the promise from on high,
 His speech forsakes him at the angel's word;
 But thou on thine eighth day dost re-attune
 For him the vocal chord.

No marvel; since yet cloister'd in the womb,
 The presence of Thy King had thee inspir'd;
 What time Elizabeth and Mary sang
 With joy prophetic fir'd.

Immortal glory to the Father be,
 With His Almighty sole-begotten Son,
 And Thee, co-equal Spirit, One in Three,
 While endless ages run.

Amen.

V. This child is great before the Lord.

R. For in truth His hand is with him.

See previous page for details of
A New Book of Old Hymns.

- Veronica Brandt

Fitzroy Falls Easter Camp April 2005

By Shaun Fanning

Our Fitzroy Falls Easter Camp this year was one which will stick in the memory for the momentous external events taking place around us. We were all woken on the morning of the second day of the camp (I can't say at an ungodly hour) by a bell being rung out with the joyous news that we had a new Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. It was a popular choice among the camp inmates. For our family it was a particularly appropriate choice of papal name as our son Benedict was about to celebrate his 21st birthday on that same day. It was a great start to what was to prove a fantastic camp.

Yes, it had everything that Fitzroy Falls camps usually have: the invaluable contribution of wonderful priests and religious, stimulating talks, lots of outdoor fun for the youngsters, progressively sleep-deprived mothers and children, the customary sports injuries among the older kids and the usual damage to family finances caused by the hard-selling Andy Elvis at the book stall! If camps can be judged on how long it takes the families to recover emotionally and financially afterwards (a pretty infallible guide for our family) then this was a cracker.

We are usually blessed with a wonderful priest on our camp, but this year we were privileged to have two priests permanently with us, with day visits from Fathers Gordon and Columba. Father Paul Newton, a young diocesan priest from Melbourne was to be the main priest for the camp, but Father Bray from Merrylands in Sydney attended also. Our daily Masses were concelebrated by Father Paul and Father Bray, and, needless to say, they were excellent opportunities for prayer and reflection. The queues for confession were encouraging (or discouraging, depending on your point of view!). If Father Bray thought he was coming to the camp for a bit of a rest, then I hope he was not too disappointed! What a privilege to have two such priests to ourselves for the whole week. Father Paul's sermons and talks had a wonderful appeal to the younger children, but had an equal resonance with the adults as well.

In addition to our priests we were joined again by Sisters Maur and Bede, without whom a camp would not be a camp. Their appeal and example to the children in their care has been a feature of the past ten years of our camps. Dr Sarah once again was a generous contributor in his time and efforts.

The talks were all very interesting, Father Gordon's talk on marriage being taken into all sorts of fascinating sidetracks by an avid audience, and Anthony English's talk was as stimulating and entertaining as ever. When

Anthony got a bit dull, Thomas, his two year old, was on hand to rescue him.

Socially the camp was as enjoyable as ever. The concert was smoothly run by Mr Hanrahan, who marshalled the acts professionally and dealt with the notoriously 'difficult' artistic temperaments around him (particularly Bob Smith) with tact and firmness. Once again, the talent on display left the audience speechless, though for me the pick of the acts was the Smith (butter wouldn't melt in their mouths) Twins who delighted with a rendition of a song about how twins can be misunderstood! And of course the Wiggles were true show stoppers!

The trivia night was great fun, marred only slightly by some inadequacies in the interpretation of our team's answers (OK so we came second) by the quiz master. I suppose I have to congratulate Mr Hanrahan for an above average trivia night.

Again the sports were pursued with vigour (hard but fair you would have to say). Poor Mark Mills suffered damage to his knee which required medical attention and crutches. This is what comes of a Victorian trying to play that cerebral game of 'Fudee'. The mass soccer game concluded in satisfactory fashion with one of the teams winning (I forget which), but sadly the drought has so depleted the mud reserves of the field that there was not all that much in the way of mud stains for the mums to wash off. Mr English could probably have worn his famous white trousers (instead of his infamous white legs) and come out unscathed!

To conclude, this will always be remembered as Pope Benedict's camp. It was conducted in great spirit with all families participating fully. A great opportunity was provided for prayer, reflection and spiritual refreshment, and this was taken up by all. It is amazing how such an uplifting and encouraging week can leave you so drained at the end of it.

Our thanks should be extended to Helen and Michael Brearley for organising this year's camp, incidentally the tenth home schooling Easter camp and the ninth at Fitzroy Falls. The camp ran beautifully smoothly, testament to Helen and Michael's gifts of organisation and to the spirit in which the attendant families participated in the camp. Thanks also should go to Martin and Robin at the Centre who continue to improve the facilities we enjoy each year.

Roll on Easter 2006!

A Question of Time

By Vicky Leach

It is the basic law of economics that those which are the scarcest of commodities are deemed to have the higher value. Thus, it is that time, with its endless demand and ever-dwindling supply, is, for the average mother, as water is to the desert-dweller (well, at least, for this average mother whose organizational abilities are still at the developmental stage!).

Gone, for me, are the days of clock-watching in front of a meticulously well-ordered (and under-utilised) public servant's desk. These days, my attempts to create order are aimed at saving time, not merely passing it.

Unlike the supermums of the seventies, my efforts at household efficiency are not motivated by an intrinsic dislike of anything domestic. I actually quite enjoy looking after my little nest and often find household chores somewhat relaxing and even therapeutic. In this house, cleaning is no mad dash against the clock in order to fly the nest in search of more exciting horizons. No, this mother is more often to be found rushing back to the perch after the errands are done (except, of course, when the darling, little chicks have all but destroyed the family nest; in which case, a shopping trip, followed by a cenacle, a trip to the park and a scenic drive home will be more than tolerated...).

The problem isn't so much one of avoiding the mundane as finding time for the truly exciting – and, with 5.30am starts and 10.30pm bedtimes already the norm, the

possibilities for creating new time seem particularly limited. So, we prioritise. And the priorities go something like this – Mass, food, schoolwork, play and housework, with time for prayer fitted somewhere in between. Ideally, it would make sense to reverse the last two on the list but my little people are still revolting over that issue.

The weekly shop, being an out-of-nest activity with limited scope for creative input, doesn't make it to the list in anybody's estimation – except when it's pocket-money day (in which case, it rises to the rank of special excursion). Until recently, shopping managed to fit itself rather snugly in between food and schoolwork (unless the cupboard was completely bare when it would shift its position to somewhere in between Mass and food) but this all changed when the list of priorities expanded to fit in certain extracurricular activities.

Faced with the prospect of eventual starvation, the problem of finding time to do the all-important shop assumed vital proportions. The solution, however, was incredibly simple – the greatest consumers of my time would be the very ones who would spend the time doing that which I didn't have time to do. Thus, the little shoppers' shopping lists came into being.

Nowadays, five shopping lists are stored on the computer and updated throughout the week. On shopping day, they are printed out and each little shopper parades the aisles, armed with a shopping

basket which is periodically emptied into the master shopping trolley (manned by the captain, Mum, and her trusty sidekick, Little Bub). So far, this arrangement is going great, having also provided some added benefits along the way. The kids are learning technology (the lists are, after all, produced on the computer), maths (finding the best buy is naturally expected), personal development (sometimes, one has to ask for directions to a certain item...) and sports (racing around with heavy baskets and scaling the heights of adult-sized grocery shelves are physically challenging for any youngster intent on beating his siblings to the cash register). What home-schooling mother could resist the opportunity to combine a necessary chore with an educational experience!

Now the shopping is under control, we have only the washing, the dishes, the weeding and the unfathomable chaos of the pre-teen bedroom (aka 'The Abyss') to master before we can truly claim to be efficient users of our most precious resource!

The next edition of Keeping in Touch will be edited by the Leach family. Submit any contributions by the second week of next term to:

leachav@optusnet.com.au

Our Homeschool

By Sonja Hooker

Our family has been homeschooling for 3 3/4 years. Before hand our two oldest girls went to a (Catholic) school as you do without question. I hadn't ever given any thought to homeschooling (nor really heard about it in Australia) and there was a perfectly good school down the road....Or so I thought!

On enrolling Ashley into kindergarten, I was distraught, her being our first child, I sat with her at the front of the stage with all the other kindy kids and all the other parents peering at us from the chairs seated on the floor. I didn't see at the time that we were already distressed by her leaving the sanctuary of our home and I guess it was not God's time for us to homeschool either as He'd never brought it up. It took us until the end of term 3 when Ashley was in year 4 and my second daughter Gabrielle was in year 1 to take the step out of the school institution into our own home. After school days, I had little girls coming in from school in tears and distressed from their day away and me dreading them coming home as it was the same ritual every day. They would come in upset and crying, (Ash had headaches for most of that year) about who did what to them and what teacher said what to someone or to them, or what child had ostracised who from the group today or who teased Gaby about sucking her thumb again.

School as I remember it hadn't changed, and the more I hear of the goings on from parents whose children are still there nearly breaks my heart and takes me back to the days when I was being banished to the corner for looking at the 'Wonder of the Lord' out of my classroom window.

One of the last straws which led me to take them out of school was hearing one of Ashley's acquaintances, a 9 year old girl

asking Ash about being intimate with her guardian angel in a not so innocent way. This was not innocent talk and I wondered about her life at home. Another incident was when her teacher got her up to talk or answer something in class and because she couldn't she was called stupid and the whole class laughed at her. Later she said she did know the answer but was too scared she would be wrong so said she didn't know. I don't know the whole deal with this teacher but I do know that he wasn't very nice not only to my daughter but to a lot of the children in his care for the 6 hours they are left 5 days a week for 40 weeks of the year. I don't think so. There has to be another way.

I can be the one to treat them like that at home on the days I am not coping but I can guarantee that it wont be 6 hours a day 5 days a week 52 weeks a year. Their friends are the girls' brothers and their teacher is me and yes I do have bad days and say stupid things myself. Here they know at least that I love them and that they are worthy, cared for, listened to and treated with the dignity a child should expect. The good days are more abundant than the bad. Being schooled at home does not give them the easy ticket to life but it does show a more realistic side to life. They may not have to get up and get ready to get out the door at a certain time nor do homework or study on weekends but be ready for breakfast, prayers and devotions by 8:30 am, chores done and school started by 9:00 am. Life still revolves around routine and work so they can't be self indulgent and look out only for themselves as they are surrounded with the cares and needs of others (a pooy nappy never goes unnoticed). Since we have been homeschooling, a whole new world has been opened up to us. We can see that life has more meaning than lessons, material possessions and looking out for one

self and I am sorry to say that this mentality is bred in the school yard. In fact, I love the fact that I can have as many children as God will allow even though I am still scared and limited in accepting that He will give the grace to cope, I love the days that we all wake late and little gets done but we have been refreshed in rest to cope with the hassles of the day and days to come. I love that my children value each other more than their friends at school as those friends are now of the past or seen little (you know when they have been around). Our family is a community itself. Our friends are like-minded and a great example of Christ's mercy, love and kindness as they are compassionate yet will never let us wallow in self pity, but will always give timely advice and KIT is always a welcome addition to the curriculum that term. I feel like we have been taken from the fires of hell and immersed in the waters of life and love. Our home is a little Nazareth and a Holy abode. We may be full of faults but more greatly filled with faith, hope and love. In my opinion we are a school that Christ has blessed abundantly for his children (including Stephen and I) to learn what His Will is for us.



Expressive Arts Workshop

for Catholic Homeschoolers

Are you a Catholic homeschooling family in Sydney?

Do you know anyone considering homeschooling their little children?

A workshop is held once a month at Homebush

- to develop skills in expressive arts and language
- as an opportunity for social interaction
- to offer mutual support for homeschoolers.

Where? Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Hall
74 Underwood Road
HOMEBUSH

When? **The first Thursday of every month**
Following 9:00 am Mass to 12 noon

For whom? The programme will be aimed towards infants and Junior Primary aged children.
(However, older homeschoolers are welcome to come and help).

If you are interested please call Mrs Lisa English on (02) 9889 2124.

Programme

- 9:00 am** **Holy Mass (Parish Mass in church)**
- 9:35 am Learn a new song (French, Spanish, Italian or Latin)
- 10:00 am Art / Craft Activity related to song
- 10:30 am Play time and Morning tea (please bring something to share)
- 11:00 am Revise song
Add actions / dance / percussion
- 11:30 am Appreciation of fine music / Art / Poetry
- 12:00 noon Finish**

CAMPION COLLEGE AUSTRALIA

Liberal Arts worth the investment

It seems that a new business or IT college opens every day in Australia, some with affiliations to universities, others simply private concerns. So it is news when a college opens in a field of study which is not necessarily vocational.

Campion College will open its doors in 2006 and will offer only a Bachelor of Arts Liberal Arts. Reversing the trend towards heavily vocational colleges, Campion sees a great need for a different style of education and has invested heavily in ensuring that this style comes through in all aspects of College life.

The proudly Catholic College is renovating an old Marist seminary in Old Toongabbie. It is costing substantial amounts of money, donated purely from people of the faith. The people behind the college believe there is a great need for a higher education provider who teaches students not only about a vocation but also about life, the true calling of the university, seeking knowledge and wisdom.

President the Rev Dr John Fleming believes it is time to reverse the trend. “For too long, the focus at universities and private colleges has been on purely vocational study which develops technicians rather than flexible, interesting people. Employers are increasingly looking for graduates who can think on their feet, who understand the world around them and who bring character and values to the workplace”.

“We are looking to produce leaders at our college. People who understand the civilization that has brought them to this moment and who can apply ethics to the workplace and indeed to their lives in general”. Said Dr Fleming

Our students will be at a Catholic College which believes in the true ethics and morals of the Church. Our pastoral care of students will be exceptional. We believe students need to be able to think for themselves and this course provides them the tools which will allow them to this.

The College, which will look towards university status in the near future, intends eventually to offer vocational postgraduate courses probably in 2008, however, these to will have a heavy focus on ethics and values.

Contact

Mr. Paul Abela, Development Manager

Phone 9896 9300

Mobile 0407061502

<http://www.campion.org.au/>



Are you are thinking about a degree which prepares you not only for work but for life?

In 2006, Campion College Australia is scheduled to offer a *Bachelor of Arts in the Liberal Arts* based at Old Toongabbie, near Parramatta. The 3 year undergraduate program has been developed which can be followed by post graduate courses such as *business, teaching and communications*. The College's academic activities will be operated under the patronage of the University of Sydney.

Campion's degree will prepare graduates for life. Catholic and personalised in its teaching, Campion College aims to develop leaders for our communities.

For more information, visit www.campion.org.au or telephone 02 9896 9300.

CAMPION COLLEGE
Educating for Eternity