



Keeping in Touch

A quarterly newsletter for homeschooling families

AMDG

JMJ

Term 4, 2006

Keeping In Touch is published by Australian Catholic home educating families four times a year. It is distributed primarily through the Cardinal Newman Faith Resources web site:

www.cardinalnewman.com.au.

If you would like to be notified by email when a new issue of *Keeping In Touch* is coming online, please advise Mr. Shaun Fanning, who currently maintains the address list, by email: tarlohill@bigpond.com.

If you need a printed copy and cannot get a friend or neighbour to download and print it for you, please contact:

Mr. Shaun Fanning
Tarlo Hill
2142 Taralga Road
Tarlo NSW 2580

Editors

This edition of *Keeping In Touch* is edited by:

The Brandt Family
8 Beauford St
Woodford 2778
veronica@brandt.id.au

The next edition will be edited by the Fannings. Please send contributions for Term 1, 2007 of *Keeping In Touch* to tarlohill@bigpond.com.

Deadline for each edition is the end of the second week of the term. For Term 1 of next year that will be 9th of February.

Publication

Keeping In Touch is published about the end of the fifth week of each term.

The editors are responsible for the content of their edition and feedback is always welcome.

Thank you to all 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*.

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

Another valuable help is to print out extra copies to hand out. Although our newsletter is primarily for homeschoolers, many people will find the articles interesting and relevant.

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

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

Contents

<i>Holy Cross Festival</i>	2
<i>Evans Head Camp</i>	2
<i>Fitzroy Falls September Camp</i> ..	3
<i>Christus Rex Pilgrimage</i>	3
<i>Fratpack</i>	4
<i>Prospect homeschoolers day</i>	4
<i>National Home Education Conference</i>	5
<i>Results of the Bush Boys Competition</i>	6
<i>Seton English Book For Sale</i>	6
<i>Talking Point</i>	6
<i>How to Survive a Dodgy Christology Course</i>	6
<i>Linux and Free Software</i>	8
<i>Marrying the 'Wrong' Person</i> ...	9
<i>Breastfeeding & Catholic Motherhood</i>	10
<i>Gregorian Chant</i>	11
<i>Friends of the Suffering Souls</i> ..	12
<i>Continual Adjustments and Charlotte Mason</i>	12
<i>How to fry eggs</i>	14
<i>Not That Kind of Girl</i>	15
<i>December Puzzle</i>	16
<i>An Interesting Calculation</i>	16
<i>How to Prepare For A Party</i> ..	17
<i>Solution to the Puzzle</i>	18
<i>Postscript</i>	18

September was a busy month.

Holy Cross Festival

Cathy Powell

There was something for everyone and a great day out had at the Holy Cross Festival. Situated on the old Lewisham Hospital site, in the inner western suburbs of Sydney is the Maternal Heart of Mary Chapel. The day commenced with a High Mass celebrated in the traditional roman rite. The Chapel has in recent times come to house two very important relics; pieces of the True Cross and Our Lady's veil. There were opportunities to venerate these relics during the day after Mass and Vespers.

From the Chapel it was but a short walk to the beautiful surrounding grounds of Ozam Village Gardens where true medieval festivities began. Medieval banners, costumes, market stalls, music, a nobility table and plentiful knights doing battle amongst the bushes make it so colourful it was hard to imagine you were in Sydney in the year 2006. Feasting was next on the menu. It was BYO picnic lunch but tea coffee and drinks and cake were available at the stalls. After all were refreshed it was down to some serious chivalry lessons and demonstrations of chain mail and weaponry from the era which enthralled children and adults alike. It was a joy to watch



Medieval games

and listen to other demonstrations of medieval dancing and singing that followed. Then came costume recognition and prize giving. The family with the best costumes won the opportunity to be on the royal table the following year. There

were also other prizes for the best dressed individuals. Medieval music played in the background as the children participated in games and a buzz of activity filled the garden for the entire afternoon.

Being a homeschool family of four boys gave plenty of scope for costuming. Months before the children planned some ideas of what they wanted to wear. Shields, swords and battleaxes appear out of the workshop, gleaming with silver paint ready for the inevitable battles ahead! This year they were not disappointed.



Awesome chivalry demonstration

Eventually the day drew to a close. Tired and exhausted but happy we all piled into the car for the trip home. The day was talked about amongst family and friends for weeks afterwards.



Free punishment available!

The beautiful smell of incense in the chapel and the sound of vespers chanting. The constant ringing of the steeple bell throughout the consecration and the buzz and excitement of the children all made the day worth the effort.

The Holy Cross festival is sponsored and promoted by the Maternal Heart of Mary Community and the Australian Tradition, Family & Property

Centre(TFP). A big thank you to all who gave our family and others the opportunity to dive into the past and live our history, even but for a short while. I look forward to next year.

More information

The feast of the Exaltation of the Cross is the patronal feastday of the choir at the Maternal Heart Church. For more information about the festival contact Richard Lyon rlyon@tfp.org or Jane Gresser on 02 9750 4815 or gressers@bigpond.net.au More about the Maternal Heart of Mary Church can be found at: <http://www.maternalheart.org>

Evans Head Camp

Therese Moore

The Evans Head Catholic Homeschoolers camp is an opportunity for Catholic Home Educators to gather in a fantastic location for a week of faith, relaxation, and good old fashion fun.

We have a choice of attending daily Morning or Evening Mass or both, along with the Rosary, confession and Benediction.

The camp offers encouraging talks for Mothers and Fathers given by camp participants or the priests and religious at the camp. These cover a variety of topics relative to our faith and home schooling.

Catechism classes are offered for the children each day giving parents the opportunity to catch up and have a chat and swap ideas.

Camp activities include a sports carnival, high and low ropes, beach activities, art and craft, evening activities such as trivia and games nights. The highlight being the camp concert night where families and children show their hidden talents.

The Most Reverend Geoffrey Jarrett, Bishop of Lismore, offers Mass for First Communicants and celebrates the receipt of the

sacrament of Confirmation for Children each year which is an especially lovely occasion and is followed by a delightful celebratory luncheon.

A book stall is also available for families to sell old books or to purchase books from Fountain resources.

Evans Head Camp is located at Koinonia Youth Camp and Conference Centre at Evans Head on the far north coast of NSW, 25 minutes south of Ballina. And is held each year around September.

Fitzroy Falls September Camp

Cathy Powell

Another year almost over and yet another successful September camp has been and gone. All year I looked forward to the camp. It was wonderful reuniting ourselves with friends, the Conventual Sisters of St Dominic and Fr Matthew Austin again.

Yet again Michele and Daniel Vieira and family, supported by faithful friends rallied together to make it all happen. The first day everyone settled into their rooms and shared lunch together. During the camp the children attended religion and drama lessons run by the sisters. There were also preschool craft and singing lessons run by Mrs English.

Lots of facilities available at the camp were well used by the children during breaks. The great outdoors provided tennis, putt putt golf and trampolines. For those who preferred to remain indoors, a games room with table tennis and pool tables sufficed. There was also an indoor heated pool.

The days were a fairly busy but rewarding schedule. Whilst the children were at lessons, talks were provided for the adults. This year as in previous, we had some very interesting talks ranging from homeschooling, spirituality and vocations to religious life. Being still a spring chicken to homeschooling, (4 years) there is tremendous value in others, who have been in it longer than myself, sharing ideas and useful tips on curricula or household shortcuts.

Camp enabled me to stop and take in where I was going. Being regularly called back together in prayer throughout the day in the form of Mass, Benediction and the rosary was wonderful in refilling that bucket of courage, strength and reassurance. I am sure I am not alone in saying how wonderful the book store was, thanks to Andy and Sue Elvis.

Camp very quickly came to a climax on Thursday evening with the performance of the children's musicals.



Musical performance

The joy of seeing the children achieve and work as a team, using their known talents and investigating new ones was overwhelming. Supper and bush dancing followed late into the evening. The following day ended our time together with a Eucharistic procession and mass.

I left camp with a mixed bag of joy and sadness as September 2007 seems a long way off. What wonderful an opportunity it was again to recharge and grow.

Christus Rex Pilgrimage

Fr. Rizzo

The pilgrimage has been on fifteen years now and this was the most well attended pilgrimage so far with over 200 people there. One of those that came was baptised on the pilgrimage, a young baby from a family that's been going on the pilgrimage for years. So she was baptised just before the final Mass in Bendigo.

We went through all the towns singing hymns, saying our prayers and singing the litanies and we had different people looking, asking us a lot of questions. I even heard some confessions from different bystanders. So we got extra customers so to speak.

We had Mass every day, we had Fr. Michael Rowe again, Fr. Michael McCaffrey, Fr. Tattersall, Fr. Fongemie.

It was a job well done.

I hope I can go next year. The first few days were raining and cold — we were praying for rain — then Sunday was beautiful, a perfect day.

More about the pilgrimage

The Christus Rex Pilgrimage takes pilgrims from Ballarat to Bendigo on the last weekend of October. Mass is sung daily over the three days. Groups come from all around Australia to join in this event.

For more information you can see the web page:
<http://www.crex.org>.



“I observe one shocking historical fact, which I invite my reader to test and consider. It is that no earthly institution except the Catholic Church has ever successfully stood against militant Islam.”

—David Warren, Canadian journalist and recent convert to Catholicism, *Western Standard* February 2006

Fratpack

James Moore

The Priestly Fraternity Of St. Peter Youth Group

The Fratpack is a Youth group for Catholic teenagers aged 13 to 18. Focusing on having great outings with Catholic youth. The Fratpack is a work of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter; our chaplain is Fr John Fongimie who is based in the Parramatta diocese. You'll experience a of variety of terrific activities throughout the year; such as bushwalks, ice skating, movies, beach activates, prayer and recollection days, trips to theme parks and other terrific activities.

Some of the outings we have had in the past year have consisted of trips to Luna Park, Shark Island which is situated in Sydney Harbour National Park have been to see a variety of movies. Future youth days will include going to the beach south of Wollongong, Christmas Parties and some community service works.

We meet every fourth Saturday of the Month barring January. If you are interested and want to know more about it please call James Moore on 4759 3121 or Elizabeth Gresser on 4758 8019 and you can get in touch with James on james_da_man_01@hotmail.com and you can get hold of Elizabeth on jgresser@bigpond.com .

[For more about the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter in Australia see their webpage: <http://www.fssp.net>]

Please pray for Sr. Maur

Please pray for Sr. Maur Woodbury SM as she undergoes treatment for cancer. Her tireless work for the Holy Family Catholic Education Centre has helped many homeschooled and schooled children to learn much more about their Catholic Faith.

Prospect homeschoolers day

an interview

Q. What do you get out of Prospect as a young mother who isn't quite homeschooling yet?

Andrea: A good example from the other Catholic mothers that perhaps I haven't seen in other places. Its a great witness to me as a parent

And the graces that I find come from this Mass are quite extraordinary.

Q. How do your kids find it?

Mary: It is the highlight of their week. They all have their friends here. Everybody's on the same level, everyone understands each other, there are none of the problems they had when they were going to school

And its really good to meet mothers who . . . their focus is not themselves, their focus is on God and their kids.

Its sort of like everyone's on the same page, there's nothing there to worry about.

Once you have God as your centre everyone's looking in the same direction.

I want my kids to realise that there's more to life than what's out there in the world. They can still have friendships and fun and not be completely swayed by everything that happens in the world.

Q. What does your daughter learn in the oldest class?

Denise: She's learning heaps of stuff. She says she's never learned this amount of stuff at school, ever. She's learning Latin, which is really good. She's really learning in depth about her faith, not just the surface stuff, but the theology.

Father Gresser is really good with the kids, he's fantastic with teenagers, I can't believe it.

I like coming here because she has friends here, I have friends here. It's good to mingle with people who have the same faith. I don't feel like I'm going overboard because I go to the Latin Mass or I like to pray.

About the gathering

The priests of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter run a home schoolers group every Friday during school term at St. Mark's Coptic Catholic Church, Prospect.

The schedule for the day is:

10.00: Holy Mass

10.45: Morning Tea

11-12: Classes

12-1: Sport

Classes are in age groups ranging from pre-school to high school. A plate of food to share for morning tea is appreciated, but don't let it stop you from coming. New faces are always welcome.

For more information please contact either Therese Moore on 02 4759 3121 or the Fraternity on 02 9688 4287 or by email: southerncross@fssp.net.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you."

— John 15:1-4

National Home Education Conference

International speakers John Taylor Gatto and Alan Thomas visit Australia to share their views on school education and homeschooling alternatives. Australian speakers include Eleanor Sparks, Terry Harding, Beverley Paine, Craig Henderson and many more.

The conference will be run for 2½ days and be staged in 11 locations all over Australia. Keynote presentations, workshops, trade fair exhibitions, formal and informal networking opportunities and kids activities will be at each conference.

Early Bird specials available for everyone who registered before 31 December 2006. Get in early and help us make this the best homeschooling conference Australia has ever seen!

Keynote Speakers

John Taylor Gatto was named New York State Teacher of the Year in 1990. He used the occasion

of his acceptance to resign from teaching, outlining his reasons in his speech titled *I Quit, I Think*. One of his reasons was that, “[School] kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents.”

Since then John Taylor Gatto has written four books about education and its effect on children, the most popular being *Dumbing Us Down: The hidden curriculum of compulsory schooling* (1992).

Well-known UK researcher, writer and speaker Alan Thomas will be travelling to Australia and speaking from his own research into alternative learning. His books include *Educating Your Child at Home*.

Eleanor Sparks is a Brisbane homeschooling mother-of-five and editor of the national magazine *Education Choices*.

Dates and Venues

Launceston: 30–31 March

Hobart: 1 April

Alice Springs: 27–28 April

Darwin: 1 May

Brisbane 25–27 May

Perth 28–30 May

Sydney 1–3 June

Melbourne (Camberwell) 6 June

Melbourne (Portsea) 8–10 June

Canberra 11–13 June

Adelaide 15–17 June

All conference registration queries should be directed to:

2007 National Home Education Conference

PO Box 389

Berowra Heights NSW 2082

02 9564 5086

info@nhedconference.com

<http://www.nhedconference.com>

Notes

Campion College will be represented in the Trade Fair.

Education Choices is a magazine for Australian Homeschoolers which is also available free with membership of the Home Education Association (HEA). You can find out more from their webpage: www.hea.asn.au.

“...Men cannot be educated by machinery; and though there might be a Robot bricklayer or scavenger, there will never be a Robot schoolmaster or governess. The actual effect of this theory is that one harrassed person has to look after a hundred children instead of one normal person looking after a normal number of them. Normally that normal person is urged by a natural force, which costs nothing and does not require a salary; the force of natural affection for his young which exists even among the animals. If you cut off that natural force, and substitute a paid bureaucracy, you are like a fool who should pay men to turn the wheel of his mill, because he refused to use wind or water which he could get for nothing. You are like the lunatic who should carefully water his garden with a watering can, while holding up an umbrella to keep off the rain.”

—G. K. Chesterton, *The Thing*



Alexandra Clark 2006

Results of the Bush Boys Competition

Sue Elvis

Last term's Bush Boys competition involved a challenge to form as many words as possible from the letters B-U-S-H- B-O-Y-S- E-X-P-L-O-R-E-R-S

Congratulations to Matthew French who made 259 words! 25 of his words weren't in my dictionary but most of them I found in an online version.

Congratulations to the runner-up, Lucy Brearley. Although Lucy didn't find as many words as Matthew, she did have 44 words which weren't on Matthew's list!

Seton English Book For Sale

Michele Vieira has a brand new Seton Year 5 English book for sale for \$10. She can be contacted on (02) 4829-0113.

How to Survive a Dodgy Christology Course

Anonymous

Over the past few years a very good friend of mine has been suggesting that I obtain some sort of formal qualifications in theology. For most of that time I resisted. After all, why would I want to go to any of the "Catholic" universities in Australia which from most reports are not Catholic, at least at the post graduate level?

Unfortunately, there are some very compelling reasons why orthodox Catholics may need to study at so called "Catholic" universities. Consider the case in the Church in Australia at the moment. We have some wonderful young priests such as Fr. Mark de Batista, Fr. Peter Joseph, Fr. Luke Joseph, Fr. Bernard Gordon and Fr. Anthony Robbie. All of these men entered seminaries at a time when all that was on offer at a tertiary level in Australia was, to put it mildly, bleak. Sure, many of these men completed their studies overseas, but the chance to go overseas would not have presented itself if they didn't weather some of the storm here.

If we want orthodox Catholics to gain positions in the bureaucracies in Catholic education in the future, we need people willing to tolerate the spiritual abuse that

Talking Point

for next term

How do you go about a family rosary? It seems so simple, especially when saying a quick rosary by yourself only takes 15 minutes. But finding the time to bring the family together for this most valuable prayer sometimes seems impossible. Little ones seldom understand subtle requests for peace and quiet, yet raised voices spoil any meditative atmosphere.

If you have any ideas, what works for your family, what doesn't, please write a short letter for next term's *Keeping In Touch*. The submission deadline is the 9th of February, but the sooner the better. You can email your thoughts to veronica@brandt.id.au or post written letters to Veronica Brandt at 8 Beauford St, Woodford, NSW 2778.

Also, if you have an idea for a future topic, or would like to collect letters for the next Talking Point, contact Veronica again.



Patrick Brandt (age 5)

they will almost certainly suffer under the current regime. Even as homeschoolers, we must admit that there is a need for organised schools — the Church, in Her wisdom established schools to support parents who couldn't educate their children themselves, and there will probably always be people in that situation. With the majority of Catholics in Catholic schools, there's almost a necessity for those who can make a positive difference to get amongst the rot and try to help save souls.

So, with the arguments presented to me, and the exciting possibility of making a real difference in the near future, I decided to enrol in a post graduate education/theology course. The first subject was "Christology". This article is about some of the problems in that course, and how to work around them to insure a pass.

Up and Down

One of the first things a student of Christology encounters is a concept known as "ascending and descending Christology". I think it was Karl Rahner who first coined the terms; if he wasn't the originator, he was very comfortable using them.

What they mean is this: A "descending Christology" aka a "high Christology" is one where our

understanding of Christ is formed around the idea that the Bible is inerrant and that the Early Church was plain and correct in speaking about Christ and defining dogmas about Him. This method of Christology is called “descending” because we receive data that is handed down. In short, this method of Christology is Catholic — it is what we find in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in official Church teachings.

An “ascending Christology” aka a “low Christology” is one where our understanding starts with the presumption that modern(ist) biblical scholars, through their scholarship, really know what parts of the New Testament are genuine reflections of what Jesus Christ said and did and what the intentions of the original authors are. In this form of Christology, the “Jesus of history” is different to the “Christ of faith”, and the student of this form of Christology needs to abandon the “myths” created by a literal reading of the Scriptures and the dogmatic formulations of the Early Church. In short, this method of Christology is a load of rubbish.

A friend of this writer, studying a post graduate course at a different “Catholic” university in Australia has come across the same “high/low” Christology in his course in studying New Testament. Sadly, it goes without saying that these courses rampantly promote low Christology and attack as much as possible high (traditional) Christology.

The problems remains: how does a Catholic survive one of these courses?

My advice is as follows:

1. No matter what you are taught or what you read, assume that there is something wrong with the thesis being presented. This might sound terribly negative, but the errors of modernism are sometimes so subtle that they can be easily missed. If one works on the a priori notion that the course is wrong and that what you are reading is wrong, then one limits the damage that such courses can do.
2. Time out. Organise your time so that you get a chance to stop reading and listening to rubbish and use the time to read and listen to sources that are thoroughly orthodox. Read the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the writings of great teachers such as St. Alphonsus di Liguori, St. Thomas Aquinas, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, Frank Sheed, Archbishop Sheehan and St. Teresa of Avila. Doing this was

invaluable to me.

3. Keep praying, especially when you don’t feel like it. Reading and listening to rubbish has a bad effect on the mind and heart. For me, prayer became a source of irritation — praying the Creed and meditating on the Mysteries of the Rosary just reminded me of all the things that the modernists deny! But it is in these times and in these circumstances that we can make the greatest advancements in our interior life. As a good friend of mine put it, we stop seeking consolations from God in order to find the God of consolation.
4. Be as wise as a serpent. Don’t ever commit the sin of heresy just to pass a subject — there will be other tests later where freedom from mortal sin will be a prerequisite! If your lecturer promotes modernist views, simply give him back the modernist views he is looking for in your assignments. I don’t need to agree with a crackpot (lets say his name is Crackpot Karl) to say that “Crackpot Karl says Arius’ Christology was more biblically sound than that of the First Council of Nicea.” Quoting a moron only makes you a moron if you agree with the original moron!
5. Bear a grudge. By this I don’t mean a personal grudge against individual lecturers — of all people in the world today, these people are among the most in need of our pity and prayers. Instead, I am saying that we should keep in mind the damage that the sin of modernism has, is and will continue to inflict upon generations throughout the world. This heresy is almost a quasi-incarnation of the father of lies himself and it is here to bring havoc. Hate it.
6. Plan your victory. Keep your spiritual head above water by reminding yourself of the difference you will make in a school/university when you complete the qualification. Even though you may find that your qualification only gets you in a school on the ground floor (a member of a R.E. staff for example), you will have direct access to students, who will now have direct access to the fullness of truth through you. If your qualification is a post-graduate one, then you may have a wider influence still!

Anonymous

(I haven’t finished my course yet, and don’t want any of my future lecturers to have the upper hand!)

It’s become more difficult to believe because the world in which we find ourselves is completely made up of ourselves, and God, so to speak, doesn’t appear directly anymore. We don’t drink from the source anymore, but from the vessel which is offered to us already full, and so on.

— Pope Benedict XVI from an interview given to a panel of four German journalists on 5 August 2006.

Linux and Free Software

Veronica Brandt

This edition of *Keeping In Touch* was prepared entirely using free software. Although the contributions may have used Microsoft or other proprietary products, they have been entirely reformatted using open source tools.

Here I need a quick note on the definition of free software. By free software I mean programs that make their source code freely available under one of the many free licences such as the General Public Licence (GPL). There are other programs available free to download, but some come with built-in advertising, some with crippling licences that prevent you from making copies, some asking for a licencing fee, some that even install spyware or malicious programs to your hard-drive to send back information for marketing purposes or even credit card fraud and identity theft. They may be free as in you don't pay for them (up front), but they are not free as in freedom. This problem of naming has given rise to a range of names including such mouthfuls as Free Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS). I'll just say free software and hope you know what I mean.

Homeschoolers often appreciate saving money on things. But that's only one advantage of using free software. With free software you have the freedom to change the programs you use. If you have a problem you can fix it, or hire someone else to fix it for you.

As an example, consider the excellent Bible study package from Crosswire. It is a fantastic resource. Many volunteers have contributed different versions of the Bible, including the Latin Vulgate and the Douay Rheims. Plus there are various commentaries and extra reading. The only problem is that, being a primarily protestant work, the books of Maccabees and other 'Catholic' books of the Bible are unavailable. Amazingly, no one has fixed this yet. But fixing the program is possible and even encouraged. I haven't had a response yet from emailing the developers, but perhaps someone else will have more luck. Imagine setting that as homework for you aspiring computer expert "I want to read the verse about it being a good and holy thing to pray for the dead by the end of term".

There are many wonderful free software projects out there, perhaps the most famous is Linux, a freely available clone of the Unix operating system. Since Linux is an operating system rather than an

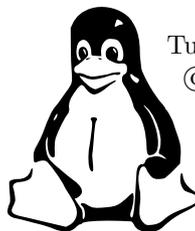
application, using it generally requires taking over your computer, though there are ways to have it co-exist with other operating systems, Windows in particular. There are also live-CD versions which don't install anything to your computer but run entirely off the CD.

Other free software includes OpenOffice.org — a replacement for MS Word, Excel, Access, etc. The GIMP is a full featured paint program to rival Adobe Photoshop. Mozilla Firefox is a web browser, quick to use yet with many handy features including tabbed browsing and the ability to block pop-up advertising.

All these and more are included on the latest collection from OpenCD.org. The OpenCD project works to bundle the best free software available for Windows onto one CD. They make sure each program installs and uninstalls cleanly. If you know someone with plenty of internet access and a CD burner they can make a copy for you. Alternatively there are retailers who can make you a copy for a fee.

There are many educational open source projects that you may find on the internet. There are groups like Open Source Education Foundation¹ (OSEF), School Forge² and Organisations for Free Software in Education and Training³ (OFSET). These organisations advocate the use of Linux in schools. They also help develop new educational applications and projects to make curricular resources available.

January 2007 sees a five day Linux Conference in Sydney. On the 18th of January they are having an open day at UNSW, Kensington. It promises to be a fun-filled day aimed at high-school and university students. For more details see <http://lca2007.linux.org.au>



Tux, the Linux penguin. Image ©1997 Larry Ewing using the GIMP. Permission to use and/or modify this image is granted provided you acknowledge him and The GIMP.

Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.osef.org>
- 2 <http://www.opensourceschools.org>
- 3 <http://www.ofset.org>

“There were no copyrights or public jealousies when hymns were made anonymously, like cathedrals, for God’s glory, and romantic individualism was odd and uncouth.”

— Fr. George Rutler, *Brightest and Best: Stories of Hymns*.

Marrying the ‘Wrong’ Person

Sue Elvis

Shortly before Andy and I were due to be married, my future mother-in-law took me aside and said, “You don’t really want to marry my son, do you?” I heartily assured her that I did. I am sure Andy’s mum was hoping for a good Catholic girl for her son. Instead he was marrying me. I told Andy I wanted to marry him but I would never become a Catholic. Andy followed his heart and married me anyway.

Looking back, my mother-in-law must have prayed earnestly for me. Over the first years of our marriage, my heart gradually softened and by the time we’d had our first child, my thoughts were turning to God: did I want our children to be baptised and if so, would they be baptised in the Catholic Church? I phoned our parish priest and told him I needed to know more about the Catholic Church in order to determine if baptising our children was the right step to take. After reading a selection of books and literature provided by this priest, the baptism went ahead and before too long I was taking part in the RCIA program of a neighbouring parish.

The overwhelming feeling I had at this time was a yearning to belong. God was calling me. I would sit at the back of the church watching the congregation celebrate Mass and feel I was on the outside. I wanted to be on the inside, with our family worshipping together as part of the Church’s family. So Easter 1991, I entered the Church.

For several years, life rolled on and then one day I discovered (shock, horror!) I was a modernist. Although we’d always homeschooled our children, we didn’t meet any fellow Catholic homeschoolers until our eldest child was nine years old. Then my faith education really began. It didn’t take me long to realise that I knew very little about the Catholic Church. An RCIA program in a modernist parish had

taught me almost nothing. With our new Catholic homeschooling friends came a new phase in my life. They introduced me to the richness and beauty of our faith. It definitely was an exciting time. However, it was also a bit frightening and certainly stressful.

Now, modernists aren’t exactly popular in our homeschooling circles. I had so much to learn. How could I fit in without revealing my deplorable lack of knowledge of even the basics such as how to celebrate Mass reverently? I bravely went along to homeschooling picnics but some time passed before I felt courageous enough to agree to go to a homeschooling camp. Five days with orthodox Catholics: how would I survive without doing or saying something stupid that would set me apart from my fellow homeschoolers who seemed so confident, reverent and comfortable with their faith?

“Copper pipes can conduct just as efficiently as gold pipes. Keep your heads down and concentrate on God.”

More time passed, I became confident and comfortable too. In fact, I forgot my humble beginnings as a modernist. We began to spend most of our time with our like-minded Catholic homeschooling friends. We roamed nearby parishes searching for a ‘good’ Mass. We tried to live the perfect Catholic life without interacting too much with the outside world. We certainly avoided associating with our less than orthodox fellow Catholics and their children.

Then a few years ago, I again felt an overwhelming need. This time it was the need to belong to a parish community. We were tired of roaming and we yearned for a place where we belonged. We came home to our local parish. Of course, like most parishes ours

isn’t perfect: Over the years, we have had excellent priests and ones more difficult to deal with; we have had traditional sacred music and we have suffered the more trite modern hymns; we have had altar boys and altar girls; we have had beautiful reverent celebrations of the Mass and we’ve had more ‘inventive’ liturgies. And then there’s our fellow parishioners. Many of them could be described as modernists. It would be so easy to criticise their clothes, their reverence, their choice of music. That is, it would be so easy to criticise, until one remembers that I, also, used to be a modernist before God drew me into a wonderful group of homeschoolers who showed me how beautiful our faith is. These days I have so much more knowledge and understanding. I have received so many graces. But for God, I wouldn’t even be in the Church let alone be a modernist. I am no better than the caring loving friends I have made within our parish and I certainly have no right to judge them.

I remember when a much loved priest was preparing to leave our parish. We didn’t know who would be replacing him. During one of his final homilies, Father urged us to stick together as a parish community even if we had reservations about his successor. He said, “Copper pipes can conduct just as efficiently as gold pipes. Keep your heads down and concentrate on God.” This advice has been difficult to observe at times but I understand what he meant. Parish families are important. If we all left our parish looking for a ‘better’ Mass, there would be no parish left. It would take a serious abuse of the Mass to convince us to travel to another parish, away from our fellow parishioners who love and support us and who have become an important part of our lives.

Of course, we have to think about our children and the dangers a particular parish might expose them to. However, I believe

there are no safer children in our parish than those of our local homeschooling families. Not only do they have a parish community, they have the homeschooling community and parents who have received enormous graces to guide them. Now many of you may disagree with me. Maybe you have a choice of Masses within easy travelling distance (as is possible in the city) and think it prudent to attend a 'better' Mass at a neighbouring parish. Maybe your neighbouring parish can become your parish family. But some people are not so fortunate. Those living in country areas might have no choice but to attend the Mass in their own parish. To them, their local parish is very important.

Perhaps we can feel comfortable in our parish. We might be able to accept our fellow parishioners, even modernists, and appreciate that but for the grace of God, we might be modernists too. We might recognise that we, homeschooling Catholics, aren't a superior breed of Catholic. We can acknowledge the graces we

have been given and thank God for our faith. But how would we feel if one of our children wanted to marry someone other than an orthodox Catholic? Would we even be able to accept someone who wasn't favourably disposed towards homeschooling? Of course, it would be very difficult. We want our young people to have the best start as they head out along the path of matrimony. We know this tough vocation will have the best chance of success if both husband and wife share a strong bond of faith.

We pray that our children will meet perfect partners. But sometimes God has different ideas to ours. The other day, a friend was telling me how she'd been praying for the help to accept her adult children's decisions, especially those decisions she didn't agree with: "I can't see where those decisions will lead but God can. Perhaps God has some plan I don't know about."

I am sure, twenty-three years ago, when Andy and I were married,

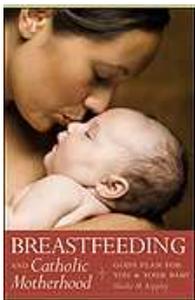
* * *

the future did not look very promising to his mother. But God had plans for me she couldn't see. After initially expressing her concern, she quietly accepted our decision and then must have prayed constantly for us. Finally, she was rewarded with her "good Catholic daughter-in-law" and the knowledge that Andy and I have a strong and happy marriage. Although I will pray that my children marry 'good' Catholics, I will not lose hope if my prayers are not answered in the way I'd like. If our children, after prayer and discussion, decide their choices are in accordance with God's will, then I will remember my own experience, and have confidence that God will bless their marriages. If Andy had not had the courage to follow his heart and marry me, where would I be today? Perhaps, still outside the Church.

Breastfeeding & Catholic Motherhood

Veronica Brandt

Book Review: *Breastfeeding and Catholic Motherhood: God's plan for you and your baby* by Sheila Kippley



Sheila Kippley has written this small book summarising the benefits of breastfeeding in the light of Church teaching. She is an active member of La Leche League, Couple to Couple League and more recently Natural Family Planning International Inc. which she formed with her husband in 2004.

Sophia Institute Press¹ released this book at about the same time as *A Mother's Rule of Life* by Holly Pierlot, reviewed in *Keeping In Touch* Term 4, 2005 by Gai Smith. Reading both at the same time was kind of interesting. Holly Pierlot is all about getting organised whereas Kippley was talking more about the round the clock care that a baby requires. A schedule is great, but infants add that chaos that keeps life interesting.

So, what does the Church teach about breastfeeding? Fortunately you don't have to buy the book to find out. Kippley has made a fine webpage full of

articles under the name of NFP and more.org. Her article entitled *Breastfeeding: New Catholic Interest*² summarises the main Papal pronouncements plus the work of Fr. William Virtue who came to the bold conclusion "The testimony of the Magisterium and moral experts confirms that it has been the constant teaching of the Church that there is a serious obligation of maternal nursing." She goes on to clarify that a serious obligation doesn't mean a matter of serious or mortal sin, but that breastfeeding is the norm in God's plan.

From Pope Pius XII's address to Women of Italian Catholic Action comes this beautiful quote:

We see in mothers those who exert the earliest and the most intimate influence upon the souls of the little ones and upon their growth in piety and virtue.

Surely there is no art more difficult and strenuous than that of fashioning the souls of children; for those souls are so very tender, so easily disfigured through some thoughtless influence or wrong advice, so difficult to guide aright and so lightly led astray.

This is the reason why, except where it is quite impossible, it is more desirable that the mother should feed her child at her own breast. Who shall say what mysterious influences are exerted upon the

growth of that little creature by the mother upon whom it depends entirely for its development.³

Perhaps even more edifying is her article on Scriptural Mothering⁴ where she has all the scriptural references to breastfeeding she can find. From Hannah's offering of Samuel after he was weaned, through the imagery of consoling breasts found in the book of Psalms and Isaias, up to the cry from the crowd "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" Perhaps this study is all the more important in the face of the Ezzo movement that claims biblical grounds for its strict regime of 'training' babies from a young age to be independent of the comfort of extended feeding and carrying.

Supporting breastfeeding is one way you can encourage people to heed the teaching of the Catholic Church (even if they don't know it). The Australian Breastfeeding Association does much to promote breastfeeding. They also provide mother to mother support for many aspects of raising children. Involvement is tailored to fit into a mother's life, trained volunteers staff a 24 hour helpline from their own homes. It may be an especially useful resource for those in alternatives to abortion. A local group of the ABA can help provide a supportive environment

for a new mother. Note, however, that the Australian Breastfeeding Association has no position on abortion.

Also, those who join the Australian Breastfeeding Association before the 31st of February 2007 will receive a free copy of their comprehensive book *Breastfeeding . . . naturally* (RRP \$34.95). You can subscribe online at www.breastfeeding.asn.au or by contacting your local group or state helpline.

Breastfeeding and Catholic Motherhood can be ordered in through Cardinal Newman Faith Resources. They don't currently have any in stock. The price in the US is only \$10.95 so it should come in under \$20.

Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.sophiainstitute.com/>
- 2 <http://www.nfpandmore.org/bfnewcatholic.shtml>
- 3 The Major Addresses of Pope Pius XII: Vol. 1 Selected Addresses, Vincent A. Yzermans, ed., North Central Publishing, St. Paul, 1961
- 4 <http://www.nfpandmore.org/bfscriptural.shtml>

November is the month of the Holy Souls.

Gregorian Chant

Veronica Brandt

Seq. I.

D I-es iræ, di-es illa, Solvet sæclum
That day of wrath, that dreadful day, when heav'n and earth

in favilla: Teste David cum Sibylla.
shall pass away, both David and the Sibyl say.

This is (or was) the chant for the sequence of All Souls Day. It is also sung for traditional latin requiem Masses. It can be found in the Liturgy of the Hours for the last Sunday in Ordinary Time. The words are based on Zephaniah 1:14-16. It is attributed to Thomas of Celano, one of the first followers of St. Francis of Assisi.

Dies Irae is well known as far as chant goes, but it is a long piece, so it might be harder to find a recording. The De Souza Family include it in their CD of sacred music 'Sensus Sacrorum'.

Above is just the first verse out of 18 (or 19 depending on how you count the last couplets). The rest of the sequence follows a common pattern. It is made to be sung alternately by two choirs. One choir sings one verse, then the other choir sings the next verse echoing the same tune, then the next verse for the first choir introduces a new tune again and so on. There are

three tunes in the pattern: AA BB CC AA BB CC AA BB C for the 17 verses then a new tune for the last part ending with 'Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem. Amen.'

You may find it interesting to hear the tune in a more modern piece of music. If you find a copy of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*, skip to the witches' movement and listen out for the tune. As the chant was used for funerals it bore a strong association with death in the imaginations of Christian europe. It is also said to be found in Camille Saint-Saen's *Danse Macabre*, but I haven't found it yet.

It is even found in more modern music. I haven't checked these out, but the theme of *Citizen Kane* is based on the tune. According to Wikipedia *Disney's Lion King* uses the tune entering the Shadowlands and it also crops up in the soundtrack of *The Matrix*.

For those who find it easier to read modern music, here is that first tune:



The text has proved particularly challenging for translators. Each line ends with a double rhyme — the last two syllables rhyme. The most widespread

translation into English, that of Dr. William Irons, keeps this exact rhyming scheme. To do this he uses lots of '-eth's, for example: rendeth, descendeth, dependeth, arraigneth, attaineth, remaineth. Latin is a good language for rhymes, and for fitting lots of meaning into a few syllables. English is a bit more clumsy.

There are 300 known translations into English according to Fr. Matthew Britt, O.S.B. in his book *The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal**. Here is a short one by Sir Walter Scott:

That Day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead:

O, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

* Becoming available online at <http://www.cathcorn.org/hotbam/>

Continual Adjustments and Charlotte Mason

Gabriella De Battista

Why homeschool?

I first heard about homeschooling from a priest friend. I thought it was a mad idea until I met some homeschooled children who were polite, mature, sensible and cared about others. We decided to homeschool with my eldest son, Anthony, from the start and have since learnt that it is more than bookwork at home. Homeschooling is growing together as a family both physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. There is a wise saying: "begin with the end in mind". The "end" I want is for our family to meet in heaven one day and I think we have a better chance at it if we are together as much as possible. A homeschooling mother whose child was critically ill had these thoughts to share. "A family is uniquely suited to sanctify its members — it's a refining process, burning away the dross and preserving the gold . . . And when children show character flaws that I am not sure how to deal with because I have the same flaws, God would rather have me battle them out in my inadequate way, asking for His Grace and provision, than rely on outside solutions (like sending them to school) to solve the problems. God put us together for a reason and I think even a tired, sorrowful, preoccupied mum and dad are better for their children than the best teachers in the best school." (Willa Ryan, *Real Learning* p29).

Friends of the Suffering Souls

The Friends of the Suffering Souls is an organization that assists the souls in Purgatory by arranging for Masses to be offered each and every day of the year for all the souls in purgatory and especially for deceased members.

There is only one obligation incurred by becoming a Friend of the Suffering Souls. Each member has to organise on behalf of the association at least one Mass each year. This Mass has to be offered for: "ALL the souls in Purgatory, especially deceased members of FOSS"

Members can however organise as many Masses as they wish to add to the novena but they must organise at least one. So in a similar manner to the Living Rosary of St. Philomena, we combine together to offer a continuous novena of Masses for all the Holy Souls and especially for deceased members.

You can find out more and join online at:
<http://users.learth.net/~foss/>

Charlotte who?

When I first started homeschooling I used work books and text books only. I then moved onto unit studies with the KONOS curriculum, then was greatly relieved when I came across Charlotte Mason's philosophy of education, and use it combined with the Australian Christian Academy curriculum. She was a teacher in the 1880s. Her observations of a homeschooled family and her experience in teaching over 30 years lead her to formulate an educational philosophy which includes education of both the mind and the character, a common sense approach to the way children learn, and a great love for children. She states "This is how we find children — with intelligence more acute, logic more keen, observing powers more alert, moral sensibilities more quick, love and faith and hope more bounding; in fact, in all points like as we are, only much more so; but absolutely ignorant of the world and its belongings, of us and our ways, and above all of how to control and direct and manifest the possibilities with which they are born. . ."

So how do we "educate" such gifts and what exactly is education anyway?

A book called "Accelerated Learning for the 21st Century" states that "Education should aim for five outcomes: **Knowledge** — an ever-expanding body of facts; **skills** — writing, reading, maths skills, communication skills, physical skills etc, **wisdom** — the ability to decide priorities, to allocate time effectively, to interpret and judge, to analyze

experience and act on conclusions; **character**” — [defined as “the sum total of certain virtues ... Faith, hope, love, sound judgment (prudence), a sense of responsibility (justice), personal toughness (fortitude) and self-control (temperance). All other character strengths — such as industriousness, perseverance, courage etc are derived from these four fundamental powers of mind and will” (James Stenson, *Upbringing*, p25)]; and “**emotional maturity** — the ability to recognize, express and manage ones own moods and emotions and respond sympathetically to others, to delay gratification, to manage stress, anger, and anxiety, to resolve conflicts rationally and be assertive without being aggressive”.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, “The general aim of education is obviously to train the whole man — the intellect and the will, not just the mind alone. Knowledge is in the mind; character is in the will or our decisions.”

Charlotte Mason’s philosophy is that “the aim in education is to give a Full Life . . . Life should be all living, not all thinking or all doing or all feeling. . . . the question is not — how much does the youth know when he has finished his education — but how much does he care? And about of how many orders of things does he care?”.

Education continues throughout life, so our aim is also to develop a love for life-long learning.

Daunting? You bet . . . but!

Charlotte relied heavily on one belief: “here is the great recognition which the educator is called upon to make. God, the Holy Spirit, is Himself the Supreme Educator of mankind. . . .” and “We begin by believing in the children as spiritual beings of unmeasured powers — intellectual, moral, spiritual — capable of receiving and constantly enjoying intuitions from the intimate converse of the Divine Spirit. . . .” What parent has not been astounded at some of the questions a child has come up with at one time or another?

God, being infinitely more interested in my children’s education than I ever could be will provide all the resources necessary to fulfill their needs. I can’t emphasize this enough. In short, when perplexed about anything pray and be guided by what is a logical idea or an idea that is put on your heart.

Education in practice — the basics.

Charlottes philosophy is that education is;

1. an atmosphere in which the child finds themselves valued, accepted and respected for who they are, and an atmosphere which is not removed from the realities of daily work, joys and struggles (as typically found in the home environment);
2. a discipline — which involves the formation of good habits such as attention, obedience, prayer, gratitude, manners, thoroughness, punctuality, truthfulness, taking turns, doing our best, etc.; “the mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself easy days”.

3. teaching of Ideas — “minds of children need to be fed on the best intellectual food — God’s Word, great literature, stories that radiate the moral life, wonderful inventions, discoveries in science, paintings, plays, psalms, symphonies, real living history in which . . . precept and example flow in from the lives and thought of great men and women . . . a knowledge of strange places and strange people, and direct contact with God’s creation through an outdoor life”.

In summary, child training in a loving atmosphere is priority where teaching of the knowledge of God is most important, then the knowledge of man (in history and the arts), then the knowledge of the universe (in science and geography).

Her educational method was to teach phonetics, writing/copying, grammar and mathematics early in the morning, with short lessons in keeping with the attention span of the children at various ages. Her basic teaching of other subjects was through reading books and getting the children to “retell” what has been read to them. She observes that “Children working on these lines know months after that which they have read and are remarkable for their power of concentration (attention) . . . and become well-informed, intelligent persons”. The retelling or “narrating” means the child has thought the ideas through and made them his own — “forming a relation with them”. “All a parent need do is give the child a varied diet of true and noble ideas and the mind does for itself the sorting, arranging, correlating, selecting, rejecting and classifying”. This is “self-education” and encourages a love for life-long learning.

However, she used what she called “living books” — those written by individuals passionate about their topic and written in literary form — with a touch of emotion, because she says, “the mind concerns itself only with thoughts, imagination, reasoned arguments; it declines to assimilate facts unless they are presented in literary form”. You can recognize a “living” book by reading about the author, and seeing if the text is written in a literary style. They are often found in second hand bookstores on all subjects and include the classics. Examples are, *Heidi* (which teaches about conscience), *Black Beauty* (develops a sensitivity towards animals), *Little Women* (generosity in taking half their Christmas meal to a poor family), *Pius X* — the Farmboy who became Pope (self-sacrifice when at 11 years old walked 4 km a day to school without his new shoes so that he wouldn’t wear them out), *Lay Siege to Heaven* (Catherine of Siena’s courage and her respect for church authority), *The Quiet Light* (the story and teachings of Thomas Aquino).

Her formal lessons ended at 1 pm, earlier if the children are quite young, later for high school students. The afternoons were free for leisure activities, running, climbing, yelling — all out of doors. In fact, she recommended that children under the age of 9 be taken outdoors for 4, 5 or 6 hours a day . . . “Let them once

get in touch with Nature, and a habit is formed which will be a source of delight through life". Handicrafts, practicing an instrument, chores, cooking, gardening, visiting lonely neighbours, observing and recording nature could also be done at this time.

Where the rubber hits the road — getting it together in a family

I use a combination of Charlotte's reading method for topics I want them to remember for life; those of wisdom, character building and emotional development; and the gaining of skills and knowledge (reading, writing, maths etc.) from the Australian Christian Academy who use the American Accelerated Christian Education curriculum with Australian supplements for maths and social studies. This curriculum was developed over 25 years and has self instructional material with a marking system in which the children mark their own work at the end of each day. It has scripture memorization and they learn a new virtue (one of 60) for each subject per booklet. Being Christian, emphasis is on the bible, creationism and protestant leaders, but these are points of discussion that we work out together. I act as supervisor, and work is normally finished by morning tea with my 5 year old (who demands most attention), my 7 year old (who requires moderate attention), and by lunch time with my 11 and 13 year old (who demand attention only occasionally for dictation and some questions which can usually be found in the text). The baby plays on the floor or has a breastfeed in a comfortable armchair or sleeps throughout this time.

After morning tea I read a "living book" to my 5 and 7 year old and both do violin practice. I love music so we get a professional teacher to teach them. The daily music practice develops skills of self-discipline, attention to detail, perseverance and endurance, and there is also evidence that classical music stimulates brain development.

Lunch break comes next, then the two older children do music practice and I take a break for a couple of hours. I find I need a rest from the constant activity of children. If baby isn't sleeping the older children mind him.

Exercise is next and we all go to Mullet Creek for the playground, playing cricket, roller skating, bike riding, making boats from sticks, while I enjoy the fresh air and do brisk walking around the car park for 20 minutes. My eldest normally rides his bike to soccer training.

After dinner at night, the most important and fun filled education begins — devotions and reading "living" books. We say the rosary, then read a "living" book, then have another "living" book which is a choice between a Saint story, catechism teaching using Seton's Religion for Young Catholics, an historic novel such as Christ the King Lord of History, or a scientific novel such as The Life of Leonardo Da Vinci, or a

classic.

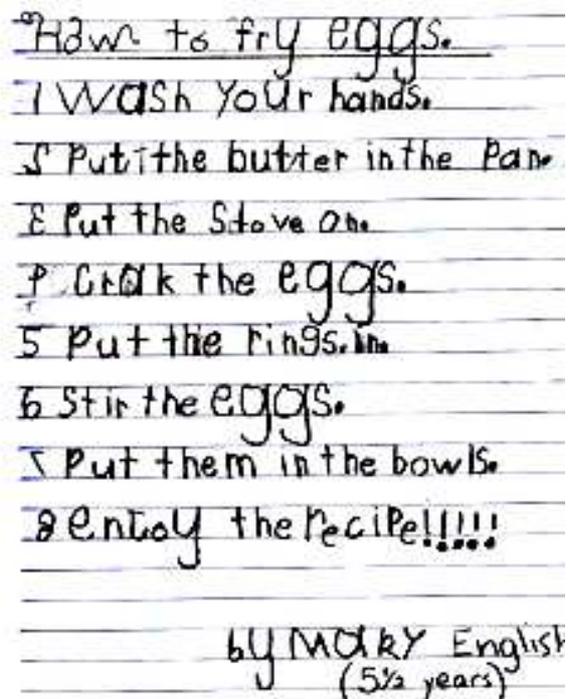
The children retell an idea that struck them in varying detail appropriate with their age. It constantly surprises me as to how much a 5 year old can understand and remember of a difficult concept as long as it is explained in simple language. My 13 year old told his father the other day of the disappointment of St Francis who wanted to be martyred by the Saracens. However, the Mullah liked him so much he was sent back to Italy and was eventually converted to Christianity himself. We read that book 7 years ago!

We do this for 4 days. On Friday we have Mass and exposition in the morning then have a nature day out to "get in direct contact with God's creation" as Charlotte says. Getting our nature day out is the single most important event of the week (after Mass). We use what's available — local bush walks, water catchment dams, the botanic gardens, the beach or playgrounds.

This is a general rundown of our homeschooling day which changes constantly over time as new circumstances arise. We are all adjusting and learning together and wouldn't have it any other way since "God put us together for a reason".

How to fry eggs

Mary English



Not That Kind of Girl

Sarah Fanning

At Christmas time I had given each of our little girls (aged 4, 5 and 7) ‘body glitter tattoos’, the pretty sparkle of which I knew would appeal to them — as it did. Later I overheard a discussion between the four-year-old and seven-year-old as to how to apply them. Examining the packet, the younger one said “You stick them on your tummy.” There was a cartoon of a fashionably unattractive young girl on this, displaying her midriff, with the tattoo around her navel. The older sister glanced disparagingly at the packet and retorted, “We don’t, we’re not that kind of girl.” This exchange made me chuckle, but it also made me think. How did the seven year old, with so little acquaintance with ‘street smart’ — our children do not watch television, rarely go to the cinema, play almost exclusively with other homeschooled Catholic families — know that she was ‘not that kind of girl’?

In one way, of course, it is something for which to be thankful. But on the other hand, there is an edge of scorn there that is not necessarily desirable. A friend with a six-year-old daughter told me that she deliberately drew her daughter’s attention to unsuitably dressed individuals in order to try and demonstrate how unattractive it was, but stopped doing so after realizing that the child was making uncharitable assumptions about the people involved; now she simply instructs her to say a silent ‘Hail Mary’ for the person, because she felt she had been teaching her child to despise others. It is very easy to assume that our standards are irreproachable, and others reprehensible, but it is a dangerous assumption, for we all have different standards.

Of course we want our children to dress, think and behave modestly. But modesty is such a slippery concept! I don’t think it is something which can be physically measured, on the whole. Some things of course do seem clearly unacceptable — the ‘to the waist cleavage’ affected by numerous so-called film stars, for example — yet what about the bare-breasted women of New Guinea, whom one missionary priest praised because he said seeing the women suckling their babies at least reminded men what breasts are for!? To some, a sleeveless dress is shocking: brought up in the tropics, I find nothing offensive in sleeveless dresses. When my mother gave me my own First Communion dress for my daughter to wear, I had to add a second layer to the skirt because it was so short, yet my parents had always emphasized the necessity of modesty in dress and thought as we were growing up!

...it seems more important to ensure that our children welcome others with self-effacing love...

I think that the answer is that real modesty lies in the attitude of the person involved, and is a development of humility. As with so many things, if we concentrate on developing a loving and humble attitude in our own

mode of dress and behaviour, it will be so reflected in our interaction with others that we will automatically display due modesty. To me, it seems more important to ensure that our children welcome others with self-effacing love rather than judgements of superiority or otherwise. If we truly love God we will teach our children to live humbly and comport themselves with modesty simply through example; in some ways that is the opposite of narrowly examining every individual, whipping out our mental tape-measure to check on the length of that girl’s skirt or this girl’s neckline.

One of the problems of the tape-measure approach is that one ends up in constant fear that one’s children will simply not match up; that they will be found wanting by the standards of others in the group, and then the pressure is felt to ensure conformity with what others deem right rather than what God asks of us. Despite my own private convictions of what is suitable and what not, God may have other ideas than mine. I may, in fact, not even be right.

Another problem is that one can inadvertently lead girls into believing that it is actually wrong in itself to desire to look pretty; yet I am sure Our Lady always tried to make the best of herself. So often in lives of the saints there are examples of holy young girls besieged by unwanted suitors, by reason of their exceptional beauty. I am inclined to think that such shining beauty did not necessarily lie in physical attributes, but arose from inner sweetness of living. Most girls are very innocent of the effect they may have on young men, and need to be gently encouraged to consider how their dress may affect those around them, although again you don’t want to despoil their innocence with too many explanations! And too, appropriate dress can vary. But there is a danger in leading girls into thinking they have to look drab to be modest. A priest friend of ours once sent a list of “Catholic chat-up lines” (At Benediction: Do you come here often?). One which had our boys laughing was “Oh wow, I’ve only just noticed how cute you look in that completely shapeless floor-length dress?”

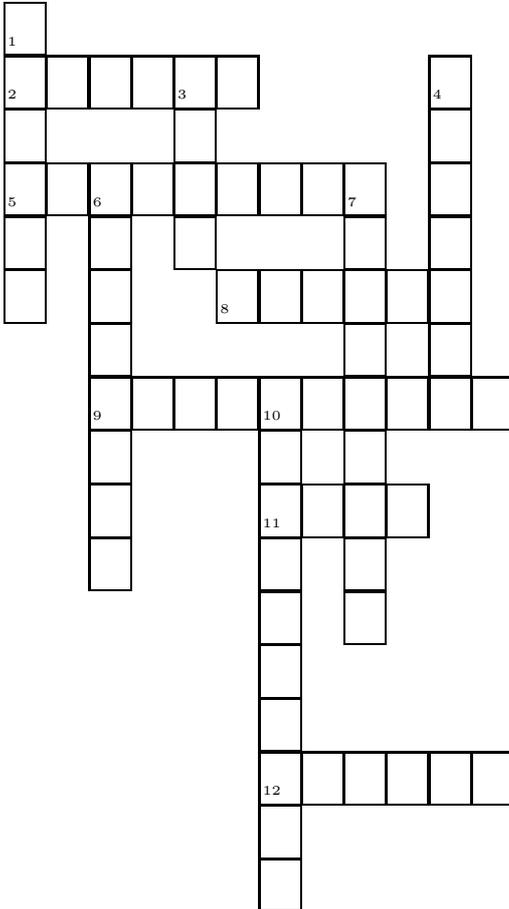
Young men and women will necessarily and normally be attracted to one another at a certain age, for that is how God has ordained humanity — and it is important, especially since most of them will be called to marriage. The girls must be aware of how they dress (as one of my boys complained after a weekend away for prayer and meditation for young Catholics, “I couldn’t concentrate at Mass, because everywhere I looked there were girls wearing these clothes?”) and the boys of how they receive this. But it isn’t healthy to try and deny that the attraction will take place, and surely we must concentrate on helping our youngsters to dress and behave suitably, rather than to concentrate on who is falling short of our standards and how. If our children are strongly formed in their faith, we must rely on that formation to lead them to think and behave as followers of Christ. Of course we all make mistakes sometimes (even me!) but that

doesn't have to be irredeemable, and the children need to know that having formed and taught them we now trust them, and God, to live well.

December Puzzle

V. Brandt

Here is a puzzle covering the feasts of December.



Across

- 2 Gave the message to the 7d (6)
- 5 Feast day 28th, Holy _____ (9)
- 8 Foster-father of Jesus (6)
- 9 Antiphons for vespers leading up to Christmas (1,9)
- 11 Mother of God (4)
- 12 Season of waiting (6)

Down

- 1 Feast day 3rd, St. Francis _____, patron of Australia (6)
- 3 Feast day 13th, St. _____, patroness of girls (4)
- 4 Feast day 26th, St. _____, protomartyr (7)
- 6 Feast day 6th, St. _____, patron of children (8)
- 7 Caretakers of sheep
- 10 Feast day 8th, Our Lady's _____ Conception (10)

Technical note

The program used to generate and format this puzzle is another example of free software. The generator is written in C as an example of a mathematical algorithm. The author is Nándor Sieben from the Northern Arizona University.

The program:

<http://www.gtoal.com/wordgames/gatekeeper/ujpuzz.c>

The T_EX macros to format the puzzle for printing:

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~ns46/puzmac.tex>

An Interesting Calculation

Veronica Brandt

Do you find maths interesting? A book review in *Oriens*, the journal of the Ecclesia Dei Society had this to say about the subject:

“According to both the ancients and their Christian followers, the order of creation was love, bound together in a unity both mathematical and musical. Indeed love, divine order, music and mathematics are simply four different ways of saying the same thing. Harmony, as a result, had come to possess a cosmic meaning, that is, as a manifestation of the music of the spheres, a political manifestation, as seen in the well-ordered state, and a psychological manifestation as seen in the well ordered soul.”*

In a similar vein Donald Knuth, the mathematician who wrote the typesetting software I'm using to edit *Keeping In Touch* this term, said “Mathematics belongs to God”. In fact the T_EX typesetting system arose from his desire to see well typeset mathematics papers in the American Mathematical Society's publications. He released the program as open source and worked to develop the program over the 70s and 80s. Since then T_EX has been used to typeset calendars, chemistry diagrams, Tolkien's elvish, crossword puzzles, chess diagrams and gregorian chant.

So, in using T_EX to make a newsletter I looked forward to the opportunity to show off some mathematical typesetting. Now I just needed some maths to type up. . .

How long does it take to pay off a mortgage?

Unfortunately, the textbooks that I have don't exactly cover this scenario. They do cover the more cheerful picture where you have invested a large sum of money in an interest bearing account. Although the loan situation is similar, it's made more complicated by the repayments that you make. It's also made more complicated by the prevalent practice of calculating interest daily while making repayments fortnightly. I simplified things to assume the bank was calculating interest fortnightly along with the repayments. From some experimentation it looks like this has the effect of reducing the amount of interest.

First look at the first installment. I've called the initial amount borrowed A_0 . Then the balance after the first fortnight is A_1 and so on. The repayment amount is R and the rate of interest per fortnight is I .

$$A_1 = A_0 + A_0I - R$$

Which we can factorise a little thus:

$$A_1 = A_0(1 + I) - R$$

The next fortnight we have:

$$A_2 = A_1(1 + I) - R$$

$$A_2 = (A_0(1 + I) - R)(1 + I) - R$$

$$A_2 = A_0(1 + I)^2 - R(1 + I) - R$$

The fortnight after that we have:

$$A_3 = A_2(1 + I) - R$$

$$A_3 = (A_0(1 + I)^2 - R(1 + I) - R)(1 + I) - R$$

$$A_3 = A_0(1 + I)^3 - R(1 + I)^2 - R(1 + I) - R$$

A pattern seems to emerge slowly:

$$A_n = A_0(1 + I)^n - R(1 + I)^{n-1} - R(1 + I)^{n-2} \dots - R$$

or using fancy greek symbols:

$$A_n = A_0(1 + I)^n - \sum_{x=n-1}^0 R(1 + I)^x$$

Σ is the greek letter S and here it stands for Sum. In particular this is the sum of a geometric series. They crop up often enough that there is a good equation to deal with them. All the way from the Encyclopedia Britannica entry on Number Sequences comes:

$$\sum_{n=1}^0 ar^n = \frac{a(1 - r^n)}{1 - r}$$

Which is pretty impressive. Read out this would be something like, "The sum from $n - 1$ to 0 of ar to the n equals one minus r to the n all multiplied by a over one minus r ."

Now the whole point of this exercise was to find out how long it takes to pay off a mortgage, so we want to look at the case when all the repayments balance out all the initial loan and all the interest. To put it simply we want to find n when $A_n = 0$.

$$A_n = 0 = A_0(1 + I)^n - \sum_{x=n-1}^0 R(1 + I)^x$$

$$A_0(1 + I)^n = \sum_{x=n-1}^0 R(1 + I)^x$$

Then, using the equation from the Encyclopedia:

$$A_0(1 + I)^n = \frac{R(1 - (1 + I)^n)}{1 - (1 + I)}$$

Now the next step could be to solve for n , but I'll leave that to someone else. If you do happen to accomplish that, send it to me and I'll send you a free copy of my book *A New Book of Old Hymns*. So remembering what the letters stand for: I is the interest per fortnight, A_0 is the initial loan, R is the fortnightly repayment, and n is the number of fortnights since the initial loan.

Going out into the sunshine with a calculator, pencil and paper I get these figures. Borrowing \$100 000 at 7% per annum over 10 years requires repayments of \$535.31 per fortnight giving a total repaid of \$139 179.57. So the net cost of the loan is just under 40% of the loan. The same loan over 30 years requires repayments of \$306.92 per fortnight giving a total repaid of \$239 398.76. So the net cost goes up to just under 140% of the loan.

Endnotes

* E. Michael Jones, *Dionysos Rising: The birth of cultural revolution out of the spirit of music*; Ignatius Press, 1994 as quoted in *Oriens: Journal of the Ecclesiae Dei Society*, Winter 2002 Books Revisited: Composing for the damned, Reviewed by Martin Sheehan

How to Prepare For A Party

Sarah Fanning

Someone is going to have a party, probably turning eighteen. About six weeks before this, the girls start preparations. It begins with ringing one's friends to discuss clothes. One's own wardrobe, and that of one's friends, is minutely considered, picked over, discussed, proposed, rejected, contemplated? "But what about the gold one, you know, with the bow? Yes, but you could just put a bit of lace over that bit or something. Or that burgundy one with the long sash. No, I didn't know that — well, couldn't she wear the purple and you could have the silver?" And so on, over the next fortnight, phone calls back and forth, indecision and hesitation?

Finally, the conclusion is reached that nobody has anything remotely suitable that hasn't already been worn (or almost worn) at least once, and is therefore not to be considered again. So a new dress must be found. This takes another two weeks or so. St. Vincent de Paul, the Smith Family, all local op-shops, are combed for possibilities. Local boutiques are visited, and there is much more phoning: "Oh, it was just gorgeous, it had this wonderful skirt, and it was just the softest blue — well, yes, about \$90 in the sale, but just gorgeous — no, I guess not. But there was another one that was cheaper, except it wasn't quite the right length, and I don't think that above the knee is really all that flattering — did you see the green one,

though? Wasn't that cute?" Eventually it is decided that this time, perhaps that maroon one that so-and-so didn't wear last time could be adapted for this time, and maybe the embroidered silver one with the straight skirt that you picked up at the Smith Family last Christmas but never wore could do for this one?

Dresses sorted out, hair, jewellery and shoes remain to be decided. Much further discussion ensues regarding who has the best sandals to match the chosen dress, whether the owner of the said sandals will be using them or they can be borrowed, whether anyone has a little jacket to go with that dress because if it is cold you'll just freeze, it's really pretty strappy; oh yes, there is that shawl with the sequins, or the one with the embossed velvety bits. And so and so really looks best with her hair up, but if you do that what about curling it, because that takes quite a lot of time. No, she shouldn't have her hair up, it's such lovely hair, she should have it down. You'll break your ankle in those sandals!! Oh, have you seen her gold and purple necklace, it's just so lovely — I've got this sort of sparkly one and the earrings do match quite well?

The week before the party all this intensifies. Dresses are re-agonised over and re-distributed before returning to the first decision yet again. Maybe those sandals aren't quite right. Did you decide on a different pair of earrings?

The morning of the party is happy chaos. Finally everybody is dressed, ready and assembled; the party begins; it is quite fun; but nothing like the preceding six weeks.

The boys start to get ready about an hour before the party.

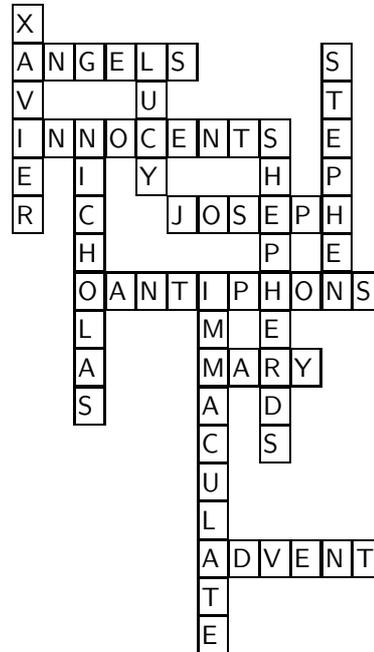
"WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN ITS FORMAL? WHY DO THEY ALWAYS DO THIS?"

"Where are my black trousers?"

"Okay, let's go."

And they enjoy it too.

Solution to the Puzzle



Postscript

Editorial team

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of *Keeping In Touch*. Putting it together has been a great experience.

Your editors for this edition are the Brandt family. We have been blessed with three boys, aged 5, 3 and 1 plus a new baby due in March. We live in the Blue Mountains where homeschooling

is not completely out of the ordinary. We have a family webpage www.brandt.id.au

Each family volunteering to edit *Keeping In Touch* welcomes more articles. Upcoming events, reports on past activities, notes on different homeschooling situations, book reviews, recipes, prayers, thoughts or any questions.

Writing things early is good. As it says on the front page, your next editors are the Fannings. You can

send any contributions to Sarah Fanning at tarlohill@bigpond.com. The deadline for Term 1 2007 is about 9 February.

Thanks for supporting *Keeping In Touch*. Many families find it a great source of information and inspiration in a world gone mad.

God bless you,

Veronica, Peter, Patrick, Christopher and Anthony