



Catholic Family

The Future of Humanity passes by way of the Family (Pope John Paul II)

Issue 53
September 2002
40p

Proclaiming the Gospel
of Life through song
– See page 4.



Mary, Mary quite contrary
Catholic Nursery rhymes
– See page 7



for links and articles, try:
www.Catholic-Family.org

Catholic Families in England's Nazareth

Alex Van Spijk describes this year's annual National Association of Catholic Families' pilgrimage to Walsingham.

Despite some difficulties and trials, which dogged the preparations for this event, a joyful pilgrimage of families took place this year. It has done so for many years and, God willing, will do so for many more to come. Looking round at our gathering, I felt I was witnessing a miracle: a clear demonstration of human determination to co-operate with God's plan and to overcome all the adversity that the modern age throws at us.

Family life in our affluent Western society appears less heroic than the precarious existence of refugees from war and famine; but



Future fishers of men? Some young members enjoy the cool stream

lay movements, we are growing! This was evident in the number of new, young families who joined us. You could see three generations gathered together: children, parents and grandparents walking the Holy Mile hand in hand.

joyful message

Only the Holy Spirit could have moved people, young and old, to suffer a little discomfort during a weekend when the rest of the country was glued to the football on its TV screens. Walsingham is an experience dominated by some practical discomfort and much spiritual comfort. At times it felt as it might have done in medieval times, when the church would have been the sweetest-smelling, most colourful and cleanest place in one's existence.

During three days of unbroken sunny weather, we were encamped in an idyllic meadow by a stream where the children paddled, the fishes were seen to leap and the world passed by. We celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee in our own celebration of families – the vital and fundamental 'glue' that binds our country and society together. What more simple and joyful message is there, than that of faithfulness to Christ and His Church within our families? Yes, parenthood calls for physical, psychological and emotional trials, but all of us give thanks for the many graces and blessings we experienced dur-

ing our pilgrimage. Does my wife enjoy camping with a baby and four other children? No – but we wouldn't miss such an opportunity to share our experiences with other families, support one another and renew old friendships. So: will my family return next year? Yes. We will do everything possible to make it happen again. Why not join us?

For more information about Walsingham and joining the NACF, please see page 11.



The van Spijk family

How can we help our children love the Faith?

One of our readers recently asked advice on how to pass on the Faith to his children. Looking through past editions of *Catholic Family* we discovered many ideas and suggestions on this topic. We list them below in the hope that they will prove useful and even inspiring.

1. Elizabeth Bell felt that being a full-time mother was important. Then you can answer questions as they arise, in a leisurely way, in the peaceful setting of home. Small children don't ask questions about God in 'quality time'; they arise unpredictably in 'quantity time' i.e. at any time.
2. Clare Underwood bought large baptismal candles for her children. Inscribed with the child's name and symbols for baptism, Christ, the Church and the particular patron saint, these are lit in front of the child's place at table on their name-



Sr E. Ruth O'Connell

day and at first Confession and Communion. This has stimulated discussions on baptism, the other sacraments and the Church in general.

3. Father Joseph Hattie, a priest-friend of the NACF, suggests families should pray regularly for priests. In his archdiocese, each family had a printed card with the date of their special day to pray the Rosary for a particular named

Schism ends in joyful reunion

Graham Moorhouse celebrates the end of a schism in Brazil

Most Catholics are aware of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the late superior of the Fraternity of St Pius X. Not so well known is that Mgr. Lefebvre was not the only bishop to resist the post-conciliar liturgical changes. Foremost among the other traditionalists was Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer of the diocese of Campos, Brazil. Mayer refused to discontinue the celebration of Mass in the Tridentine rite in his diocese. When he retired from the scene there was an enormous groundswell of popular feeling,

seeking his return. To this he finally acceded. This led to a sad situation in the diocese; there were now, in effect, two bishops. Bishop Mayer sought to resolve this unhappy state of affairs by forming his followers into an autonomous association, the Association of St Jean-Marie Vianney.

It was inevitable that Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop Mayer should become friends. At this stage neither had been excommunicated for refusing to accept the revised liturgy. Then the Archbishop, aware that time was running out, forged ahead with his ordination of four bishops in defiance of Rome. Mayer had co-operated with him in these ordinations. Rome then responded by excommunicating Lefebvre, Mayer and the four bishops who had been illicitly (but validly) ordained.

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Our Lady of Walsingham

if you are trying to live this family life according to the Gospel you can sometime feel 'refugees' in all but the physical sense. In our spiritual journey, Walsingham is both a refuge and a rock. Our Lady, who loves England, and whose ancient 'dowry' England is, beckons us to meet her Son at this national shrine.

It is with a very real purpose that our NACF families encamp yearly in these Norfolk meadows. Our flags and banners are the outward witness that we are brimful with enthusiasm to fight for a culture of life, in fidelity to the teachings of the Holy Father. Although still modest in size compared to some

Good news from the Universal Church

The Holy Father. The Pope has affirmed that he is prepared to carry on his pontificate 'to the end', despite ill-health and rumours of retirement. He said that the prayers of millions of people give him strength, even when he is suffering. 'Every day I experience that my ministry is sustained by the unceasing prayer of the people of God, of many people who are unknown to me... who offer the Lord their prayers and sacrifices for the intentions of the Pope. At the moments of greater difficulty and suffering, this spiritual force is a valid help and an intimate comfort.'

The Holy Father. On June 16 the Holy Father canonised Padre Pio of Pietrelcina and made his 23 September feast day an 'obligatory memorial' in the Church's liturgical calendar. Hundreds of thousands filled St Peter's Square to listen to Pope John Paul say that the holiness of Padre Pio could not be understood without his attachment to asceticism and the crucified Christ's suffering. 'His spirituality of the cross' was still valid today, declared the Pope. He recalled that as a young theological student in 1947, he, too, had vis-



ited the friar for the sacrament of reconciliation. It is the 45th canonisation ceremony of the Pope's pontificate and it has brought to 461 the number of people he has proclaimed saints.

Vatican. Cardinal Trujillo, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, has told a UN special session on children that the rights of children are inseparable from the rights of the family. He stated that the child should be viewed as a member of a family so that parents could 'carry out their unrenounceable duties and be aided, not impeded, by society.' He added that 'everything must be done so that children can be conceived, born, raised and educated in a family that is capable of offering protection and example, in a positive and permanent way.'

UK. Those who want to help the cause of the beatification of the late Archbishop Fulton Sheen, or report any spiritual or physical favours granted in his name, should contact Martin Shaw, The Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation, (GB), 43

Westminster Palace Gardens, Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RR. **Turkey.** The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, has said he wants closer ties with the Catholic Church and an end to centuries of animosity. Doctrinal and theological differences 'must not prevent us from facing problems together', he declared.

Chile. Cardinal Errazuriz, Archbishop of Santiago, has published a pastoral letter, 'What God has joined together', proposing indissoluble marriage as a good for Chile. 'The family is the good we Chileans must appreciate', he said. 'The state must not weaken the family but strengthen it.'

Brazil. The Holy Father has named a coadjutor bishop for a traditional group that has returned to full communion with the Church. The new bishop will be Father Fernando Areas Rifan, the current vicar-general of the St John Vianney Apostolic Administration. See page 1 article.

Italy. A step towards full unity between Catholics and Orthodox took place for the first time in a millennium when an Orthodox Patriarch celebrated the divine liturgy in the Byzantine basilica of Sant' Apollinare in Ravenna.

Thailand. Sr Consuelo Garcia of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Director of 'Mary's House', has said that at least 1000 girls have been saved from prostitution by training in a 2-year programme that helps them to be economically independent.

USA. Bishop Timothy Dolan of St Louis is to be the new Archbishop of Milwaukee. In a recent interview he declared: 'We have to intensify our efforts to renew priestly formation in our seminaries. I really believe in the next 25-30 years we are going to see Charles Borromeos, Philip Neris, these great saints that rose up in the Catholic Reformation, who are calling us back to holiness, humility, integrity, fidelity and joy.'

Our path is straight ahead

Two members of Miles Jesu describe this new ecclesial movement

The Miles Jesu community has been approved in this country since 1997. Founded by Fr Alphonsus Duran, Miles Jesu helps its members understand and live more deeply their vocation as lay members of the Church. Robert Steele of Worthing says, "My wife and I first encountered Miles Jesu at a parish baptism. We met two American members, Stephen Ryan and Michael Owens, who told us about their consecrated lives in their community. Later we saw an advert in the Catholic press for the 'Path to Rome' Conference, organised by these same men. 'Path to Rome' concentrates on our historic Catholic heritage here in England and works to bring 'our separated brethren' closer to Rome. Wanting to know more about this work for the conversion of England to its original roots, we decided to become 'vinculum' members of Miles Jesu. Our family prayer life is much more focused now. Regular, structured meetings, called Reunions, help us to strive for holiness and for the salvation of souls. We bless the day we met those two young men. We now know our path is straight ahead."

Bryan Lock, president of the

group, says, "Our Reunions began on a monthly basis. Now we try to do them weekly. They consist of 8-12 people and we begin with a reflection on the purpose of Miles Jesu: 'To instil Catholic ideals and goals in the world and to further the Kingdom of Christ, making Him the centre of all human life.' We have opening prayers, followed by a study period - perhaps on the Catechism - and then encouragement for the individual practices of our group: daily Mass if possible, regular Confession, the Rosary. We discuss our progress and our difficulties in order to help each other.

Application of our personal resolution follows. What did I do to improve myself at home, at work, in whatever circumstances, this past week? Perhaps someone has a bad habit they want to break, or to improve relations with a family member. We end with a review of the activities our group has undertaken. Currently we are promoting *Continuity Journal*. Our meetings help us to be more apostolic in our daily lives. We finish with the evening prayers of Miles Jesu, tea, coffee and, with a bit of luck, a generous helping of cake!"

For more information, contact Miles Jesu at 20 Fairview Road, London SW 16 5PY. Phone: 020 8764 0341. Email: milesjesu@newman82.fsnet.co.uk



Some members of the Miles Jesu apostolate

Life News

Canada. Archbishop Adam Exner of Vancouver has announced that in future his diocese will follow the directives of the Holy See and leave parents in charge of educating their children on sexual matters. There will be no classroom teaching on sexuality before Grade 7 in Catholic schools and in Grade 7 only the *Love and Life* programme, published by Ignatius Press, will be used.

Hawaii. The Senate has refused to legalise physician-assisted suicide. Three senators switched sides and the vote was 14-11 against the proposal.

Switzerland. In response to proposals to legalise euthanasia, the Swiss bishops have published a document in support of terminally ill patients, in which they condemn direct active euthanasia as 'murder on demand'.

Italy. More than 55,000 babies have been saved from abortion by Italy's pro-life movement. The Life Assistance Centres, which offer accommodation and help to mothers-to-be considering abortion, have seen a 'city of babies' born over the years and saved countless others through a telephone help line and pro-life publicity.

UK. A recent article in *The Daily Telegraph* has stated that women only instigate 30% of abortions. The rest are suggested by parents

(7%), friends (10%), doctors (20%) and partners (33%).

Scotland. Childless couples throughout Britain are asking Fertility Care Scotland to help them to achieve a pregnancy. A spokesman commented: 'More non-Catholics are asking for help, some even referred from family planning clinics where they have been advised to try IVF treatment. These couples have almost ruined their chances of having a baby by their contraceptive methods, but Catholic or not, they are people in need and we always try to help'.

Canada. A bioethics institute has produced a report reviewing more than 500 studies on abortion-associated health risks, including breast cancer, pelvic infection, infertility, ectopic pregnancy and suicide.

UK. In a recent interview, Nuala Scarisbrick of LIFE said that the organisation now counsels a growing number of women who have had abortions and regret it. LIFE also now offers married couples fertility treatments which, with a 25% success rate, compare favourably with IVF.

UK. Student LifeNet is a national network of pro-life students, run by students for students, which began 2 years ago to encourage the setting up of pro-life groups in universities. Contact them at tel. 01707 655443 or slifenet@btinternet.com

CatechismCornerCatechismCornerCatechism

The Tabernacle

1379. The tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent, outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species. It is for this reason that the tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church, and should be constructed in such a way that it emphasises and manifests the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.



1380. It is highly fitting that Christ should have wanted to remain present to his Church in this unique way. Since Christ was about to take his departure from his own in his visible form, he wanted to give us his sacramental presence; since he was about to offer himself on the cross to save us, he wanted us to have the memorial of the love with

which he loved us 'to the end', even to the giving of his life. In his Eucharistic presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us, and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love:

'The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in the sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation, full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offences and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.' John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae*, 3.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church (& see page 4)

Schism Ended in Brazil

continued from page one

Sadly, Lefebvre and Mayer died excommunicated. Following the death of Mayer, the bishops now running the Fraternity of St Pius X ordained a fifth bishop, Licinio Rangel, to be head of the Association of St Jean-Marie Vianney.

Rome was anxious to reach an accommodation with the traditionalist groups. Bishop Rangel and his priests had, within 20 years, built churches and chapels, opened a seminary, a school, social centres and even monasteries. Cardinal Hoyos, head of the Congregation for the Clergy, was given the

responsibility by the Holy Father of exploring avenues of reconciliation. The terms of the final agreement surely demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit. The Association was required to formally recognise the validity of the Novus Ordo. In return, the right of the priests of the Association of St Jean-Marie Vianney to celebrate the traditional, Tridentine, Mass was formally acknowledged.

Secondly, they were required to acknowledge that Vatican II was a valid General Council of the Church – while Rome effectively acknowledged that the Association had a right to be critical of the

implementation of some of Vatican II's decrees. Thirdly, and most significantly, Bishop Rangel has been given the status of Apostolic Administrator, which means that he and his Association are directly responsible to the Holy Father, and not to any local Ordinary. **All this has been achieved with the enthusiastic blessing of the diocesan bishop, Mgr Roberto Guimaraes, clearly a remarkable prelate, for whom the wellbeing of the Body of Christ is infinitely more important than anything else.**

Bishop Rangel could not have praised the diocesan bishop more

highly, attributing to him the credit for the end of the schism. However, the Fraternity of St Pius X, the largest of the traditionalist groups, has not yet been reconciled. So while there is great rejoicing in the whole Brazilian church, and very

rightly so, for this demonstration of mutual zeal for unity in charity and truth, there is still great need of prayer before this tragic chapter in the life of the Church can be finally resolved.

*for links and articles, try:
www.catholic-family.org*

Alliance of the Two Hearts

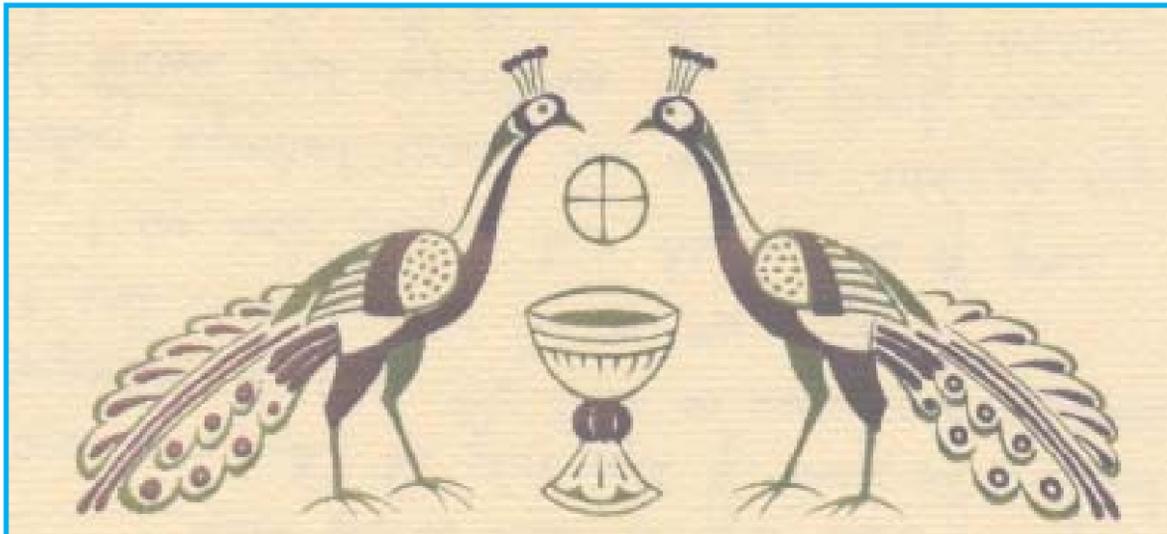
“I will bless the homes in which my Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honoured. I will give peace in their families”
(From the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).

The Alliance of Holy Family International (AHFI) is an international Catholic movement under the supervision of the Pontifical Council for the Family in the Vatican, Rome. The mission of the AHFI is to restore and strengthen holiness, unity and healing of broken-ness beginning in the home and extending to the bigger family of GOD, made up of the clergy the media, and youth. The main apostolic activity of the AHFI is its twofold program of House-to-House Evangelism and a monthly Communion of Reparation vigil.

The Communion of Reparation is the devotion to the Two Hearts lived daily through Family Consecration, Rosary, Reconciliation, Holy Communion, Holy Hours of Adoration and monthly through the First Friday-First Saturday overnight Vigil. In our House-to-House Evangelism program a family is visited and encouraged to adopt the daily Communion of Reparation (Rosary, Examination of Conscience or Confession, Holy Communion and Adoration) as a way of life.

Would you like your family consecrated to the SACRED HEART of JESUS and the IMMACULATE HEART of MARY and help spread this devotion in your Parish ?

UK contacts: John Beighton 01135 370414; Pauline Ramsden 01829 770585; Patrick Barry 01606 77434.



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Irresistibly drawn by Christ's presence

Jim Allen recalls his conversion, almost 40 years ago

While on holiday in Italy in the early 1960s, I was idly watching TV one evening in my hotel when they showed a re-run of Pope John XXIII giving his Easter blessing. At first my attitude was that of a Protestant Englishman observing quaint foreign customs. Suddenly the words 'He is the Holy

Father', repeated over and over, passed through my mind with such a warmth and power that they could not be resisted. From that day on I have had no difficulty with the papacy, although it took two more years before so many roads were proving to lead to Rome that, like Newman, I knew it would be a 'sin against the light' to resist any longer.

There was another equally compelling experience on that holiday that helped to give me a kick start towards the 'one true fold'. I went with a friend to Rome for a few days. On arrival, he went off to look at a sports stadium while I, like a homing pigeon, made straight for St Peter's. Over the first altar on the left as you go in, there is a picture of Christ's baptism. As I looked at it some truths of amazing simplicity were impressed on me: I thought: 'He has got arms - and I have got arms.'; 'He has got legs - so have I.' 'He is like me and I am like Him - but He is God!' Then I saw that, while people are more or less difficult to love complete-

ly, there is no such problem with Our Lord. We can give ourselves to Him without any reservations.

As I walked around St Peter's, alone in a foreign land and surrounded by the trappings of a strange religion, I felt for the first time in my life fully at home. It was as if I had been there before. Even the faint smell of incense seemed 'familiar'. There were also some other, less vivid experiences. At the top of the Scala Sancta there is a picture of Jesus crucified with the words *Jesus Christus* over it. This was the first time that I had seen the Lord's name in the universal Latin and at that moment any lingering Anglicanism fell away from me, never to return. On entering one little church some unseen power made me cross myself - another first time! After that my conversion was sustained by the heart-melting power radiating from the tabernacle, which makes Catholic churches, to quote Newman again, 'like no other places on earth'.

Let sophisticated sceptics say what they will about this sort of thing. We who have truly been led into the Roman Catholic Faith know better.



Tabernacle in Newman's chapel, Littlemore, near Oxford

The message is powerful

Jana Mocova, aged 20, describes a choir to which she belongs in Slovakia

It is now eleven years since the founding of 'Doves of the Cross', the all-girl Slovakian choir based in Ziar Nad Hronom, central Slovakia. Nearby is Kremnica, the centre point of all Europe. Before communism, Ziar Nad Hronom was a small village rejoicing in the name 'Holy Cross'. Now it is a town, with the employment problems common to post-Communist societies. The choir consists of 40 girls, whose ages range from 7 to 24. Led by Magda Polonova, a 47-year-old mother of six, we sing for Mass on Sundays in our parish church, the Triumph of the Cross.

In 1994 the choir took on new work. Magda, pregnant with her fifth child, was being given much advice to abort. Instead, she offered her choir a challenge. With some of the older girls and the help of a local teacher, Dasa Bencova, she wrote a programme of pro-life words and music for her choir to perform. Accompanied on the keyboard, the choir began to practise such compositions as 'Testimony of a Baby' and 'Diary of an Unborn Child'.* Blessed with talented accompanists - the first is now a doctor, the second is studying medicine, while the third is a law student - we were soon ready to take to the road. In response to invitations, often from parish priests, we began to travel throughout

Slovakia, taking our programme to villages and towns.

truth and purity

We wear long grey dresses with white-lined cowls and we travel by coach, accompanied by our mothers, who bring copies of our tapes to sell, and by altar boys from our parish, who help us to carry the heavy sound equipment and keyboards. Usually we are invited to sing at Sunday Mass in the morning, eat a light lunch and then present our music programme in the afternoon. We are home again in time to prepare for another week at school or work. reactions to our performances are as you would expect: sad faces, tears. The message is powerful; the youth of the

singers underlines its truth and purity.

Magda noted that her sixth pregnancy in 1999 did not give rise to suggestions of abortion. Little Teresa was born in August, her mother's pro-life message well understood in Ziar Nad Hronom, the town of the Holy Cross. The choir has made five tapes and a 16-track CD. The CD contains songs in several languages, including English, and a beautiful *Salve Regina*. At £10 a copy, it demonstrates the choir's purity and clarity of tone, with beautiful harmonies.

Enquiries to: Magda Polonova, S. Moyses, Ziar Nad Hronom, 96501 Slovakia. For UK orders, phone: 01622-765175.

*See also the lyrics, on page 10.



The baby daughter of Magda Polonova with her oldest sister

Passing on the Faith

continued from page one

priest. This ensured that every priest was prayed for and teaches children how important it is to pray for priests.

4. Diana Turner got her children to make cards and small gifts to give to their local Carmelite convent every Christmas. The children delighted in their efforts - once even making a crib for the nuns out of a shoe box - and learnt a little more about religious orders in the wider Church.

5. Carolyn Ellis, the MacGregor family and several others have family shrines, oratories, grottoes or 'altars' where family prayers take place. This gives a special aura to the room (or under-stairs space) and 'incarnates' the numinous in the home or garden. Children can be given the task of picking fresh flowers to keep by the shrine and of lighting candles before family prayers. Crucifixes, holy water stoups (kept filled), pictures of the Sacred Heart etc, also show visitors that they are in a Catholic home, distinguishable from its secular neighbours.

6. Josephine Treloar has taken her pre-school children to visit their local Catholic church sometimes during the week. This gives familiarity with the inside of a Catholic church; children can absorb something of the Passion from looking at the Stations of the Cross; dipping their fingers in the holy water font, making the sign of the Cross, lighting candles before a statue and learning to genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament.

7. A French family makes a habit of blessing each child before bed, making the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

8. The NACF has in the past demonstrated practical charity towards child victims of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster. Taking refugees and needy children into one's home for short periods shows children the need for practical charity to others less fortunate than themselves. They can

also have their own 'poor boxes' for particular diocesan charities, and be encouraged to put some of their own pocket money in them.

9. Peter Kahn, and other families have mentioned the need to 'make Sunday special'. This helps a child to see that it is not simply part of the weekend, but a holy day, sacred to attending Mass and special family outings or pastimes.



Sr E Ruth Obbard OCam

10. Clare Bevan describes reading aloud from saints' stories. Children love stories of adventure and heroism so this is an excellent way to introduce them to lives that are also courageous and holy. Family Publications (see page 9) publishes very readable and modestly priced saints' stories, some of them written in a lively, humorous style by CF's own gardening correspondent, Ethel Pochocki.

11. Richard Brown points out that there are some very good Christian films on video, e.g *A Man For All Seasons* (about St Thomas More), *The Song of Bernadette*, *The Mission* (about the Jesuit mission among the Indians in Paraguay), *Becket* (the story of St Thomas Becket and his quarrel with the King) and many more. The visual medium has enormous impact (as we know from TV); it can be harnessed to capture children's imaginations for the Faith. St Paul's Media Publishing has a catalogue: Tel. 020 7937 9591. It is possible to use a TV screen for videos only, without paying for a licence.

Continued on page 12.

Femininity not feminism

'The Gift of Femininity' is a collection of women's writings, in which each describes a personal spiritual journey. Contributors include such well-known names as Joanna Bogle, Alice Von Hildebrand and Kimberley Hahn. The book is an excellent Catholic response to the strident voice of the women's 'liberation' movement, which has only succeeded in enslaving women in a new way.

Copies are available from the Good Counsel Network, 538 King's Drive, Wembley HA9 9JD and cost £10, which covers cost and postage and gives a small donation to the Network's badly needed funds.

Letters to the Editor

The Editor, 8 Oxford Road, Stone, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 8PB

Danger in children's books

Dear Editor,

I am a primary school teacher, involved in the assessment of suitable reading material for children. Following Margaret Pattinson's letter about Harry Potter in CF 52, I would like to offer your readers some advice about *Northern Lights* by Philip Pullman. It is part of an award-winning trilogy, all three books sharing a common 'philosophy'. It is deeply anti-Christian, and unless the reader is well formed, doctrinally and morally, as well as capable of critical reflection, I believe it could do specific harm. Pullman states that maturity is not so much assessing and then choosing right over wrong; it is 'self-realisation.' In his novel, the 'Church' (Christian and loosely Catholic) is seen as the enemy of a young person's 'self-realisation', and the novel dramatises the often cruel attempts by Christians to prevent it. The references to the Church and to Christians are negative and inaccurate (to the point of rewriting part of the Book of Genesis). The arch-criminal, Mrs Coulter, is a 'lay apostle.' In interview Pullman describes his ficti-

tious universe as one in which the good angel has been dethroned by a 'demiurge' (i.e. our God), who is overpowering and indifferent to man's happiness.

How different from this is *Lord of the Rings*. Courageous and self-controlled, Frodo realises himself in spite of fear, on a quest freely undertaken in the battle against evil. His 'self-realisation' is deeply consonant with the objective good.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen de la Bedoyère
London

Editor's note: Bethlehem Books publishes (and republishes) excellent children's classics. Phone Family Publications, 01865 558336, for their catalogue.

Conversion Stories

Dear Editor,

Many of your readers will be familiar with *Surprised by Truth*, the 1994 collection of first-person stories by converts to the Catholic Church. That book has changed many lives. It played a part in both my wife and I joining the Church in 1997. Well, its sequel, *Surprised by Truth 2*, is now published and is a worthy follow-up. The variety of

perspectives and experiences is impressive: you'll read about former Protestants, Mormons, pagans, cult members and lapsed Catholics. Each story is compelling in its own way. Who should read it? I can recommend it to anyone open to learning more about the Catholic Faith, especially lukewarm Catholics. It is also inspiring and encouraging reading for committed Catholics. Its overall message is that life is an ongoing conversion. We never 'arrive' or can ever consider ourselves above the need for conversion.

God bless you and your readers!
Scott Crow
California.

Feedback from readers

Dear Editor,

Please accept my compliments on CF 52, another lovely issue of *Catholic Family*. I pass my copies to mainly home-schooling families here in western New York. I know they are read and I take comfort from the knowledge that there are so many good, solid Catholic families, raising their children in the virtues so ably presented and defended in the pages of your publication. You and Catholic families are ever in my prayers. May the Lord send you many more blessings.

Yours sincerely,
John H. Heyer II
New York

Dear Editor,

By far the best things in your newspaper are the little pen pictures of how religion is organised in certain devout families. I note that it always seems to be the wife who is the prime mover in this area; she it is who determines the form of family devotions and gently imposes 'ecclesiastical discipline'. Sometimes a smiling man appears in the accompanying photo, sometimes not. This connects up with the fervent saying of an old Irish priest I once knew: 'The vocation of a priest comes through the heart of his mother.'

Best wishes,
Jim Allen
Torquay

Dear Editor,

Your paper offers such a warm perspective on Catholic family life. Thank you for it.

Beth Abrahams
Toronto, Canada

Dear Editor,

I read the response of Ruth Taylor to the events of September 11 2001 in CF 51 with great interest. Writing as an American citizen, it is

The power of speaking out

Many NACF members joined in the campaign to persuade Tesco's supermarket chain to rethink its policy after its announcement that it would offer the 'morning after' pill to underage girls without a prescription at two of its shops. Now Tesco's has announced that 'after listening carefully' to customers' concerns, it has 'decided not to dispense to those under 16'. After so often reading bad news, this is surely good news, even if of a limited kind. Those who did protest to Tesco's should remember to thank the chief executive, Sir Terry Leahy for this change in policy; we must encourage as well as criticise. Such an about-turn should spur us on to keep raising our voices in defence of Christian values and to protect our young people. We all have many concerns competing for our attention: family, parish, pro-life, children's religious education, the media. But we must not be discouraged or give up. Truth demands that we speak, in whatever way is appropriate in our particular circumstances.

We have recently celebrated the feast of Sts Joachim and Anne, patrons of marriage and family, so let us not forget to say:

St Joachim and St Anne, pray for us and our families!

understandable that we should be deeply disturbed by the memory of that horrific destruction of so many innocent American lives. And yet I can't help but compare the general public outcry against the September attacks with our nation's sad complacency in the face of abortion, the legalised destruction of not thousands but millions and millions of innocent American lives. Though I am in no way trying to defend Islamic extremists in their 'holy war' against America, I do find it hard to understand how we can have so much righteous anger about the heinous and despicable crimes of September 11 when our own hands are so tainted with the blood of our own crimes, viz. the literal slaughter of our own unborn young. Worse, we not only permit innocent unborn babies to be murdered, we defend

abortion as a 'right'. Yes, it is fitting to pray for those who died as a result of the terrorist attacks, but to ignore what we do to the unborn in the name of women's 'rights' is simply duplicitous. Either the taking of innocent life is wrong or it is right. It cannot be wrong in one case and right in another.

Surely, now more than ever, in the light of just how vulnerable we all are to terrorist attacks, we need to 'get straight with God', to repent of our sins, most especially the hardening of our hearts, and allowing expediency and selfish concerns to justify nothing less than killing our own unborn children.

I wonder if your English readers feel the same as I do?

May God have mercy on us all!
Carolyn Ellis
Texas

Let that be true for me

Monsignor Graham Leonard writes the following prayer:

Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven

Father, I know that You love me,

for you have shown me Yourself in Christ, my Lord;

I see You on the Cross

I know Your presence everywhere, sustaining, guiding and directing me;

Father, I accept Your love and in response I ask two things:

deliver me from the evil of trying to use You to serve my ends

for I am made for You and You for me.

May I see Your will for me and seeing it

embrace it as my true and sovereign Good;

give me the vision to see that when I hear the call to leave this world,

I shall bring nothing save my friendship with Yourself

which You have given me.

My hands will be empty if I have not responded to Your love

and made friendship with You my one and chief concern

besides which all else has no abiding worth.

My possessions, my talents and my body –

what are they but gifts from You to be returned,

as means through which I learn to be Your friend.

I need not fear; I see my Lord transfigured on the Mount

And so I know that he who lives with God is not destroyed,

but through the Passion and the risen life,

united by the Spirit with Your Son,

in glory radiant with Love will come to share

Your ceaseless, perfect life of love and peace.

My God, my all. Let that be true for me.

Only if it be so can I bring others to your love. Amen.

Thanks for your help!

In response to our appeal in CF 52, Father Don Burke SMA writes us the following:

Dear Editor,

Information has come to me of your readers' kind and generous help in my work at a rural 'school' on the Congo border (Zambian side). The teacher/farmer in that little unit came to me for supplies – chalk, textbooks and exercise books (and a cooking pot for his wife!) – and I was happy in being able to supply all. I enclose a photograph of him and his pupils. I have now managed to make uniforms for the more shabbily dressed pupils in the photo and have given them washing powder for their other 'clothes'. Bless them! Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,
Don Burke SMA.

Those wishing to make further donations to this good cause, should send them to Father Don's sister, Miss Laura Burke, 5 Stephen Street, Waterford, Ireland, and she will forward them to her brother.



Becoming a family through home education

Peter Kahn argues the case for home schooling

Is your family so very different to non-Christian families around you? This question strikes at the heart of what it means to be a Catholic family. Much of the difficulty in answering this stems from the nature of the society in which we live. Everything is based around the individual and not the family. Friendships are between individual members of different families, rather than between whole families. We each aspire to our own successful career. Schools educate children in isolation from their brothers and sisters. In the face of such a society,



it is difficult for a family to live a common life. Far more is needed than a few extra minutes of prayer each day or week. We need radically to rethink our family life. Where better to start than with the education of our children? Schooling dominates so much of life. How can you make sure that education builds unity into your family, encourages your children to grow in their faith and enables you to reach out to other families?

The answer I want to propose is indeed radical: educate your children at home. While it will not suit – or be possible for – everyone, many Catholic parents have found that educating their children at home enables them more truly to live as a Catholic family. With two small children, what do my wife and I see in our plan to home-school that we hope will enable us to become more of a family? My answer draws heavily on the teaching of the Holy Father in his encyclical on the family, *Familiaris Consortio*. The Pope selected several tasks that the family needs to take to heart to truly become a family. Every family is called to form a community of persons, to serve life, to participate in the development of society and to share in the life and mission of the Church. Home education provides a wonderful opportunity to carry out these tasks that the Pope has identified as God's plan for the

family. I hope we will also see how every family, home-schooling or not, will be able to carry out these tasks more fully.

community of persons

Sustaining a community of persons is a real challenge. Many families break down in the face of the pressures of life. Often the lack of community in a family is revealed with the passage of time, as children leave home. To aid us develop our family into an authentic community of persons, Pope John Paul II identifies a fundamental source of help: the educational exchange between parents and children, in which each gives and receives. Life is full of occasions when parents teach, and learn from, their children. And all of these are occasions for love. But what if we hand over a key part of this exchange to an external agency – a school? We lose one of the best opportunities for parents and children to love each other. Indeed, Aidan Nichols, in his prophetic book, *Christendom Awake!*, observes that when key functions of the family are hived off to other agencies, its foundations collapse.

One alternative is for schools themselves to foster family life. Parents can be encouraged to become involved in the daily activities of the school; ways can be found to enable brothers and sisters at the same school to participate in common activities along with a parent. But perhaps this idea is more radical than home education. Schools are increasingly judged on how well the children perform in national examinations. They are not measured on how well they promote family life.

The second task that the Pope has identified for the family is to

serve life. This includes both the transmission of life and education – most especially education in the faith. Most children leave Catholic schools with little understanding of what the Church teaches. How many school leavers genuinely understand the principles that underpin the moral teaching of the Church? With home education, parents can guarantee that their children receive comprehensive and faithful catechesis as an integral part of their education. 'Socialisation' is another task that often scares parents from educating their children at home. But what kind of socialisation will your children receive in school? An environment based around peer relations is not a good place to learn how to be unselfish, to be detached from possessions or, in the teenage years, to live chastely.

The kind of socialisation envisaged by the Pope is based around the communion of persons in the family. We see a model of education that has the family at its heart, rather than simply a concern for individual relationships between peers. Home education stills allows plenty of scope for families to relate to each other; it should not be a choice for social isolation. What about the education of the intellect? Statistics show that home schooling leads to more effective academic results than standard schooling. Apart from the small size of the 'classroom', there is the possibility of shaping the curriculum for your own children that ensures the whole of their education is coloured by faith and takes account of their developing interests.

Part 2 of this article will be in the Autumn edition. Contact Peter Kahn at peter.kahn@man.ac.uk for more advice.



St Bernadette

St Bernadette was a poor girl from Lourdes. She saw Our Lady 18 times in the year 1858. Our Lady told her that she was the Immaculate Conception. Bernadette became a nun at the convent of Nevers. Her body is still preserved there. She led a very holy life and suffered a great deal. Her feast day is 16 April and the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes is 11 February – the World Day of the Sick.

Picture by Marie-Clare Pfang, aged 10, from Norfolk

Agnostic to Catholic via pro-life

Cyndi Babecka describes the conversion of her and her husband, and their website www.ThinkChastity.com



Bob and Cyndi Babecka and their children

What is 'Honest to God Sex'? Three years ago my husband Bob and I had no idea. Now this is the slogan for our web site. A few years ago, neither Bob nor I was pro-life, Catholic or even Christian. So how did we get to be advocates for marital chastity? It has been a long, strange, grace-filled journey. Before Bob and I met, he became friendly with a Catholic co-worker, Mike. After many lunchtime discussions, he convinced Bob that life was precious, abortion was wrong and he needed to work to prevent abortions. Bob did this; he became involved with local pro-life groups.

Fast forward to when we met. I, too, believed that a woman's choice was more important than a child's life. Bob set my thinking straight. When the time came for us to marry, I still had to finish college, so we were looking for a way to postpone having children. Remember that we were not Catholic at the time, so we thought that we had no reason not to use contraception. We knew we couldn't use any birth control based on artificial hormones because some of the time they work by preventing a newly conceived baby from implanting in the mother's womb, causing an early abortion. Mike introduced us to natural family planning. It was safe, effective and no one had to die. So a couple of agnostics began using NFP.

Time went on. We had two lovely daughters. Bob was sidewalk counselling with some Christian friends. When Kaylynn was two and Debbie was about 9 months, our best friends lent us a book, *Won By Love* by Norma McCorvy. She had been 'Jane Roe' in the infamous 'Roe v. Wade' court decision that legalised abortion in the US. The book told of her conversion to Christianity. (Since then she has become a Catholic). I was deeply moved by her story, but too embarrassed to admit this to Bob. You see, a couple of months earlier, I had told him that since he was spending so much time with all these Christians, I was afraid he would get sucked into Christianity. Now I wanted to get 'sucked in'! Fortunately the book also moved Bob. When he told me this, I jumped at the chance and told him I wanted to look into Christianity.

We started with the Catholic Church, figuring we would work our way through all the denominations until we found the truth. Luckily we started at the right

place. At the suggestion of Father Tom, whom we had met at a pro-life conference, we started going to Mass and praying the Rosary. Imagine a couple of agnostics praying the rosary and sneaking into Mass for fear of being spotted by our friends! One night while praying the rosary, one of the girls needed a nappy change. While Bob was upstairs changing her, I prayed for him to receive faith. God filled me with grace. I knew that God was real and that Christ was real. I knew.

Bob was not happy with this revelation. He had expected an intellectual journey, and a decision based on facts. Now I had leapt across a chasm and had left him behind. In reality, God had simply raised the stakes on Bob's search. Six months later, Bob found the proof he needed. Along the way, we started to appreciate the beauty of the Church's teachings on contraception and its strong link to abortion. In the fall of 1999, Joseph was born and we began our conversion classes. We soon learned that most Catholics knew little of the Church's teachings on birth control and abortion. In fact we were told by both a priest and a catechist that contraception was 'a matter of conscience'. When we were welcomed into the Church at Easter 2000, we had our calling.

Our website, ThinkChastity.com was Bob's brainchild. He gathered all the information and I learned how to build a website. The site started at the end of summer. Our message was simple: chastity doesn't end when we say 'I do'. Chastity is not 'abstinence'. It is living one's conjugal life in accordance with God's will. When you are married, that means being open to life with every conjugal act; no contracepting, no sterilising, no holding any part of your life back from God or your spouse. **Why not visit us on the Web sometime?**

Standing apart from the crowd

Peter Kahn, a lecturer at Manchester University, discusses the challenges for Catholic students going to university today

I think we are all aware how difficult it is for young people to live out their faith. It is particularly difficult for students who live away from home at university to remain practising Catholics. The social life at a typical hall of residence, for instance, is often centred around recreational sex and the excessive consumption of alcohol. Life at university can offer an experience of intense isolation for someone who wants to be an active Catholic. A young friend of mine who is a student has recently experienced this feeling of isolation. She is keenly aware that nearly everyone ignores God at university. Boyfriends assume that she will be ready to sleep with them. So what is it that has sustained her faith? She points to two main factors. She continued to live at home with her parents while she was an undergraduate. And she is also a member of a small Catholic community. For her this means that she shares friendships with around ten to fifteen other young Catholics.

The first lesson for me from my friend's experience is that students need friendships with other young Catholics. So students should seriously consider choosing a university on the basis of the local Catholic life. Find out what the local Catholic

Chaplaincy is like before deciding on a university. Are there any other groups like Youth 2000 that are particularly active in the area?

The next lesson is that the people you live with have a real influence on your life. Find a university with a Catholic hall of residence that will take you in. Catholic halls of residence do exist. If you simply allow a university to assign a place to live in a mixed secular hall of



residence, then you may well be letting yourself in for a life of constant temptation. And why not consider living at home, if at all practicable? Choose a local university if there is one, or study with the Open University. **Most students now live lives that are at odds with the practice of the faith. Without supportive relationships, it takes a rare student to stand apart from the crowd.**

Peter Kahn's email address is: peter.kahn@man.ac.uk if readers would like to contact him on this subject.

I cannot do it on my own

Cecilia Bromley-Martin, of Aid to the Church in Need, investigates the Church in Haiti

Like the island itself, the Church in Haiti is desperately poor. Père Nicolas Vitesse is the parish priest in a remote and mountainous region of the country, and he is virtually dependent on his parishioners for daily survival. Sometimes they can spare him some food, at other times they cannot. No meal is guaranteed. 'When my people live wretchedly, then so do I', he told me. 'When you have nothing, you cannot choose.' He has scarcely any furniture in his presbytery, because nobody can afford to buy it for him. Without a wardrobe, he simply keeps his clothes on the floor.

Yet despite his extreme circumstances, this 39-year-old priest is dynamic and pioneering. He was sent to the rural parish of St Pierre des Dunes when it was founded five years ago, only to be faced with an ignorance of Catholicism, a strong presence of Protestant sects, and a firm attachment to the traditional Haitian religion of voodoo. But he was not deterred. 'When I arrived, I tried to do missionary work. ACN helped me with the formation of catechists. I visit the people in their houses and for some it is the first time they have heard about the Catholic faith.' His evangelising work has been hugely successful. 'Between 1996 and 1997, before the parish was created, there were 7 baptisms in the area. Now, in February this year, I had 80, in

March I had 60, and in May I am due to have 96. I have 500 people every evening in May, saying the rosary for the month of Mary. At my first Mass in the parish, I had



Père Nicolas Vitesse of St Pierre des Dunes parish, Les Gonaïves

115 in the congregation. Now on Sundays I get 650-700. Even at the 5am weekday Mass I get 150.'

And that is just in one church. In the inhospitable terrain of this mountainous country, each parish has numerous outlying chapels for the more remote faithful who live too far from the church. Père Nicolas has 7 chapels in total, although only 3 are built, the rest are just 'tonnelles' - wooden posts with a thatched or tin roof. 'I visit all 7 chapels several times each month. The furthest is nearly four hours' walk away, and involves taking a boat to cross a river, too.'

But his commitment is being rewarded. The people in his parish

are now beginning to leave the sects to convert to Catholicism. 'Even now, the sects and voodoo are diminishing. Some voodoo priests have even converted; one gave me the land, where he'd held his 'ceremonies', for a chapel. I really believe that in 4 or 5 years I could drive out voodoo and the sects. But I cannot do it on my own. I am alone now, but if I had an assistant priest, how could he live? The people can't feed two priests. They scarcely have enough to feed me.'

It is for priests like Père Nicolas that the thousands of Mass stipends sent to Haiti every year by ACN can be such a life-saver. One told me: 'For the last six months, we have only survived on your Mass intention stipends. Without them, those of us in the poorest parishes would have had nothing to keep us alive.' And yet vocations are actually growing in Haiti. The young men training for the priesthood know the sort of difficulties they will face in their ministry, but they are willing to give their lives to bring encouragement and the Faith to their suffering people. One priest explained it very simply: 'I love this life. One of the reasons I felt pushed to go to the seminary was that I wanted to find a place where I could give myself totally to the service of God through service to my brothers.'

To help the work of Aid to the Church in Need, contact Cecilia at 1, Times Square, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LF Tel. 020 8642 8668.

"All the Lord's angels and all the Lord's men..."

Helen Fox takes a new look at old nursery rhymes

Easily memorable rhymes and songs have been used throughout history as a good way to convey ideas. Particularly in societies where most people couldn't read, these became an extremely powerful tool for the spread of ideas. In the fourth century AD, when the heretic Arius wanted to propagate his views, he cleverly took his little choir out on festival days and they all sang a catchy tune containing his dubious doctrine. People would end up singing it even if they didn't believe a word he said. Those who held the orthodox beliefs took up the defence and started making up their own songs to correct his errors and educate the flock.

From more recent times there is a very common nursery rhyme that goes: Mary Mary, quite contrary/how does your garden grow?/ With silver bells and cockleshells/and

pretty maids all in a row.

This has been interpreted as a religious rhyme about a convent of Our Lady. The bells were the chapel bells, the cockle shells were a well-known symbol for pilgrims and the 'maids' were the nuns singing in the choir. Yet another interpretation sees 'Mary' as Mary, Queen of Scots and the maids as her faithful ladies-in-waiting. Even the secular world can do it. During the last war, Lord Woolton was the UK Minister of Food Production and he published the following notable piece: Those who have the will to win/cook potatoes in their skin/for they know the sight of peelings/deeply hurts Lord Woolton's feelings.

So can we do better than that? How about today's Catholics coming up with a few offerings to instil some true doctrine in the next generation? What about these to start off with:

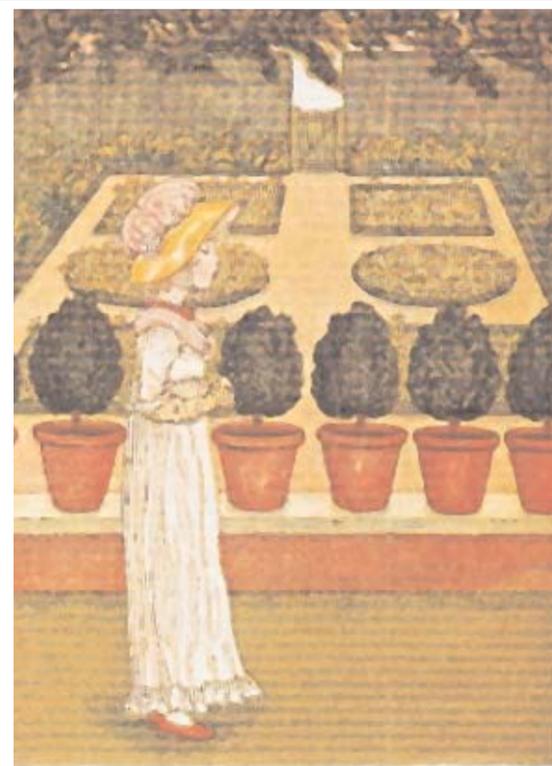
Alternative to 'The grand old Duke of York': The grand old souls of men/ They have three destinies/ They go to heaven or hell/or wait in Purgatory/And when they are up they are up/and when they are down they are down/ and when they are only halfway up/they are nearer up than down!

Alternative to 'Humpty Dumpty': Satan set himself above all/Then the devil had a great fall/All the Lord's angels and all the Lord's men/couldn't make Satan a good guy again.

Alternative to 'Mary had a little lamb': Mary was a holy girl/her soul was white as snow/ and for each prayer that Mary said/ the Lord would wonders show.

Alternative to 'Twinkle, twinkle little star': Twinkle, twinkle little soul/how I wonder what's your goal?/ If unto the world you die/Up to heaven you will fly/Twinkle, twinkle little soul/how I hope that is your goal.

'Mary, Mary, quite contrary', illustrated by Kate Greenaway



Competition!!!

Families are invited to send in their own Catholic nursery rhyme alternatives to the Editor at 8, Oxford Road, Stone, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 8PB (to arrive before 30 September, 2002, please). Helen Fox will judge them and the winning family will receive a £25 Marks and Spencer gift voucher. The winning entry will be published in the Autumn edition.

Passing on Catholic morality to our children

Greg Clovis, Director of Human Life International (UK), gives advice and encouragement to Catholic parents

It is common today, sadly, to hear Catholic parents, who have tried to raise their children in the Faith, say, 'I do not understand why our children do not share our values, our beliefs and our approach to pro-life issues.' More and more parents are grieved to see their children follow the culture of their peer group and seem indistinguishable from other children raised in non-religious homes. Most Catholic parents make efforts to send their children to Catholic schools in the hope that, along with their own good example, the school will promote Catholic teaching and culture as part of the learning process.

But are Catholic children less likely to cohabit, contracept, be promiscuous or abort than other non-religious teenagers? According to our research in Catholic schools, it seems that the majority of young Catholics do not differ on these questions from the attitudes found in the general population. The HLI chastity team has gone into a number of schools and distributed a questionnaire. If we look at three of the most vital moral issues, cohabitation, contraception and abortion, we can form some



NACF members Greg and Aghi Clovis with their family

idea of the influence of the Church's teaching on the next generation.

The responses to our questionnaire showed that some 61% of Catholic youth agree or strongly agree that cohabitation is acceptable. On the question of contraception, 72% thought it was 'a necessity'. On abortion, 33% felt it could sometimes be justified. When we look at the way in which these students answered our questions, it becomes apparent how successful the media and sex 'educators' have been in influencing our children. The overt messages our children are continually bombarded with, coupled with the lack of moral formation given in the parish communities, inevitably leave young peo-

ple in a moral desert. For the most part, they never hear the message consistently taught by the Holy Father, so we should not be surprised if the majority of young Catholics do not hold fast to the teachings of the Church.

chaste lives

If young people accept cohabitation, they will inevitably accept contraception. If they accept contraception, the acceptance of abortion will follow as the 'contraception' of last resort. The agents of death have long known this, and for this reason they promote a version of sex education which is based on the promotion of contraception. Their strategy is: if they can change the behaviour of the young, they

can dictate their value system. Most children spend 15 years in full-time education. In Catholic schools, political correctness often dictates that the Faith is seen 'comparatively', as one of many faith traditions. Further to this, the introduction of sex and relationships education has caused enormous damage. Sex education in schools is a misappropriation of parental authority and it has not helped our children to live more moral or chaste lives.

They are increasingly alienated from their parents' values, from authority legitimately exercised and from the moral teachings of the Church. The beauty and the mystery of the holiness of sex within marriage is being withheld from our young people. We live in a pagan culture. When one considers the time our children spend at school, with television and with their peers, it is obvious that only the strongest of teenagers can survive with their faith intact. As parents, we need to be more proactive in saying 'No' to inappropriate sex instruction which seeks to strip away children's natural sense of modesty and shyness. Catholic parents must remain the prime educators of their children, particularly in this area.

Even if parents cannot articulate to their children the teaching of

Christ and the living out of the moral life, simply teaching it by example is all that is necessary. Our children are expert imitators and by observing the loving and prayerful relationship between their parents, they will gain the insight they need to prepare them for married life. Parents need to minimise destructive influences, such as the media and bad company, and to maximise positive influences like family prayer time and general family activities. The most effective pro-life organisation and school in the world is the family.

See also the article by Peter Kahn on page 6.

Canticle on chastity

Canticle, the US quarterly magazine of 'today's Catholic woman', has devoted the whole of its latest issue to chastity – 'our joyful affirmation of true love'.

Canticle can be found on-line at www.canticlemagazine.com. You will find information on past issues, many articles available for reading and printing out, the chance to write in and the opportunity to subscribe. Why not spread the word about the fullness of authentic femininity!

Stop Press!

What? Foyer Retreat
Where? Boars Hill, Oxford.
When? 9–15 September 02.
Who? Led by Fr. Ian Ker, renowned Newman scholar.
How much? only £130 for the full week, all inclusive!
Hurry! Still some places available!
Contact Martin Blake, 01458 833726.

dream, to seek absolute values and to believe in true love. As parents, it is our duty to guide them and inform them, to give them freedom – but also the full knowledge of the consequences of their choices. To fail to do this is to give them a false liberty, leaving them in vulnerable ignorance, prisoners of fashion and their peer group. We must teach our children how to evaluate the messages with which they are bombarded; to recognise manipulation; to judge, with compassion; to have a sense of absolute values and to strive for the virtues of hard work, honesty, courage, respect for others and for themselves – which will keep them on the path of real happiness.

A mother's concern for *spiritual* health

Clotilde de Merode, from Belgium, gives her personal response to this question

As a child I received the priceless gift of faith. Every evening my mother would read us a few pages from a religious book. One picture showed a sick child, watched over by his mother, who nursed him selflessly. The text said that 'God loves you so much more even than this mother'. I was very impressed by the extent of God's love. To judge by the devotion shown by my mother when we were ill, I thought that nobody could love us more. If God really loved me more than this, His love must be infinitely great. Other pictures in the book taught us more about God, His infinite mercy and the quality of His love, freely and ceaselessly given. Later, when I began school, my father told me he would try to imagine my school day, whatever I happened to be doing. With my childish logic, I thought, 'God, who loves me even more than my father and who sees everything, wants to follow me with love wherever I am at school; and for Him, that will be possible.' I fell asleep comforted, knowing I



Clotilde de Mérode with her family

would go to school under the infinitely loving eyes of God.

And so I grew in faith, that inestimable gift which my parents transmitted to me through the example of their own love. Now I myself am the mother of a family. I have five adult, or almost adult, children and I hope, with the help of God, to have given them, too, the gift of faith. But society is more intrusive than it was in my day: the internet, television, video shops, films, newspapers, mobile phones and magazines targeted at every age continually bombard young people, making it harder to have the time and the peace to think of God, to withstand the confusion of

values and to have strong and clear views. Many other parents feel as I do. Some of them would argue that there is nothing to be done, that one must let young people 'choose' for themselves and not 'insist' they share one's own faith. Yet we do insist that they dress warmly in winter and that they eat a healthy diet. We insist they study hard and take proper exercise. But we often do not concern ourselves with their moral health or with their spiritual development.

absolute values

During their school holidays, my children were often invited to camps, organised by other parents,

to participate in some activity such as tennis, riding, drawing, dancing etc. They would come back full of enthusiasm, having discovered new interests and made new friends. This gave me the idea of doing the same thing, but with a view to developing the children's spirituality. I had the necessary space and a supportive husband, so I invited children of the same age as my own to 'spiritual camps'. I explained to their parents that the object was to get to know God better, while enjoying themselves and being kind towards each other. To help me organise these camps, I turned to the novitiate of the Legionaries of Christ, a new religious congregation, who lived close by. Since then, I have discovered other similar 'camps'.

I have also organised a conference in Rome this Easter, particularly addressing the needs of young girls. The sessions at the conference that were most appreciated were a critical analysis of modern media and the witness offered by a young engaged couple on the importance of chastity. The event led me to observe how much young people today, and in particular young girls, still have a profound need to



All his empty promises

An Exorcist: More Stories.
By Gabriele Amorth. Ignatius Press. Distributed by Family Publications £11.50

The vows we make for ourselves and our children at Baptism are awesome: 'Do you reject Satan? And all his works? And all his empty promises?' Unhesitatingly, we respond, 'I do' – but do we really ponder the significance of what we are affirming? I once heard an Anglican vicar explain that he couldn't believe in 'the Devil', but that he was happy to remove the 'D' and accept the 'general idea' of 'evil'. Many Catholics would admit to a similar scepticism. Yet Faith and Revelation tell us most emphatically that Satan exists and that we ignore him at our peril. The great strength of this book is the wisdom and straightforward sanity of its author. He is not interested in the sensational or in satisfying morbid curiosity; indeed, he makes it clear that such curiosity plays into the devil's hands. **But he is concerned to demonstrate to the reader the folly and harm that can result from frivolous or malicious dabbling in the occult.** Clear theological guidance and explanations are illustrated by many telling – and terrifying – anecdotes. The remedy is always the same: sometimes an exorcism, always prayer and fidelity to the sacraments. There are some sobering statistics; for example, Italy today has twice as many occult practitioners as Catholic priests. When fellow Catholics assure you that Gospel accounts of casting out demons can be easily 'interpreted' as psychological illness, remind them that great saints, such as the Curé of Ars and Padre Pio, suffered prolonged physical assaults from Satan, furious that they were saving the very souls he had earmarked for hell – and buy them a copy of this book, a worthy sequel to the Chief Exorcist of Rome's first book on this subject, *An Exorcist Tells His Story*, also distributed by Family Publications.

Jack Carrigan

The statistics are on the side of the family

Broken Hearts: Family Decline & the Consequences for Society.
By Jill Kirby. Centre for Policy Studies, 57 Tufton St., London SW1P 3QL. £7.50

In the early years of the NACF we had a simple message: the two-parent family is important and society will be worse off if the two-parent family is not actively supported by government and the media. This message was deeply unpopular; we were seen as reactionary and judgmental, saying that single mothers and cohabiting couples were worse than ourselves. So we looked for authoritative, objective data that might be relevant to the debate. What we found was astonishing. The data consistently supported our view that two-parent families were vital for a good society. On every important measure, the two-parent family did better than single parents or cohabiting couples: on physical and mental health of parents and children, suicide rates, school results, illegitimate births, infant mortality, crime rates, etc. Divorce contributed hugely to negative outcomes. Jill Kirby's book is most helpful in providing the latest statistics from authoritative sources. What is shocking is how consistently Britain is near the top of the European league on all these negative statistics. It is shameful and unnecessary. Some modest adjustments to the way the Government and the media approach the issue of two-parent families could make a significant difference.

The book also discusses the issue of cause and effect, demonstrating that pouring more money into supporting single-parent families cannot 'fix' the fundamental problem. The fact that Britain's figures are so consistently bad compared to our European neighbours shows that our problems are not inevitable consequences of 'modern society'. Some European countries have cultures and policies which give much greater support to the two-parent family. We could learn a lot from analysing what they have done right. It must be emphasised that we have to make a clear distinction between individuals and society in general. There are some wonderful single mothers and some dreadful two-parent families. Statistics and data have nothing to say about these individuals. What the statistics show clearly is that anything which encourages an increase in single-parent families will, in general, harm those families and therefore society. Politicians must learn to make this distinction: to be clear about the negative social consequences of single parenting and cohabitation without being judgmental of particular situations. As the book says, 'There is nothing compassionate about our failure to act', when it is clear that two-parent families are so vital to the good of society.

The book's recommendations are simple, clear and supported by the example of our European neighbours: we must remove the disincentives to marriage and committed parenting; we must restore fiscal recognition of marriage through optional joint taxation, combined with a system of family allowances; we must educate children and young people as to the value of marriage, family commitment and fatherhood. Can our society learn from its mistakes?

Steven Bishop

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A precious newborn:
see *Testimony of a Baby*, p. 10

Elements of the miraculous

Catholic Lives. By Greg Watts. Gracewing. £9.99

This book is another in a series of essays on conversions and returns to the fold, following those by Patrick Madrid, Dwight Longenecker and Joanna Bogle's light-hearted *Come On In – It's Awful!* The subtitle, 'Contemporary Spiritual Journeys', was a little disconcerting, suspicious as I am of 'contemporary theology', but my suspicions were unwarranted; and of course it is precisely the problems of contemporary life that have driven many people either to question secular values and seek others, or to succumb to temptations and discard the faith, only to return when the pitfalls of the alternatives become apparent. Few of Greg's interviewees are well-known, apart from Anne Widdecombe and Conrad (now Lord) Black, though several are known in academic or artistic circles. Several have had extraordinary paths to Rome via Buddhism, Rastafarianism, even prison. For many, personal contact was the key – with a priest, a future spouse, a charity worker. A striking feature is the richness in the Church; people have been attracted by things as various as a magnificent liturgy and cathedral or by a simple service and church, by a charitable response to a personal crisis or a fierce intellectual challenge. The Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways and, despite the scandals, inadequacies and lack of zeal which critics find in the Church, the seekers can still find the Truth.

These journeys are encouraging. The least dramatic are probably the most helpful, corresponding as they do to the lives of most of us. Others contain elements of the miraculous. On a purely personal note, I found the most interesting those of Joseph Pearce – whose change from member of the Orange Order and National Front to leading Catholic writer was triggered by reading Chesterton – and of the Capuchin, Father Mark Elvins, who, in describing his journey from Anglicanism, covers a wonderful range of Catholic history.

Angela Gracey

Unreliable evidence for same-sex parenting

Children As Trophies? Examining The Evidence On Same-Sex Parenting. By Patricia Morgan. The Christian Institute. £6.99.

The title of the book is taken from the comments made by the Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP, as Home Secretary, on the case of a homosexual pair seeking to adopt a child. 'We should not see children as trophies', he declared. This was in 1998. Since then pressure has increased to allow same-sex 'couples' to adopt both babies and children in care. Because adoption, in law, must be for the best interests of the child, it was necessary to show, from research, that homosexuals make as good parents as heterosexuals. In her book, Patricia Morgan, a well-known sociologist, investigates the reliability of these studies. Her detailed analysis reveals biased hypotheses, faulty methodology and an unusual degree of certainty. Some of the 'studies' are no more than a series of anecdotes from self-selected volunteers. Early studies compare children brought up by single parents after divorce, with or without cohabiting partners of the same or opposite sex. These children are known to fare worse than children in traditional families. So are there children who have not suffered the trauma of divorce who have been brought up by 'same-sex parents'? IVF and various surrogacy arrangements have made this possible – but, argues Morgan, the sample is still too small to be conclusive. She further points out that the obvious drawbacks to this form of adoption, such as the shorter life-expectancy of homosexuals, their tendency to change partners frequently and the lack of support they have for their 'parenting', are ignored by the homosexual lobby. The outcome for children might be 'different' they say, but that should not prevent adults from exercising their 'right' to adopt. It is very chilling to realise that turning children into commodities has reached the stage where adults' perverse self-indulgence is put before the needs of the child. The evidence really shows that the best environment for children to grow up in is within a traditional marriage.

Clare Underwood

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Testimony of a baby

Mummy, don't you want me?

Do you want me to die before I am born? But you don't know yet whether I am your son or your daughter.

Mummy, don't you want me?

Are you afraid that your flat is too small? But I can just live in a little corner. Remember how people lived outside, a long time ago during the war, when their houses were destroyed and everyone was desperate. Then, a mother wrapped her baby in its shawl and together they fled from the dark ruined cellar.

Mummy, don't you want me?

Are you afraid that I will eat a lot? But I will live on crumbs alone, like a baby bird or a tiny puppy. I could pick berries in the woods. During the war, the hungry people lived on crusts of bread and the mother certainly fed her baby in its shawl.

Mummy, don't you want me?

Are you afraid that having me will make you less beautiful? If I take a little of your beauty, it will be to make me a reflection of you. Mummy, you will be able to see yourself in me all day. Don't you know that every mother sees herself in her baby? You won't need to look in a mirror.

Mummy, don't you want me?

And what will happen when you are lonely or thirsty? When you call a hundred times for a little sip of water and no one hears? What if one day you grow old. Who will say 'Mummy, what is the matter?' Who will help you, take you out, look after you? In whose arms will you

die? Mummy, the thing I would like most in the world to see are golden sunlight and twinkling stars, baby sparrows peeping from a nest, a rose, a little piece of heaven. But most of all, with all my heart, I would like to see you, my Mummy.

Mummy, don't you want me?

Maybe I will discover a cure for

cancer. Maybe I will fly to the moon, to the stars...

Mummy, don't you want me?

What will you decide?

Will there be one more tiny body with no grave? Or will you be brave and fight for the life of your baby? Give your baby life – as your parents gave you life.

Diary of an unborn baby

2nd May

Today my parents gave me life with their love.

15th May

Veins are forming throughout my body. Everything is happening very quickly and well.

19th May

Already I have a mouth.

21st May

My heart has begun to beat.

22nd May

I don't understand why my Mummy is so worried.

28th May

My legs and arms have started to grow.

8th June

I am growing longer.

15th June

Today my Mum went to the doctor and he told her that I am living in her. I am so happy.

20th June

Now it is certain I am a girl (boy).

24th June

I have all my organs. My senses are growing stronger.

6 July

My hair and eyebrows started to grow today.

8th July

My eyes have already developed though my eyelids are still closed. But in a short time I will see all the wonderful things in the world. The best things I will see are my lovely Daddy and my Mummy who is carrying me inside her.

19th July

My heart is beating strong and steady. I feel safe and very happy.

20th July

Today my parents had me killed.

These are the texts of the songs sung by the Slovak girls choir, 'Doves of the Cross'. See article on page 4.

Reflections on the Mass and spiritual warfare

Recently it has struck me how the enemy, that is the Devil and his henchmen, as well as my own weak nature, assault me the most at Mass. Despite my earnest desire to be focused and prayerful, my thoughts often scatter, my mind races with various plans and projects, and once again I end Mass feeling frustrated with myself. This very experience is described by the monk Evagrius in the 5th-century spiritual classic, *The Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer*: 'The devil so passionately envies the man who prays that he employs every device to frustrate that purpose. Thus he does not cease to stir up thoughts of various affairs by means of the memory. He stirs up all the passions by means of the flesh. In this way he hopes to offer some obstacle to that excellent course pursued in prayer on the journey towards God.' Only when I have been in the midst of trials and sufferings have I found myself so desperate as to cling to every word and prayer of the liturgy as a drowning person would to a life raft. When my 'waters are calm' I become lazy and I am all too easily taken hostage, as it were, by my own thoughtlessness or the enemy's tricks.

A few years ago I came upon a reflection in some book I was reading which made a deep impression on me. The main point of what I read was that how people spend their time during the course of the week has a direct impact on how

well they will be disposed to receive the grace and gift of the Mass. Ever since I first came upon this reflection I have felt myself drawn to mull it over in my mind. I can certainly see that if I spend my week 'sowing' daily impatience, unkindness and criticism, all I will have to bring to the altar is a heart full of 'bad fruit'. Unfortunately, the problem is that in order to overcome force of habit/nature and come against the powers of darkness, a committed effort, a real spiritual effort is required. The sacraments, the Mass, the rosary, prayer, fasting, self-denial, vigils, works of mercy – these are the weapons of spiritual warfare. Whatever I do to concentrate at Mass, what I have come to see is that ultimately everything depends on God's grace and my commitment to Christ and His Cross. Improving my attention at Mass and receiving more from the liturgy in general is not, as I had thought, simply a question of disciplining my mind and focusing my thoughts. Lord Jesus Christ, help me, help all of us, to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow you.

Carolyn Ellis

Video viewing

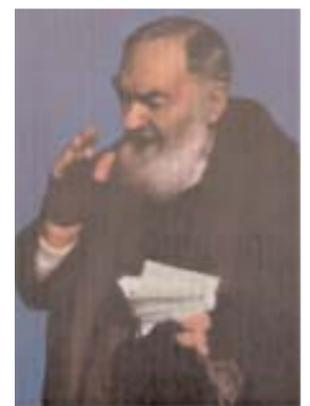
Padre Pio: Man of God

This moving account of the life of the famous Capuchin friar was produced for his beatification two years ago. Often quoting his own words, it shows him as a young Franciscan brother, as a priest and as a confessor. There are excellent views of Pietrelcina, Padre Pio's cell and his chapel, and the hospital he founded, as well as interviews with a friar who knew him. It is a good introduction to a modern, saintly story (Padre Pio only died in 1968) for children and young people, showing the power of the supernatural in a life of faith, suffering and obedience.

To order, contact Pauline Books and media, Middle Green, Slough, Berks SL3 6BS.

Tel: 01753 577629.

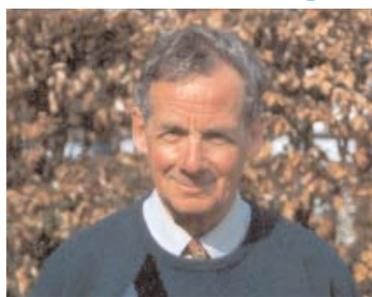
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We must campaign for the right to live

Dr John Scotson, our medical correspondent, analyses two different 'right to die' cases

Two cases in respect of terminally ill patients who have now both died – may they rest in peace – made recent legal history because both went to court: one, Diane Pretty, who had motor neurone disease, for the 'right' to have her husband's help in ending her life; and the other, named 'Miss B', who had paralysis of all four limbs, to have the right to have her ventilator switched off. In the case of Diane Pretty, her husband was not granted leave to assist his wife to die at a time of her own choosing and be exempt from prosecution if he did so. In the case of 'Miss B' a judgement was made that the ventilator, which was her life support machine, could be turned off, even though she would die as a result. Both these judgements are correct from the moral and ethical viewpoint. Let us review the principles involved.



Nobody has the right to kill another person. The commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill' is a God-given commandment which cannot be disobeyed. A patient cannot legitimately be killed either by an act of commission, such as giving an overdose, or by an act of omission, such as the deprivation of fluids, because this constitutes normal basic care, which must be given to all those who are sick, however imminent death may be. Pain killers can be administered, in doses sufficient to relieve pain, but not in a greater dose than is needed, even though this might unintentionally hasten the death of the patient.

The correct name for euthanasia, when it involves deliberate human destruction, is murder. However difficult the circumstances of an ill or dying person may be, there is much that can be done by way of giving comfort and pain relief, particularly now we have the means and the expertise to lessen suffering and distress. One recognises there is no panacea for the complete elimination of all suffering and one must bear in mind that in God's Providence pain can be a means of drawing a soul closer to Him and to other people in the last moments of life.

What about the case of the patient whose ventilator is turned off knowing that this will end the life of the patient? Why should this be in accord with the moral law? The answer is that one is not obliged to use vigorous and burdensome medical means to maintain the life of a person when death is impending and unavoidable. The ventilator, in the case under consideration, was not turned off with the inten-

tion of killing the patient, but with the intention of relieving 'Miss B' of an intervention which was extraordinary and could only prolong the act of dying. Let us suppose a person on a life support machine is disconnected from the machine and unexpectedly lives – as happened with a patient in the United States – then the person should be given normal care to sustain his or her life.

It is necessary to understand that there is a difference between an act which is carried out with the deliberate intention to kill and the withdrawal of treatment which can be described as oppressive, out of the ordinary and over-zealous when death cannot be avoided. Such treatment may be withdrawn so that in the end life may take its natural course and the act of dying not be prolonged. There are strong vocal supporters of 'the right to die'. What they are really campaigning for is 'the right to kill'. We must campaign for the right to live, not the 'right to be killed'.

NOTICEBOARD

Working Rosary, Stations and Angel Boards

Valuable aids for teaching children Catholic devotions (for homes, schools, parishes etc)

Contact D. Angood, 145 Lower Kirklington Rd, Southwell, Notts NG25 ODR Tel: 01636 813965.

Prayers for Life

NACF member, Mary Ashfield, in a letter published in the *Catholic Herald* recently, urged readers to take part in 'Prayers for Life'. Our own readers might like to take up this suggestion, by having Mass said, if possible, once a month 'in reparation for abortion and contraception'. Mary writes: Let us respond with faith and hope to the Holy Father's cry in *Evangelium Vitae*: 'a great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world.' mtashfield@hotmail.com

Towards Advent!

NACF member, Joanna Bogle, reminds us that this Festival of Catholic Culture is now in its third year. It will take place on Saturday 16th November at Westminster Cathedral Hall. There will be books, talks, gifts, teas – something for everyone. Please publicise this event and help to support a truly Christian culture. Contact Telephone Number: 020 7640 0042, for further details, handbills etc.

Wanted – Catholic Newspapers

These are urgently needed for the Ukraine and Lithuania. If you have any suitable Catholic material, please send direct to: Tom Wall, Ballinookera, Whitegate, Midleton, Co Cork, Ireland.

St Anthony's Communications

This was founded by two brothers, Christian and Marcus Holden, in 1995, with the intention of providing a resource for good Catholic material. With each passing year the business has gone from strength to strength, with an ever-increasing selection of audio tapes and books, covering almost every aspect of the Catholic faith, life and culture. Videos and CDs are to follow shortly. For more information write to them at Mount Carmel, St Bride's Lane, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire SA69 9HL or phone: 01834 812643.

Families First

This is the name of a family advocacy group, committed to supporting parents and children in the family unit. It supports the rights and responsibilities of parents to protect and guide their children and to bring them up in a reasonable manner, according to their religious and philosophical convictions. It has successfully campaigned against attempts to introduce an 'anti-smacking law' in this country.

Contact them at 173, Frinton Road, Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 OPD. Tel: 01255 671616.

What is CRUX?

It is a Catholic lay movement, taking its name from the Latin for 'cross', offering a spiritual way of life which deepens a person's love for Our Lord, while dealing with the world around us. Members use the 'See/Judge/Act' technique and take on limited objectives that are attainable within a short time-frame. There is a vital need for such a movement in today's society. They operate in small groups, or cells, which meet regularly.

Those interested should contact National Secretary, Fred Tippen, at 18 Berwick Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex, UB4 ONF; or e-mail Christopher McNicholas: christophermcnicholas463@hotmail.com

The Missions

need your used stamps and broken or unwanted rosary beads. Please help by sending them to:

Peter Derry, 79 Weaponness Valley Rd, Scarborough, Yorks YO11 2JG

Reflections on Humanae Vitae

This is the title of an excellent pamphlet by Cardinal Desmond Connell, Archbishop of Dublin, drawn to our attention by Crux. It is clear, scholarly and pastoral, giving deep insight into this magisterial teaching.

Copies are available from the Editor for 50p + A5-sized SAE.

Are you a member of a local NACF group?



- Birmingham:** Dr & Mrs Villalobos Baillie. Tel: 0121 244 1343 ovb@hep.ph.bham.ac.uk
- Cambridgeshire:** Malcolm and Clare Underwood Tel: 01223 366066 clare_underwood@ntlworld.com
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- Australia:** (National co-ordinators) Chris & Mary Clare Meney: Tel: 0(061)395 44 99 77 mcmenev@hotmail.com
- USA:** (New York) Mr John Heyer II, T: (001) 716 373 5490 jhhll@yahoo.com
- India:** (Tamil Nadu) Mrs Gigi Selvan Tel: 00 91 462 5020 43 (or ...44). g2410g@rediffmail.com

The National Association of Catholic Families now has many local groups, which meet to share faith and friendship. If you are not in a local group, perhaps you would like to join one? Above we give some information about local groups, and how to contact them. If you would like to know more about the NACF, please contact Dr Tom Ward on 01449 720319.

There are many benefits of belonging to a local group. Families give each other practical help and advice, they pray for each other and form strong communities. They hold 'Family Days', events which take a variety of forms, but always contain prayer in the presence of an icon of the Holy Family and a short talk about Catholic teaching on the family. The NACF pilgrimage to Walsingham is a great chance for members to get together.

Yes, I would like to join the NACF

Name

Address

Postcode

Annual Membership Fees are as follows (please tick):

<input type="checkbox"/> Family	£15	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate	£10
<input type="checkbox"/> Overseas	\$25US	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior (under 18 yrs)	£5

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I would like to leave a legacy to the NACF

(If you have genuine difficulty in affording the membership fee, we are happy to waive it until things improve.)

It's helpful to know about our members' families, so please tell us about your children (e.g. names & ages) and your special interests.

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To: Mrs Jan Patrick, Membership Secretary, Stelvio, Crane Hill, London Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 0SS

CF53

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A beautiful place to study

Stratford Caldecott visits the Newman Institute in Ballina, County Mayo

As an Englishman from Oxford, I wasn't at all sure how welcome I would be in County Mayo. Flying across the green fields and stony hills from Dublin, I wondered what I had let myself in for, when I agreed to teach for two weeks at the Newman Institute in Ballina. After all, you can't get more Irish than Mayo – or more English than Oxford. I shouldn't have worried. The Irishness I was afraid of expressed itself in the form of friendliness and hospitality you don't often find elsewhere in the modern world. It was the modern world I was there to talk about. The modern world that is making it hard for traditional Irish families to survive, as the pressures mount to join the rat race. A whole generation is riding the Celtic tiger out of poverty, but too often the tiger carries it away into a world of consumerism, broken marriages and promiscuity. What is going wrong? Will the new prosperity bring greater happiness to our children; and if not, why not?

Perched by the rushing waters of the Moy, the Newman Institute is dedicated to providing an education that equips its students to understand the modern world in the light of the very deepest resources of Christian theology and spirituality. My course was part of the Masters Programme in Marriage

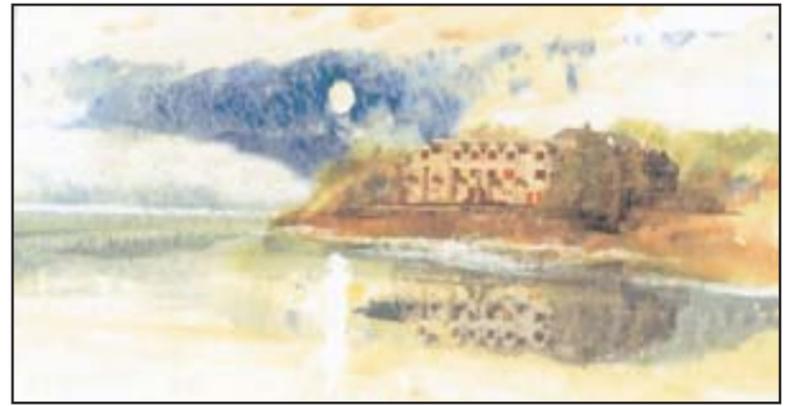
and the Family accredited by the John Paul II Institute in Rome. Visiting professors are flown in from all over the world to supplement the local faculty. I was there because of my work directing a Centre for Faith and Culture in Oxford.

peace and prayer

Did I enjoy it? More than I could have expected, mainly because of the students. All ages, all backgrounds (including African, Scottish and American) they were there to learn and their enthusiasm was tangible, even contagious. The best thing I did was to turn the last part of the course over to them. Having taught what I could about the history of European thought, and the roots of the modern anti-family culture, I asked them to prepare presentations on specific areas that interested them. One student spoke about abortion, another about divorce, several about the problem of the aged and caring for the elderly. These presentations were vivid, well-formed and quite often a lot more amusing than the subjects would suggest.

There were times to relax as well; I walked up the river to Quay, and spent a day out at Holy Hill Hermitage, which showed me that this part of Ireland is as beautiful as anywhere in the world, with stunning mountains, cliffscapes and mysterious forests, as well as ancient ruins and modern shrines. Now I ask myself: when can I

come back? The Hermitage calls for special mention, for putting God back into the landscape. Run by the Spiritual Life Institute as a place of peace and prayer, the monks have close ties to the Newman Institute and were invited to the Diocese by the same bishop, Thomas Finnegan – a legacy for which his successor, John Fleming, will always, I am sure, be grateful. And who knows? Maybe John Henry Newman is pleased too – another Oxford man who loved Ireland.



The Newman Institute at Ballina, Co. Mayo, Ireland
Phone +353 96 72066 for more details about courses

Passing on the Faith

Continued from page 4.

12. Mechtilde Clarke and her family have spent their summer holidays roaming around Europe and camping at famous pilgrimage sites: La Salette, Fatima, Lisieux, Lourdes, Loreto, etc. Older children are given a memorable holiday as well as a wonderful insight into the culture of Christian Europe and the universality of the Faith. Nicky Willis takes her children annually on pilgrimage to Lough Derg in Ireland; 'St Patrick's Purgatory' is not for small children, but is a practical introduction to ascetic practices for older ones. For less ambitious families, there are numerous shrines and holy places in this country; a practical history lesson about the Reformation for children as well as an enjoyable family outing.

13. Christine Hudson believes it is important to show children how to be non-materialistic; to be frugal and to enjoy simple, rather than costly pleasures. In our consumerist society, this can be a further 'lesson' in showing one's children the importance of self-denial and how Christians should be 'different' from the world.

14. Agnes Van der Linden feels altar boys should know how important their task is; learning to serve at the altar, and observing the attitude of the celebrating priest, can sometimes lead to a vocation to the priesthood.

15. The Klepacki family have attended many pro-life vigils outside abortion clinics, praying the rosary and counselling young women about to enter. Introducing children to pro-life work is a profound lesson in the sanctity of life and the reverence Christians must have for it.

16. Emma Fawcett visits art galleries with her children and has compiled several albums of great Christian art for them, from old Christmas cards, post cards etc. This can introduce children to the beauty, as well as the truth, of Catholicism and show them that artists' imaginations have been kindled over the centuries by the life

of Christ: the Nativity, the Baptism of Our Lord, the Crucifixion, the Pieta and countless other Gospel scenes are more memorable for having been painted by artists such as Fra Angelico and Piero della



St. E. Ruth Obbard O.C.A.M.

Francesca. On this topic, prayer books with good art pictures are essential; if we find the sketches and cartoons in certain prayer books ugly and irreverent, so will our children.

17. Teresa Crabtree encourages her children to have other Catholic pen-friends of their own age; this can be a way for children to share their family life and culture with other children from similar families.

We have not mentioned other Catholic practices: morning and night prayers, grace at mealtimes, the family rosary etc. Here also, children can be taught (and 'caught') by example; one small

boy's observation of his father kneeling devoutly with a painful knee later led to his own priestly vocation. Many of these ideas are aimed at younger children particularly. For older children and teenagers, there are summer schools for young Catholics, to help with more formal theological teaching. Perhaps attending a World Youth Day to meet the Holy Father and thousands of young fellow-Catholics from around the world can make an impact that stays for life. There are also our own NACF 'Family Days', where families, children, and young people can meet like-minded friends and share their faith. Some families believe that home schooling is the answer to helping children learn and keep their Faith. Whatever their particular challenges and solutions, each family is unique and uniquely loveable to God. What we have listed above are some tried and tested ways to help create a Catholic 'culture' in the home, an atmosphere both deliberate and intangible so that children can learn to absorb and to love the Faith 'that comes to us from the Apostles'. The list is by no means complete. *Do send us your own ideas and practices which we can publish for the good of other families - and therefore the good of the whole Church.*



Enjoying the sunshine at NACF Walsingham 2002



National Association of Catholic Families

- ...helps families to get together on 'Family Days'... arranges retreats... organizes an annual pilgrimage to Walsingham...**
- Founded because families need effective spiritual, moral and social support**
- ...shares our experience in bringing up our children, on family prayer, caring for the elderly and handicapped people and families in need.**
- ...keeps families in touch through Catholic Family (read in 35 countries) and CF News (free email news from editor@cfnews.demon.co.uk)**
- Complete the form overleaf, or e-mail: Members@Catholic-Family.org**
- Join the NACF (it only costs £15) – you will help us to help families blossom and grow, helping to build the 'civilization of love'.**
- You will receive a membership pack and news of family events such as Family Retreats, Youth Retreats and our annual pilgrimage to Walsingham. Catholic Family will be sent to you each quarter.**