

The 'also rans' and life after death

RECENTLY I was chatting with a couple of friends, all of us in our late sixties.

No one had too much to complain about except crook backs and knees. All had played a lot of sport and the others had worked hard physically. The verdict was that growing old is not easy. "But it's better than the alternative" was one comment.

As I had heard that remark quite a few times, I had decided that I should say something in response to encourage a few distinctions.

"We might be surprised," I ventured. "Heaven should be much better".

Everyone laughed while the

CARDINAL'S COMMENT



third member added that heaven would need to be better, "otherwise we could have lived quite differently!"

It wasn't the time to point out that the wages of sin begin in this life, because he would have agreed instantly.

But the conversation was an interesting example of how we run together death and dying, which we instinctively dislike and the hope of heaven, which we tend to ignore in everyday conversation.

November is the month the Catholic Church uses to remind us

of the reality of life after death by urging us to pray for the "also rans" so they may be purified and so enter God's presence (the feast of All Souls) and by urging us to honour the model Christians on the feast of All Saints.

If we are too attached to the goods of this life, if our first priority is money or possessions, then we find it harder to believe in the reality of life after death.

If God is slipping, if his voice is receding, Christ's promises of reward and punishment also become more uncertain.

Among the minority who are atheists many object to the idea of a personal God who would judge our lives after death. They need to

be reminded gently that "the Great Escape" happened only once and that was in World War II, when allied prisoners of war broke out of Colditz castle. Christians do not believe that anyone escapes judgment – from a just and merciful God.

When I go back to the chapel of my old school, a large 1950s building now beautifully restored, I always pray for the repose of the souls of the school's "old boys", especially those who studied with me who might need a prayer now.

We should not forget our family and friends who have gone ahead.

+ **George Cardinal Pell**
Archbishop of Sydney



News

Record number opt for ACU

A RECORD number of school leavers are hoping to study at Australian Catholic University next year, with the university seeing a 20 per cent rise in applications for bachelor degree courses.

First preference applications have risen by 10.4 per cent nationally, and by 8.4 per cent for NSW and the ACT.

Vice-chancellor Professor

Greg Craven says the numbers reflect the university's reputation for quality teaching and high employment rates for graduates, particularly in health and education.

First preference applications for the Bachelor of Nursing rose by 5.3 per cent at the university's North Sydney campus, and there was a 10.8 per cent increase in students

applying to undertake a Bachelor of Education (Primary) at Strathfield.

"ACU National has the largest education faculty in the country, and a long tradition of producing experienced teachers and educational leaders," Prof Craven said.

"We are also the largest provider of graduate nurses in Australia."

CWL backs campaign to help Kenyan girls



IN SCHOOL: These girls in Kenya now have the opportunity of an education because of the generosity and thoughtfulness of Catholic women in Australia.

By Sharyn McCowen

CATHOLIC women across Sydney are supporting an initiative to keep young girls in Kenya at school beyond puberty.

Extreme poverty means most girls have no access to sanitary products, and 40 per cent of girls in developing countries drop out of school on reaching puberty.

"Currently girls living in extreme poverty don't even have access to a single piece of cloth of their own to use for their monthly menstruation," said Verity Twydale, co-ordinator of the SHARE Project, a Kenya Aid venture launched in 2008.

"We've heard of girls sharing cloth or using dirt to help manage their periods, both of which create unnecessary health problems.

"Being such an important part of a young girl's development, and also greatly affecting her ability to complete school without health problems or harassment, we thought there must be something we could do about it."

But Verity said she discovered that "menstruation issues are largely ignored by international aid organisations [in terms of] research and financial support".

To combat this, the SHARE Project is calling for donations of specially-made reusable fabric pads and new underwear.

"We use the icebreaker of the colourful pads to get girls talking about their bodies, what is normal, and when to see a doctor.

"We are also able to use the pads to encourage and provide the means for a girl to stay in school, helping us help break the cycle of poverty through learning."

Members of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) Sydney have so far donated fabric, pads, underwear and money to the project.

CWL member Margaret Blomfield says: "So far we've received 140 pairs of knickers, and we sewed 60 pads in one working bee alone, and we have been given donations of money to buy more fabric.

"This is to do with young women, and the greatest tragedy is that they are dropping out of school.

"I think there would be the same problem in East Timor, which no one has touched on, which Australia should be very involved in."

Verity said the project has received more support than she thought possible.

"Women love SHARE," she said. "I've not met a woman yet who hasn't offered support – verbal, financial, physical – for the work we're doing.

"Having your period is tough enough, and I think most women can empathise with how difficult it would be to manage living in such difficult circumstances."

The reusable pads are designed to be "environmentally responsible, economically sustainable and culturally sensitive", and are sewn from brightly-coloured flannelette, which is a hit with the girls, who each receive three pads and two pairs of underwear.

Kenya Aid wants new size 12-14 underwear, colourful flannelette, towels to make the pad inserts, or money to buy them.

If you can help, please call 0412 346 935, email info@kenyaaid.org or write to Kenya Aid, PO Box 3124 East Blaxland, 2774.

MOBILE SHOWROOM WITH SAMPLES – ANY SITUATION

Vynyls and Carpets! Bargain Prices!

SCHOOLS
CHURCHES
DOMESTIC
COMMERCIAL

50 Years Experience in Floorcoverings

GOOD ADVICE

MANY DESIGNS

IT'S SO EASY!

We come to You

Move Furniture and Take-up
and Remove Existing Floors

WHITES FLOORCOVERINGS

"Whites works hard to make it easy"

9723 4811

SHOWROOM
Cnr CAMPELL and
TANGERINE STREET
FAIRFIELD