**Faith feels like home**

By Bill Pugh

An old lady lived just off the highway midway between the Catholic and Uniting churches.

Nobody knew how old she was, but she was nearly blind and not hearing well.

She could not go anywhere.

Meals came via the hospital kitchen, but somehow she arranged for visits from Father Gerry and me.

Nobody knew whether she was a Catholic or Protestant but it didn’t matter.

The church came to her with fellowship and spiritual presence and she gave us a sense of mission.

She could not come to us physically, but we came to her in person with friendship and with spiritual help.

In my home many years ago the minister was a frequent visitor.

We sat with him and mum for afternoon tea and a prayer, in our best clothes until we were dismissed to play outside.

We once thought him a bit stuffy in his gown and white collar in church but at home he came across as not a bad bloke.

**Reflection**

In today’s world busyness has taken over. There is little time to organise a pastoral visit at home.

But we need to bring the human side of our pastoral carers into everyday life outside the formality of Sundays.

**Let’s make history**

By Geoff Serpell

It is a pity that the date January 26 is associated by many as the date that our first people commenced to be alienated from their right to freely move around and feed off the vast land we know as Australia.

At school we were required to learn about dates of wars, politicians, and discoveries.

However, history is much more than that.

History also included the arts, music, drama, poetry and architecture.

These are the soul of the human story.

The history of the human story has a soul in people with passion and personality.

This spirit in humans is from God, a divine spark which is in us all.

History brings together the past and the present like when we take photos or journal our thoughts, words and deeds.

When we make another chapter, we make history.

**Reflection**

History is a larger way at looking at life, looking at people who speak to us across the years.

In many cases they can be our very good teachers.

**The passage of life**

By Bill Pugh

We were having morning tea outside our favourite patisserie, on a walkway where shoppers pass up and down viewing the bargains.

I couldn’t but help to reflect on the lives of passers by, young of every age with their whole lives before them.

And the middle-aged, slowing down but getting quality out of life’s experiences.

And there were the elderly, some on sticks, walking slowly, leaning over a bit, but determined to carry out their shopping tasks and then go home.

In his 2nd Letter to the Corinthians, Paul calls our bodies an earthly tent which does its job in life, but gradually wears out.

This is our human condition. God has given us these human flesh bodies for life but not forever.

As our human tent wears out, God gives us a spiritual body which lasts forever.

He who has prepared us for this very thing is He who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Paul concludes thus: “So we are always confident. Even though we know that while we are at home with the body we are away from the Lord-for we walk not by sight but by faith. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So that whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”

**Reflection**

Read 2nd Corinthians 5: 1-10 and make it a discussion topic at a Bible study.

**Our all-inclusive heaven**

By Bill Pugh

In the corner of our backyard against the fence which bordered the local state school we had a chook house.

Every morning my brother and I fed the chooks and searched for eggs.

One day a lovely chicken was missing and we searched high and low.

Maybe it had somehow got into the schoolyard and was stolen by the kids or eaten by a fox which lurked there at night.

We were sad to lose one of that special family, really friends.

Sundays were important to our family. We went to church and came home to a roast dinner, prepared by mum, which was waiting in the oven.

This particular Sunday a scrumptious roast was served up. This time on the menu appeared roast chicken.

I looked at it, so inviting, but my appetite failed and I could not face eating that.

No one said anything but we knew where it came from.

The Bible tells us God made all creatures great and small to live in the garden, and food was to be the gift and sacrifice for man’s nourishment.

But I asked myself what about creatures which are so special to us as friends and companions on the way?

I like to believe in another heaven where all live in peace after their work on earth is done.

The most telling example of God’s priceless value of his creatures is in the image of a tiny lamb applied to the life and work of Jesus on earth.

Did not he say: “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

**Reflection**

We should never take lightly what energy produces the food on our tables each day, and the sacrificial lamb of the Lord’s Supper is his offering for each of us.

**Healing takes patience**

By Bill Pugh

I have been disabled by a fall and my back has a fracture.

I am told it will take weeks to heal.

The back is a vital structure for mobility and so I get around with a stick and, when outside, a wheelchair.

Paul knew the effect of pain in his body. He suffered from what he called his thorn in the flesh.

But he kept on his missionary witness, travelling on foot to many places.

Our Lord knew the disability caused by suffering.

On the cross he suffered terribly but he still could care for his mother and told John, his beloved disciple, to care for her.

How fortunate are we today to have medicinal care for our injuries.

Thanks be to God for the wonders of modern medicine and his gift of healing.

We need the virtue of patience to allow healing to take place.

**Reflection**

The psalmist praised our healing God for his loving kindness and tender mercies.

I have found inspiration as I meditate on Psalm 103.

I pray for my healing and a measure of patience to allow healing to take place.

Please read the Psalm in meditation as you remember all in need of our healing God.