

EDITORIAL - *Angela & Jim Allen*

At the time of writing this editorial, I am in the second week of holidays. The perfect holiday for me happens when the mix between getting some odd jobs is combined with a few pleasurable activities.

As an avid cross stitcher, I went into one of the two local craft shops to buy some thread for a sampler that will soon be completed. I was shocked to discover that this business is going to discontinue supplying the needs of those who do patchwork, tapestry or cross stitch. My first response was one of anger? Where were my needs going to be met now? The alternative craft shop is a very long walk from home and Spotlight has a fairly limited stock.

On my walk home I reflected on the possible reasons for the decision to discontinue the needed supplies of the needleworkers. Didn't the owner realise that this was a need, not a want of mine? Are the women of the world moving so fast that they do not give themselves time to sit and create beautiful things that are also very beautiful? How would our children ever experience the joy that the arts and crafts have to offer?

A day or so later, I returned to the shop who is discontinuing the supply of threads, canvas and material and asked the reason for this decision. "Oh, it's too slow", was the response. My reaction to this response was one of sadness. Once we wanted to make a living, perhaps make some money for leisure. Now we want to make it quickly.

That afternoon we went down to Point Lonsdale to see Jim's mother who has been unwell for some time. It was quite distressing to see this once healthy, vibrant, competent woman sitting in her armchair feeling very fragile and lonely. While she has been unwell, she has been lovingly supported by those in her neighbourhood and community in Point Lonsdale. But one friend, whose husband died recently, has decided to move down to Melbourne to be nearer to her children. From the neighbour's position, this is a most sensible decision, and, .it is not the decision she wants to make. My mother in law will miss her friend enormously and is already feeling lonelier in her street because of this.

So, in less than twenty four hours I had two sobering examples of how life, and indeed our way of living life changes. While I can buy my cross stitch and tapestry supplies elsewhere, and will do so, I am saddened about what is being said in the bigger scheme of things, when such decisions are made. At this stage of my life I am able to be very adaptable about these changes. But what of my mother in law and many others like her? What happens to her sense of self when the very fabric of her life changes? How is she meant to sustain her role as the mother of four and friend to many when she is simply not well enough to perform those roles, let alone enjoy them? I am not sure that there are any real answers to these questions, but as I journeyed home with Jim from Point Lonsdale, I wondered how we will fare when the dynamics of our family changes – when we live elsewhere – when someone dies or gets sick – what will it be like? I guess many teams have already faced loss and change and even death. The team to which we belong has

faced huge losses – but as yet we have not faced the death of one of our team members. I have no idea what this might feel like, and, when I am brave enough to allow my imagination to journey there, I return very comfortably to my comfortable present. I do pray that I have as a much dignity as my mother has when life is clearly hurting so much.

On a lighter note congratulations to Alex Van de Kooij who won the first cross word competition. His prize was a \$20.00 book voucher from Dymocks. We hope you have enjoyed your prize Alex! Thanks too must go to Andrew Fewings for producing the second crossword for us So please enter the cross word on page....of this edition. The first snail mail correct entry to be opened will win the book voucher.

While I know that many teams are already working on To be a Christian Couple, and are enjoying the experience, I would like to offer you either an alternative or something to consider in the future. It is a programme called “From Trees To Forests – A Path for Couples” and is put out by The Marriage Educators Association of Australia (South Australian Branch) My very brief review of this programme is on page....

Happy reading,
Angela Allen