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# THE TABLET

## Darkness visible



**Marilynne Robinson** decries the US Churches' capitulation to rising fear, resentment and bigotry

A death in the family reminds **Melanie McDonagh** of a lost world of modesty, resilience and quiet stoicism

**PLUS:** ROSE PRINCE • PETER HENNESSY • CHRISTOPHER HOWSE

UK-US  
RELATIONS

## TOO QUICK TO COSY UP TO TRUMP

**P**acts with the devil do not generally end well. That may have been one of the doubts that the British Prime Minister banished from her mind as she journeyed to Washington last week to become the new President's first official foreign visitor. But it may come back to haunt her. She did her duty adroitly, establishing a personal connection with Donald Trump in the name of the national British interest. He is new to all this, and in the presence of the practised professional politician that she is, he adopted a statesmanlike tone.

It did not last long. President Trump continued to issue decree after decree which manifestly contradicted both good sense and basic civilised values. These gave Theresa May's undoubted diplomatic achievement a morally ambiguous complexion. In headline terms, Mr Trump says he wants to stop Muslims from certain countries going to America, deport illegal immigrants from Mexico and build a 2,000 mile wall to keep them out, and torture any suspected terrorists who may fall into American hands. He also promised to facilitate a trade deal with Britain. Many politicians and commentators on the right as well as the left were asking – does Britain really want to be seen as the best friend of this extreme new American administration?

Mr Trump's moves on restricting Muslim refugees, on cutting the traffic in goods and people with Mexico, and his crass conclusion that "torture works", are misjudgements by a man with no experience of government who came to power on the back of trite

populist slogans. He backed down on torture soon enough when he found military and intelligence opinion implacably against him. But the Mexican wall is a foolish idea that expert opinion says will not work and which the United States could end up having to pay for. Banning travellers from a number of majority Muslim countries from entering the US, has earned him world-wide revulsion. An unjust callous policy which causes unnecessary hardship to many can have no effect on stopping terrorist attacks – not one refugee from Syria admitted under the Obama administration has been implicated in terrorist activity. And trying to prioritise Syrian Christians over Muslims, as he has proposed, may well be illegal.

Despite Theresa May belatedly distancing herself from Mr Trump's refugee policy, her reputation may have been damaged by association, and her invitation to Mr Trump to visit the UK in the summer may become a millstone round her neck. Nor will all this improve the goodwill towards her of the European governments with whom she will soon have to negotiate a smooth British exit from the EU. She may hope that the prospect of a trade deal with the United States would give her some leverage in Brussels, though Mr Trump's intention to cut business regulations by three quarters could mean that many British businesses – and their employees – may be in for some rude shocks. In any event Mrs May is a free trader, Mr Trump a protectionist. This does not sound much like a marriage made in heaven.

PRISON  
POLICY

## PRISONERS NEED HEALING, NOT REVENGE

**R**ecent disturbances in British prisons – thankfully quelled without too much extra violence – may be interpreted as protests at a severe crisis in the entire system rather than just as outbreaks of lawless anarchy. Another sign of the same crisis is the rise in suicides and self-harm to record levels, figures which the Catholic bishop responsible for prison ministry, Bishop Richard Moth of Arundel and Brighton, rightly called "shocking".

This is a crisis with several causes. As part of government austerity cuts, the budget of the Justice Ministry, which runs the prison system, was recklessly slashed until the number of prison officers fell by about 30 per cent. This was during a period when the total number of prisoners went up year on year to its present record level, which represents 98 per cent of its maximum capacity in England and Wales – the position in Scotland is not dissimilar. One consequence was that the job of prison officer became so unattractive that efforts to correct the shortfall by a recruitment drive, following the belated recognition that the cuts had gone too far, were a dismal failure.

This crisis has even deeper roots. As elsewhere in many Western countries, crime has been falling. But whereas prison populations elsewhere have also started to drop, in Britain they have continued their inexorable rise. This is largely due to an almost invisible inflation in sentencing where average sentences have crept up year by year. To some extent this may be driven by tabloid headlines. But the public perception of sentencing as too lax, based on a few sensational cases, is seriously out of line with reality.

In that climate it would take a brave government to order a ten per cent reduction in all sentencing guidelines, but that is what is needed.

It would create the space for prison officers to do what they signed up to do, which is to work towards the rehabilitation and reform of their charges. The present prison experience is more like punishment by endless boredom against a background of drugs and barely suppressed violence. This is bound to make a prisoner's emotional and spiritual state worse than ever.

The average prisoner often suffers from a diminished sense of their own humanity, sometimes a reflection of their treatment in childhood. A prison regime based on imposed humiliation and powerlessness makes that worse. Somehow the formula of despising the crime and despising the criminal has to be turned on its head: despising the crime, yet loving the criminal – as a child of God in need of redemption. It calls for the exercise of discernment and accompaniment, to use two of Pope Francis' favourite words. Punishment may be a requirement of justice, but it must always be merciful.

The present Government has grasped the scale of the problem and, when she took over from him as Prime Minister Theresa May adopted David Cameron's commitment to wholesale reform and rebuilding. But even a renewal of bricks and mortar, and an increase in staff numbers working in a better environment, will not suffice if the basic philosophy is wrong. Damaged personalities need repair, not the deliberate infliction of further suffering out of a sense of vengeance.



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PHOTO: REUTERS, © DYLAN MARTINEZ

**ROBINSON:** 'I think of evil as an aspect of human choices and actions'

The American writer **Marilynne Robinson** believes Christian voters capitulated in the face of the fear and resentment that were stoked during the US election campaign. In an interview, she reflects on the reality of good and evil / **BY JON M. SWEENEY**

## 'The Churches have disgraced themselves'

**JON M. SWEENEY:** People are thinking about good and evil today. Many are wondering if good and evil exist in more than the abstract. You write about the nature of reality in the light of contemporary neuroscience in the "Humanism" essay in your latest book, *The Givenness of Things*, retrieving the soul as still valuable – but would you reflect with us on other ancient aspects of this question? Specifically, are good and evil real? And, if they are, what is the good? Is it God; is it transcendent; is it definable?

**MARILYNNE ROBINSON:** If I understand your question, you are asking me if I think good and evil can be reified, as they are in traditional language that speaks of Satan as

an embodiment of evil, and an agent in his own right. I tend to think of all language as necessarily inexact when it is used to describe things beyond the experiential world – or, better, as free from the narrowness of meaning this-worldly understanding implies for it.

I think of evil as an aspect of human choices and actions, a failure to honour the sanctity of other human beings, as well as the abuse of creation with its inevitable human consequences. In some contexts it may be useful to speak of these undeniable tendencies in us by personifying them and, in effect, externalising them, but historically this has been dangerous – has empowered Satan, so to speak. He appears in the Book of Job to prepare the occasion for God's overwhelming statement of his power when he speaks from the whirlwind.

If he is, in effect, God's devil, this certainly complicates the concept of evil. I notice that when Satan is invoked, there is no adversary on the side of good but God himself. This implies a Manichean equivalence between them that my monotheism cannot brook.

Addressing human evil – greed, hatred, generalised irreverence – will keep us busy till Doomsday, and do more to thwart Satan, granting him whatever existence is appropriate to him, than anything else we can do. God made us capable of good, and Moses, Jesus, Paul, James and others make clear what they mean by the word. It is humble and circumstantial, as when God wipes tears from all faces.

**SWEENEY:** Are we losing a sense of the radical difference between the things of darkness and the things of light?

**ROBINSON:** I'm afraid too many have become too confident in their definitions of these things. Joseph forgave his brothers, Jesus forgave his executioners. In both cases they knew a long, providential history lay ahead as a consequence of actions that, viewed in the terms of any other understanding, were purely evil. God is the God of history. Events take on their ultimate meaning in his good time. And vengeance is his.

We preclude grace when we react to events as if we were their sole judge. All this is to say that the things that stay our hands and our judgements – patience, humility, mercy, love and faith – are the things of light. Darkness is as it presents itself, hypocrisy and self-righteousness being relevant here.

**SWEENEY:** For many years, you have been a contrarian voice on the role of religion and the concerns of contemporary society. At the dawn of 2017, do you find yourself feeling more contrarian than ever?

**ROBINSON:** I'm not ready yet to pass judgement on 2017. It might be the year that lets us know our democracy is stable and vigorous at deeper levels than one bizarre administration can touch. It could be exciting to see what resources can be brought to bear on this problem. We Americans have been made sharply aware of how much we have been able to assume in the way of dignity and competence in our government up to this point. It will be a long time before we take them for granted again.

Meanwhile, it must always be remembered that Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by a margin that would be considered a solid mandate in any normal year. We have adhered to the constitution, which is a good thing. But Donald Trump is not America, and I hope we and the world will see this very clearly in the next four years.

**SWEENEY:** In light of recent events in the US, where a large majority of self-described Christians have elected a president who advocates positions that unambiguously contradict the teachings of the Gospel, have you found yourself contemplating the rise of the Nazis in Germany in the 1930s, which provoked Karl Barth and others to write the Barmen Declaration, and led Dietrich Bonhoeffer to insist that Christians rediscover the "true church"?

**ROBINSON:** I think the Churches have disgraced themselves, more or less, the best by a silence that approaches capitulation, the worst by corruption of various kinds, weaponising piety, among other things. Of course, it has always been true that religion has been put to bad uses, and the emergence of a "true church" is always to be hoped for. But the flagrant use of religion to inflame fear and hostility and resentment that we have seen, has set back American society by 150 years.

**SWEENEY:** You have a well-earned reputation as a Calvinist. It sometimes seems that there is only a hair's breadth between Calvinism and Catholicism, at least of the Augustinian variety. Do you think that's so?

**ROBINSON:** Calvin and other Reformers were very much indebted to Augustine as well as other early fathers of the Church. I am not specifically aware of Augustinian Catholicism as an ongoing tradition. In general, I think good theology is simply good theology, and any Christian can find a great deal to value in it.

**SWEENEY:** Do you feel a particular

## WRITER IN FOCUS

# God and democracy

While he was US president, Barack Obama interviewed Marilynne Robinson about her views on the logical connection between religious humanism and a just political system / **By BRENDAN WALSH**

MARILYNNE Robinson is a novelist, essayist and professor. She is the author of the novels *Housekeeping*, *Gilead* (winner of the Pulitzer Prize), *Lila*, and *Home*, as well as the essay collection, *The Givenness of Things*.

She lives in Iowa, where she recently retired after 25 years' teaching at the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa.

She was interviewed by President Barack Obama in Des Moines, Iowa, on 14 September 2015 for *The New York Review of Books*.

He told her: "One of my favourite characters in fiction is a pastor in Gilead, Iowa, named John Ames, who is gracious and courtly and a little bit confused about how to reconcile his faith with all the various travails that his family goes through. I just fell in love with the character, fell in love with the book."

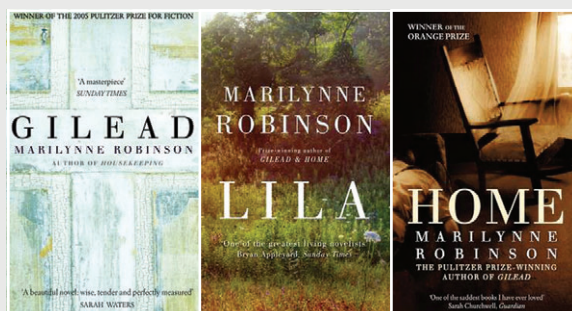
Robinson told the President: "I believe that people are images of God. There's no alternative that is theologically respectable to treating people in terms of that understanding.

**affinity with Catholic essayists or novelists, past or present? Any in particular?**

**ROBINSON:** I have read Cardinal Newman, G.K. Chesterton, the letters of G.R. Hopkins, Gary Wills and, of course, Flannery O'Connor, whose essays are superb. Odd as it seems, I don't read many essays or novels. When I do, I tend not to think of them as Catholic or Protestant unless religion is a subject. My reading is basically history, primary texts whenever possible.

**SWEENEY:** What do you make of Pope Francis?

**ROBINSON:** I enjoy the fact that he speaks



What can I say? It seems to me as if democracy is the logical, the inevitable consequence of this kind of religious humanism at its highest level."

"Christianity", she went on, "is profoundly counterintuitive – 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' – which I think properly understood means your neighbour is as worthy of love as you are, not that you're actually going to be capable of this sort of superhuman feat.

"But you're supposed to run against the grain. It's supposed to be difficult. It's supposed to be a challenge."

Robinson will deliver the Charles Gore Lecture 2017 on "Integrity and the Modern Intellectual Tradition," in Westminster

Abbey on 7 March. She will also speak in London on 13 March as part of the McDonald Lecture Series, a collaboration between St Mellitus College and the McDonald Agape Foundation.

Jon M. Sweeney, who conducted our interview by email exchange, was for 20 years an evangelical Christian (a story he tells in his memoir *Born Again and Again*); he was received into the Catholic Church in 2009.

With his wife, Rabbi Michal Woll, he has written a joint memoir, *Mixed-Up Love: Relationships, Faith, and Religious Identity in the 21st Century*. He will be in Derry, in May, to speak at the Novena for St Thérèse of Lisieux.

in his own voice, humanly, not as the voice of an office or an institution.

**SWEENEY:** Finally, do you have any plans to publish the Gilead trilogy – *Gilead*, *Lila*, and *Home* – as a single volume?

**ROBINSON:** I have never heard the idea mentioned before. On the one hand, it would sort of seem in a way to fulfil an old aspiration of mine, to write a long book. On the other hand, it would fix the novels in a particular order, when I have meant that each one would be freestanding.

**Jon M. Sweeney's** most recent book is *The Enthusiast: How the Best Friend of Francis of Assisi Almost Destroyed What He Started*.

Dozens of prisoners have died in a shocking series of brutal massacres in Brazil's prisons in recent weeks. Prison chaplains argue that only a radical reform of the system can break the cycle of violence / **By FRANCIS McDONAGH**

# How to stop the killing

**B**RAZIL'S Alcaçuz prison in the north-eastern state of Rio Grande do Norte has had the top spot in the nation's TV news bulletins in the past few weeks. Prisoners were seen on the roof of the building with banners of the notorious First Capital Command (PCC) criminal network and the local crime syndicate, and the initials of another gang, the Family of the North, were daubed on the walls.

Since 2015, many of the cells in Alcaçuz have had no bars, and the prisoners have a free run of the prison; 26 prisoners were murdered there in rioting on 14 January. Another prisoner was reported killed on 18 January as police entered the prison to transfer 220 inmates associated with the crime syndicate, and in related violence 15 buses and a government car were burned in the streets of the state capital, Natal.

The authorities later brought 16 shipping containers into the prison to create a barrier between the factions, and by 27 January members of a special prison task force were photographed posing on the same roof with their banner and the Brazilian flag.

**THE DEATHS IN** Alcaçuz happened during the third prison massacre in January; about 60 died in two prisons in Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state, in the first days of 2017, followed by at least 31 killed in the Monte Cristo prison in Roraima, Brazil's northernmost state, on 6 January.

The killings were carried out with extreme violence: some prisoners were beheaded, and grisly videos of the carnage have been posted on the websites of Brazilian media organisations. The problem of finding and matching body parts has added to the difficulty of producing accurate totals of the dead. It is likely that the killings in Roraima and Rio Grande do Norte were in retaliation for the massacre in Manaus, where the victims were associated with the PCC.

The majority of Brazil's prisons and their 600,000 inmates are controlled by the country's 26 states and the Federal District of Brasília, and the state security secretaries were summoned to a meeting with the federal



Inmates on the roof Alcaçuz prison last month. Photo: Reuters

government in Brasília on 17 January.

President Michel Temer announced that he would make the armed forces available for use in prisons to search for prohibited items such as drugs, mobile phones and weapons, at the discretion of state governors; however, the states are more interested in having a fixed percentage of government spending allocated for security in the same way as is done for health and education. This would go against a key plank of Temer's policy of reducing government spending, and require an amendment to the constitution.

The idea of sending the armed forces into prisons has been criticised by Dr Michael Mary Nolan, a lawyer and religious sister who heads the non-governmental organisation ITTC, which works to eradicate gender inequality and combat large-scale imprisonment. The armed forces do not understand prisons or have the training to work in them, she explains.

Dr Nolan tells me that the government missed an opportunity last year to reduce the

prison population in its traditional Christmas pardon. For the first time since 1974, she says, the government did not grant remission of sentences. It also rejected appeals for the release of women prisoners, who generally represent no danger to the public.

On the question of how weapons and other prohibited items get into prisons, Dr Nolan refers to a study by ITTC which shows that only 1 per cent of family members had brought such items in, suggesting that prison staff are responsible. The Brazilian media have reported that two prisoners in the Anísio Jobim prison in Manaus, where the New Year's Day killings took place, have made accusations of corruption against the governor. Dr Nolan suggests that the peace agreement in Colombia between the government and the Farc guerrillas – who were involved in the drugs trade – left space for others to take their place, and this could explain increased competition among criminal gangs in northern Brazil, which borders Colombia.

**THE NATIONAL** coordinator of the Brazilian prison chaplaincy service, Fr Valdir João Silveira, tells me that prisons in Brazil are essentially for the poor.

He wants the Brazilian law that requires prisoners remanded in custody to be tried within a reasonable period to be implemented. Nationally, 40 per cent of prisoners are on remand awaiting trial, but the proportion in Amazonas state, where the New Year's Day massacre took place, is 77 per cent. Twenty-five per cent of remand prisoners are acquitted after trial, says Fr Silveira. The chaplaincy service is also in favour of reviewing the current drugs legislation, which makes five-year sentences mandatory. Since the law took effect in 2006, the percentage of people imprisoned for drugs offences has more than doubled, and in the case of women is 64 per cent.

If drugs were treated like alcohol, argues Fr Silveira, the power of the criminal organisations would be undermined and the petty traffickers currently in prison could be released without harm to society. Keeping offenders out of prison, he says, also keeps them out of the control of criminal networks like the PCC.

The problems in Brazilian prisons are clearly serious, but – if organisations such as ITTC and the chaplaincy service are to be believed – not insoluble. What is lacking is political will and perhaps, at a deeper level, a belief that criminals can be reed. As a former Minister of Justice put it wearily, many Brazilians still subscribe to the maxim that the only good criminal is a dead one.

Francis McDonagh writes from South America for The Tablet

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## CHRISTOPHER HOWSE'S PRESSWATCH

# Obituaries throw the silhouettes of lives against a screen of eternity



“ One day in February 1988, John Hurt the actor was having a quiet pint of Guinness in the Coach and Horses in Soho when one of the regulars there who had the not negligible title of its drunkest denizen turned to him and said: “You’re just a bad actor. All you want is fame.”

Jeffrey Bernard, who was sitting on a nearby barstool, remarked: “I want to be rich and famous. Though I’d settle for the former.” And so the tension was defused.

But John Hurt was not to get off so lightly, being buttonholed next by an eccentric regular wearing a monocle. His nickname was The Red Baron and he was later murdered in Shepherd’s Bush. That night in 1988 he got away with being told by Hurt that he was boring.

I mention this illustration of the trials of fame because Hurt’s was among five pages of obituaries in *The Times* on Monday. He died shortly after his 77th birthday, an age he doubted he’d attain in his drinking days.

On the next page was Alexander Chancellor, who remade the fortunes of *The Spectator* as its editor from 1975 to 1984, and also died shortly after his 77th birthday.

He said he saw the magazine as a convivial party more than a political party – even though he harboured a deep knowledge of politics and I never saw him as wildly drunk as John Hurt could often be.

Obituaries are about lives, not deaths, but they throw the silhouettes of lives against a screen of eternity. Neither Chancellor nor Hurt lived to a conventionally religious pattern. Chancellor had been at Eton, and so had been to chapel more times than most people go to church in a lifetime.

Hurt had been at an Anglo-Catholic prep school, and, *The Times* told us, “one of his two brothers also rebelled, converting to Catholicism and becoming a monk at Glenstal Abbey, Co. Limerick. ‘It created a huge rift in the family,’ Hurt said. ‘To my father, it was as though his son was embracing the Antichrist. I’m sure he used that expression.’” For himself, Hurt settled for agnosticism.

Obituaries are tremendously popular in the serious papers. *The Times* and

*The Daily Telegraph* tempt readers behind their pay-walls with them. Over the past year, since the death of David Bowie really, there’s been an idea abroad that more famous people are dying these days than ever used to. I do not think that is true.

I happened to be obituaries editor at *The Daily Telegraph* in 1997 when I was woken in the small hours of a Sunday morning by a telephone call saying that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been killed. That is 20 years ago, and last week, as the *London Evening Standard* reported, Prince William and Prince Harry announced, “The time is right to recognise her positive impact in the UK and around the world with a permanent statue.”

On that late summer Sunday 20 years ago, I did not foresee the Sargasso wave of emotion that would sweep over the British people, leaving a thick mass of decaying flowers outside Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace. But the Princess was not the only famous name obituarised that week. On the Tuesday, Sir Rudolf Bing, the opera impresario died, aged 95. Then my old friend Jeffrey Bernard, John Hurt’s distraction from annoyance that evening in the Coach and Horses, died, aged 65, and Sir Georg Solti, the conductor, aged 84. It was already a busy week on the obituaries desk when, on the Friday afternoon, I heard a cry go up from one of the tough crew on the news picture desk: “Oh no, now f---ing Mother Teresa’s gone and died.”

Today Mother Teresa is a saint and Alexander Chancellor, the man who asked Jeffrey Bernard to write the “Low Life” column that brought him fame (if not riches exactly), is dead, too. He had toyed with the idea of being Donald Trump’s assassin at his inauguration, but that remained an unfulfilled ambition.

Yes, obituaries are about lives, but as it says in the antiphon that Cranmer pinched for the burial service in the Book of Common Prayer: “*Media vita in morte sumus*”. Or as Hopkins observed in that poem beginning “Margaret are you grieving?” it’s ourselves we mourn for.

**Christopher Howse** is an assistant editor of *The Daily Telegraph*.



For many, there appears to be a marked difference between the sensibilities and behaviour of people today and those of the generation that grew up in these islands between the wars. The death of an uncle serves as a reminder of attributes that once seemed natural to everyone / **By MELANIE McDONAGH**

# A lost way of thinking

**O**NE WEEK AGO I had an uncle; now I have none. My Uncle Frank died at 94. It's one of those bereavements that cuts surprisingly deep. Every man's loss diminishes me, but that of someone born in 1922 diminishes us rather differently.

It means a loss of one of the last remaining living links with the generation that grew up between the wars, leaving the Queen still going strong. There are parts of every individual that belong to him alone, but parts that are formed by the culture in which he grew up; my uncle saw the Crystal Palace burn to the ground as a child.

What were the attributes of that generation, given that individuals vary wildly within a generation and, in my family, between those in Ireland and England? Indeed, between classes. There's an essay to be written about charm; characteristic of upper-class women of that generation, of whom I have known several. It was a learned skill, as much a social asset as good looks, and which made them good company at house parties, dinner parties, dances, and in managing their menfolk. It was made redundant by feminism.

Thrift was one characteristic that decisively set my uncle's generation apart from their grandchildren. My two uncles had simple tastes. Tea with lettuce, salad cream, boiled egg, bottled beetroot and tinned salmon would be a treat; fish and chips wholly enjoyable. He, and his bachelor brother who cared for my grandmother, were savers on modest incomes; that kind barely exist now. Honesty, probity, was a given.

**ANOTHER ORDINARY** trait was stoicism. My uncles did not manifest much emotion; they kept their feelings to themselves, though my younger uncle would manifest grief by violently blowing his nose. You did not indulge in inordinate manifestations of affection; you simply wouldn't get my uncles telling anyone in the family, "Love you!" (Indeed, with my paternal Irish grandfather, I would shake hands at the end of a visit.) My uncles would take the most crushing bereavement without showy demonstrations of grief. You got on with things. As for familial affection, my bachelor uncle would manifest his devotion to his father with bottles of whisky, which he would replace silently as needed.

What that generation did have, was direct-

ness; they would say what they thought without the elaborate circumlocutions that we go in for. It may be as society becomes more crowded, less homogenous and more threatening, we adopt a policy of niceness as pre-emptive pacifism.

**A CERTAIN** down-to-earth resilience was another characteristic of those who grew up in the war. My uncle was in the Marines (he liked the uniform in the poster) and was frogmarched off to volunteer as soon as he was 18 by my grandmother. She was, he observed, worried what the neighbours would say. He had a blessedly uneventful war; never fired a shot in anger.

When half of his unit was sent to train in Scotland for ghastly operations behind enemy lines, he was, entirely fortuitously, sent either to barracks in England, within reach of

Sunday lunch with one or another of his maiden aunts, or off to guard the rump of the British Empire in Ceylon. Even his voyage across the Mediterranean was uneventful; he never saw a single Axis ship. Bravery, as he said, didn't come into it; you went where you were sent.

This was the lot of many of those who took part in the war. And with our natural interest in the spectacular battles, the heroism, we forget they also serve who only do the typing for the commanding officer, which was what my uncle did in Ceylon, being the only member of his brigade who could type. The rest of the time he would chat with street traders selling ebony elephants or tiger's eye necklaces, with one of whom he struck up a friendship.

My great aunt suggested he should buy a commission but it was inconceivable without money; the ambitions of that generation were circumscribed by want of money, but they were accepting of those limitations and largely without resentment of the classes who did have it. My uncle's aunts were employed in grand hotels or with grand families; they never manifested the slightest envy.

My uncle was despatched to Normandy, for D-Day plus one, which meant that there was no heavy fighting, but rather a sense that no one was in charge. The most dangerous episode was when his commanding officer, drunk, sent his men across a field to establish, in oddly Stalinist fashion, whether it was mined. The men did debate whether to shoot him. Not a heroic war, then, but one that called for mere ordinary virtues – the ones that, I think, don't often get their due.

**MY UNCLE'S** outstanding gift was for what you might call positive thinking. After a fall at 90, he was confined to his home, but would insist that he was terribly lucky to have it. He would marvel at the detail of football matches on television; "It would cost you ever such a lot of money to get seats like that," he observed.

Whenever I wanted a flavour of the sensibility of people before the war, I'd talk to him. It wasn't mere conservatism – he voted Remain in the referendum. Rather, he was a living repository of attributes that once seemed natural to everyone. They belong to a vanished world.

**Melanie McDonagh** is a leader writer at the London Evening Standard.

## Tablet poem / by John F. Deane

### Crocus: a brief history

The crocus opens out to something more than crocus, becomes a brief history of time, the ology of cosmos, as a poem is –

impacted yellow of gold-dust, shape of a baby-thumb all-tentative, prelude to a new year; breath of fire from the dark earth, from the closed heart;

the rose-coloured: flush of love, signature of the overture: – these sudden, these small preliminaries – polyphony of crocus – demi-semi-quavers

of what will be an oratorio of hollyhock, lupin, sunflower, under the gold-full baton of the light.

**John F. Deane** is a poet and novelist. He is a member of Aosdána, the body that honours artists "whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the arts in Ireland".

Religion is not something that's discussed in polite society. At least that's the myth. But a year-long festival in London is confronting the big questions in a spirit of openness and tolerance / By NICK SPENCER

# Don't believe all you've heard

**W**HEN I WALK in, a chess grandmaster is talking about the number 42. Jonathan Rowson, British chess champion for three consecutive years, former director of the Social Brain Centre at the Royal Society of Arts and now co-founder and director of *Perspectiva*, a "research institute that seeks to build the intellectual and spiritual foundations for a more conscious society", is riffing on Douglas Adams' famous answer to the meaning of life.

He is talking to the Sunday Assembly, the famous "church for atheists" which, each weekend, is exploring the themes of the year-long festival, "Belief and Beyond Belief", at

London's Southbank Centre. The audience is large, engaged and amused. Elsewhere in the building, preparations are under way for a debate on "Meaning for Atheists: What do Atheists Believe?", at which I am speaking. Later, there will be sessions on mindfulness, and a short film about what it means to lose your memory. This is the first weekend.

Through talks, debates, exhibitions and music, ranging from ritual to science, the festival seeks to explore the "seemingly innate need for humans to find meaning for their lives and a sense of where they fit into the universe, with all its mystery and majesty".

There be dragons in these seas. You don't



talk about "religion" in polite company. Even assuming religious people are capable of rational discussion – many are not, as perfect faith drives out all reason, apparently – doing so invariably risks awakening the inner Ian Paisley. Religion is a fissile material, best kept sealed in concrete. The result, to the chagrin of some, is that the festivals that do head into these waters, often skirt around religion and overtly religious language, in favour of a more nebulous talk of "belief", "existence" and "world view".

**THERE IS ANOTHER**, more positive, way of looking at this, however. As a society becomes less religious, it does not necessarily become any less interested in "belief". Big existential questions press upon us with the weight they always have done. The only difference now is that fewer people are presented with established answers, fewer people trust any pre-ordained systems, and it is generally easier for most of us to anaesthetise ourselves from their implications by means of a vigorous bout of consumerism.

Belief, purpose, meaning, mystery, majesty: this is the register in which we discuss religiosity today. Those who believe coherent answers to the questions are to be found in Christianity should seize the opportunity they provide.

And so it was that I proceeded to my public debate on meaning for atheists with much

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## The UK and the US have now become destabiliser nations in the world

enthusiasm, and some trepidation. I was there, I made clear in my opening remarks, not because I am an atheist (although I used to be of a rather agnostic/tepid kind) but because I had written a history of atheism. It was not for me to tell the atheists in the audience – my impression was that they comprised the majority – whether or not their life had meaning.

Rather, my task was to offer some clarity, from a historical perspective, on the different meanings that atheists have claimed. Atheism is not, after all, one thing and to imagine that an atheist's rejection of God or the supernatural necessarily entails their embrace of one particular system of meaning is wrong.

**THE DISCUSSION** – with Richard Norman, emeritus professor of moral philosophy at the University of Kent and patron of the British Humanist Association (BHA), and Lois Lee, a research fellow, also at the University of Kent and an expert on the sociology of “non”-belief – was, as expected, eminently civil and thoughtful. Those who had come to witness any point scoring would have been disappointed. But it's always the questions that carry a frisson of the unknown, not least for a Christian in a room full of atheists.

As it turned out, and as I should have told my pre-match nerves, they were the epitome of intelligence and politeness. We talked about Darwin, freedom to choose one's beliefs, why God was seemingly so real to some people and not to others.

Afterwards, audience members came to ask me about when God could have “flipped our spiritual switch” as a species, whether certain personality types were attracted to certain religious manifestations, and what it meant for me to admit that there were many days in which God did not seem particularly real at all. There was never a moment, such as I had endured at one BHA conference, where I was in danger of being accused of child abuse for sending my child to the local Church of England primary school.

And it was in the aftermath I realised that the dragons don't exist or, at least, are far rarer than we are led to believe. Our cultural fear of discussing matters of personal belief, religious or non-religious, is out of all proportion to the number of people – religious or otherwise – who will breathe fire at those who disagree with them. The inner Richard Dawkins, coiled asleep within every atheist, is no more real than the inner Ian Paisley. People are surprisingly happy, willing, even keen to talk about beliefs and what lies beyond. We need more opportunities to do so.

To find out more about the *Belief and Beyond Belief Festival* go to <https://tinyurl.com/tabletbeyondbelief>

**Nick Spencer** is acting director of the Christian think tank, Theos. His latest book is *The Evolution of the West*.



Kenneth Baker, who served in several Cabinet posts during the Thatcher and Major years, said to me just after Donald

Trump won the US presidential election: “We know already that 2016 will be one of those years, like 1939 or 1945, of which we will come to say, ‘before 2016’ or ‘after 2016.’” First, there was the Brexit referendum in June, and then the US result in November. He's right.

As the year turned into 2017 there were more uncertainties, perils even, facing the UK than at any time since 1945 (if you exclude the crisis moments of the Cold War, admittedly a big “if”). This became still more apparent in two set-piece speeches – Theresa May's on Brexit, at Lancaster House in London on 17 January, and Mr Trump's, in Washington DC on 20 January, on his plans to remake his country's politics, its economy and its international relations.

Both speeches illustrated, albeit in different ways, the degree to which the UK and the US have now become destabiliser nations in the world. This is certainly not how we Brits imagine ourselves. Quite the reverse. The speeches also fleshed out some of the broad gauge consequences of those two pivotal events of 2016. Both, inevitably, left a quantum of uncertainty about what might be about to become of us and of the architecture of international institutions on which we have come to rely for our peace and security: in the case of Nato, for nearly 70 years.

There were some fascinating resonances, audible and visible. These were most obvious in the case of Mr Trump. He stood on the spot that has become a sacred place for the proclamation of presidential intent. There was, for example, an echo of the first one I listened to on the wireless as a boy, John Kennedy's of 20 January 1961:

“Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed ...”

Now Mr Trump: “We assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign

capital, and in every hall of power. From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on it's going to be America First.” Very similar form. Very different philosophy.

To explain her strategy for engineering the second of Britain's great geopolitical shifts since 1945, Mrs May chose a location central to the first; the very room in which she paved a bit more of the path to Brexit, saw many independence agreements negotiated, as colonies left the British Empire.

There was – is – a huge difference between the two. Disposing of the British Empire was accomplished to a set of timetables largely in the control of UK Ministers. Leaving the EU is not; 27 other countries are involved. And Brexit will, as time goes by, illustrate another comparison; it was far easier to acquire an empire than to shed it.

“Brentry” (to borrow a useful word coined by *The Economist*) will, I suspect, strike historians as having been a relatively swift process once Ted Heath and Georges Pompidou fired the starting gun in 1970. It would not surprise me if a final Brexit settlement takes until the mid-2020s to complete.

Mrs May's speech contained a candid and intriguing piece of historical context: “Our political traditions are different,” she said. “Unlike other European countries, we have no written constitution, but the principle of parliamentary sovereignty is the basis of our unwritten constitutional settlement. We have only a recent history of devolved governance ... and we have little history of coalition government.

“The public expect to be able to hold their governments to account very directly, and as a result supranational institutions as strong as those created by the European Union sit very uneasily in relation to our political history and way of life.”

I can't make up my mind if this passage reflects a regretful Mrs May suggesting a divorce was always likely on grounds of deep incompatibility or a reprise of that traditional national air, “Why can't Johnny Foreigner be more like us?”



**Peter Hennessy** is Atlee Professor of Contemporary British History at Queen Mary University of London and a crossbench peer.

# FROM THE ARCHIVE

## 50 years ago

THE TABLET • 4 FEBRUARY 1967

**A**n Announcement. A paragraph in Saturday's *Times* prompts the announcement on another page [see below] of my retirement in April next, which otherwise would not have come for some four to six weeks, because in general such announcements should not be too far removed from the events they are concerned about. While my friend and successor Tom Burns will have his own ideas and policies, I think readers can accept that there will be an essential continuity in the paper, and that I shall be, as the

notice says, a regular and frequent contributor. **D.W.** ■ The Editor of *The Tablet*. At the end of April Mr Douglas Woodruff will be retiring, having been editor for over thirty-one years. His successor will be Mr T. F. Burns, until recently Chairman of Burns and Oates Publishers. Mr Burns has been a Director of The Tablet Publishing Company during the whole period of the present Editorship, and is closely acquainted with all sides of the paper. Mr Woodruff hopes to continue to contribute regularly.

## 100 years ago

THE TABLET • 3 FEBRUARY 1917

**T**his is the fourth centenary of the publication of the most generally known work of Blessed Thomas More, the *Utopia*. Originally written in Latin, it was probably published in January 1517, and was not translated till 1551. It is one of the ironies of history that this work, which breathes the love of peace and of the people, should have first seen the light in the ravaged city of Louvain, which has been laid in ashes by the hand of German Kultur. A correspondent in the *Manchester Guardian*, having further noted the fact that the

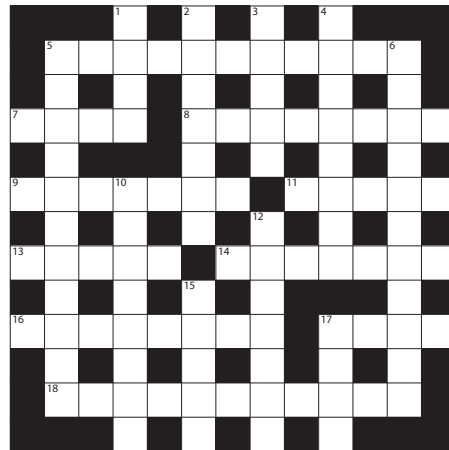
first part of the book was composed by More in London and the second in Antwerp, points to the international character of the circumstances of its production. The book, he says, was "written in an exultant age, delightfully self-conscious in its sense of having left the Wars of the Roses behind, and yet perfectly alive to the horrors of social disorder which followed in the train, first, of the upheaval of civil war; and, secondly, of the stagnant abuses created by the old feudal system of the Middle Ages."

# PUZZLES

## PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 544 | Axe

### Across

- 5 Goal at work to return to some semblance of civilised society (11)
- 7 They make a play book (4)
- 8 Companion of Daniel obtained vehicle to return all in silence (8)
- 9 Bel zeal is out of hand for the Tabernacle man (7)
- 11 There's a party, by the way at first, for a particular martyrologist (2,3)
- 13 Not the first rag-bag regressive king, legend has it, asking for Jesus' help (5)
- 14 Tiny bit to overlook before evangelical trip (7)
- 16 Pope, cardinal and Scotsman (8)
- 17 In Jordan on every level, primarily, there's a prophet (4)
- 18 First into Canterbury, he worked to suit US agent (2,9)



- 5 Council of Trent dissenter, sadly he's a bulimic (6,5)
- 6 See Westminster as one? (11)
- 10 Semite this morning seen in an area running (8)
- 12 Incomplete code on SIM deciphered to reveal Jewish movement (7)
- 15 Books Henry, Charles and William, for example (8)
- 17 Oriental ascetic informed Tarzan's girl (4)

### Please send your answers to:

#### Crossword Competition 4 February

The *Tablet*, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on Paul, Theology and Christian Ethics – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 17 February.

● The answers to this week's puzzles and the crossword winner's name will appear in the 25 February issue.

#### Solution to the 14 January crossword No. 541

**Across:** 1 Crispin; 5 Sarah; 9 Lot's wife; 10 Arad; 11 Manna; 12 Damaris; 14 Masada; 16 Olivet; 18 Johanan; 20 Ittai; 23 Hymn; 24 Ethiopia; 25 Verse; 26 Brother. **Down:** 2 Rhoda; 3 Susanna; 4 Isis; 6 Ahava; 7 Adamite; 8 Lebanon; 13 Hanamel; 15 Acolyte; 17 Introit; 19 Annas; 21 Amice; 22 Shur.

**Winner:** Stephen Morgan, of Oakham, Rutland.

### Down

- 1 Exists to be in the present, tense – the third person one worshipped in Egypt (4)
- 2 Oedipus complex that's under scrutiny in *The Da Vinci Code* (4,3)
- 3 Philistine's suit tailor only partially fits (5)
- 4 I love Roman customs, those we find in the Bible (8)

## SUDOKU | Challenging

				4		2	5	8
					8	4		9
								3
8					5	9	7	
6				7				1
	9	5	8					4
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5	1	2		9				

2	4	5	7	9	6	8	3	1
6	1	7	2	3	8	9	4	5
8	3	9	1	4	5	6	7	2
5	7	3	6	8	4	2	1	9
4	6	2	3	1	9	7	5	8
9	8	1	5	7	2	3	6	4
7	9	4	8	5	3	1	2	6
1	2	8	4	6	7	5	9	3
3	5	6	9	2	1	4	8	7

Each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution to the 14 January puzzle

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## All prayer, all of the time

Inspired by the calling of one individual, a cathedral joined in a city-wide initiative to establish prayer 24/7. The spaces provided clearly responded to a contemplative yearning on the part of many Christians

NICHOLAS HENSHALL

**D**AVE IS an ex-policeman who has worshipped at a local Pentecostal church for 30 years. He left the police because he felt a profound call from God to set up prayer stations across the city of Chelmsford to pray for the city and the mission of the Church here. This was not an "ecumenical" venture in any formal sense. Dave simply refused to recognise the traditional boundaries and wanted to work with anyone who shared the vision.

And so it happened – to Dave's surprise and probably to mine – that one of the chapels in the cathedral soon became the Chelmsford 24/7 prayer space for four hours on alternate Wednesdays, part of a wave of prayer across the city. And simply because of the nature of cathedrals, it soon became the busiest.

The set-up is simple and can be adapted to any space in any church. It could be a separate room or chapel, a discrete corner, part of the nave, just some chairs, well-spaced with prayer stations.

These do not have to be elaborate: a place inviting people to write Intercessions on Post-it notes and place them on a wall or board; a map of the world and/or the local community with themes and ideas for prayer; a leaflet with some Bibles giving an outline for *lectio divina*.

These are familiar ideas in many churches already and the elements can be different in each place. Having the heat on when it's cold is important, as well as having someone on duty to welcome people and explain the space, invite them to look through the Sunday leaflet and to find out about local churches with details of timings and locations.

Social media is extremely effective for getting the word out.

Between Ascension and Pentecost 2016, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York invited churches across the country to keep a dedicated novena of prayer for evangelisation. Some great resources appeared and some big plans were laid. But it soon became clear to me and Dave that the most important thing that we could offer was a solid 24 hours of prayer in the cathedral.

Dave used the same format as on Wednesdays: the small St Peter's Chapel laid out with prayer resources as a simple, silent space. We recruited two people for every hour to act as welcoming and stewards. The priest of the neighbouring parish and I drew the

### To do

**REDISCOVER** the contemplative Christian tradition that is a genuine gift to all the Churches.

**ADAPT** any space in any church for prayer – a separate room or chapel, a discrete corner or part of the nave.

**REMEMBER** prayer is not the job of other people; it's a key practice and ministry of the local church.

short straw and were allotted the 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. slot, but it was great to see the online list gradually populated by enthusiastic volunteers.

The vigil began straight after Evening Prayer, and perhaps emblematically our first visitor was one of our more unusual homeless people who then spent much of the night lying in the porch welcoming others.

People came and went quietly. Coffee and tea were on tap. Through the stillness of the evening and into the early hours, there was nothing earnest – simply a contemplative silence that invited people across the threshold. And while some came and went to the chapel, others sat or stood in other parts of the building, lighting candles, saying prayers, sharing in the silence.

Birdsong and dawn slowly came, and then Morning Prayer and Eucharist, the ordinary daily rhythm of the cathedral's life – a busy day in the building, but the chapel simply there as an offering and invitation. And people were still coming and going right through to 5.15 p.m. and Evening Prayer once again. A reporter from the local radio station arrived, curious, intrigued.

I realised that my own questions had been: could I afford to give so much time, to lose sleep? Could I really make it through the night? Sure, those kind of vigils had been part of my teenage waking up to God, but that is many decades ago. And yet the experience was not one of boredom but of blessing. The night did not pass quickly and by the following afternoon I felt pretty wrecked – but it was a blessing nonetheless.

When Dave and I first met, part of me wanted to say: "Look, Dave, we know about this kind of prayer! This is what cathedrals and churches in our tradition do! Come along

on Maundy Thursday, or share in the 40 hours devotion at Our Lady Immaculate just down the road."

All that is true, and deeply valuable. Indeed one of Archbishop Justin Welby's initiatives at Lambeth Palace has been the introduction of silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament after Evening Prayer in the chapel there – a deep encouragement to stillness and encounter.

The 24/7 prayer movement (see [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)) has grown up outside the mainstream Churches and been a significant part of the rediscovery of the contemplative tradition that is a genuine gift to all the Churches.

Even if we observe the strict disciplines – and here at Chelmsford our daily 15 minutes' silence as a team, between Morning Prayer and Eucharist, is very precious – serious dedicated time with God gets pushed out by busyness, emails, the relentless demands of daily ministry.

It is easy to forget the pearl of great price: to be in God's presence, as the worship song goes – "this is my desire". Jesus' early morning vigils (e.g. Mark 1:35) are a pattern and model for us, not an exceptional practice. And Jesus' first invitation to the disciples is after all "to be with him" (Mark 3:14).

I am clear that the 24/7 prayer movement, with its roots largely in the independent Christian communities, is one of God's ways of reminding the whole Church of something we are in danger of forgetting, or regarding as the job of other people rather than a key practice and ministry of the local church.

So I love it that alongside the daily round of liturgical prayer, the community here at Chelmsford Cathedral has been blessed by Dave and has become a home for what it was always here for – 24/7 prayer.

Dave is still a little baffled to be working so closely with something as establishment and mainstream as an Anglican cathedral, and he still sits at the back of the cathedral when the Eucharist is being celebrated, uncertain yet whether he is invited to the feast.

But he is helping us all to learn that cathedrals – and indeed any church – can be (and should be) wild borderlands in the adventure of prayer.

**Nicholas Henshall** is Dean of Chelmsford Cathedral.

# NOTEBOOK

•QUOTE OF THE WEEK•

"I've always been rather cussed and argumentative and therefore John XXIII and Pope Francis still continue to make me a Catholic."

LORD (CHRIS) PATTEN OF BARNES on BBC Radio 4's Great Lives



## Couldn't be wurst

He was speaking in the country that invented the Bratwurst and the Frankfurter, so the Archbishop of Berlin, Heiner Koch, should not have been surprised when

his comments attacking the meat industry provoked ire among German farmers.

"We cannot close our eyes to the catastrophic conditions in the large animal factories," Koch told rbb-Radio (Radio Berlin) at the opening of the "Green Week" Agricultural Fair in Berlin. "Pig fatteners treat animals like conveyor-belt products and slaughter them

under unspeakable conditions," he added.

Peter Bleser, from the Ministry of Agriculture, said that Koch's portrayal of farmers as "animal torturers" had deeply hurt many farmers who were very attached to their animals. Michael Lohse, a spokesman for the German Farmers' Association, was "disappointed in and furious with" Koch.



PHOTO: PA/CZECH NEWS AGENCY

## Bishops' truce secure

There are no hard feelings between the Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, and the Bishop of Willesden, Peter (Pete) Broadbent, after their serious falling-out at the time of the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. The famously plain-speaking Broadbent took to Facebook to rail about the "nauseating tosh" in the coverage.

The Bishop of London, who preached the sermon at the Cambridges' wedding, took a dim view of this and asked Bishop Broadbent to withdraw from public ministry for a time.

However, at a dinner held last Thursday at the Mansion House – one of a number marking Bishop Chartres' forthcoming retirement and the launch of a charitable fund in his name – harmony was restored: the senior bishop, at the end of Broadbent's speech, looked at him with a smile and enquired, impromptu, "Shall we toast the Queen?"

It's just as well they've made up, as they have to work closely together. Broadbent will be interim leader of the London Diocese when Chartres retires next month.

Date	Description	Amount	Balance
1939	21. Prof Black shoe boots 12/6	12/6	12/6
1939	6. Prof Black shoe boots 12/6	12/6	25/2
1939	16. Shoes soled through, built new soles	12/6	37/8
1941	14. Prof Brown shoes brogue shoes	11/8 3/4	49/1 1/4
1941	21. Prof Brown shoes brogue shoes	11/8 3/4	61/0 1/2
1941	2. Prof Black R. Marching Boots	2/18 7/9	63/8 1/2
1941	11. Shoes soled through	12/6	76/4 1/2
1941	23. 2 pairs of Brown leather shoes	3/0 5/6	79/4 1/2
1941	20. 2 pairs of shoes soled through	1/8 6	81/0 1/2

### HISTORIC ACCOUNTS

## SOLE TRADING

If it is true that you can tell a lot about a man from his shoes, a set of ledgers from Oxford shoemaker Ducker & Sons could shed light on Catholic authors Evelyn Waugh and J.R.R. Tolkien. The 11 leather-bound ledgers cover the early to mid-20th century and are being auctioned by Mallams after Duckers' owners failed to sell the business. Among the accounts are details of Waugh's purchase of a pair of patent leather pumps in 1939 and Tolkien's purchase of football boots, which cost 14 shillings and six pence. Between 1939 and 1941, Waugh is documented to have bought several pairs of brown Oxford brogues and two pairs of black "marching boots". A Mallams' auctioneer described the ledgers as "a unique social history of the city and its environs from the early to the mid-20th century". It is estimated that they will sell for between £4,000 and £6,000.

## Wall of hope

Members of six families from a church in north London, all of whom died from brain tumours, are to be commemorated at a memorial wall at Queen Mary University of London.

David Taylor, whose daughter Sue Blasotta, died in 2011 aged 42, was this week due to put six tiles on the Wall of Hope to represent the families from St Monica's parish in Palmers Green. The university is conducting research into the most aggressive forms of brain tumour. Mr Taylor, through his charity, In Sue's Name, has also launched a £1 million research funding campaign.

## Room at the top

For the first time *The Tablet* is to appoint a chief executive to realise ambitious plans to take our unique insight to new audiences in the UK and around the world – especially to younger readers. Our distinctive voice has been heard across print and online platforms for several years, but to further build our presence we are investing in the technology and people to deliver the best results.

The new chief executive will report to the board, to guide and lead us through this phase in our development – see advertisement on page 29.

# LETTERS

• THE EDITOR OF THE TABLET •

✉ 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY ☎ 020 8748 1550 @ letters@thetablet.co.uk

All correspondence, including email, must give a full postal address and contact telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

## Vocation to teach

● Matthew Quinn's letter (21 January) should set alarm bells going, because unless the issues he raises are addressed, prospects for our Catholic schools look uncertain. Our schools have always been reliant on headteachers and staff with a profound sense of calling to the education of the children.

All schools are struggling to recruit staff as young teachers are put off by the data-driven soullessness of school culture in our times. And let us not doubt that the same soullessness is a real danger for Catholic schools. Just as the Anglican communion found it not only necessary but revivifying to review their school system in 2001, so too ought we to review and renew ours as we seek to generate hope and commitment for the future.

The 1977 review of Catholic education led by Bishop David Konstant focused on adult religious education and made recommendations including "that plans be made for the establishment of an Ecumenical Christian College for the preparation of adult religious education teachers, of headteachers and potential headteachers, of chaplains for schools, universities and polytechnics, of catechists and others".

I believe that it is time now to implement this resolution, suitably adjusted to meet current needs, and at the top of the list I put the need of formation for heads and senior staff. In the old days when the system benefited from the presence of religious, formation was taken care of by the various congregations. Since the departure of the religious however, headship has become a fully lay role and not many lay men and women have had any structured preparation to lead their schools as communities of faith. That needs to be addressed.

Unless we reawaken a sense of vocation among our young teachers and prepare them to lead our schools with wisdom, vision and courage, then sadly it is possible that in a generation or so our much-loved and

much-cherished Catholic schools will be Catholic in name and in memory only.

**JIM MADDEN**  
BUDLEIGH SALTERTON, DEVON

## Abuse ignored

● Christopher Lamb writes that, "Even in Italy, the bishops' safeguarding guidelines impose only a moral, not a legal, obligation to report allegations." ("Papal fallibility", 28 January.) In fact the safeguarding procedures now taken for

## TOPIC OF THE WEEK

### Too many own goals

**I CONGRATULATE YOU** on your editorial "Reclaim the laity before it's too late" (28 January). The parallels between Martin Luther and the modern Church should ring alarm bells. Pope Francis asked the Irish bishops to become goalkeepers in the game of being Church in our time. This is gloriously timed. Many bishops think they are the manager of the team, if not the actual owner of the club.

There is an urgent need to recalibrate ministry, with more goalkeepers, also dribblers with the common touch of the Pope himself. The Church has played a defensive game for decades with too many own goals and far too many fouls. Our bishops need to acknowledge and value every church member as a team player.

**(FR) TOM GRUFFERTY**  
CHRISTCHURCH, DORSET

**FEW WOULD DISPUTE** that the Church is in some disarray. One major cause is the neglect of key elements of Vatican II. Dormant are: the collegiality of the bishops, the importance of the "People of God", and the stress placed on the primacy of conscience. With Pope Francis clearly in the pastoral footsteps of Pope John XXIII, do we really want to return to the times when virtually every papal pronouncement was taken as near infallible?

**ARTHUR WELLS**  
EMSWORTH, HAMPSHIRE

**KATH HOWELL** (Letters, 28 January) urges the Holy Father with his bishops to put aside ambition or pride and to concentrate on the teaching of Christ on moral issues. Thus will disunity in the Church be cured.

I wonder. Is she old enough to remember

the pre-conciliar days when our lives were controlled by "approved authors" who based their teaching largely on natural law and canon law? The Council told moral theologians to base their work more on Scripture and theology. Some, such as Bernard Häring, were already doing this. So out went the "approved authors" and in their place the careful studies of such as Häring were brushed aside and replaced by the hierarchy. If the Pope made a rule, that was it. If a bishop ordered his priests to follow a certain line they were bound in obedience to him. In the days of "approved authors" there was little choice between them on certain questions. It was a question of simple obedience.

Our best moral theologians could not agree to this interpretation. All our circumstances count in our coming to a moral decision and this may mean breaking the letter of the law. Pope Francis follows the teaching of the Council.

**KEVIN DEAN**  
BLACKBURN, LANCASHIRE

**THE BATTLE** between conservative Cardinals and Pope Francis prompts the reflection that all appears to depend on our vision of God. He has to be all-knowing and all-powerful and the Old Testament emphasises this. The promised Messiah was expected to use his power to drive out the Romans and restore the Kingdom to Israel. Is it the image of power that conservatives hanker for? Do they find Christ's words "learn from me. I am meek and humble of heart" unacceptable? Pope Francis does not.

**CHRISTOPHER DAVID**  
LANZAROTE, CANARY ISLANDS

granted in Britain, with information about whom to contact prominent at the back of every church, are absent in, of all places, Rome.

I discovered this a year or two ago when I witnessed an incident that needed reporting. When I tried the relevant clergy, I was ignored. English clergy there, who I knew must be familiar with safeguarding, also dismissed it and the idea that they should have a reporting procedure.

A Sister held up a hand and said, "I'm going to stop you

there. I'm an Irish citizen. I'm going back to Ireland on Friday. If you tell me, I'll have to do something about it." Eventually I was led to Fr Hans Zollner, who responded appropriately. He is right that there should be a central authority, which would make this sort of indifference much harder. He and the other members of the Commission for the Protection of Minors need our prayers.

**CATHERINE M CLOUGHLIN**  
LONDON W14

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

## LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

### Separate tables

● While warmly welcoming John Sweeney's loving and ecumenical understanding (Letters, 28 January), I would like to point out that the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic Sacrament has been taught by the Church of England from the earliest days.

The Prayer Book Catechism states that the elements signify "The Body and Blood of Christ which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper". It is the philosophical description of "transubstantiation" that is more problematic for Anglicans. Either way, as Sweeney points out, this is God's gift, not that of the clergy, and I have never accepted that refusing anyone at the altar was consistent with the example of the incarnate Saviour, who did not exclude even Judas.

(REVD) ANNE KIGGELL  
OXFORD

● What is depressing about "the controversial issues raging in *The Tablet's* letters page" is that in spite of all "the trouble experts have taken to explain" the doctrine of the Real Presence, John Sweeney seems not to appreciate that no matter how reverently an Evangelical Anglican might treat the Host at a Catholic Mass as a sacred

symbol, if he or she does not believe it is the Body of Christ, he/she has in all sincerity to regard the symbol as empty of what it symbolises, and what he/she and anybody else see before them, as really only a piece of bread.

Such a view of Christ's Body would indeed be sacrilegiously offensive to God, for all that He would not hold the Anglican to account for it, because of his/her good faith.

DANIEL WADE  
LONDON NW9

### Kings and martyrs

● Your report on the National Civil War Centre's purchase of *Eikon Basilike* (Notebook, 28 January) describes it as a "rare 17th-century book" but then notes that there were "at least 36 editions printed in 1649 alone". As this figure indicates, *Eikon Basilike* is not that rare. However, the copy acquired by the centre is: it contains Charles II's signature and was once kept in the Royal Library.

PETER AUGER  
QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF  
LONDON

● You remind your readers of the execution by Parliament of King Charles I, his anniversary being 30 January, and that he is held a saint by high Anglicans.

Another sad anniversary on that same day and the following, is the brutal death of

the Gunpowder Plot conspirators who suffered the penalty for treason in 1606 – Fawkes, Wintour, Fr Garnet and others.

These recollections impress on us that injustice does not entitle men, or women, to commit sanguinary atrocities in response. Nor does it authorise authorities to hold innocent members of a particular faith answerable for the deeds of a few of their coreligionists.

There's a moral here for our present times.

PETER GERRARD  
NENAGH, CO. TIPPERARY, IRELAND

### March against Trump

● "Never underestimate the courage and wisdom of women" – the words of Pope Francis during his 26 January audience give me strength.

I, too, took part in the Women's March, reported by Tina Beattie ("At the edge of the inside", 28 January). This was 30 years after I first marched, in solidarity with CND and the Greenham Common women, against the siting of US cruise missiles on UK soil. As a mother with a new infant I felt passionately then, as I do now, that we should not allow American policies to determine our futures.

This time I walked as a grandmother, alongside my daughters, shoulder to shoulder with other women and men to

try to safeguard future generations. I am not willing to see our gains in the fields of equality and human rights eviscerated by a demagogue.

CATHERINE BRADY  
LOUGHBOROUGH,  
LEICESTERSHIRE

### False doctrine

● The convert Colin Armstrong (Letters, 28 January) has been sold a pup. He believes that converts have to accept the Church's current "teaching in its entirety" and that Una Kroll converted in bad faith.

Had Armstrong left the Anglican church when slavery was taught by the Church to be moral, or that sex between married couples was sinful if they enjoyed it, he might have been willing to submit to such false teaching.

He also needs to be clear that not all papal teaching is "Church teaching". The sort of certainty Armstrong is looking for is not on offer in the Catholic Church, where Church teaching is often the matter of healthy debate. The late revered Kroll was a prophet and as a Catholic I am proud to have been in communion with her when she died in early January.

SIMON BRYDEN-BROOK  
LONDON SW1

NB: The email address for letters to the editor is now [letters@thetablet.co.uk](mailto:letters@thetablet.co.uk)

## THE LIVING SPIRIT

AND LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Those periods of dryness [in prayer] can be when God is closest to us and when we grow the most. In those times, our prayer is motivated by pure love, and we do not come to God for the comfort we receive. There will also be times of great consolation, when praying gives us peace, or joy, or true sorrow for our sins. In Rudyard Kipling's words, when it comes to consolation and dryness in prayer, we must "treat those two imposters just the same". Prayer is about God, not about our feelings. If you keep yourself close to the Lord, you will experience "peace... which passes all understanding" (Phil 4:7).

AURORA GRIFFIN

IN *HOW I STAYED CATHOLIC AT HARVARD*  
(IGNATIUS PRESS, 2016)

St Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering. / Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church. / O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; / intercede with God on their behalf, so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. / Those whom man enslaves, let God set free. / Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith. / Help all survivors find healing from their wounds. / We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us. Amen.  
UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC



BISHOPS MIGRATION AND  
REFUGEE SERVICES, PRAYER TO ST.  
JOSEPHINE BAKHITA (2011)

If we cannot find the Kingdom of God within us, if we cannot meet God within, in the very depth of ourselves, our chances of meeting him outside ourselves are very remote. When Gagarin came back from space and made his remarkable statement that he never saw God in heaven, one of our priests in Moscow remarked, "If you have not seen him on earth, you will never see him in heaven."

METROPOLITAN ANTHONY OF SOUROZH  
IN *CREATIVE PRAYER: DAILY READINGS WITH METROPOLITAN ANTHONY* (DARTON, LONGMAN & TODD, 2004)

### CALENDAR

**Sunday 5 February:**

Fifth Sunday of the Year (Year A)

**Monday 6 February:**

St Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

**Tuesday 7 February:**

Feria

**Wednesday 8 February:**

Feria or St Jerome Emiliani or St Josephine Bakhita

**Thursday 9 February:**

Feria

**Friday 10 February:**

St Scholastica, Virgin

**Saturday 11 February:**

Feria or Our Lady of Lourdes

**Sunday 12 February:**

Sixth Sunday of the Year

♦ ♦ ♦

For the Extraordinary Form calendar  
go to [www.ims.org.uk](http://www.ims.org.uk)



# BOOKS

• OUR REVIEWERS •

PETER MARSHALL is the author of *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Reformation* • LYNN ROBERTS' latest book is *A History of European Picture Frames*

PATRICK WEST is a freelance writer • ROBERT CARVER is the author of *The Accursed Mountains* • MICHAEL GLOVER is *The Tablet's* poetry editor

## The father of the Holocaust?

New insights into why the man who sparked the Reformation 500 years ago turned so violently against the Jews

PETER MARSHALL

### Luther's Jews: A Journey into Anti-Semitism

THOMAS KAUFMANN, TRANSLATED BY LESLEY SHARPE  
AND JEREMY NOAKES

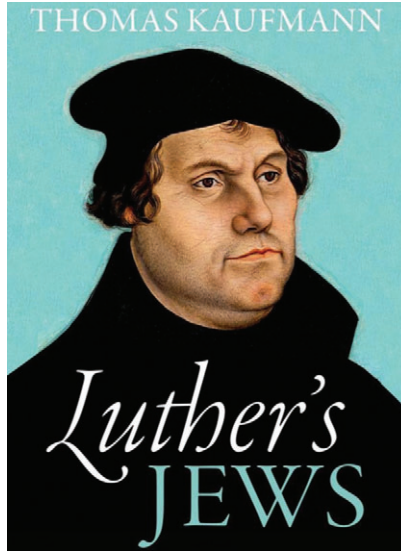
(OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 208 PP, £18.99)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £17.10 • TEL 01420 592974

**I**N THE RECKONING after the Second World War, reproachful British and American commentators drew a straight line between Martin Luther's hostility towards the Jews and the greatest crime of European history. Unrepentant Nazis acknowledged the connection. Julius Streicher, doyen of anti-Semitic propagandists, told his Nuremberg judges that Luther should be sitting in the dock. Luther's defenders, on the other hand, argue that it is anachronistic to label him as "the father of the Holocaust". His attitudes, though regrettable, were the conventional ones of his day, and there is a crucial difference between old-fashioned religious anti-Judaism and modern racial anti-Semitism.

Thomas Kaufmann brings exciting new insights to what I had suspected was a worn-out debate. His subject is not "Luther and the Jews" – the reformer never had much contact with actual Jewish people. Rather, it is "Luther's Jews", a construct and a fantasy, though one that Kaufmann sees as central, not marginal, to Luther's preoccupations after his break with the Church of Rome.

**THE PRINCIPAL** challenge is to bridge the gap between two contrasting texts. In 1523, Luther wrote the pamphlet "That Jesus Christ was born a Jew". It was, for late medieval Germany, a remarkable intervention, condemning oppressive treatment and arguing that Jews must be treated in a "brotherly" manner. Twenty years later, Luther published another tract, *On the Jews and Their Lies*. It fell short of advocating extermination, but only just: Hebrew writings were to be seized, Jewish worship banned, Jewish homes destroyed. Luther recycled old calumnies absent from his previous work – that Jews poisoned wells, and kidnapped and murdered Christian children. He also urged the burning of synagogues, a suggestion without precedent in earlier anti-Jewish writings, and, as Kaufmann points out, an extraordinarily reckless one given the way most sixteenth-century towns were laid out.



Luther's descent into demonisation is often portrayed as the optimism of youth giving way to the irascibility of age. But Kaufmann offers a more interesting version. Luther's early "kindness" towards Jews was a product of his growing anti-papalism, and of his prophetic self-understanding. It was no wonder Jews had not converted to the debased Christianity of popish days. With the rediscovery of divine truth, the times were once again apostolic, the Gospel on offer to Jews and Gentiles without distinction. What Luther announced in 1523 was not a new era of "tolerance" for Jews, but a one-off opportunity for them to convert.

Earlier scholars, Kaufmann argues, overlooked a key qualification: benevolence was to last only "until I can see what effect I have had". And, as it happened, there was to be no wave of conversions. It seemed in fact that Jews were simply unconvertible, and increasingly Luther came to regard their historic sufferings as proof of their abandonment by God. He had made a mistake in 1523, and in 1543 he set out to correct it – but his underlying assumptions had not much changed.

Luther, writes Kaufmann, "was convinced of his rightness to a degree hardly seen before in a scriptural exegete". Driving Luther's hatred of Jews was their refusal to recognise what to him seemed self-evident: that the Old Testament was a guide to the messianic identity of Jesus. His frustration extended to Christian Hebrew scholars who "just stick to grammar". What was at stake in the vitriolic

outburst of 1543 was nothing less than the potential "loss of the Old Testament as a witness to the truth of Christianity".

Nor will it quite do, Kaufmann argues, to protest that Luther's anti-Semitism was solely "religious", for to compartmentalise "religion" in this way makes little sense for Luther's world. In the reformer's comments on the nature of "Jewish blood", in his willingness to attribute to Jews characteristics of deviousness and love of money, Kaufmann detects a "proto-racist" form of anti-Semitism, which was certainly not unique to Luther but was nonetheless integral to both his personality and his theology. At the very least, Luther was a "resource" for twentieth-century anti-Semitism in its truly murderous forms.

It is all sobering stuff. One of Kaufmann's sentences, early in the book, stopped me in my tracks: "We can no more put our faith blindly in Luther's theology than twenty-first-century adults would voluntarily place themselves in the hands of a sixteenth-century surgeon."

There is a twenty-first-century agenda in play here. Like other professional German historians, Kaufmann is perturbed by the uncritical adulation of Luther from all sides that the 500th anniversary celebrations of the start of the Reformation has elicited. It was a mistake, he believes, for the Lutheran Church (advised apparently by advertising consultants) to choose Luther's image as the official logo for the commemorations. The only remedy is the critical distance supplied by "a consistently historicising lens", a relentless determination to locate Luther in his own age, rather than regard his life and writings as timelessly adaptable to current needs and circumstances.

**AS A HISTORIAN**, I instinctively applaud the sentiment, but I somehow can't quite regard this as the end of the matter. The past may well be a foreign country, but it's the country in which we used to live, and from which our memories, attitudes and values derive. Kaufmann is probably right that "there is no figure in other Christian denominations who enjoys a position comparable to Luther in German Lutheranism". But other Christians, including Catholics, face similar challenges of deciding what to cherish, what to reinterpret, and what to quietly drop, from the pronouncements of their historical teachers. How we might best go about doing this is something on which, sadly, this excellent book offers no prescriptions.

Forgery or mystery?

ROBERT CARVER

The Voynich Manuscript

EDITED BY RICHARD CLEMENS  
(YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 304 PP, £35)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £31.50 • TEL 01420 592974

“I WILL PROVE to the world that the black magic of the Middle Ages consisted in discoveries far in advance of twentieth-century science,” proclaimed Wilfred Voynich to *The New York Times* in 1916.

This exiled Polish antiquarian book dealer had imported a mysterious vellum codex, which he claimed to have bought from a Jesuit library smuggled out of Rome when the order was suppressed in 1773. Alchemical in content, with an undecipherable text in an unknown language, beautiful coloured illustrations of astrological configurations and imaginary, non-existent plants, not to mention mysterious naked blonde women ritually bathing in vats of green liquid, it was an exquisite and intriguing puzzle.

Voynich claimed it had been compiled by the thirteenth-century Franciscan friar Roger Bacon, who was known to have been so deeply immersed in occult lore that his spiritual superiors had put him under house detention in Paris and forbidden him from any further meddling with the dark arts. Helpfully – and possibly too conveniently – the codex contained an explanatory letter in Latin dated 1665 from the Prague scientist J. M. Marci to the Rome-based Jesuit scientist Athanasius Kircher. This included the attribution to Roger Bacon, and suggested it had been sold for 600 ducats to the Renaissance alchemist-prince the Emperor Rudolf II. Voynich’s own price tag was US\$100,000. He garnered many headlines but no buyers. Many believed it to be a clever forgery. Eventually this mysterious work ended up in Yale University library. Experts and amateur cryptographers have tried to crack the coded text for 100 years, but all have so far failed.

This handsomely-produced large-format book contains the first full-sized colour facsimile of the whole codex, together with essays arguing for its authenticity. The vellum book itself has been carbon-dated with a 95 per



CONTESTED: a detail from the manuscript

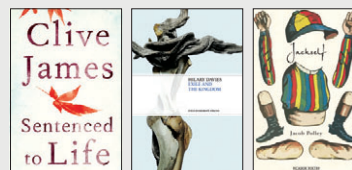
cent probability to between 1404-1435: too late for Roger Bacon, but it could have been copied from an earlier, now lost original. So much for the vellum, but questions remain, however, around the text and illustrations. Medieval watercolours and carbon-based inks can be washed off vellum leaving no trace, and mineral-based inks – which cannot be carbon-dated – can then be put on the original vellum pages. Thus it is possible to theorise that Voynich could have purchased a genuine but dull medieval book, had the text erased, and had the present intriguing version substituted by skilled forgers.

The 1665 letter in Latin could also have been forged – all one needs is a single sheet of genuine seventeenth-century paper cut from the back of a book, then undateable mineral ink, a quill pen and an expert in old calligraphy. Voynich was no angel: he had sold forgeries before, including to the British Museum, and he had travelled on a forged passport himself when escaping from a czarist prison in Siberia. He was widely regarded as an untrustworthy character. Without the letter, the attributions to Bacon and the Emperor Rudolf vanish. This book proves the vellum itself is original, but nothing else.

The probability is that like the Vinland map, which also ended up in Yale University library, the codex is in fact a very sophisticated forgery. It is simply too odd, too mysterious, too unusual, with no similar texts to be found anywhere. Can anyone really believe that the Jesuits had such a gem in their library for 200 years without noticing it? It is certainly very beautiful, but it also looks too good to be true. Where is Umberto Eco in all this, I hear readers asking, and indeed he is here, on page 58 of this book, in a photo, poring over the original manuscript at Yale.

This could be a book that launches 1,000 far-fetched fantasy historical sagas of the Dan Brown variety – just add the Knights Templar, Aleister Crowley, Rennes-le-Château, the Holy Grail, and maybe you’ve got a best-seller.

SPEED READING



MICHAEL GLOVER

Selects three recent poetry collections

It is often said that poetry comes into its own at moments of extremity: when a slippery new babe, hoisted up by the ankles, pipes its welcome to a dangerous world; when a tired body finally slips away into the oncoming light or dark. There is something so brutally and poignantly unflinching about Clive James’ hard stare in the direction of his coming demise in *Sentenced to Life* (Picador, £9.99; *Tablet* price £9), so sweetly tragic are his fond looks at the little time that has not yet slipped away. The very fragility of his hold has shocked him into verse much superior to anything he has written before.

Hilary Davies’ fourth collection, *Exile and the Kingdome* (Enitharmon, £9.99; *Tablet* price £9) is, in part, a brave and eloquent writing through of the loss of her husband, the poet Sebastian Barker, who died on the last day of January in 2014. A grave commemoration can also be a fine and wholly deserved celebration. There is much more too: a fine sequence in praise of the Rhine, for example, and all that it has meant to her. A wonderful collection, with such a musical swing and verve.

Jacob Polley’s *Jackself* (Picador, £9.99; *Tablet* price £9) is a strange, jerky, conniving, glance-back-over-your-shoulder sort of a book. It is haunted by nursery rhyme and folklore. It has lines of curiously odd lengths, shuttly spacing. It alarms, estranges and beguiles. It seems to possess a kind of oddly dangerous waywardness. It throws us back to thinking what part of the dark human underbelly *Lord of the Flies* or Ted Hughes’ *Crow* might have emerged from. Sniff it out.

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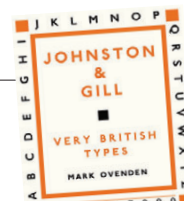
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RECENTLY PUBLISHED

**Johnston and Gill: Very British Types** / MARK OVENDEN / LUND HUMPHRIES, £40; TABLET PRICE £36  
A magnificently illustrated celebration of the contribution to Britain's visual culture of Edward Johnston and Eric Gill

Mango-yellow sunlight

LYNN ROBERTS

Studio of the South: Van Gogh in Provence

MARTIN BAILEY

(FRANCES LINCOLN, 224 PP, £25)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £22.50 • TEL 01420 592974

WHEN VAN GOGH was painting Félix Rey, the young hospital doctor who cared for him after the ear incident, he apparently declared, “there are only two colours, red and green”. No one looking at his Provençal work would agree with this; his palette is alive with mango-yellow sunlight, lapis blues and singing turquoises, sugar-almond pastels and tangerine. This is Martin Bailey’s second book on Van Gogh; the last one, *The Sunflowers Are Mine*, used the artist’s flower paintings as a means of examining his work, and through it, his life. Here the view is also apparently limited, focused narrowly on the 15 months he spent in Arles; yet he produced so much in that short period – “around 200 paintings, at the

PHOTO: PA/SIPA USA/XINHUA, CHEN YICHEN



MASTERPIECE: Van Gogh’s self-portrait at the Musée d’Orsay in Paris

impressive rate of over three a week” – that Van Gogh’s whole career seems telescoped into this lean and handsome book, which overflows with Mediterranean colour.

Bailey is a tireless detective of unpublished nuggets and archival titbits. There is the hospital registration of Van Gogh’s admittance, showing that he declared himself a “landscape painter”, and a newspaper item on other artists,

besides Van Gogh, who were currently working in Arles (some of their work is also reproduced). There are more newspaper reports of his ear mutilation, and the possibility is raised that it was provoked by the “aural hallucinations” mentioned in his medical records. We also learn that, surprisingly, Van Gogh took three of the hospital staff to the Yellow House to see his paintings. Bailey also publishes a sketch by Emile Bernard of Van Gogh drinking in a Paris cafe, and his registration in Arles as a foreign resident. Another interesting revelation is that four of his paintings have borders painted in complementary colours (like Seurat’s, from two years previously), as well as two given painted wooden frames. They reveal how much he had learned of colour complementaries from the Impressionists, and of harmonising an interior with the paintings hanging there – as he did in the *décoration* planned for Gauguin’s room.

The book is divided into themed chapters based on subjects: local orchards, harvest, portraits of friends; or on aspects of Van Gogh’s time in Arles – Gauguin’s arrival, collaboration, and what became of the famous bed. Letters and paintings are used mutually to illumine each other, and the result is an intensely vivid and colourful examination of this dedicated, vulnerable, ornery artist.

The boredom of nihilism

PATRICK WEST

The Evenings

GERARD REVE, TRANSLATED BY SAM GARRETT

(PUSHKIN, 320 PP, £12.99)

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GERARD REVE, who died in 2006, is considered one of the greatest post-war Dutch authors and his debut novel, *The Evenings*, published in 1947, is regarded as a masterpiece in his native land and continues to be taught in schools. The existential tale has been called his country’s equivalent to *Nausea* or *The Outsider*, yet it is only now that it has been translated into English.

Its protagonist, Frits, is an aimless and neurotic 23-year-old nihilist with an unhealthy taste for black humour. He lives with his parents, whom he resents: “I’m only waiting for them to hang themselves or beat each other to death. Or set the house on fire.” When not at his dull, unspecified day-time job, Frits spends his evenings meandering from house to house, engaging in conversations with like-minded misfits about such subjects

as pain, death and baldness. Much talk ensues because Frits is terrified of silence among strangers. His only vaguely constructive pastimes are cinema and listening to the radio.

Frits is obsessed by what time it is, finding relief only when the tedium of the day is over. “Ten o’clock is the first milestone,” he reflects over fruit juice. “Then it’s on to eleven. Once we’re past that, the worst is over.” He is a sadist who jokes about cancer and dead children, yet who is aware of his own sickly predicament. “My head is seriously ill,” he says. “The soul is covered in countless points of infection.” He is haunted by anxiety dreams, and some of the most entertaining sections in this novel are his terrifying hypnagogic and hypnopompic states.



Like Camus’ *The Plague*, the strength of *The Evenings* lies in its evocation of atmosphere. Where *The Plague* is hot and arid, *The Evenings* is unrelentingly wet and cold, dank and monochrome. It is claustrophobic, a feeling emphasised by there being no line breaks between the dialogue.

It is an opaque affair and one without resolution, a tale clearly inspired by the Second World War and German occupation – although, as in Camus’ novel, the war is not directly mentioned, only implied.

*The Evenings* is engaging, but not completely satisfying. Roquentin in *Nausea* has a palpable disgust and terror of reality itself,

a revulsion for people and even objects. Frits, on the other hand, is less wracked by existential ennui and beset more by simple boredom. In this regard, the idiosyncratic Reve, who converted to Catholicism around the time he came out as gay, may be compared to Alberto Moravia or J.D. Salinger. Perhaps, with his morbid humour and bizarre, amorous friendship with a toy rabbit, Frits is merely heading towards insanity. “One of these days you’ll go completely mad,” says a companion, to which he replies: “I am already heading in that direction, by leaps and bounds. But don’t tell anyone.”

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## The riches of religious history

London's newest museum is an ancient monastery

TERRY PHILPOT

The Charterhouse Museum  
CHARTERHOUSE SQUARE, LONDON

**C**HARTERHOUSE SQUARE stands at a historical crossroads. Shaped by tumultuous moments in religious history, it is a place of leafy seclusion overlooked by the modernist towers of the Barbican, ringed by expensive apartments and a stone's throw from the bustling Smithfield meat market.

It is easily overlooked: and so too within it is the Charterhouse, an almshouse founded in 1611 out of the dissolved remains of an ancient monastery. Forty "brothers" (as the residents are known) still live there. And now, for the first time in its history, it is open to the public as it houses London's newest museum; it is a museum with one of the richest religious histories of any in the capital.

It was here in 1371 that a Carthusian monastery was founded, lasting just over a century and a half before being dissolved by Henry VIII in 1537. For four years while he was a student of law, St Thomas More was "religious lyvinge" at the Charterhouse. This is the heart of monastic London: a quarter of a mile away is the twelfth-century former Augustinian church of St Bartholomew the Great, London's oldest, and Knights Hospitallers' Clerkenwell Priory, of which only the crypt and gate remain.

Back in Charterhouse Square, one is standing on a plague pit, the burial site of victims of the Black Death of the mid-fourteenth century; it is sobering to think that the original graveyard was maybe five times the size of the

present square. In 1381, at what was then the open space of adjacent Smithfield, the boy king, Richard II, met Wat Tyler and John Ball, leaders of the Peasants' Revolt, while near to today's market is a memorial to Protestants killed during the reign of Mary Tudor.

The entrance to the new museum invites reflection on the anguish caused by great suffering in this area: the Black Death, the execution of monks, the dissolution of the monastery. It leads to a path through Chapel Court, where the chancel and part of the transept of the priory church once stood.

A new plinth marks the site of the grave of Sir Walter de Mauny, the monastery's founder; behind it, a marble slab shows the place of the high altar and on a wall is a plaque commemorating the Carthusian martyrs – the prior and six monks were executed by Henry VIII's men, and nine more died in prison. A Catholic commemorative service in 2007 was the first held here since the Reformation.

When the monastery was dissolved, Sir Edward North, an apparatchik of the king, used stone from the buildings to construct a great mansion in the 1540s, so great that Elizabeth I and James I held court there; in fact North was virtually bankrupted by Elizabeth's final stay here in 1561 and was forced to retire from public life as a result.

Thomas Sutton then purchased what remained of the Charterhouse in 1611, and founded the almshouse and a school, which

numbers Robert Baden-Powell, William Makepeace Thackeray, Francis Turner Palgrave, John Wesley and the Prime Minister Lord Liverpool among its old boys. In 1872, Charterhouse school moved to Godalming in Surrey, where it remains today.

Artefacts, prints and pictures illustrate the museum's themes of successive owners, who in the sixteenth century included the Duke of Norfolk: there are copies of the letters that were used to prove his guilt in siding with Mary, Queen of Scots.

In one display case, a Victorian replica of a Catholic chalice of 1500, a New Testament of 1690, an Anglican Communion cup from 1630, and a 1549 Bible illustrate the changing denominational fortunes that have marked this plot of land. But, more poignantly, there is also a mutilated chapel statue of the martyred St Catherine of Alexandria, triumphing over her persecutor, the pagan emperor Maxentius. It had been used for ballast, excavated after wartime bomb damage.

But it is in the buildings where the visitor sees history most clearly: standing in the barrel-ceilinged Great Hall, the Great Chamber, with its Flemish tapestries, or in the chapel, with its cloister a remnant of its Carthusian origin, or the Norfolk Cloister, with an original monk's cell. One passes through courtyards redolent of the place's history – the Master's, the Wash-house, and the Preacher's. The museum itself stands on part of the Great Cloister.

**LIKE THE AREA** in which it stands, the Charterhouse is shaped by the past and buffeted by the present: its fabric incorporates elements from the fourteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Now it is an ancient caring institution alongside a new museum: and the irony is that the almshouse was set up as a model Protestant charity, and remains an Anglican foundation – though, needless to say, Catholics are not barred from becoming "brothers" (the word is without religious connotations).

The almshouse will soon start to admit women provided they, like the men, can prove they are in need of companionship and in straitened financial circumstances. Today's visitors are likely to catch sight of some of the brothers, and there are videos showing their current daily routine.

And the distant past meets the very modern present with the final exhibit: the skeleton of an unknown man, a victim of the Black Death. He was found with 24 others, in the square, during excavations for Crossrail. This place is indeed a historic crossroads, and it continues to be traversed.

*The Charterhouse Museum is open Tuesday to Sunday from 11 a.m. Last admission 4.45 p.m. Tours of the grounds, and brother-led tours, are available. [www.thecharterhouse.org](http://www.thecharterhouse.org)*

DIGITAL  
ARTS

**Carnival in Bolivia**, in the city of Oruro, as well as the usual festivities, there is a “diablada” that travels several kilometres in honour of the Virgin Mary <http://www.arte.tv/guide/en/054722-001-A/carnival-oruro-bolivia>

## VISUAL ART

**Sun, snow – and war**

A forgotten campaign recalled

LAURA GASCOIGNE

**War in the Sunshine**  
ESTORICK COLLECTION, LONDON

**I**N NOVEMBER 1917, British troops arriving at Ventimiglia near Genoa were greeted with showers of carnations and barrels of wine. After the Italians’ disastrous defeat at Caporetto, the British had despatched an Expeditionary Force to the Italian defensive lines on the River Piave, and the change from the trenches felt as good as a holiday. One officer described it as “war in the sunshine”.

That is the title chosen by the Estorick Collection for its unusual First World War centenary exhibition (until 19 March), which opens the curtain on a forgotten theatre of war, presenting it from contrasting viewpoints – the air and the ground – via photographs and paintings from the Imperial War Museum.

The paintings are by Sydney Carline, a young artist enrolled in the Royal Flying Corps who was posted to Vicenza in February 1918 to provide escort protection for reconnaissance aircraft, later flying combat missions. Fifteen thousand feet above the Brenta Valley and the Julian Alps, Carline reported feeling “an exhilaration ... like nothing on earth” that inspired him to record the vertiginous views while flying his Sopwith Camel with his knees.

After his appointment as an official war artist, the Ministry of Information complained that there were “too many clouds and Alpine peaks” in Carline’s paintings, but the beauty of the landscape left him little option. In *British Scouts leaving their Aerodrome on*

*Patrol over the Asiago Plateau, Italy* (1918), the tiny village with its campanile far below seems more like a Renaissance painting than war art. His approach became even less documentary after he swapped his plane for a motorbike to record the effects of the Austrian defeat: his shadowy *Austrian Prisoners being driven towards the Italian Lines* (1918) could be damned souls from Dante’s *Inferno*.

The Ministry of Information took a different line with its war photographers, telling Ernest Brooks to play up to public expectations “that everything on the Italian front takes place in the mountains” and “get some good snow stuff”. There is not much snow in the photographs selected for this show, which focus mainly on British-Italian relations.

As a macho former soldier, Brooks took a rather dim view of the Italian military and the local culture, but his image of a *Soldier from the Royal Engineers with Two Messenger Dogs and a Roadside Shrine* (1917) succinctly captures the brutality of war’s incursion into Italian rural life. His civilian colleague W.J. Brunell was more sympathetic, especially to the women in the Royal Army Service Corps. A smiling model pictured in one photograph leaning against a stack of cartridge cases is persuaded to pose flirtatiously in another with her arms around an 18-pounder shell.

Sunshine apart, the Italian campaign was no holiday. It cost the lives of 1,230 members of the Expeditionary Force, some of whose rudimentary graves appear in a photograph by Brunell. The cost to the survivors was less obvious. Brunell eased back into civilian life and a post-war career as a car photographer, but Brooks, a royal photographer before the war, lost his Royal Warrant and his OBE through a drink-related scandal. Carline suffered bouts of depression and died from pneumonia in 1929 aged just 40, two weeks after his first solo exhibition.

## RADIO

**Sweet travels**

The story of honey

D.J. TAYLOR

**Gift of the Gods**  
BBC RADIO 4

**D**ESPATCHED TO THE ancient world to explore the early history of apiculture, Martha Kearney was clearly having a terrific time (27 January). From a Cretan cave where the infant Zeus was thought to have been nurtured by a friendly local swarm, she proceeded to Heraklion to examine artefacts relating to the Minoan bee, before travelling to the mainland to Mount Hymettus in search of an ancient house whose terracotta pots had been identified as antique hives.

Then it was back to Crete to interview a modern-day bee-keeper who declared, with all the solemnity of a Hollywood actor saluting his co-star, that it was “a pleasure to work with such animals”.

If the faint air of folksiness that always attends radio programmes set anywhere near the Aegean was apparent in the “Zorba the Greek”-style introductory bouzouki music, then Ms Kearney, when not going into raptures over some of the local products, had a serious quarry in view. For the bee, she reminded us, played a vital part in the Minoan economy, its diet and also its spiritual life.

Bronze Age bowls with wax traces discovered at religious sites suggested a coming-of-age ritual undergone by young men. Bee symbolism turned up everywhere from the marks on temple doors to coinage. Here in the miniature world of the hive, with its fruitful alliances and its common purpose, lay a potent metaphor for the Greek city state.

There was also, Kearney’s array of archaeologists and historians insisted, a fascinating gender divide. Every ancient writer from Hesiod to Aristotle assumed that worker bees were necessarily male, led by a king whose hives offered a home to parasitic female drones. In contrast, many of the symbolic figurines that survive are half-bee, half-woman, with bee head and loudly striped female bodies. Were the first bee-keepers women? Kearney wondered.

If the jury was still out on this vexed question, then Kearney – an apiarist herself – relished the chance of a little hands-on involvement. Donning protective clothing for her tour of the Cretan hives, she could be heard marvelling at the size of the wasp-trap (“I’ve only got a jam jar with a bit of water and some vinegar”).

All this, along with the obliging taxi drivers, classical allusions and recitations from Carol Ann Duffy, made for a highly entertaining and informative jaunt.



**CAMEL PATROL:**  
Sydney Carline’s 1918 painting (detail) of British war planes over Italy’s Asiago Plateau

## THEATRE

## An uninvited guest

Unthinkable history in the making

MARK LAWSON

Winter Solstice  
ORANGE TREE THEATRE, LONDON

**T**HE SOCIAL GATHERING that is ruined by an unexpected or uncooperative visitor is a reliable theatrical conceit: from J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* through Alan Ayckbourn's *The Norman Conquests* to Yasmina Reza's *The God of Carnage*.

But, in a 2014 German drama by Roland Schimmelpfennig, given its United Kingdom premiere in a David Tushingham translation called *Winter Solstice*, the guest from hell hails – or, crucially, seems to – from a particular historical inferno.

One Christmas Eve, Albert, a historian of subjects including the Holocaust, is fixing drinks for wife Bettina, an experimental filmmaker, and her widowed mother, Corinna. A doorbell heralds not the expected friend, an artist called Konrad (he turns up later), but a stranger, Rudolph, who recently met Corinna on a train.

Apparently cultured, an expert pianist and lover of art, the uncalled-for caller progressively drops worrying details into the conversation. Although German, he grew up in Paraguay, where his father had “emigrated”. He loves the music of Wagner, but believes the Jewish contribution to culture has been over-rated. On his return to Germany, he has found “a



**MILO TWOMEY**  
plays Konrad in  
the thrilling  
import  
*Winter  
Solstice*

whole army of lost people” who need firm leadership because “everything is falling apart”.

In a literal interpretation, Rudolph is the son of a Nazi doctor, but is probably a broader metaphor for the rise of the far Right across Europe, as the play resists specificity. Schimmelpfennig's script is divided into 19 continuous movements, containing up to 71 separate mini-scenes within them. The text gives no instructions on setting, but the writer's request that stage directions be “spoken where possible” has inspired director Ramin Gray to stage the bulk of the play as a read-through in a rehearsal room.

The five actors sit in casual clothes around trestle tables laden with scripts, tubs of mini-snacks and water bottles. Each plays a single main character, but also voices interstitial lines, so that, when one says, “He plays a couple of

bars again. He starts with Chopin's *Nocturne*,” another mimes the performance with his fingers on the table. Only the final scene is fully acted out, with realistic props, in what may be a scene from a film made later by Bettina.

The result is an examination of how theatrical imagination works – five characters in search of a movie – but given greater heft because the play's theme is the politically unimaginable becoming real in a future Europe.

Nicholas Le Prevost, Kate Fahy, Laura Rogers, Dominic Rowan and Milo Twomey brilliantly enact the paradox of making characters fully fleshed within an anti-realistic scheme.

The Richmond premiere is a co-production with the Actors Touring Company, which surely must live up to its middle name with this thrilling European import.

## TELEVISION

## Postcards from the edge

In search of the lure of the remote

LUCY LETHBRIDGE

Fair Isle: Living on the Edge

BBC4

An Island Parish: Anguilla

BBC2

**C**AN A COMMUNITY be created artificially, or does it have to emerge organically? This is one of the questions asked in a documentary about Britain's remotest island, Fair Isle, situated in turbulent seas between Orkney and Shetland. *Fair Isle: Living on the Edge* is a two-part documentary, the first of which (1 February) focused on what drives people to live in a place so isolated that they are completely dependent on weather, sheep and each other.

The immediate attractions of Fair Isle were clear enough. When the sun is out, it is staggeringly beautiful, a slab of emerald in a blue sea. But the sun is rarely out and much of the

time the 55 islanders battle against driving rain and damp so deep it makes the kitchen cupboards fall off the wall.

Half the inhabitants are incomers, renting cottages from the National Trust, which owns the island. The trust looks for hardy souls, preferably families who will keep the community going. There is no pub, one shop (stocked by a weekly boat that takes five hours from Lerwick), a primary school and a bird observatory that attracts visitors who are then encouraged to buy the island's famous patterned knitwear. There is a kirk and a chapel and the minister, like everyone on the island, holds down several jobs. Most of the cottagers are crofters – renting a cottage at a peppercorn rent comes with a flock of sheep – and everyone pitches in to help at shearing time.

While the native Fair Islanders come from generations of knitters and crofters, some of the incomers have just pitched up with a longing for self-sufficiency, while others arrived by accident – they came to visit and loved it so much they stayed.

The documentary concentrates on the most recent arrivals – Shaun and Rachel, jobless and ex-Army. They had only known each other three months when they applied to rent a

trust cottage, but with horrible inevitability, as we watch them holding down three or four jobs and careering through mud chasing sheep in the rain, the relationship seems to go sour rather quickly. We will have to see what happens in episode two but it does not bode well.

The community on Fair Isle is a created one in the sense that its members consciously keep alive island life in the face of modernity. As the ever-popular *An Island Parish* series has shown, small island communities demonstrate how groups of people left largely to their own devices usually come together and work in the common interest.

The current eight-part series is set in the Caribbean island territory of Anguilla, bigger and hotter than Fair Isle, but with the same commitment to community and the same sense that living there is a coming home. Anglican Bishop Brooks regularly visits the 10 islands that make up his diocese of the North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba, and in episode six of eight (6 February) the visit of the native Anguillian priest coincided with the excitement around the coronation of Miss Anguilla.

As one expat put it, “It reminds me very much of Cornwall, where I was brought up”, though the weather is probably a little warmer.

# NEWS BRIEFING

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD



## Nun honoured

An 85-year-old nun who has spent more than 50 years helping the Northern Territory's Tiwi people has been named Senior Australian of the Year at a ceremony at Parliament House Canberra, at which the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, presented her with the award. **Sr Anne Gardiner** (above) said she accepted the award on behalf of her fellow Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and of the Tiwi people. She first went to live among the Tiwi at Bathurst Island, near Darwin, in 1953. She used her acceptance speech to call for greater recognition of Australia's indigenous peoples.



After witnessing the arrival of **President Adama Barrow** in Gambia's capital, Banjul, on 26 January, to assume power days after his predecessor, Yahya Jammeh, finally stepped down after losing December's elections, Bishop Robert Patrick Ellison of Banjul said: "The crisis is over, but we need help." He called for more US

and European Union aid and for measures to restore the tourist industry in Gambia.

The ongoing economic crisis and political polarisation in **Venezuela** is costing thousands of lives, Archbishop Ubaldo Ramón Santana Sequera of Maracaibo said. "There is already a bloodbath of considerable proportions in Venezuela," he said last week, pointing to figures of some 30,000 murders a year. "If we fail to find a peaceful way to understand each other, the number could increase," he added. As well as violence and riots caused by food shortages, the archbishop reported soaring inflation, growing poverty and malnutrition, especially among children. Venezuela's opposition has been holding street protests calling for an end to the rule of the unpopular President, Nicholas Maduro.

The **Chinese Government** over the past year has increasingly pressurised Christianity in the country to conform to the Communist Party's agenda, according to a recent report by a watchdog that monitors religious freedom in China. China Aid, a non-governmental organisation that documents abuses against Christian churches, pastors, activists and human rights lawyers, said in its report that throughout 2016 the Government of President Xi Jinping had engaged in activities to force all religions "to surrender to the authority and leadership of the Chinese Community Party".

## Lay missionary murdered

A Polish lay missionary has been murdered during an attack on a childcare centre run by Polish nuns in Cochabamba, central Bolivia. **Helena Kmiec**, 26, who had started work at the centre only weeks earlier, died of multiple stab wounds after the attack on the night of 24 January. Police arrested several suspects and suggested robbery was the motive. Ms Kmiec was a volunteer at last year's World Youth Day in Krakow.

An archbishop and a Catholic contingent have joined Hindus

in India's **Madhya Pradesh** state on a march to try and save the Narmada river from pollution that is turning its water toxic. Archbishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal recently walked a stretch of the "Protect Narmada March", which will cover the 1,000-km path of the river through the state and end in May. The river, a major water source in Madhya Pradesh, is heavily polluted from factory waste, sewage, animal carcasses and the ashes of burnt bodies.



A delegation of the Chaldean Church, led by **Patriarch Raphael Louis Sako** (above), visited Iraq's Nineveh Plains last week and reported that committees have been set up and the first funds allocated to rebuild churches and homes destroyed by Islamists. The largely Christian community was driven out by Islamic State between June and August 2014. In Telkaif, the Chaldean Patriarch led prayers in the church of the Sacred Heart for peace and the prompt return of refugees to their homes.

The Czech President, Milos Zeman, has invited the Pope to visit his country for the 75th anniversary of the **Lidice massacre**, carried out by the occupying Germans. Nazi paramilitary police destroyed Lidice and executed 173 male villagers at a nearby farm on 10 June 1942 in retaliation for the killing a fortnight earlier by Czech resistance fighters of a leading Nazi official, Reinhard Heydrich, Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia.

**Japan** is to submit a proposal to add several places linked to the history of Japan's persecuted Christians to Unesco's list of

cultural World Heritage sites. The 12 Christian sites include the Oura Church in Nagasaki Prefecture, a national treasure and the oldest existing church in the country, and Sakitsu village, where hidden Christians lived, in Amakusa, Kumamoto Prefecture.

## Mental health appeal

The commission representing **Europe's Catholic bishops** has urged better care and improved dignity for mental health sufferers, and urged the Church to do more to resist their social exclusion. "Christian ethical thought and Catholic social teaching have many resources to bring to reflection on mental health and wellbeing," the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the EU (Comece), said in a report.

Russia's minority Catholic Church has vowed not to be drawn into planned state celebrations of the 1917 revolution despite wide support among local Catholics for the autocratic policies of **President Vladimir Putin**. "Our Catholic faithful hold various political views – but the Church's role is to make people morally sensitive, not to promote any political option," said Mgr Igor Kovalevsky, secretary-general of Russia's Bishops' Conference. In a *Tablet* interview, he said a church committee would meet to discuss the anniversaries, but added that most Catholics would prefer to commemorate the 1917 Marian apparitions at Fatima, which urged Russia's conversion, rather than a revolution that heralded eight decades of savage repression of Christian communities.

Addiction to the drug methamphetamine is one of Western Australia's biggest issues ahead of the March state election, **Archbishop Timothy Costelloe** of Perth told *The West Australian* newspaper. "Society is being cut loose from its moorings," he said. "Society is strongest when it has strong values that are pretty well recognised, accepted and adhered to by the vast majority."

Compiled by **James Roberts**

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“Society is being cut loose from its moorings. It is strongest when it has strong values adhered to by the vast majority”

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe on the scourge of the drug methamphetamine in Western Australia (see page 23)



UNITED STATES/ ‘Be known for love,’ says Mike Pence

## New vice president joins March for Life

MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS

**NEWLY INAUGURATED** Vice President Mike Pence became the highest-ranking US government official to speak at the annual March for Life (pictured) in Washington DC. The march, the 43rd such protest, is traditionally held on the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalising abortion.

“Life is winning in America and today is a celebration in that progress,” Pence told the crowd gathered on the National Mall. “We’ve come to a historic moment in the cause of life and we must

approach it with compassion for every American. Life is winning in America because of you. Let this movement be known for love. Not anger. For compassion. Not confrontation.” The speakers included members of Congress, presidential adviser Kellyanne Conway, evangelical leader Eric Metaxas, Catholic bishops and other pro-life advocates.

Organisers anticipated a crowd of 50,000 but the appearance of the Vice President, announced at the last minute, may have swelled the numbers. The previous weekend, an estimated 500,000 people participated in a women’s march



protesting against Donald Trump’s policies and as many as 800,000 people attended the presidential inauguration.

The night before the march, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, chairman of the bishops’ committee on pro-life activities, presided at Mass in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Billed as an annual “state of the movement” address, but mindful of the executive orders on immigration issued that day by President Trump, the cardinal organised his homily around the theme of sanctuary – the sanctuary of the womb, of the family, and of America as a haven for immigrants and refugees – echoing the “seamless garment” approach to life issues advocated by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. “We come

together this evening in a church we call a sanctuary,” the cardinal said, “in a land historically termed a sanctuary ... to reclaim the belief that a mother’s womb is the primal sanctuary.” The applause that has greeted such sermons in the past was absent.

The Pope sent the “many thousands of young people from throughout America gathered for the March for Life ... the assurance of his closeness in prayer.”

A message signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin said: “As [Francis] has made clear, ‘so great is the value of a human life, so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother’s womb, that no alleged right ... can justify a decision to terminate that life’ (*Amoris Laetitia*, 83).”

■ **RUSSIA:** Russia’s Orthodox Patriarch has called on Russian MPs to press for a total ban on abortions, warning that the high numbers performed annually are impeding the country’s moral and social development, writes *Jonathan Luxmoore*.

“I’ve appealed to deputies several times to consider restricting abortion, and I’ve seen some progress made in highlighting this evil,” Patriarch Kirill told members of the State Duma. “This would not be some revolutionary step but a necessary return to normality, without which it will be impossible for men and women to achieve happiness.”

## Bishops divided over Trump orders on migrants

**DIFFERENCES ARE** emerging among US bishops in their responses to President Donald Trump’s executive orders restricting refugees from certain Muslim countries, building a wall on the US-Mexican border, and stopping federal funds from going to so-called “sanctuary cities” that shelter undocumented migrants, writes *Michael Sean Winters*.

Three statements issued by the US bishops’ conference express “concern” and state that the bishops “strongly disagree” with certain aspects of the policy that the President is implementing. The statements were issued in the name of Bishop Joe Vasquez who chairs the Migration Committee,

■ **MEXICO:** The Mexican Episcopal Conference issued a statement on 26 January, responding to US President Trump’s executive orders to advance the construction of a border wall with Mexico and to deport millions of undocumented immigrants, writes *Martha Pskowski*. The bishops wrote: “We express our

not from the President of the conference, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo.

In a column in his diocesan paper, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia did not mention the executive orders, and instead called attention to Trump’s critics.

“Some of the harshest fury directed at [Trump] has nothing

sorrow and rejection with regards to the construction of this wall, and respectfully invite everyone to reflect on the ways through which we can ensure security, development, work and other necessary and fair measures, without causing further damage to those who are already suffering.”

to do with his character. It’s a very special brand of ‘progressive’ intolerance for the approach his administration may take toward a range of social issues, including abortion. It involves a visceral media and leadership-class contempt for people [who] march in defence of the unborn child.”

Conversely, after Mr Trump signed the executive orders, Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark sent out a tweet that read: “A fearful nation talks about building walls. We must challenge the fear before we are led into darkness.” Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago stated: “The world is watching as we abandon our commitments to American values.” Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego said: “This executive order is the introduction into law of campaign sloganeering rooted in xenophobia and religious prejudice.” Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl wrote to his priests: “We raise our voices [for] all refugees, especially those fleeing religious persecution.”



GERMANY / Parliament memorialises the murder of 300,000 people deemed 'unworthy of life'

## Bundestag remembers Nazi euthanasia

CHRISTA PONGRATZ-LIPPITT

FOR THE FIRST time, the annual hour of remembrance for victims of the Holocaust on 27 January, the day in 1945 that the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated, was devoted to victims of the Nazi regime's euthanasia programme. The Bundestag especially highlighted the murder of some 300,000 people with special needs who were considered "unworthy of life" by the Nazis.

It had taken Germany a long time to come to terms with this particular crime in its past, Bundestag President Norbert Lammert (pictured) said. Many of the perpetrators who were doc-



tors and scientists had gone on to become university professors in the Federal Republic after the Second World War, he recalled. "The fact that this commemoration was possible at all, we owe to the efforts of a few untiring individuals," he emphasised.

The euthanasia murders had been a "test run" for the "deliberate

and systematic" murder of the millions that followed. With the exception of individual representatives of the Christian Churches such as the Catholic Bishop of Münster, Clemens von Galen, and the Protestant Bishop of Württemberg, Theophil Wurm, hardly anyone had had the courage to "defy this inhuman Zeitgeist", Lammert said, unable to hold back his tears as he read out the names of some of the known victims.

Sebastian Urbanski, an actor with Down's syndrome, read out a letter from an inmate of the Hadamar Euthanasia Centre to his parents describing the appalling conditions under which he and

his fellow inmates were slowly starving to death. The letter was confiscated by the Nazis and recovered after the war. Speaking to KNA, Mr Urbanski deplored the continued social exclusion of people with Down's syndrome.

■ Bulgaria's predominant Orthodox Church has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for rescuing 48,000 fugitive Jews from deportation to Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War, writes *Jonathan Luxmoore*. The nomination was passed to the Nobel Committee by a former Israeli health minister, Efraim Sneh, with signatures from more than 200 relatives of rescued Jews.

## Portugal to start debate on legalising assisted dying

THE PORTUGUESE Parliament was to start debating the legalisation of euthanasia on 1 February, following a petition signed by 8,300 citizens, writes *Filipe Avillez*.

The issue has been spearheaded by the Left Bloc party, which together with the Communist Party supports the

Socialist Government, and by PAN, the animal rights party, which has only one sitting MP.

But the Socialist Government and the Communist Party want to avoid a heated and divisive debate on this subject, for fear of alienating Christian voters just months away from local elections and a papal visit in May.

For now only the petition is being discussed and no draft laws have been submitted, but PAN and the Left Bloc have been saying they intend to table a bill after the debate. Although the Socialists are expected to try to dissuade the Left Bloc, the animal rights party may go ahead with its plan. If it does so, the Left Bloc

will probably submit a proposal of its own.

Meanwhile a second petition was handed in to the Portuguese Parliament last week, requesting the rejection of any proposal which allows the state to take a human life. This received more than 14,000 signatures and has been backed publicly by seven different associations of Catholic professionals, including doctors, nurses and psychologists.

## ITALY

### Catholic chapel becomes Sicily's first synagogue in 500 years

THE CATHOLIC Church in Sicily has made a significant step towards healing ancient wounds with the Jewish community, allowing a chapel in Palermo to become the first synagogue on the island for 500 years, writes *Isabel de Bertodano*. The chapel, part of the church and monastery of St Nicholas of Tolentino, is built on the ruins of the Great Synagogue in the old Jewish quarter.

"It's the closing of an historical circle and the righting of an historical wrong," said Michael Freund, founder and chairman of Shavei Israel, which has long campaigned for a Sicilian synagogue.

The move came about largely due to the friendship between Rabbi Pinhas Puntarello, who will become the rabbi of the new synagogue, and the Archbishop of Palermo, Corrado Lorefice.

"It is with great joy that we have responded to this request," said the archbishop. "This transfer is the product of a genuine friendship and ongoing dialogue between the Church and Palermo's Jewish community."

Rabbi Puntarello said the archbishop was "open minded, friendly and sincere. He really believes in the equality of all people in front of God."

## FRANCE

### Nine clerics now in prison, 26 under investigation for sexual abuse

THE FRENCH Bishops' Conference has said that nine priests and deacons are currently in prison for sexually abusing minors and 26 more clergy are being investigated by judicial authorities in such cases. A further 37 have served their sentences and been released, writes *Tom Heneghan*.

The results of a recent survey of French dioceses with their 15,000 priests were released as the bishops presented an updated edition of "Combating Paedophilia", their 72-page guidebook for dealing with sexual abuse.

The survey and the guidebook reflected the bishops' efforts in

recent years to reflect better the suffering of victims. The failure to do so in the past led to the current abuse scandal in Lyon, where Cardinal Philippe Barbarin has admitted he was slow to react in the case of a priest now awaiting both civil and canonical trials for repeated abuse in the 1980s.

The survey noted the current 26 civil investigations were half the total reported in 2010. Since then, 137 claims of clerical sexual abuse of minors have been made to judicial officials. Some 222 victims have come forward in recent years, some with accusations against priests now dead.

## ROME

# New Mass translation may be revised

**A REVIEW** of Vatican guidelines on liturgical translations from Latin to other languages has been announced by Pope Francis, raising hopes that the unpopular 2011 English version of the Roman Missal could be revised, *writes Christopher Lamb.*

The commission of bishops from across the world will look at the current rules – which demand an almost literal translation of the Latin into vernacular languages – while also examining how much of the work should be decentralised.

Archbishop Arthur Roche, the secretary of the Vatican's liturgy department, will lead the body. He has a more open position on liturgical matters than its traditionalist prefect, Cardinal Robert Sarah.

A number of Bishops' Conferences have been unhappy with the translations ordered under the *Liturgiam Authenticam* guidelines of 2001.

## Polish mystic on path to sainthood

**THE VATICAN** has recognised the "heroic virtues" of Jan Tyranowski (1901-1947), the lay Catholic mystic in Krakow whom St John Paul II credited with nurturing his vocation, *writes Jonathan Luemoore.* Tyranowski, an accountant and tailor, helped organise a parish youth group after the May 1941 arrest of his church's Salesian priests by the Nazis. At least 10 other participants also later became priests besides the then Karol Wojtyla, who praised Tyranowski in his 1996 autobiography, *Gift and Mystery.*

## Call for prayers after attack on mosque

**ON MONDAY** morning, Pope Francis met with Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix, assuring the Archbishop of Quebec City of his prayers for the victims of the attack on a mosque there on Sunday night, *writes James Roberts.* A French-Canadian student, Alexandre Bissonnette, 27, is facing six counts of first-degree murder and five of attempted murder after the shooting at the mosque left six people dead.

# VIEW FROM ROME

Christopher Lamb



**THE POPULAR IMAGE** of Francis is of the cheerful, compassionate, avuncular Argentine who rescues refugees and celebrates his birthday by having breakfast with the homeless.

But the current Knights of Malta saga lays bare the steely, calculating side of Jorge Bergoglio: the strategic thinker who, like an expert chess player, always stays a few moves ahead of his opposition.

Take the Order of Malta whose leaders – encouraged by Francis' most outspoken critic Cardinal Raymond Burke, the knights' patron – defied the Pope's instructions by sacking a knight close to the top of the organisation, Albrecht von Boeselager, in a row about the distribution of condoms. To make matters worse, when the Holy See decided to investigate the matter, it issued a series of extraordinary statements effectively telling the Pope to mind his own business.

In the end, however, the sound and fury amounted to very little. The Order's Grand Master, the Ampleforth-educated former Sotheby's auctioneer Matthew Festing, submitted his resignation after what must have been an uncomfortable meeting with the Pope on 24 January. There appears to be no love lost between Festing and the Pope: sources inside the knights say that during the meeting last Saturday at which the Sovereign Council of the knights accepted his resignation, Festing described the Pope as his "enemy". Meanwhile, von Boeselager has been reinstated to his former position and all recent actions of the former Grand Master declared null and void.

Francis sees the knights as suffering from a form of "spiritual worldliness", too focused on power, money and status. And its renewal will be led by his personally chosen delegate, not by Cardinal Burke. His role as patron is technically to act as liaison between the Vatican and the knights, while looking after their spiritual interests. That leaves Burke in office, but not in power.

Francis' one-time press secretary in Argentina, Fr Guillermo Marco, said his former boss's head "is like a game of thrones, in a good way". When it comes to battles inside the Church, the Pope is one step ahead and – so far, at least – is emerging victorious.

**ANYONE WRITING** a history of twenty-first century Catholicism is likely to cite Archbishop Charles Scicluna as a man who played key roles in two of the big stories of the period.

It was the diminutive Maltese prelate, then an official at the Vatican's doctrine office, who was commissioned in 2005 by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to investigate the case of Marcial Maciel, founder of the Legionaries of Christ.

In the face of high-level opposition from inside the Roman Curia, Scicluna doggedly persisted in his enquiries, until eventually the serial sex abuser was suspended from priestly ministry. Then, as the Vatican official overseeing abuse cases, he won a reputation for taking a tough, no-nonsense approach.

Now, as the Archbishop of Malta, he has put himself into the firing line once again by issuing highly significant guidelines on the implementation of the Pope's family life document, *Amoris Laetitia.*

To the fury of conservatives, he and his fellow bishop in Malta, Mario Grech, have made it clear that there may sometimes be circumstances when remarried divorcees can receive Communion. "We must be careful to avoid falling into extreme rigour on the one hand and laxity on the other," they write.

Tiny though the Maltese Bishops' Conference might be, its statement is clearer than any other to date. It is an important step in embedding Francis' interpretation of church teaching into the local Church and making it harder to roll back changes in the future.

Will other Bishops' Conferences follow the Maltese lead? So far, only a handful have done so, despite the Pope's encouragement to each Bishops' Conference to produce its own guidelines.

**ONE OF** the Pope's aims is to pull the Church away from internal arguments, and ensure it goes out into the world; to be less self-referential and more responsive to the needs of humanity. This is something he's aimed to do on climate change, where he has shown robust global leadership ensuring the Church is, for once, setting rather than following the agenda on a major world issue.

According to United Nations diplomat Christiana Figueres, Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'* played a key role in ensuring global agreement to cut carbon emissions at the 2015 Paris summit, while stressing the Pope had gone further than many other world leaders by calling for urgent action.

She was speaking in Rome at a conference on divesting fossil fuels at the Pontifical Lateran University where Papua New Guinea cardinal, Sir John Ribat, explained that he was witnessing islands in the Pacific being wiped out as a result of climate change.

All agreed that global Catholicism, together with other faiths, was now in a key position to help protect the future of the planet.

"For so many years we were dancing on the outside of this story," Jacqui Rémond, the director of Catholic Earthcare Australia, told the conference. "Now the Pope has put us at its heart."

# NEWS BRIEFING

FROM BRITAIN AND IRELAND



The Church of England has said it will uphold its traditional teaching of marriage as being between a man and a woman while allowing “maximum freedom” for gay and lesbian Christians and their pastors.

At a press conference in London a spokesman said that the House of Bishops had concluded its two years of “shared conversations” about sexuality with a report upholding the doctrine of marriage. But the report, to be discussed at General Synod next month, also found that the Church’s advice to priests on the prayers they can use to informally bless a gay marriage or partnership was inadequate.

The report calls for a fresh culture of welcome and support for LGBT people and also recommends that bishops prepare a new teaching document on the Church’s doctrine of marriage. **Vicky Beeching** (above), a campaigner for gay rights in the Church, said the document was “painful” and required “mental and emotional gymnastics”.

The **Prince of Wales** has complained that a report by Aid to the Church in Need that highlighted the persecution of Christians in the Middle East was buried by public obsession with Brexit. Prince Charles, who recorded a special edition of Radio 4’s “Thought for the Day” and posted a video message

supporting the report, Religious Freedom in the World 2016, said during a private reception at Lambeth Palace that he was dismayed it had received so little coverage. A source at the event quoted Prince Charles as saying: “People are more interested and obsessed with Brexit than persecuted Christians.”

## Jail figures ‘shocking’

The Catholic Church’s liaison bishop for prisons has called on the Government to speed up its plans for prison reform, following a damning report into self-harm and suicide among inmates. **Bishop Richard Moth** described the figures released last week as “shocking”. A record 119 prisoners killed themselves in 2016, an increase of 29 on the previous year, according to government data. The bishop said staff shortages and overcrowding were major contributing factors. He called on the Prime Minister to “move as quickly as possible on its reform agenda for our prisons”.



## Heythrop appoints principal

The current deputy provost at the University of Roehampton has been appointed by Heythrop College as its new, and final, principal. **Professor Claire Ozanne** (above) is taking the post on a part-time secondment from Roehampton. Her responsibilities will include overseeing the closure of the Jesuit-run college based in

Kensington, west London, which is due to take place at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. According to a statement from Heythrop she will be “exploring any opportunities for staff at the college”.

One of the Church’s “greatest scandals” has been its treatment of women, Columban theologian **Fr Sean McDonagh** has said. Describing them as “the elephant in the Church’s reality”, the missionary said women must be brought into the Church’s structures of governance and administration.

Speaking to RTÉ Radio’s Miriam O’Callaghan on the *Sunday* show, the co-founder of the Association of Catholic Priests said one of the things that saddens him most is the number of young women in Ireland today who “are turning away from the Church because of misogyny”. Fr McDonagh was interviewed alongside censured Redemptorist Fr Tony Flannery, who said with hindsight if he was a young man starting off again he would not join the priesthood because “I couldn’t be part of an institution that discriminates so blatantly against women”.

The Catholic development network, International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), which represents 18 member organisations from Europe and North America, has appointed **Éamonn Meehan**, Trócaire’s executive director, as its new president. Mr Meehan takes up his role as CIDSE implements its new strategic framework, which will run until 2021.

The refugee Community Sponsorship programme piloted by the **Diocese of Salford** has been so successful that Caritas Salford was asked to share its model with the

European Parliament in Brussels on 25 January. Caritas Salford chief executive Mark Wiggin presented a paper detailing the model developed by St Monica’s parish, Flixton, Manchester.

A bill to ban late-term abortions on the grounds of disability is to proceed to report stage, having passed the committee stage in the House of Lords with near unanimous support from peers on 27 January. The bill, proposed by **Lord Shinkwin**, would remove a section from the 1967 Abortion Act that allows for abortion on the grounds of disability up to birth. The law would then state that no babies can be aborted after 24 weeks. There were a record 3,213 disability-selective abortions in England and Wales in 2015, representing a 68 per cent increase in the last 10 years.



## Cafod Brexit plea

The Catholic aid agency, Cafod, is calling on the Government to negotiate trade deals in the interests of both the UK and the world’s poorest communities following the Brexit vote.

The aid agency is to launch a letter-writing campaign calling on Catholics to remind their MPs that International Trade Secretary **Liam Fox** (above) must consider the impact on the world’s most vulnerable people of any new trade deals.

Compiled by **Liz Dodd**

## RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY - 12 FEBRUARY 2017

We live in a troubled and divided world. Brexit, terrorism, migrants, increasing inequality and a spike in hate crime.

The Catholic Association for Racial Justice (**CARJ**) is an independent charity working with others to bring about a more just, more equal, more cooperative society. We welcome your support and involvement.

For further information about **CARJ** and **Racial Justice Sunday**, please visit [www.carj.org.uk](http://www.carj.org.uk)

## PERSON IN THE NEWS



The Prince of Wales on the overlooking of a report on the plight of Christians in the Middle East: "People are more interested and obsessed with Brexit than persecuted Christians." (See page 27.)

REFUGEES / Bishops express solidarity with Muslims

## Church leaders condemn Trump's refugee ban

LIZ DODD

**THE CHURCH** in England and Wales has condemned US president Donald Trump's controversial immigration policy, warning that his exclusion of refugees based on their country of origin "violates justice".

The lead bishop for migrants, Bishop Paul McAleenan (pictured), an auxiliary of Westminster Diocese, called on Catholics to oppose the president's ban.

He told *The Tablet*: "What has President Trump's travel ban achieved? Initially amazement and confusion; now as it is enforced extreme hardship precisely for those to whom we should be offering hope and a chance of a new life. Opposition to this decision goes beyond any political agenda, it is being rejected by those who clearly see that with this ban justice is being violated and hardship wilfully imposed."

The Executive Order, signed on 27 January, imposes a travel ban on nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries, including Iraq and Syria. It also suspends the US refugee admission programme for



120 days and prioritises refugee claims of religious-based persecution, provided it is a minority religion in the individual's country of nationality. It halts admission of Syrian refugees and restricts entry to no more than 50,000 refugees in the fiscal year 2017.

Bishop McAleenan continued: "Those who have the welfare of all humanity, especially refugees, at heart, must continue to let President Trump know that his protectionist policies are not the way forward. These policies do not correspond with the rest of the world's attempt to alleviate the hardship of those who are long familiar with violence, fear and impoverishment."

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said it fully supported the US bishops' reaction to the Executive Order, highlighting in particular its call to assist all those fleeing persecution (see page 28).

Quoting the US bishops, they said: "We need to protect all our brothers and sisters of all faiths, including Muslims, who have lost family, home, and country. They are children of God and are entitled to be treated with human dignity."

Sarah Teather, director of the Jesuit Refugee Service UK (JRS UK) and a former Liberal Democrat Minister in the 2010 coalition Government, attended a protest against the ban on Monday night outside Downing Street with a large group of Jesuit, Religious and JRS volunteers.

"We can't pretend that what is happening in the US has no relevance for us. It threatens to destabilise refugee protection around the world at a time when it is needed more than ever. These are grave times," she said. "As Christians, we wanted to be present to stand in solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters affected by this refugee ban, and to make the point that to reject refugees is contrary to the Gospel."

Last week the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, used his speech for Holocaust Memorial Day to urge people to resist a culture of "post-truth" and "alternative facts" that he said concluded with evil.

## Call for aid agencies to prioritise Christians

**BRITISH** church-linked charities are at loggerheads over whether to discriminate in favour of Christian refugees fleeing jihadists such as Islamic State (IS) in Iraq, writes *Abigail Frymann Rouch*.

*Ensuring Equality*, a report co-authored by 16 NGOs, argued that charities and donors should focus attention on displaced Middle Eastern non-Muslims because they face the double blow of being targeted by jihadists and facing discrimination if they seek help at a UN camp or facility. As a

result, the report said, minorities have fared "unequally in the allocation of international aid, funding, political support, media attention, and asylum placements". The report added that "international aid rarely reaches the Christians, most of whom remain entirely dependent on the churches and smaller charities", whose resources were depleting.

Larger organisations such as the Catholic Agency For Overseas Development, which receive grants from the Department for

International Development (DFID), stand by their policy of helping people of all faiths and none equally. The charities behind the 88-page report, published last month, include Aid to the Church in Need, Iraqi Christians in Need and the Barnabas Fund. None receives DFID funding and all primarily support Christians. The report argued that government departments should all formulate ways of prioritising Middle Eastern Christians because of their particular need.

## FAMILY

### Pope Francis should talk with 'dubia' cardinals, says Radcliffe

**THE POPE** should engage with the four cardinals who penned the "dubia", or doubts, about contentious issues in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, theologian Timothy Radcliffe has said, writes *Filipe Avillez*. Speaking in Portugal, where he was attending conferences on Catholic ethics, the ex-head of the Dominicans said that it was important to recognise that the four cardinals were "speaking honestly". He said they were expressing doubts felt by many about Francis' teaching that divorced and remarried Catholics could, in some circumstances, be allowed to receive Communion.

The "dubia" were sent to the Pope and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) by Cardinals Raymond Burke, Walter Brandmüller, Joachim Meisner and Carlo Caffarra in September. Having received no answer from the Pope or from CDF Prefect, Cardinal Gerhard Müller, they made their letter public in November. Asked if the Pope should reply, Fr Timothy said: "I think it would be good to engage more closely with the four cardinals. I think it is important to recognise that they speak honestly."

Fr Radcliffe is often portrayed as a progressive, a description he said he disliked, adding that "simplistic labels" tend to "stop the conversation" necessary to search for truth. On *Amoris Laetitia*, he said he considered it did not change doctrine, but was an attempt "to understand more deeply how people travel towards God. It is a very profound meditation on what it means to be a moral being ... I disagree with [the cardinals], I agree with the Pope's position. But I think we have to understand they are expressing genuine doubts ... felt by many young people," he explained.

**FUNDRAISING** / 'If everyone gave just £5 a year we would be in surplus'

## Scottish diocese turns to parishioners for bailout

BRIAN MORTON

**THE DIOCESE** of Paisley has turned to parishioners rather than professional fundraisers in an effort to pay off a £3 million debt.

Bishop John Keenan announced the initiative in a letter setting out his plans for a Friends' programme, through which individuals can contribute to different projects within the diocese, such as vocations, education and youth.

The bishop said that Paisley was running at a deficit of £300,000 per year, and has appointed Fr Oliver Freney, administrator of St Mirin's Cathedral, as a director of fundraising with a remit to bring in £100,000 per year.

Bishop Keenan said that until now the debt had been funded from cash reserves and revenues



from cemeteries and legacies. He pointed out that Paisley was in the same position as virtually every other diocese in Scotland but expressed determination to deal with the problem at source.

He said: "How the deficit has built up is no real surprise. It is the same deadly combination of rising costs and falling income that you know all too well from

your own home finances". A fall of nearly 20 per cent in Mass attendance had also meant that income from the collection had dropped accordingly. Rather than give the task to professional fundraisers, Bishop Keenan said that he was "putting his trust in you, my own people" and that he had "every confidence that you will see us right". The aim is to generate £300,000 of income and savings each year by cutting costs, raising parish levies and the ongoing fundraising programme.

Bishop Keenan said that almost £100,000 had already been saved by reducing costs, with a further £60,000 taken in from parish levies. Fr Freney said: "If every member of our diocese signed up to give just £5 a year, we would be in surplus."

### IRELAND

## Some Catholic schools to lose their religious patronage

**IRELAND'S** Minister for Education has announced new plans to accelerate the provision of multi- and non-denominational schools across the country, writes Sarah Mac Donald.

At the start of Catholic Schools Week Richard Bruton wrote to the bishops to outline his proposals and to seek their nominations to working groups that will begin the process. The Programme for Government has committed to increasing multi-denominational and non-denominational school numbers to 400 by 2030.

Mr Bruton said new schools will account for approximately one third of the additional multi-denominational schools required to hit this target, so transfers of existing schools from religious patronage will be required.

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## The Revd Dr Una Kroll

As remarkable for the range of experiences she embraced as she was for her passionate commitment to a deeply spiritual life

JILL ROBSON

**T**HE LAST TIME I spoke to Una, shortly before she died, she told me that her life had fallen into three parts: 30 years a single woman, 30 years married, and 30 years a widow.

There were three main drivers in her life: a passion for structural social justice, a call to deep contemplative prayer, and a wide love for the people in her life (family, friends, patients, those who came to her seeking support and advice). In a long life, these drivers led to a bewildering array of roles: doctor, nun (twice), missionary, wife, mother, deaconess, parliamentary candidate, Christian feminist, campaigner for the ordination of women, writer, priest, solitary, counsellor/spiritual director, and grandmother.

Her parents both grew up in Tsarist Russia in comfortable trading families but political events shattered their lives and scattered them across Europe. When Una was still very young, her father abandoned her mother. She grew up in London's Russian émigré community, although she was three-quarters English. Parcelled around relatives in Europe, she became multi-lingual. School was stable until the Blitz; then she was evacuated to Malvern Girls' College in Worcestershire and won a state scholarship to Girton College, Cambridge, to study medicine.

At Cambridge, she met Anglo-Catholic Franciscan friars and "fell in love with God". She qualified as a doctor in 1953 and that same year entered an Anglican women's Religious order, the Community of the Holy

Name. Four years later, while working as a missionary doctor in Liberia, she became seriously ill. An American Episcopalian monk, Fr Leopold Kroll, offered to travel home with her and on the journey they discovered a shared vision for social justice and committed life. They fell in love, left their respective orders, and married. Leo was 25 years Una's senior. She credited him with saving her mental health, but at the expense of his reputation and livelihood as a priest.

Thirty years of happy, supportive, mutually prayerful life followed, in which the couple had four children. Una worked as a GP in south London and trained as a deaconess. Through her work, she became increasingly aware of structural inequalities in the way women are treated in society at large and in the Church. She became an activist and campaigner, standing in 1974 for Parliament as an independent candidate on an equal opportunities platform, losing her deposit, but attracting lots of media attention. She was active in the struggle for women's ordination. It was her voice that broke the silence after the "No" vote in General Synod in 1978, shouting from the public gallery: "We asked for bread, and you have given us a stone!"

A year later, Leo had a stroke; Una cut back her medical work to care for her frail husband, moving to the Sussex coast. After his death in

1987, she had another go at religious life as a contemplative nun, leaving after a few years. She then found a new way of life as a vowed celibate solitary. She lived in a cottage in the churchyard of Monmouth parish church, serving as an assistant curate. As a deacon, then a priest, she ministered to those who came to her for counsel and advice, while living a life of prayer and writing. Her book *Vocation to Resistance* (1999) summed up a life's witness.

In 2003, aged 78, she moved to Bury in Lancashire to be nearer her family and to retire. But she became involved in her local Anglican church and in a Catholic church close by, where she attended daily Mass. She continued to support those who came to her for spiritual direction. She grew unhappy at the way the Anglican Church was treating homosexuals and women's ministry and protested at the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

She then astonished friends and family by announcing in Advent 2008 that she had become a Catholic. She made the move in solidarity with her Catholic sisters, she said, joining them in their struggle for fundamental change in the structure of the Church. She had wanted to lay down her "power" as a priest, as she wrote in *The Tablet* in 2011. This was no triumphalist conversion, but an identification with the dispossessed and powerless. For all her caveats about the hierarchical nature of the Church, she had found a place to finish her journey. She ended her days in a Franciscan convent's care home, surrounded by prayer and gentle care. She died peacefully on the Feast of the Epiphany.

*Una Margaret Patricia Kroll, born 15 December 1925, London; died 6 January 2017, Blackburn, Lancashire.*

**Dr Jill Robson** is a psychologist and friend of Una Kroll.



**She credited him with saving her mental health, but at the expense of his reputation as a priest**

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### ADMINISTRATOR - CARE HOME, CHISWICK, LONDON

St Mary's is a 60 bed highly regarded residential and nursing home in Chiswick owned by the Anglican Society of St Margaret.

We are looking to appoint an administrator to be part of the senior management team to work alongside the Sister-in-charge and the Matron. This is an important new post which will carry increasing authority over time and needs experience of administrative work in a team, but not necessarily in a medical setting. Empathy with the Christian ethos of the home will be an essential element.

See our website - [www.saintmarysconventchiswick.org](http://www.saintmarysconventchiswick.org) - for more information and write with some details about yourself to **Sister Jennifer Anne SSM** if the post is of interest.



- Are you passionate about Catholic Social Thought and its related teaching?
- Have you the skills and experience to act as a Trustee for a charitable trust supporting projects concerned with education and social justice?

### Recruitment of Trustees & Committee members

The Charles Plater Trust was created in 2007 to further the work of Plater College (originally the Catholic Workers' College) established in Oxford for and by lay Catholics during the 1920s in the name of Father Charles Plater SJ. It was closely linked to the Catholic Social Guild for several decades.

The Trust provides grants to organisations in England & Wales for projects that meet the goals set by the Trustees in any particular year. You can read more about the Trust and about recipients of its awards on our website [www.plater.org.uk](http://www.plater.org.uk)

We wish to appoint a number of new Trustees and committee members – to help further the Trust's objectives and to have an oversight of the Trust's activities. The Trust would be particularly interested in applicants with financial, legal, charity and project management expertise but all expressions of interest will be welcome.

As a Trustee, you will be expected to attend three or four meetings a year and engage with periodic communications with other trustees and managers at other times. Trustees are fully reimbursed for their expenses for attending meetings.

For further information on the roles and responsibilities of trustees and details of how to apply, email [plater@plater.org.uk](mailto:plater@plater.org.uk)

Deadline for applications is 5 p.m. on Thursday 2nd March 2017.

**The Charles Plater Trust**  
 Registered Charity in England and Wales number: 309719

# Soup for the sick

ROSE PRINCE

**H**OSPITAL FOOD is so regularly found to be poor, that any new report saying so causes barely a ripple. Some people joke that patients' meals have to be bad or they'd never leave – only our current social care deficit and too many people stuck in hospital means this is not at all funny.

So it is indeed a disgrace that a new Department of Health review found that only 54 per cent of hospitals in England are “fully compliant” with nutrition standards set by the British Dietetic Association. These standards include screening patients for malnourishment – yet unlike nutrition standards set for schools which are set in law, these standards are only guidelines.

Another of the guidelines for hospitals states they must ensure that patients have choice and control over what they eat while staying in hospital. I wondered at this. Does it mean a larger menu? Or that someone who is sick should make decisions regarding their own nutrition?

It is an odd remit and I am not surprised if hospitals fail to meet this requirement – because it is impossible. When I visit someone in hospital and ask how the food is, they invariably say it is disgusting. Ask them what they want to eat and they'll likely beg you to nip out for a litre of triple chocolate chip ice cream. That, presumably, is a patient taking control. It certainly will not meet any nourishment guidelines, however.

Perhaps it is time to say that to serve a



**When I visit someone in hospital and ask how the food is, they invariably say it is disgusting**

wide choice of nourishing, palatable food in a large hospital is unachievable. Small budgets and complex logistics make it so. Now we are seeing supermarket and takeaway outlets on hospital premises for patients to use themselves or with the help of their visitors. Online food delivery may also be playing a part, however this does not help the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, who may not have adequate funds or, sadly, many visitors.

With apologies for being simplistic in the limited space I have, I would like to name a solution: soup. Soup stores well, travels well and is very nourishing. It can be kept and reheated on wards when needed to reduce waste. There are

hundreds of recipes, choices of thick stew-soups, velvety smooth soups and clear broths. With bread and butter, it is the most comforting dish in existence, and it is cheap to make.

When I am under the weather I crave the solace of soup, in particular pasta e fagioli, the filling Italian pasta and bean filled broth. It is best to make your own stock using roasted chicken bones and then stewing them with water. Virtually every nutrient can be obtained from this soup, and it is very delicious.

**PASTA E FAGIOLI**  
MAKES 2 LARGE HELPINGS

**4 tbsp.** vegetable oil  
**1** onion, grated  
**2** garlic cloves, chopped  
**1 tbsp.** tomato puree  
**1 tsp.** chopped rosemary  
**1** litre of chicken or vegetable stock  
**150g** tubular pasta  
**450g** tin of cannellini beans, drained  
To serve, grated Parmesan cheese, **2 tsp.** extra virgin olive oil, black pepper, chopped red chilli (optional)

**Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the onion and garlic. Fry until soft then add the tomato puree and rosemary. Cook for a minute then add the stock and pasta. Simmer until the pasta is soft then add the beans. Heat until simmering then serve with the Parmesan, oil and chilli, if using.**

## Glimpses of Eden

JONATHAN TULLOCH

**THE TRAIN STOPPED.** I looked through the window. It wasn't a particularly promising sight, just a junk yard with a wall-eyed dog barking at us from a small mountain of crushed cars. I turned back to my book. Happening to look up again, I noticed the scrapyards high wire fence was clotted with feathers. Or were they snowflakes? Actually what I was looking at were the seeds of the climbing plant, old man's beard. In spring, old man's beard (a wild clematis), clambers up shrubs, hedges or wire fences before blooming in a late



summer froth of creamy flowers. At this time of winter when everything else is drab and dead, old man's beard's white seeds remain clinging to their supports like knots

of fluffy sheep wool. Easy enough to see how the wispy old man's beard came by its name, but it's also equally well known as traveller's joy. Sitting on my train, I could see why. The plant had travelled riotously across fifty yards of wire fence. But it doesn't just journey on its own woody bines; the seeds in their fluffy husks are adept at catching the wind and drifting to new territories. In France, the plant is known as rascal's herb, because beggars were said to use its acrid sap to give their legs the kind of ulcerous look that might draw a coin of pity.

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