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THE TABLET



Hot Holy Ladies

The women who kept the faith alive
Joanna Moorhead

Maggie Fergusson
Gumbel's best is yet to come

Chris Maunder
When we prayed to Mary the Priest

Peter Stanford
Ruth Hunt after Stonewall

Morag MacInnes
The sexual counter-revolution

BATTLE FOR NO 10

THE MORAL OUTLOOK IS BLEAK

It will be bad for Britain if the battle between the two rivals for the keys to 10 Downing Street never moves beyond self-righteous claims to be “more fiscally Conservative than thou”. It will strike the average voter, possibly even the average member of the Tory Party, as no more relevant than the alleged debate between medieval theologians – which probably never happened – about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

This is the level that the bad-tempered televised debate on the BBC on Monday never transcended. Rishi Sunak, whose resignation as Chancellor of the Exchequer triggered the avalanche of ministerial departures that brought down Boris Johnson, wants to keep taxes higher a little longer. Cutting them immediately would stoke inflation, he believes. Liz Truss, still British Foreign Secretary, wants to “unleash” – her favourite word – the animal spirits of capitalism by massive tax cuts as soon as possible, paying for them with borrowed money.

This is not, however, about to become the full-blooded debate about fundamental political and economic philosophies which is long overdue. That would enable rival visions of Britain’s future to be explored in depth. Instead it is an exercise in disingenuousness on both sides, though slightly less on Sunak’s part than with Truss. His accusation that her economic policy is “fairy-tale economics” has a ring of truth; her accusation that he has raised taxes to their highest level in 70 years wilfully ignores the cost of having had to cope with the devastating economic consequences of the epidemic.

The problems that led to Johnson’s downfall were essentially ethical and in a sense cultural. Nearly 60 members of his

government followed Sunak and Health Secretary Sajid Javid in submitting letters of resignation. In protest at the serial mendacious machinations of Johnson’s Downing Street operation, they said “enough is enough”. Yet there was more than a hint of straining at a gnat after comfortably swallowing a camel. Why did none of them resign over Johnson’s notorious policy of deporting people with valid asylum claims to a remote African country, to avoid offering them the sanctuary in Britain guaranteed by international law? Indeed, both Truss and Sunak seek to go further, competing to reinforce the “Rwanda policy” with even crueller ones of their own devising.

Meanwhile the country is in an economic crisis, with falling living standards and rising prices, and continues to struggle with the overhang of the Covid pandemic, which is by no means over. Though no Conservative leader has been honest enough to admit it, Brexit has also damaged the national economy. Instead, the rival camps try to outbid each other on how tough they intend to be in controlling immigration or putting down strikes in public services. Neither has much to say about Johnson’s signature policy, “levelling up” the unequal parts of Britain. They merely declare they agree with it; they do not say how they would pay for it.

The moral reckoning of this leadership contest is proving a bleak one. It is not too late to elevate the tone, but neither side thinks it is in their interests to do so. Instead they have imagined a lowest common denominator of the self-interest of Tory party members, the only people who have a vote in this context, and pitched their sales talk accordingly. Edifying and enlightening leadership, it is not.

CURIAL CONCERNS

LISTEN TO THE LAITY

There is clearly a fear among some in the Vatican curia that the German Catholic Church is embarked upon a course that could lead to schism. That is the most likely explanation for the publication of an unsigned document from the Holy See reminding German Catholics that unilateral changes to Catholic doctrine and decision-making structures are only acceptable if the universal Church validates them. In other words, reform proposals, for instance to introduce a lay element in the government of the Church, to allow priests to marry or to ordain women as deacons, may be submitted by a local church for consideration. But they may not be enacted unless they are judged to be compatible with universal doctrinal norms – ultimately, in other words, only if they are approved by the Pope. So far, so orthodox.

These particular proposals have arisen from the German Church’s “synodal pathway”, which will be fed into the synodal process along with the reports from other national churches in preparation for a universal synod in Rome in October next year. In fact the Vatican document is entirely consistent with what has been said by German church leaders themselves. They have never claimed that the German synodal process has the power to devise reforms applicable only in Germany. So why was the Vatican statement deemed necessary? And why

did it not bear the signature of Pope Francis? Is it that he does not share the fears of some of his officials, but has allowed them to be aired to placate them? Or does he also fear that the German bishops are losing control of the synodal process?

Curial officials do have a history of trying to pre-empt synodal processes. It certainly happened in the days before the start of the Second Vatican Council. This is fundamentally an ultramontane conviction that only the central organs of the Church are open to the Holy Spirit’s bidding, or at least are the only ones qualified to reliably interpret it. That does of course disqualify lay opinion, and downgrades the insights of episcopal conferences worldwide, not to mention of individual bishops and theologians.

The model of the Church that Francis is promoting has somehow to preserve the hierarchical principle, as defined for instance in the Vatican II dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, while recognising that the Holy Spirit also uses other channels to guide the Church, including a consensus of the faithful. It was Cardinal Newman who identified the laity as sometimes a more reliable guide to Catholic truth than episcopal opinion. His *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* deserves to be more widely read. Including in the Roman curia.



28 Buckfast Abbey, where three communities of nuns from around the world were welcomed to the English Benedictine Congregation

COLUMNS



Melanie McDonagh's Notebook
 'Germany needs a new Reformation. It should come from the Catholic Church' / 5



Madoc Cairns
 'Reader, when I hear the words "reverence for Art", I reach for my matchbox' / 11

REGULARS

Letters	14
The Living Spirit	15
Word from the Cloisters	16
Puzzles	16
Across the Universe	30
Glimpses of Eden	30

CONTENTS

30 JULY 2022 // VOL 276 NO. 9463

FEATURES

4 / Why did Rome try to ban this image?

More than a century ago, senior Vatican figures decided to suppress a centuries-old devotion that portrays Mary as a priest / **BY CHRIS MAUNDER**

6 / Equipping the saints

The inspirational force behind Alpha agrees with Catholic concerns that his beginners' course in Christianity is weak in several areas / **BY MAGGIE FERGUSON**

9 / How to mend a broken heart

The unwillingness of some bishops to listen to the survivors of abuse could undermine the synodal listening process / **BY CATHERINE PEPINSTER**

10 / From the periphery of the peripheries

The humble Dalit origins of one of the men due to become a cardinal next month made headlines across the world / **BY STANISLAUS ALLA**

12 / The Tablet Interview: Ruth Hunt

The former head of the charity Stonewall explains how her values are shaped by her Catholic faith / **BY PETER STANFORD**

NEWS

23 / The Church in the World / News briefing

24 / Francis laments schools 'catastrophe'

26 / View from Rome

27 / News from Britain and Ireland / News briefing

28 / Abbot welcomes reach of new communities

COVER: HELENA WINTOUR'S ALLELUIA CHASUBLE 1650. PROPERTY OF THE BRITISH JESUIT PROVINCE

ARTS / PAGE 17

Exhibition
 The religious embroidery of Helena Wintour
JOANNA MOORHEAD

Theatre
 Patriots
MARK LAWSON

Exhibition 2
 Pre-Raphaelites: Drawings and Watercolours
MADOC CAIRNS

Music
 Little Women; Margot la Rouge / Le Villi
ALEXANDRA COGHLAN

BOOKS / PAGE 20

Morag MacInnes
 The Case Against the Sexual Revolution
LOUISE PERRY

Patrick Hudson
 Cathal Brugha: An Indomitable Spirit
DAITHÍ Ó CORRÁIN and GERARD HANLEY

Christopher Bray
 Britain's Contested History: Lessons for Patriots
BERNARD PORTER

Carina Murphy
 Cuckoo Summer
JONATHAN TULLOCH

More than a century ago, senior Vatican figures decided to suppress a traditional devotion promoted for centuries by saints, popes and theologians that portrays Mary as a priest / **By CHRIS MAUNDER**

Why did Rome try to ban this image?

MARY AT the Annunciation is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and thus gives Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God, human life; Mary at the Presentation in the Temple presents him to the world; Mary at the Crucifixion has to partake in the sacrifice of her son as the final and necessary act of redemption. The analogies to the priest offering the Mass are clear: Mary carries out in her life journey what the priest performs sacramentally.

The French theologian René Laurentin launched his career as a distinguished Mariologist in 1952 with *Marie, L'Église et le sacerdoce* ("Mary, the Church and the Priesthood"). He identifies four phases in the history of the concept of the "Virgin Priest". In the first, from the origins of the Church to 1050, associations between Mary and the priesthood were only sporadic; the idea only began to flourish, Laurentin concluded, in the High Middle Ages, an age of intense Marian devotion.

However Ally Kateusz, a researcher at the pro-women's ordination Wijngaards Institute, claims that "recent scholarship is recovering more and more evidence of women church leaders in many early Christian communities. Both Jesus's mother and Mary Magdalene appear to have been important role models for female leaders". In *Mary and Early Christian Women*, Kateusz provides several examples of imagery from the early centuries of the Church in which Mary is pictured with the episcopal pallium (West) or omophorion (East). In these images, Mary is not only depicted as a priest but as a bishop. Furthermore, images of Mary from that period often show her in the "orans posture" – with her hands extended to the side and facing upwards – like a priest presiding at Mass.

In what Laurentin describes as its second phase, the tradition takes a passionate turn under the influence of St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and others. Homilies for the Feast of Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (or the Presentation of Jesus) speak of Mary offering her son both in the Temple and at the Cross. In one sermon, Bernard wrote: "Offer your son, O sacred Virgin, and present to the Lord the blessed fruit of your womb. Offer this holy victim, pleasing to God, for the reconciliation of us all."

Laurentin's third phase is the era of the Counter-Reformation. In Rome in 1600, the

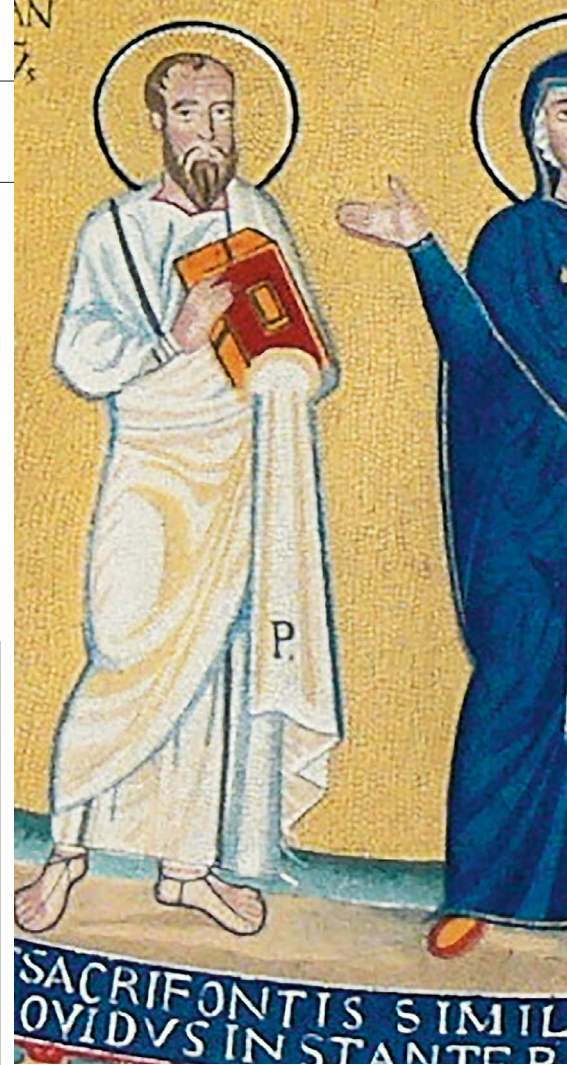
Italian poet and dramatist Giovanni Battista Guarini wrote *The Sacred Reign of the Virgin Mary*, in which he saw the place of Mary by the Cross in John's Gospel as equivalent to the priest standing by the altar. He also writes, of Christ and Mary, "There has not been, and will not be, any *priest* more worthy or more holy than *they*; for they were without sin, which cannot be said of the priests of the New, nor of the Old, Testaments."

The theologians of the influential French school of spirituality adopted the Marian priest theme with enthusiasm. Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-57), founder of the St Sulpice seminary, wrote that Jesus' human life was offered up at his death, and this human life came from Mary; thus she offered her own substance for the redemption of the world.

The fourth and final phase began in the late-nineteenth century, when the Belgian priest Oswald van den Bergh's book *Mary and the Priesthood* (1872) was published with a letter-preface by Pius IX. Marie Deluil-Martiny, who founded the Daughters of the Sacred Heart, composed a prayer to "Marie Sacerdoce". In 1906, Pius X commissioned a prayer to the "Virgo Sacerdos" and attached indulgences to it. Mary, he said, quoting St Antoninus, the fifteenth-century Dominican theologian and Archbishop of Florence, possessed all the grace and dignity that can be found in the priesthood; each and every human virtue could be attributed to her.

IN SPITE OF this momentum, before the end of Pius X's papacy the first move was made within the Vatican to suppress the devotion to Mary as Virgin Priest. A decree of 29 March 1916, during the pontificate of Benedict XV, refers back to a decision of the Holy Office of 15 January 1913, ordering that "images of the Blessed Virgin Mary clothed in priestly garments are to be rejected". Such images had been proliferating rapidly at the turn of the twentieth century. The suppression was confirmed under Pius XI by the Cardinal Secretary of State, Rafael Merry del Val, who wrote in the clerical monthly journal *La Palestra del Clero* in 1927 that the concept of Mary as Virgin Priest was one which "less enlightened minds would not be able to fully understand".

Why was a tradition with such a long pedigree and such potent theological symbolism suppressed? Sarah Jane Boss, co-founder of the Centre for Marian Studies, suggests that



Detail from an 1890 painting of a seventh-century mosaic of Mary with a pallium

the growing participation of women in lay activity together with the opening of moves to ordain women in other churches made some in the Church anxious that people might think that Mary, a woman, had actually been ordained. Even Laurentin, while faithful to the magisterium, admitted that the tradition had not been suppressed because it was theologically incoherent but because it associated the priesthood with a woman.

The eleventh-century abbess and polymath Hildegard of Bingen provides a good example of the tension between the tradition of Mary's priesthood and the tradition that only men could be ordained. In *Scivias*, while supporting the widespread reforms of the clergy in her day, she affirms that women cannot be priests – but the same time, she includes some major themes of the Mary-priest tradition.

She writes of a female figure, both Mary and *Ecclesia*, the Church, offering Christ's blood on the Cross. Mary's Annunciation was a model of priesthood, her conception of Christ analogous to the priest consecrating the host. And, although unable to be ordained, in a special and mystical sense, she writes that female virgins have access to "the priesthood and the ministry of [the] altar".

The traditional association of Mary with the Church seen in Hildegard, which goes back at least to St Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century, might suggest a rationale for the images of Mary as Virgin Priest. If Mary represents the Church, and the Church is a priestly community in which the sacraments of redemption are administered, then perhaps



there is nothing controversial about these images. Nevertheless, Mary is a woman, and therefore, inescapably, the image of the Virgin Priest is the image of a woman dressed in priestly vestments.

Of course, no one thinks that Mary was ordained a priest by the laying-on of hands of a bishop. The issue is rather whether Mary – as an individual rather than as an abstract personification of the Church – can be understood as an exemplar for priesthood, which would challenge the argument in official Vatican documents such as *Inter Insigniores* (1976) that Christ's maleness and his choice of 12 men to be his disciples mean that the ordained priesthood is confined to men.

A particularly poignant image of Mary as priest is an eleventh-century mosaic in the apse of Hagia Sophia, Kyiv, where, this Easter, President Zelenskyy delivered a message imploring God to “save those who are saving us”. Mary has her hands raised, and there is a eucharistic cloth hanging from her girdle. There are many other such images of Mary in a priestly pose above church altars in the Christian east and west dating from earlier centuries. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Vatican decided to ban such images in the early twentieth century not out of theological conviction, but out of fear that the deeply traditional devotion to Mary the Virgin Priest could undermine the argument that only men can be ordained.

Chris Maunder is a visiting fellow in Theology and Religious Studies at York St John University. He is the author of *Mary, Founder of Christianity* (Oneworld Press, £18.99; Tablet price, £17.09).

MELANIE McDONAGH'S NOTEBOOK

Germany needs a new Reformation. It should come from the Catholic Church



“ THE POPE'S dusty response to the German Synodal Way is a fascinating development. But to me, as an outsider, it's obvious what's wrong with the German Church. It's not (just) that the synodal movement has been captured by liberals, or that the bishops are running ahead of the rest of the Church on all the usual issues. It's money. And it doesn't make things any better that the problem is shared by all the German denominations.

If you are a member of a Catholic, Protestant or Jewish community (Muslims and Buddhists are exempt), or if you want to have your baby baptised or have a Christian burial, you have to register and pay the Kirchensteuer, a surplus of 8 or 9 per cent on top of your income tax. I spoke the other day to my neighbour, a former Lutheran from Kiel, about it. She gave up paying the Church tax for, she told me, financial reasons. But having done so, she can't expect any support, any of the sacraments, from that Church. She couldn't, if she wished, get married in church. She doesn't care now but she was once sufficiently devout to have been confirmed.

Can anyone, anywhere else in the Church, imagine that a Catholic priest might refuse the last rites to the dying, because they hadn't been paying the levy? But that's a possibility. It's the spiritual equivalent of physicians who won't touch an accident case until they find out the insurance status of the victim. By comparison with the sheer rottenness of a Church that denies the sacraments to a baptised Christian because of his or her tax contributions, the fuss about blessings for gay couples pales into insignificance.

OBVIOUSLY, it's bad for the Church that it can be wealthy – though a good deal less than before – without people coming to church. Empty, rich churches are inimical to the Gospel. More importantly, in subsisting off the state, it is falsifying the Christian message. Think, for a moment, of how Christ would respond to those who, in his name, demanded money for the eucharist, which he gave freely to all comers? It is a scandal, more egregious than the indulgences which gave rise to the original German Reformation. How very odd that this grotesque corruption should not have been at the centre of the preoccupations of the busy synodal participants.

The Pope should intervene in the German Church to address this manifest corruption which appears to be accepted by conservatives as much as liberals. Indeed, it would be good if Pope Emeritus Benedict could say what he really thinks about it, being himself German. If the German Church wants to sustain itself financially, let it do what every other Church does, and rely on the contributions of the active faithful, not on the intervention of the state.

Germany needs a new Reformation. And it should come from the Catholic Church. Manifestly, it won't come from the Synodal Way.

THE OTHER day I was in a second-hand bookshop in Arklow, and couldn't resist a back issue of a periodical called *The Lanthorn*, which was, it seems, the house journal of the Dominican Convent in Eccles Street, Dublin. It was 1963, and this was the golden jubilee number. An introduction by the Archbishop of the Port of Spain, Finbar Ryan, an Irishman, reflected that “generations of splendid girls have grown up within its walls and in every field of endeavour have shown what noble women can do in their gladsome land”. One contributor reflected that “reading well-loved names in *The Lanthorn* and gazing on familiar faces, we can almost see the mark of the Holy Spirit on each, and they form, not a happy collection of individuals drawn together by chance, but an orchestra of souls, blended and balanced by some purposeful music whose score is written of God”.

Inside, the contributions – in English, Irish and German – included reviews of the year and contributions from past pupils about their careers – radiography, institutional management and draughtsmanship as well as dress design. It was the world on the cusp of feminism, and the sweet-faced young women were, it seemed, pretty well up for anything.

It was a time of spirited optimism in the Irish Church. At the close of the Foreword, the editor reflected: “I see each future Lanthorn gathering countless happy girlish faces in its radiance, ‘dream children’ of an era that shall see a renewed Christian Renaissance.” Poor things. Little did they know what was in store.

Melanie McDonagh is a journalist and writer.

The presiding genius of Alpha retired as Vicar of HTB this week. He has a surprising response to Catholic concerns that his hugely successful beginners' course in Christianity is very weak in several areas: he agrees with them / **By MAGGIE FERGUSSON**

Equipping the saints

PHOTO: ALAMY, GRAHAM PRENTICE

IT'S A WARM Wednesday evening in late July. In Holy Trinity Brompton (or "HTB" as it is universally known), in Knightsbridge, about 200 young people, average age 27, have gathered for the final session in an 11-week Alpha course – what its organisers describe as “an opportunity to explore the meaning of life”, and specifically an opportunity to ask “Who is Jesus?” The first course ran in 1977, and there have been many thousands since. But tonight is special. Nearly 32 years after taking over responsibility for Alpha in 1990, the Revd Nicky Gumbel is about to retire as Vicar of HTB.

It is Gumbel who has overseen an explosion in Alpha, which now runs in 140 countries and in 70 languages, in churches, homes, workplaces, universities, prisons. He has developed its straightforward, unthreatening approach: A – anyone can come; L – learning and laughter; P – pasta; H – helping one another; A – ask anything. The formula is simple. Young people meet to eat together, hear a talk, and then to listen to one another in small groups. It works. The number worldwide who have taken part in an Alpha course is now cruising towards 30 million. Some of my Catholic friends react warily when I tell them this – “It’s not a numbers game.” True. But the numbers are astonishing. No wonder Gumbel has been described as “Billy Graham for the modern age”.

AS A SCHOOLBOY, Gumbel was trenchantly anti-religious. His father was an unbelieving German Jew, many of whose relations had died in concentration camps. His mother didn't go to church. At Eton, Gumbel wrote an essay that attempted to disprove the existence of God. But at Cambridge he found himself sitting up one night reading the New Testament, and “it was as if the person of Jesus emerged from its pages, and I encountered him”. He felt he'd “lived 18 years in black-and-white, and suddenly everything was in full colour. And once I'd seen this, it was like, ‘I must tell everybody.’” He has read the Bible every day since then, and if ever he suffers doubts, he clings to C.S. Lewis's maxim, “Faith is the art of holding on to things that your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods.”

For a time, Gumbel was like the stone that the builders rejected. He trained as a barrister, but then decided to give up the bar and seek ordination in the Church of England. He struggled miserably through a theology



Alpha central – Holy Trinity Brompton, where it all began

degree at Wycliffe Hall – “where I was taught by people who didn't believe in God” – was ordained as a deacon but was then turned down for nine jobs, and briefly signed on the dole. Finally, his own parish, HTB, where he had married his wife Pippa in 1978, took him in, and he was ordained as a priest in 1987. HTB gave him a chance to start exercising his vast creative energy in tackling problems and seizing opportunities.

At 67, Gumbel is still bursting with intense vitality. He's 6ft 2ins, slim and good-looking, and when we meet in a room in HTB he's just back from one of his regular swims in the Serpentine. He looks super-fit, as if, at any moment, he might spring up out of his chair. “Ask me anything,” he says, smiling broadly and holding his arms out wide, “anything at all.”

Whatever you ask Gumbel, it is practically

impossible to elicit a cross or controversial or critical response. All, it seems, is empathy, encouragement and goodwill. Whatever weaknesses he may have, calumny and detraction are not among them. Partly, perhaps, he's being careful. Alpha has, over the years, been the butt of much media mockery – A.A. Gill once called it a “slightly nerdy, harmless get together for people who want a faith that matches their curtains”; Mary Wakefield has described it as “a complete theological vacuum”; the late David Jenkins, former Bishop of Durham, wrote that if he were marking Alpha, “I’d give it a gamma”. Gumbel doesn’t want to say anything that might provoke more of this nastiness. But during the hour we spend together, I’m persuaded that his warmth is prompted by something deeper than defensiveness. He firmly believes that “every one of us is created in the image of God, and there’s something noble and beautiful about every human being”. What unites us, he believes, is “much more powerful than what divides us”. And our differences are to be treasured. “I love diversity,” he says. He loves the image of Joseph’s coat – infinite colours woven together in one bright, magnificent swirl.

He loves the image of Joseph’s coat – infinite colours woven together in one bright magnificent swirl

If there is one strand in the coat that especially delights Gumbel, it seems to be the Catholic Church, which has “hugely enriched my personal faith”. He raves about Catholics, from the local to the international. Next door to HTB is the Brompton Oratory (whose fathers once tried to cash in on Alpha’s success by creating a course called Alpha to Omega, and were politely asked to stop). “I love the Oratorians,” says Gumbel. “Do you know Father Julian Large, the Provost? I love him.” He is overwhelmed by the wisdom of Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household and author of *Come, Creator Spirit*, which he tells me is his favourite book on the Holy Spirit. Alpha has close relations with Filipino Cardinal Luis Tagle, who was interviewed by Gumbel on stage during the annual Alpha Leadership Conference at the Albert Hall in 2017. He reveres St John Paul II – “one of my great spiritual heroes”. He spent time with Cardinal Ratzinger, before he became Pope, and found him “absolutely sweet”. He loves Francis, who shares his “longing for evangelisation in the power of the Holy Spirit”, and his concern for the poor and marginalised.

Many senior Catholics are equally fulsome about Alpha. “For me”, says Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, “the Christian life has something to do with simplicity, friendship, closeness and joy. That’s what I feel about Alpha, and I think that’s a sign that it works and that it’s given from the Lord.” No surprise, then, that nearly a quarter of Alpha courses worldwide are run through Catholic churches. But while Alpha and the Catholic Church share many teachings – that sex outside marriage is wrong, that it is wrong to procure an abortion and (though Gumbel’s

own views may have changed on this – it’s the one area on which he chooses not to answer questions) while homosexual orientation is not sinful, homosexual activity is – there are big differences, too. In the week we meet, *The Economist* ran an article urging the Catholic Church to drop the rule that in the Latin Church priests should be celibate. Gumbel has been married for 44 years, and many Alpha initiatives are headed up by married couples. So what does he think? “On Alpha, we teach the things, and focus on the things, on which we’re agreed. So this is the kind of area we avoid.” But he concedes that, “to be honest, I couldn’t have achieved what I’ve achieved on my own”.

Some Catholics who’ve been involved in Alpha voice reservations. Fr Christopher Jamison, Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation, has led three teams of young City Catholics running courses at St Mary Moorfields. Both he and the teams “loved it”. “Alpha”, he says, “is very successful at the following, all of which are rarely done well in the Catholic Church: marketing, hospitality to those of no faith, training lay leaders.” But, like several other Catholics, Jamison feels “Alpha’s ecclesiology is weak”: there is no sacramental spirituality or theology. Do these familiar Catholic concerns irritate Gumbel? Not for one second. “Father Christopher’s absolutely right! Alpha is a very human product, very weak in lots of areas. What I say to young people who come on courses is, ‘This is not an introduction to the Church, or even an introduction to an introduction.’ We invite people to dip a toe in the water. We hope they’ll go on to spend a lifetime exploring the Church.”

The sacramental aspect is, Gumbel admits, tricky. “I’m conscious that my views on baptism, which I take very seriously, are not the same as the Baptists’ or the Pentecostals’. And the Salvation Army don’t even baptise. So if we’re going to run a course we can all share in, we have to be very careful.” Gumbel was keen to include teaching about Holy

Communion on the Alpha course, “so I showed Rowan Williams the section I’d written on it, saying ‘I’m conscious this might be unsatisfactory for the Catholics, but if we changed it too much in their direction it would be unsatisfactory for the Protestants. Is there a way through?’ And Rowan said, ‘If you can find a way through, you should get the Nobel Peace Prize.’”

It’s as if Gumbel is constantly wrestling with a giant religious Rubik’s Cube, trying to get all the Christian denominations on the same side. It must feel like banging his head against a brick wall. “No! I enjoy it! I like trying to find something that everyone can agree on. I love bringing people together.”

IT HAPPENS that my 23-year-old daughter has started going to an Alpha church with her boyfriend. When I ask her why they won’t occasionally come to our local Catholic church with me, she’s clear: first, the congregation is too old; secondly, it’s too dour. In her boyfriend’s church, she says, “you’ve never seen so many young people in one place, smiling.” So what can Alpha teach the Catholic Church, with its falling congregations and dearth of vocations? “Nothing!” Gumbel insists, “It’s we who learn from the Catholics!” But when I mention that this year just five men will be ordained to the priesthood in the Westminster diocese, he looks momentarily disconcerted. “Wow! Well, I can’t speak for the Catholic Church, but I can say that in the C of E there’s a huge amount of talent trapped underground by intellectualism, elitism and racism.” In response, Alpha has initiated the “Peter Stream”, enabling men and women who wouldn’t generally be thought to be educationally equipped for theological college to train for the priesthood.

Gumbel tells me about 32-year-old Joe O’Sullivan, who left school at 13 after his father committed suicide, and who is now looking after the St Francis Community Church on the Dalgarno Gardens Estate near Grenfell Tower. “Joe is amazing,” says Gumbel. “He may not have GCSEs, but he’s got bags of EQ, and his parishioners love him. Of course we need academics and intellectuals: Pope Benedict, Rowan Williams. But we need

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

A pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7
 our Joe O'Sullivan's too. His parish is teeming with life."

I wonder what this "teeming" encompasses. For many in Alpha the promptings of the Holy Spirit manifest themselves in miraculous signs: healings, visions, prophecies, and, especially, speaking in tongues. I admit to Gumbel that I've never spoken in tongues, and find the idea creepy. Am I doing something wrong? Huge laughter. "Loads of Christians don't speak in tongues. Paul puts it at the bottom of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: it's not at all the most important thing. But it's there in the New Testament, and it's there in experience. Fr Raniero Cantalamessa speaks about it very warmly, and he's not an exuberant priest, he's a godly, gentle, wonderful man. So I think the gift of tongues is really just a way of saying, 'God, I love you. I really, really love you!' – in a heart-to-heart language that God understands. But you don't have to have this gift, and even if you have it you don't have to use it."

On the evening I join an Alpha group, nobody speaks in tongues. Instead, they witness movingly to what the course has done for them. "Alpha," says a man with plentiful

dreadlocks and tattoos, "makes me feel exhilarated, safe and kind." Still, I worry a bit for these young people, as they go out into the night. Some seem fragile. How does Alpha deal with the fallout if things go wrong for them? "Of course", says Gumbel, "some are struggling with tragedy, or mental-health issues, or loneliness." HTB provides 11 services every Sunday – something for everybody – and hopes they will be drawn back to these. He hopes the small groups will still meet together, and look after one another. "It's like Ephesians 4:12: we hope we are equipping saints for the work of ministry. I think that is Pope Francis' vision, too: to get everyone ministering. Jesus trained up 12 people, and at Pentecost the disciples trained up a further 3,000 and sent them off. That's our model."

Easter 2023 will be seen by many as marking the 2,000th anniversary of the Resurrection

This model will be put to the test in the coming decade. It's no surprise to learn that, on retiring from HTB, Gumbel will not be sitting back but gearing up. Easter 2023 will be seen by many as marking the 2,000th anniversary of the Resurrection, and he wants every person in the world to know about it. In the autumn, he embarks on a gruelling programme of international travel – Malaysia,



After retiring from HTB, Nicky Gumbel plans to step up his work with Alpha

Singapore, the US, Brazil, Israel – carrying with him the burning love of Jesus that took root all those years ago at Cambridge. "I believe this is the greatest opportunity in our lifetimes," he says. "We have a real chance now to get our message out across the planet."

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Edward Stourton
 Broadcaster and writer

Today's *Tablet* pulls off the rare trick of being both a must-read and a reading pleasure. As a broadcaster covering religion I feel I need to see every issue, because it is the nearest there is to an insider's journal of the Francis Church; and as an ordinary reader I look forward to it each week because it is always, always full of surprises. One of the best definitions of "news" is "stuff you didn't know you were interested in until someone told you about it". *The Tablet* nails that every time. It is also – and this is an even rarer quality in today's media market – wonderfully generous in spirit, so time spent in the *Tablet's* company is, unflinchingly, uplifting.



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How to mend a broken heart

Is the synodal listening process failing the survivors of abuse? / By CATHERINE PEPINSTER

WHEN THE Bishops of England and Wales came together to write their reflection on the huge listening exercise that their dioceses have engaged in as preparation for next year's Synod in Rome, they opted to use the imagery of the heart to convey their message. "Seeking Our Hearts' Desire" is its title and its opening section is entitled, "With Thankful Hearts". But scroll down and you'll find another section called, "Hearing the Broken-Hearted". There's not much to it – just four short paragraphs – and it contains the document's only mention of clerical sexual abuse. Given just how broken-hearted abuse victims in the Church have been, how devastated many lay Catholics were when they learnt about the extent of abuse of children by priests, how the cases were handled by church leaders and how traumatised the survivors remain, many have been shocked that in their reflection the bishops made just a one-word reference to abuse.

The organisation Catholic Survivors has demanded that the bishops take the issue more seriously, saying: "Churchgoers have sounded a 'last chance' call for their bishops and fellow parishioners to address the systemic nature of abuse within the Church, to formally apologise, and offer more care to those whose lives have been deeply affected."

Some of these sentiments are found in the national synthesis of the pre-Synod consultation – the document that will be sent to Rome alongside the bishops' reflection – which warns that the abuse crisis has destroyed the Church's credibility and records that some people said during the listening sessions that they were ashamed to admit being Catholic.

If you dig deeper and take a look at the individual syntheses published by the dioceses and available on their websites, that depth of feeling, including anger at the Church's response to the abuse crisis, is also evident. It's also evident that the responses have been very different, with dioceses conducting the listening exercise at the parish level in very different ways, and with some diocesan syntheses expressing far deeper concern about the crisis than others. It reinforces the feeling that, when it comes to handling cases of abuse,

dioceses continue to do their own thing, under the direction of their bishop, at a time when they are required to work as one with the same policies for tackling abuse masterminded by the Catholic Standards Safeguarding Agency.

Mary Varley, who produced a study of the different dioceses' comments on abuse drawn from their synod syntheses for the lay organisation Root and Branch, said: "There is just one paragraph about abuse in the national synthesis, which suggests that the response from people has been muted. But it's clearly not muted if you read the diocesan reports." Varley praised the dioceses of Plymouth and Hallam for paying particular attention to the abuse crisis. Plymouth, then led by Bishop Mark O'Toole, since appointed Archbishop of Cardiff, used its safeguarding team to reach

out to include the voices of victims, survivors and perpetrators of abuse in its synod listening exercise. Its report says: "Concerns remain that inappropriate behaviour is not addressed. Priests are protected in a way that victims are not, moved around when there are problems and not dealt with properly. Victims still don't feel listened to and

want a proper dialogue between the Church and survivors of abuse, not a one-way listening service that is anonymous and open to being filtered or disregarded." And the Plymouth synodal synthesis continues with an imaginative perspective that few others in the Church in England and Wales expressed: "The abused are part of the solution and not the problem."

The Hallam synthesis emphasises the importance of ongoing reconciliation and atonement, seen as "necessary now and into the future". It also says: "The behaviour of the hierarchy, secrecy, and protecting reputations, abusing power, and patronising the laity are deep pastoral wounds." One survivor of abuse, Deirdre McCormack, described her relief at reading what many lay Catholics have been saying and how they are "expressing this compassion and insight into the nature of abuse and the need to take responsibility". She adds: "If the hierarchy do not listen to what the people are telling them now, it seems all too clear that more people will feel forced to walk away because they cannot be complicit any longer."

Not every diocese includes detail about abuse in its synthesis. The diocese of Menevia, run by administrator George Stack, who was the outgoing Archbishop of Cardiff at the time, produced a report that talks obliquely about "church scandals" and doesn't mention

abuse at all. The diocese of Shrewsbury's synod report says: "The issue of abuse still looms large", and quotes a lay voice saying; "I am ashamed at how clerical abuse was allowed to continue by keeping priests in active service and covering up for them." Its bishop, Mark Davies, opts for a more oblique approach in his discernment, writing of the immense harm of scandals and the betrayal of vocations but not mentioning sexual abuse.

One survivor who has monitored the Church's approach to the abuse scandal over the years told me: "Unfortunately, good practice is the exception still in the Church. We need the way that it deals with victims and survivors to be responsive, sensitive, compassionate and open to communication, but this isn't happening across the board." There are beacons of light, however, she said, including

the Plymouth diocese with its efforts to engage with survivors, and the Northampton diocese, which has created a "healing garden" in the grounds of the cathedral that is designed to alleviate stress and be spiritually restorative.

The Northampton website explains: "Reaching out to a group which has historically been ignored or pushed aside

Victims still don't feel listened to and want a proper dialogue between the Church and survivors of abuse

has been a key priority for our diocese, led by our safeguarding team", and the symbolism of the garden, the survivor told me, really matters to people.

Hearing the voices of the laity has proved a complicated task for those engaged in leading the synodal listening exercise. Efforts have ranged from holding special days and other gatherings and events at parish and at diocesan level to directing people wanting to be involved to fill in an online questionnaire. Some bishops haven't been keen on addressing sexual abuse, and some individual priests aren't either, according to Mary Varley. Even when they are willing, Catholic culture has meant the clerical caste has swayed their parishioners. The listening process has had what Varley calls "filters" – and the final filter, she says, has been the bishops' reflection on the national synthesis and its one-word reference to abuse. Yet given all those filters, she says, "the laity did really well in getting their voices heard".

As A711, a survivor who gave evidence to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, put it: "Many ordinary Catholics are telling stark truths the bishops cannot face. The people feel it deeply."

Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of The Tablet.

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The humble Dalit origins of one of the men due to become a cardinal next month made headlines across the world. Although post-independence India outlawed “untouchability” its manifestations are still noticeable in many subtle ways – including inside the Church / **By STANISLAUS ALLA**

From the periphery of the peripheries

CHINNA ANTHONY POOLA and his wife Arogyamma lived in Chindukur, a remote village in the Kurnool diocese, nearly 200 miles south of Hyderabad, the capital of the state of Telangana. Their house was at the edge of the village. They were Dalits, excluded from the ornately-tiered caste system, who in many villages in India are not allowed to touch the hand pumps that draw water from the wells. The Poolas couldn’t afford to send their six children to school but, thanks to the intervention of a missionary, one son was able to pursue his studies, and went on to enter a seminary in the nearby Kadapa diocese. They never imagined that one day he would be named a cardinal.

Archbishop Anthony Poola of Hyderabad was among the new cardinals announced by Pope Francis on 29 May. He will receive his red hat in Rome on 27 August, along with another new Indian cardinal, Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrão of the former Portuguese colony of Goa. They will join three other Indian cardinals under the age of 80 – Baselios Cleemis Thottunkal, George Alencherry, and Oswald Gracias. Poola’s humble Dalit origins made the headlines across the world. Recalling his childhood in Chindukur, he told a reporter that “when we were thirsty and went to the village pump, higher caste people would pour water into our hands. We accepted that social stigma.” That was the way things were.

AS WELL AS the first Dalit cardinal, Poola is also the first cardinal who speaks Telugu, a language spoken by more than 75 million people, especially across the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. French Jesuit missionaries baptised the Telugus more than 300 years ago.

After his ordination in 1992 Poola immersed himself in pastoral ministry. A talented singer and musician, he composed the music and lyrics for liturgical hymns in Telugu. In 2001 he left for the United States

where he worked for two years as an assistant priest in parishes in the dioceses of Kalamazoo and Chicago. His time in the US exposed Poola to the larger world and provided a broader platform for him to learn from others and develop his own views.

Back in India, he continued his work in health care and education for the poor. He was known for his willingness to engage in serious and fruitful conversations with the laity. The seeds of the more synodal Church, which he was to embrace enthusiastically, were being sown here. Many say that listening and learning have always been among Poola’s characteristic traits.

In 2008 he was called to lead his own native Kurnool diocese, where he remained until 2020. A fledgling diocese, Kurnool needed a dynamic leader with a broad vision. His predecessors had laid the foundations but the diocese was ripe for pastoral expansion. Poola took up the challenge. He nurtured more local vocations and encouraged religious congregations to open their houses to the faithful and the poor.

Mgr Anthonappa Chowrappa, appointed administrator of Kurnool after Poola was appointed Archbishop of Hyderabad in November 2020, told me: “Bishop Poola worked tirelessly for the spiritual growth of the faithful in the diocese. During his time, 12 new parishes and several mission centres were established – no small achievement.”

Madhu Maddileti, a freelance journalist who also worked with the Catholic youth movement in Kurnool diocese, says: “He is soft-spoken, affable and available, and anyone can approach him easily. During pastoral visits to villages or when people visit him at the office, he would remember and call each one by name, ensuring that no one was ignored.”

Poola also learned to be firm, quick and decisive. If evangelisation remained central to Poola’s apostolic activities, the education of the poor was closest to his heart. Sr Anthonamma Pyreddy, Superior General of

Poola is also the first cardinal who speaks Telugu, a language spoken by more than 75 million people



Breaking the mould: Cardinal-designate Anthony Poola, Archbishop of Hyderabad

the congregation of the Sisters of St Anne Phirangipuram, says that Bishop Poola “made a huge difference in the lives of many poor students to whom he reached out through various educational scholarships, particularly to those who hail from the rural and marginalised families.” In education, Poola saw immense potential to transform the lives of students, their entire families and the larger society.

He says that at the time of the announcement in May he was travelling and couldn’t believe the news. Catholics in the Archdiocese of Hyderabad, as well as the larger Telugu Catholic community, have enthusiastically welcomed his elevation; Dalit Catholics across India have thanked Pope Francis. In the cardinal-designate, the Indian Catholic Church may have found a voice that can speak for those who live on the margins and those who are still discriminated against. Caste stubbornly persists in multiple forms in the Indian subcontinent and tackling it will be a tricky and tough job, even for a cardinal known for his diplomatic skills.

SINCE the French anthropologist Louis Dumont published his ground-breaking work *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* the world got to know more about caste, its origins, manifestations, implications, and how it structured and colonised the lives and minds of Indians for millennia. Though he simplifies a little, Dumont explains that in traditional Indian society four classes of people (priests, soldiers, traders and peasant-workers) shared the pie together – even if unequally, and with much internal conflict between them – but kept the Untouchables (who did not then call themselves Dalits) and Adivasis (indigenous tribal peoples) outside the fold.



Reader, when I hear the words ‘reverence for Art’, I reach for my matchbox

While the Adivasis lived in the forests and were economically exploited, Dalits, branded as impure and untouchable, survived appalling atrocities, oppression and discrimination. Post-independence India outlawed “untouchability” but its manifestations are still noticeable in many subtle ways.

Sadly, an unholy alliance existed for centuries between Church and caste. Despite the best of intentions, missionaries starting with St Francis Xavier and others, tolerated it as an ineradicable social practice. The many Dalits who embraced Christianity down the centuries found that discrimination against them persisted even in the Church, in its life and practices, in its administration and in the appointment of bishops. While much progress has been made, much remains to be done.

After receiving admonitions from Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis, finally in 2016 the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India published a landmark document known as “Dalit Policy”. Its full title is revealing: *Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India: An Ethical Imperative to Build Inclusive Communities*. The policy describes the issue, gives a road map and an action plan and makes some recommendations.

“The elevation of Poola is historic, as it acknowledges the half-century-old demand for the Dalit Christian community’s ecclesiastical recognition,” John Dayal, the veteran Catholic journalist and human rights activist, says. “It brought cheer to the entire Indian Christian community, especially after two years of terrible persecution and attacks on religious freedom.”

THE INCREASING polarisation based on religious identities and the normalisation of violence against minorities in India challenge the Catholic Church to defend the promise to guarantee justice, liberty, equality, fraternity as well as human dignity and rights to all that is enshrined in the Indian constitution.

In such a charged and volatile context, it will take a figure of exceptional political agility and fearlessness to defend India’s threatened and persecuted Christians and simultaneously be a voice for the Dalits. Political and social engineering, alongside economic and cultural factors make caste a very complex, sensitive and emotive subject.

To confront caste-based inequalities and discrimination, a leader is needed who will enter a dialogue with the government to secure long overdue benefits for Dalit communities, work within the Church for the education and empowerment of Dalit Catholics and, in the spirit of *Fratelli Tutti*, directly challenge the Catholic faithful finally to outgrow the caste-mindsets they have inherited and let solidarity and friendships that cut across caste and ethnicity, language and region flourish.

Anthony Poola, the cardinal from the periphery of the peripheries, may have the dynamism, the shrewdness and the courage to be this leader and this voice.

Stanislav Alla SJ lectures at the Vidyajyoti College of Theology in Delhi.



Every believing Christian must be tempted, at times, to spit on her hands, hoist the black flag, and defend the legacy of Fra Girolamo Savonarola. I reached that point myself last week when Just Stop Oil campaigners superglued themselves to the frame of Constable’s *The Hay Wain* in the National Gallery. The fury of their critics was unquenchable. Their reasoning – given that *The Hay Wain* was unharmed – was incoherent. One commentator called for the protesters to be maimed, adding that one ought to show “reverence for Art”. It would make anyone feel savonarolan. Reader, when I hear the words “reverence for Art”, I reach for my matchbox.

Tendresse for Girolamo S. – and his “bonfire of the vanities” – isn’t particularly fashionable. Historically, Savonarola was seen as a heroic reformer, proto-democrat, even a saint. Nowadays, mention of the diminutive Dominican prompts alarm rather than approbation: he’s conceived, instead, as an anti-human demagogue, somewhere between Islamic State and Mark Francois.

I’m not sure why. Savonarola’s reliance on spiritual force – instead of the more reliable physical sort – was mocked by Machiavelli. But his call for moral reform won the admiration of Italy’s leading humanists. Michelangelo asked him for advice; Pico della Mirandola died in his arms; Botticelli, secular painter supreme, fed masterpieces to the “bonfire” on the strength of his preaching. For a few short years, all Florence hung on the little friar’s words. A spark of the Holy Spirit set a great, worldly city ablaze.

His idea of moral reform was admittedly demanding; but not more demanding than the Gospel. More deeply felt, I think, is the unease the “bonfire” provokes in us; the wilful destruction of beautiful things prompts shuddering horror, not admiration. This response isn’t entirely inborn. The sinologist Simon Leys once commented that Maoist China’s wholesale destruction of the past appalled Westerners far more than it did the Chinese. They were accustomed to it. Emperors would wipe the slate clean every few centuries.

Western paranoia over posterity has shallower roots. Enlightenment

thinkers, despairing of Christianity, found in easels and oil paint an ersatz eternity. Needled by an awareness of how much human knowledge was lost forever, luminaries fixated on the monumental, self-consciously memorialising their slightest gestures.

Those transcendental trappings are long-decayed. But the glamour of eternity lingers. We catch a glimpse of it in superstitious muttering over superglue. We catch another in theories of “co-creation” and “the sacramental imagination”, where art participates in God’s ongoing work of creation and redemption; means of sanctification, instruments of grace.

A reluctance to take a hard look at art – to gloss dross with platitudes or retreat to the constrictive security of the canonical – promotes the whole field into irrelevance, choked by a reverence too profound for thought. That’s why Nietzsche celebrated when he heard the Paris communards had torched the Louvre: those who worship art cannot create it.

Savonarola’s “bonfire” wasn’t fuelled by a dim view of culture but by an accurate one. The problem with the “sacramental imagination” is that the imagination isn’t a sacrament, however we cut it: art is human, not divine. Art is special only as human beings are special; clever as humans are clever; funny and charming and beautiful and holy only as far as human beings are. Which is to say: sometimes.

Working out when “sometimes” is – knowing good from evil – takes something subtler and more demanding than “objective standards of beauty”. It demands a capacity for analysis and differentiation; to make distinctions, to judge and so to understand. It requires taste. To develop that capacity – that taste – requires becoming virtuous. It’s what Catholic morality is all about. It’s what Savonarola was trying to induce when he torched the Botticellis. And it’s what the protesters, in their own confused, post-Christian way, attempted to encourage with their superglue stunt. A humanist insight worthy of the renaissance: it’s people who matter, not their creations – however beautiful.

Sancte Savonarola – you might say – *Ora pro nobis*.



PHOTO: ROGER HARRIS, PARLIAMENT.UK

RUTH HUNT



The book of Ruth

The former head of Stonewall, the largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans equality charity in Europe, tells **Peter Stanford** that her values are shaped by her Catholic faith

RUTH HUNT is still a relatively new member of the House of Lords. The former chief executive of Stonewall was ennobled by Theresa May in her resignation honours in 2019. And so far, though the fresh-faced 42-year-old is a signed-up member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Holy See, she has yet to accompany the delegation of fellow Catholic peers and MPs who go annually to the Vatican.

“One year I will go,” she says, “but not yet. I’m a campaigner. I nudge and influence and persuade people, but I don’t want to go to Rome for Mass and treat it a lobbying opportunity. Mass is where I go for my peace.”

Back in 2014, Hunt’s appointment to lead Stonewall, which speaks on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, made headlines because she was a practising Catholic. “Faith”, she explains with a raised eyebrow, “was con-

sidered an oppositional problem to what we were advocating at Stonewall.”

And, as we talk, on a bright summer’s day in the covered courtyard at the centre of London’s Wallace Collection, she makes no attempt to disguise the very real chasm between Stonewall’s position and the Church’s official stance that same-sex love is sinful. In Hunt’s own life, the Church’s disdain for civil partnerships (last year Pope Emeritus Benedict referred to them as “a distortion of conscience”) sits in counterpoint to her very happy and long-standing civil partnership with Caroline Ellis which, in spite of official rules to the contrary, was joyfully blessed by a Catholic priest in the presence of friends and family in church.

“I’m fairly loyal to institutions,” she points out, in case this makes her sound like an out-and-out rebel. “I’ve always belonged in institutions. I love being part of something bigger than myself. So, for me to wash my hands of the institutional Church would feel a bit defeatist. Anyway, I consider my faith separate from the institution.” And, in the context of a papal Mass, separate from her campaigning work.

IN THE LORDS, Baroness Hunt of Bethnal Green is a regular attender at the Wednesday evening Catholic Masses held in the Houses of Parliament. “The chapel we use is tiny, beautiful, very camp – all gold leaf and bling – and deep underground, so there is no phone reception. The thing I love about it is that you have the ministers, the MPs, the catering staff, the doorkeepers and we are all breaking bread together and offering each other the sign of peace.”

I can’t stop myself asking if Britain’s first Catholic Prime Minister since the Reformation is ever an attender. “I would never comment,” she replies, “on who comes into that room.”

It is a good and honourable answer that manages to make me feel slightly ashamed for asking, but then in her five years in charge of Stonewall, and the nine that she worked there before being promoted to the top job, Hunt was an effective public speaker and one who made her arguments carefully and thoughtfully, aiming always to build consensus rather than accentuate the culture wars currently dividing the West.

For her – like many other Catholics, most surveys suggest, whatever their politics, gender or who they love – it is the practice of the faith, rather than the rules of the institution, that keep her within it. Of course, it can be a difficult line to tread and she isn’t blind to hypocrisy. “The Vatican”, she says at one stage, “has more gay staff than most corporates.” But she won’t let it get in the way of the things that run deep in her.

“I try not to scrutinise too closely the political machinations of the Church [by which she means the rules it makes] because I find it too intrusive on my peace and my relationship with God. The most peaceful way I have that relationship is through Catholic Mass. I’ve been brought up with Catholic values.

When I go to other shop fronts [other Christian churches' services], I don't experience that peace."

RUTH HUNT grew up in Cardiff, though you'd never guess it from her lack of an accent now, a change she puts down to moving to Birmingham when she was 16, then going to university in Oxford, and on to London afterwards. Both her parents were Catholics, her mum a nurse who went to night school and rose to be a professor of nursing.

"They gave my younger brother and me biblical names, Ruth and Thomas. I remember asking them why, and they explained that Ruth was brave and did the thing she wasn't expected, and that [Doubting] Thomas was brave because he stood up to his friends. So how could we not be brave!"

The Book of Ruth also provides one of her favourite Bible passages (1:16), with words that have echoed down through Hunt's life. "Wherever you go, I will go, wherever you live, I will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God."

The family parish was St Brigid's, and her primary school Christ the King. "They may not have taught me much about maths, but I loved the Friday worship." At 11, she did not want to go to the local Catholic high school for reasons she now cannot remember, so instead spent a year in a large comprehensive.

"It was too much for me, I was too sensitive a kid." She got a scholarship to a small independent school in the city that specialised in rugby but also wanted "some clever girls to boost their GCSE statistics".

It was around this time, she remembers, that she came across the first of a series of priests whose pastoral care has kept her within the fold. "What is important to me is that I have never felt individually excluded or judged by the Catholic Church. Politically, of course, I have been, but the Catholic Church excludes people every other day. Call it luck or call it God, I have had some amazing priests."

When she was 14, her aunt died in childbirth, leaving three young children. The "seismic shock" that it caused in Hunt's life was compounded by her having her first experiences of same-sex attraction at the same time.

"I was talking to this priest in the confessional and was telling him how I hated looking after my cousins but felt bad about it because their mum had died. And then I said, 'and I think I fancy girls'. He told me: 'You're a bright kid, you're going to go far. So, keep your head down and it will work itself out. And don't worry.' He didn't say being gay is fine, or being gay is awful. He just said you've got enough going on. Do your GCSEs."

When the family moved to the Midlands with her mum's work, Hunt was beginning to come out as a lesbian. It coincided with a period away from the Church. "My parents had given up on it by then - mainly because it was so misogynist."

At Oxford - where she studied English at St Hilda's and was elected president of the university students' union - she started to come back, "to different local churches.

"I was peripatetic. I'd just drift in and sit at the back. I needed a space and a liturgy and that need continued into my first couple of years in London. I never wanted to be part of anything. I didn't want to risk the rejection."

Faith remained a part of her, though, and when she started working on policy at Stonewall one of the initiatives she worked on was around homophobic bullying in schools. Going into Catholic schools, there were particular challenges, because of the Church's teaching, but she remains proud that Stonewall found a way to work effectively with their pupils.

"What I knew was that keeping secrets is toxic. Trying to separate off bits of yourself can be deeply, deeply, damaging and shame eats you up. We were doing all these narratives with kids, and I found it extended into my philosophy. I realised that going into work and sharing something about what shapes you is important and helps people get a sense of who you are."

At Stonewall, at the time, she was keeping quiet about her Catholicism, which had now seen her return to being a regular Massgoer. "What shapes my values is my faith - fairness, forgiveness, mercy, peace, kindness, doing your best, giving back. I felt couldn't

advocate being open to schoolchildren and then keep my faith as a dirty secret."

Her public coming-out as Catholic happened almost by accident. In 2013, Cardinal Vincent Nichols announced an end to the "gay Masses" that had been taking place in his archdiocese. Stonewall was called by a newspaper for a comment and Hunt happened to be the staff member dealing with such requests that day. When the reporter told her that gay people couldn't be Catholic, she told them that they could, and she was. Hence the headlines that followed the next year when she was made CEO.

Did she get attacked for it at Stonewall? "Yes, of course I did, but I got so much more gyp as chief executive when I started advocating trans inclusion. The God stuff was much more polite."

IN AGREEING to be interviewed, Hunt had made plain that she didn't want to talk about the current toxic public debate around trans inclusion, which Stonewall continues to champion since she left in 2019. What she does, when we are face-to-face, is bemoan that "meanness" that trans people routinely face in public debate. "We need to bring people together with constant conversations, not the antagonism of social media."

With Caroline, she now runs Deed + Words, a consultancy that helps clients that include NHS England, government departments and the British Legion to have more conversations,

more inclusion, and to change their cultures and effectiveness.

"We are very interested in collective leadership, where you need the different people on a team to each be able to bring their contribution and perspective, whereas most organisations are preoccupied with heroic leadership, where you have one person making all the decisions and only seeking advice from people who are like them. And what you then get are policies, practices and procedures that are very narrow."

It sounds, I suggest, like one way of characterising the Vatican. Would Deed + Words work for them?

"It would depend on who was in the room and what they were trying to achieve. So, if the Vatican was to say: 'We'd like your help to coalesce our organisational purpose in suppressing the rights of women', we'd say we are probably not the people for you. If, on the other hand, they said: 'We see ourselves as significant social change agents, or as a movement that can do a huge amount of good in the world, help us do that', then we'd work with them to build trust and respect to enable people to feel they belong and can genuinely contribute without fear."

Lack of trust, Hunt points out, isn't a problem unique to the Vatican, but - with her deep grounding in the faith, for better and for worse - she might just have something very particular to offer.

'What is important to me is that I have never felt individually excluded or judged by the Church'



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LETTERS

• THE EDITOR OF THE TABLET •

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

More to do on abuse

● As a lawyer who has represented many survivors of clerical abuse in the Archdiocese of Birmingham I read with interest your interview with Archbishop Bernard Longley (“It’s the culture we have to change”, 23 July).

First, credit where credit is due. Having inherited a safeguarding operation that was in many respects shambolic, Longley has clearly attempted to set Birmingham on a better path. Time will tell whether this succeeds, but in 2022 it is still almost unheard of for a Catholic bishop to invite external scrutiny of a serious abuse scandal, and publish the report, as Longley has done. His willingness to overrule insurers is also unprecedented, and very welcome. These things are long overdue in the Catholic Church; I hope (although I have little expectation) that his fellow bishops will emulate him.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the most important finding in the report: for many years, what the Archdiocese really knew about [Joseph] Quigley and the risk he posed was withheld from the statutory authorities. Remember the context: since the Nolan reforms in 2001, the mantra from the Catholic Church in England and Wales has been that all knowledge and suspicion of abuse is now reported externally. But in this case in Birmingham, the largest Catholic diocese in the country, presided over by Archbishop Nichols, who is now a Cardinal, this didn’t happen.

This demonstrates, yet again, that we urgently need a mandatory reporting law – as advocated by the campaign group Mandate Now – which ensures that knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse in regulated activities is reported to statutory authorities, with sanctions for non-compliance. Bishops can be good and bad, but the crucial lesson from the Quigley case is that unless and until we get that change in the law, there

◆ TOPIC OF THE WEEK ◆

Forgiveness for the Church

I HAVE ENJOYED Timothy Radcliffe’s recent articles in *The Tablet*, and he raises an important point about young people’s moral idealism (“How can we forgive?” 23 July). Adding to the morals he mentions, young people also expect that institutions including the Church should open up to the talents of the many, not the few, embrace diversity, make the world kinder, live by their values, and be authentic and trusting.

The Church has much to do to attract young people and should itself seek forgiveness for what it continues to fail to do.

(DR) CLAIRE JENKINS
FELLOW, MARGARET BEAUFORT INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE

FR TIMOTHY Radcliffe, in his article on forgiveness, forgets that the two motivations for seeking forgiveness are remorse and supernatural love of Our Lord and his mother. As St Alphonsus says in his meditation on the Stations of the Cross: “It is thy love more than the fear of Hell which causes me to weep for my sins.”

Most Catholics have forgotten the meaning of sin and it is the modern intellectual priests who are chiefly to blame for this because they attempt to rationalise the concept. Confessionals are transformed into broom cupboards and most Catholics habitually receive communion in a state of mortal sin, which is very serious indeed. Fr Radcliffe even admits to avoiding the use of the word “sin”.

JOSEPH BEVAN
DOVER, KENT

READING TIMOTHY Radcliffe’s reflection on forgiveness, I was reminded of what the late Fr Des Wilson once said on the subject. He said that the people who are best at forgiving are the ones who do not forget, because they know exactly how much forgiveness is going to cost them. He also said that forgiveness has little to do with the past and nearly everything to do with the future, and that one act of forgiveness unlocks a torrent of energy, hope, goodwill and joy. Wise words, indeed.

(FR) GERRY MCFLYNN
LONDON NW3

is every chance that such a scandal will happen again.

RICHARD SCORER
HEAD OF ABUSE LAW AND PUBLIC INQUIRIES, SLATER AND GORDON, MANCHESTER

Alpha-plus

● A postscript to Andrew Atherstone’s story (23 July) of Catholics embracing the Alpha Course, as told to me by its great promoter, Nicky Gumbel.

In the time of St John Paul II, Gumbel was “invited” to Rome to discuss Alpha with the Vatican’s chief doctrine enforcer, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Knowing of the cardinal’s formidable reputation as a heresy-hunter, Gumbel was extremely nervous as he entered the palazzo that houses the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

“Ah, Reverend,” the German cardinal greeted him severely. Drawing his hands wide apart, he got straight to the point: “You

should know that we have a file this big on the Alpha course.” Gumbel’s heart skipped a beat as he waited for the tirade. But the Cardinal broke into a big smile: “And it is all positive!”

AUSTEN IVEREIGH
HEREFORD

Money worries

● Professor Philip Booth, in his article on Catholic Social Teaching (“Common ground and the common good”, 2 July), gives this perspective on Dorothy Day: “Her suspicion of the state, and its role in welfare provision, is shared with many Catholics who support a free economy.” However, her most withering criticism was of the world of finance. In *The Catholic Worker*, December 1944, she wrote: “Banks and insurance companies have taken over land, built up farms, ranches, plantations, of 30,000, 100,000 acres, and have dispossessed the poor. Loan and finance

companies have further defrauded him.”

In the eyes of many, including four popes, that is the biggest problem the world has with capitalism. St John Paul II, addressing an UNCTAD conference in 1985, stated that “a structural reform of the world financial system is, without doubt, one of the initiatives that seem most urgent and necessary”. It is high time for proponents of CST to hold a serious dialogue on the issue.

(DR) JOHN CARLISLE
SHEFFIELD

Clerical view

● Prompted by the letter of Keith Parkes (23 July), I read the Synodal Response of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh – not easy to find on the website. It is certainly a piece of clerical composition and I find it hard to believe it represents the belief and feelings of the majority of Catholics in

LETTERS

the archdiocese. The overall impression I took from the Response is that all is well with the Church, safe in clerical hands, and any “improvement” will only come from going back, not forward. Pity Pope Francis if he has to read this.

I can assure Keith Parkes that I have read far more positive responses and my hope for the future is not dimmed.

(CANON) MATT MCMANUS
SALT COATS, NORTH AYRSHIRE

God's call

● My parish also is blessed to have the ministry of a married Roman Catholic priest. He gives unreservedly while remaining grounded and supported; his wife makes a wonderful contribution to parish life and is a joy to know.

I agree wholeheartedly with Fr Bernard Shackleton (Letters, 23 July) that there is no shortage of vocations. God has not ceased to call, and faithful people have not stopped answering. However, the Roman Catholic priesthood discriminates on grounds of marital status as well as gender, gender identity and sexual orientation; it is also at best ambivalent about disability. Any such institution can never be entirely healthy.

God clearly loves diversity and equally calls diverse people to serve, both as priests and lay people, each one unique and

each of equal value. Discerning every call with wisdom and openness, without prejudice, would be to truly welcome a God who surprises, a God who invites us to take risks that are radical and genuinely rooted in universal love.

KATHY POPE
ST AUSTELL, CORNWALL

Brian McGuinness

● Christopher Howse (Notebook, 9 July) reports on the memorial service for Brian McGuinness. Brian and I received our Jesuit schooling at Mount St Mary's. He was a brilliant scholar and at a moment's notice could produce a sonnet or verse in English, Latin and Greek.

However, he also excelled at sport: hooker for the First XV and winner of the cross-country, although as to cricket, he said he would name his team the Ancient Mariners – “he stoppeth one of three”.

DEREK LAW
WHITCHURCH, HEREFORDSHIRE

Priestly politics

● Fr Barry Grant's comment that “following in the steps of Karl Marx is not the same as following in the steps of Christ” (Letters, 9 July) reminds me of my own father's aphorism that “the best example of communism in practice is a

Cistercian monastery”. The problem for some priests is that their flock is composed of saints and sinners with many and no political views. Hence *The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching* (1996) stressed that the Church should not tell people how to vote, but praised upright politicians working for the common good. Its contents deserve a re-look.

COLM LANIGAN
LONDON SE3

Too few workers

● There are too few workers on our land and as Mike Seales rightly points out (Letters, 16 July) “farmers are left with unharvested produce”. Now that Europeans are no longer able to do vital work in this country, it would seem logical for our government to allow legal immigrants to fill the gap. At present their subsistence allowance is pitiful. Many of them would love the opportunity to take on seasonal work while they wait for the results of their applications for permanent residency in the UK.

HELEN ROBSON
HARMBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Good deeds

● Robert Frazer (Letters, 23 July) criticises Harrison Pawluk for performing random acts of kindness and being filmed for

social media while so doing. He justifies his criticism, by citing Matthew 6:1-2.

I would advise him to read a little more of the Sermon on the Mount and “judge not, that ye be not judged”. (Matthew 7:1). The hypocrites gave to the needy in order to be praised, and Our Lord criticised their motive – but not their help for the poor. We do not know Mr Pawluk's motives.

St Thomas of Canterbury, in T S Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, condemns “the greatest treason: to do the right deed for the wrong reason”. But the damage is to our own souls; the world benefits that the right thing is indeed done, rather than the wrong thing, or nothing.

JAMES BRYANT
SOUTHAMPTON

Lay Religious

● You are wrong to say that of the three women recently appointed to the Dicastery for Bishops, Dr Maria Lia Zervino is the first lay woman to be appointed to such a role (“Women join dicastery for appointing bishops”, 23 July). The two other women appointed are also lay women, albeit Religious. There are no women clerics in the Catholic Church yet, more is the pity.

SIMON BRYDEN-BROOK
LONDON SW1

THE LIVING SPIRIT AND LITURGICAL CALENDAR

To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a Religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you work for a living? Be holy by labouring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently

teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain.

POPE FRANCIS
FROM *GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE: ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD* (CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY, 2018)

You are not what you do, although you do a lot. You are not what you have collected in terms of friendships and connections, although you might have many. You are not the popularity that you have received. You are not the success of your work. You are not what people say about you, whether they speak well or



whether they speak poorly about you. All these things that keep you quite busy, quite occupied, and often quite preoccupied, are not telling the truth about who you are. I am here to remind you in the name of God that you are the Beloved Daughters and Sons of God, and that God says to you, “I have called you from all eternity and you are engraved from all eternity into the palms of my hands. You are mine. You belong to me, and I love you with an everlasting love.”

HENRI NOUWEN
FROM “BELOVEDNESS” (UNPUBLISHED TALK) IN *YOU ARE THE BELOVED: DAILY MEDITATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING* (HODDER & STOUGHTON, 2017)

◆ CALENDAR ◆

Sunday 31 July:
Eighteenth Sunday of the Year (Year C)
Monday 1 August:
St Alphonsus Liguori,
Bishop and Doctor
Tuesday 2 August:
Feria or St Eusebius of Vercelli,
Bishop or St Peter Julian
Eymard, Priest
Wednesday 3 August:
Feria
Thursday 4 August:
St John Vianney, Priest
Friday 5 August:
Feria or The Dedication of the
Basilica of St Mary Major
Saturday 6 August:
The Transfiguration of the Lord
Sunday 7 August:
Nineteenth Sunday of the Year

◆◆◆

For the calendar for the Missal of 1962
go to www.lms.org.uk

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

diary@thetablet.co.uk

Sir David's little list

IT WAS ALWAYS known unofficially as “the David Amess debate”: the last major session before the six-week summer break, when backbenchers able to catch the Speaker’s eye could raise a burning issue, and hopefully get a response from a minister and a headline in their local paper.

Several MPs had the knack of it, but no one could cram as much material into the six minutes allotted as the honourable member for Southend West. He would deliver his speech with mounting speed, in the manner of the lead tenor performing a tongue-twisting patter song in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, somehow squeezing in 30, even 40 issues, teasingly waiting till the end before throwing in the inevitable call for Southend to be made a city.

Amess was fatally stabbed during a constituency surgery last October; at his memorial service in Westminster Cathedral a message from Pope Francis was read out praising him for his years of “devoted public service”. Southend became a city on 1 March. And what was previously a tea-room quip is now an official part of the parliamentary calendar. Last week, MPs held the first “Sir



David Amess Summer Adjournment Debate” in the chamber of the House of Commons.

A MAN FROM *The Financial Times* was among the 200,000 people following banners and marching bands through Durham at the annual gala celebrating working-class culture. He interviewed the star speaker of the day, Mick Lynch, the 60-year-old bushy-browed general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT).

Lynch’s father, Jackie, was born in Cork city – no relation to Jack Lynch, the Cork

hurler and Taoiseach – and his mother, Nellie Morris, was from a farm outside Crossmaglen in south Armagh. They had come to London during the war to find work. His father worked on building sites; his mother was a cleaner.

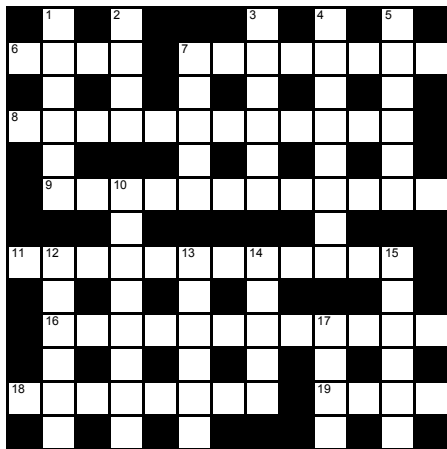
“The values of solidarity and trade unionism are what I was brought up on,” Lynch told the *FT*. “A lot of those values came from my Catholic background. It was a solid base and I think people have lost a lot of that.”

Lynch grew up on a council estate in Paddington, the youngest of five. He has described his upbringing as “very straight down the line – Mass every Sunday, holy days of obligation, confession Saturday night, taking communion Sunday morning, stations of the cross, the whole bit.” In his speech, he told the Durham crowd, “We are back! The working class is back... We refuse to be meek, we refuse to be humble and we refuse to be poor any more!”

Lynch – who left school at 16 – has run rings round the front line of the British media in recent weeks. “They’re all a bit shallow and a bit unprepared and a bit glib,” he told an Irish newspaper. Might Lynch be the solution to the Church’s public relations problems? Sadly, he told the *FT*, “I’m not a Catholic any more – none of us are, I think.”

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 816 Axe



Across

- 6 ‘The Gift of the ----’: short story by O Henry (4)
- 7 Kings of Egypt at the time of the Israelites’ confinement (8)
- 8 What Jesus promised to make Andrew and Simon Peter in some versions of Matthew (7,2,3)
- 9 Name for the Hebrew forebears, being more inclusive of the Matriarchs (3,9)
- 11 Those advocating the strict religious observance of Sundays (12)
- 16 Location of Adam and Eve at the Creation (6,2,4)
- 18 Collection of Hindu mantras and tunes (8)
- 19 Tobit’s wife (4)

Down

- 1 Member of a Persian sect founded in 1844 by an Islamic heretic (6)
- 2 One of a religion of former Hindus who rejected the word of the Vedas (4)
- 3 Daughter of Herodias; opera by Richard Strauss (6)
- 4 Region of the Adriatic where Titus preached (8)
- 5 Another name for Babylonia, often identified with Sumer (6)
- 7 Desert wilderness where Hagar and Ishmael made home (5)
- 10 24 hours set aside after particular Feast Days for fasting and prayer, in both RC and C of E traditions (5,3)

- 12 Part of the Mediterranean, the cockpit of Roman imperial domination at the time of Christ (6)
- 13 Cities of ancient Greece and Egypt which share the same name (6)
- 14 Servant girl who, so stunned to hear the voice of Peter, neglected to open the door for him (5)
- 15 Hezekiah’s secretary who talked with Sennacherib’s Assyrians (6)
- 17 Warlike country east of 5, perhaps, capital Susa (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 30 July The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 OGY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. 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

■ We are processing entries but there may be a delay in notifying winners and sending out prizes. Please keep entering.

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Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution to the 9 July puzzle

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

Solution to the 9 July crossword No. 813

- Across:** 1 Esdras; 5 Claude; 8 Vitalian; 9 Boaz; 10 James; 11 Babylon; 13 Persia; 15 Assisi; 17 Ramadan; 19 Angel; 22 Zion; 23 Cathedra; 24 Verses; 25 Russia.
- Down:** 2 Shiva; 3 Readers; 4 Shia; 5 Cantatas; 6 Abbey; 7 Deacons; 12 Damascus; 14 Elamite; 16 Sonnets; 18 Annas; 20 Edrei; 21 Star.

The fabric of history

BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH JESUIT PROVINCE

Options were limited for seventeenth-century British women. But Helena Wintour found a way to become an accomplished artist via her unwavering belief in the Catholic Church.

By Joanna Moorhead

HOW DID a clever, creative woman become an accomplished, practising artist in the 17th century? The answer, in the case of Helena Wintour (no relation of Anna, it seems) was to design and embroider a large collection of vestments for the Catholic priests who, in those penal times post the Reformation, were forbidden from saying Mass. This summer, Wintour's exquisite work is on show at Stonyhurst College, the Jesuit boarding school in Lancashire (to 20 August). It's one of the most comprehensive exhibitions ever of a maker whose output was very nearly completely lost.

Jan Graffius, the curator at Stonyhurst, is a fan of Wintour – and with good reason. She was, says Graffius, “a prickly, independent woman” who overcame many personal tragedies to find a way of living autonomously at a time when doing so was extremely tough if you were female. She also seems to have been fearless in the face of danger and was clearly an exceptionally accomplished artist, as evidenced by the array of brightly-coloured, intricately embroidered chasubles now lined up in the museum area of Stonyhurst.

The vestments – blood red for Pentecost, deep green for Feria days, night-black for funerals and Good Friday, bright gold and pinks and blues for Easter – were worked by Wintour herself, sometimes with a group of friends, and they're a testament to an extraordinary level of precision and care. The stitches are painstaking; some of the motifs she created, doves and crests and monograms among them, are almost objects in themselves. The birds seem to be about to fly off from the material to which they are attached, and the spring flowers are almost pluckable.

But it's more than just the workmanship:



Wintour's work is overlaid with symbolic images and lettering, and the entire designs speak to a bigger picture of spirituality and religious meaning. Her religious connections were with the Jesuits – her young nephew, to whom she was guardian, was educated at the Jesuit-run school of St Omer in what is now France. It was from this establishment that Stonyhurst was founded in 1794 – and it's very clear, unpicking the intellectual meanings behind her work, that she would not herself have been out of place in the order, had they been able to welcome her.

BUT WINTOUR didn't want to embrace the religious life: like other Catholic women of her era, choice consisted of basically becoming either a wife and mother, or a nun. She dismissed both, and forged a path for herself as an artist, as well as caring for her family's property and safeguarding the meaning and the observance of her faith. This was the key to Wintour's story: she was a recusant, a Catholic who decided to break the laws of her time, and the social mores of the period, to remain steadfast to the faith into which she had been baptised.

It's interesting to ponder how picky and

A detail from Helena Wintour's Red Pentecost Chasuble, c.1650

judgemental we sometimes are about law-breaking: the Catholic faith only continued in these islands because people like Wintour stuck two fingers up at the statutes that forbade her from attending Mass or harbouring priests. She did it anyway; these vestments were created for illegal events, and if she had been caught hiding priests, she'd likely have been tried and executed (which incidentally makes it even more remarkable that she usually embroidered her initials or her name on to the garments, and not in small letters either).

She came from a family scarred by the outlawing of Catholicism. A great uncle who was a priest, Francis Ingleby, had been hanged, drawn and quartered at York in 1586; but it was the conspiracy that her father Robert and his brother Thomas were at the heart of in 1605 that truly nailed their colours to the mast. Along with their cousin Robert Catesby, his friend Guy Fawkes and others, they masterminded the Gunpowder Plot, and after its spectacular failure their days were clearly numbered. Robert Wintour lived rough for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

a while to escape his pursuers, but eventually they caught up with him; when he was executed, in January 1606, his daughter Helena was only six years old.

Such a history of bloodshed, in the face of an overriding belief in the value of the Catholic Church, could have gone either way for Helena, making her either terrified of suffering the same fate, or brazen in the face of the dangers and determined to do all she could to ensure her relatives' deaths had not been in vain. Needless to say, it was the latter path she decided to follow; perhaps deciding to have no children of her own was a way of ensuring that if she was arrested and put to death, there would be no offspring to mourn as she had once had to do.

What perhaps is most remarkable about Wintour, given the times in which she lived, is the agency she invested in herself, and her determination to proclaim her ownership not only of her work, but also of her place in a male-centric world. She was certainly no shrinking violet; some of her vestments display a visual hierarchy of the grace of God flowing down from Christ – characterised with the Greek symbol IHS – through the Holy Spirit (an elaborate and jewel-encrusted dove), via Mar, the monogram for the Virgin Mary, to herself, represented by the Wintour family crest or motto. It's hard to overestimate how bold a gesture this was, and it marks out an artistic as well as a fervently religious sentiment.

Wintour, whose likeness, sadly, history has not preserved, lived in Worcestershire, and after her death her family home, Badge Court, became a secret Catholic school as she had wished – probably because she hoped it would mean other families could avoid the separation that had happened in her own family when her nephew had to be sent to the continent as a young child.

SHE DIED aged 71: the vestments she left behind were used by the priests at the school at Badge Court, but by the mid-nineteenth century they had disappeared. They might never have been seen again if it hadn't been for a cat at a Jesuit community house: she chose a trunk of rags in the attic as a birthing space, and when she and the kittens vacated it the fabric on which they were sleeping turned out not to be rags at all – they were Wintour's chasubles.

The curious title of the Stonyhurst exhibition – “Hot Holy Ladies” – references a phrase initially used as an insult for the impressive and independently-minded recusant women, of whom Wintour was but one (others included Anne Vaux, Elizabeth Woodroffe and Jane Wiseman, all of whom risked death by sheltering priests). We aren't told who used that phrase, but we don't really need to know. Whoever it was, they were right, and Wintour's work, and her story, stand testament to both the heat of her talent, and the resolve with which she pursued not only her religious ambitions, but her artistic aims as well.



THEATRE

Cheque mates

Power and money in modern Russia

MARK LAWSON

Patriots

ALMEIDA THEATRE, LONDON

WE'D LOVE to know what was said in Downing Street on the day the great political escaper was forced to accept defeat, or be privy to the final conversations between Boris Johnson and Elizabeth II.

The soon-to-be ex-PM will provide written accounts, although their reliability must be suspect; imagine being the editor charged with fact-checking the texts of such a serial fabulist. So many will rely on Peter Morgan, who seems certain to incorporate Johnson's fall in late episodes of his Netflix epic *The Crown* or a revised version of his stage play *The Audience*, which imagined the weekly conversations between the monarch and the head of her government.

Before then, Morgan's latest attempt to solidify gossip into fiction is *Patriots*, dramatising the interaction of three powerful Russians from 1994-2012: Vladimir Putin, Roman Abramovich and Boris Berezovsky. The least widely known, Berezovsky, is the main focus and narrator.

As in *The Crown*, Morgan makes complex history neatly schematic: Putin rises from nothing (a failed local politician turned taxi driver) to billionaire plutocrat head of state, while Berezovsky falls downward from vast power and wealth to broken British exile. Abramovich's narrative is blurrier, perhaps because he recently achieved legal deletions from a book about him and Putin.

The problem is that Morgan characteristically imposes historical advantage and Freudian theories. The great historian Antonia Fraser argues that characters in historical biography or fiction should know only as much as people knew by the date of the scene. Otherwise, there is too much risk of knowing irony.

Morgan, though, is always looking through a 20-20 retrospectroscope. In *The Crown*, Diana knows from the outset she is a tragic

Tom Hollander plays the billionaire Boris Berezovsky as a moody enthusiast

figure when the likelihood is that she understood this tragically late. In *Patriots*, Putin is a tyrant who destroys the Russian democracy that Berezovsky hopes to create. Abramovich is more nuanced, perhaps because his lawyers are watching.

But is this too smooth an overview? Putin plausibly was once a reformer until, realising the constitution limited him to two terms as president, he went despotic to continue. There's a single reference to the rejection of Putin's request in 2001 to join Nato. The dramatist's extrapolation is that the pushback began the paranoia and isolation that led to the invasion of Ukraine. But that suggests Putin's game-plan did change, so there might be a good scene in that grumpy summit. And Morgan's chalk-cheese scheme requires Berezovsky to be a heroic good Russian, while he was more likely a pragmatic financier who gambled wrongly – Morgan provides fascinating context in his background as a maths prodigy.

However, although Berezovsky complains of having suffered anti-semitism, Morgan doesn't consider that Abramovich, who Putin seems to prefer, is also proudly Jewish, so the play could have done more with that and Putin's own very public Russian Orthodoxy. Faith must have been an aspect of competing patriotisms that, despite the title, are never deeply examined.

Rupert Goold's direction elegantly interpolates movement and folk songs on Miriam Buether's cruciform stage, frequently tinged red in reference to Russian flags, sex clubs, hell. Transformed by a bald-cap, Tom Hollander makes Berezovsky a moody enthusiast who fatally believes that money trumps political power. If, as rumoured, Putin uses lookalikes as a security tool, Will Keen will soon get a call from the Kremlin for his uncanny portrayal of the president's menacing ordinariness. Luke Thallon's bashful, soft-voiced Abramovich captures a man who hoped to be in charge under the radar.

As with *The Crown*, this is engaging entertainment but raises fears that Morgan presents crowd-pleasing guesses as if they are historical record.

EXHIBITION

Aspiring dreams

A mood rather than a movement

MADOC CAIRNS

Pre-Raphaelites:
Drawings and Watercolours

ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

HER EYES are from another universe. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Day Dream* – the centrepiece of “Pre-Raphaelites: Drawings and Watercolours”, a new exhibition of work from the Ashmolean Museum (to 27 November) – is, in terms of subject matter, irenic. Jane Morris, Rossetti's muse and sometime inamorata, sits in a bower of tree-branches, staring into space. She drapes an idled hand over an open book; her fingers, loosened, let a single flower fall. It's a picture of arcadian peace: harmonious, if a little haunting. But then there's the colour.

The branches, the book, Jane's characteristically billowing dress: all are frozen mid-painting, pre-pigment, inert in pencilled sepia. Colour, when it comes, is shocking. Seeping through hands and flower, blossoming on Morris's neck and face, bursting into auburn and russet when it reaches the dense curls of her hair, it's an invasion more than an embellishment; two paintings in one frame. And her eyes – brightest blue – look like they're from somewhere else entirely.

It's an apt synecdoche for the exhibition as a whole: a work-in-progress, but all the more affecting for it. Some of the works here – such



The Day Dream by Dante Gabriel Rossetti has a captivating air even as a work-in-progress

as the ill-fated Simeon Solomon's *Two Acolytes Censing: Pentecost* – seem catalogue-ready. But most of the drawings and watercolours (and pastels, chalks, body-painting, blueprints) are suggestive, gestatory things: sketches of friends, watercolours of small-time patrons, chalk-worked plans of later triumphs.

See the first drafts of William Holman Hunt's Lampkeeper-Christ masterpiece *The Light of The World*, or William Morris and Rossetti's Arthurian outlines for the Oxford Union Library. Elizabeth Siddal is, like Jane Morris, omnipresent; but Rossetti's many-aspected

etchings of her are joined to some of Siddal's own work – a rare treat. The intimate, aspirational, often unfinished character of so much on display reminds us that pre-raphaelism's coherence was largely posthumous.

The range of mediums reminds us too, how diverse pre-raphaelism was, the strength and variousness of the talents employed. An illustration of the angel Cecilia embracing an angel is almost shockingly small: fine-featured, finely-drawn. Satiric pencilwork sits alongside designs for stained-glass windows; stylised figures, mailed or robed, gaze from watercolours, glower from murals.

It's a window into the past. But it's hard to shake the feeling that the window could have been a door. Drawings and Watercolours' unintuitive categories are culprits here: “stunners” and “landscapes” might usefully sort the available material, but it won't help viewers understand it. The inclusion of some staggering Ruskin watercolours – realist to an unreal degree – raises the tone of the exhibition, but prompts an awkward transition from the romanticising salmagundi of the Pre-Raphaelites proper.

The error, perhaps, is to take the Pre-Raphaelites at their word. Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Morris, Holman Hunt et al. didn't represent a movement so much as a mood, a taste, a style. Stephen Spender was right to think the “brotherhood” inspired by poetry more than art – legible through ideals more than through technique. Gawky knights, elegant somnambulists, sulking Hellenes, pouting dryads, stunners real and imagined, the harmony and the clash ... Pre-Raphaelites went looking for an entirely new art. They found another universe.

PHOTO: ALI WRIGHT

MUSIC

Sibling rivalry

Juxtaposed opera pair

ALEXANDRA COGLAN

Little Women; Margot la Rouge/Le Villi
OPERA HOLLAND PARK, LONDON

SOME OPERA companies serve up certainty, familiarity: solid Carmens, Figaros and Bohèmes, season after season. Everyone knows what they're getting, and everyone goes home happy. That's not the Opera Holland Park way.

Over years now the company has led its loyal audience down some of the genre's less-travelled roads. Wolf-Ferrari's *I gioielli della Madonna* anyone? What about Mascagni's *Iris* or Cilea's *Larlesiana*? This season has been no different, offering a chance to see not one, but three real rarities.

Premiered in 1998, Mark Adamo's *Little Women* was a hit for Houston Grand Opera, going on to become one of the most-performed new operas in North America. That it has taken until now for the piece to have its UK premiere

says a lot about the split between that continent's more mainstream, Broadway-adjacent operatic tradition, and Europe's more cerebral scene.

There's certainly nothing cerebral about Adamo's Louisa May Alcott adaptation, which is all heart and sincerity. Sitting a little sweet on an English palate, its sisterly devotion and Christian values are served with a sentimentality we don't find in the original novel (glibly tied up in rhyming couplets, written by the composer himself). The musical language is a bit Bernstein and a bit Strauss, with a smattering of Charles Wesley.

The female-dominated cast gives the music a sheen that's echoed in the orchestra's harp and tuned percussion. It's all very glassy, glossy. Sian Edwards conducts a young cast that clearly believes in the score, throwing themselves wholeheartedly into Ella Marchment's rather diffuse production that confuses rather than clarifies Adamo's flashback, jump-cut structure. Charlotte Badham's Jo is a plucky, likeable heroine, but vocally the laurels go to Elizabeth Karani's Amy – a gilded top line to the ensembles.



If that sounds too wholesome, the company has an emphatic answer in a double-bill of Delius's one-act Parisian melodrama *Margot la Rouge* (a prostitute finds herself at the centre of a love-triangle between her childhood sweetheart and current lover) and Puccini's

first stage work: the Gothic fable and operatic cousin to *Giselle*, *Le Villi* (pictured). There's no happily ever after, but the road to violent death is paved with luscious horror thanks to conductor Francesco Cilluffo and the City of London Sinfonia, which has surely never played better.

The Delius is slight, at its best in the orchestral opening and music for its cameo villain L'Artiste (Paul Carey Jones), but the Puccini is a gem. Director Martin Lloyd-Evans leans heavily into the Black Forest Gothic, giving us a troupe of white-faced harpies who whirl and convulse on Takis's efficient revolving set as they seek revenge on the unfaithful Roberto. Peter Auty and Anne Sophie Duprels make for an impressive pair of doomed lovers, but it's Stephen Gadd's Guglielmo who anchors it all with gravitas and easy charisma.

BOOKS

• OUR REVIEWERS •

MORAG MacINNES is an author and poet • PATRICK HUDSON is The Tablet's Newman Intern

CHRISTOPHER BRAY is the author of *1965: The Year Modern Britain Was Born* • CARINA MURPHY is a freelance writer

Turn back the clocks

A passionate polemic calls for a sexual culture of old-fashioned virtue and restraint

MORAG MacINNES

The Case Against the Sexual Revolution

LOUISE PERRY

(POLITY PRESS, 200 PP, £14.99)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £13.49 • TEL 020 7799 4064

SOMETIMES it's not altogether wonderful to have lived in the world for a long time. Things you thought would last for ever – Woolworths, Oxendales catalogues, Texan bars – disappear. Battles you thought were won – equal pay, or reclaiming the streets (remember that one, the one which would let women walk late at night without being scared that they'd be attacked?) – those battles, like the conflict in Ukraine, grumble on. You'd imagine, wouldn't you, that female MPs would get respect for the work they do, and that male MPs wouldn't watch porn at work. Well, time for a rethink. Or a sexual counter-revolution?

In August I'll have been married for 50 years. So Louise Perry's guide to sex in the 21st century might have arrived too late for me. But a quick look at the chapter headings is immensely reassuring. "Men and Women are Different", "Violence is Not Love", "Listen to Your Mother" and, gosh, "Marriage is Good". Reassuring, but also alarming. This is an important book, for all the wrong reasons. The very fact that this young woman, "a post-liberal feminist who has witnessed the reality of male violence up close", a worker at a rape crisis centre, a mother, feels the need to explain to her generation that it's OK to say no, and that marriage is the safest option, means that we have not travelled far at all since the swinging Sixties.

PERHAPS, to be clearer, we travelled in an unexpected direction, propelled by Big Pharma. I remember a university friend pointing at someone. "She's on the Pill!" she said. I was impressed; it seemed to me that this heralded a new dawn. But, as this book points out in the most direct and cogent way, we were sold down the river. Sexual freedom has meant more pain for women, not less. "The modern angel of the bedroom... a waxed and willing swan, glides across the water... beneath the surface furiously working to maintain her image of perfection. We have smoothly transitioned from one form of feminine subservience to another."

There's no getting away from biology.



PHOTO: ALAMY, DENISE LAURA BAKER

Tributes to Sarah Everard, kidnapped, raped and murdered by a serving police officer

Women have babies, feed them, get up in the night to comfort them. Yes, they can perhaps choose when to have children – but what about their careers? "Somewhere in the uneasy space between sexual liberalism and traditionalism, it has to be possible to navigate a virtuous path," Perry tells us. To her credit, the word "virtuous" doesn't seem ridiculous or old fashioned, it seems appropriate. The difficulty is that capitalism doesn't do virtue. It embraces porn and violence. Ann Summers shops, I discovered, have enjoyed a rise in profits because of the publication of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, a book featuring a charismatic torturer.

Perhaps the most disturbing trend Perry highlights is the "hook-up culture". It seems young girls are encouraged to behave like boys traditionally do. It was Darwinian, you know? Lads have lots of sperm and they need to spread it about – have sex without consequences, without any emotional ties afterwards. Now, post Darwin, plus Pharma, according to Perry, girls feel forced to behave in the same way. Perhaps the phrase would

be "hang out as sex buddies, friends with benefits". But then it turns out girls feel anxious and sad when their benefit friend doesn't text. They can't quite stop feeling emotionally engaged.

If this is true, then it's an awful indictment of society. Women, as Perry tells us, are not like men. If you thought this didn't need pointing out – well, welcome to my club. I also didn't think women needed to be told about why abusive men can get away with all kinds of nasty behaviour because they are rich. I never knew landlords in London were offering "sex for rent". I never knew Instagram and Twitter are full of "belfies" posted by 14-year-olds. (Sorry – that means butt selfies. I have to lie down soon.)

Can it really have gone so wrong? So skewed that this book divides men into "cads and dads"? Women, on the other hand, are "agreeable" – they put their own interest last, and that makes them vulnerable. Because it's a polemic, Perry is extreme – she doesn't have much time for the complex areas of pioneering

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Dear old Ireland

PATRICK HUDSON

Cathal Brugha: 'An Indomitable Spirit'

DAITHÍ Ó CORRÁIN AND GERARD HANLEY
(FOUR COURTS PRESS, 192 PP, £19.95)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £17.95 • TEL 020 7799 4064

REVOLUTIONARIES are ordinary people with odd ideas. The architects of the Irish Revolution were solid sorts from the lower-middle classes: bookkeepers, tobacconists and teachers, suspicious of the more flamboyant figures who occasionally turned out in the cause. It is the sobriety of most heroes of Irish freedom that causes us to lavish attention on more “cuddly” figures such as Michael Collins (admittedly an odd term for the executor of assassination campaigns).

Collins's bitter enemy Cathal Brugha – hero of Easter 1916, minister of the underground republic, first celebrity fatality of the Civil War – was a commercial traveller for a firm of church candle manufacturers. Perhaps his most remarkable achievement throughout a decade of fomenting the downfall of the British was maintaining his directorship in the firm.

He belonged to the nineteenth-century school of nationalism that cultivated early-to-bed habits in the cause of national salvation. He enjoyed cycling, was kind to children, and prayed the rosary daily. He did not drink or smoke or swear. You could certainly take him to tea with your mother, but she might not find the experience especially entertaining.

The authors of this fine, diligent study want to reconcile that understated private character with the Cathal Brugha who sustained 25 bullet wounds fighting in Easter Week. Such an



Cathal Brugha

effort is overdue: Brugha is an under-written character in most histories of the Irish Revolution, whose occasional diehard interjections bear no apparent relation to his background.

In this crude narrative, his career amounts to two acts of heroism and a feud. He burst on to the scene in a blaze of glory, single-handedly defending his post in Easter Week and miraculously surviving his injuries to assume a senior role in the republican movement – and pursue a deranged mission to assassinate the British cabinet. Appointed minister of defence in the first Dáil in 1919, he squabbled with Collins over IRA accountability throughout the War of Independence and insisted on the pure republican doctrine, which the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 inevitably failed to satisfy. He was an eager recruit to the anti-treaty cause and died fighting in much the style he had in 1916.

The difficulty with leavening this story with proper history is that little substantial source material relates directly to Brugha, leaving

the authors – both academics at Dublin City University – to triangulate their subject from the words and behaviour of others. From his early involvement in the Irish language revival, to the secretive Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Volunteers (which became the IRA), Brugha's name appears on plenty of declarations, his face on all the official photographs, and he was the constant subject of his contemporaries' praise or blame.

What this reveals, however, is not necessarily the subtlety of character the authors intend. Some of their analysis is revealing: they are excellent on Brugha's domestic life and the impact of his political career on his family. They also make perceptive points on how devout Catholicism motivated his insistence on thorough justification for IRA killings, as well as his growing hostility towards the IRB as a secret society contrary to Church teaching. Yet how he had reconciled himself to membership in the first place – or addressed the Church's support of the treaty – defies explanation without an apologia in Brugha's own hand.

Too much of the detail confirms the prevailing narrative. The full story of Brugha's five-month escapade to shoot the cabinet in the House of Commons is barmy, no less for the fact that other senior republicans also fantasised about gunning down the Treasury Bench. (He eventually left London, his closest brush with the state a police caution for cycling in Regent's Park.) While many of his clashes with Collins displayed a principled concern for the authority of the Dáil, others were surely petit-bourgeois pedantry – how thoroughly can you expect to audit a gun-running expedition?

Cathal Brugha was not an articulate or quick-witted man in life, and 100 years after his death he is no closer to explaining himself. This is a valuable and illuminating study, but for all its merits the indomitable spirit still struggles to take corporeal form.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

feminism – workplace politics, childcare – she'd just say, well, that failed. Her focus is on the most difficult area: intimate relations. The problem is that her answer to the muddle we got ourselves into when we all opened those magic Pill bubbles is a very reductive one. Don't do this. Don't risk that. Listen to your inner voice.

Well, yes, if you have a guiding inner voice. Interestingly, though C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton, the old suspects, are referenced here, there's no sense that Perry is guided by a higher voice, and certainly not a male one. Politics and religion have failed women equally. The only option if we want to control our sexualised society is damage limitation.

SO WHAT is the answer? Again, with a determined old-fashionedness which is very refreshing, Perry addresses herself directly to young women, “the group who have been utterly failed by liberal feminism”. “Distrust

any person or ideology that puts pressure on you to ignore your moral intuition... avoid being alone with men you don't know... only have sex with a man if you think he would make a good father... don't use dating apps... listen to your mother.” We must, it seems, “re-erect the social guard rails that have been torn down.” In other words, put up barriers, be suspicious, be afraid.

I came away from this book feeling desperately sorry that it's necessary. Sorry for the young girls who are at risk. Sorry for Louise Perry, who felt so alarmed by the way the balance of power has shifted away from empowerment to enslavement in the feminist debate that she had to propose a series of rules which wouldn't be out of place in a magazine article from the Fifties. Sorry that, once again, women must tailor their lives to avoid threat, rather than embracing virtuous – yes, I will use that word – virtuous equality. I would make this required reading, not for girls, who instinctively know most of the

issues, and who never walk home after 11 pm without telling their mums what they're doing, but for boys. Who often walk through the night, because that's what boys do.

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BOOKS



RECENTLY PUBLISHED *The Good-Enough Life* / AVRAM ALPERT / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, £20; TABLET PRICE £18 / Study of how an acceptance of our limitations can lead to a more fulfilling life

PHOTO: ALAMY

What's Britain really like?

CHRISTOPHER BRAY

Britain's Contested History: Lessons for Patriots
BERNARD PORTER

(BLOOMSBURY, 172 PP, £20)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £18 • TEL 020 7799 4064

THE SON OF a famous journalist once asked me if I was proud to be British. I told him the question was as silly as my asking him whether he was proud of his red hair or of being a six-footer. That's still a good answer, I think, but thanks to Bernard Porter's new book I now have a better one. It is indeed absurd to be proud of the accident of your birthplace – but it follows that the only people who are really entitled to take pride in being British are those people who live here but who weren't born here. "That means immigrants," says Porter, adding that "the more 'racist'... of Britain's present-day 'patriots' ... might feel uncomfortable with that".

Not that *Britain's Contested History* is just knocking copy. As Porter allows, from a "traditional patriot's point of view there must seem much to admire in Britain's past". Blighty gave the world football and cricket, not to mention a lot of pop music. It invented manufacturing industry, liberalism, freedom. It

discovered DNA, and split the atom. It was among the winners – count them – three world wars ("the Napoleonic being the first"). At one point it ruled over almost a quarter of the global population. Not bad for a small (250,000sq km) country with a "pretty rotten climate". But don't get too boastful, counsels Porter. For one thing, the true patriots' responsibility isn't to glorify the past but to criticise the present in the hope of engendering a better future. For another, "flag-waving... used to be considered un-British".

That last is one of many eye-opening factoids in this fascinating book. Did you know that football referees came in only when the working class took up the game? The public schoolboys who first played footie had no need of referees because being gentlemen they would always own up to any – accidental, naturally – foul play. Or that Hitler called those same public schoolboys "men of inflexible will and ruthless energy who regard intellectual problems as a waste of time but know human nature and how to dominate other men in the most unscrupulous fashion"? Or that 200-odd years ago the idea of patriotism itself was seen as a dodgy fantasy that went hand in hand with that other idiocy – democracy?

Alas, there a few fluffs too. The book was written under lockdown in the Stockholm archipelago (to where Porter fled after what

he sees as the folly of Brexit), with an internet connection but no access to libraries or even to Porter's own books and notes. All the more reason, then, for the manuscript to have been properly edited. But no. The comic-strip hero Dan Dare turns up twice in the space of a few pages – and Porter seems unaware that he's mentioned him before. Conan Doyle's Dr

Watson might be "bluff [and] salt-of-the-earth", but that's not as a sop to

readers who might be alienated by the intellectuality of Sherlock Holmes. He's just there so that Sherlock has someone to explain the plot to. As for the idea that finance capitalism is in its "death-throws", well, someone ought to be thrown to the dogs for letting that one through.

Still, Porter's big point comes across. He is fearful about what Brexit might portend. If it doesn't come up with the goods (and he is convinced it won't), he believes it could usher in "post-capitalist fascism". Even if Brexit should come up trumps economically, he worries that the incompetence and immorality of the government it licensed will end up having convinced its own supporters that politicians are all the same and that they should be shot of the lot of them. Most terrifying of all, Porter believes that the Brexit vote might just have revealed "what Britain was really like, underneath". Read this book, learn what its subtitle calls its "lessons for patriots", and prove Porter wrong.



Counting sheep

CARINA MURPHY

Cuckoo Summer

JONATHAN TULLOCH

(ANDERSON PRESS, 256 PP, £7.99)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £7.19 • TEL 020 7799 4064

THE PREMISE of *Cuckoo Summer*, a new wartime romp aimed at 10-to-12-year-olds from naturalist and *Tablet* columnist Jonathan Tulloch, may sound a little familiar to those who've read Robert Westall's *The Machine Gunners*. It's the Second World War in the north of England, and two children find a wounded German airman in the woods and keep him hidden from the adults. Yet this new story confidently tells its own tale and is worth recommending to, or reading aloud to, your children for the richness of detail about its Lake District setting and the way it captures the private world that children can inhabit

even during times of the greatest adversity.

Tommy Grisedale is being raised by his three aunts on their farm in Woundale, Cumbria, in 1940, and his day starts and ends with farm chores. His mother died when he was a baby and his dad is missing in action, yet his world feels relatively cosseted. "Not even the arrival of Hitler himself would keep my aunts from the kitchen on baking day."

His best friend, Sally Smith, is a tough evacuee from Tyneside, whose favourite saying is "Divvent need nee help from neebody, me. Never have. Never will." The pair are beautifully depicted – Tommy as a gentle soul who always tries to do the right thing and Sally as fiercely loyal and uncomplaining. Sally speaks in a regional dialect. She says "gadgie" for man, "champion" when she's happy and "gan" for go although my eight year old found the explanations of words mid-page "annoying" and would have preferred footnotes.

The pair take the decision to keep the "Jerry" safe in their den, for fear of his getting shot by the Home Guard or the inhumane Mr Scarcross, who makes Sally

live in the "filthy byre", or cowshed, with the animals, in all seasons. We follow the pair on their adventures on foot and by bike through woods, dales and waterfalls to the evocatively named Giant's Teeth rocks. The

adults form a backdrop to the children's world. But the story is really Sally's, as we slowly discover she isn't who she seems.

There's plenty of humour in their plotting and escapades and even a teacher called Miss Gently who shakes Sally until her head lolls about "like a rag doll". At the beginning, the Westmorland sheep-counting numbers are listed: yan, tan, tethera etc and children might enjoy trying to learn these as well as doubtless giggling along with Sally when she learns "bumfit" during the day-long sheep shearing.

The writing is unsentimental, even when it seems that a fairytale ending might be on the cards for Sally, who decides the airman is actually her dad. But Tulloch doesn't patronise his young readers. Instead, in the epilogue, as the cuckoo migrates back from Africa, Tommy and Sally's world is beginning to be repaired from the fallout of the previous summer.



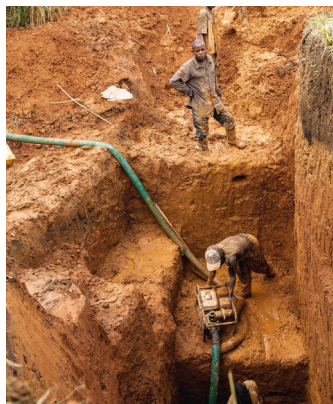
NEWS BRIEFING

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Kidnapped priest murdered

Catholic leaders in **Nigeria** have announced the “gruesome murder” of Fr Mark John Cheitnum who was abducted on 15 July. Fr Cheitnum is the fourth priest to be killed this year alone. In a 19 July statement, the Diocese of Kafanchan, in northern Kaduna state, said that his body had been found, “already decomposing”. The statement, signed by diocesan chancellor Fr Emmanuel Okolo – a copy of which was received by Aid to the Church in Need – said that Fr Cheitnum had been “brutally murdered”.

PHOTO: ALAMY, GUY OLIVER



Child labour and human rights violations in **Congo's** mining sector are a “critical” cause for concern, Jesuit Fr Rigobert Minani Bihuzo told a US congressional hearing this month. The House hearing was looking into claims that China is exploiting children in Africa in the mining of cobalt, lithium and various rare earth minerals. Congo produces more than 70 per cent of the world's cobalt, which, along with other minerals, is used in components for smartphones, digital cameras, computer hard disks, flat-screen televisions, computer monitors and other high-tech devices. Fr Bihuzo estimated that there are 1,000 small-scale mining sites (pictured) in Congo's Ituri region, with some 200,000 miners, among whom are thousands of children and pregnant women. “The Chinese Communist Party's quest for cobalt for batteries and lithium for solar panels to power the so-

Compiled by **James Roberts** and **Ellen Teague**.

called green economy motivates human rapacity as an estimated 40,000 children in Congo toil in nonregulated artisanal mines under hazardous conditions,” said Rep. Chris Smith, N.J., who ran the hearing as the commission's co-chair.

At least one person was killed and several were injured on Sunday in an attack on the inauguration of a Greek Orthodox church in **Syria's** Hama Governorate. The 24 July attack targeted Hagia Sophia Church in Al-Suqaylabiyah, about 30 miles northwest of Hama. The church was being built as a replica of Istanbul's Hagia Sophia by the governments of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin in response to the Turkish government's conversion of that building into a mosque.

Pope Francis sent birthday greetings to **Italian** President Sergio Mattarella on Saturday 23 July and thanked him for his dedicated service amid “not a few difficulties”. Offering Mattarella his best wishes for his 81st birthday, Francis said: “At this particular juncture, marked by not a few difficulties and crucial choices for the life of the country, you continue to make a fundamental and indispensable contribution with gracious leadership and exemplary dedication.” The Pope's telegram was sent days after Italy's Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, resigned following the collapse of his “unity” coalition in parliament. Italy will hold an early national election on 25 September.

A bishop in **Belarus** has defended a Catholic priest jailed after a closed trial for illegally “holding a mass assembly”, in a rare humanitarian church intervention in the authoritarian state. “I ask all concerned people to pray for Fr Andrei Vashchuk, now behind bars,” Bishop Yuri Kasabutsky, a Minsk-Mogilev archdiocese auxiliary, said on Facebook. The bishop was reacting to the sentencing of Fr Vashchuk, rector of the Holy Spirit parish in Vitebsk, who was jailed for 15 days for “violating procedures

by organising or holding a mass assembly”. Unofficial Catholic media said that it was believed the priest, of the Salvatorian order, had worn a face mask inscribed with the words: “A country for life”, a slogan that is associated with the exiled opposition presidential candidate, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

Food shortages warning

Cafod has warned that many countries remain at risk of food shortages despite the lifting of Russia's blockade on **Ukrainian** grain exports. The charity welcomed the agreement between Kyiv and Moscow, signed in Istanbul last Friday, to allow shipments of grain to leave Ukraine's Black Sea ports, but said food must not be diverted from countries most in need. Graham Gordon, Cafod's head of policy, emphasised the plight of communities in East Africa, Afghanistan and Lebanon. The Istanbul deal was imperilled this week when Russian missiles hit military targets in Odessa, Ukraine's largest port.

PHOTO: CNS/MARONITE PATRIARCHATE, MYCHEL AKL



Maronite Catholic Patriarch Bechara al Rai has described the detention and questioning of Archbishop Moussa el-Hage (both pictured) as a “security, legal and political farce,” and hinted that the **Lebanese** military tribunal that questioned the archbishop was prompted by the Hezbollah movement. Archbishop el-Hage was delivering aid from Lebanese and Palestinians in Israel to their relatives in Lebanon. The detention of the archbishop, who was questioned for eight hours, was a grave offence against the integrity of the Church, the

Lebanese Patriarch said. The archbishop was released after top judicial officials intervened.

The Vatican's delegate to the **Organisation for Security and Co-operation** in Europe has called for “true equality” between men and women and has urged all governments to ensure women's engagement “in all aspects of public, political, economic, social and cultural life”. “The Holy See supports the principle that full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society, and is convinced women need to be valued for all capacities that stem from their feminine genius,” said Mgr Simon Kassas, chargé d'affaires at the Vatican's Permanent Mission. He accused the OSCE's German secretary general, Helga Maria Schmid, of exceeding her powers by supporting a 2021 Generation Equality Forum in Mexico City and Paris, which advocated “bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights”.

Romanian officials have ordered the demolition of a 246-foot office block in Bucharest after a 16-year campaign, ruling that it was built illegally and endangers the stability of the nineteenth-century Catholic St Joseph's Cathedral. “Since 2013, the capital's City Hall has been compelled under a final court decision to demolish this building – however, this obligation was ignored,” said Nicusor Dan, Bucharest's mayor. “Our goal now is for the land to be harmoniously reintegrated into Bucharest's urban landscape.” Archbishop Aurel Perca of Bucharest described the mayor's order as a “victory” for local Catholics.

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“That the president is trying to dictate terms and force himself on the people with the use of thuggery and oppression is unacceptable.”

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith on the crackdown on dissent by Sri Lanka's new president Ranil Wickremesinghe (see page 26)

CANADA / Penitential pilgrimage marks ‘first step’ ahead of ‘serious investigation’ of residential school abuses

Francis laments schools ‘catastrophe’

JAMES ROBERTS

IN HIS FIRST public remarks in Canada, Pope Francis expressed “sorrow, indignation and shame” on Monday for the actions of members of the Catholic Church who operated most of the residential schools in the country.

Funded by the government, the schools were part of a programme to assimilate Indigenous children by separating them from family, language and culture. Pope Francis, speaking in the grounds of Ermineskin former residential school in Maskwacis (Cree for “bear hills”), near Edmonton, Alberta, on the first stop of his “penitential pilgrimage”, called this a “disastrous error” and asked forgiveness “for the evil committed by so many Christians” against Indigenous people.

His apology, he said, was a “first step”. A “serious investigation” must follow. Lamenting the “colonising mentality” behind the system, Francis referred to its “catastrophic” effects on generations of Indigenous people.



Parishioners and Pope Francis at Sacred Heart Church, Edmonton

Before making his remarks, the Pope met leaders at the local church privately and led a silent prayer at the Ermineskin Cree Nation Cemetery, where there are marked – and probably unmarked – graves of residential school students. The Pope travelled to Canada, landing in the western province on Sunday at the start of a week-long pilgrimage, with

a pair of moccasins given to him by an Indigenous delegation in the Vatican in April this year, with whom he made the undertaking to come to Canada in person.

The small pair of moccasins, which Francis was asked to return, symbolise the children who attended residential schools and never came home.

The prime minister, Justin Trudeau, the governor general, Mary Simon, the Assembly of First Nations National Chief, RoseAnne Archibald, and federal MPs attended with nearly 2,000 First Nations survivors at Ermineskin's Powwow Arbour – a space for First Nations community gatherings and celebrations.

An anguished rendering of Canada's national anthem in Cree by an Indigenous woman marked one of several emotional moments on Monday. After Francis spoke, Chief Wilton Littlechild placed a feather headdress on the Pope's head as the crowd cheered.

Phil Fontaine, a residential school survivor and former

Assembly of First Nations National Chief, who was at the event, described the Pope's apology as “a special moment for survivors”. The school has largely been torn down and five teepees now stand at the site, representing the four nations in the area with the fifth marking the entrance to where the school once stood.

In 2008, the federal government apologised for establishing and running the schools, paying billions of Canadian dollars in compensation to survivors.

In Edmonton, the Pope was to take part in an open-air Mass at Commonwealth Stadium to mark the feast of St Anne on Tuesday. He was then to travel to Lac Ste Anne, Quebec, for the annual pilgrimage there, and on to Quebec City, celebrating Mass on Thursday at Sainte-Anne-de-Baupré pilgrimage site north of Quebec City. In Indigenous North American cultures, the figure of the grandmother is deeply revered, none more so for Indigenous Catholics than the grandmother of Jesus.

ROME

Strict new protocols for Vatican finances

POPE FRANCIS has taken another step in his efforts to clean up Vatican finances by placing all investments under the control of a special committee that will ensure all Church money follows strict protocols in line with Catholic teaching, *writes Christopher Lamb*.

A new investment policy published last week prohibits the Holy See investing in weapons or the defence industry; pornography and prostitution; gambling; pro-abortion health centres and companies that work with embryonic stem cells or manufacture contraceptive products. The new guidelines remove the autonomy

of Roman Curia departments to invest their own money, something which has been cited as creating a culture in the Vatican of separate financial fiefdoms operating with little oversight.

This was widely perceived as contributing to bungled investments by the Secretariat of State into a London property which is now the centre of a Vatican corruption trial. The investments in 60 Sloane Avenue, Chelsea, south west London, saw the Holy See lose €140 million euros (£118m) and led to the Secretariat of State being stripped of control over its funds in 2020.

Investments, the new policy

states, should be low risk and support the Church's social teaching by seeking to “contribute to a more just and sustainable world.” They should favour clean energy and environmentally friendly products, supporting companies that are tackling hunger, poverty and inequality such as the pay gap between men and women.

The 20-page document also warns that speculative investments in mining, oil, nuclear energy and alcoholic drinks should be avoided along with complex financial products.

One of the major problems identified as contributing to Vatican financial scandals has also been the high level of financial oversight given to clergy with no financial training. From now on, investments will be overseen by an ethical investment committee led by Cardinal Kevin Farrell,

the prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life who holds a MBA degree. He will be assisted by four lay experts. All Vatican departments must now close their investments and shareholdings in foreign countries, including Italy, and transfer them to the Institute for the Works of Religion, the Vatican Bank.

The latest changes were announced by the Secretariat for the Economy, set up by Francis as a way to coordinate the financial activity in the Holy See and ensure transparency and accountability. The first prefect was Australian Cardinal George Pell and today it is led by a Jesuit priest, Fr Juan Antonio Guerrero and his number two, Maximino Caballero, who held executive positions at Baxter Healthcare in the US. The new guidelines come into effect on 1 September.

GERMANY / Synodal Path under renewed scrutiny

Vatican statement inflames polarised church responses

CHRISTA PONGRATZ-LIPPITT

ON 21 JULY the Vatican published a brief statement warning the German “Synodal Path” initiative that it did not have the power to change church teaching or introduce new church structures, and that it threatened church unity.

The terse, unsigned Vatican statement made headline news in church and secular media in Germany within hours of its publication. Reactions in Germany and Switzerland indicate a deep division on synodal path issues.

Germany’s conference president Bishop Georg Bätzing and the president of the Central Committee of (lay) Catholics

(ZdK), Irme Stetter-Karp, strongly rejected the idea that the German Synodal Path was planning reforms that would lead to a schism, insisting that topics of the Church’s sexual morality, priestly celibacy and the role of women in the Church were being discussed in other countries too.

The Vatican statement was above all an “outrageous vote of no confidence”, the secretary general of the Roman Catholic Conference of Switzerland, Daniel Kosch, who is a German Synodal Path observer, claimed in a guest article for the Swiss Catholic news agency, kath.ch. “No dicastery or representative of the Holy See has taken personal responsibility [for

this statement]. This anonymity makes dialogue impossible and so is incompatible with the church’s synodality,” he observed.

Canon lawyer Bernhard Anuth of Tübingen was more measured. The Vatican statement was “merely clarifying” what was already laid down in the German Synodal Path’s statutes, Anuth told KNA. However, he admitted, “numerous comments by prominent Synodal Path members, could be, had been and were understood as though church law was actually being changed”.

Just two days before the Vatican statement was published, the German Synodal Path’s secretary general, Marc Frings, called for a

“readjustment” of the Church’s teaching on homosexuality in a guest contribution for the US blog “Outreach”. Frings wrote that the [German] Synodal Path was a “deliberate statement against the current Catholic Catechism which has been critical and disparaging of homosexuality since the mid-Seventies and still reproaches homosexual activity as sin”.

Bishop Bertram Meier of Augsburg welcomed the statement. “It shows that Rome is interested in what happens in Germany. [At the moment], the risk to church unity is virulent,” he underlined. Rome was trying to channel the German Synodal Path to allow itself to be “enriched” by the world Church.

Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer of Regensburg said he was thankful for the “clarifying” statement, adding: “It is now at last time to join the Pope on the synodal path – listening, discussing and praying on the basis of Catholic doctrine not with the aim of changing it.”

UKRAINE

Local Church condemns Odesa port attacks

JONATHAN LUXMOORE

THE HEAD of Ukraine’s Catholic Church has deplored last week-end’s Russian attack on the strategic port of Odesa, just a day after a United Nations-brokered deal to resume grain exports, as warnings grew of worsening humanitarian conditions and a possible escalation in the war.

“This was the most cynical act – the day after signing an agreement to unblock the ports, the Russians struck the port of Odesa with rockets, seeking to hit Ukrainian grain warehouses,” said Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych. Russia insisted the strikes were against

military targets and did not break the agreement.

The archbishop, whose Church combines the eastern rite with loyalty to Rome, was reacting to Saturday’s missile attacks on the Black Sea port of Odesa, currently the main export route for 20 million tons of trapped Ukrainian grain. In a national message, he said the strikes had been accompanied by other attacks around Kherson, Donetsk, Sumy and Kharkiv, as well as on Mykolaiv.

“Since 2014, Pope Francis has often talked about war in Ukraine becoming a flashpoint for a larger-scale conflict – [which I fear] when I look at the situation on the front in our country’s east,”

PHOTO: YOUTUBE



Odesa port under attack

Bishop Jan Sobilo of Kharkiv-Zaporizhia told Vatican Radio on Monday.

Ukraine’s military command said two Russian Kalibr missiles had struck Odesa, with two others shot down before reaching their targets, despite Moscow’s pledge last Friday in Istanbul not to target Ukrainian ports during the transit of grain shipments.

The apparent violation of the 120-day deal, which was welcomed as a “beacon of hope” for developing countries facing famine by the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, was deplored by the EU. However, Ukrainian officials said they still hoped the first grain shipments could leave Odesa and other ports “within days” if security arrangements were kept in place.

During his flight to Canada on Sunday, the Pope told journalists he still hoped to visit Ukraine in the near future. But the president of Ukraine’s Latin Catholic Bishops’ Conference, Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki, told Vatican Radio conditions were deteriorating across the country, and said recent days had seen a growing influx of orphaned children and “maimed people, often in wheelchairs” from embattled eastern Ukraine seeking shelter at his western Lviv see.

Gregory regulates Old Rite Mass

UNITED STATES Cardinal Wilton Gregory has issued a decree implementing Pope Francis’ motu proprio *Traditionis custodes*, regulating the Tridentine rite, within the Archdiocese of Washington,

writes Michael Sean Winters.

“The intent of these requirements is to foster and make manifest the unity of this local Church, and provide all Catholics in the archdiocese an opportunity to [demonstrate] acceptance of the teaching of Vatican II and its liturgical books,” he wrote,

naming three churches to host the rite on Sundays.

■ Jayd Henricks, former chief lobbyist for the US bishops’ conference, in the magazine *First Things* strongly took issue with the Pope’s recent comment that there are “many” in the US who reject the Second Vatican Council.

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SRI LANKA

Cardinal condemns 'thuggery' of new president

CARDINAL Malcolm Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, has appealed to the international community to open an inquiry into the country's newly formed government after armed police and military attacked peaceful protesters, *writes James Roberts*. The attack occurred on Friday last week, less than 24 hours after the new president, Ranil Wickremesinghe, was sworn in.

Cardinal Ranjith condemned the attack in which security forces raided the main protest camp in the capital. Unarmed young people, even after announcing that they were preparing to leave the site, were attacked by an "unprovoked" group of policemen and soldiers, Ranjith said. Some were injured and others arrested, he noted, condemning the "high-handed action of the president".

President Wickremesinghe had been in power for less than 24 hours at the time of the attack. He had won 134 votes in parliament, after former prime minister Gotabaya Rajapaksa was ousted. "This is very sad", stated the Cardinal, "because the president became president only on the vote of the parliamentarians, and because he came saying that he would protect the constitution". Instead, "he has acted against the basic right of the people to protest, which is a democratic right, which was exercised non-violently by the youth".

Describing the president's actions as contrary to his duty as head of state, Ranjith added that the parliament does not represent the majority of the people, and that Wickremesinghe's attempt to "dictate terms and force himself on the people with the use of thuggery and oppression is unacceptable". "We hold [him] responsible for any future disaster that might come as a result of his actions," the cardinal warned.

The people of Sri Lanka, suffering from high unemployment and a lack of basic necessities to live with dignity, had protested against this reality, only to be attacked, he said. He demanded that an inquiry be opened into the violence and that those guilty be held responsible.

Cardinal Ranjith said that if the government failed to open an inquiry, members of international human rights organisations should do so. "To attack the very same people whose protests led to this change is like kicking the ladder after one reaches the top," Ranjith concluded, with reference to the way Wickremesinghe, an unelected parliamentarian and ally of the former president, had come to power.

VIEW FROM ROME

Christopher Lamb



AN UNSIGNED statement, released last week out of the blue, represents the firmest intervention to date by the Holy See in its attempts to rein in the German synodal way.

The *Synodale Weg* has been worrying senior figures in the Vatican and a number of bishops around the world for a number of years. A majority of German Catholics are determined to push through reforms on the use of power in the Church, on women's ministries, on the role of the priest and on teachings such as the blessing of gay couples. Some critics are simply hostile to change; for others, the concern is less about the nature of the reforms but about the German Church "going it alone".

The decision to release the statement will have been signed off by Pope Francis. It declares that, "new official structures or doctrines in dioceses" cannot be adopted without the agreement of the whole Church; Germany is not able to decide "new forms of governance and new orientations of doctrine and morals".

Francis' problem with the Germans is more about process than content. He has gently warned them not to adopt solutions based simply on re-organising church life, or to embrace changes pushed by intellectual or theological elites disconnected from grassroots parish life. There are well-organised and influential reform groups in the German Church that sometimes succumb to a "lay clericalism" that seeks to mould the Church in a predetermined way. Francis' vision of synodal reform is, at its heart, a spiritual process. He dreams of the whole People of God – lay people, clergy and bishops – listening and discerning the will of the Holy Spirit, not manoeuvring to promote a particular agenda. It is only through an experience "from below" that the blueprint for the Church's future will start to emerge.

The highly unusual decision to release an unsigned statement on a local synod suggests an attempt by the Holy See to articulate its "general position". It is noticeable that the statement was not issued by the Vatican's Synod office. The word in Rome is that the intervention was drafted by the Secretariat of State and is likely to have been influenced by Cardinal Walter Kasper, the 89-year old president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, sometimes described as "the Pope's theologian", who has been outspoken in his criticisms of the *Synodale Weg*. Two powerful departments in the Roman Curia have already expressed their concern: the Dicastery for Bishops, which sent a warning to the Germans about their synod in 2019, and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, which last year issued a ban on same-sex blessings (one of the German synod's proposals). The latest move

suggests that there are key people in Rome who do not believe German Church leaders are listening to their concerns.

THE INTERVENTION comes as the global synod is getting into its stride. Reports are now arriving in Rome on what local churches around the world have gleaned from the listening process. And most raise similar concerns to those that the Germans have been wrestling with. It seems that there are those in Rome who want to draw some red lines. While it is understood that, ultimately, the Holy See makes the critical decisions on disputed issues, the tone of the latest statement suggests that this is a case of "Rome deciding" rather than engaging in a dialogue and consensus-building with local churches. It exposes a risk that a small, well-organised minority will act to stymie the desire of a less well-organised majority for moderate reform.

The Churches in Germany and Australia both launched their synodal processes because it was recognised that only a deeper reform of structures and culture could address the underlying causes of the sexual abuse crisis. But some continue to argue that synodality should focus solely on the Church's relations with the world rather than on questions around governance, how bishops and priests exercise their ministry and the role of women. The German Church, provided it engages with the global synod, has some constructive proposals to offer in these areas. And Rome needs to show it is listening.

THE VIRTUE of obedience sometimes seems to be in short supply in the Church these days. Opus Dei's response to the Pope's changes on how it is governed goes against the trend. In a new ruling, Francis says the leader of Opus Dei should no longer be a bishop, and that the group will come under the Dicastery for Clergy, to which it will be required to submit an annual report. The Holy See says the changes are designed to safeguard Opus Dei's charisms of evangelisation and personal holiness.

Opus Dei, founded in Spain in 1928, was made a "personal prelature" by John Paul II in 1982, and its leaders became bishops. All this gave the group autonomy and status. It is safe to assume that some will be unhappy with the new decree. Nevertheless, its leader, Mgr Fernando Ocariz, said they "filially accept" the ruling that Opus Dei should adopt a "form of governance based on charism more than on hierarchical authority." He added the Pope's reforms are an "opportunity to go more deeply" into the vision of its founder, St Josemaría Escrivá.

NEWS BRIEFING

FROM BRITAIN AND IRELAND

PHOTO: ALAMY/JAGUAR



Russell Crowe (pictured) has been cast as the Vatican's late chief exorcist Fr Gabriel Amorth in a new film, *The Pope's Exorcist*, due out next year. Fr Amorth, who reportedly carried out more than 100,000 exorcisms, wrote several bestselling books about his experiences before he died in 2016 aged 91. Crowe, who has studied a variety of religions in his life, including Scientology and Ba'hai, has repeatedly stated his admiration for the Pope. "I'm not Catholic and I've never felt any connection with any previous pope, but I like this guy," he told local media after meeting Francis at a General Audience in 2014.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols celebrated the opening Mass of the Archdiocese of Westminster's pilgrimage to **Lourdes**, the first since 2019, at Côte Grotte on Saturday.

Delivering the homily, Bishop Nicholas Hudson referred to the chapel's icon of Our Lady of Grace, chosen by St Bernadette as the closest likeness to the apparition of the Virgin Mary. Most diocesan pilgrimages, as well as the national pilgrimage run by the Society of Our Lady of Lourdes, have returned this year, with reduced numbers.

Bishops 'ignore calls for reform'

The **Root and Branch** reform movement has accused the bishops of England and Wales of refusing to listen to the views of ordinary Catholics as expressed in the National Synthesis for the Synod on Synodality. In a statement, Root and Branch's spokesperson, Penelope Middelboe, said the views of Catholics in England and Wales cited in the National Synthesis published last month were "braver than we'd expected". The synthesis contained statements such as: "Many call in the reports for women to be ordained as deacons and priests." On 19 July, the bishops issued their own initial reflection in response to the consultations, which, according to Middelboe, "ignores the calls for reform in their very own National Synthesis".

Ruhama, the Dublin-based charity which works with women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking, has raised

concerns about the risk of sexual exploitation to Ukrainian women and girls. The charity, which was founded by women Religious, welcomed Ireland's latest reports on combatting human trafficking.

A **Stella Maris** chaplain in Thailand has been recognised by the US State Department for her work in supporting trafficked seafarers. Apinya Tajit, Stella Maris' deputy director in Chanthaburi diocese, Thailand, received the 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report Hero Award from Secretary of State Antony Blinken at a ceremony in Washington DC last week.

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Tickets have gone on sale for a guided tour on 17 September organised by SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Twentieth Century Society of three post-war religious artworks in

Greater Manchester. The tour will include a visit to the **Oldham Mural** (pictured below), by the visionary émigré artist George Mayer-Marton (1897-1960), in the redundant Church of the Holy Rosary on the edge of Oldham.

Clinic 'buffer zones' under fire

The Church in Scotland has criticised a new push for "buffer zones" around **abortion clinics**, suggesting that new legislation presents "a threat to civil liberties," especially freedoms of speech, assembly and religion. The proposed Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Bill would ban "seeking to influence or persuade a person concerning their access to abortion services" within 150 metres of abortion providers.

Raymond Friel, chief executive of Caritas Social Action Network, wrote on Twitter that some churches were opening as a "**cool sanctuary**" in the heatwave to rough sleepers and the vulnerable, and to people in flats that are hard to cool down. He said: "A simple offer of welcome, respite, water, toilet facilities, human contact. This is a good space for the Church to be." One reader responded: "Our school was only able to open today due to our wonderful parish priest offering us the use of the church."

Compiled by **Ruth Gledhill**.

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PERSON IN THE NEWS



Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin: “Remembering David Trimble (pictured) ... whilst a strong representative of his party, he had courage to lead and persuade others to take historic steps for peace.”

ENGLISH BENEDICTINES / Nuns from Ireland, Sweden and Australia join Congregation

Abbot welcomes international reach of new communities

RUTH GLEDHILL

THREE communities of nuns from around the world have joined the English Benedictine Congregation.

The nuns of Kylemore Abbey in Galway, Ireland, of Mariavall Abbey in Tomelilla, near Malmo, Sweden and of Jamberoo Abbey near Wollongong, Australia, were welcomed by the general chapter of the congregation meeting at Buckfast Abbey, Devon.

Abbot President Christopher Jamison, who was re-elected for another four-year term, said: “Having communities of nuns and of monks as equal members is a strength of our congregation. Three new communities from across the globe add greater international diversity. We are delighted to welcome them.”

The general chapter ran for 10 days from the Feast of St Benedict on 11 July, covering areas of monastic life that had emerged as key issues during the 12-month period of preparation, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda.



Benedictines at Buckfast Abbey

The chapter spent a day of healing and prayer considering the impact of child abuse, with input from Dani Wardman, chief executive of the Religious Life Safeguarding Service, who has worked with survivors. Dr Catherine Sexton, from Durham University’s “breaking boundaries” project, also contributed.

A further issue was that of the novitiate. The chapter agreed to introduce a three-month period of shared formation for novices from all its monasteries, to pri-

oritise human formation for all, develop the visitation process and to identify the needs of the increasingly diverse membership of the congregation. Abbot Jamison said: “This general chapter was a moment of grace. As we renew our internal processes, we will better serve others as we offer them a monastic wisdom rooted in Christian faith.”

Kylemore Abbey is home to a Benedictine monastery of nuns founded in Ypres in 1665 who fled Belgium in the First World War. In 1920, they moved to Kylemore Castle, in Connemara, Co Galway. Mariavall Abbey has its origins in the Sisterhood of Jesus’ Mother Mary, a Lutheran community established in 1957. They were received into the Catholic Church in 1983 and moved into their new monastery in southern Sweden in 1991.

The Jamberoo Abbey community was founded at Rydalmere, near Sydney in 1849 at the instigation of the English Benedictine monk Bede Polding, the first Archbishop of Sydney.

JUSTICE AND PEACE

Conference explores concept of hope across various cultures

MADOC CAIRNS

THE NATIONAL Justice and Peace Network’s 2022 conference last weekend saw experts, activists and campaigning organisations hosting a series of conversations on the theme “Hope Is A Verb With Its Sleeves Rolled Up”.

Around 150 delegates listened to speakers including former diplomats, peace campaigners, environmental activists and conflict-resolution experts over the three-day conference, held in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

The keynote speaker, Philip McDonagh, poet, diplomat and academic, gave a talk reflecting on the concept of hope in the encyclicals of Pope Benedict XVI.

Following on from the wartime insights of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, McDonagh proposed that Christians help formulate “axioms of the historical imagination” that could “provide a common criterion of evaluation across cultures”. Such a proposal could create “community even among people and groups who never interact directly”.

Other speakers included Patrick Devine, chair of the Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, who spoke about his award-winning peace-building work in East Africa. Other events at the conference included workshops on universal credit, prison reform, tax reform and a film about activists opposing the destruction of forests for coal mines in Germany and the UK.

John Paul de Quay of the Ecological Conversion group gave a talk on his organisation’s drive to move Catholic parishes and other Christian groups towards ecological and social sustainability.

Sexual ethics dominate Lambeth agenda

A STATEMENT on human dignity which Anglican bishops were to discuss as they meet in Canterbury at the Lambeth Conference this week is to be revised, following widespread criticism of its reiteration of the prohibition on same-sex marriage, writes Patrick Hudson.

Ten draft “Lambeth calls” for bishops to consider had been published in advance of the conference, due to be attended by around 650 of the 1,000 bishops of the Anglican Communion.

They included statements on Christian unity, care for the environment and the relationship

between science and faith, as well as on safeguarding and on Anglican identity.

All were overshadowed, however, by the reaction to the “Call on Human Dignity” drafted by the Archbishop of Jamaica, Howard Gregory, which included the statement that “the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole [is] that same-gender marriage is not permissible”.

This reaffirmed “Resolution 1:10” of the 1998 conference. Several bishops expressed shock at the wording and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, called a meeting on

Monday with the group which drafted the call. Former Bishop of Truro Tim Thornton, chair of the Lambeth calls sub-group, said the drafting group “will be making revisions” to the call. He also announced that bishops “will now be able clearly to state their opposition to a particular call”.

The conference, which began on Wednesday and runs to 7 August, already faced controversy, with the archbishops of Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria declining their invitations on behalf of their provinces, accusing attendees of going against biblical teaching on sexual ethics.

IRELAND / Archbishop stresses importance of avoiding polarisation on synodal journey

Martin warns against divisiveness

SARAH MAC DONALD

THE HEAD of the Irish Church has said the synodal synthesis document, which is due to be published next month, will reveal many challenges for the handing on of faith in Ireland.

In his homily at the annual Mass and investiture of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in St Patrick's College Chapel, Maynooth, Archbishop Eamon Martin stressed the need for communion amid concerns over an emerging polarisation of views.



"Concerns have already been expressed in Ireland, and around the world, that the synodal discussions could damage, rather

than create, communion in the Church," he told the assembled knights and dames.

He said it was "vitaly important" to work together in Ireland to ensure that the ongoing synodal journey avoids divisiveness and polarisation of views, or degenerates into a "them and us" adversarial process which "loses sight of our shared belonging within the Church of Christ".

According to the Primate of All Ireland, the synodal synthesis will acknowledge the impact of a major decline in the practice of the faith, and in vocations to

priesthood, to the religious life and to sacramental marriage.

Many of the thousands who took part in consultations over the past nine months called for greater transparency, participation in decision-making and accountability within parish and diocesan church structures. "We have heard about the importance of renewing our connection with the energy and gifts of our young people and of finding fresh models of responsibility and leadership that especially recognise and facilitate the role of women, as well as men," the archbishop said.

Birmingham archdiocese safeguarding 'shambolic'

A TOP abuse lawyer has condemned the Archdiocese of Birmingham for "shambolic and wholly inadequate" safeguarding systems, writes Ruth Gledhill.

Richard Scorer, specialist abuse lawyer at Slater and Gordon who has acted for numerous victims of abuse in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, was speaking after publication of an independent review by children's charity Barnardo's into the management of concerns about Joseph Quigley, a priest in the archdiocese.

Scorer said: "This report is utterly damning. It paints a pic-

ture of a diocese in which safeguarding systems were shambolic and wholly inadequate."

In addition, in a letter to this week's *Tablet*, Scorer says: "We cannot ignore the most important finding in the Barnardo's report: for many years, what the archdiocese really knew about Quigley and the risk he posed was withheld from the statutory authorities. Remember the context: since the Nolan reforms in 2001, the mantra from the Catholic Church in England and Wales has been that all knowledge and suspicion of abuse is now

reported externally. But in this case in Birmingham, the largest Catholic diocese in the country, presided over by Archbishop Nichols, who is now a Cardinal, this didn't happen."

Quigley was convicted of child sex offences and sentenced, in January last year, to 11 years and six months' imprisonment.

The trustees of the archdiocese of Birmingham commissioned Barnardo's to undertake an independent, transparent review into what had gone wrong.

In a press statement, the archdiocese said: "The Barnardo's review highlights a number of failures by the archdiocese in procedures, communications, managerial scrutiny and oversight. We accept these failures [that] the review shows ... were

institutional." Archbishop of Birmingham Bernard Longley said: "I am deeply sorry for what happened to those who have been harmed by Joseph Quigley ... it's clear that those things would not have happened in this way today."

(*Letters*, pages 14-15)

Lack of priests will require new ways of 'being Church'

CURRENT STAFFING levels of priests to parishes cannot continue, according to the Archbishop of Cashel and Emly Kieran O'Reilly, writes Sarah Mac Donald.

In a pastoral letter read out at Masses, the archbishop warned that the current staffing levels provided by priests to parishes will not continue and that the model of Church, as people have known it, is being replaced by a new reality.

The diocese is preparing to implement a reorganisation of its

parishes and has begun the process of training pastoral workers.

"In future, it will be essential to have lay people more involved and engaged with their priests and with one another in building witnessing communities of faith," Archbishop O'Reilly said. This would call for openness to change. As with the other dioceses in Ireland, Cashel and Emly was moving into a new way of being church which would open new possibilities of participation for members of the faith community.

Currently 68 diocesan priests, whose average age is 67, minister in the diocese. Over the next five years 16 priests will reach the retirement age of 75. At the same time there will be at most 35 priests under the age of 75 serving in the diocese, which has just one candidate at the moment training for the priesthood.

The archbishop said future organisation would call for the formation of different pastoral units, encompassing several parishes functioning together.



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Heat waves

GUY CONSOLMAGNO

IT'S ALL about heat. At the end of the eighteenth century, the astronomer William Herschel passed a beam of sunlight through a prism and measured its heat with a thermometer placed in its various colours, violet to red. To his surprise, the thermometer continued to heat up even when it was placed beyond the red, where no light was visible to the human eye. And now the Webb space telescope has begun its inspection of the universe with these “infrared” waves.

Infrared light has a slightly longer wavelength than visible light – comparable to the width of a grain of corn starch. This provides one key advantage of astronomy in the infrared: grains of dust in space are smaller than that, and so infrared light can pass them by, while this space dust blocks visible light. In this way the Webb infrared cameras can see stars even when they're embedded in clouds of dust.

Furthermore, certain chemicals emit or absorb specific wavelengths of infrared light, each with its own distinct spectral fingerprint. Studying infrared light from distant planets tells us what chemicals they contain. One of the very first Webb results found water in the atmosphere of a planet orbiting the star WASP-96b.

Planets themselves are easier to see in the infrared. An object in space radiates light in such a way that the colour of its maximum brightness depends on its temperature. Hot stars peak in the visible



The Webb's infrared camera has already seen a galaxy the way it looked just 300 million years after the Big Bang

– that's why we can see them – but cool planets peak in the infrared. Our eyes see planets, including everything we see here on the surface of our own Earth, by reflected sunlight ... but of course this reflected light will always be dimmer than its source; with visible light, distant planets are lost in the glare of their nearby stars. In the infrared, however, stars are much dimmer while their planets shine at their brightest.

Finally, just as the pitch of a train horn drops as the train moves past us, the light of distant galaxies in our expanding Big Bang universe is “red-shifted” to longer wavelengths. The infrared is where you'll find the light emitted by galaxies so far

away (and thus moving so fast from us) that we can only see what they looked like billions of years ago. The Webb's infrared camera has already seen a galaxy the way it looked just 300 million years after the Big Bang.

It should be mentioned as well that the lovely images we've seen from Webb are all in “mapped” colours. Since our eyes don't see in the infrared (indeed, the air around us absorbs most infrared light) we have to translate the different parts of the infrared rainbow into our more familiar range of violet to red.

There is, of course, a certain symmetry in that these heat images from space come to us while a very different sort of heatwave envelops Europe and North America. The same physics that shows us water vapour in a distant planet's atmosphere also lets carbon dioxide trap infrared heat in our own atmosphere. Indeed, our first detailed models of atmospheric “greenhouses” came from studying Venus, more than 50 years ago (before anyone could accuse us of pandering to Venusan voting-blocs).

But it is also a reminder that the universe is so much larger than the colours or events we see immediately around us. Our heat-polluted summer will pass; but the galaxies that Webb has shown us will still be there to entice us with their beauty.

Guy Consolmagno SJ is director of the Vatican Observatory.

Glimpses of Eden

JONATHAN TULLOCH

WHAT DID YOU learn during the heatwave? Like most of us, I found out how to harvest the relative cool of the small hours by sleeping with windows thrown open, then closing all curtains and blinds at six in the morning. And since I was up anyway, I learnt to start work early, before seeing out the time of unbearable heat with a siesta. I also learnt to value trees more than ever, which was why each evening, sweat streaming in my eyes, insects swarming and biting, I carried four gallons of water for half a mile to water our saplings.



I planted these crab apples and oaks two Christmases ago with my wife and son, and I was determined they would survive the fury of the heat storm. Trudging through

the tropical twilight, buckets brimming with the still-cold water collected from the spring, I learnt something else – just how beautiful this world is. The corn glimmered, owls called, the air was scented with honeysuckle and the moon seemed to stand on the hills and look out for me like an old friend. Each mature tree I walked beneath perceptibly lowered the temperature. The woods were an air-conditioning unit. Reaching the saplings at last, I knelt to carefully empty the buckets, and on the stillness of deep dusk the icy water whispered like a compline prayer.

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