

## WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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### Unfinished symphonies

AT THE REQUIEM for Brian Mulroney, Canada's eighteenth prime minister, last Saturday, the 84-year-old Irish-Canadian from Baie-Comeau, Quebec, was celebrated by political, cultural and sports celebrities in a ceremony resplendent in sound, colour and ritual. Archbishop Christian Lépine presided at the Mass in the Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal. Amid the eulogies, political grandstanding, operatic repertoire and schmaltzy Irish songs, his homily underscored the dedication to peace, justice and the common good Mulroney displayed as prime minister between 1984 and 1993.

His neoliberal economics and his cosy relationship with conservative US administrations didn't fit everyone's model of Catholic Social Teaching in practice, but the Canadian writer Michael W. Higgins comes to Mulroney's defence. "He eschewed cheap partisanship, sought to build on alliances rather than trumpet polarising ideologies, fearlessly opposed South Africa's apartheid system when his close allies and friends, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, were not for turning, and espoused free trade initiatives when his political opponents fought for isolationist policies.



He imbibed his core values from his devout Catholic parents and his education at St Thomas College in Chatham, New Brunswick, St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and Laval University in Quebec City. He became a model peacemaker when such qualities are in short supply globally."

"Every human life is an unfinished symphony," as Archbishop Lépine gently noted.

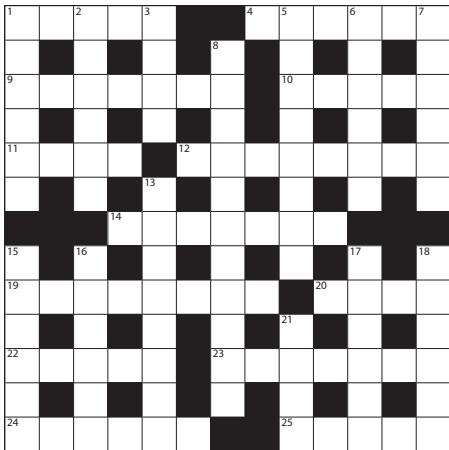
SOME TOOK UP cold-water swimming or growing tomatoes. One or two considered learning Serbo-Croat. Canon Kevin Firth used lockdown to write his autobiography. Guileless,

unaffected and charming, *Three Score Years and Ten* was privately printed before his retirement last year, and a copy arrived on our desk in Holy Week. Fr Firth is warm and generous – even his bishops are dealt with charitably – and the discovery in adulthood of a "hidden second family" is recorded with tact and tenderness. The photographs take us from Kevin sitting proudly on his tricycle in front of his parents' back-to-back to Canon Firth at his ruby jubilee celebration outside his last parish church, St Joseph's, Barnoldswick – Barwick to locals.

Firth grew up in the Macmillan "You've never had it so good" years, the tin bath and outside loo in Armley swapped for a twin tub washing machine and a refrigerator in Pudsey. He squeezes into St Bede's Grammar School in Bradford, works his socks off and gets the grades to study history at Birmingham. He is briskly interviewed by Bishop Wheeler and accepted for training to be a priest for the Diocese of Leeds. At the English College in Rome, where the genial rector is Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, he is introduced to pasta and Frascati. Then 40 years as a curate and parish priest: Bradford, Leeds, Huddersfield, Sowerby Bridge, Keighley and Barwick, with five years helping out in Aberdeenshire: a life of friendship with God and delight in the company of others, given in the service of all.

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 897 Alanus



#### Across

- 1 Thin and emaciated nature of Henry IV's father? (5)  
4 Cuts down around east and discovers Ancient Egyptian pharaoh (6)  
9 Chap cutting hair I assist in identifying Passionist Blessed Dominic (7)  
10 Regret holding exercise for currency (5)  
11 Part of chapter section in Irish Gaelic (4)  
12 Nature of long wanderings reading Homer? (8)  
14 Obtain funds as mendicant working with me and a flower (7)  
19 Simian holds toast curiously for a faith rejector (8)  
20 Egyptian khedive can reveal cross of his country (4)

- 22 & 23: Solar whisper about upcoming seasonal weather (5,7)  
23 See 22 Across  
24 Asked about pencil coding in wilderness where Miriam died (6)  
25 Debussy classic from a different realm (2,3)

#### Down

- 1 New blog linked with French and presenting chalice (6)  
2 Disturbance caused by international body and others (6)  
3 Long journey to boldly go following Star! (4)  
5 Suffering is tough on vessel (8)  
6 Great Antiphons and victim for bird (6)

- 7 Creator of *Tristram Shandy* bit of a martinet we hear (6)  
8 With odd stone impede some Italians (11)  
13 Listen for example over being different from Jews (8)  
15 Material question following work on reservoir (6)  
16 Rose rapidly on hearing weapon (6)  
17 Short response by tree for Norman canonised Archbishop of Canterbury (6)  
18 One in pursuit of accompanying drink (6)  
21 Clown and victim of first 22 Across prank (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 30 March, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 6GY. 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 Anselm, Vatican II and Evangelicalism – from OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random.

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### SUDOKU | Easy

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

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

#### Solution to the 9 March puzzle

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

#### Solution to the 9 March crossword No. 894

Across: 1 Market; 5 Caleb; 8 Prowl; 9 Marines; 10 Dude; 11 Tampered; 13 Idaho; 14 Acute; 19 Huntsman; 21 Cure; 23 Edibles; 24 Rides; 25 Trees; 26 Depart.

Down: 2 Avoided; 3 Kale; 4 Tomcat; 5 Carapace; 6 Liner; 7 Beside; 8 Pods; 12 Whistles; 15 Thunder; 16 Threat; 17 Passed; 18 Sees; 20 Naive; 22 Trap.