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**On the move – Flame
and World Youth Day**

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**Homilies in a minute –
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surprise – A Ghanaian
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**Centred on a promise
– Looking back to the
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PATRICK HUDSON

REVIEWS

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Editorial office
Natalie K. Watson (Editor)
Tel: +44(0)77 6674 4011
inspire.editor@gmx.co.uk

Patrick Hudson (Assistant Editor)
phudson@thetablet.co.uk

Amanda Davison-Young
(Chief Executive Officer)
Tel: +44(0)20 8748 8484
adyoung@thetablet.co.uk

Malgorzata Chylinska Pequeno
(Design and Production)
mchylinska@thetablet.co.uk

To advertise
Lisa Ottway (Advertising Manager)
Tel: +44(0)1903 534041
lisa@ottwaymediasolutions.com

Head Office
1 King Street Cloisters
Clifton Walk
London W6 0GY, UK
Tel: +44(0)20 8748 8484
publisher@thetablet.co.uk

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Welcome to inspire: the international Catholic quarterly for young adults

I'm a rotten linguist, all too happy when abroad to speak in hopefully-accented English or simply not to ask for a coffee. I find the exciting part of the Pentecost story not the wind or the fire but the disciples speaking in many tongues, without even a Duolingo streak. The people in Jerusalem were staggered: "Are not all these people speaking Galileans?" (Implying, perhaps, that the fishermen shared the monoglot

notoriety of today's English.)

Yet Day Zero of the early Church wasn't so much about languages as understanding. The disciples weren't just finding the right words and vocabulary – they were conveying the meaning of what they had been told. I'll keep plugging away at my French, but first I need to work out what I mean.

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Faith on your feet: pilgrimages and processions



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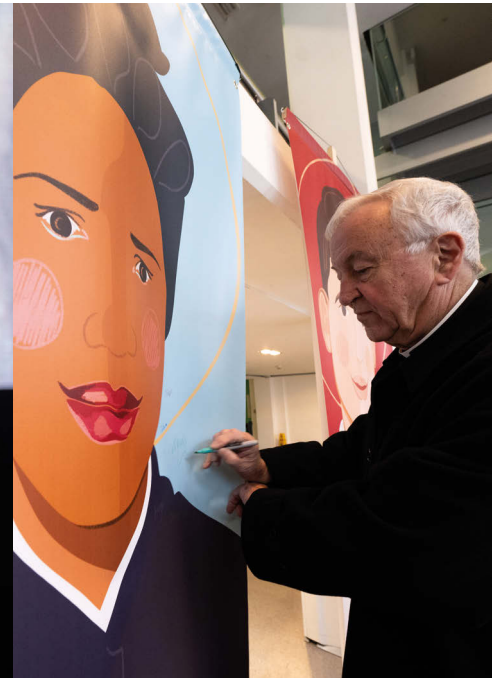
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Patrick Hudson looks back to Flame and forward to World Youth Day

On the move

PICTURES: CATHOLIC CHURCH ENGLAND AND WALES, FLAME 2023 | FLICKR



He might not be considered *papabile* anymore, but Cardinal Tagle can still draw a crowd. There were 7,700 people in Wembley Arena on 4 March for Flame 2023, where he was the keynote speaker. In a characteristic twist on his brief, he looked told the young audience about “angels” apparently distant from their lives: his grandparents who were refugees from war, other refugees he has met around the world, street vendors in his native Philippines. “The elderly are not a burden – they are angels,” he said, and asked: “Who are the angels sent to you by God?”

If this theme surprised, then so much the better. Angels are a dissonant concept that rarely feature in our common parlance. In fact, Tagle was pointing out that they are not a concept at all – they are personalities, real people we encounter in unexpected places who don’t quite fit with how we’re used to seeing things. It’s a theme that chimed with Pope Francis’s message for the occasion:

“Dare to be different, point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, purity, perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and the common good, love for the poor, and social friendship.”

We would happily sign our names to these ideals, but which don’t always look quite as we’d expect. The mighty reception for Jenny Garzón Saavedra, who works with CAFOD in Colombia to support Amazonian communities, showed that the audience

recognised these traits when they appeared on stage. But there was still a question for each individual pitched by Timothy Costelloe, the Archbishop of Perth: “What do I need to do?”

A precise 150 days before World Youth Day in Lisbon, Flame took its “Rise Up!” theme from the WYD motto chosen by the Pope. “Mary arose and went in haste” (Luke 1:38) begins the Gospel of the Visitation at pace – the pace of urgent, interested youth. Our Lady of the Visitation, the patroness of WYD, “is a model for young people on the move, who refuse to stand in front of a mirror to contemplate themselves”, says Francis. “When faced with concrete and urgent needs, we need to act quickly.”

It’s a message that could easily stray into familiar scolding, the voice of an older generation telling you to go and make something of yourself. “Life is real, not virtual,” Francis told Hungarian youth last month. “It does not take place on a screen, but in the world!” The difference (hopefully) from the nagging of any other 86-year-old is that he recognises the real desire to make a difference that lies buried in the troubled inactivity of so many young people. Doomsscrolling is always haunted by a hope that something on the feed will provide an answer.

There aren’t any there. Instead, you’ll find them in the peculiar, dissonant questions – who are your angels? – and the most fundamental – what are you going to do?



Emmanuel Donkor writes about his experience as a Ghanaian seminarian arriving in the UK

Expectations and surprise

PICTURE: EMMANUEL DONKOR



That first-time experience of a life adventure leaves you with enduring memories to share. Since entering formation with the Spiritans in Ejisu, I had completed a degree, but the pandemic had stopped me from travelling outside Ghana for my pastoral missionary experience. It was not until the end of 2021, after a year of youth service, that I left for the UK for the first time.

Before I left Ghana on 21 December that year, I did a little research about the place to learn what might be awaiting me. The memory of the plane taking off still brings back the sense of anxiety I felt inside me. After all, this was my first intercontinental flight. More reassuring was the confidence of the flight attendants cheerfully doing their tasks. In spite of their confidence, my heart beat a little faster when the plane struggled through winter turbulence!

I was travelling to the UK in the depths of winter. Big mistake! Growing up in a country with an average temperature ranging between 25 and 32 degrees Celsius, the UK weather was harsh and unforgiving. The cold was biting. I dressed up like an astronaut going to bed on my first night.

Believe me or not, I questioned how people could live and work in such weather. Later a priest told me of the experience of the Irish Spiritans who came to Ghana for the first time on a new mission in the 1970s. I stopped grumbling about the weather.

For the first time in my life I experienced the four seasons of a year. I truly enjoyed the changes in climate, dress code, events, and

time accompanying these weather seasons. The beauty of it is that each season puts me in a particular mood – just as the five liturgical seasons of the Church do – evoking in me an appreciation of my natural surroundings.

My year began in the southeast of England, in Kent and London. I had been told that secularisation had had an adverse effect on Catholicism, but I never imagined the impact could be so significant. Though I didn't have high expectations for Mass attendance in my first parish, I was still disappointed with the number of people who came to Sunday Mass – not forgetting that most of the time I was alone with a priest for daily Mass. I told myself that it was probably because the parish was in the countryside that most people there were not interested in religion.

This proved a fair assessment, since other parishes I visited had quite vibrant congregations. However, what shocked me the most was that in almost any parish I visited there were hardly any young people. Who is the future of the Church?

I asked why this was so. It seemed that even young people who were brought up as Catholics stop attending Mass for minor reasons, because somebody questions or challenges them about their faith. I feel we need more formation sessions, to empower young people to grow in their faith. If you understand your faith, then you won't be too worried when someone who is ignorant about it belittles you.

In September last year, I finished my parish work and moved to the Spiritan retirement home in Chester, where I also assist with administration in the provincial office. My encounters with the veteran Spiritans who have worked in different African countries have enriched me greatly; they have made my whole experience of the UK and its way of life very memorable. Life is such that I've not had a chance to see the more famous parts of the country, but I hope to have the chance this summer before I return to Ghana to continue my studies.

The retired Spiritans are remarkable: they are an example to me, not by their perfection, but in their enthusiasm for the community, their effort to pray, eat, and share their leisure together. I am learning from and with them how to live a community life.

Emmanuel Donkor is a seminarian with the Spiritans.

Phoebe Hobbs finds Christians on TikTok

Homilies in a minute

Elizabeth Barton preached to kings. St Francis preached to birds. Christians are meant to spread the Word of God.

Isaac David preaches to his 391,600 followers on TikTok.

"Judas betrayed Jesus for money. We betrayed Jesus for free," he laments. "Today, let's ask God to forgive us our betrayal and put our faith in him."

This particular video has 210,600 views as of time of writing. It's a crowd St Francis could never have imagined reaching all at once when he was on Earth.

TikTok might seem an unlikely vehicle to spread the word of God. The maximum video length is three minutes. Many are much shorter. Then again, the Psalms are pretty short, too.

Christian TikTok attracts a wide range of preaching. On the more conventional side, there are Catholic priests uploading a series of "homilies in a minute".

Meanwhile, *redeemed_by_blood* has more than 2 million likes on the platform. Her profile reads "Metalhead for Jesus".

"Every day I see Pharisees in my comment section saying I'm not a Christian, or I'm going to hell, or I'm not saved because I'm goth," she says, in a video explaining why there's nothing biblically wrong with her style.

No doubt some will be sceptical of Christian TikTok. The social media platform isn't the first vehicle you'd imagine for sharing the word of God.

But does the vehicle matter? Before Elisabeth of Schönau became a saint, she was a young woman struggling with whether to share her faith. In 1153, around 850 years before the advent of TikTok, she sent a letter to Saint Hildegard asking for advice.

Hildegard replied that she should sing the mysteries of God like a trumpet. The trumpet isn't the important part. The trumpet is just the messenger.

What matters is the message.

Phoebe Hobbs is a journalist living in London

Maximilian Yuen looks back at the coronation of King Charles III

Centred on a promise

PICTURE: IAN SHAW, ALAMY



“Oh! the buzz, the prattle, the crowds, the noise, the hurry!” wrote Horace Walpole in 1761. “What is the finest sight in the world? A Coronation. What do people talk most about? A Coronation.” Certainly, crowds buzzed and prattled around Westminster on 6 May. The finest sight in the world? It was certainly unlike anything that all but a fraction of the population had set eyes on before.

We all know that the late Queen was crowned in 1953, but think exactly what that means. It is a remarkably long time ago: Winston Churchill was in Downing Street; Stalin had been dead two months; The guests included Thami el Glaoui, a Moroccan chieftain who had lately mounted rebel heads on the gates of his Atlas stronghold.

1953 is considerably closer to the death of Queen Victoria than it is to today. A centenarian watching the festivities had lived through the invention of the telephone and the Indian Mutiny, besides two World Wars.

Yet, despite all this, the gap from 1953 to 2023 is short in the grand scheme. Records refer to the coronation of Egferth, King of Mercia, as long ago as 785; this year’s service more or less matched Richard the Lionheart’s in 1189. New actors said the same lines and used the same props against the same backdrop.

Take the central artefact. The Imperial State Crown, which the King donned for the procession home, is a twentieth-century creation studded with ancient gems. In its central cross sits Edward the Confessor’s sapphire, which glittered in his ring in the days before Hastings; on the front, the Black Prince’s ruby, worn in Henry V’s helmet at the

battle of Agincourt in 1415, and Richard III’s at Bosworth in 1485.

Or the soundtrack: when “Zadok the Priest” soared out as the Archbishop of Canterbury anointed Charles, it echoed with the same grandeur that it has at each coronation since Handel wrote it in 1727. Its words are even older, from the Book of Kings – Zadok and the less strikingly-named Nathan anointing Solomon king of Israel. They have been read at every coronation since 973. The same elements recur and evolve, layer upon layer.

But what did it signify? Charles was fully and legally king from the moment of his mother’s death. Why the expense, the inconvenience for the guardsmen, the long day for His Majesty?

The answer is that a coronation, like a wedding, centres on a promise. It is a contract: first, with God, who since Zadok has been believed to grant kings their authority. And it is a contract, second, with the people, “the community of the realm”, who from the thirteenth century have been invoked in coronation oaths, as the king promises to defend their laws and customs. In any

relationship, it is worth saying things clearly: the coronation makes these promises explicit, memorable, and holy.

On 6 May we witnessed something quite different from what took place in 1953 – yet something very much the same. Those promises made to one generation were made afresh to a new one, 70 years younger. One observer wrote:

For the hundreds of thousands of people outside the Abbey, the gold coach with the crowned figures brought back something of the element of fairy-tale so wanting in the monochrome of modern life. Well, for us it is all beginning over again, and it is a good thing, for our society, for our kith and kin all over the world, that it should be so: an enacted scene that goes back to the origins of our people, to our earliest memories together...

But this observer was A. L. Rowse, writing not in 2023 but for the Coronation Book in 1953. Now, we have begun over again once more.

Maximilian Yuen is a history teacher working in Essex

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Patrick Hudson discovers some of the things monks do when they are not praying

Work to Rule

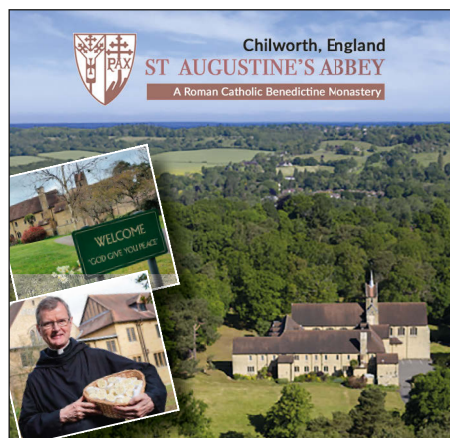
Monastic ruins in the British Isles are generally dominated by the vertical: walls and pillars that no longer support a roof, the empty tracery of enormous windows, the patch of sky where a spire used to be. It's only once you've wandered around these that you register the horizontal – how much space you are wandering in. The great monasteries required enormous lands for pasture, cultivation, manufacture and however else they diversified the portfolio that sustained the life of prayer.

English historians in particular have looked askance at these enterprises as incriminatory worldliness (while also denigrating monastic spirituality – but who's so fussed about consistency, anyhow?). They miss the point, of course. The Rule of St Benedict requires monks to look after themselves: "When they live by the labour of their hands, as our fathers and the apostles did, then they are really monks."

This work remains embedded in monastic life, not simply to fill the gaps between the hours



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but as an integral part of its sustenance. Monasteries are expected to look after themselves, depending not on charitable support but on their own sources of income, and the work monks and nuns undertake must be spiritually nourishing while keeping them in the black. Holy pictures and rosary beads in the gift shop aren't always enough.

Farming has been the traditional side-hustle, its rhythms broadly complementing the monastic day and its products feeding the community. Though no monasteries have embraced fully-industrialised factory farming and crop-spreading by drones (yet), a few continue cultivation: the Benedictines at Worth, though more noted for their school, keep a flock of 60 Lleyn ewes; besides praying for the soul of Napoleon III, their brethren at Farnborough keep 30 Wiltshire Horn sheep, as well as chickens and bees.

Many monasteries go in for bee-keeping (perhaps the habits are suited to it) and flog an inventive range of hive products. Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight sells honey through its farm shop, while St Augustine's in Chilworth started using the surplus beeswax from its hives to produce furniture polish – and then lip balm – and then skin cream. The monks now sell skincare products in a range of flavours. If it pays the bills, then why not?

The Trappists at Mount Saint Bernard Abbey in Leicestershire concluded in 2013 that the dairy farming which had kept them busy was no longer viable. They turned to their order's

tradition of brewing and found both a market and a method suited to their rule. When he blessed the brewery in 2018, Dom Erik Varden (now the Bishop of Trondheim in Norway) said that it provided "a parable for our monastic life, with the Lord as virtuoso brew-master" making something rich and sophisticated out of the simplest ingredients.

Monastic manufacture is well-placed to benefit from the boom in ethical shopping – Glenstal Abbey in Co. Limerick finds "Made by Monks" a useful advertising tag for its candles and bookbinding. Not made to meet demand, they have a rarity value besides standards guaranteed not by a market watchdog but (in the final estimation) by God. Profits are just part of the picture. In France, the Carthusians who make Chartreuse recently refused to expand production of their popular liqueur because some of the ingredients are endangered plants and more distilling would leave them too tired for prayer. By contrast, Buckfast Abbey sold the licence to make their eponymous tonic wine and now finds itself tarred by the antisocial consequences of commercially-marketed "Buckie".

It's a tricky path to tread, one that no economist can quite describe. The closest we could come to an equation might be the words of Psalm 104: "You make the grass grow for the cattle and the plants to serve man's needs, that he may bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer man's heart."

Patrick Hudson is a staff writer at The Tablet.

REVIEWS

Accidental Death of an Anarchist at the Theatre Royal Haymarket

Did he jump or was he pushed? Dario Fo's 1970 play was a macabre lampoon of a death in Italian police custody; Tom Basden's anarchic adaptation updates it into a chilling howl of laughter at the Metropolitan Police. Topical enough when it started touring last year, the production has really started to sting as it reaches the West End. Police malpractice, police inquiries, judicial inquiries into police inquiries – are they still funny?

Daniel Rigby answers an emphatic Yes, and no less sinister for that. He plays the Maniac, a compulsive imposter who appears at a copshop in the guise of the lord chief justice to help the police whitewash their role in the fatal mid-interrogation fall of an "anarchist" (a useful custodial catch-all, he notes) from a station window. This he does by teaching them to hug, arranging a chorus of the anti-fascist anthem *Bella ciao*, disguising himself as a hook-handed bomb expert, and generally smashing up the set and the story.

Rigby's breathless delivery and capers will leave you spluttering with laughter before you register quite how dark the joke is. Vaudeville skits about Wayne Couzens or police racism are too close to the bone, but that's because they are true: demanding sensitivity won't change that. As the audience whooped the curtain call, a monstrously-grinning Rigby came back on stage to switch on projector – which counted up the 1,854 deaths in police custody recorded by Inquest since 1990. We quietened down pretty quickly.

The Accidental Death of an Anarchist runs at the Theatre Royal Haymarket until 9 September.

Inside No. 9 on BBC Two

More wit belies the darkness in twisted tales from the minds of Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, which return for an eighth series. Even as the "Number Nine" conceit becomes more tangential, the scripts get sharper and better – an extraordinary feat helped by the wild inconsistency of their subject matter and format.

Straightforward East End villainy met parrots and necromancy in the series opener, an abundance of quips and blood orbiting the central question of whether the supernatural would turn out to be real. Pemberton and Shearsmith often spin this conundrum – previous episodes have featured ghosts, vampires, hallucinations, fake séances, pagan sacrifice – without concluding one way or another. They also favour prismatic thriller plots – *Reservoir Dogs* retold as commedia dell'arte, anyone? Very occasionally, they

blindsided you with an unheralded heart-warmer. And in an episode in series five, "The Referee's A...", captured the indefinable generational *something* of club football in half-an-hour.

And if this turns out to be one of their more gruesome series, you can turn to *The Fast Show* which is now on iPlayer too.

Inside No. 9 is available on BBC iPlayer.

EVENTS

Lourdes 2023

Back to it this year and it's as if the pilgrims never went away. In April, the shrine welcomed HCPT in some style for their largest outing since the pandemic – 3,500 travelled with the charity. An outline of the schedule of diocesan pilgrimages is available from Tangney Tours, who run most of them: www.tangney-tours.com/pilgrimages/lourdes

Not on their books, however, is the Archdiocese of Liverpool, which celebrates 100 years of its Lourdes pilgrimage this summer. They travel out with Joe Walsh Tours on the 21 July, following a centenary Mass in the cathedral on 25 June which will bring together generations of pilgrims to mark the milestone.

Corpus Christi

One of the under-heralded benefits of pedestrianisation schemes is the space they make for Corpus Christi processions, which used to dice with the traffic. The solemnity on 11 June will see the Blessed Sacrament out and about in various parts of the country, but the grandest is the two-parter in central London: around Covent Garden from the Westminster Diocesan Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament (Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane) and another from the Ordinariate HQ at Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory, Warwick Street, which will weave through the fashionable end of town to St James', Spanish Place. It's a mighty spectacle, but most importantly it's the Church doing what it does – neither aggressively nor apologetically, but confidently – in the literal public square.

Discernment Retreat, Pluscarden Abbey

The Benedictines of gloriously-secluded Pluscarden, Britain's only living medieval monastery, will host a discernment retreat on the weekend of 9–11 June for men and women aged 18–35. Daily Mass and the Offices will be punctuated by talks on recognising your vocation from religious including the Bishop of Aberdeen, Hugh Gilbert OSB. Details at www.youngcatholicadultnetwork.uk/event.

World Youth Day, Lisbon

The main event in Portugal runs for a week from 1 August, culminating in Pope Francis's promised visit to Lisbon, but the array of preparatory events is long underway.

Alongside the Pilgrimage of Symbols currently meandering through the Portuguese dioceses, WYD provides resources for a series of **Rise Up** encounters to discuss three key themes – Integral Ecology, Social Friendship and Mercy – of the Francis pontificate, available at www.lisboa2023.org/en/rise-up. The Jesuits' **Magis** programme will be in Portugal the week before WYD itself for Ignatian spiritual preparation: www.jesuit.org.uk/magis.

For the inside track on what is happening in Rome, the UK and around the world, listen to The Tablet podcasts, available on Spotify and other platforms.

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