

Onward Christian soldiers

Bishop Helmut Krätzl, a former auxiliary in Vienna, is probably Austria's most popular bishop. A keen young stenographer at Vatican II who took part in all the sessions, he had been expected to succeed Cardinal Franz König as archbishop in 1985. John Paul II appointed Hans Hermann Groër instead, a decision he came to regret. Groër stepped down in 1995 amid allegations that he had sexually abused young seminarians.

In spite of finding it increasingly difficult to walk – the result of a serious car accident – Krätzl still celebrates Masses and gives lively media interviews. One of his books got him into the soup with the Holy Office. He was called to Rome by Cardinal Ratzinger and made to promise that it would not be reprinted.

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, who recently completed her first 30 years of writing for *The Tablet* from Austria, bumped into Krätzl recently at a book launch. "It was a freezing cold night with temperatures well below zero and an icy wind blowing," she told us.



"As I was struggling to get my gloves off and put a comb through my hair, I heard a familiar voice say: 'Go slow, Mrs Tablet, we don't want to trip.' It was Helmut Krätzl. We are both 87, but he is my senior by three months.

"I took his free arm, and we walked in together very slowly, heads bent and eyes glued to the floor. Then there was a sudden burst of applause. Everyone started clapping – no doubt to welcome the unexpected episcopal guest but to both of us, we agreed afterwards, it sounded like 'Bravo oldies,

thank you for soldiering on.' When I said goodbye to him, he looked up at me questioningly and asked: 'We must soldier on, mustn't we Mrs Tab?' I assured him that of course we must."

"When I was a young evangelical mother bringing up my four little children in Zimbabwe I had no intention of ever becoming a Catholic, let alone a theologian, but I used to write novels late at night when the children were in bed," Tina Beattie, the ebullient "Thought for the Day" presenter and professor of Catholic studies at the University of Roehampton told us.

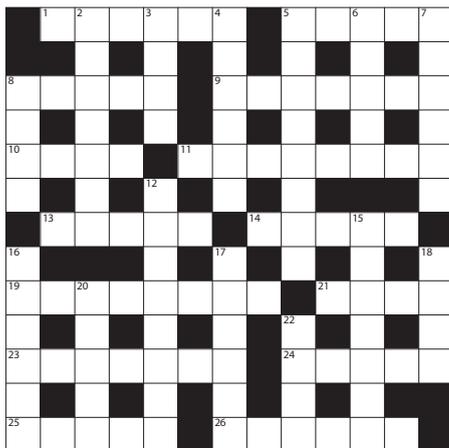
After a dazzling academic career that has zigzagged between books on religion and psychoanalysis, gender and sexuality, and the cult of the Virgin Mary, Tina has finally got a novel into print, *The Good Priest*, a combination of murder thriller and Lent book.

"It would have astonished me to discover that my first published novel would include a gay priest, a murderous cardinal and a cat, but I would have been pleased to know that I'd at last go public about my secret obsession, even if it has taken me 40 years and five unpublished novels to get there."

The Good Priest is published by Troubador.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 649 | Enigma



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 16 March, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. 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 Augustine, Christianity and Thomas Aquinas – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 29 March. The answers to this week's puzzles and the crossword winner's name will appear in the 6 April issue.

Across

- 1 They have an alternative possible explanation (6)
- 5 Was anxious to do an unusual doctorate in Old English (5)
- 8 The carafe is broken and the middle of the glass is missing. It's hilarious! (5)
- 9 An old vehicle carries the complete works (7)
- 10 Father is on the platform (4)
- 11 Roman law pictures dictionaries as the solution (8)
- 13 Have you seen the GP yet? He's in the country (5)
- 14 A rainstorm around the first of December? Things can't get any worse! (5)
- 19 An intemperate speech made behind the Union Jack, with no attempt at concealment (8)

- 21 A terribly posh place to buy things (4)
- 23 Criminals make legislation public (7)
- 24 It's wonderful, in short, the French myth! (5)
- 25 A policeman carries paintings of the pub game (5)
- 26 I join the party for equality (6)

Down

- 2 Fish for proof that the woman is married (7)
- 3 I'll be frank and honest; I've nothing to write with! (4)
- 4 There are no chaps to follow you old-fashioned servants (6)
- 5 It's said to be useful headgear for a golfer (8)
- 6 Will Pippa blow the whistle on the Spaniard? (5)

- 7 Susie was upset when the old penny fell into it (6)
- 8 There is, at the end of the cliff, a party with Iberian songs (4)
- 12 The ancient Greeks had pictures in the middle of the bridges (8)
- 15 How a monk may live in a monastery (7)
- 16 One could have enough money for a sixth car (6)
- 17 One will put a stop to the drink when one finally arrives (4,2)
- 18 Part of the church with an extension in the middle (4)
- 20 We could see him at some stage (5)
- 22 A business affair loses business if a long way away (4)

SUDOKU | Challenging

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

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

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

Solution to the 23 February puzzle

Solution to the 23 February crossword No. 646

Across: 1 Thatch; 5 Sects; 8 Petty; 9 Trailer; 10 Cafe; 11 Passport; 13 Ploys; 14 Bonus; 19 Brass hat; 21 Spot; 23 Drought; 24 Whelp; 26 Spelt; 26 Rating.
Down: 2 Hateful; 3 Toys; 4 Hitman; 5 Scansion; 6 Cello; 7 Strata; 8 Pact; 12 Eyesight; 15 Umpteen; 16 Abodes; 17 Faster; 18 Stop; 20 Adore; 22 Swot.
Winner: Terry O'Sullivan, Kilnwick Percy, East Yorkshire

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