

God's dogsbody

THE REQUIEM Mass of Tony Pearce, who died on 20 March, took place at Worth Abbey on the Wednesday of Holy Week.

Tony was born in 1933 in Rochford, Essex. His family was billeted in Ilfracombe, North Devon, where in 1941 Tony was confirmed by the local bishop. After national service, he taught English in various prep schools. He loved rugby. Slight, adroit and elusive, he could only have been a hooker. He played for London Irish – a team whose wildly oscillating fortunes matched his own – in the 1960s, and briefly flirted with an international cap. “Never before have I come across anyone like Tony Pearce,” a baffled reporter explained to equally baffled readers in the January 1969 issue of *Rugby World*, trying to make sense of Tony's decision to leave the game to enter Worth Abbey. “The Hooker Becomes a Monk” was the story's headline.

Tony tested his vocation for the priesthood three times with different religious orders. He also had a stint in Peru as a lay missionary – or as “a general dogsbody” as



he would put it. Tony had an unmatched gift for making others happy – children, particularly – with his cartoons and conjuring tricks and comic rhymes. His friends loved him and wanted more than anything to make him happy, too: but peace was always just out of reach. He had an artist's eye for fakery and pretension; he saw the world too clearly to be able to completely trust it.

At the age of 60, wanting to make himself useful, Tony offered himself to Cafod as a volunteer. He worked in the post room

and put out chairs and cadged sandwiches. He stayed for 25 years, and became the aid agency's beloved gofer, jongleur and conscience. He resisted all offers of a “proper job”. Tony had discovered that the “general dogsbody” was the most sacred of professions.

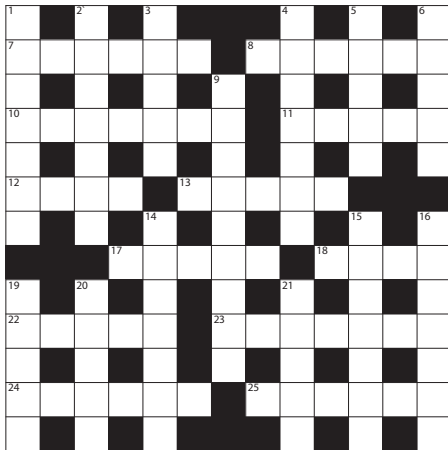
PAT GAFFNEY, who has just retired after serving nearly 30 years as the general secretary of Pax Christi UK, was described as “a woman in the prophetic tradition of the scriptures” by Bishop Kevin Dowling of Rustenburg. The co-president of Pax Christi International was among several surprise guests at Pat's joyful and exuberant retirement party in London on 13 April.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool, President of Pax Christi UK, also spoke warmly of the indomitable peace campaigner, who has been arrested 11 times and jailed four times. As a Church, he admitted, “we pay lip service to peace; when it comes down to doing something about it, people always find something else to do.” Confessing to being “a reluctant peacemaker”, Archbishop McMahon added: “I've always been in awe of Pat's courage.”

Pat described her surprise party as “a conspiracy of thoughtfulness and love”.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 655 | Enigma



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 27 April, 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 Jesus, Christian Art and Catholicism – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 10 May. The answers to this week's puzzles and the crossword winner's name will appear in the 18 May issue.

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Across

- 7 They never work in the fields (6)
8 One direction ejected during approach for landing, which is pretty good (6)
10 I say, lady, accept that this is wrong (7)
11 Irish airspace is hazardous (5)
12 He comes from Limerick (4)
13 Church worker to sing (5)
17 They belong to a secret agent in the stock market (5)
18 This birdwatcher, he always finds a bird (4)
22 See food uncooked in an empty pan (5)
23 It's a sign that a dangerous creature has lost direction (7)

- 24 They are dangerous when cruelly shot by British marines (6)
25 It would seem to be a soft fruit (6)

Down

- 1 Description of a centipede as it went up (7)
2 A girl, one among hundreds, like Jane Austen's Emma (7)
3 It's hard to start trouble during breakfast, lunch or dinner (5)
4 Address to a German with one bad fish (7)
5 Quickly, bring the event leader in for the party (5)
6 A ship goes round the river and does not move on (5)

- 9 A religious believer has a way of being out in front (9)
14 Am always this (7)
15 The lie by the person in question causes this priest to hesitate (7)
16 We own the premises in which the scientist works (7)
19 Make points about the mine with malice (5)
20 Poultry wearing headgear (5)
21 TV programmes for pious elderly people (5)

SUDOKU | Tough

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

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

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

Solution to the 6 April puzzle

Solution to the 6 April crossword No. 652

Across: 7 Ellery; 8 Da Capo; 10 Drabble; 11 Arkle; 12 Ecce; 13 Stock; 17 Harpo; 18 Coir; 22 Magog; 23 Decagon; 24 Levant; 25 Darnel. **Down:** 1 Dead men; 2 Fleance; 3 Grebe; 4 Balance; 5 Larks; 6 Mores; 9 Centipede; 14 Galgani; 15 Gorgons; 16 Pringle; 19 Smolt; 20 Ogive; 21 Ocean.

Winner: D.E. Findlay, of Ponsanooth, Cornwall.