

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Kindred spirits

WRITING OF the women who managed to “find a way round Rome’s rules” in this week’s *Tablet*, Joanna Moorhead refers to the extraordinary Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the seventeenth-century Mexican nun and polymath who championed education for women and was ostracised by the bishops.

The illegitimate daughter of a Spanish father and Creole mother, Sor Juana is considered the first great Latin American poet. She wrote plays as well as poetry, taught the girls in the school adjoining the convent music and drama, and looked after the community’s accounts. Her small room was filled with books, maps, and musical and scientific instruments. Clever, independent and uninterested in marriage, it wasn’t long before she was in trouble with the Church.

According to a forthcoming book by *Times* journalists Gabriel Pogrund and Patrick Maguire, *Left Out: The Inside Story of Labour Under Corbyn* (Bodley Head, £18.99), Laura Alvarez, the Mexican wife of Jeremy Corbyn, surreptitiously passed the beleaguered Meghan Markle a collection of Sor Juana’s work (probably the selection put together by the translator Edith Grossman) at the annual



Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey in March.

Alvarez was trying to cheer her up. Pogrund and Maguire speculate that she “hoped Meghan might find a kindred spirit” in Sor Juana, “a nun whose willingness to attack the hypocrisies of the colonial classes had made her a target for Establishment hate”.

The next day, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex jotted down a personal note of thanks: “Dear Jeremy and Laura. Sending our great thanks for the wonderful work of Mexican literature that you so kindly gave us at the

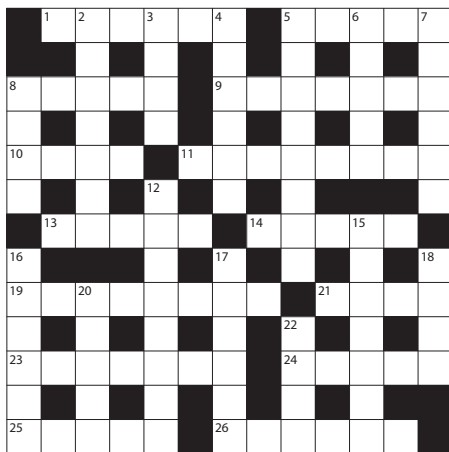
Commonwealth Service; Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz is a fascinating historical figure, and we look forward to learning more about her life and works! Thanks for the support, Harry and Meghan.”

LESS THAN SIX months after the dauntless Frederick Lucas had launched his new weekly in London 180 years ago, Sydney’s *Australasian Chronicle*, encouraged by the paper’s attentiveness to Irish affairs, predicted that *The Tablet* “will prove a valuable advocate of the best interests of Australia” and recommended its own readers subscribe.

Historian Nick Brodie tells us that *The Tablet* proved a vital source of news for the local Catholic presses that were beginning to emerge down under. It was quoted in the first issue of Sydney’s *Freeman’s Journal* in 1850 and in the first issue of the *Tasmanian Catholic Standard* in 1867. These semi-independent, usually lay-edited and often independent-minded Catholic publications tended to gradually drift towards the safe harbour of episcopal direction. Not all went gently. A now opaque episcopal intervention in the 1870s gave rise to two rival *Catholic Standards* in Tasmania. One could boast of the bishop’s approval; its less biddable rival craftily arranged instead a pontifical blessing.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 721 Enigma



Across

- 1 Is the doctor caught in the storm? You bet! (6)
- 5 Keep quiet in front of wartime wardens: they are clever! (5)
- 8 (& 10 Across) Make a little money from a stray pet cat (5,4)
- 9 A composer’s partnership with peacemakers will gradually fall apart (7)
- 10 See 8 Across
- 11 Initiate scheme for a modern office (4,4)
- 13 Dismiss the head of the jury: we object to his excessive interest (5)
- 14 Publicity is likely to change with circumstances (5)
- 19 If it’s good, it isn’t wanted (8)
- 21 Goodfellow’s jocular contribution was made to look favourable to the party (4)

Down

- 23 Hear I’ve put on weight? (7)
- 24 Three students: that is all the city needs (5)
- 25 The first recruit to appear in the early light was put in the picture (5)
- 26 Their unkempt beards are what excludes them (6)
- 2 Bears witness to truth of statement while sitting examinations (7)
- 3 Sends money, though terribly busy (4)
- 4 Provides with computer-generated witticisms (6)
- 5 A seer and a dean break out in song (8)
- 6 That’s what you get for forging in a Russian village! (5)
- 7 When in the country, do half of 11 Across (6)
- 8 With some speed, Dad goes down to join the Anglicans (4)

- 12 An unpleasant type, born in mid April, became a utopian (8)
- 15 Liked for providing back-up in freezing conditions (7)
- 16 A whale concealed himself in a flower (6)
- 17 I won a victory when I left Sid wandering around the centre (6)
- 18 How many times were the Royal Engineers omitted from the encore? (4)
- 20 Top marks to the biblical tribe for getting round her! (5)
- 22 “Bringing up the rubbish is pointless!” Spoken with facile confidence (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 29 August, *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 God, Miracles and Pilgrimage – from the OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random. **■ We cannot process entries or prizes at present. Please keep entering. Winners will be notified and prizes awarded as soon possible.**

SUDOKU | Hard

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

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

Solution to the 1 August puzzle

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

Solution to the 1 August crossword No. 718

Across: 7 Altare; 8 Hector; 10 Nanette; 11 Lines; 12 Suez; 13 Ocean; 17 Nancy; 18 Scar; 22 Women; 23 Trueman; 24 Nathan; 25 Analog.
Down: 1 Farnese; 2 Stanley; 3 Crete; 4 Aeolian; 5 Stamp; 6 Brass; 9 Leucocyte; 14 Rain Man; 15 Schmalz; 16 Iron Age; 19 Swans; 20 Empty; 21 Funn.

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