

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

diary@thetablet.co.uk

The Lord's anointed

WHEN RUPERT RIDGE was told he had inoperable lung cancer, it was a terrible shock. He was 66 years old and very fit – he had grown up in the foothills of Exmoor, loved the countryside and had always been a great walker and gardener. He had worked in the aerospace industry, and became involved with his local Cheshire Home. He came to know Leonard Cheshire VC and, like so many, found him inspirational. Cheshire was a Catholic, and Rupert, who had begun to want to convert to Catholicism, saw what his faith meant to him. He eventually became international director of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation; it was a job he loved.

His wife, Mary Blanche Ridge, a regular on our books pages, tells us that their parish priest came out to anoint Rupert and bring him communion on his last Christmas Day, two months before he died. Around this time, Rupert began to write about his experience of the Sacrament of the Sick. "I have had wonderful support from many people, none more wonderful than that of my wife and our family. But there is another form of support I hardly knew existed ... If the medical profession has its surgery and its pills and



potions, the Church has one particular Sacrament that is quite extraordinarily powerful yet is perhaps the least well known of all, the Anointing of the Sick. I have found the very young to be fascinated by it, as they hear of God's love being called down on someone they love, too ... watching it offers them an aspect of their newly forming faith they can therefore grasp and identify with rather more easily than some of the other stuff they have to put up with.

"WHEN THE PRIEST anoints my forehead and the palms of my hands while praying

over me," Ridge wrote, "I am conscious that I am taking part in something that has been happening continuously since Our Lord's time. Jesus is there with me, as he always is of course, but in a way that is almost tangible.

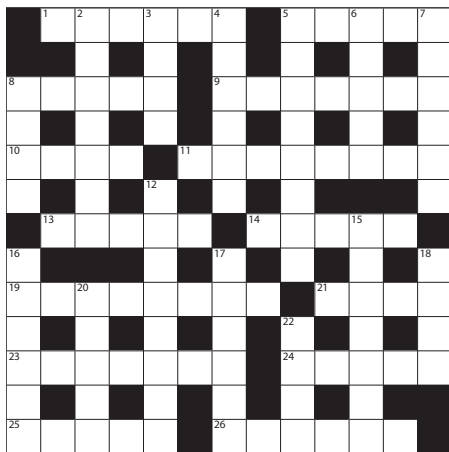
"What sets this Sacrament apart for me is that I have to *do* nothing, I merely have to *be* receptive. It is *done* to me. When the circumstances are right it may be possible for the patient's principal carer to be anointed too, and Blanche and I have found that to be a lovely way to live our vows in sickness and in health."

Blanche tells us, "When Rupert and I first met each other, on a train, I was 21 and on my way back to university, and he was 22, a soldier, on his way to an army intelligence course. A year later, a week after my finals, we got married, and a year after that, now with a baby son, he left the army. After the priest left on that last Christmas Day, tears were coursing down Rupert's cheeks. He died in February 2017, just three months before his seventieth birthday."

On Wednesday 20 March, in the last of our four Lenten webinars, Maggie Fergusson, Fr Alban McCoy and Sue Gaisford will be discussing the Sacrament of the Sick. For more information, visit our website: www.thetablet.co.uk/events

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 895 Alanus



Across

- 1 Members of an early kingdom of central Mexico (6)
 5 "Sheep may safely -----", part of J. S. Bach Cantata BWV208 (5)
 8 & 22 Down: He saw a "pleasure dome" in Xanadu and gave name to Coleridge's poem (5,4)
 9 Payment from cathedral revenues to one of its clergymen (7)
 10 Little ----, orphaned girl of Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop* (4)
 11 In Greek myth, the god of wine-making (8)
 13 Margaret of ----, French-born queen married to King Henry VI (5)
 14 & 23 Across: Second-highest female voice, Janet Baker an outstanding example (5-7)
 19 A period of six months (4-4)

- 21 Pile Pelion upon this (another mountain) to add difficulty to difficulty (4)
 23 See 14 Across
 24 Identifying features of a Bactrian camel (5)
 25 James ----- Flecker, poet of "The Golden Road to Samarkand" (5)
 26 Nationality of 18 Down (6)

Down

- 2 Son of Jacob and founder of a tribe of Israel (7)
 3 "Plague Village" of Derbyshire so named through self-sacrifice of local victims in 1665 (4)
 4 Martyr saint whose name means wisdom after whom Constantinople cathedral named (6)
 5 British Crown Dependency whose capital is St Peter Port (8)

- 6 King of Sparta (d.265 BC) set up the minting of coins and (most likely) its first theatre (5)
 7 In traditional primogeniture, the male sibling to inherit a powerful title (6)
 8 Immanuel ----, influential figure in modern western philosophy (4)
 12 Cultural system of more than one wife (or husband) at the same time (8)
 15 Early pope, successor to Innocent I (7)
 16 Of a virtuous and pure physical state (6)
 17 Kenneth -----, first political cartoonist of *The Times*, later with the *Daily Mail* (6)
 18 ---- Christian Andersen, writer particularly associated with fairy tales (4)
 20 Victim of Hansen's disease, one of many cared for by St Damien of Molokai (5)
 22 See 8 Across

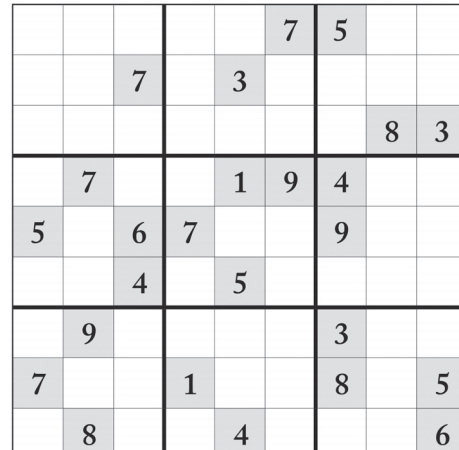
Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 16 March, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 6GY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on Paul, The Hebrew Bible as Literature and Christian Ethics – 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 | Hard



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

Solution to the 24 February puzzle

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

Solution to the 24 February crossword No. 892

Across: 7 Uriah; 8 Tolstoy; 10 Arcadia; 11 Omagh; 12 Caravaggio; 16 Syllogisms; 20 Carli; 21 Avocado; 23 Secrets; 24 Circe.

Down: 1 Dumas; 2 Finch; 3 Chad; 4 Strada; 5 Pleonasm; 6 Strange; 9 Yahoos; 13 Atomiser; 14 Asicus; 15 Clarice; 17 Idassa; 18 Barry; 19 Horeb; 22 Orca.