

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## Saint Corona, pray for us

WE'RE ALL praying hard to Saint Roch of course, the patron saint of sufferers from the plague. (He's also the heavenly protector of dogs and dog-owners, but that's another story.) You can fill a bottle with water from St Roch's well, on the site where he was born in Montpellier in the fourteenth century. When a cholera epidemic was raging through neighbouring towns in southern France in 1854, Montpellier was spared. That's the sort of man you want in your team when the heat is on.

There's a painting by Anthony van Dyck in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York of Palermo's patron saint, Saint Rosalia, fervently interceding for the plague-stricken of the city. It's one of several of Saint Rosalia produced in Palermo by van Dyck in the late summer of 1624, when the city was quarantined. With the Sicilian capital in lockdown again, residents are once more turning to Saint Rosalia to intercede for them.

There are other patron saints for plagues and epidemics. One of them is Saint Corona. I'm not pulling your leg. According to the



*Roman Martyrology*, she met her death in the third century. When a Roman soldier called Victor was discovered to be a Christian, his old comrades subjected him to terrible tortures. While he was having his eyes gouged out, a 16-year-old girl called Corona was so moved by his sangfroid that she comforted and encouraged him.

It is said that she was tied to the top of two palm trees that had been pulled to the ground; when they were released, the trunks sprang back, and Corona was torn apart. Her feast day is 14 May. The Crusaders built

a church dedicated to Victor and Corona in the village of Anzu, outside the town of Feltre in northern Italy, at the foot of the Dolomites, where Victor is said to have been born. Her sanctuary, and the town of Feltre, is now under lockdown.

St Corona, pray for us, that we might have a scrap of your faithfulness, compassion and courage.

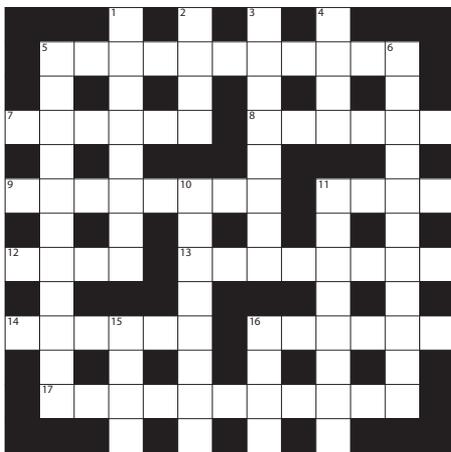
MELANIE McDonagh had a swipe at John Cornwell in her *Tablet* column last week, and the author of *Hitler's Pope* defends the choice of the title of his biography in the Letters pages.

Whether or not you think it is a fair epithet for Pius XII, it's certainly stuck. Long-time editor of this paper John Wilkins tells us that he was alarmed when Cornwell told him what the publishers intended to call his book. But they went ahead, and the result was instantaneous.

Cornwell's biography was denounced from the pulpit of St Patrick's cathedral on Fifth Avenue by a furious Archbishop of New York. A block away, there is a branch of Barnes & Noble, which had just received a consignment. The congregation went straight out of the cathedral door and into the bookshop, where every copy was sold.

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 699 Axe



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 21 March, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: [thetablet@thetablet.co.uk](mailto: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 3 April. The answers to this week's puzzles and the crossword winner's name will appear in the 11 April issue.

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### Across

- 5 Assisi acolytes find bemused prioress so tense inside (4,7)
- 7 Pope number ten's first to visit America (6)
- 8 Classical city whose council Paul at that time so embraced? (6)
- 9 Sounds like English composer with alias is after some Buddhist text (8)
- 11 King of Judah's broadcasting later this morning (4)
- 12 Failing, without starting, to make a niche in church (4)
- 13 Pope's house – dynasty that's backed by Poles (8)

- 14 Dad, a sailor at heart, is in port where Paul and Luke changed ships (6)
- 16 Jew from the east's going after a place in Germany (6)
- 17 Laurel given to one American is a tribute: almost canonised is he (2,9)

### Down

- 1 No credit for composing Credo? (8)
- 2 Course that runs in Oxford identifies the spirit of Egypt (4)
- 3 Is son of Saul's name variously spelt "Ali Shaba"? (8)
- 4 Able-sounding replacement for Genesis (4)

- 5 Two boys read quietly in school a letter from Paul (11)
- 6 Book maybe that's Solomon's greatest hit (4,2,5)
- 10 "Ha-ha" part created for the first of the Syriac Church Fathers (8)
- 11 One doesn't believe number etched into silver cane is infinite (8)
- 15 Numbers giant, an obsessive type, alternatively gets rejected (4)
- 16 Pop fashionista turned up to follow the drugs situation in Genesis (4)

### SUDOKU | Challenging

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

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

### Solution to the 29 February puzzle

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

### Solution to the 29 February crossword No. 696

- Across:** 5 Decalogue; 8 Onan; 9 Chaldean; 10 Vincent; 12 Hadad; 14 Codex; 15 Annates; 17 Boniface; 18 Amen; 19 Samaritan.
- Down:** 1 Dean; 2 Dancing; 3 Zorah; 4 Gurdwara; 6 Antidoron; 7 Gadarenes; 11 Clerical; 13 Angelic; 16 Barak; 18 Agag.
- Winner:** Kate Wilcock-Jones, of Sutton, Surrey.