

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Super Mario

FR PAUL GRAHAM OSA, an old friend of *The Tablet*, now lives in the Augustinians' headquarters in Rome, where he is a member of the Prior General's team, helping oversee the global work of one of the great religious orders.

There are about a dozen in the community, and they have a few spare rooms. They had a call last year from a diocesan bishop of a small country who had been asked to take up a job in the Roman curia. Could he stay with them until the Vatican sorted out his accommodation? "He's still with us," Fr Paul tells me. "He joins us for prayers, meals and recreation; he even joined us on some of our summer hikes in the Apennines. He is affable, easy company, serves at table and clears away the dishes."

One Sunday morning last month, he joined Fr Paul at a nearby hostel for the homeless to serve breakfast and say Mass for the residents. Afterwards he slipped off to the Jesuits down the road for a coffee. The Augustinians live just across the street from St Peter's Square, and on Sundays they go up to the roof to hear the Pope deliver his midday message and recite the Angelus.



"The speaker system is excellent, so we can hear him clearly," Paul says. "That Sunday, Francis announced he would create thirteen new cardinals. To my astonishment, the first name he called out was Mario Grech. Our house guest!"

When he turned up for Midday Prayer before lunch, the Maltese cardinal-to-be, who only a few weeks earlier had succeeded Lorenzo Baldisseri as the secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, had an air of stunned surprise. Had Pope Francis told him beforehand? "Not a word." On his way back from

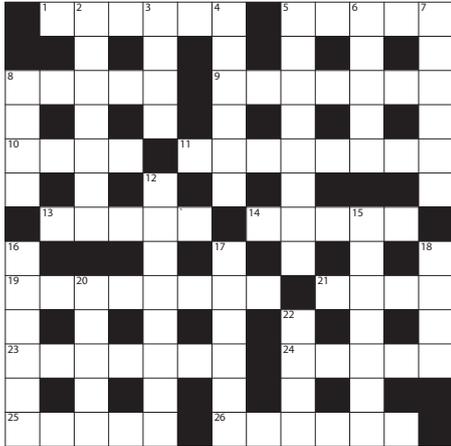
the Jesuits, somebody recognised him in the street and offered him congratulations. That was the first he'd heard of his nomination as a cardinal.

"A POPE OF SURPRISES" was Fr Paul's immediate reaction to the news of Bishop Mario's elevation. "My hope is, Francis will surprise us with a female cardinal one day. Mario's story puts flesh on the bones of Pope Francis's promise to 'go to the periphery'. The other nominations include the first African American; a vicar apostolic from Brunei; a parish priest; and a Franciscan in charge of the shrine in Assisi. As Karl Rahner famously said, God's grace is at work everywhere in the world, but not everyone recognizes it. The Church exists *for* the world; it embraces the world in its arms, sinners and all, powerfully symbolized by Bernini's colonnade in St Peter's Square, which I walk by every day."

Mario Grech will receive his red hat next Saturday, along with the other new cardinals. "I will pray for Mario and for all of them," Fr Paul says, "and remember that red is not just a flashy colour that looks impressive in shimmering silk. It is the colour of human blood that flows from real wounds."

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 733 Enigma



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 21 November, *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 Saints, Monasticism and Philosophy of Religion – 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.**

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Across

- 1 A PhD is not wanted by fruit growers (6)
- 5 This book *The Christmas Five*, is a work of fiction (5)
- 8 One of those in Yorkshire, the lowest in rank, is Doctor Who's enemy (5)
- 9 A city-dweller; he is palindromic and pale (7)
- 10 A theologian who is holy puts two and two together (4)
- 11 There may be health benefits in frequenting these bars (8)
- 13 With the dawning of knowledge, a slipper customer will prepare to pray (5)
- 14 One taking a terrible risk with a drug goes downhill rapidly (5)
- 19 Where the good news is concerned, an evangelist is one (8)
- 21 Little weight given to one student

in a knockout (4)

- 23 Come back, sir! One from 9 Across needs food (7)
- 24 Decorate for a party for some British sailors (5)
- 25 Why did that toad dare to steal the abacus? (2,3)
- 26 Throw cold water on study about electrical measurement (6)

Down

- 2 A friend brings uproar in Charlemagne's court (7)
- 3 Seeing a clumsy sister is annoying; not the beginning of the end (4)
- 4 "Seek not the centre; love not the English"; a European's cryptic writing (6)
- 5 Ingratitude? I won't accept it! (2,6)

- 6 One of the five makes a solemn promise to the Spanish (5)
- 7 Poor Nelly, having nothing, feels unwanted (6)
- 8 Shakespeare's return was colourless (4)
- 12 Return to discourage the judge who searched so diligently (8)
- 15 Sending the wretched pie in my direction was the most typical example (7)
- 16 A brass band is heard returning from Noah's destination (6)
- 17 Make a note: start reviving the Latin creed (6)
- 18 It's the bit in front that makes it valuable (4)
- 20 In the Italian dictionary, this dish brings us up to the letter "B" (5)
- 22 We need a bit of a hand! The pious person left during the prayer (4)

SUDOKU | Tough

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

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

Solution to the 31 October puzzle

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

Solution to the 31 October crossword No. 730

Across: 7 Hiatus; 8 Joseph; 10 Chekhov; 11 Remus; 12 Ankh; 13 Elegy; 17 Mitty; 18 Slur; 22 Torah; 23 Onassis; 24 Isaiah; 22 Canice.
Down: 1 Choctaw; 2 Pavelka; 3 Rushy; 4 Courage; 5 Germs; 6 Ghost; 9 Evolution; 14 Rich man; 15 Plastic; 16 Crested; 19 Stoic; 20 Priam; 21 Sarah.