

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## Home truths

KEEN-EYED viewers of the new Channel 4 comedy *Home* will have noticed that the Syrian asylum-seeker at the centre of the plot is a middle-class Christian from Damascus.

British-Moroccan actor Youssef Kerkour plays Sami Ibrahim, an English teacher who smuggles himself over from Calais in the car boot of a family from Dorking and ends up living with them. In the heart of suburbia he encounters curiosity, welcome, prejudice, and the assumption that he must be a Muslim.

Writer and co-star Rufus Jones explains why Sami's character is a Christian: "I thought it might be a good example of confounding expectations and showing someone's cultural background may have commonalities in ways you don't expect." But, he adds, Sami's Christianity becomes "a crucial thing as he seeks refugee status at the Home Office".

After revelations last week of the spurious reasons one Home Office official found for rejecting an Iranian convert to Christianity seeking asylum, let's see if their fictional counterpart treats this Christian asylum-seeker any better.



EACH SPRING, the largest annual gathering of Catholics in the United States takes place near Disneyland, in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, at the Anaheim Convention Centre for the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress. Over three days, 35,000 attend lectures, gather for daily Mass, and browse the stands of Catholic publishers.

We caught Robert Ellsberg, doyen of US religious publishing, at the busy Orbis stand, where many of those milling around were admiring a book jacket depicting the Holy Family as twenty-first century refugees. "While

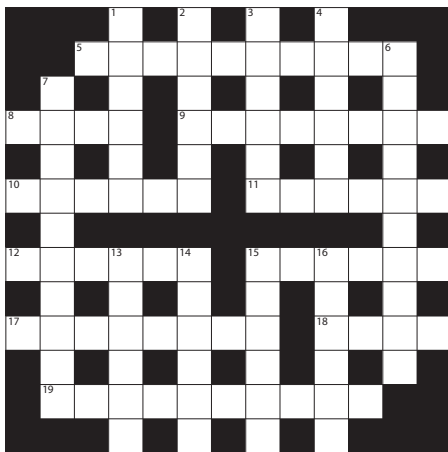
Trump says that refugees are invading the US," Robert told us, "our bestseller is *A Stranger and You Welcomed Me*, a collection of Pope Francis's writings on migrants and refugees."

IN THE late 1950s, a young Irishman was at Confession in a Jesuit church in New York. He was upset by the series of questions the confessor was relentlessly posing, until he was asked: "What do you pray for?" He answered: "I pray every day for the canonisation of Pope Clement XIV." Deploying the name of the pope who suppressed the Jesuits in 1773 ensured that the sacrament was completed without further unease.

A lively raconteur, the asthma from which he suffered all his life did nothing to diminish the vigour, detail or length of the stories told by Michael Glazier, who died, in Florida, on St Patrick's Day, aged 91. With his wife Joan, a nurse, he had moved in the 1950s to New York from the family bookshop in Tralee, Co. Kerry, to work as a publishers' consultant, later setting up his own imprint. Michael Glazier Inc. published a successful series of reference books and dictionaries; though Michael sold his list to Liturgical Press in 1990, his imprint lives on. Every Catholic academic has at least one of his books on their shelves.

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 651 | Axe



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 30 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 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 12 April. The answers to this week's puzzles and the crossword winner's name will appear in the 20 April issue.

### Across

- 5 Halt a bribe in disguise god of Shechem identified (4-6)
- 8 Almighty line, one royal David starts (4)
- 9 They follow one position, the French (8)
- 10 His backing includes a triple 'A', even, for King Joash's secretary (6)
- 11 Jerahmeel's other wife, a hag in the beginning, stalks a sailor (6)
- 12 Roman province where a church temperance movement smothers one (6)
- 15 Mehir's boy's quiet in school (6)
- 17 There's a kind of acidity in Isaac's new High Priest (8)
- 18 Clamour after one Israelite has 454 in succession (4)

19 Bee zeroing in, confusion finds Israelite camp site (5-5)

### Down

- 1 Brigand hierarchy's share supplies Hindu political leader (6)
- 2 Spanish article included retrospective about a Midianite (6)
- 3 Here Paul got into trouble putting eggs in an old carrier (6)
- 4 Xerxes' eunuch's battered hat's large on (6)
- 6 Roman city of Asia, after Paris yesterday, gets a Stockholm police visit (10)
- 7 Vow made by Tory secretary of state after story is broken to leave (10)
- 13 A flower after leaving hospital for

- Haman's son, killed by Jews (6)
- 14 Classical city which was then as new? (6)
- 15 Kind of feast that gave one wind in the old days (6)
- 16 Kind of nirvana, popping drugs into port (6)

### SUDOKU | Beginner

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

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

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

Solution to the 9 March puzzle

### Solution to the 9 March crossword No. 648

Across: 1 Armagh; 4 Lassus; 8 Sunna; 9 Adomnan; 10 Serpent; 11 Tribe; 12 Hymenaeus; 17 Simon; 19 Arch-see; 21 Antipas; 22 Runes; 23 Luther; 24 Altars. Down: 1 Assis; 2 Menorah; 3 Grace; 5 Apostle; 6 Sinai; 7 Sinner; 9 Antonians; 13 Maniple; 14 Susanna; 15 Israel; 16 Verses; 18 Motet; 20 Cyril. **Winner:** Dr Gregory Porilo, of Upper Tooting, south-west London.

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