

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

diary@thetablet.co.uk

## Requiescat in pace Reginaldus

THE GREATEST Latinist of his generation, the legendary Reginald “Reggie” Foster, a Carmelite friar, has died. From a family of plumbers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the excitable, bald and ruddy-faced Fr Foster dressed more like a petrol station attendant than a friar. For nearly 40 years he toiled over the translation into Latin of encyclicals, documents and letters, often written in Italian or Polish, until he retired at the age of 70 in November 2009. He also taught at the Gregorian University, until he was moved on for allowing too many students to take his classes without paying fees.

He didn’t think much of Italian – too mellifluous, caressing, languid, forgiving, theatrical and drawn-out. “It doesn’t have what I would call ‘guts’”, he told Michael Sheridan, who included Foster in his 1995 book *Romans*. “All these verbose encyclicals – if you were to write the original in Latin, they would be one-fourth – one-tenth – of their length and you’d say much more.” Foster consoled himself by reading the letters of Cicero every evening, considered the poet



Martial “a doll” and was perhaps the only living person who could truthfully say that he regretted the fact that we possess only one-sixth of the known works of Livy.

“I would like to remember Fr Foster for two things,” Sheridan told us. “First, his essential kindness, often masked like an actor in his beloved Plautus. Second, his rigour. I asked him which of the classical writers he prized most and he replied ‘Cicero’ without hesitation. Any student who has struggled to parse a verse of the Aeneid turns with relief to the clarity of Cicero’s prose. Fr Foster told me that reading

Cicero was a spiritual exercise because it tested the intellect and made everything fit together.”

Reginaldus died on Christmas Day. He was LXXXI.

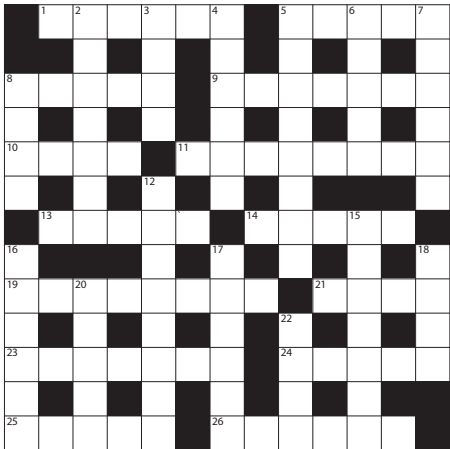
“THE ACROSTIC,” wrote Dr A. J. Dodd of Abingdon, “is an essential part of my Christmas. WHERE IS IT?” Those capital letters suggest that a subscription might be hanging in the balance. Dr Dodd is not the only reader whose patience has been tested by the absence of the acrostic – a mix of a crossword and the game of hangman – from the Christmas issue.

Our first acrostic puzzle appeared in the Christmas 1975 issue. Like all the 44 puzzles since, it was compiled by Martin Redfern, for many years the director of Sheed & Ward. Redfern told us: “It arose out of a conversation with Tom Burns, who was always looking for new ideas. When he wondered about something for the Christmas issue I suggested the acrostic. I had always been fascinated by acrostics, not least by the early Christian ‘secret’ SATOR AREPO acrostic.”

“When all Christmas family gatherings were cancelled, I thought at least I shall have the Acrostic to cheer me up,” Judith Davys told us. “Do please bring it back next Christmas.” I think we better had.

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 737 Alanus



#### Across

- 1 Keeping warm things about first English national composer (6)
- 5 Elected King of the Franks represented in suede (5)
- 8 Reworks lace with time for brilliant display (5)
- 9 Music of period of student high jinks? (7)
- 10 Goes with hedges in gardeners’ carol? (4)
- 11 Sin that’s unusual inheritance (8)
- 13 (& 24 Across): Work of Dickens on Sheba and Luke revision losing direction (5,5)
- 14 Cut stone prepared for attack (5)
- 19 Class tie messed up in children’s rope game (8)
- 21 Small measure of sculptor linked to

#### Down

- 2 Fat alternative okay for power and heat source (3,4)
- 3 Shows irritation with you and Eliot (4)
- 4 Writer with existential view about arrest (6)
- 5 Attractive personality getting prepared for marriage? (8)
- 6 Pub with disc jockey and spirits from folklore (5)
- 7 (& 25 Across): Confused Sister in a mall somehow about to address Our Lady in a way (6)
- 8 Type of rice linked with 1 Across (4)
- 12 Became Apostle that I am about to lead to saint (8)
- 15 Connoisseur with remedy for pie that is off (7)
- 16 Madness to leave place of rest and be on the run (6)
- 17 Warders of maritime employees protected by saints (6)
- 18 Artist Paul man of earth we hear (4)
- 20 Love of the French we have after early start (5)
- 22 Cleaner of cathedral very depleted (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 2 January, 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 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.**

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### SUDOKU | Challenging

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

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

#### Solution to the 5 December puzzle

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

#### Solution to the 5 December crossword No. 734

**Across:** 5 Gethsemane; 8 Maronite; 9 Paul; 10 Arkite; 11 Hebrew; 13 Massah; 15 Hermit; 16 Sela; 18 Mordecai; 19 St Agapetus.  
**Down:** 1 Herodias; 2 Shrine; 3 Kedesh; 4 Wasp; 6 Ecumenical; 7 Fair; Havens; 12 Bar-jesus; 14 Hymnal; 15 Hermes; 17 Ahab.