

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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A meddling priest

"I KNEW I'd got it dead right," Fr Frank Brennan SJ tells us. "But I had to wait another 15 months for the unanimous judgment of the High Court of Australia. Meanwhile a lot of people inside and outside the Church said some very silly things."

Frank Brennan has been a gingery, often contrarian figure in Australia for many years. His father was Chief Justice of Australia. Brennan, too, is a lawyer – and a formidable advocate. In 1995 he was awarded the Order of Australia for his service to Aboriginal Australians. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating famously referred to him as "the meddling priest".

There was consternation when in February 2019 Brennan – who was known to have had strong-minded public disagreements with Cardinal George Pell – published articles in *The Tablet* and elsewhere questioning the unanimous verdict of a jury that Pell was guilty of abuse. After all the work to drag the Church out of its habits of obfuscation and denial, here was a prominent Catholic priest defending another Catholic priest who had been convicted of sexually abusing two 13-year-old choir boys.



"I received lots of criticism. But as a lawyer, I was attentive to the evidence as, in the end, was the High Court. And as a priest, I hope I was appreciative of the traumas suffered by bona fide complainants and victims. That's why I dedicated my new book to those who seek truth, justice and healing and to those who have been denied them."

Once asked what the phrase "a man for others" – commonly used of Jesuits – meant, Brennan replied: "We are called to a life of service and to have an eye out for those who are poorest and most marginal." Perhaps he

saw in the abrasive cardinal a figure as unlikely to receive due process of law as the Aboriginal Australians he had defended in the past.

Brennan's *Observations on the Pell Proceedings* is published by Connor Court Publishing, and is available in the UK for £16.

WE'VE BEEN determined not to just hunker down until the Covid storm passes. This week, thanks to the development fund and readers' generosity, a boisterous newcomer joins *The Tablet* and *The Pastoral Review* in the *Tablet* family of publications.

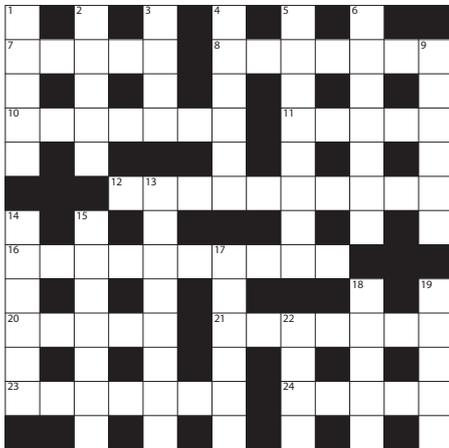
The creative team behind *Inspire* – which comes with this week's *Tablet* – is Natalie Watson, Malgorzata Chylinska Pequeno and Sebastian Milbank. "It's one of the privileges of working in religious publishing to be able to listen to and facilitate good conversation about the things of God," Natalie tells us.

"I started reading *The Tablet* when I was in my twenties and have always turned to it for thought-provoking and engaging writing. It's been a fascinating challenge to work on a project that Sebastian, Malgorzata and I hope will begin to draw a new generation into that conversation."

Do pass *Inspire* on to anyone you think might enjoy it – and let us know what you think.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 755 Alanus



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 8 May, *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 Paul, Theology and Christian Ethics – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random. **■ We are processing entries but there may be a delay in notifying winners and sending out prizes. Please keep entering.**

Across

- 7 Early saint of Rome and one concerning where Holy Island situated (5)
- 8 It's true about drowned river valley region of ancient Italy (7)
- 10 Cushion for a penitent? (7)
- 11 Carefully examine church for pea plant (5)
- 12 No vote for Friday conformity (10)
- 16 Remake guess holding in agony over places of worship (10)
- 20 Lake where Wallace's Ben is working (5)
- 21 (& 3 Down) Leave the kit up to answer call (4,3,4)
- 23 Rearrangement for the late sportsman (7)

- 24 Gasp for oxygen shows who you are firstly at border state (5)

Down

- 1 Way of lacteal nature for medieval Walsingham pilgrims (5)
- 2 Well in Rome with the first saint of Oxford college (5)
- 3 See 21 Across
- 4 Post-Impressionist as true as can be (6)
- 5 French region shown to be so Anglican (8)
- 6 It's in the source of thoughts that this country will be identified (7)
- 9 Army returns farm items where St Paul

- delivered Areopagus sermon (6)
- 13 Mendicancy duty denoting exclusive circle of novice (8)
- 14 Airways problem over a subject of calculation (6)
- 15 Indiscriminate choice about support for having no rule (7)
- 17 Stream wax down candle by roadside (6)
- 18 Mate returns about first hour in Exodus wilderness encampment (5)
- 19 Friday very important to this author's shipwrecked hero (5)
- 22 Name of travelling saint briefly heard presenting dagger (4)

SUDOKU | Hard

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

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

Solution to the 17 April puzzle

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

Solution to the 17 April crossword No. 752

Across: 7 Reeve; 8 Atheism; 10 Uccello; 11 Milan; 12 Passionist; 16 Stravinsky; 20 Aztec; 21 Herrick; 23 Donatus; 24 Tabor.
Down: 1 Prout; 2 Leech; 3 Peel; 4 Valois; 5 Shamrock; 6 Millais; 9 Minute; 13 Advocate; 14 Oswald; 15 Bretons; 17 Nahash; 18 Bilbo; 19 Skirl; 22 Rita.

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