WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Joining the club

ALL THE big bananas have served a stint on the International Theological Commission: von Balthasar, Congar, de Lubac, Lonergan. Established by Paul VI in 1969 to help him keep the Church's teaching fit and healthy, English members have included Jack Mahoney, Charles Acton, Paul McPartlan and John Finnis. Now Simon Francis Gaine, an Essexborn Dominican teaching at the Angelicum in Rome, has been invited to join 22 other men and 5 women in theology's most exclusive gym.

"I learned a great deal about Christian belief at my Anglican parish church, where I sang in the choir, and membership of a Congregational church club added to my knowledge of Scripture," he says. He studied theology at Oxford under Tom Wright and Fr Richard Conrad OP, who encouraged his passion for Aquinas, and was received into full communion at the Catholic chaplaincy by Fr Peter Cornwell.

"I was drawn to the Dominicans by their combination of intellectual and pastoral work," Brother Simon tells us. His doctorate was on Karl Rahner, who famously cried off the ITC after one term, a little unfairly dismissing it as an impotent talking shop for smart people



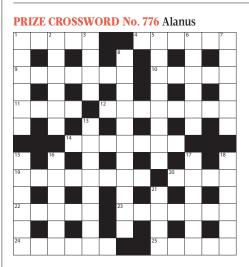
- "a theologians' club". "Excellent though the ice cream of Rome may be," Rahner declared,"I can eat ice cream in Germany too."

Gaine roams the borderlands between history, theology and biblical exegesis; his latest book, *Did the Saviour See the Father?* is a stylish and deft defence of the now unfashionable belief that Christ possessed the beatific vision. He will bring a pragmatic and subtle English Thomism to Catholic theology's top table.

MICHAEL SHARRATT, Catholic priest, historian, theologian and librarian, was born in Rennington, Northumberland in 1939 and entered Ushaw College as a seminarian at 13. A skilled wood carver, the shape and texture of the place suited him. He'd hoped to die there, but when it became no longer possible to care for him at Ushaw he was welcomed into the community of the Little Sisters in Elswick in Newcastle, before being transferred to the Freeman Hospital, where he died on 25 August.

His old friend, Fr Jim O'Keefe, the last president of Ushaw, told us that when he was studying at the Greg in Rome in the 1960s, Michael had managed to blag his way, "using his usual cheek and charm", into the upper gallery of St Peter's for the opening of the Second Vatican Council. He arrived back at Ushaw in 1967 as a long-haired lecturer. "So you went to St Cuthbert's grammar school then?" an apocryphal barber once put to him. "How do you know?" asked Michael. "I've just found your cap", the barber replied.

In 1977, Sharratt began forty years as devoted custodian of Ushaw's magnificent library and archives. His study of Galileo was published in 1994; a few years later it was translated into Chinese. He arrived at breakfast one morning saying: "I hope every single one of them buys it!" At least that's the version that can be repeated in a respectable newspaper.



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 9 October, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 OGY. 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.



PUZZLES

Across 1 Eldest of the three Fatima child visionaries (5) 4 Mythological wife of Eros giving name to study of the mind (6) 9 Famously seasonal composer known as "The Red Priest" (7) 10 How Jesus was addressed by Peter in Mark 9:5 (5) 11 Husband of Ruth and grandfather of Jesse (4) 12 In the O.T., royal daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (8) 14 "Beneath the rose", symbol of confidentiality at the confessional (3,4) 19 Buddhist kingdom of Southern Asia (8)

20 Easternmost county of Northern Ireland (4) 22 Garment worn by altar servers at Mass (5)

- 23 Ancient city, a former capital of China (7) 24 See 18 Down
- 25 Code-like jargon specific to particular social groups (5) **Down**
- 1 Post-Offertory washing of the fingers in Mass (6)
- 2 (& 16 Down): Famous Latin phrase advising the buyer of something to be wary (6,6) 3 Essential linking shaft for wheeled vehicles (4)
- 5 Seaweed-strewn sea within the North Atlantic Ocean (8)

6 Nature of a six-sided figure such as a box (6) 7 Major prophet of the O.T. associated with miracles and Eliiah (6) 8 Members of an order, once common in the UK, made widespread by St Bernard (11) 13 Means of reaching destination in Germany by car (8) 15 Feature of winter threatened by global warming (6) 16 See 2 Down 17 Method of laying water pipes avoiding the use of trenches (6) 18 (& 24 Acr): Chivalric figure of romantic tales of the Middle Ages (6,6) 21 Husband of Joachim and mother of Immaculate Mary (4)

SUDOKU | Challenging

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

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the

numbers 1 to 9.

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

Solution to the 18 September crossword No. 773 Across: 1 Parsec; 5 Bacon; 8 Malay; 9 Sell Out; 10 Echo; 11 Dalmatic; 13 Twixt; 14 Flask; 19 Chabrie;r 21 Cree; 23 Look Out; 24 Enoch; 25 Seals; 26 Rugosa. Down: 2 All Show; 3 Styx; 4 Caspar; 5 Boly Mill; 6 Chout; 7 Notice; 8 Meek; 12 Uxorious; 15 Sorrows; 16 Scales; 17 Hector; 18 Leah; 20 Aloha; 22 Berg.