

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Into a deep but dazzling darkness

ONE EPISODE in the current season of *The Crown* opens with Helena Bonham Carter and a man in a dinner jacket she calls “Dazzle” bopping to Bowie’s “Let’s Dance”. Dazzle is Princess Margaret’s latest crush, but they fall out when he tells her he is going to be a Catholic priest.

Like the character of Princess Margaret in the Netflix series, Dazzle is loosely based on a real person. Derek “Dazzle” Jennings was born in 1946 and worked as a senior civil servant. He seemed to know everyone, showing up at country-house dinners, Glyndebourne picnics and student parties. In 1984, at the age of 38, he quit his job to train for the Catholic priesthood.

After ordination he served as a curate in Camden and then in Chiswick. Harriet Mound met Fr Jennings when she was looking for a priest to receive her into the Church. “He was uncreepy, straightforward, pragmatic,” she remembers. “He had great energy and great intellectual integrity, but he was also fun.” Jennings once said to her, “You know, we’re all so susceptible to self-delusion, to thinking



we’re better than we really are, and prayer helps us to let go of this.”

Jennings was appointed Catholic chaplain of King’s College London at the same time his friend Fr Andrew Davis was appointed to a west London parish with a huge clergy house. “Derek asked if I could accommodate his large library, of which he was very proud,” Fr Davis told us. “Derek seemed to mature as a person when he was ordained. When people complimented him on his sermons and talks he always said, ‘It just came with the grace of holy orders.’”

WHEN HE WAS diagnosed with lymphatic leukaemia, Fr Jennings asked to stay in the clergy house at Ealing. Harriet visited. “I wanted to be sure he was being looked after and that he wasn’t lonely. But this wasn’t what he wanted. He told me he took death very seriously, and I realised he was fully occupied preparing for it.”

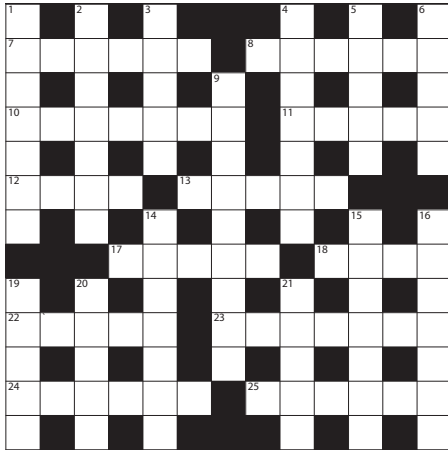
One day Jennings told Fr Davis that he had been thinking about all the comforting things he had said to people when they were dying and tried to apply them to himself, but they seemed to be empty platitudes. “He was trying to pinpoint exactly what was his spiritual comfort as his end drew near. I think he found it when he died with Cardinal Hume reciting the Rosary at his bedside.”

In the College Diary at the English College in Rome the entry for Monday 23 January 1995 reads:

Fr Derek Jennings died this evening. Only last Holy Week he was leading us in such an inspiring, quirky, hysterical Day of Recollection. He showed us, above all, that priesthood isn’t about becoming a “type”, but just means saying “Yes” to the crazy love of Christ, and letting it have its way, with our warts and wounds and all. May his wounds, united with Christ’s, lead him to the Father.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 736 Enigma



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 12 December, 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 Augustine, Christianity and Thomas Aquinas – 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

- 7 Daughter of Poseidon (6)
- 8 Peter the ----- (1050-1115), priest during the First Crusade (6)
- 10 Battle fought here (1945) was codenamed “Operation Iceberg” (7)
- 11 The Tin Man wanted one (*Wizard of Oz*) (5)
- 12 ---- Elliot, heroine of *Persuasion* (4)
- 13 Basic blend of wood-aged port (5)
- 17 Juan Domingo ----- overthrew his country’s government in 1943 (5)
- 18 Spanish painter, sculptor, ceramicist, died 1983 (4)
- 22 Member of school of philosophers founded by Antisthenes (5)

- 23 Milos Forman’s 1984 award-winning movie (7)
- 24 Name of Mary Tourtel’s fictional bear (6)
- 25 Trimetrogon, a type of ----- photography (6)

Down

- 1 Soft brimmed hats with indented crowns (7)
- 2 Gentiles who saved Jews from Nazis are known in Israel as “Righteous Among the -----” (7)
- 3 Theirs was the largest empire in pre-Columbian America (5)
- 4 The simplest alkane and main constituent of natural gas (7)
- 5 Modern name of Ancient Greek Palladelphia (5)
- 6 Othello had done it some service (5)
- 9 Mountain range in Asia (9)
- 14 Is it also known as a javelina (7)
- 15 Adjournment ---- fixes no specific date for resumption (4,3)
- 16 The two elected chief magistrates in Ancient Rome (7)
- 19 It is also called an oaknut (5)
- 20 A wading bird whose name may be preceded by “Jack”, “Common”, “Great” or “Wilson’s” (5)
- 21 He prayed: “Oh that you would bless me” (Chronicles: 4:10) (5)

SUDOKU | Challenging

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

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

Solution to the 21 November puzzle

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

Solution to the 21 November crossword No. 733

Across: 1 Aphids; 5 Novel; 8 Dalek; 9 Ottowan; 10 Adds; 11 Parallel; 13 Kneel; 14 Skier; 19 Reporter; 21 Kilo; 23 Risotto; 24 Adorn; 25 To add; 26 Dampen. **Down:** 2 Paladin; 3 Irks; 4 Slovak; 5 No thanks; 6 Vowel; 7 Lonely; 8 Drab; 12 Ferreted; 15 Epitome; 16 Ararat; 17 Record; 18 Coin; 20 Pasta; 22 Palm.