

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## No cheap comfort

VIOLENCE OFTEN grows out of a blind denial that we need others. Speaking to his Ukrainian hosts during a visit to Chernivtsi, Ukraine, near the Romanian border, Rowan Williams reflected that “in times of terrible crisis and trauma, we recognise that we cannot find in our own resources what we need to be ourselves, to be human. We need others to bring us to life. Not just in terms of practical support and help, but in terms of knowing that we belong, knowing that we are welcomed and valued.”

Speaking alongside other faith leaders, he said: “If one part of the body suffers, all suffer. What makes you suffer, what threatens your life, threatens the lives of all the human family. And, if this is true, the least we can do is to be here, to sit with you, even if only for this short time, and even if we are overwhelmed with the tragedy. It is our life and our hope, too, that is at stake in the agony that this country is enduring. No cheap comfort, but we are here because we recognise that we cannot be free, we cannot even be human, if you are not free and if you are not treated as human.”

“We feel, too,” Dr Williams said, “the bitterness of knowing that those who abuse the



freedom and humanity of others are, in fact, destroying their own humanity – wounding the image of God in themselves, as well as in their victims. The oppressor, the aggressor, destroys others; but, in doing so, destroys his own integrity and faith and future.”

MEDIEVAL MONKS had a reputation for obesity. After a visit to Muchelney Abbey, you’ll understand why. Sequestered deep in the Somerset Levels, only the foundations remain of its church and chapter house, soon eradicated after the abbey fell victim to Henry VIII. The abbot’s lodging was, however, spared

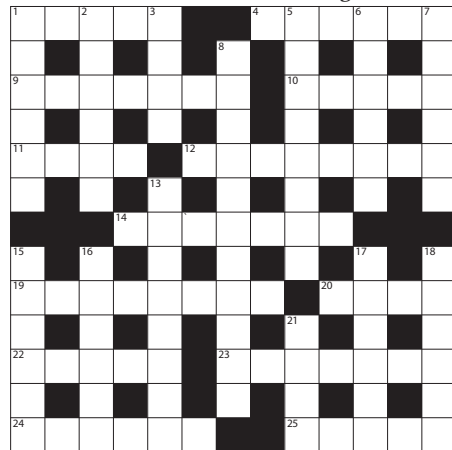
and was converted into a manor house, saving medieval stained glass and wall paintings in the process.

On its ground floor are the kitchens, dating from the early fourteenth century. By then, the Benedictine diet was a far cry from the largely vegetarian austerity mandated by the order’s sixth-century Rule. A papal bull in 1336 gave Benedictine monks permission to eat “flesh” (i.e. beef, lamb, pork and venison). The Muchelney community responded by building a special dining room called a “misericord” for its consumption. It’s been converted into a ticket office by English Heritage, which now runs the place.

Dr Michael Carter, senior properties historian at English Heritage, a regular *Tablet* blogger and the author of a splendid new guidebook to the abbey, tells us that the monks clearly enjoyed the pleasures of the table. In 1455, Bishop Thomas Beckington admonished Br John Longport for his gluttony and drunkenness. Such consumption had unfortunate consequences for the monks’ digestion: a fourteenth-century breviary from the abbey is generously annotated with helpful recipes for laxatives and an enema. Coincidentally, Muchelney has one of the best-preserved monastic latrines anywhere in Europe.

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 802 Enigma



#### Across

- 1 His last case featured in a 1913 novel, and in three films; 1920, 1929, 1952 (5)
- 4 Pyramus and -----; Ovid’s ill-fated couple (6)
- 9 The ----- Shield is a hypothetical rugby union trophy (7)
- 10 Pertaining to dew (5)
- 11 ---- Nagle; born 1718 near Cork, defied Penal Laws to help the poor there (4)
- 12 Name of pope who reigned 1914-1922 (8)
- 14 Botanically, they are berries. World’s first cultivated fruit (7)
- 19 Cognitive structures representing generic knowledge (8)
- 20 Marcus Porcius ----, 95-46 BC, was opposed to Julius Caesar (4)

- 22 Arsène -----; Maurice Leblanc’s gentleman thief (5)
- 23 Unpleasant condition; title of a 1958 film starring James Stewart (7)
- 24 Fictional mariner in *The Arabian Nights* (6)
- 25 Third section of an Ancient Greek choral ode (5)

#### Down

- 1 Poem “Epitaph on a -----” (W.H. Auden) (6)
- 2 In Elizabethan drama, direction to actors to leave the stage (6)
- 3 In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, gentlemen undertook the grand ---- (4)
- 5 In a poem, Yeats told him to pass by (8)

- 6 Rakija is this country’s brandy (6)
- 7 “I have heard the mermaids singing, ---- each” (T.S. Eliot) (4,2)
- 8 Insufficient thyroxine is produced by a thyroid gland which is this (11)
- 13 The Bass Strait separates it from the Australian mainland (8)
- 15 The Book of ----- begins the third section of the Hebrew Ketuvim (6)
- 16 Famous pianist-composer, 1810-1849 (6)
- 17 Unbleached, unfinished fabric made from cotton fibres (6)
- 18 Its scientific name is *Canis latrans* (6)
- 21 ---- de Meaux; a cheese made from unpasteurised milk (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 23 April 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 Saints, Monasticism and Philosophy of Religion – 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.**

### SUDOKU | Tough

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

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

#### Solution to the 2 April puzzle

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

#### Solution to the 2 April crossword No. 799

Across: 7 Omega, 8 Erratic, 10 Unaided, 11 Exist, 12 Scapegoats, 16 Renovation, 20 Grill, 21 Organic, 23 Netball, 24 Adorn.

Down: 1 Bonus, 2 Legal, 3 Paid, 4 Send up, 5 Arpeggio, 6 Stoical, 9 Cutest, 13 Civilian, 14 Oregon, 15 Anxiety, 17 Trous, 18 Ingot.

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