

Remembering a beloved Austin Friar

MY OLD headmaster died last week, and although I knew there were more powerful sources of authority in the universe, it was difficult for a schoolboy to imagine them. That Fr Bernard O'Connor was firm but kind was part of the formative infrastructure of my childhood.

Bernard O'Connor was born in Dublin in 1927. He was one of a group of talented Irish Augustinians who established Austin Friars School, Carlisle, in 1951. He taught Maths, became housemaster of Clare House, and then headmaster. He went on to negotiate the independence of the Augustinians in Britain from the Irish Province in 1977, becoming the first Provincial of England and Scotland.

He moved into parish work in Longtown, near Carlisle, then served in parishes in Dundee, London and Birmingham. Gifted with great clarity of mind, his interventions in both provincial and general chapters were models of clear exposition and incisiveness. His occasional letters to the editor of this paper always came with a self-deprecating covering note that did not disguise his con-



fidence that he had a point worth making. He was once in the frame to be Prior General of the Augustinians. He died on 16 April of Covid-19, aged 92.

Fr Paul Graham, an Austin Friars old boy who went on to join the Augustinians and has had a couple of stints as Provincial himself, told us: "If the Holy See were ever to look for a miracle to support Fr Bernard's cause, he got me through O-Level Maths."

READERS' LETTERS tell of both the heart-break and the unexpected glimpses of grace

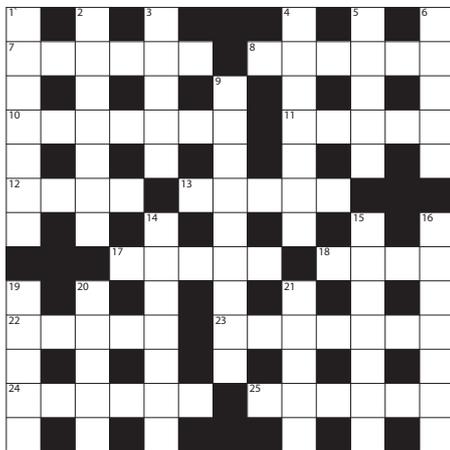
amid the Covid storm. Hilary Lagden's husband died of cancer in February. Because of the restrictions, "My entire support network was seized from me just when I needed it most," she writes. "Devastated with grief, and having never lived alone before, I found it hard to get out of bed. I was in shock from my loss, isolated from the Church, isolated from family and friends and isolated by my deafness with only my Hearing Assistance Dog, a black cocker spaniel, for company. I was completely unable to pray. I could only hope that God heard my groans of despair."

Hilary found the closure of her local church particularly hard to bear. But something unexpected happened. "On my third day of isolation I began to feel a little different. I'd had no distractions to stop me thinking about my loss, nor had I been under any pressure to join well-meaning friends for lunches or outings that would've distracted me for a while, and then only served to emphasise my loneliness when they were over. Being alone is giving me a blanket of protection before I have to emerge into the normal world again. I have discovered that 'aleness and loneliness' are not as unbearable as I thought they would be."

"I have been thrown in at the deep end", she writes. "But in enforced solitude I have found a very remote glimmer of peace forming."

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 704 Alanus



We cannot process entries or prizes at present. Please keep entering. Winners will be notified and prizes awarded as soon possible.

Across

- 7 ----- *Caeli*, hymn and Advent Mass from Isaiah 45:8 (6)
- 8 Iberian city with Gothic cathedral dedicated to Santa Maria (6)
- 10 City victim of eruption of Vesuvius (7)
- 11 Santa Maria ----- Minerva, church in Rome containing the tombs of St Catherine of Siena and Fra Angelico (5)
- 12 A currency of the Middle East (4)
- 13 Reluctant prophet saved from drowning by a huge fish (5)
- 17 Patron saint of the physically and mentally ill, one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers (5)

- 18 Niels -----, Danish physicist, winner of the Nobel Prize for work on atomic structure (4)
- 22 Medieval manager and pilgrim with a Tale for Chaucer (5)
- 23 City in the Netherlands, birthplace of only Dutch pope, Adrian VI (7)
- 24 St Peter -----, French Marist martyred (28 April 1841) as missionary in Oceania (6)
- 25 Of the nature of, e.g., Bucephalus and Incitatus (6)

Down

- 1 Scriptural texts for the Mass that change each day and are spoken or sung (7)
- 2 A ceremonial cloth placed upon the lap of a bishop when he is seated at Mass (7)
- 3 Product associated with Spanish town famously painted by Goya (5)
- 4 Saint (tenth century), reforming

- Archbishop of Canterbury who restored monastic life (7)
- 5 Totally selfless love as Christ taught in John 13 (5)
- 6 Lion in C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* (5)
- 9 He helped bring down the body of Christ from the Cross (9)
- 14 Assyrian city whose people repented after the preaching of 13 Across (7)
- 15 Saint, husband of Anne and mother of Mary (7)
- 16 English composer of *War Requiem* and *Missa Brevis* (7)
- 19 Max -----, German Romantic composer especially of major works for violin (5)
- 20 Parisian artist, early Impressionist, associated with painting dancers (5)
- 21 National from the Middle East (5)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 25 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 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.

SUDOKU | Challenging

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

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

Solution to the 4 April puzzle

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

Solution to the 4 April crossword No. 701

Across: 1 Sacre; 4 Of Arms; 9 Martin; 10 Urban; 11 Irma; 12 Diatonic; 14 Common; 19 Trumpets; 20 Loki; 22 Coeur; 23 Showers; 24 O'Neill; 25 Tract. **Down:** 1 Summit; 2 Chrome; 3 Evil; 5 Faustina; 6 Rubens; 7 Seneca; 8 Numismatist; 13 Corporal; 15 Stucco; 16 Eugene; 17 Bodega; 18 Tissot; 21 Coat.

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