

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Insider, outsider

THE NAME René Girard will ring bells for many readers. The late French literary critic's reading of Christianity – championed among others by the influential priest-writer James Alison – has had a powerful emotional impact on both believers and unbelievers.

Civilisations are built, Girard says, on the figure of the scapegoat: an impure outsider, identified and punished as part of the normal round of human life – socially, politically or religious. Without a scapegoat to blame periodically, society as we know it would collapse. Christ breaks this cycle. Excluded, tortured and condemned, Jesus upends the scapegoat myth by turning the other cheek; becoming what Alison calls “the forgiving victim”.

It was something of a surprise to learn that J.D. Vance, the 36-year-old venture capitalist and Republican candidate in the forthcoming US Senate election, has declared himself a Girardian. Vance's memoir *Hillbilly Elegy* chronicled his journey from a flinty working-class upbringing in the Appalachians to Yale Law School via the Marine Corps. In 2019, Vance was baptised into the Catholic Church. And it had been through reading Girard, Vance wrote in the Catholic quarterly *The*



Lamp, that he had come to Catholicism: “Christ is the scapegoat who reveals our imperfections, and forces us to look at our own flaws rather than blame our society's chosen victims.”

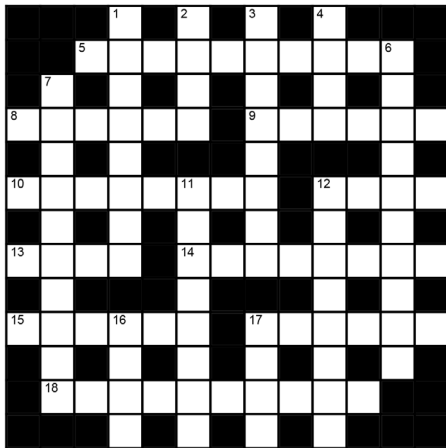
Vance went on to triumph in Ohio's Republican primary. A key campaign theme? Immigration. According to Vance, Joe Biden has “opened the floodgates” to illegal immigrants. Those immigrants live on welfare “and all the free stuff we give them”. They bring drugs. They bring crime. And they're driving America to “the precipice of social collapse”. This is one victim who isn't for forgiving.

WE SUGGESTED last that week that the Dutch Carmelite priest and editor Titus Brandsma might be adopted as the patron saint of journalists. Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest at the Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park, in the Brentwood diocese, writes to suggest that a more alert diarist might have proposed the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh – martyred in Jenin on the West Bank on 11 May, four days before Titus Brandsma's canonisation – as an additional patron of courageous journalism.

The Al Jazeera journalist, widely admired for her courage and professionalism, was a Melkite Greek Catholic. After the funeral Mass in the Melkite Catholic cathedral, she was buried in a Greek Orthodox cemetery on Mount Zion, just outside the Old City in East Jerusalem. Mourners at her funeral – Palestinian Christians and Muslims – were beaten by Israeli riot police. The leader of Latin Catholics in the region, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, known for deftly balancing protectiveness towards the rights of Palestinians with a cautious opening to Israeli political leaders, lambasted the police for a violent attack that forced pallbearers almost to drop the coffin. Abu Akleh was laid to rest next to her Greek Orthodox mother and grandfather, and her Greek Melkite father.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 807 Axe



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 28 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 Jesus, Christian Art and Catholicism – 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

- 5 Debit niece in error, bless you (10)
- 8 Son of 2, Homer, Aristophanes invited in (6)
- 9 Very dense reporting of an Egyptian calendar (6)
- 10 Bolton away supporter: Rover or Ranger, perhaps. Never! (8)
- 12 Expected about the middle of Sinai to find some sand (4)
- 13 No support for this African pub book when edited (4)
- 14 North-east breeze is buffeting around Ark when leaving here (8)
- 15 Hush among US Military, press people finding the temple slaves' boss (6)
- 17 Baptist's disciple tied Sumerian god to the front (6)

- 18 Syrian governor, one in star's company, gets back to track Olympian (10)

Down

- 1 Vicar's looking down on, moreover, a hard section of decking (8)
- 2 Noisome in the end, moving up to become the top patriarch (4)
- 3 Gershwin passes on English underscoring for part of the requiem (4,4)
- 4 Church conference for fatties? (4)
- 6 Bee zeroing in, confusion hits Israelite camp site (5,5)
- 7 Cuts back on false images two weeks before Lent (10)
- 11 Abbey cellar is almost below river on times (8)

- 12 Penny, for example, led fraud reconstruction ... (8)
- 16 ... looking into Hong Kong specs to find crook (4)
- 17 Articles circulating around Tobit's wife's (4)

SUDOKU | Hard

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

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

Solution to the 7 May puzzle

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

Solution to the 7 May crossword No. 804

- Across:** 6 Cherub, 7 Yahweh, 9 Ankh, 10 Drusilla, 11 Nuncios, 13 Emily, 15 Simon, 17 Eleazar, 20 Ethiopia, 21 Arad, 23 Ashima, 24 Asajah.
Down: 1 Shen, 2 Orphic, 3 Abaddon, 4 Cyrus, 5 Christm, 8 Eulalia, 12 Uniates, 14 Elkanah, 16 Osiris, 18 Ararat, 19 Ephah, 22 Aran.

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