

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## The joy of muddle

PIERS PLOWRIGHT, the celebrated BBC radio producer, died on 23 July at the age of 83. "Something I wrote yesterday seemed so right for you," he scribbled in the note that came with the poem we reproduce on page 8, the last he sent us. "Quite understand if you think it more tactful to keep it in the drawer."

"Piers brimmed with kindness and a sense of fun," the writer Rupert Shortt told us. "His intellectual curiosity sprang from a great interest in other people. He was especially well liked at the Men's Pond on Hampstead Heath, where wild swimmers take the plunge every day of the year. One moment he might have people in stitches with a well-timed anecdote; next he could be listening to someone in trouble, or earnestly discussing religion and culture. And behind the *joie de vivre* stood a faith that supplied an extra dimension to all else in his life. It was at once simple, subtle and life-enhancing."

Piers met his wife, Poh Sim, on the steps of the British Museum. They married in 1964. After his death, the family thanked the staff at the Marie Curie hospice, Mgr Phelim Rowland of his parish church, St Mary's, in



Holly Walk, Hampstead, and Fr Toby Lees OP of St Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill, for their support. "Piers, the family and I shared some very beautiful tears," Fr Toby told us. "He gave one priest a much greater understanding of what a privileged and precious ministry it is to serve the sick and their families."

Piers was once asked why he had become a Catholic. "It had its roots in a visit I once paid to a convent," he said. "I was moved by the quality of the nuns' silence." Reviewing a memoir by another convert, drawn to the

Church because he had found it a comforting source of authority, Piers wrote, "For me – and I converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism 30 years ago – it's exactly the opposite. The Roman Catholic Church is in a muddle and continues to make huge mistakes, but it's also a forum for discussion, argument and reform. I find in its confusions and contradictions; in its willingness to question its own traditions and certainties; in the lightheartedness and joy you can find in it, a constant source of strength."

A family funeral is planned for 1 September. Numbers will be restricted due to Covid; a memorial service will follow.

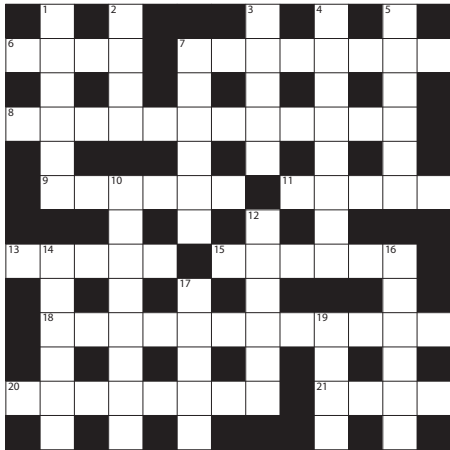
"ONE FRIEND said the homeless of Hampstead would miss Piers," Fr Toby told us, "and I think this was because he saw each of them as a unique individual made in the image of God, and worthy of so much more than spare change."

Fr Toby is currently on pilgrimage with three brother Dominicans, following in the footsteps of the first friars to come to England, who walked from Kent through Canterbury and London, and arrived in Oxford on 15 August 1221.

For details of how to join them, go to [www.dominicanjubilee.com/pilgrimage](http://www.dominicanjubilee.com/pilgrimage)

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 768 Axe



#### Across

- 6 Philistine stronghold; troubled modern-day city (4)
- 7 Bible people from the southern Dead Sea area (8)
- 8 City of Roman Asia, one of the seven churches in Revelation (12)
- 9 Ceremonial; solemn service (6)
- 11 Belief; creed (5)
- 13 Sacrifice site (5)
- 15 Alternative name for Peter (6)
- 18 What Jesus promised to make Andrew and Simon Peter in some Bibles (7,2,3)
- 20 Biblical port in Macedonia for Philippi (8)
- 21 Solomon's ----, variant title of an O.T. book of mutual love between man and woman (4)

#### Down

- 1 Priest who put Jeremiah in the stocks for prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem (variant spelling) (6)
- 2 Deity most commonly worshipped by the Canaanites (4)
- 3 *Ilex aquifolium*, commonly used in Christmas wreaths (5)
- 4 Town of Benjamin, east of Bethel (8)
- 5 Biblical region of the Eastern Mediterranean, today linked with Lebanon, Syria and Israel (6)
- 7 The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Vulgate (6)
- 10 Part of a cruciform church which crosses the nave at right angles (8)
- 12 Short subsections of biblical text (6)

- 14 River which James Joyce turned into the "Ganges of the literary world" (6)
- 16 King Hezekiah's secretary who talked with Sennacherib's Assyrians (6)
- 17 Book of ----, believed to be the work of Columban monks, now housed close to the 14 river (5)
- 19 One facet of Ramadan observance, for instance (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 7 August, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: [thetablet@thetablet.co.uk](mailto: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 God, Miracles and Pilgrimage – 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 | Beginner

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

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

#### Solution to the 17 July puzzle

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

#### Solution to the 17 July crossword No. 765

Across: 1 Polytheism; 7 Urban; 8 Propers; 10 Isidore; 11 Isaac; 12 Austin; 14 Hecate; 17 Islam; 19 Araunah; 21 Mattins; 22 Titus; 23 Antipatris. Down: 1 Publius; 2 Lando; 3 Tippet; 4 Edomite; 5 Sheba; 6 Puritanism; 9 Sacred Host; 13 Ismaili; 15 Annates; 16 Baasha; 18 Latin; 20 Altar.

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