

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

diary@thetablet.co.uk

A school for singing

“OH, YES, ABSOLUTELY,” a young member of the All Saints Catholic College Schola Cantorum assured me when I asked if she really turned up at 8 a.m. every weekday morning to practise her tuning, tempo and aural skills. It must have been a long day for her and her mother, who was standing beside her beaming with pride – it was after 8 o’clock on Monday evening when the last of the boys and girls and their teachers and parents left the Jesuit church in Farm Street, after helping *Tablet* readers and friends to lift their voices and hearts to God in a stupendous carol concert.

Established in the sixth century by Pope Gregory I, the Notting Hill branch of the Schola Cantorum (literally, “school for singing”) in west London has been going since April 2021, when All Saints’ effervescent head teacher Andrew O’Neill invited Stephen Bick to bring this medieval papal tradition to Ladbroke Grove. Earlier this year, the Schola got together with the Maîtrise de Reims, the world-famous cathedral choir of Reims, for a one-off concert. Next summer the pupils will visit Venice, Assisi, Florence and Rome. In between the carols at the *Tablet* concert,



they sat patiently through Scripture readings from Shelagh Fogarty, Helen Ghosh, Julie Etchingham and Robert Bathurst. Alex Macqueen was given the Betjeman part (“And is it true? The Maker of the stars, and sea / Become a Child on earth for me?”) and looked as if he was enjoying every minute of it.

EASTERN CHRISTIANS have had much sad cause to call on their friends this past year. Speaking at the annual dinner for the trustees and supporters of Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (Face) on 4 December, the founder and chair John Adam Fox

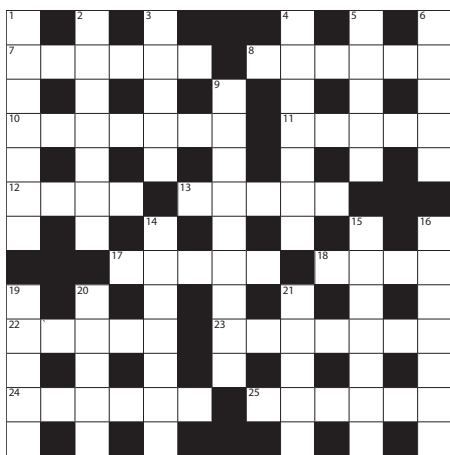
acknowledged that the achievements of one of the charity’s busiest years had been dwarfed by fresh crises – most painfully, the violence afflicting the Holy Land since 7 October.

There was fine Iraqi cuisine for guests who made it to the top floor of Romero House (where the lift was awaiting repairs) in London while a strong showing from the UK’s Greek Melkite and Chaldean parishes – and a video message from the latter’s patriarch Cardinal Louis Raphaël Sako – complemented the club ties and double-breasted suits of Face’s distinguished patrons. Sir Edward Leigh MP raised the plight of civilians in Gaza during post-prandial questions to the guest of honour, the apostolic nuncio Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, whose diplomatic reply caused disquiet among the Melkite delegation: they told us they had seen too many IDF bombs in Lebanon to equivocate.

But faith defies cruel circumstance, as Canon Robin Gibbons preached at Mass in Southwark Cathedral beforehand. The chaplain of Face invoked the Feast of St John of Damascus for his contrariwise homily on the Parable of the Talents (which you can read on *The Tablet’s* website), to praise the third servant and remind us that “even where we might assume God is not, there and at all times the Holy One can use and change us”.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 884 Enigma



Across

- 7 Transformation in one’s purse (6)
- 8 The French back the silly dope who married by stealth (6)
- 10 Official permission to enlist, without starting trouble, in the Anglican Church (7)
- 11 Catholic returns with a fish in a basket (5)
- 12 The taste and smell of a stinger makes a comeback (4)
- 13 Found in Glasgow for a weary baby in a ship (5)
- 17 Is a backward American city able to provide passage for ships? (5)
- 18 This one will make you give up! (4)
- 22 Stops scattering hot salt (5)

- 23 At 8.05 I made a dash for 8 o’clock Mass at the Roman basilica (7)
- 24 Describe a comedian carrying a dollar among the planets (6)
- 25 A gap was left, causing Nuala to catch cold (6)

Down

- 1 Locate the youth who assists on the altar (7)
- 2 In non-clerical surroundings, a Catholic starts to engage in theft (7)
- 3 It’s a male spy (5)
- 4 Tape the first three returning Californians to dispel their anger (7)

- 5 You wretched pest, causing distress! (5)
- 6 There was no child in that commercial last month (5)
- 9 A wild ape joins some Protestants; skilful and non-belligerent (9)
- 14 To be bitterly scathing is to bring on a display of nervousness, they say (7)
- 15 The raffle takes a turn that is terrifying (7)
- 16 Graduate began to struggle to find somewhere to sit (4, 3)
- 19 The humble dwelling of a canonised journalist (5)
- 20 The second-last explosion (5)
- 21 To act under the influence of terrible tales of 2 Down (5)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 16 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 Saints, Monasticism and Philosophy of Religion – from OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random.

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SUDOKU | Moderate

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

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

Solution to the 25 November puzzle

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

Solution to the 25 November crossword No. 881

- Across: 6 Fuel; 7 Slovenia; 8 Mesopotamian; 9 Saskatchewan; 11 Amphitheatre; 16 Delicatessen; 18 Blue moon; 19 Yo-yo.
Down: 1 Aureus; 2 Clio; 3 Mosaic; 4 Pediment; 5 Vienna; 7 Skoda; 10 Schiller; 12 Medals; 13 Tucson; 14 Eaton; 15 Evelyn; 17 Skye.