

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Poets, philosophers and princes

THIS WEEK saw the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of the Orkney poet, and Catholic convert, George Mackay Brown. On 12 April 1996, feeling under the weather, he was driven to hospital in Kirkwall. It was a glorious evening, and the air, he said, was “like champagne”. By the following afternoon, he was fading fast. Before he lost consciousness, he spoke his last words to the doctor and nurse attending him: “I see hundreds and hundreds of ships sailing out of the harbour.”

As news of his death broke, tributes poured in. Seamus Heaney praised him as a poet, and “a man with more interest in spiritual integrity than in any kind of literary success”. Three days later, George’s funeral was held in St Magnus Cathedral. The first requiem Mass celebrated there since the Reformation, it happened to fall on the feast day of St Magnus – “and if you call that a coincidence,” said Ron Ferguson, minister of St Magnus, welcoming a congregation of 600, “I wish you a very dull life.”

Before the funeral, his open coffin lay in the little Catholic church, for friends to pay



their dues. As one described it, he wore an expression of bliss, “as if in his last moments he had felt secure in the convictions in which he had invested so much”.

TWENTY YEARS ago Carmel McConnell MBE was researching a book on business ethics when she stumbled across a national scandal: many children start their school day hungry. She established the charity Magic Breakfast, which has provided school breakfasts for countless children from disadvantaged families, and her passion and energy has put the need for

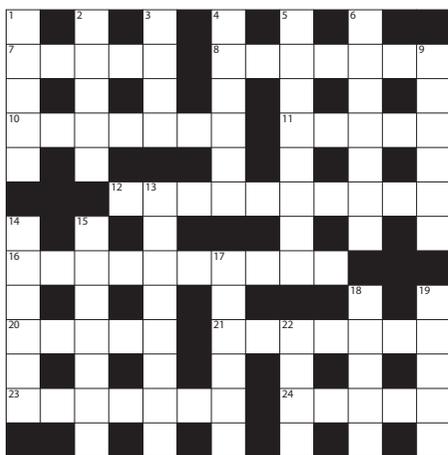
every child to have a healthy breakfast onto the national radar. Her goal is to ensure that no child arrives at school too hungry to learn.

Carmel joined *The Tablet's* board of directors two years ago, and she is spearheading our readership appeal this year. The pandemic has bruised and tested us. It has also led us to create new ways of broadening and deepening our relationship with our readers, which has always been *The Tablet's* greatest strength. Next week, she will explain how we are planning to build on these initiatives in years to come, and invite you to help us if you are in a position to do so.

PRINCE PHILIP’s funeral takes place today in St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle. He was in the chair when Hans Küng, who predeceased him by three days, gave the St George’s lecture here in 1986. The historian Michael Walsh and his wife Cathy were among the guests – John Cleese tripped over her feet as he squeezed passed to reach his pew. Afterwards, there were drinks in the cloister, and Küng wandered over. When he heard that Michael was writing a book on *Opus Dei* he became highly animated and held forth at such length that the Duke had to come to collect him. “Come on, Hans,” he said, “you are keeping the Queen from her dinner.”

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 752 Alanus



Across

- 7 Pilgrim with tale for Chaucer en route to Canterbury (5)
- 8 Rejection of belief in Almighty God (7)
- 10 Florentine fifteenth-century painter, especially of *The Battle of San Romano* (7)
- 11 Mighty Italian cathedral dedicated to the birth of Our Lady (5)
- 12 Member of order founded by St Paul of the Cross (10)
- 16 Russian composer of the choral *Symphony of Psalms* (10)
- 20 Native ancestry of many South American Catholics (5)
- 21 Poet who advised: “Gather ye rosebuds while ye may” (7)

- 23 Name of several early martyr saints, one patron of protection from lightning (7)
 - 24 Portable drum often played with a pipe in marches (5)
- Down**
- 1 Sr Elizabeth -----, English nun recently proclaimed Venerable by Rome (5)
 - 2 Creature much used in Victorian medical treatment (5)
 - 3 PM giving name to first police force (4)
 - 4 House occupying the French throne in Tudor times (6)
 - 5 Botanical aid used by St Patrick to explain the Holy Trinity (8)
 - 6 Pre-Raphaelite artist, painted *Christ in the House of His Parents* (7)

- 9 Timely reference to popular Chopin waltz (6)
- 13 “Devil’s -----”, formerly used by the Church in authenticating canonisation (8)
- 14 Saint, Northumbrian king killed in battle (6)
- 15 People of north-west France, many descended from south-west England (7)
- 17 King of the Ammonites defeated by Saul (6)
- 18 ----- Baggins, central character in Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* (5)
- 19 Wailing sound associated with bagpipes (5)
- 22 Italian saint from Cascia, patroness of impossible causes (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 17 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 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 cannot process entries or prizes at present. Please keep entering. Winners will be notified and prizes awarded as soon possible.**

SUDOKU | Tough

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

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

Solution to the 27 March puzzle

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

Solution to the 27 March crossword No. 749

Across: 1 Shalom; 5 Judge; 8 Angel; 9 Cordoba; 10 Nana; 11 Flambard; 13 Ushaw; 14 Pasch; 19 Whistler; 21 Bala; 23 Leading; 24 Light; 25 Exile; 26 Romero. **Down:** 2 Hyginus; 3 Lely; 4 Macula; 5 Jeremiah; 6 Drop A; 7 Ecards; 8 Acne; 12 Fast Time; 15 Clanger; 16 Twelve; 17 Beggar; 18 Kant; 20 Iraqi; 22 Slam.

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