

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## Beggars for heaven

LAST YEAR MARKED 50 years since the death of the French philosopher and theologian Jacques Maritain at the age of 91, and earlier this month the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology in Cambridge celebrated his life and that of his wife and intellectual partner, Raïssa Oumansoff, with a one-day conference.

“Beggars for Heaven” explored the Maritains’ far-reaching and continuing influence on French, European and American intellectual and spiritual life. The small but smart and cheerful audience were told by John Trapani, emeritus professor of philosophy at Walsh University, Ohio and a former president of the American Maritain Association, that Maritain is much less well known in Britain than he should be. Philosophy professor John Rist spoke with characteristic cogency about Maritain’s political thinking, showing where it worked and where it might have been overly idealistic. Other speakers looked at Maritain’s role as ambassador to the Holy See, friend of Paul VI and one of the minds behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We learnt of the astonishingly wide circle of friendships the couple built up over the years.



Their salon in Meudon, on the edge of Paris, was, variously, frequented by the writers Péguy, Bernanos, Cocteau, Gide and Mauriac; the painters Picasso, Chagall and Rouault; the theologians and philosophers Garrigou-Lagrange, Gilson and Marcel; and the composers Stravinsky and Satie. That’s one hell of a party.

The Maritains’ visitors also included the shady Charles Maurras, head of the far-right monarchist *Action française*, which Maritain was strangely enamoured of until its condemnation by Pius XI in 1926. In 1932, Edith Stein visited the Maritain home. Jewish like Raïssa, Stein had also become a Catholic. She

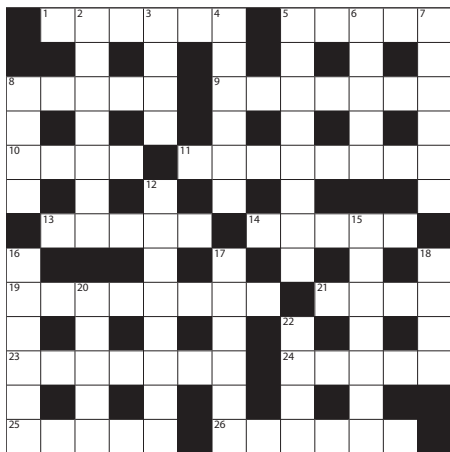
would soon enter the Carmelite Order and eventually be put to death at Auschwitz.

FR NICHOLAS Schofield is the parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Michael, Uxbridge, so the holy places he celebrates in *Highways and Byways* (Gracewing, £15.99), tend to be within a day’s drive of west London. Alongside the drop-dead gorgeous sites such as Rievaulx, Walsingham and Lindisfarne, Fr Schofield enjoys lesser treats such as the lovely new church at ancient Clare Priory in Suffolk, St Mawes holy well in a Cornish fishing village (“one of the country’s most ‘hip’ places, whatever that means”) and the parish church of an obscure Buckinghamshire country priest whose trick of capturing the devil in his boot led to invention of the “jack-in-the-box”.

He ends with the saddest, sweetest pilgrimage of them all: “the ultimate journey that we will all make”, written after the death of his mother, Clare, in her local hospital, with the only tourist sights the blue curtain around her bed and the tape covering the cracks on the window frames. The moment of death came while Schofield was having his dinner. “It was probably easier for Mum to make her final journey without me standing by,” he writes, “for what mother wants to leave her child behind?”

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 896 Enigma



#### Across

- 1 My boy, it isn’t gross; it’s a poem! (6)
- 5 Several in the farmyard, one in the boat race, we hear (5)
- 8 The wretched pest has nothing for people like Wordsworth and Shelley (5)
- 9 Rowdily backing one holy place, Lily loses heart (7)
- 10 For the Irish Republic, no comeback. It’s hard (4)
- 11 Remember I’m Bauhaus-bound, carrying an instrument from Brazil (8)
- 13 We object to that woman showing people to their seats (5)
- 14 Feline hesitation to supply refreshments (5)
- 19 Battered green tin coming in (8)

- 21 Rugby player is a help to actors (4)
- 23 In the Gospel, it’s soft and capable of being ploughed (7)
- 24 Back to that woman? Not the same one! (5)
- 25 The gist of an article by me (5)
- 26 Makes brown bread (6)

#### Down

- 2 Single, terribly sour and burdensome (7)
- 3 Is aware of the feature, we hear (4)
- 4 Reacts with anxiety to past, present and future (6)
- 5 Mr Capone follows the reviewer in finding fault (8)
- 6 No tea in this climate, starting breathtaking ascent (5)

- 7 Phone tool can make you and me look well-groomed, it’s said (6)
- 8 Handed over money to discover who Dad really is (4)
- 12 Ivan’s history report is very bad (8)
- 15 Where the sound can be heard, a listener fell victim to gunfire (7)
- 16 Posted, unfortunately, to a tyrant (6)
- 17 Creepy-crawly joins strange religion (6)
- 18 No cheer for preachers who practise boxing (4)
- 20 Therese was upset when he left; it was so abrupt (5)
- 22 Professor comes out of tornado with a damaged roster (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 23 March, 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 Augustine, Christianity and Thomas Aquinas – 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 | 8 | 4 |   |   |   |
|   |   | 8 |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
|   | 6 |   |   |   |   | 7 | 8 |   |
|   |   |   | 4 |   | 2 |   |   |   |
| 4 |   |   | 5 |   | 1 |   |   | 8 |
| 8 |   |   | 2 |   |   |   |   | 7 |
| 7 | 3 | 9 |   |   | 5 |   |   |   |
|   |   | 6 |   |   |   |   |   | 3 |
|   | 5 |   |   | 1 | 2 |   |   | 7 |

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

#### Solution to the 2 March puzzle

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

#### Solution to the 2 March crossword No. 893

- Across:** 1 Phillip; 5 Fates; 8 Pugin; 9 Perjury; 10 Rare; 11 Behemoth; 13 Whist; 14 Econe; 19 Lanterns; 21 Amos; 23 Perugia; 24 Passu; 25 Shams; 26 Assisi.
- Down:** 2 Hogarth; 3 Link; 4 Popper; 5 Ferency; 6 Truro; 7 Scythe; 8 Paris; 12 Asperges; 15 Nemesis; 16 Slypes; 17 Ankara; 18 Esau; 20 Norma; 22 Opus.