

Difficult islands of diplomacy

POPE CAN be grit in the oyster for British politicians. Margaret Thatcher was irritated by John Paul II's concern over her intransigence towards the hunger strikers in the Maze. Foreign Office officials feared that when Argentine Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope he would start calling the Falkland Islands the "Malvinas".

Francis tries to avoid both monikers – but he has intervened forcefully over British policy towards other faraway islands: this time, in the Indian Ocean. In May, the United Nations ticked off the UK for retaining possession of the Chagos Islands when Mauritius gained independence in 1968. The UK forcibly expelled the local people and handed over one of the islands, Diego Garcia, to the US to use as a military base. As Francis left Mauritius after his visit in September he expressed strong support for the islanders' right of return. The UN set a six-month deadline for the Brits to withdraw. That runs out this week.

And there's been another twist in the tale. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was in Rome last week to introduce Pope



Francis to the man he has just appointed as his permanent representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre: Ian Ernest, the Archbishop of Mauritius. Ernest was a familiar face – he had met Francis during his Mauritius visit. Last week he also met the UK's ambassador to the Holy See, Sally Axworthy. Might her telegram back to London suggest that a problematic Argentinian-Mauritian axis is developing in Rome?

ST MICHAEL and All Angels, Birkenhead, was packed on 6 November for the Requiem

Mass for Bishop Brian Noble, evidence of the deep affection felt for their loving, supportive pastor by the clergy, religious and laity of Shrewsbury Diocese.

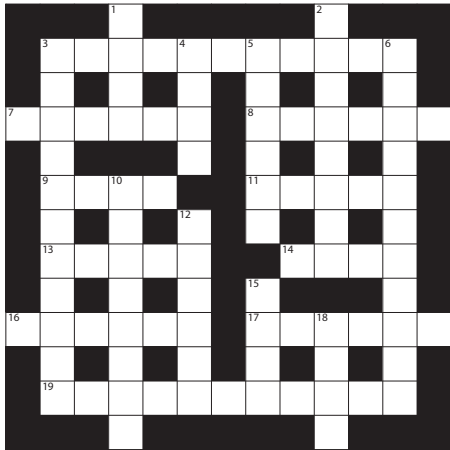
Born in Lancaster in 1936, he trained at Ushaw and served as chaplain at Lancaster University, Director of Pastoral Studies at the Beda and parish priest in Whitehaven before his ordination as Bishop of Shrewsbury in 1995. He was immediately faced with the painful task of closing churches and amalgamating parishes. Only four years into the job he was diagnosed with cancer, told he had only weeks to live, but that radical surgery, chemo and radiotherapy just might be successful. He chose the latter, conscious of the task he had just begun. He served a further ten years.

Brian Noble's wisdom and humility were evident in all the meetings he chaired. He loved music, art, poetry, birdwatching and, when younger, fell-walking in his beloved Lake District. And conversation – punctuated by his infectious sense of humour.

The text from Micah he chose for his episcopal ordination card was apt. He did indeed "act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with his God". He chose as the first reading for his Requiem, Ecclesiasticus: "If you aspire to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for an ordeal..." Brian discovered the truth of that.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 684 | Axe



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 23 November, 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 Augustine, Christianity and Thomas Aquinas – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 6 December. The answers to this week's puzzles and the crossword winner's name will appear in the 14 December issue.

Across

- 3 Member of a tribe named after a son of Jacob (11)
- 7 Housing for the manger in the Nativity? (6)
- 8 3 Acr, the patriarch's second son (6)
- 9 Father of Elam, Arpachshad and Lud (4)
- 11 River that marked the border between Moab and the territory of the Amorites (5)
- 13 One of David's Thirty great warriors (5)
- 14 Chief Semitic fertility god, becoming a deity of convenience for the Canaanites (4)
- 16 Aramaic for Peter, meaning "stone" or "rock" (6)

- 17 Greek and Roman goddess of good health (6)
 - 19 Sacred writings of Judaism, and comprising the Law (Torah), the Prophets, and the Hagiographa or Writings (6,5)
- ### Down
- 1 Son of Koz, a descendant of Judah (4)
 - 2 Roman province of Asia Minor, an important centre of Christianity (8)
 - 3 Site of Jehoash's victory over Amaziah of Judah (4-7)
 - 4 Hebrew word still in common use in churches, meaning "so let it be" (4)

- 5 After Psalms, the longest book in the Old Testament (6)
- 6 Prospect for those who are "in Christ" and "know God", according to the N.T. (7,4)
- 10 Wife of Aaron (8)
- 12 Indian Zoroastrian worshipper (6)
- 15 Pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (4)
- 18 Town, the northern limit of the Southern Kingdom, fortified by Asa (4)

SUDOKU | Beginner

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

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

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

Solution to the 2 November crossword No. 681

Across: 1 Acre; 3 Sapphira; 9 Angelus; 10 Palms; 11 Assir; 12 Salome; 14 Ararat; 16 Cascia; 19 Haggai; 21 Micah; 24 Amice; 25 Shemesh; 26 Hanukkah; 27 Gera.
Down: 1 Aramaean; 2 Ragas; 4 Assisi; 5 Papat; 6 Islamic; 7 Apse; 8 Gloria; 13 Bathshua; 15 Acacian; 17 Ammie; 18 Birsha; 20 Greek; 22 Crete; 23 Bach.
Winner: Liam O Brian, Prestwich, Manchester.

Prizes kindly donated by
OXFORD
 UNIVERSITY PRESS
www.oup.com