

Catholicism through the looking glass

“WHO EVER made a stranger course towards Rome?” wondered Ronald Knox of Stanley B. James, the writer and journalist.

Stanley, born in 1869, emigrated from Wimbledon to the Canadian West, becoming in turn a cowboy, shepherd, logger, hobo, journalist, soldier, poet, playwright and actor – “a kind of 1890s hippy”, as his grandson Robert Nurden puts it, in his entertaining and, as he himself confesses, slightly obsessive biography.

Back in England, Stanley became a fiery Nonconformist minister in Walthamstow. Nurden’s assiduous research has turned up letters and diaries that reveal clandestine liaisons with several members of the congregation. In 1923 Stanley converts to Catholicism, and swaps socialism and pacifism for distributism and fondness for Mussolini. He has seven children and writes nine books and hundred of newspaper articles. Michael de la Bédoyère took him on for a few years as assistant editor of the *Catholic Herald* in 1941, when he was 71. He died in 1951.

Stanley lived in a cottage in the Cotwolds without electricity, gas or running water; while



at the *Herald*, then in Fleet Street (*The Tablet* had sloped off to Reading for the war) he stayed during the week in a hostel for the homeless. In one of his regular columns, Stanley – never short of an opinion – suggested that the Vatican should move from Rome to Dublin: the world was becoming increasingly English speaking, and Ireland was ideally poised between Rome and the United States.

Knox wrote in his foreword to the first of Stanley’s two autobiographies, *The Adventures of a Spiritual Tramp*: “Readers of *Through the Looking-Glass* will remember that Alice

can only make her way about the garden by walking away from the object she wants to reach ... Mr James seems to have done the thing in real life; he has reached the Catholic Church by steadily walking away from it.”

Stanley James: Between Heaven and Earth is written and published by Robert Nurden and is available from online booksellers for £10.

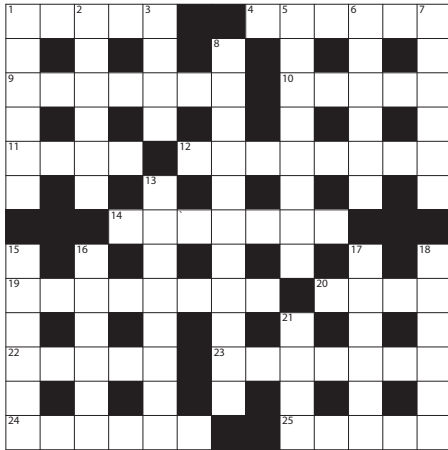
WHEN THE eight million listeners to Ken Bruce’s BBC Radio 2 show got their quiz sheets ready for its daily PopMaster quiz on Monday morning, they were surprised to hear that one of the contestants was going to be Liam Gallagher. Not the bad-boy frontman of Oasis, but his namesake, Fr Liam Gallagher of St Francis Church, Maidstone, Kent.

Fr Liam told Bruce that Oasis was his favourite band and that the other Liam had inspired his own guitar skills. The 21 points that he gained not only meant that Fr Liam won the quiz but he showed off his musical skills. But sadly the answer he should have got eluded him: the name of the Justin Bieber/Chance the Rapper hit was “Holy”.

PopMaster was a few minutes well spent: Fr Liam won a digital radio and had a chance to fit in some evangelisation-lite, telling Bruce and the audience about private prayer during lockdown in Catholic churches.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 734 Alanus



Across

- 1 Fr F.W. -----, Oratory founder who wrote the hymn-anthem *Faith of our Fathers* (5)
- 4 Bags carried by medieval pilgrims (6)
- 9 Early saint, Doctor of the Church; Bishop of Milan who promoted a style of chant (7)
- 10 Irish county wherein Battle of the Boyne took place (5)
- 11 ---- *Mariae*, the heel of Mary (in art crushing the head of the serpent) (4)
- 12 ----- disease, serious adrenal gland disorder; Jane Austin died from it (8)
- 14 Historic German city at the confluence of major European rivers (7)
- 19 Domenico -----, Italian composer renowned for his comic operas (8)
- 20 Novel by Zola relative (4)
- 22 Father of Bathsheba in the O.T. (5)

- 23 One promoting beliefs contrary to the established teachings of the Church (8)
 - 24 Enigmatic hunter dedication of Elgar to his publisher in a pun (6)
 - 25 Patron saint of Edinburgh (5)
- Down**
- 1 César -----, composer particularly known for his *Panis Angelicus* (6)
 - 2 Covid-era term for small group that can meet together (6)
 - 3 (& 15 Down): In church partition between chancel and nave, usually bearing Calvary scene (4,6)
 - 5 (& 21 Down): The “Challenge to the Privy Council” of the Jesuit martyr-to-be, St Edmund (8,4)
 - 6 Common Russian surname that is title of early Chekhov play (6)

- 7 A split in the Church over disputes in the formal teachings (6)
- 8 Great composer, works include revision of Bach’s *St Matthew’s Passion* (11)
- 13 St Charles -----, Archbishop of Milan and cardinal, leading figure of the Counter-Reformation (8)
- 15 See 3 Down
- 16 Duke of -----, major figure in the “Palliser” novels of Anthony Trollope (6)
- 17 ----- Gandolfo, the Pope’s summer retreat near Rome (6)
- 18 ----- Aurelius, philosopher Caesar under whose rule many early Christians were martyred (6)
- 21 See 5 Down

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 28 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 Jesus, Christian Art and Catholicism – 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 | Challenging

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

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

Solution to the 7 November puzzle

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

Solution to the 7 November crossword No. 731

Across: 1 Knees; 4 Oswald; 9 Of Siena; 10 Relic; 11 Iota; 12 Jeopardy; 14 Toenail; 19 Lutenist; 20 Gozo; 22 Queen; 23 Exegete; 24 Ernest; 25 On His. **Down:** 1 Kaolin; 2 Ersatz; 3 Spem; 5 Seraphim; 6 Allure; 7 Dactyl; 8 Paternoster; 13 Mornings; 15 Clique; 16 Strewen; 17 Joseph; 18 Boreas; 21 Zeno.

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