

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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One step enough

IN MAY 1985, the Vicar of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin Oxford, Peter Cornwell, mounted the pulpit to announce that he had decided to seek admission to the Roman Catholic Church. He was following the path his predecessor John Henry Newman had taken 140 years before, and *The Times* mooted a “third spring” for Catholicism in England, with a wave of further conversions. It was an acknowledgement of Cornwell’s influential standing in the Church of England. Less than three years later, he was ordained a Catholic priest. He died on St David’s Day after a brief illness. He was 86, and had been an Anglican priest for nearly 25 years, and a Catholic priest for nearly 33.

His conversion, like Newman’s, came from a deep pondering of church history and a yearning for communion with the universal Church with and under the Pope. The Second Vatican Council’s vision of renewal and ecumenism had excited him, and continued to do so for the rest of his life. After the election of Pope Francis, he said that after years of loyal opposition, it now felt like being in government.

A socialist and one-time pacifist (whose National Service was spent as a hospital



orderly), he greeted kindred spirits with a hearty “Good Morning, comrade!” as he walked to the Co-op for his *Guardian*. In *One Step Enough*, the memoir he wrote shortly after his reception into the Catholic Church, he describes meeting Hilary Lord in the summer he was teaching at Cuddesdon under Robert Runcie. They were married the following February. “I am by nature a lonely person,” he writes, “reticent about opening up in confidence even to my closest friends, so that, thrown in upon myself I can become introspective and brooding. I have no doubt

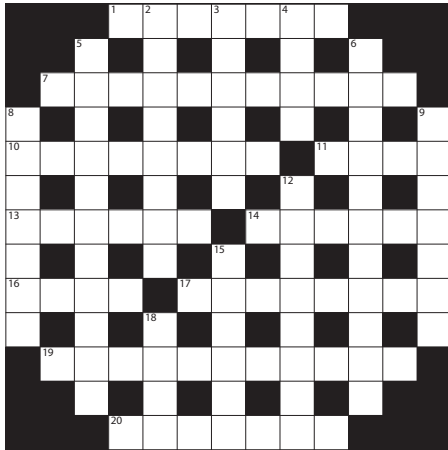
that I have needed Hilary to make me more complete.” Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville once told him: “Look after her, you won’t get another.” They had two children, James and Elizabeth.

His Catholic ministry embraced prison chaplaincy at Oxford (a vital period) and school chaplaincy at Prior Park College in Bath in the 1990s, which proved transformative for the school, followed by service in the Bath deanery parishes. Those (few) who accused him of being too “liberal” or “an Anglican at heart” must have missed his great sermons on the Marian solemnities and Corpus Christi or the queues when he was hearing Confessions.

One Step Enough is a hope-filled apologia and it’s impossible not to wonder if we were not a bit of a disappointment to him. Giles Mercer, headmaster of Prior Park between 1996 and 2009, told us that Peter never even hinted that that was the case. “He embraced the Catholic Church, warts and all, in spite of annoyances and frustrations. He was a joy-filled person, with wonderful humour and breadth of vision. He always knew reform would be a long haul, and never completed. All who came into contact with Peter Cornwell were treated equally and with huge kindness. They were brought closer to God.”

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 747 Axe



Across

- 1 I am about to be embraced by the younger of 7, being one of Joktan’s boys (5,2)
- 7 Issues of Adam and Eve viewed in a balanced way (4,3,4)
- 10 Each boss in Rome put first a place in the Bible (8)
- 11 Menahem’s dad modern-day soldier takes on board (4)
- 13 David’s commander, one of 7 to squirrel gold away (6)
- 14 Something spiritual, with the Royal Academy getting involved (6)
- 16 State’s leader is usurped by a son of Abinadab (4)
- 17 Temples in antiquity? I’m a hater, sadly (8)

- 19 Worker’s steaming – visitor to shrine’s starting to hit retired clan leader (11)
- 20 A jumped-up medico got promoted to Doctor of the Church (7)

Down

- 2 Little Benjamin fooled his father – he said he’s the King of Aram (8)
- 3 Guy who runs place hasn’t a bed for Advent (6)
- 4 Chap’s going up to the old country featured in the book (4)
- 5 Dreadful con man’s idea for Philippians, for example (11)
- 6 Babe in a band shocked Solomon’s governor according to the New KJV (3,8)

- 8 He’s governed from Corinth, being one within a distance of twenty-two yards (7)
- 9 Little informal greeting on the outskirts of Antioch for Pharaoh’s daughter (7)
- 12 Caste members need support over a short period of time of Hindus, principally (8)
- 15 Ward may be needed for this girl, being one with a habit (6)
- 18 Haggard woman married Noah’s lad (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 13 March, 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 | Challenging

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

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

Solution to the 20 February puzzle

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

Solution to the 20 February crossword No. 744

Across: 7 Church; 8 Reuben; 9 More; 10 Innocent; 11 Joy To The World; 13 Teresa of Avila; 16 Dies Irae; 18 Olaf; 19 Saints; 20 Clouds.
Down: 1 Theodore; 2 Priest; 3 Christmas rose; 4 Prince of Peace; 5 Nuncio; 6 Dean; 12 Lollardy; 14 Essene; 15 Voodoo; 17 Imam.

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