George Weigel The next pope must challenge the moral confusion and decadence of the age

Zena Hitz defends the bookworm • Elena Curti reports on Walsingham’s redevelopment

Christopher Howse won’t let go of the Sixties • Lucy Lethbridge explores the contradictions of Mrs. America

Margaret Hebblethwaite investigates the mystery of the Winchester Bible
**THE TABLET**

**FOR THE FUTURE**

The main pitch of the campaign for Brexit was the promise that Britain would regain control of its own borders, with regard to immigration and with regard to trade. Outside the European Union, it was said, immigration could be limited and free trade expanded, and “Global Britain” would prosper. Both those goals are now in jeopardy, and the reason is found in one word: China.

China was rapidly becoming the hub of the globalised economy, which has handed the Chinese government leverage over the affairs of other countries, a leverage it is increasingly tempted to use. Meanwhile, its behaviour towards Hong Kong exposes China as a global partner that cannot be trusted. The Chinese ambassador to Britain, Liu Xiaoming, has unwisely warned Britain not to jeopardise its trading relationship with China by reversing the decision to allow the Chinese technology giant Huawei a role in the 5G network that will eventually cover the whole of Britain. Eliminating Huawei would be a setback for Chinese global economic ambitions, and any Chinese measures in retaliation would only make things worse. Mr Xiaoming has also denounced what he calls Britain’s “interference” in Hong Kong, specifically the announcement that up to three million Hong Kong citizens could be allowed to emigrate to the United Kingdom and eventually graduate to full citizenship.

The Beijing government has introduced draconian new security laws to try to stamp out the street protests against its increasing control of Hong Kong’s internal affairs. The new measures are plainly in contravention of the “one country, two systems” arrangement enshrined in international law by the 1997 treaty under which Britain ended colonial rule in Hong Kong. Britain’s offer of entry visas and a pathway to citizenship is a very generous and honourable response, which reflects well on a British government not normally given much credit for its moral integrity. If the offer is taken up, it will lead to a large influx of immigrants to Britain just when the government had hoped to reduce the flow, post-Brexit.

The behaviour of the Chinese government puts the whole edifice of international trade, and the progress of globalisation over the last three decades, in doubt. The United States, a key participant in that process, was already moving to anti-free trade protectionism and a trade war with China. Globalisation depends on minimal compliance with a set of rules, especially the observance of treaty obligations, and if neither China nor the US are willing to respect those rules then a decade of international protectionism beckons.

Globalisation has lifted millions of China’s citizens out of dire poverty. China has virtually cornered the market in the production of electronic consumer goods such as smartphones. But globalisation has also been a major factor in the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs in British steelworks and shipbuilding, and has swung the economy into heavy dependence on financial services. This has increased the economic imbalance, and consequent inequality, between the north of England and London and the south-east. So if globalisation is stuttering to a halt – even if it is only temporary – a new era of domestic industrialisation will be necessary to sustain the British economy for the next half century. And “green” industrialisation, which the government has placed at the core of its policy for long-term economic growth, becomes its essential component. It is an ill wind ...

**GREEN LIGHT FOR THE FUTURE**

Until the end of last month, the practising Catholic population of the United Kingdom was approximately zero – if by “practising Catholic” is meant someone who attends Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Even now, with church doors half open, normal Catholic life remains disrupted. So one truth the coronavirus has unearthed is that Christian discipleship cannot simply be defined by participation in the liturgy. The obligation under canon law to hear Mass every Sunday cannot be reimposed as if nothing has happened.

The distinction between the “practising” and the “lapsed” – meaning, essentially, non-practising – Catholic has been, in effect, dissolved. Not all those who were once practising, in this sense, will return to weekly Massgoing. That does not mean that they no longer live by the Gospel. Indeed, if the virus remains endemic in the population long-term, large gatherings of the faithful such as in a typical parish on a typical Sunday may become a thing of the past.

Masses have continued to be celebrated, of course, with invisible congregations watching at home via computer screens. Much praise is due to those who have kept things moving, and, anecdotally at least, this unusual procedure has concentrated hearts and minds on neglected distinctions between good liturgy and bad. But it has also placed a focus on the community present at Mass, and how we feel when it is absent. Catholic parishioners may not communicate verbally with each other very much, but being in each other’s presence does have a transformative effect.

Even more significant, watching remotely is not just a poor substitute for “being there”, but a different kind of reality. To be in the real presence of the body and blood of Christ is to be where Heaven and Earth are mystically joined. The God who created the universe becomes present in this small space, among His people. This is, as Vatican II’s decree Lumen Gentium declares, the “source and summit of the Christian life”. Medieval churches had tall spires rising above the tree tops so people could see from afar the place where this miracle occurred, and close to the base of the spire and look upwards, and it becomes an infinite column reaching beyond and above the sky. It is a symbol, as the Encyclopaedia Britannica condescendingly puts it, “of the heavenly aspirations of pious medieval men”. They obviously knew something they were later forced to forget.

All these glimpses of truth and many others have been uncovered by the coronavirus earthquake, and remain to be collected and used. It would be a shrewd move by the bishops’ conferences of these islands if they were to commission research into this episode and the effect it has had on the faith of the People of God, knowing that evidence leaves nothing wasted, even disasters and their consequences.
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Shaftesbury Avenue – London’s theatreland – deserted during lockdown

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COVER: SCENE FROM THE LIFE OF DAVID, WINCHESTER BIBLE, FROM THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM, NEW YORK. BRIDGEMAN IMAGES
FEATURES / King Henry’s Bible?

IT IS 800 YEARS since the body of Thomas Becket was moved on 7 July 1220 from a tomb in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral into a shrine; he had been murdered in the cathedral 50 years earlier, on 29 December 1170. But I want to dwell on the tragic life of the man responsible for his murder, King Henry II, and on the way Thomas wove in and out of his story – and also that of the Winchester Bible, “a candidate for the greatest work of art produced in England”, according to the celebrated scholar Christopher de Hamel.

Winchester Cathedral reopened to visitors on 4 July, and the “Kings and Scribes” exhibition that displays the famous Bible is expected to follow soon. When I visited it before the lockdown, the guides showed me the page with the historiated initials for Psalm 51, where King Saul is ordering his servant Doeg to kill the priests who had given holy bread to David, his rival for the kingship. Christopher de Hamel was the first to make the striking suggestion that this “might be a political allusion to the order by Henry II in 1170 for the murder of Thomas Becket”.

The exhibition begins with a panel telling you that the Bible was commissioned by Henry of Blois, who was Bishop of Winchester between 1129 and his death in 1171. This has long been the mainstream account of Henry of Blois commissioning the Winchester Bible. He was “rich and powerful beyond imagination, politically devious and opportunist” and an “art patron extraordinaire”, and in 1143 he commissioned a different, large, luxury Bible from the monks of Winchester, known as the “Auct Bible” (Bodleian MS Auct. E. inf.1-2). Since a Bible of this size cost as much to produce as a small castle, it could only have been paid for by someone extraordinarily rich.

As the brother of the previous king, Stephen, Bishop Henry had a tricky relationship with Henry II, who had fought a war to recover the throne that Stephen had unjustifiably seized on the death of Henry I, Henry II’s grandfather. So from time to time during the 1135-1153 civil war the bishop had to go into exile. When he returned in 1150, “we can imagine him”, said de Hamel, “storming into the scriptorium, the boss back from abroad, bursting with the news that the continental fashion now was no longer for Bibles with initials and mere foliage which they had been doing, and that modern places like Cluny now had pictures inside the initials. He told them

A royal search for illumination

A wealthy bishop is said to have ordered the magnificently illuminated Bible displayed in Winchester Cathedral. But could it have been commissioned by a worried Henry II, trying to find biblical precedents for the disasters of his own life, including the death of Thomas Becket? BY MARGARET HEBBLETHWAITE

February this year, de Hamel, author of the widely acclaimed Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts, colourfully elaborated the traditional account of Henry of Blois commissioning the Winchester Bible. He was “rich and powerful beyond imagination, politically devious and opportunistic” and an “art patron extraordinaire”, and in 1143 he commissioned a different, large, luxury Bible from the monks of Winchester, known as the “Auct Bible” (Bodleian MS Auct. E. inf.1-2). Since a Bible of this size cost as much to produce as a small castle, it could only have been paid for by someone extraordinarily rich.

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to put aside the old-fashioned, unfinished Auct Bible, and to begin all over again with a new and illustrated Bible instead. This new replacement enterprise was the book we call the Winchester Bible.

Henry II was largely responsible for the killing of Thomas Becket in 1170, and Bishop Henry publicly reproached him for it just days before dying himself the following year. With the death of their patron, work on the Winchester Bible "stopped immediately", says de Hamel, and the monks returned to the Auct Bible, which was the one they finished.

As part of his penance for Becket's death, Henry founded a Carthusian monastery at Witham in Somerset. He placed as prior Hugh of Avalon (the future St Hugh of Lincoln), and when Hugh told him that the monastery lacked books, and could not easily obtain parchment (because Carthusians are vegetarians), King Henry gave him a magnificent Bible which he had obtained from the monks of Winchester Cathedral, promising to compensate them. According to de Hamel and the current mainstream view, the Bible that was given to Witham was the Auct Bible.

But was it? Professor Christopher Norton of the University of York, a specialist in medieval monastic art, believes that it was not the Auct Bible but the Winchester Bible. Whichever it was, when Hugh discovered it had been taken from its rightful home he insisted on returning it, without the King knowing. The story is told by Hugh's thirteenth-century biographer, Adam of Eynsham, in the Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis.

In 1961, when the Latin–English edition was published, the editors thought the Bible Hugh had received "was almost certainly the famous Winchester Bible ... The accentuation and correction marks fit Adam's description." De Hamel's reconstruction of the life of the Winchester Bible is a good story, but Norton's account – "an extraordinary story at the intersection of high politics, high churchmen, high art, and of course the Bible", as he put it to me – is appealing. To understand it, we need to know more about Henry II's life.

WHEN HE APPOINTED Thomas Becket as Lord Chancellor they became bosom friends. Henry had such trust in Becket that he sent his own son, also called Henry, to live in Becket's home, and when the Archbishop of Canterbury died, Henry could think of no one better to succeed him, even though Thomas was not even a priest. This could be put right, and in 1162 Thomas was ordained and the next day consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury by Bishop Henry.

King Henry had thought he would have an ally in Canterbury, but to his increasing fury, his friend went all ascetic and devoted himself to taking a tough line on the rights of the clergy. The King removed his son from Thomas' care and an acrimonious power struggle between Church and state began.

The King thought he would forestall problems over the succession to the throne by getting the coronation of his son done during his own lifetime. So in June 1170, "Henry the Young King" – a handsome and popular fairy-tale prince, who unfortunately turned out to be irresponsible and spendthrift – was crowned by the Archbishop of York and two other bishops, with the idea that he would not begin to rule until his father died. The anointing and crowning of a king was a sacred act, belonging normally to the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom Henry II was now in dispute. Thomas was furious that normal procedure had not been followed, and excommunicated all three bishops involved.

THE ROW PEAKED towards the end of the same year, with King Henry's famous, variously quoted, "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?", or "... free me of this meddlesome priest", or words to that effect. What he actually wanted was for Thomas to resign or be dismissed, but we know the sequel: a group of knights rode to Canterbury and cut off the crown of Thomas' head in the cathedral, scattering his brains on the floor. It was 29 December 1170.

When he heard about the killing, King Henry put on sackcloth and ashes and shut himself in his room for three days, refusing all food and comfort. By 1172 he was accepting a papal penance, agreeing to pay for 200 knights to assist in the defence of the Holy Land, and promising to set off himself on the Crusade (though in the end he founded monasteries in lieu). Such was the cult growing up around the new martyr that Thomas Becket was canonised in February 1173, barely more than two years after his death.

In the same year Henry the Young King began an armed revolt against his father, and Henry II felt oppressed by the curse of Thomas's murder. In 1174 he undertook a more dramatic penance, walking barefoot through Canterbury, falling prostrate before the place of martyrdom with many tears, enduring a flogging by the bishops and monks, and spending the night there in prayer.

The Young King's rebellion against his father did not succeed, and they reached a peace settlement, but in 1183 he rebelled again, this time dying of dysentery during the campaign. In his death throes he had a vision of Thomas Becket coming to meet him into the next life. King Henry was profoundly distressed by both his son's betrayal and his death, and said: "He cost me much, but I wish he had lived to cost me more."

Hugh meanwhile had become a spiritual counselor to the King, who "consulted him on all matters", according to the Magna Vita. Hugh "frequently reproved him for his various sins" and King Henry attributed his salvation from a life-threatening storm at sea to a prayer he made through Hugh's intercession.

WITH THIS CONTEXT, we are in position to understand Norton's theory that it was Henry II who commissioned the Winchester Bible, not Henry of Blois; and that it was the Winchester Bible, not the Auct Bible, that was sent to Witham. Much depends on the translation of the Latin verb conficere in the Magna Vita, which the great art historian, Walter Oakeshott, said meant "completed", and this was his principal reason in 1981 for reversing his earlier judgement that the Winchester Bible was sent to Witham.

If King Henry gave Hugh a Bible which had been "completed" at Winchester, then it points to the Auct Bible; but if it simply means "made" in Winchester, then it could indicate the Winchester Bible, which was complete in its text, but incomplete in its illustrations, and remains so. The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources seems to favour Norton's reading: the primary translation is "bring together, make, make up"; only as the fifth meaning does it give "complete".

If it was the Winchester Bible that King Henry had given to Hugh, this would provide a convincing reason, firstly, for why it was bound up before it was finished – because it needed to be sent away – and secondly, for why it never was finished, because discretion required that on its return to Winchester it should remain hidden to avoid offending or angering King Henry. By the time it was safe to bring it out, the brilliant group of international artists who had worked on the miniatures had dispersed. It would also explain why King Henry wanted this particular Bible for Hugh, because as the person who had paid for the Winchester Bible he was giving away something that was in a sense his own. And it is not more likely that the two rival bibles were commissioned by the two rival millionaires – Bishop Henry and King Henry – rather than by the same person, who had grown tired of one and began another?

But there is something more interesting and compelling about the theory that the Winchester Bible was "King Henry's Bible". Its unusual choice of pictures would have had a deep emotional meaning for a king struggling to make sense of the tragedies of his life. The famous Morgan Leaf from the Winchester Bible (probably removed in the 1820s when the Bible was rebound, and now in the...
Christopher Howse's Notebook

Somehow we have preserved the culture of the Sixties in amber

There's a fragment from a song that has stayed in my memory: "You turn all the lead sleeping in my head to gold." It comes from the first album by Arcade Fire, called Funeral (2004). It is a beautiful metaphor, and I'm happy to find poetry where I can.

Such fragments are sometimes the work of no single lyricist, having been mauled by transmission, like the words of any folk song. Bob Dylan was fortunate in that way with a couple of lines from his version of "Man of Constant Sorrow": "Through this open world I'm a-bound to ramble / Through ice and snow, sleet and rain." This sounds age-old, echoing from a land far, far away. But I think the second line was a filler to supply for words he'd forgotten when rearranging the lyrics. The song, which he put on his album Bob Dylan in 1962, had, as far as I can tell, been written by Emry Arthur, who had recorded it only 33 years earlier, in 1929. Emry Arthur's is a fine version, crackling like some ancient folk song from an ancient folk singer collected on an Edison cylinder by Percy Grainger.

Yet it is now nearly 50 years since Dylan made his own recording, a much longer time from now to then than from Dylan back to Arthur. Somehow we have preserved the culture of the Sixties in amber. I suspect it's because many of that generation won't let it go of it.

I thought of this last week, when, for the want of a live Glastonbury festival, BBC television gave us archive coverage. Many of the acts had been nostalgic when they were performed amid the Somerset mud, so the television reprised presented us with receding mirrors of nostalgia. One set from 2002. Arthur Lee, the singer songwriter from the Sixties group Love. In a worrying state of health, he gave the crowd in the westering sun most of Forever Changes. In Britain that album came out in 1969. I was a boy in the form at school called In the Jesuit system, Rudiments. But my brother was old enough and tuned in enough to buy it.

The track called "Maybe the People Would Be the Times or Between Clark and Hilldale" begins with the couplet: "What is happening and how have you been? / Gotta go but I'll see you again." I've since found those lines very powerful in expressing the ephemeral in human existence.

I knew nothing then of Arthur Lee's life, and hardly know much more now. But he lived and worked in Los Angeles, and there was a seedy, cheap cafe that he nicknamed the Slop Affair, on the corner of Sunset and Hilldale. I don't suppose the neighbourhood was very sparkling, but nor was the Soho that I came to know when I grew up.

I already had a set attitude of not being surprised to meet people again by chance and of not saying goodbye in any definite way on parting. As with the "Man of Constant Sorrow", this open world seemed to be for rambling through. It was P.Y. Bettis who noticed as a child that "people who come to say goodbye usually don't come back". (That gave the title of her incomparable memoir of childhood People Who Say Goodbye, 1991, written when she was 80.)

Perhaps I took it all a bit far. Either way, most people in my address book are dead. Three years after his Glastonbury booking, Arthur Lee was dead too.

I went to Mass one day during the lockdown. A lot of Tablet readers probably did too, one way or another. I won't say where, because priests get into trouble for the most ridiculous things. If I said it was somewhere in Hertfordshire I might have said too much.

Did I break the law? No, I am confident I had the requisite reasonable excuse under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, which were ever at hand. For me it was the greatest recognisable blessing of the year.

It's 101 years since the publication of Winifride de Hôpital's book about her father, the architect J.F. Bentley, and the building of Westminster Cathedral. I remember from its two volumes the number of bricks used (12,454,474) and the strong regret at Eric Gill's stations of the cross in a Byzantine church. Now we have John Francis Bentley by the historian Peter Howell. My copy is in the post and I keep an ear open for the postman's footsteps.

Christopher Howse is an assistant editor of The Daily Telegraph.
The Tablet Readers’ Appeal

In his memorable interview in the Easter issue of The Tablet, Pope Francis addressed us directly:

“There is a yearning for the rebirth and renewal of old institutions and ideas, a resurrection of the human spirit in the name of solidarity. All the efforts made to defeat the coronavirus, all the heartache and suffering endured, deserve a new beginning. Let’s not let this moment slip from us,” he urged. “Let’s move ahead.”

The Covid storm has tested us all. But thanks to your support for our development fund, we have been able to increase the reach of both our print and our digital platforms, and we have drawn new voices into the Tablet conversation through online events.

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Brendan Walsh
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FEATURES / Catholicism in crisis

The biographer of John Paul II believes that Catholicism in Western Europe is moribund. As other Christian communities with a clear sense of moral identity flourish, only a pope offering doctrinal clarity will make the faith compelling / By GEORGE WEIGEL

The next pope

I N JOHN 8:31-32, the Lord Jesus proclaims that those who “continue in his word” will “know the truth, and the truth will make you free”. Thus the next pope must understand that doctrine is liberating, and that Catholicism can and must be both a Christ-centred Church of doctrinal clarity and a Christ-centred Church manifesting the divine mercy. That understanding will help him, and it will help the Church he leads, to cope with a basic sociological fact about the Christian circumstance today.

There seems to be a kind of iron law built into the relationship between Christianity and modernity (and late modernity, and post-modernity, and probably whatever is coming after post-modernity); Christian communities that have a clear sense of doctrinal and moral identity can survive, even flourish, under the challenges posed by contemporary culture; Christian communities whose sense of identity becomes weak and whose boundaries become porous wither – and some die.

This iron law was first demonstrated among the various forms of liberal Protestantism around the world. The liberal Protestant denominations that began abandoning doctrinal clarity in the nineteenth century and moral clarity in the twentieth are dying – everywhere. The part of Protestantism throughout the world that is growing is evangelical, Pentecostal, or fundamentalist. And while there are vast differences in theological sensibility and pastoral method among evangelical Protestants, Pentecostalists and Protestant fundamentalists, each of these forms of Christianity exhibits clarity of teaching and strong moral expectations.

The iron law is also applicable to world Catholicism. There is a strong correlation between the collapse of Catholic belief and practice in Western Europe and the ongoing attempt there to make “Catholic Lite” – a Catholicism of indeterminate convictions and porous behavioural boundaries – work as a twenty-first-century pastoral method. This phenomenon is most obvious in the German-speaking lands of Europe but it is not confined there. Catholic Lite is an evangelical and pastoral failure throughout Western Europe, as it is an evangelical and pastoral failure in North America, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand.

By contrast, the living, vibrant parts of the world Church in the third decade of the twenty-first century are those that have made the proclamation of the Gospel their priority; that offer a distinctive mode of life, and whose members are growing – even if sometimes at a slower rate – because they offer a fusing way of life, rooted in friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is most obviously true of the newer local Churches of sub-Saharan Africa. It is also true of the growing end of the Church in North America. And it is true of those shoots of new Christian life that are sprouting up through the hard, secularised soil of Europe.

This basic truth of twenty-first-century Catholic life – Catholicism-in-full is attractive and compelling; Catholic Lite is moribund – also extends across a range of Catholic institutions. It is true of parishes, dioceses, religious communities, seminaries and lay renewal movements. Perhaps the most dramatic example is found in communities of women Religious in the West. There, communities that have abandoned the religious habit and a distinctive mode of life, and whose members regularly dissent from authoritative church teaching, are dying; those that have embraced the reform of religious life mandated by the Second Vatican Council in the decrees, Perfectae Caritatis, as authoritatively interpreted by Pope John Paul II in the 1996 apostolic exhortation, Vita Consecrata, are growing – even as society makes more and more opportunities for service and leadership available to women. Lay renewal movements in the Church follow a similar pattern: those that have flourished in the past several decades embrace Catholicism-in-full.

That Catholicism-in-full attracts is also demonstrated by the remarkable fact that, in the United States, seminary recruitment has not collapsed under the pressure of the scandal of clerical sexual abuse. A young man discerning a priestly vocation today is not only
CATHOLICISM IN FULL does not set "Gospel" against "doctrine". That is a Protestantising move that has done grave damage to the Christian Identity and witness of many Christian communities born from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Catholicism-in-full recognises that the basic Gospel proclamation – "Jesus is Lord" – was developed intellectually by a Spirit-led movement within the Church, which produced the Church's creeds and its defining dogmatic statements. Catholicism-in-full also recognises that, under the same divine inspiration, the Church's understanding of the truths that make the Church who she is develops over time – always in continuity with what has been handed on from the past. Thus Catholicism-in-full deploys both Gospel and doctrine in evangelisation and pastoral ministry, believing that the full truth of Catholic faith is indeed liberating in the deepest meaning of human freedom.

The failures of Catholic lite have been manifest for some time, and it takes a special kind of arrogance, or just plain stubbornness, not to face the empirical facts of the contemporary Catholic situation. Catholic lite may have the capacity to maintain existing Catholic institutions for a time; Catholic lite has demonstrated no capacity to grow those institutions or, more importantly, to transform them into platforms for evangelisation and mission.

This suggests that, in the not-too-distant future, Catholic lite will lead to "Catholic Zero" - a Catholicism that has lost any serious capacity for either mission or public witness. Examples of this can be found in both Europe and North America, in once-vibrant Catholic cultures and societies such as those in Quebec, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. These societies are now aptly described as "post-Christian". And in several cases, "post-Christian" is rapidly decaying into "anti-Christian", with the Church incapable of mounting any defence of the innocent against the culture of death, or of responding to the anti-Christian propaganda in politics, culture and the media that seeks to drive the Church out of public life.

TO REPEAT and sum up: there is no example, anywhere in the world, of Catholic lite delivering on its promise of "relevance". Where Catholic lite has infected local Churches, evangelical fervour has diminished and so has the Catholic capacity to shape humane societies. These situations are sometimes described, and by high-ranking churchmen, as a "pastoral emergency" for which more light and lighter Catholic lite is prescribed.

The iron law of Christianity and modernity suggests an alternative diagnosis and prescription. The "emergency" is a collapse of deep faith that Jesus is Lord, which has led to a failure to proclaim the Gospel. The remedy is a vibrant Catholicism-in-full offering friendship with Jesus Christ and incorporation into the communion of his friends as a pathway to human happiness, fulfillment – and salvation. The next pope must know these truths and lead the Church in light of them.

Caricatures to the contrary notwithstanding, Catholicism-in-full is not a revulsion to Jansenism or other forms of moral rigourism in the Church. The vibrant, living parts of the world Church are not those resisting the handclasp of fellowship to the already perfected. The living parts of the world Church are those that offer friendship with Jesus Christ to those caught in the worship of false gods, be those the gods that terrify indigenous peoples, or, in the West, the false god of the imperial autonomous Self – the false god "Me".

THE LIVING PARTS of the world Church are those parts of the Church that confide in mercy as well as truth, while recognising that the most merciful thing a Christian can do for suffering or lost souls is to offer them the truth: that, in Jesus Christ, we meet the face of the merciful Father and the truth about ourselves – the Father who welcomes the prodigals home when they acknowledge that they have squandered their human dignity, and the truth that that dignity is magnified in Christ.

When a pope manifests the power of divine mercy in his own life, he empowers the people of the Church to be agents of that mercy in the world. The next pope must live and teach in such a way that the relationship between mercy and truth is clear, and he must live and teach in such a way that mercy (which the world often confuses with therapeutic forgetfulness) does not devolve into sentimentality. The divine mercy is purifying as well as comforting, and what can seem comforting will not be truly comforting over time if it is detached from purification.

Growth into the Christian life is a lifelong process for all. The lesson involves both truth and mercy. Catholics learn that lesson from the lives of the saints, beginning with Peter himself. The next pope must teach that lesson to a Church sometimes confused about the intimate relationship between mercy and truth and should display the meaning of the lesson in his own self-emptying witness to Christ.

Adapted and excerpted from The Next Pope: The Office of Peter and a Church in Mission, published this week by Ignatius Press.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies. His books include Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II.
FEATURES / The life of the mind

In a transactional, technological world riven by crisis, have literature and philosophy become redundant? An American academic argues that the renewal of our inner life is fundamental to preserving our humanity / By ZENA HITZ

In defence of bookworms

Hard-boiled bookworms like myself sometimes find ourselves in a crisis of conscience when dramatic human suffering forces its way into our awareness. When I was a PhD student in philosophy, the smoking ruins of the World Trade Center shook me out of my contemplative slumber. I felt I could not live in a library: I had to “make a difference”, to help to heal the broken fragments of the world.

The desire to make a difference is not always easy to distinguish from the urge to make a splash. So, in turn, one can end up making a spectacle of oneself. We live in a social world where the thirst for justice seems to lead on to fixed and rigid pathways, and where absurd performances can take precedence over substance. This is nothing new. Caryll Houselander wrote in 1944 of an invalid lady who could not forgive God for not permitting her to be eaten by a cannibal and so achieve martyrdom. “She could not accept herself as a sick woman,” Houselander wrote. “But she would have achieved heroic virtue as a cutlet!” We prefer the fictional role of a cannibal’s dinner to the real tedium of illness.

It is easy to snark, but difficult to know what to do. Amid a global pandemic and a powerful movement against police violence and racism, what point could there be in studying literature, philosophy, poetry or mathematics? Aren’t all those self-indulgent hobbies for quieter times? Aren’t we bound to dedicate ourselves to the welfare of our neighbours, now more than ever?

Two sets of walls divide us both from learning and from service, from the true life of the mind and the true life of the heart. The first, as I have suggested, is a tendency to dwell in fantasy. Just as we may devise a theatrical fight for justice that never leaves the realm of pixels, we can study and think precisely to avoid the demands of others. We may retreat into our imagined proofs of our superiority to others, assembling an arsenal of facts with which to bludgeon our unsuspecting enemies. So we imagine we recover status and from service, from the true life of the heart.

The second wall is our comfort. As a PhD student, luxury more than competition was my obstacle. I was comfortable, safe, travelled regularly, went to parties, and was successful at prestigious work that I loved. When the Twin Towers came down on 11 September 2001, I realised that my comfort wasn’t all there was. The fact that others suffered while I flourished seemed not right. Surely I ought to suffer for them and with them? While fantasy substitutes for reality, comfort gives an only partial view. To catch a glimpse of what has been obscured changes us.

When we read or study seriously, not to compete for status or to distract ourselves, we encounter the object of our attention in all of its messy, unpredictable reality. Such reading and thinking involves discipline to undertake, and a willingness to surrender to whatever one may find. We may not know in advance how entering a fictional world or considering a philosophical theorem might change us. The great chronicler of peregrine falcons, Essex office worker John Baker, may not have known in advance that he would find himself admiring the colour of blood, as he learned over time to identify with his bloodthirsty birds. Learning requires abandonment, the fear of which has to be overcome at the outset.

Our intellectual comfort is our certainty, our confidence, our sense of righteousness. It is the ease of life with others who share our views. Any encounter with the real threatens to unsettle that comfort, leaving us in confusion or loneliness, just as a drive through an impoverished neighbourhood may mar the beauty of one’s own luxurious garden, or a visit to the hospital may reveal our health to be the accident it is.

Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker movement, opened up houses of hospitality all over the United States, and began a tradition of Catholic anti-war activism, protesting against the atom bomb and nuclear weapons testing. She might seem above all a woman of action. And yet in an interview with a biographer, she said something surprising: she wanted to be remembered especially as a lover of books.

Day did not consider herself a scholar. But she considered that her call to love her neighbours came through avid reading. As a young woman, she read authors with a heart for the poor, Dickens, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, and came to see working people through their eyes. She read the Psalms, and when in jail after a suffragist protest, she felt the words of the Psalms echo through her own experience and through the desperate people imprisoned with her. For Day, books were not an escape so much as they were a way to meet the real world that her middle-class upbringing had hidden from her.

We are by nature animals who perceive...
and think. Yet for the most part we live windowless lives. Our appetites and aspirations for ourselves come first: I am in pain, I am hungry, I am tired, I have been insulted. We animals of the screen who have evolved over the last 20 years are more sophisticated: I think this, not that; he is right, she is wrong; he is evil, she is admirable; I like this, I don’t like that; smiley face, angry face; heart, retweet.

In every book is at least one other human being; an author. The author offers us a way of seeing, glimpses from high places or low from which we had not yet examined things. Sometimes the author shares other people with us, and we come to see their thoughts, desires and limitations. Reading at its best is a mode of communion more than it is a vehicle of distraction.

Augustine said that love could not bind people together if no one learnt anything from anyone else. He meant, I think, that books and learning develop our capacities to love and to choose. So too, they give us a dignity beyond our ordinary usefulness as a grocer, a barrister, or a cleaner. They open up points of connection with other human beings, where we see them, and they us, not as vehicles for power or for pleasure, but as fellow travellers or fellow labourers in the endeavour of understanding. Like all common endeavours, learning is a bond of unity in which our differences first drop away, then return graced with new worth.

The memoirs of the marginalised and the impoverished testify to the power of learning to elevate and to forge bonds of unity. The oppressed find through books, plays, poetry and astronomy a dignity denied them in ordinary life. Jonathan Rose’s wonderful book, The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes, collects many such testimonies. The black American scholar and activist, W.E.B. Du Bois, writes of finding among dead authors such as Aristotle or Balzac a community of equals where skin colour dropped into irrelevance. Many black American leaders and authors describe their education in similar terms. They find a freedom in old books often denied them by living neighbours.

We live these days under a funny kind of authoritarianism. We are not meant to pick up a great book and encounter the author as an equal, but to sit at the feet of an expert who tells us how to think. Likewise in service: we are not meant to simply visit our neighbour, get to know them, and help as we can, but we must support top-down initiatives, five-point plans and policies – all designed from on high by people who do not know those whose lives they will shape. But we ourselves will not grow in either learning or love unless we look at one another at eye level.

Through serious reading, Du Bois found a community of the dead, and his own dignity. Dorothy Day found a way to build a community of the living that offered a window on to the whole of humanity. She felt, reciting the Psalms in jail, that she experienced the sufferings of others through the sufferings of Christ.

The mystical body of Christ, in the world of the living, is a suffering body. We resist serious reading, just as we avoid the suffering of our flesh-and-blood neighbours, because we do not want ourselves to suffer. If we are to pick up the fragments of a broken world, we must steel ourselves for pain, fear and uncertainty. Serious reading provides both practice in endurance and fuel for reimagining the future. Real change is organic, and so requires patience. Patience, as Gerard Manley Hopkins says, comes those ways we know.

Zena Hitz is a tutor at St John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland. Her latest book, Lost In Thought: The Hidden Pleasures of an Intellectual Life, is published by Princeton University Press at £18.99 (Tablet price £17.09).

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FEATUEES / Dowry of Mary

An ambitious proposal to redevelop the riverside Catholic Marian shrine lying south of Walsingham village is meeting stiff opposition from local people and heritage groups / By ELENA CURTI

Choppy waters for pilgrims’ progress

THE CATHOLIC shrine in Walsingham has become central to Marian devotion with the recent rededication of England as the Dowry of Mary. The statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was taken on a "Dowry Tour" of England’s cathedrals in preparation, but because of the Covid-19 crisis the ceremony was livestreamed from the shrine to more than half-a-million homes. The Rector of the Shrine, Mgr John Armitage, quoted the prophecy of Pope Leo XIII, who wrote to the English bishops in 1893: “When England goes back to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England.”

During the lockdown, hundreds of thousands of people have been virtual pilgrims to Walsingham, thanks to its extensive livestreaming programme. When physical pilgrimages resume, they will of necessity be smaller, but the shrine’s administrators are preparing for the day when they can welcome large numbers once again.

Catholic architect Anthony Delarue has submitted plans to North Norfolk District Council to double the indoor space at the site with a much bigger church, covered walkways, a pilgrim centre and improved facilities for visitors. There is a consensus that the latter are sorely needed. Mgr Armitage launched the first version of the development scheme in 2015, soon after he became Rector, but the sensitivity of the site and other difficulties in 2015, the project was put on hold. Delarue has proposed a design review or competition to produce a quality design while minimising impact on the historic environment.

Environment Agency recommends refusal of the planning application because of the flood risk. Others are fearful of the impact of the development on the abundance of wildlife along the River Stiffkey. Crucially, there is a requirement that the design and scale harmonises with the beautiful Slipper Chapel, which is Grade I listed, and the place where medieval pilgrims removed their shoes before walking the final “Holy Mile” to Walsingham barefoot.

The proposed new church would be located behind the Slipper Chapel where the Chapel of Our Lady of Reconciliation, often known as the “barn church”, now stands. This chapel, where the main pilgrim Masses are celebrated, was built in 1982 to resemble a Norfolk barn, and seats 500. Delarue’s proposed replacement is twice the size, with a transept, and tower topped by a statue of the Virgin Mary. Critics describe it as “high urban Gothic”, “grandiose” and “overly ornate”. Delarue has reduced the scale of his church to try to meet objections, but it is still claimed that it will swamp the Slipper Chapel.

In its submission, Historic England agrees, raising “serious concerns” about the application on heritage grounds. The agency is most worried about the scale of the proposed church, particularly the tower, and also the spire of a new Lamps Chapel. Historic England is also critical of the church’s design, describing it as “a mixture of styles and traditions, many of them not found in the region”. It suggests that a design review or competition “might be useful in bringing a wide range of views and expertise to bear on the problem of how to produce a quality design while minimising impact on the historic environment”.

In normal times, it is estimated that around 250,000 people a year visit the Slipper Chapel site, with regular pilgrimages organised by parishes and other Catholic groups. These include the annual New Dawn festival – an important event in the Charismatic Renewal

The Tablet - making sense of a world in lockdown

In his recent exclusive interview with The Tablet, Pope Francis says the Covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity for conversion and reform.

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Trustees of putting the pilgrim experience

testing Catholic, accuses the Walsingham
Chapman, a parish council member and prac-
tices of “zero engagement” with them. Frank
Parish Council accuses the Walsingham Trust
Barsham, but the Barsham and Houghton
public consultations in Walsingham and
numbers.

assurances from the shrine’s administrators

ting to the local economy. They do not believe
that large coach parties often spend the entire
time at the Catholic shrine, contributing noth-
ing to how to ameliorate the traffic would go a
long way towards addressing residents’ con-
cerns. He gives a brisk “no comment” when
ask him whether the shrine needs a bigger
church.

The district council has received many
favourable responses to the plans, though
many of these respondents live in other parts
of the country. David Chapman (no relation
to Frank Chapman) of Walsingham
Association Publications, lives in north
London and has been visiting the shrine since
1962. He believes the Slipper Chapel site needs
a new church that befits its status as a major
European Marian shrine. “If you’re going to
build, you build with confidence. The new

church makes a bold statement,” he says.

Sister Camilla Oberding, leader of the
Community of Our Lady of Walsingham, who
runs the Dowry House Retreat Centre in
Walsingham village, describes the new plans as
“wonderful” and is looking forward to the
new facilities. “I’m hoping we’ll get the new
toilets, larger eating areas and a cloister for
when it rains, which happens quite a lot. I
can understand local residents being worried
about the amount of traffic while the building
work is going on, but the short time when
there will be disturbance will be worthwhile
in the long run. You have to look at the bigger
picture,” she says. Sr Camilla believes that if
people have a positive experience at the shrine,
they are more likely to extend the length of
their stay at Walsingham, using B-and-Bs,
shops and restaurants.

Both Sr Camilla and David Chapman have
praised Mgr Armitage for building relations
with the Anglican shrine and also with
Walsingham Estates, owners of the abbey
ruins in the village and major landowners.
They point out that Catholic pilgrims are
couraged to walk the Holy Mile, visit the
Anglican shrine, the abbey ruins and the stun-
ing modern Catholic parish church in
Walsingham village.

MGR ARMITAGE will move on at the end of
August at the completion of his five-year term.
He was away on holiday at the time of writing.
The incoming Rector, Mgr Canon Philip
Moger, a parish priest from the Diocese of
Leeds, says he “absolutely” supports the plans,
but is reluctant to comment further. “When
you go to a new place, the first thing you do
is be patient, sit down, listen and let people
speak. It’s always a mistake to go in with a
great plan before know exactly how things
will work out,” he tells me.

North Norfolk District Council is unlikely
to make a decision before September, and
will hold further public consultations. The
East Anglia Historic Churches Committee,
which will determine listed-building consent,
is undertaking its own consultation with statu-
tory bodies. Mgr Keith Barltrop, a London
parish priest and a Walsingham trustee, says
the Walsingham Trust has “already paid care-
ful attention to the views of local people and
adapted the plans accordingly, and will no
doubt continue to do so”.

Plans for pilgrimages will be radically
affected by the pandemic, according to Mgr
Barltrop: “Large pilgrimages will be out of
scope because of the restrictions, but I think
the Walsingham Trust will have to be more care-
ful and plan to cater for more small-scale
pilgrimages in the future.”

Elena Curti is a former deputy editor of The
Tablet. Her book, 50 Catholic Churches in
England and Wales to See Before You Die,
which includes the Slipper Chapel, is due to
be published by Gracewing in September.
Faith in the arts

The Piccadilly Theatre, London, wrapped in pink tape last week as part of a national Missing Live Theatre campaign by theatre designers

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on our spiritual and imaginative life, argues an Anglican bishop and writer, welcoming the government’s announcement this week of a £1.57 billion fund to help save the short-term future of theatres, concert halls, museums and galleries / By MARTIN WARNER

FEAT URES / Protecting human dignity

I SPENT MANY childhood summers with my grandparents in the seaside town of Broadstairs. One of the places I used to visit with my grandfather was St Augustine's Church in nearby Ramsgate, where Augustus Welby Pugin, its famous architect, is buried in his own side chapel. I will never forget the beauty of this sacred space. Even Philip Larkin, a poet who was dogmatically indifferent to religious faith, recognised how the atmosphere of being in a church building might surprise in us a hunger “to be more serious”.

The weeks of our confinement have brought home to me how important it is for us to be in places of beauty – and sometimes to be there with others, to be part of an assembly. Simply looking at images, or making virtual visits to galleries and museums, or watching a livestreamed religious service, is good, but it is not the same. The lockdown has deprived us of something more precious to us than perhaps we realised.

Of course, the greatest damage caused by the Covid storm has been the premature loss of so many lives. There has been so much sadness and grieving. And the impact of the pandemic has been hardest on those already disadvantaged: the poor; the elderly; prisoners; the homeless; vulnerable children and their families.

There is an understandable urgency now to rebuild the economy nationally and globally. But it would be good to reflect, too, on the lessons that we have learnt in the past few months. Perhaps the greatest is the truth that no person is simply a statistic, and how much the health and well-being of each of us is connected to others. Every death is a bereavement and every infringement of human dignity is an injustice that diminishes us all.

The pandemic has also taught us that one of the most powerful ways the dignity of each person can be demonstrated is through the arts. The rainbow symbol, painted by children and displayed in windows and drawn in chalk on the pavements, is more than a popular, widely understood expression of support for the NHS. It is a statement of hope for the future. And it is an expression of human skill modelled on natural beauty in creation (though I fear that the biblical use of the rainbow symbol has been largely unrecognised).

STREET ART, RAP, fringe theatre, satire; the cartoons and animations that are exchanged on social media; the actors and musicians and dancers recorded performing from home: we have seen so much extraordinary work in recent weeks demonstrating the power of artists to alert us to poverty, hypocrisy or injustice, as well as celebrating the heroism of so many ordinary people and simply delighting in beauty for its own sake. This points to the seriousness of entertainment. It is a responsibility that those who work in the arts understand. Indeed, demonstrating the dignity of life and personhood is often the motivation for their work. Here in Sussex the Chichester Festival Youth Theatre runs attractive, inclusive programmes that reach out to some 800 young people from every background. Glyndebourne, in East Sussex, is more than an opera house for the well-to-do. It runs an amazing education programme that gives opportunities for local performers and was innovative back in the 1950s in taking opera into the nearby Lewes Prison. The award-winning partnership of Opera North with St Anne’s Cathedral in Leeds makes the benefits of music accessible to thousands of students in state schools.

But the arts can be more than a vehicle for peaceful protest and engagement with our moral conscience. The arts have a capacity for social inclusion that transcends age, social status and any other forms of categorisation. They act as an international medium of communication, ensuring that we sustain our relationships with Europe and the rest of the world. Creative industries contributed more than £111 billion to the UK economy in 2018.

CHRISTIANITY HAS always valued the arts as a distinctive expression of the image of God in us. Our capacity for imagination and creativity is evidence of a giftedness that comes from God through the Holy Spirit. The arts are an expression of divine love in creation, giving dignity to human labour. The government’s newly announced £1.57 billion fund for the arts will help ensure the survival of this vital element of our cultural, spiritual and economic life.

The Old Testament hints at this in the detailed accounts of the artistry needed to create the Tabernacle, and ultimately the Temple in Jerusalem that housed the Ark of the Covenant. This is the template for the Church’s worship in spirit and in truth, which Pugin sought to present so imaginatively in his designs for St Augustine’s and elsewhere. Nor should we forget that the ordering of worship in the Temple set the standard for sustaining the social virtues of justice, mercy, truth and peace.

To worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 96:9) is the foundation for how the Christian is shaped by these virtues and practises them. Worship is how we protest our conviction in the dignity of each and every person, and proclaim our solemn responsibility for the stewardship of creation. Beauty, through the labour of the artist, is a thread by which God draws us to perfection and glory in his presence.

(See also Mark Lawson, p23.)

Martin Warner is the Bishop of Chichester. His books include Between Heaven and Charing Cross and The Habit of Holiness.
WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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The unmentionable Mahler

THE FUNERAL this week of Georg Ratzinger brought back memories of an awkward encounter with the brother of the Pope Emeritus for an English filmmaker. Mark Dowd had been commissioned by the BBC to profile Pope Benedict XVI ahead of his 2010 visit to the UK, and was delighted to have secured an interview with Georg. The brothers were close. They had been ordained on the same day in 1951, and after his younger brother was elected pope, a separate apartment had been created for Georg in the papal digs in the Apostolic Palace, where he would stay during visits to Rome from Bavaria.

Dowd turned up at the Ratzinger home in Regensburg for his appointment: “I’d prepared meticulously for the encounter,” he told us, “even remembering to address him correctly as ‘Herr Domkappellmeister’.”

The interview had to traverse tricky territory: the brothers’ membership of the Hitler Youth, the clerical sex abuse scandal in the Church, and the continuing dysfunction in the Vatican’s finances. “I’d been told to watch for the encounter,” he told us, “I’m not sure we’d have got past the first question.” Dowd told us: “He asked me if I enjoyed classical music and who my composer of inspiration was. ‘Gustav Mahler’, I said. A look of horror passed over Georg’s face. If we’d started on this before the interview got started,” Dowd told us, “my step, as Georg was very protective of his little brother,” Dowd told us. He managed to keep out of trouble. When the camera stopped recording, he relaxed, and made small talk about Georg’s role as the director of a boys’ choir school. “He asked me if I enjoyed classical music and who my composer of inspiration was. ‘Gustav Mahler’, I said. A look of horror passed over Georg’s face. If we’d started on this before the interview got started,” Dowd told us, “I’m not sure we’d have got past the first question.”

Herr Domkappellmeister’s parting shot was to quote with approval a music critic who had once said that all serious music stopped at Beethoven. More ammunitions, perhaps, for those who insist that the Ratzingers never much liked “modernity.”

CHARLES NYAMITI, one of the great pioneers of inculturation and of African theological studies, has died at the age of 89. Ordained a priest in 1962 in his native diocese of Tabora in Tanzania, Nyamiti studied in Louvain and Vienna. He resisted several offers to teach in north America or Europe: he chose instead to spend his career teaching in Africa.

Patrick Strong, a trainer and lecturer in mental health issues and safeguarding who for the past twelve years has given workshops at the Apostles of Jesus Seminary in Nairobi, where Professor Nyamiti lived and taught, told us: “His room was next to mine and we shared many animated exchanges. He regarded himself as part European by virtue of his long association with Louvain and Vienna and was always asking me about the Church in Europe. He was the outstanding African theologian of his generation. My abiding memory of him was sitting in his chair by an open door, drafting the latest edition of one of his many books, but always ready to engage anyone passing by in conversation.”

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 715 Enigma

Across
1 Devotion said to have originated with St Dominic (6)
2 The fictional Mr ------ was a nobody (6)
6 According to Hebrews 13:2 one may be so when entertaining angels (7)
7 & 22 Accross: Words announcing imminent closing of doors at a conclave (5,5)
12 Surname of actor whose character’s catchphrase was “Just one more thing” (4,4)
13 They provide horizontal access and drainage in mines (5)
17 “In which Piglet does a very ------ thing” (4) (Winnie the Pooh, A. A. Milne) (5)
18 His bones are in Durham Cathedral since 1022 (4)
22 See 11 Across
23 Outer casing of a jet engine (7)
24 Otto Liethelth (late nineteenth century) was the first really successful user of this (6)
25 One of those whose wings fill the evening in Yeats’ “I will arise and go now” (6)

Down
1 Second name of St Oscar Romero (7)
2 Birth nationality of Natalie Portman (7)
3 Member of a mendicant order (5)
4 Popular name of Luniana Anna (7)
5 In the song “Chicago” ------ Street is called “That Great Street” (6)
6 It is an aerophone, and the hydraulics is its earliest ancestor (5)
9 --------- Magellan; sixteenth-century Portuguese explorer (9)
14 Film of Ronald Harwood’s play “The -------” starred Anthony Hopkins and Ian McKellen (7)
15 Painter brother-in-law of Mantegna (fifteenth/sixteenth century) (7)
16 Small musical instrument whose felt hammers strike steel plates (7)
19 Term for Maori nose-to-nose greeting (5)
20 Surname of actress playing Lady Ludlow in BBC’s Cranford (5)
21 Fabric used in heavy-duty lining or upholstery (5)

Solution to the 20 June crossword No. 712
Across: 7 Upsets; 8 Homily; 10 Trivial; 11 Norse; 12 Roes; 13 Fonts; 14 Mustang; 15 Almonds; 16 Prayers; 19 Greek; 20 Egret; 21 Bravo.

Solution to the 20 June puzzle
Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

SUDOKU | Challenging

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Prison sort of works

In your review (Books, 27 June) of Amanda Brown’s The Prison Doctor: Women Inside, the strandline quotes Michael Howard’s assertion that “prison works” and Dr Brown’s reply that it definitely doesn’t. I disagree with both.

Like Dr Brown, I am a healthcare professional and have worked with some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people. While Dr Brown looks after their health in prison, many of the homeless people that I have looked after over the past 20 years have recently been in prison, and a huge proportion of them quickly return to prison. It’s not unusual for my patients to be liberated from prison into a homeless hostel and for them to be back in prison again before permanent accommodation can be found for them. Many have been so socialised into prison life that they find life on the outside intolerably stressful and so, either deliberately or inadvertently, they quickly return to the security of prison.

One young man told me that he loved the music of Johnny Cash because it reminded him of the good times inside. For many of my patients, life is so hard that they look for respite. One woman told me that she needed a few months in prison, but because they need some respite. One woman told me that she needed a few months inside to get away from her abusive partner who spent all their money on drugs, stole her medication and was violent towards her.

In the sense that Michael Howard meant, prison doesn’t work. For some it may be a deterrent, for many it isn’t. For most prisoners it does nothing to rehabilitate them and does not address the root cause of their offending behaviour. It is my experience that, with the exception of lifers being released on licence, very little is done to prepare prisoners for life outside. However, there is a way in which prison does work: it improves the health of prisoners. I can tell immediately that a patient has been recently liberated from prison because they look so much healthier. The daily routine, regular meals, good access to healthcare and very restricted access to alcohol and illicit drugs definitely improves the health of most prisoners.

One other way in which prison works is in reducing the stress on parents of young offenders. There is often a sense of relief when a young person is incarcerated as their parents now know that they are safe. This sense of relief usually goes hand in hand with a strong sense of guilt.

New normal

Many individuals and groups are trying to work out just what the “new normal” will mean for them. I don’t get a sense of any serious such searching within our Church. May I suggest that we start by looking for a new theology?

Why? Because Catholics and other Christians are still living from a medieval pattern of thinking and praying. How do we find a theology for the twenty-first century?
I appreciate Ladislas Orsy’s words about Sunday Mass Obligation (“Word from the Cloisters”, 4 July). The wording of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2181) on the subject, which you quote in the article, sounds very threatening. It’s as if one is being summoned to a court hearing, with dire consequences if you do not attend.

Surely the Eucharist is a celebration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, which people are invited to celebrate freely, willingly and joyfully? When this pandemic is over, why not rewrite CCC 2181 and drop the words “obligation” and “grave sin”? Or is the Church just going to go back to the usual “old normal”? The pandemic, distressing as it is for many people, is an opportunity for new vision.

FRANK GRAHAM MHH
LIVERPOOL

With the anxious discussion about numbers permitted in church buildings, it is worth recalling that Jesus did not say: “Where two or three hundred are gathered in my name…” (FR) DES O’DONNELL OMI DUBLIN

Help for disbelief

The exposition by Tara Isabella Burton of the current “disbelief and disaffiliation” in much of Western society (“Religion remodelled”, 4 July) is to be welcomed. It does raise the question, especially in the context of the New Evangelism, of what we are doing about it. I wonder, for example, if the Jesus push for the “preferential option for the poor”, surely a providential gift of the Holy Spirit, needs now to be enlarged to include the preferential option for the confused?

During the chaos of Paris ’68, the Jesuits, in conjunction with the Diocese of Nantes, took a shop in the city centre and gave daily expositions on the nature of the Incarnation; this for a whole year. Presumably, post-lockdown, there will be plenty of empty shops in British cities.

BERNARD CARTWRIGHT STOURBRIDGE, WEST MIDLANDS

Priests and people

I read with keen interest Roderick Strang’s review of Stephen Cottrell’s On Priesthood (Books, 4 July), which summarises succinctly the life and ministry of the pastoral priest.

It made me further reflect that while priests shepherd their people, there are times when people pastor their priests; that as a shepherd, the priest needs to listen in faithful personal prayer to the Spirit of God; that some meet Christ not always on the roads to Damascus and Emmaus but also along the way of the Cross, like Simon of Cyrene; that “in the Church of Christ, while all members are equal not all are equally members”; that the lay apostolate is not the participation of the laity in the confession of the clergy but an exercise of their own priesthood received at baptism; that the pastoral priest, like the conductor in an orchestra, does not create the music, but by his deft guidance lets it emerge. I found the review inspirational.

(NGR) ALEX REBELLO BARMOUTH, GWYNEDD

Employment rights

One must wonder why any person of good will would deny equal and protected opportunity in employment to a person who is LGBTQ (Church in the World, 27 June). What Christian principle does this uphold? Is it a Christian good for people to lose their livelihoods and thus housing, food and healthcare? Is it a Christian good to put people on the street?

As to the very stale canard of complementarity, Archbishop Gomez needs to do a great deal more reading in both theology and science. I would remind him that “the glory of God is a person fully alive”. That surely must mean, at the very least, the right to employment which makes so many other things possible.

I, for one, continue to be gracefully amazed that the Church in whatever iteration continues to attract queer people, because of the continuing harm the Church seems willing to inflict on us.

(REVD) CARLTON KELLEY GRAISLAK, ILLINOIS, USA

Alone in a crowd

Like Lucy Lethbridge, I thought Alan Bennett’s Talking Heads was ideal lockdown television, a single actor talking to camera on an otherwise dissused set (Arts, 27 June). And then the credits rolled and I saw that no fewer than 67 people were credited with bringing this to our screens!

BRUCE CARLIN DEWSBURY, WEST YORKSHIRE

Knight to remember

Catherine Pepinster (Letters, 4 July) is unfairly harsh on Sir Keir Starmer for dropping his knighthood on occasion. The Pope’s views may be helpful after his own recent difficulties in this area (View from Rome, 11 April): “Francis has never looked to derive his authority from titles.”

Or is he too just playing a “PR game” or trying to be a “man of the people”?

ROBERT FLynn SOLIHULL, WEST MIDLANDS

THE LIVING SPIRIT

AND LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Today, in the midst of our uneasy culture that appears to be dominated by casual brutality, military corruption, life cheapened by the lust for control and visible signs of an immense destruction of the biosphere, we are still confronted with outward and visible signs of an immense inward and spiritual grace, a gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the possibility to choose to let go.

Our letting go, particularly of the wish to isolate and elevate ourselves by controlling and scapegoating others, is a small part of this offering. It is a holocaust of greed and security, things familiar and therefore safe, concepts of self, of how things ought to be and never will, of how they might have been…

This is the heart of prayer, the cry of the heart that has emptied itself of everything most precious to it – even its own idea of itself and its god – so that it may be filled with the fire of the living God.

MAGGIE ROSS
FROM THE FIRE OF YOUR LIFE: A SOLITUDE SHARED (DARTON, LONGMAN AND TODD, 1992)

Return to yourself; enter into your heart; ponder what you were, are, should have been, called to be; … meditate in your heart; let your spirit brood. Plow this field, work on yourself; strive for freedom within, the freedom that leads to relationship with God, realizing that God will never force us to love him; … if you are not able to understand (and accept) your own self, you will not be able to understand (or accept) what is beyond you.

ST BONAVENTURE
FROM LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE: THE COMPLETE PRAYERS OF ST FRANCIS, ST CLARE AND OTHER EARLY FRANCISCANS, BY ION M. SWENEY (PARACLETE PRESS, 2020)

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For the Extraordinary Form calendar go to www.lms.org.uk

CALENDAR

Sunday 12 July: Fifteenth Sunday of the Year (Year A)
Monday 13 July: Feria or St Henry
Tuesday 14 July: Feria or St Camillus de Lellis, Priest
Wednesday 15 July: St Bonaventure, Bishop and Doctor
Thursday 16 July: Feria or Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Friday 17 July: Feria
Saturday 18 July: Feria
Sunday 19 July: Sixteenth Sunday of the Year

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Human Search For Meaning

a book called
ably once driven his faith. In 2004 he wrote

in and beyond the world, which had presum-

and putting his hope squarely in humanity,

2000, declaring himself an “after religious”,

told and tell themselves to find that meaning.

shaped by examining the stories humans have

sounds of a strange kind”.

When Holloway resigned his bishopric in

driven his faith. In 2004 he wrote

R

EDING this wise, witty and provoca-
tive book, I was haunted by a poem:

seventeenth-century Welsh poet and
doctor Henry Vaughan’s “Vanity of Spirit”. It

begins with a hermit/philosopher, “quite spent

Richard Holloway, former Bishop of

Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish

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THIS IS SUCH an important statement: the
temptation to close down our exploration of

why and how we live because of the demands

of the materialist world, and the failure of so

many answers we used to rely on, must be

resisted. Not by retreating into old simplicities

or sacrificing our humanity, but by doing what

Holloway does here, taking a larger view and

deeper look at how we have answered these

questions in the past and continue to do so.

We live, as W.H. Auden points out in his

famous poem “September 1, 1939”, “lost in a

fire, or that it is enough to stand at the

barricades. This is such a moment of us who

want to understand the world and

our humanity, but by doing what

Holloway does here, taking a larger view and

deeper look at how we have answered these

questions in the past and continue to do so.

We live, as W.H. Auden points out in his

famous poem “September 1, 1939”, “lost in a

Chasing our tales

A former bishop engages in a personal reckoning with faith and fable

PIERS PLOWRIGHT

Richard Holloway

is The Tablet’s TV critic

is The Tablet’s TV critic

is a former BBC radio producer

is the author of The Muslim Revolt: A Journey Through Political Islam

is a London-based freelance writer

is a former bishop engages in a personal reckoning with faith and fable

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TIM COOPER

discovers

watery wilds

In The Land of Maybe (Short Books, £14.99; Tablet price £13.49), Tim Ecott writes about a year spent in the Faroes, 18 remote islands off the top of Scotland. He writes with a passion for nature, which is probably much all there is in a place that can be summed up in three words – sheep, seabirds and storms – weaving his own Irish background into his travels around a sparsely inhabited archipelago that clings to a traditional way of life in the modern world.

There’s more extreme weather, more seabirds, and a lot of fish in Lamorna Ash’s Dark, Salt, Clear: Life in a Cornish Fishing Town (Bloomsbury, £16.99; Tablet price £15.29). Ash spent several months living in a close-knit fishing community, and she offers a colourful portrait of Britain’s largest working fishing port, Newlyn, looking at how its traditional lifestyle is threatened by globalisation and an influx of affluent holidaymakers.

Suzanna Cruickshank moved to Cumbria after climbing one mountain and falling in love with the Lake District, where she is now an outdoor swimming guide. For those of us accustomed to swimming mostly in the sea, or a swimming pool, Swimming Wild in the Lake District (Vertebrate Publishing, £17.99; Tablet price £16.19) opens our minds to a world of swim-hikes, guided swims and all-women walking groups amid the towering Cumbrian peaks.

As a child, one of my favourite books was Noel Streatfeild’s The Growing Summer. In it, a family of four pampered urban children (their parents inevitably dispatched at the beginning by death or disaster) are sent to rural Ireland to stay with a splendidly rude aunt they’ve never met. She ignores them completely and makes them forage for their own food. They emerge at the end of the summer holidays with their entitled corners rubbed off, having learned how to skin rabbits, identify toadstools and other important life skills.

The Growing Summer was published in 1966, at the high point of the period covered by Ysenda Maxtone Graham’s witty and perceptive new book about British summer holidays. Like her previous book, Terms & Conditions, about girls’ boarding schools, this is based on interviews, the earliest memories going back to the 1930s. The time frame of Terms & Conditions ended in 1979, with the introduction by IBM of the first personal computer. This marked the beginning of an immersive learning experience conducted by no one but yourself, an intense communion with detail. It didn’t have to be highbrow (“I got over Wagner early,” remembers Rowan Williams); it might be making a go-cart out of an old pram, working in a shop, learning to crochet or spending time with grandparents with strange Edwardian memories.

With its bracing reminiscence of bucking-up and making-do, British Summer Time Begins: The School Summer Holidays 1930–1980 (LITTLE, BROWN, 352 PP; £18.95) should be inspiring reading as we emerge from lockdown. And for modern children, atomised in the endless click-click of insta-land, it could be a manual for real freedom, a break from the numbingly conformist modern belief that one’s own company is a kind of failure. As Maxtone Graham puts it: “The lonely ones weren’t always bored and the bored ones weren’t always lonely and the solitary ones weren’t always miserable.”

LUCY LETHBRIDGE

Fresh air and fun

British Summer Time Begins: The School Summer Holidays 1930–1980

Ysenda Maxtone Graham (LITTLE, BROWN, 352 PP; £18.95)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £17.09 • TEL 020 7799 4064

Nonetheless, what shines through the book (and across wide social divides) is the deep and forgotten pleasure of resourcefulness, of those long summer holidays being an immersive learning experience conducted by no one but yourself, an intense communion with detail. It didn’t have to be highbrow (“I got over Wagner early,” remembers Rowan Williams); it might be making a go-cart out of an old pram, working in a shop, learning to crochet or spending time with grandparents with strange Edwardian memories.

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conservative Sunni Islam known as Salafism.
Wahhabism, part of the wider family of austerely
aid it exported its own brand of Islam,
medical aid, around the world. Along with the
Flush with new oil wealth, the Kingdom started
to Kosovo. The result is illuminating.
the Muslim world – from Indonesia to Nigeria
novel way by taking case studies from across
seldom fortified by hard data and cool analysis.

The Saudi  da’wa (or call) got under way in
1970s when King Faisal adopted Islamic
solidarity as the cornerstone of his foreign policy.
Flush with new oil wealth, the Kingdom started
a programme of building mosques and schools,
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solidarity as the cornerstone of his foreign policy.
Flush with new oil wealth, the Kingdom started
a programme of building mosques and schools,
and distributing Qur’ans, scholarships and
medical aid, around the world. Along with the
aid it exported its own brand of Islam, Wahhabism, part of the wider family of austere con-
servative Sunni Islam known as Salafism.
The appeal of Salafism, even to highly edu-
cated Muslims, is – as Krithika Varagur
discovers on her travels – its simplicity. It
appears to offer all the answers. In an uncer-
tain world, it provides an anchor of certainty.
But while Salafism, both inside and outside Saudi
Arabia, can be quietist and non-violent, it can also
erode violence and intolerance, serving as a gateway to extremism. In
Indonesia it helped produce the jihadists who
carried out the Bali bombings in 2002. In
Nigeria it helped produce Boko Haram, which
in addition to its well-publicised kidnappings has
killed an estimated 35,000 people. In
Kosovo it helped encourage a stream of young
Muslims to join the jihad in Syria.

Everywhere, Salafism nurtured a climate
declared principally at Sufis and Shia – and, by extension, Shia Iran. The
author points out that after the al-Qaeda
attacks of 9/11 the flow of money diminished,
and in some cases dried up, as Saudi charities
came under closer scrutiny at home and abroad
– and as oil wealth began to decline. But by
then the damage had been done. Salafism,
wherever it had taken root, acquired a momentum of its own. It became
mainstream.

There are a few flaws. It is misleading to
call Boko Haram “the world’s deadliest terror
group” when, as the author makes clear else-
where, it is essentially a localised insurgency.
(That dubious honour goes to Islamic State,
to which the Nigerian group is now affiliated.)
Al-Qaeda didn’t “destroy Saudi oilfields in
2004”, though it did attack one facility in
2006. And the account of two of the big Saudi
charities, Al-Haramain and the Benevolence
Foundation, is inadequate and in some
respects inaccurate.

This short and accessible book is neverthe-
less welcome, because it helps make sense of
an important and complex phenomenon. In
two respects it often grounds for believing
the situation is not entirely bleak. First, it
makes clear, as many books do not, that the
Saudi da’wa is chaotic and haphazard. The
three main actors – the state, the NGOs and
wealthy individuals – seldom worked in close
coordination, and senior princes often had
little idea of where the aid was ending up,
and with what result. Saudi responsibility
was both withering and unwitting.

Second, during the last 20 years, the
situation has evolved. To quote the author:
‘Can America, and the West, learn to live with
a world where ‘fundamentalist’ or conservative
Islam is a permanent part of the religious
spectrum? It must. But it can also take heart
that two decades of pressure on Saudi Arabia
have not been fruitless.”
**Woman in the wings**

Did a Catholic conservative pave the way for the Trump presidency?

**Lucy Lethbridge** on TV’s new dramatisation of recent history, *Mrs. America*

**In 2016**, a 92-year-old woman wearing a bright pink jacket joined the Republican candidate on stage at a primary rally in St Louis, the city of her birth. He had, she said, “the courage and the energy … to do what the grassroots want him to do. Because this is a grassroots uprising.”

The woman was Phyllis Schlafly, the conservative Catholic campaigner who became an icon of the Republican Right; she died six months after that appearance in St Louis, after waging a war against liberalism, feminism and globalism that spanned nearly three quarters of a century.

This week saw the launch of a new drama series on BBC2, *Mrs. America* (two episodes on 8 July), which revisits the political and cultural backdrop to the 1972 campaign that led to Schlafly’s derailment of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the American Constitution. It finds a landscape that is both a radical contrast to today and – with its knotty questions of gender and female empowerment looking now differently knotted – surprisingly similar. It is also the story of the feminist campaigners who opposed Schlafly. Forceful, intelligent women thrashing out ideas about freedom and equality: bring it on! And what a cast! Cate Blanchett as Schlafly, Rose Byrne as Gloria Steinem, Margo Martindale as Bella Abzug, Uzo Aduba as Shirley Chisholm and (scene-stealingly) Tracey Ullman as Betty Friedan.

Phyllis Schlafly was raised in a Catholic family during the Depression; her father’s long-term unemployment meant her mother had to return to work as a librarian to support the family. Following a law degree she went into politics, but failed in her attempts to secure a Republican seat in Congress.

**In 1964**, Schlafly’s book, *A Choice Not an Echo*, denounced the northeastern Republican elite and their allies in Wall Street: it sold three million copies. By now married to fellow Catholic and wealthy attorney, Fred Schlafly, and a mother of six, she was happy (or happy-ish) to be described as a “housewife from Illinois”, but that was hardly the full story. Her successful campaign against the ERA was just the beginning of a career that helped to steer the Republican Party further towards the Right – as one obituarist noted, by “thumping her nose at both liberal and conservative establishments [she] paved the way for Trump, a man who tapped into voter discontent …”

By the early 1970s Schlafly was also an expert on nuclear strategy and a formidable debater. She had been a prominent supporter of the right-wing Republican presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater, in 1964; and was as obsessively anti-communist as she was devoutly Catholic.

**Mrs. America** kicks off in 1970 when Schlafly had just failed in her third bid for Congress. As the series creator, Dahvi Waller, (also behind *Mad Men* – of which there are interesting echoes here) has it, the ERA, then on its way to ratification, wasn’t of great interest to Schlafly until she spotted a political platform she couldn’t resist. “I don’t know what all the fuss is about,” she says. “There are so many more pressing issues.” But by 1972 she had come out against the amendment with an essay entitled “What’s Wrong With ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?”

With ruthless efficiency, Schlafly mobilised conservative women, the religious Right, on the grounds that the ERA would destroy women’s existing rights rather than expand them: they would lose their protections. Under the amendment, she argued, women would be drafted into the services; there would be abortion on demand; men would no longer be made to pay alimony; mothers would be forced out to work and their children cared for by strangers. It was a threat to family – CONTINUED ON PAGE 22
and the erosion of family marked the beginning of chaos.

There were many contradictions (or hypocrisies) in the Schlafly political position, and Mrs. America teases out some of them. Phyllis is always beautifully groomed, exercises daily to keep trim for her husband, and is a fierce advocate for the stay-at-home wife and mother yet always herself burning with intellectual and political ambition – with staff to take care of the homemaking she promoted for other women. Cate Blanchett is superb, taking care of the homemaking she promoted and lots of clever, independent women with blissfully untidy hair wearing fabulous sunglasses and gossiping about Andy Warhol.

Phyllis Schlafly demonstrating outside the White House in 1977

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

Rose Byrne, serious behind a towering mane and pink lenses, makes a convincing Gloria Steinem. Like Mrs Schlafly, Steinem has to make compromises to get the message out – Bella Abzug, the feminist lawyer, tells her that like it or not she has to be the face of the campaign because she’s got the prettiest face.

Schlafly was asked to “take notes” during a political strategy meeting where she was the leading expert but also the only woman; Steinem was told by the chief investor of Ms., a man, that he’d only given her the job because he admired her legs – and he is only half-joking. The patriarchy is made up of patronising creeps in bad suits.

Viewers will need to concentrate to keep on top of the internecine political arguments within the feminist movement. In the pro-ERA gang (which is split politically – or at least more than one would assume from the perspective of 2020), it is the Republican feminist, Jill Ruckelshaus, who dismisses Schlafly as “a right-wing nut from Illinois”. Some characters are drawn crudely, every creeps in bad suits.

Some might think we have too many radio stations already, and wonder why we need any more. As for Times Radio, launched last week amid terrific fanfare, its principal objective – shared, one might add, with Times newspapers – seems to be to annoy the BBC. Certainly at least three of its presenters – John Pienaar, Carole Walker and Mariella Frostrup – have been poached from Broadcasting House, while the former Times Literary Supplement editor Stig Abell, co-presenter of the breakfast slot (6-10 a.m.), could only fairly recently be heard on Radio 4’s Front Row.

A second aim, naturally enough, is to garner up sales of The Times and The Sunday Times by way of cross-fertilisation. Starting at 5 a.m. the station is on air for five-sixths of the day – the remaining four hours are given over to a résumé of what went before – and offers half-a-dozen daily programmes and is exceptionally news-heavy. Stig and his co-presenter, Aasmah Mir, front an alternative version of the Today programme, while Matt Chorley (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and Pienaar (4-7 p.m.) submit the political and economic plums pulled out of the bran-tub to yet more relentless analysis.

ON THE PLUS side, it is all extremely professional and clearly benefits from a top-of-the-range contacts book. Thus the debate about Hong Kong involved the former Legislative Council member, Emily Lau, and ex-foreign secretary, Sir Malcolm Rifkind. Culinary matters featured Heston Blumenthal and there was also space for such radio land trusties as Michael Portillo.

On the negative, most pundits seemed to agree that the prime minister, star guest of Stig and Aasmah’s inaugural sit-down, was given a pretty soft ride. It would be a shame if all the Tory politicians who ostentatiously avoid Today simply end up trading bromides with the Times team.

Amid the relentless drip of headlines and opinion, one looks for an ethical side. The nearest thing to this would seem to be Frostrup (1-4 p.m.), whose slot is billed as “a chance to escape the hurly burly of daily news”. The adjective “thoughtful” has also been used. On the day I tuned in they were discussing the possible role of the Covid-19 crisis in helping to reduce obesity rates, but no doubt the focus will widen. It is all very slickly done, but this is a crowded market and the first month’s listening figures will make interesting reading.
THEATRE

Emergency a long time in the making
Racism in the spotlight for theatre under threat

MARK LAWSON

The Protest: Black Lives Matter
BUSH THEATRE YOUTUBE CHANNEL

AFTER ALMOST four months of all UK theatres being temporarily shut, the fear of several more major venues following the Nuffield Southampton into permanent closure finally persuaded the government to agree, on 6 July, after long resistance, a package of grants and loans to keep the cultural industry solvent. The £1.57 billion is very welcome although, with performance still outlawed, the next step is for politicians to explain why it is safe to sit with others on a plane but not at a play.

The continuing absence of live theatre is made additionally painful by reminders – through the online lockdown projects – of the artistic creativity and social contribution we are missing.

_The Protest: Black Lives Matter_, a set of six short digital pieces that the Bush Theatre in west London is streaming on YouTube, will be doubly useful to future historians as a record of the time, during the early summer of 2020, when two emergencies blurred, whereas most dramas made so far in Covid-

19 isolation have understandably dealt with the pandemic, these half-dozen works respond to the focus on the value of black lives following the protests caused by the suffocation of George Floyd, an African American, by a white Minneapolis policeman in late May.

Having been given, through this new material, late entry to the genre, the Bush project seems clearly to have benefitted from seeing the strengths and weaknesses of others’ attempts.

The Zoom monologue has become the default of lockdown drama, but only one of these six – “Do You Hear Us Now?”, by Benedict Lombe – is a self-filmed soliloquy. Subly varying that form, “Black” by Roy Williams is an interior monologue – exposing the hidden vulnerability of a young man about to leave home to join a protest – and “Hey Kid”, by Matilda Ibini, features still photographs of a young girl under the disembodied voice of the child’s grandmother, passing on advice before death. Although, to powerful effect, it is left unclear whether the older woman is dying from the new flu.

Both “Your Work” by Anoushka Lucas and Kalungi Ssebandeke’s “The Fire This Time” (on which Lucas also features) are mainly or wholly-song monologues. But the most striking use of the restrictions is Fehinti Balogun’s “You Just Don’t Get It – And It Hurts”, consisting of a 10-minute WhatsApp conversation (complete with typos and thinking pauses) between two people about the use of the N-word at a party both attended. The absence of voices means that we can never be certain of the gender or race behind the speech bubbles, which removes easy nudges about whose side to be on.

The separate pieces are united by a fascinating undertone of debate about the form that political protest should most effectively take, challenging stereotype of the tone (angry) and form (rap/gospel) expected from black pushback art – Lucas’ song is a ballad and Ssebandeke’s starts as rap but then moves into melody.

Combining a format imposed by a medical crisis with the issues provoked by a moral one, _The Protest_ is among the best work achieved in emergency theatre and, rightly, does not spare white liberals. Lucas’ list of her post-Floyd emotions includes feeling “angry that my white friends are suddenly so well-meaning”.

MUSIC

The best for last?
New Dylan album up with the greatest

BRIAN MORTON

Bob Dylan: Rough and Rowdy Ways
COLUMBIA

LOT OF people thought that 2012’s _Tempest_ would be Bob Dylan’s last album. Dylan himself grudgingly pointed out that Shakespeare had used a “the”, but didn’t quite deny anything. What followed were three very patchy albums of covers, _Shadows in the Night, Fallen Angels_ and the three-disc _Triplicate_, which allowed Dylan watchers to conclude that _Tempest_ was to be his last album of original material. Like a lot of the later output, it had been uneven, bleakly brilliant on things like “Early Roman Kings”, “I Lay My Bows” and the 14-minute title track, hitting something of a barbwire bump on its last track, “Roll On John”, a mash-up of Beatles lines addressed to their creator.

Early in the spring of 2020, with Covid-19 putting at least a temporary end to the Never Ending Tour, Dylan put out a new contender for worst Dylan song since “Hurricane”. At 17 minutes this time, “Murder Most Foul” is a laconic recitation about the assassination of JFK, played out over a minimal accompaniment. He followed up with the Whitman-quoting “I Contain Multitudes” and then the savage “False Prophet”. The Nobel laureate was still peppering his songs with obscure references, though nobody can tell whether the name spoken at the start of “I Contain Multitudes” is “Ballinalee”, and thus a reference to the blind eighteenth-century Irish poet, Antoine O Raitheoir, or “Baliani”, or something else altogether. The fact that Dylan seems to half-swallow the name suggests that he doesn’t want it hunted down.

These all now join another seven new songs in _Rough and Rowdy Ways_. Though the title, referring to a Waylon Jennings song, suggests another set of country covers, it is in fact the first album of new (or nearly new) songs for eight years. Significantly, “Murder Most Foul” is on a disc of its own, which most purchasers will soon leave unplayed, largely because the other songs are so good. Like all geniuses, Dylan has the ability to put out masterpieces and rubbish with the same hand.

The songs are nearly-new because most of them seem to reference some predecessor. “False Prophet”, a tremendous snarly blues, is adapted from a single B-side by Billy “The Kid” Emerson, made at Memphis’ Sun Studio around the time Elvis Presley was recording “That’s Alright Mama” there. Elsewhere Dylan references Jimmy Reed, early rock’n’roll songs and blues, almost as if Dylan is trying to recreate the time before his own debut as if he had been there. The whole thing builds towards the burning beauty of “Key West (Philosopher Pirate)”, which sounds as if The Band had reconvened behind him.

As perverse and tricksterish as ever, Dylan has turned the tables on those who assumed he had decided to work out his time singing torchsongs and pop ballads. _Rough and Rowdy Ways_ stands up among his greatest recordings. If Prospero-like, he does now burn his books, the magic is already in the air.
Probe into the Fabric of St Peter
Pope Francis has appointed a commissioner to investigate the management of the Fabric of St Peter, the body that oversees St Peter’s Basilica. Last week the Vatican announced that electronic devices and documents had been seized from its offices, following a report by the Holy See’s auditor.

The Fabric of St Peter has responsibility for both the running and maintenance of St Peter’s, which until Covid-19 struck attracted thousands of visitors a day. It is led by Cardinal Angelo Comastri, although it operates as a separate entity to the rest of the Roman Curia. There is no suggestion that the cardinal himself is under investigation.

movement. Cardinal Farrell said that the Vatican had “repeatedly” asked the movement’s president to reform the statutes and directorate but no action had been taken.

Kenyan bishops have expressed concern over continued insecurity and tensions in Marsabit and Narok counties that have left scores dead. The bishops blamed clan hatred, competition over resources and leadership wrangles in the region. “We strongly condemn these barbaric acts and appeal to the concerned communities to embrace peace, love and harmony,” said Bishop John Oballa Owaa, the chairman of the bishops’ Justice and Peace Commission last week.

Trump disapproval rises
The Pew Research Center has reported that Catholics in the US are increasingly voicing their disapproval of President Donald Trump. It said last week that only 41 per cent of Catholics approve of his job performance, a decline of four points since January.

Differences between white and Latino Catholics are profound: 47 per cent of white Catholics said that President Trump was doing a “good” or “great” job, compared to only 20 per cent of Latino Catholics.

The murder trial in Madrid of Inocente Orlando Montano, former colonel and former MP, is scheduled to resume this week. Mr Montano is accused of involvement in the killing of six Jesuits, their cook and her daughter at El Salvador’s Central American University on 16 November 1989.

The Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference has denounced corruption and extortion involving at least 50 public hospitals in Ecuador. It is alleged that hospital supplies were disproportionately distributed to areas where National Assembly members are from, disadvantaging other areas. Officials have also identified a criminal network colluding with health officials in marking up the cost of body bags for hospitals by up to 13 times the regular price.

Peru’s bishops have launched a joint campaign with the USIL Educational Group and the Societá Nacional de Industrias to raise funds for oxygen cylinders so that no one need die for a lack of supplies. The country is facing growing challenges in treating Covid-19 patients, as hospitals run short of oxygen canisters. Some families are resorting to buying them at significant markups on the black market to keep family members alive.

As D R Congo celebrated 60 years of independence from Belgium, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, Archbishop of Kinshasa, accused successive regimes of impoverishing the country despite its “immense natural resources”. Speaking at a Mass to mark the anniversary, the cardinal said: “This dream of redeeming the Congolese from colonialism has been progressively destroyed.”

Calls are growing for the European Union to reinstate its Special Envoy on Religious Freedom after the new EU Commission under Ursula von der Leyen (pictured) abolished the post.

In some countries, religious oppression has now reached the level of genocide,” said Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg, president of Comexc, which represents the EU’s Catholic bishops’ conferences. “The EU must continue campaigning for religious freedom, with its own representative included,” he said. The cardinal made the comments to German’s Deutsche Welle agency last weekend, as 135 German MPs urged their country to use its new tenure of the EU’s rotating presidency to press for the restoration of the post.

The head of the Catholic Church in Gabon, Jean Patrick Iba-Ba, the Archbishop of Libreville, has condemned a vote in parliament to decriminalise homosexuality.

Archbishop Iba-Ba urged MPs to think again, saying: “Bishops of the Catholic Church launch a cry of distress at this latest fracture between our people’s decision-making representatives, our country’s institutions and the Gabonese people as a whole.” Gabon’s lower house voted by 48 to 24, with 25 abstentions, to reverse a 2019 law imposing six months’ jail for homosexual acts.

Compiled by James Roberts and Ellen Teague.
**UNITED STATES** / Bishops welcome tax-credit decision by the federal Supreme Court

**Judges rule in favour of public funds paid to Catholic schools**

**MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS**

**THE UNITED STATES** Supreme Court last week ruled 5-4 that Montana's tuition tax credit programme is unconstitutional because it forbids payments for tuition at religious schools.

The ruling overturns laws nationwide that bar religious schools from receiving funds raised via state-run scholarship programmes – which are devised to permit under-privileged children to attend private schools.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority decision, saying that the Montana law violated the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of religion because it “bars religious schools from public benefits solely because of the religious character of the schools”.

He added: “The provision also bars parents who wish to send their children to a religious school from those same benefits, again solely because of the religious character of the school.”

Previous rulings held that the constitutional ban on ecclesiastical establishments prohibited state funds from going to assist religious schools.

The decision came at a time when Catholic education in the US is in perilous financial health due to the coronavirus pandemic. Already, some 100 schools nationwide have announced that they will not be able to continue operating, according to the National Catholic Education Association. The group expects that number to double before the school year starts in September.

The Montana tuition tax credit programme was enacted in 2015. The state’s own Supreme Court had ruled that the programme could not include religious schools because of Montana’s Blaine amendment, a nineteenth-century law that barred any governmental assistance to “sectarian schools”. Named after James Blaine, a nativist congressman, senator and Secretary of State from Maine, 37 other states enacted similar laws after Blaine failed to get a federal prohibition passed.

Archbishop Thomas Wenski, chair of the bishops’ conference Committee on Religious Liberty joined Bishop Michael Barber, who chairs the Education Committee, in welcoming the decision. “This decision means that religious persons and organisations can, like everyone else, participate in government programmes that are open to all,” the bishops said. “This is good news, not only for people of faith, but for our country. A strong civil society needs the full participation of religious institutions. By ensuring the rights of faith-based organisations’ freedom to serve, the Court is also promoting the common good.”

The bishops added that “the Court has also dealt a blow to the odious legacy of anti-Catholicism in America. Blaine Amendments … were never meant to ensure government neutrality towards religion, but were expressions of hostility towards the Catholic Church. We are grateful that the Supreme Court has taken an important step that will help bring an end to this shameful legacy.”

Notre Dame law professor Rick Garnett praised the decision, saying: “For too many years … Court majorities held that the … separation of church and state’ requires a strict prohibition on financial and other forms of cooperation with religious schools, notwithstanding the valuable role these schools play.”

**GERMANY**

**Choir bids farewell to Georg Ratzinger**

**PLANS WERE** finalised this week for the funeral in Regensburg on Wednesday of Georg Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI’s elder brother, who was Director of Music and Master of the famous Domspatzen boys’ choir, writes Christa Pongratz-Lippitt.

On Sunday afternoon 220 members of the Domspatzen choir bade farewell to their former choir master, who died aged 96 on 1 July, by singing the Vespers for the Dead in Regensburg Cathedral.

After Wednesday’s Requiem, due to be celebrated by Bishop of Regensburg Rudolf Voderholzer, mourners who had been asked to reserve a place by telephone were to proceed to the Lower Catholic Graveyard in Regensburg where Georg Ratzinger was to be buried in a grave endowed by the Domspatzen Foundation.

Pope Emeritus Benedict, who is 93, decided not to fly back to Regensburg for the funeral after a tiring visit to the city and his brother last month. However his secretary, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, indicated that he would attend.

In a letter of condolence to Benedict, Pope Francis said: “You had the sensitivity to be the first to inform me of the news of the death of your beloved brother, Monsignor Georg. I wish to renew my deepest condolences and spiritual closeness to you in this moment of sorrow. Filially and fraternally, Francis.”

**VATICAN**

**Founder of Schönstatt Movement accused of abuse**

**VATICAN** documents from the Pius XII archives confirm that the founder of the Schönstatt Movement, Fr Josef Ktenich, was accused of sexual abuse and abusing his power by Schönstatt religious sisters. The Vatican upheld the accusations and exiled Ktenich, writes Christa Pongratz-Lippitt.

In an article in the conservative German Tagespost, Church historian Alexandra von Teuffenbach says that the real reasons why Ktenich was exiled in 1951 by the Holy Office – the predecessor of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – have now been revealed by documents from the recently opened Pius XII archives.

According to Teuffenbach’s report, the Holy Office believed the reports of Ktenich’s manipulative abuse of power and sexual abuse, which several Schönstatt sisters accused him of during a two-year visitation conducted by Fr Sebastian Tromp SJ.

The numerous letters that the Schönstatt sisters wrote to Pope Pius XII describing Ktenich’s abusive behaviour have been found in the archives.

The Holy Office finally exiled Ktenich to the United States in 1951. He was rehabilitated under Pope Paul VI in 1965 and returned to Schönstatt. A beatification process for Ktenich was opened in 1975. The Schönstatt Movement published a long statement firmly rejecting Teuffenbach’s claims.

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ANNEXATION plans ‘put peace at risk’, Vatican warns US and Israel

THE VATICAN has warned the United States and Israel that Israeli plans to annex one third of the West Bank put at risk efforts to bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians, writes Ellen Teague.

At the end of last month Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See’s Secretary of State, summoned US ambassador to the Vatican, Callista Gingrich, and Israel’s ambassador, Oren David, for separate discussions on the planned annexation, which includes parts of the strategic Jordan Valley.

In a statement the Vatican said Cardinal Parolin wanted “express concern of the Holy See regarding possible unilateral actions”. The Holy See “reiterates that the State of Israel and the State of Palestine have the right to exist and to live in peace and security, within internationally recognised borders”.

The statement said that negotiations should be “on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and aided by measures that can re-establish reciprocal confidence”. Opposition to the planned annexation continued in the West Bank and on the international stage, despite a continuing delay in the implementation. In the West Bank Palestinian city of Ramallah, hundreds of protesters carried posters and waved Palestinian flags, as they chanted: “We will resist until full liberation. We will not leave.”

Palestinian leaders, the United Nations, European powers and Arab countries have all denounced any unilateral territorial steps planned by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is thought to be awaiting a green light from the US.

Pax Christi, the Catholic peace movement, has called on the global community to hold Israel accountable for violations of international law.

ECCLESIAL CONFERENCE is a ‘testing ground’ for Church

FRANCIS MCDONAGH

FOLLOWING THE decision at the end of last month to establish an Amazon Ecclesial Conference, its president, Cardinal Claudio Hummes (inset), former Archbishop of São Paulo, Brazil, and its vice-president, Bishop David Martínez De Aguirre, of Puerto Maldonado in southern Peru, have shed further light on the significance of the new body and how it will be structured.

They say it will emphasise the participation of the laity, especially women and indigenous people.

“Following a suggestion from the Pope himself, this is not going to be an episcopal conference, like so many others, but what he has called the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon Region,” Cardinal Hummes said.

“It is meant to be an expression of the synodal nature of the Church in the region … Like the Amazon Synod, where there were bishops who had a vote, but many others, lay people, indigenous, with the right to speak, it is a Church that listens to the communities and with them looks for ways of evangelising that are incarnate and inculturated,” the cardinal said.

Bishop Martínez De Aguirre went further and stressed that the new body is intended to be a model for the Church as a whole. “We can say that this could be considered a sort of experiment – I’m not sure if that’s the most appropriate word – for a new form of church life, based on synodality, in which the bishop is no longer someone that leads the Church on his own, but someone who is part of the whole church journey,” the bishop said. “As Pope Francis said in Evangelii Gaudium, the pastors are there, sometimes in front, sometimes in the middle, sometimes at the back.”

In Brazil in 2013 Pope Francis told the Brazilian bishops that the Amazon region is the testing ground for the Brazilian Church and he is now “applying this to the whole of the universal Church”, Bishop Martínez De Aguirre said.

“He thinks that the Amazon region, this Amazon Ecclesial Conference, is a testing ground … a practical application of the Second Vatican Council in this form of church life.”

Asked about the role of women in the new body, the bishop said: “One of the things the Pope has said is that we want a Church with an Amazonian face … and the face of women as protagonists in the Church is a very clearly defined face.”

Patriarch warns against Hagia Sophia becoming a mosque

THE CONVERSION of Istanbul’s Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque would cause a rift between Christians and Muslims, according to Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, writes Ellen Teague.

Speaking from Istanbul, the spiritual leader of an estimated 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide said: “Instead of uniting, a 1,500-year-old heritage is dividing us and I am saddened and shaken.” He called on the people of Turkey to champion Hagia Sophia’s universal character, saying the conversion of the building would “disappoint millions of Christians”.

Last week, Turkey’s Council of State – the country’s highest administrative body – delayed a decision, promising a ruling within 15 days. The Unesco World Heritage site was originally a cathedral from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries before becoming a mosque and then a museum in the 1930s. It may become a mosque again if the court approves the move. Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for the change during an election rally last year and is supported by Islamists in his country.

Last Saturday, the Russian Orthodox Church described the reconversion as “unacceptable”. 
**Geneva**

**Vatican warns of inequalities in post-Covid education**

A **TOP VATICAN** diplomat has warned the closure of schools during the coronavirus crisis will deepen injustices and inequalities, and urged government action to compensate for the loss of classes by 90 per cent of children worldwide, writes Jonathan Luxmoore.

“This pandemic has highlighted the neglect and harsh realities in our societies – we have noted its broad impact on schools and academic institutions,” said Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, the Holy See’s Permanent Observer to the United Nations and Other International Organisations.

“Covid-19 has directly affected entire families whose parents were constrained to carry out their regular work responsibilities, while having at the same time to adapt their schedules to assist and monitor their children,” the Slovenian diplomat said. “Not all families are equipped with the necessary information technology tools, nor always capable of making accommodations for the continuous presence of children at home.”

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Archbishop Jurkovic said education remained a “fundamental enabler” for sustainable development, adding that the right of families, of churches and of social groups to help shape it had been reaffirmed by the Pope in the address he gave to the UN General Assembly in 2015.

**Mexico**

**Gangsters kill 26 at rehab clinic**

**VIOLENT** attacks in recent weeks have raised concerns among church leaders about the security strategy of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, writes Martha Pekowski.

The Bishop of Irapuato, Enrique Díaz Díaz, condemned an armed attack on a drug rehabilitation centre last week that left 26 people dead. The clinic in the central Mexican town was one of many private unregulated centres around the country. Gunmen entered, forced patients to the ground and shot them.

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**View from Rome**

**Four years ago I watched Ennio Morricone majestically conduct an orchestra playing the world-famous music he had composed for The Mission. Memories of that concert in the Vatican came flooding back when I heard on Monday that Morricone had died in Rome at the age of 91. It struck me as a moment that brought together various strands of Pope Francis’ pontificate.**

The 12 November 2016 event was a musical extravaganza for the socially excluded which Francis had wanted to be “with the poor and for the poor”. That evening the homeless were treated as guests of honour, taking their seats in the front rows of the Paul VI Hall ahead of diplomats and other VIPs. Sitting in the auditorium behind them with my then seven-year-old son (who later took up playing the oboe), it was a privilege to witness the then 88-year-old maestro conduct the haunting “Gabriel’s Oboe”, the main theme of the movie, along with the premiere of a new composition, “God, One of Us”.

Morricone’s atmospheric score for Roland Joffé’s Oscar-winning film evokes the missionary work in Latin America of the Pope’s Jesuit order, opposed by a powerful European cardinal who wanted to shut down their mission to the indigenous Guaraní people. They lost the battle. The contrast with today – when we have a Jesuit Pope determined to renew the Church’s missionary efforts in the Amazon region – is poignant.

Three years on from that concert and in the same building, Francis convened an extraordinary synod of bishops gathered to discuss the pan-Amazon region. The synod gave a voice to the voiceless indigenous communities of the Amazon, who are facing environmental destruction, and listened respectfully as local leaders – religious sisters and lay ministers as well as bishops – showed the universal Church what can be learnt from incarnating the Gospel in culture.

In his response Francis avoided trying to impose NGO-style proposals or devise pastoral plans. He urged the Church to approach the Amazon on “tiptoe” and to respect “the poetry of the people”. His post-synodal exhortation, Querida Amazonia, was peppered with lyrical language and paid respect to the “artistic, literary, musical and cultural inspiration” that comes from the Amazon. “Only poetry, with its humble voice, will be able to save this world,” wrote the Pope, quoting Vinicius de Moraes, a Brazilian poet.

Morriconi’s music is a reminder that at the root of all the Church’s missionary work is the mystery of God, a mystery that cannot be packaged into simple cultural categories. Speaking after the maestro’s death, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, the Vatican’s “culture minister”, said the music from The Mission “expresses the ineffable and the invisible at the same time, which are the soul of religion”.

**In the face** of a rising tide of nationalism across Europe and North and South America, the Holy See is doubling-down on its support of multilateralism. Last Sunday, the Pope gave his backing to a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for an immediate global ceasefire in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, to allow for the safe passage of humanitarian assistance. Four months earlier, Francis also supported the “global and immediate ceasefire” called for by the Secretary-General of the UN, António Guterres.

Throughout his pontificate, Francis has used the moral authority of his office to push for peace. Last November he said he would update the catechism to prohibit not only the use but the possession of nuclear weapons. For some time now, there have been whispers in Rome that Francis’ next encyclical will look at how the Church, in the prayer of the Pope’s namesake St Francis of Assisi, can be an “instrument of peace”. During the Francis papacy, the Holy See has become more active in working with the UN, with which it has observer status. Using its vote for the first time in 2017, it voted in favour of nuclear disarmament.

The Pope believes the world’s problems can only be solved through international co-operation, and the Vatican is worried by the growing tendency for countries to think they can solve global problems in an isolationist fashion. Last week, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, summoned the US and Israel ambassadors to the Holy See to express concern about Israel’s intention to annex parts of the West Bank. The cardinal called for Israelis and Palestinians to return to direct dialogue with each other, with UN resolutions as a basis for their discussions.

**July** is when Francis slows down and has something of a “staycation”. The Wednesday General Audiences are suspended and there are no official meetings. He puts his alarm back 15 minutes and allows himself more time to read and pray.

But the 83-year-old Pope does not really believe in holidays and there is still a lot in his in-tray: planning for the future post-Covid, reforming the Roman Curia, the pending report into ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, and investigations into Vatican finances. Someone recently asked the Pope how he was, and he jokingly replied: “I’m alive!”
House anniversary
Caritas Bakhita House, which provides accommodation for and supports women escaping from trafficking and slavery, celebrated its fifth birthday last week. In that time the house has welcomed 129 guests and 11 babies from 39 different countries.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has honoured the Catholic Bishop of Derry and the retired Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry in this year’s Lambeth Awards for their work for peace and social cohesion in Northern Ireland. Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh in a message congratulating described bishops Donal McKeown and Kenneth Good as “two very worthy recipients of the Lambeth Award 2020”, which recognised their contribution to Church unity and their lived testimony to reconciliation in the wider community.

The Irish bishops’ Council for Life has expressed dismay over the number of abortions which took place in Ireland in 2019, the first year that abortion was legal following the repeal of the Eighth Amendment. A Department of Health report detailed 6,666 “terminations of pregnancy” during 2019, the first full year of legal abortion since the new law came into effect in January 2019. The official statistics reveal that 34 abortions were carried out on medical grounds. Another 100 were carried out on the grounds of a “condition that was likely to lead to the death of the foetus”.

Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow has spoken movingly of the recent death of his sister. On a livestreamed Mass from St Andrew’s Cathedral, he described the comfort he had drawn from Dina’s intimate testimony to reconciliation in the wider community.

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Tributes have been paid to the former long-serving parish priest of St Joseph’s in Pickering, Fr Bill East, who died on July 1 after a long illness. Fr Bill, who was 72, spent 11 years at St Luke’s Parish Church in Pallion, Sunderland, from 1983 to 1994 before being received into the Catholic Church along with his wife, Betty. He was ordained at Our Lady’s in Acorn, York, and served in the parish before spending 18 years in Pickering. An accomplished Latin scholar, Fr Bill was asked by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (Icel) to work on the new translation of the Missal. Icel executive director Mgr Andrew Wadsworth said: “It is hard to adequately express our gratitude for the highly significant contribution Bill has made to our English liturgical texts.”

Singalong surprise
Sisters of Mercy in Sunderland say they were “totally taken aback” by the international reaction to their weekly singalong (pictured) for the NHS outside their convent – and are now actively investigating new forms of outreach to their local community, building on the links developed in recent months. Their singing has been reported widely, including by CNN in the United States.

Compiled by Ruth Gledhill and Liz Dodd.
Pope picks his new ambassador to Great Britain

CHRISTOPHER LAMB

POPE FRANCIS has chosen Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti to be his next ambassador to Great Britain. The 64-year-old Italian diplomat will move to London from Ukraine, where he has served as papal representative, known as an apostolic nuncio, since the end of 2015.

As papal ambassador to the Court of St James's, Archbishop Gugerotti will represent the Holy See to government authorities in England, Wales and Scotland, while also playing a crucial role in the selection of bishops.

The new nuncio succeeds Archbishop Edward Adams who stepped down at the end of January after reaching the retirement age of 75.

Born in Verona, Archbishop Gugerotti is a patristics scholar and expert on the Eastern Churches, who has taught at the Pontifical Oriental Institute and worked at the Congregation for Eastern Churches.

He is not a career diplomat, but in 2001 Pope John Paul II appointed him as the papal representative to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The archbishop's appointment to the complex and delicate posting of Ukraine signalled his diplomatic expertise. He took over the position from Archbishop Timothy Gullickson, who had been openly critical of Pope Francis.

Following news of the latest appointment, Sally Axworthy, British ambassador to the Holy See, said: “My warmest congratulations to Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti on his appointment as the new apostolic nuncio to Great Britain. I very much look forward to working with him to keep UK-Holy See relations strong.”

As nuncio, the archbishop's role will see him draw up shortlists for crucial leadership positions in the Church in England and Wales. Later this year the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, will reach the retirement age of 75, while in 2021 the Archbishop of Cardiff, George Stack, also turns 75.

The post of Vatican ambassador to Britain has traditionally been a final appointment before retirement. Following the rupture of the Reformation, formal diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Holy See resumed in 1914 and a Vatican “Apostolic Delegation” to Great Britain was established on 21 November 1938.

It wasn’t until 1982, however, that the delegation was promoted to a full nunciature with the papal diplomat will move to London to a full nunciature with the papal representative to Britain.

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Irish bishops welcome guidance for churches accommodating 50 or more

IRISH CHURCH leaders have welcomed the Dublin government’s new guidance on indoor gatherings of more than 50 people in places of worship, but it will involve separating worshippers into zones of 50 within churches, writes Sarah Mac Donald and Brian Morton.

The Cabinet Committee on Covid-19 announced last Friday that churches whose size allows for a capacity greater than 50, with social distancing, can now accommodate larger congregations if certain criteria are met.

Welcoming the guidance, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said parishes would work diligently to observe the new norms to ensure people can attend Mass safely. He reminded those intending to attend Mass that the use of masks is “strongly recommended for indoor settings”.

The updated guidance requires churches to ensure that social distancing guidelines are adhered to; that a church can be subdivided and cordoned into distinct sections of not more than 50 people in each section; that each section has its own entrance/exit route; and that there are specific arrangements for elements of the service involving close contact, such as the distribution of Holy Communion. The guidance was also welcomed by Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam.

Meanwhile in Scotland, parishes are making tentative steps towards reopening, but it has been left to priests and congregations to make their own determination of when and how. Scotland has a huge disproportion between city parishes – with up to 1,000 regular Mass-goers – and rural ones in Argyll, Aberdeen and Galloway, where the numbers attending are in single figures and social distancing is not an issue.

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Housing

Religious asked to open their buildings for shelter

Hotels put homeless back on the streets

LIZ DODD

RELIGIOUS in England and Wales have been asked to offer space in their buildings to vulnerable people who face homelessness on the streets as the emergency housing scheme put in place for the pandemic draws to a close.

Hundreds of vulnerable people will urgently need accommodation by the end of July, when the hotels and hostels currently housing them reopen for business.

Around 5,400 people who were housed in emergency accommodation for the three-month lockdown now face the streets again: 1,200 people were moved into hotels from the streets in Greater London alone.

While the government has announced extra funding for housing support, that funding will be unavailable for those homeless people on the streets with no recourse to public funds, such as some migrants and asylum seekers. Caritas Westminster estimates that this group makes up around 70 per cent of the people currently sheltering in hotels in Greater London.

In a direct plea to Congregations in England and Wales this week, Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, the chair of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission, said: “Have you got buildings that you are no longer using or could spare temporarily, and are they safe? Have you got hotels and hostels currently housing people in lockdown now that you could work with to open up for this group of people who are currently facing a crisis. Are there any unused hotel rooms or hostels currently sheltering people in lockdown that you could work with to turn around for this group of people who are currently facing a crisis?”

The Catholic Union, along with other charities that work with homeless people, are warning of an impending crisis.

In a letter to Dame Louise Casey, who is heading a government taskforce on homelessness, the Union – along with the Justice and Peace Department of the Catholic Diocese of Westminster, working in conjunction with Caritas, the social action department of the Diocese of Westminster, and the Jesuit Refugee Service UK – said that asylum seekers and others with no recourse to public funds are particularly at risk.

Bishops urged to mark fifth anniversary of Laudato Si’

IRISH bishops need to give more leadership on the climate crisis and promote Laudato Si’, according to theologian Fr Dermot Lane, writes Sarah Mac Donald.

The retired president of the Mater Dei Institute of Education at Dublin City University told The Tablet he felt the bishops hadn’t adequately recognised that this year is the fifth anniversary of the encyclical, and that Pope Francis has urged the Church to reflect and take action on it.

Fr Lane’s book, Theology and Ecology in Dialogue: The Wisdom of Laudato Si’, was recently published by Messenger Publications in Ireland, and it is due out in the United States in the autumn.

The Dublin priest acknowledged that the bishops had established a Laudato Si’ working group and for the last number of years had promoted the Season of Creation, and that they were beginning to incorporate Laudato Si’ into catechetical textbooks, which he said was “a step in the right direction”. But he added: “My personal view is that they are not doing enough.”

Of the Pope’s call to the Church to reflect and take action on Laudato Si’, he said: “That is an enormous challenge and I think it is even more interesting when it is coming from the top and very little is being done.”

The theologian admitted that Covid-19 had made things more difficult for the Church in recent months, but he said the bishops had seen the pandemic solely as a global health crisis.

“This catastrophe is avoidable if there is a temporary reprieve for the growing number of destitute who have no recourse to public funds,” Fr Robinson said.

“If public funds are made available for this group of people left on the streets, we stand ready to work together for what we all want – a permanent and holistic solution to this affront to human dignity which sees those who have lost everything with nowhere to turn,” he commented.

Catholic Union head of public affairs, James Somerville-Meikle, said: “The new funding from the government is a step in the right direction, but it has come late in the day.

“Many rough sleepers face being turned out of hotel and hostel rooms in the weeks ahead. Whilst the long-term commitment to end homelessness is welcome, we need an immediate plan for how to prevent a rough sleeping crisis.

“Church groups stand ready to be part of the solution and can help get support to some of the most vulnerable people in society – people that government services often struggle to reach,” Mr Somerville-Meikle said.

Support for victims of modern slavery and human trafficking has continued throughout the pandemic, writes Ellen Teague.

The Medaille Trust, formed in 2006 by Catholic Religious, is the largest provider of safe-house beds for victims of modern slavery in the UK with a national network of nine safe houses providing shelter and support for 116 men, women and their children at any one time.

Medaille Trust safe houses have taken in people of all faiths or no faith, and nationalities of current guests include Albanians, Romanians, Vietnamese, Chinese and British.

Sr Imelda Poole, a sister of the Blessed Virgin Mary, speaking at an online gathering of Women Religious on the Frontlines organised by the US and British Ambassadors to the Holy See, reported that, in her work with Renate (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation), she sees a massive increase of hunger.

She said counselling of trafficking victims was now largely online. There has also been an explosion in the numbers of children going online unsupervised, leading to an increase in sexual exploitation.

For daily news updates visit www.thetablet.co.uk
Glimpses of Eden

JONATHAN TULLOCH

THESE GLORIOUS days of early July belong to those who love to stroll, saunter, mosey, potter. As well as often being too hot to do anything else, it’s also by far the best way to enjoy the unique gift of this time: midsummer grassland. Although we’ve lost most of our proper flower-rich hay meadows, at this time of year any patch of long grass is bursting with slow-moving, surprising beauty.

On my leisurely wade through a waist-high field margin, grasshoppers called from all around. Halfway between a rattle and a humming, I always find this sound soothing, like lullabies heard in the afternoon. I knew they were grasshoppers because crickets are crepuscular, they “sing” at dusk, whilst grasshoppers are active by day. I could hear voles too, squeaking as they busily built their nests. The day was also graced with the grand silences of butterflies, which seemed to fly up with every step I took. The dark brown ringlets; the brilliant tortoiseshells; and the fox orange small skipper, a tiny butterfly with huge eyes. And it wasn’t long before I’d met that hero of July, the creeping thistle. Those fabulous violet flowers were laden with pollinators. It was here that high-summer was at its most mesmeric – the shimmering murmur of foraging bumblebees.
HELP PRIESTS AND SISTERS TACKLE THE
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