



Elizabeth Anscombe belonged to an extraordinary generation of female thinkers at Oxford during the Second

World War. She, Philippa Foot, Iris Murdoch, Mary Midgley and Mary Warnock all found themselves at odds with what Midgley called “the brash, unreal style of philosophising” then prevalent there. All, in Midgley’s phrase, “came to think out alternatives”.

Even in this company, Anscombe stood out. She cut her hair short, wore trousers, smoked cigars, affected a monocle. The

To mark our anniversary, we have invited 50 Catholics to choose a person from the past 175 years whose life has been a personal inspiration to them and an example of their faith at its best

mother of seven children, she could work amid domestic chaos. She once lectured on the philosophy of G.E. Moore while eating baked beans from a tin.

Anscombe did as much as anyone to establish the reputation of Ludwig Wittgenstein. She took to heart Wittgenstein’s view that “philosophy is not a theory but an activity”. She asked hard questions about important things: human action and intention, the workings of the mind, our understanding of ourselves.

A flaw in modern moral phi-

losophy, she believed, is that it deploys legalistic language yet no longer subscribes to any authority that might ground it. In suggesting that such language would, in the circumstances, be better abandoned, she helped to inspire the discipline of virtue ethics, which considers moral questions in terms of good character rather than duty or rules. Personally she herself had no difficulty with the language of obligation and prohibition, for she accepted the divine authority with which such language is traditionally under-

pinned. Faith, for her, was not just believing *in* God; it was believing God.

She thought most modern moral philosophy merely flattered the spirit of the age. Hers never did. She questioned the justice of the Second World War. She was an articulate critic of contraception and a campaigner against abortion. These things lost her friends, but in doing them she was following both the teaching authority of the Church and the logic of her own philosophical arguments. This was thought in action, as well as faith.

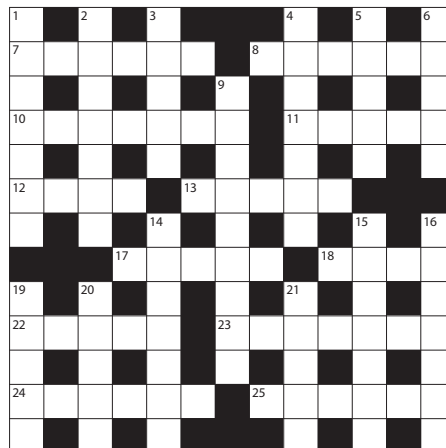
Ian Brunskill is assistant editor of The Times.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD
No. 455 | Enigma

Across

- 7 Another term for nicotinic acid (6)
- 8 Pre-marriage surname of Angela Merkel (6)
- 10 Where London can be found in Canada (7)
- 11 ----- mediocritas; “The Golden Mean” (from *The Odes* of Horace) (5)
- 12 Scottish island of peace and pilgrimage (4)
- 13 Literary adjective for a person/thing predicting the future (5)
- 17 Pagliacci (of the opera) was this (5)
- 18 Large predatory bird which chases other seabirds to steal fish from them (4)
- 22 An informal name for cannabis (5)
- 23 ----- of Remesiana; fifth-century Greek bishop and theologian (7)
- 24 ----- power; source of mechanical energy (6)



25 Family who gave sanctuary to St Edmund Campion (6)

Down

- 1 Romantically faithless ice-cream seller in music-hall song (7)
- 2 One of those whose frescoes may be seen in the Basilica in Assisi (7)
- 3 The sun appears from “----- portal of the east” (*Richard II*, act III, scene 2) (5)
- 4 Central region of ancient Palestine (7)

SUDOKU | Beginner

| | | | | | | | | | |
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| 9 | 8 | | | | | | 7 | | |

- 5 Research vessel which captured the image of the wreckage of Titanic in 1985 (5)
- 6 ----- brethren; priests in ancient Rome who offered sacrifice for fertility of fields (5)
- 9 Hot plasma coming from the sun is called a ----- (5,4)
- 14 Describes each of the consonants, B, P, D (7)
- 15 The Glaciarium was opened in London in 1876 for this (7)
- 16 Title bestowed when addressing a great conductor (7)
- 19 Genus of small lizards related to the Iguana (5)
- 20 According to Wordsworth, this has nothing to show “more fair” than the view from Westminster Bridge (5)
- 21 The ----- Confession; moderate Calvinist statement mainly by John Knox, sixteenth century (5)

Please send your answers to:

Crossword Competition 11 April
The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY.

Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. A copy of *Begat: the King James Bible and the English Language*, by David Crystal, OUP, will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 24 April.

● The answers to this week’s puzzles and the crossword winner’s name will appear in the 2 May issue.

Solution to the 21 March crossword No. 452

Across: 7 Oliver; 8 Eschew; 10 Grenade; 11 Ramps; 12 Arum; 13 Crank; 17 Orare; 18 Free; 22 Heron; 23 Implant; 24 Carbon; 25 Indigo.

Down: 1 Borgias; 2 Wine Gum; 3 Regal; 4 Is Frank; 5 Theme; 6 Swiss; 9 Bear Fruit; 14 Transom; 15 Arcadia; 16 Section; 19 Shack; 20 Frère; 21 Opine.

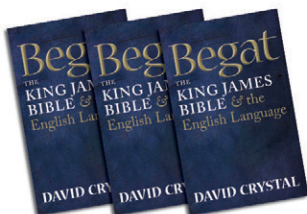
Winner: C.D. Elliott, of Camberwell, south London.

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

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

Solution to the 21 March puzzle

Begat: the King James Bible and the English Language



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