

GOSPEL ACCOUNTS

There is of course much detail given in Luke and Matthew's Gospel accounts of the conception, pregnancy and birth of Jesus. If we were to read a biography of a celebrity today, it would strike us as very strange if such large proportion of the text was given over to a careful detailing of the conception of the person. However the focus of the two gospels is on establishing the lineage of Jesus and his divinity as the son of God.

We might also think it strange that there is not much focus on the childhood or invariably awkward teenage years of Jesus, where often we would hear the most entertaining stories that would give us insight into a person's character. The Bible jumps from Jesus' presentation in the Temple as an infant to a dozen or so years later when he and Mary and Joseph are in Jerusalem for the Passover. Only Luke records one story that occurs when Jesus is around 12 years old.

As told in Luke 2:41-53, after the Passover religious festival, Jesus stays behind in the Temple while Mary and Joseph head back to Nazareth. Each one thinks that Jesus is with the other, an assumption that is easy to understand when you consider that the men and women were separated in the Temple and often travelled in segregated groups. Unless Jesus had celebrated his bar mitzvah, he spent most of his time with his mother, while after this rite of passage, he would have spent more time with Joseph and the other adult males. Neither Mary nor Joseph initially panicked when he wasn't with them when they left to return home. When the mistake is realised, Mary experiences a mother's worst nightmare. She and Joseph search for their missing son for three days. The horror and fear a mother would experience

during this time is unfathomable. When they find him, apparently oblivious to their fuss and worry, Mary scolds him. Jesus retorts with a cryptic answer about already being in his father's house.

TREASURED

Luke tells us that Mary "treasured all these things in her heart" (2:51). This is often interpreted as Mary being fully aware of the role her son was to have and was accepting of it. The word "treasured" can also have the connotations of "weighing down" and "pondering" and this seems to have much more resonance with how a mother would have felt. Every mother has concerns for their child's future and worries about what the future will hold for them. Mary has, since the earliest of times, been held by Christians as the one who pondered, who was prepared to obey God without full knowledge or understanding, yet would quietly reflect and grow in understanding as God permitted. ■



Today's readings

Is 55:10-11
Rm 8:18-23
Mt 13:1-23

GOD'S WORD TODAY

A sower goes out to sow seed. He scatters it generously. Some falls on the edge of the path and is eaten up immediately by birds. Other seeds fall on a rocky patch, where they spring up straight away, but quickly wither because there isn't enough soil for the roots to take hold. Some fall among thorns, which grow up and choke them. Others fall among rich soil, and produce an abundant crop.

Jesus explains that the seed is the word of God, which he scatters generously. It is available for everyone to respond to. But whether God's word

will take root and bear fruit depends on the condition of the ground. It depends on how open people are to receive it.

God's word is still scattered generously today. The question is how well do we respond to it. How firmly does it take root in us? Are we people like the fourth group of hearers, who listen to the word of God, take it to heart, make it their own, and have it bear much fruit?

16 July 2017 – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time **Year A**

Psalter Week 3

SoulSpace

SERIES: WOMEN FROM THE BIBLE

Season colour: **GREEN**

In this series, **Maire Byrne** examines key female figures from the Old and New Testaments.



MARY — MOTHER OF GOD

There is actually very little written in the four gospels about Mary the mother of Jesus. Writers of the New Testament saw Mary as relatively unimportant. For them, Jesus was the central figure. He was the focus of all their attention and hopes. Mary is included only when something she does throws light on the person of Jesus. As someone who is to become a mother for the first time, the idea of the motherhood of Mary is one dimension of her different roles in the gospels that strikes a chord. She is also a disciple of Jesus and a symbol of the new Christian church.

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WRONGLY PORTRAYED

Throughout the centuries, Mary Magdalene was wrongly portrayed as a reformed prostitute as she was confused with the woman with the alabaster jar described in Luke 7:36-50. The woman with the alabaster jar is called a "sinner", but not a prostitute; Luke uses a different word when he describes an actual prostitute in 15:30. Why it matters so much as to whether or not she was a prostitute is unclear. Surely the point would be that if she had sinned (which all humans do) then Jesus would have forgiven her? Indeed from Luke 8:1-3 we know that Mary Magdalene generously supported the material needs of Jesus and the apostles. Luke's initial passage also states that she was possessed by seven demons. Though the text never describes what happened to her to be cured, Mark 16:9 specifies that Jesus was the one who exorcised her demons. We don't know the exact specifics of her illness, but we can surmise that being cured of this would make most people extremely grateful to their healer and may explain why she became such a devout follower and supporter of Jesus.

DEVOTION TO JESUS

Biblical accounts also affirm that Mary Magdalene was one of the women who stayed with Jesus at the foot of the cross on the day he was crucified and died. Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40 and John 19:25 explicitly mention her being at Calvary with Jesus' mother and some other women. Tradition has it that the other men (only John the apostle is recorded as being there) and apostles abandoned Jesus and left him as it was too dangerous for them to be there, while

women such as Mary Magdalene remained faithful and stayed with him. Her act of solidarity illustrates her love and devotion to Jesus.

Her most significant role in the gospels however is her role as the first one to discover the empty tomb on Easter morning. Mary Magdalene leads the women who come to the tomb (John whittles down the group to Mary Magdalene alone). Seeing that the stone has been rolled away from the tomb and not understanding what has happened, she immediately assumes that "they" have stolen the body of Jesus. She recognises Jesus when he speaks her name, echoing John 10:3 in which Jesus' sheep know the sounds of his voice. After this emotional reunion, Jesus sends Mary to the apostles (or disciples) to bring the good news. She tells them "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18). Because she was sent by Jesus to bring the message that Christ is risen, she is often metaphorically called the "apostle to the Apostles".

A WITNESS

The idea of women as primary witnesses does not seem unusual to people now, but it was a revolutionary concept at the time. The testimony of women was not given the same weight as men's, either personally or in a court of law. When the Christian stories described Mary Magdalene and the other women as the first witnesses of the Resurrection, they were saying something important about the nature of women. They bear witness to his teaching and healing, to his torture and death, to his victory over death. He stands before them, as he does us at Easter, with his body transformed and gives them the mission to tell the world what they have seen. ■



Today's readings

Ws 12:13-16-19

Rm 8:26-27

Mt 13:24-43

like the mustard seed and the leaven, will soon reach out to the whole world and transform it.

Today's Gospel also contains the parable of the weed sown among the wheat. Matthew's explanation looks beyond the time of Jesus to the life of the community after the resurrection. The goodwill and the enthusiasm of the first disciples will not last. By Matthew's time, the Church probably contained a good number of people whose lives and conduct did not give much edification. But what was to be done about it? Some members probably wanted an instant clean-up campaign but the wiser might not have wanted hasty action to be taken.

The question of reward and punishment should be left to the end times. Human beings, even Church leaders, need to recognise the fact that the Church will always have both saints and sinners.

GOD'S WORD TODAY

The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven are both about the unexpected power hidden in small things. A mustard seed looks small and insignificant but when it takes root, it becomes a shrub or even a tree. In the same way, a woman baking bread adds a lump of leaven to her flour to produce a larger quantity of dough than she had to begin with. Jesus' preaching in the countryside of Galilee,

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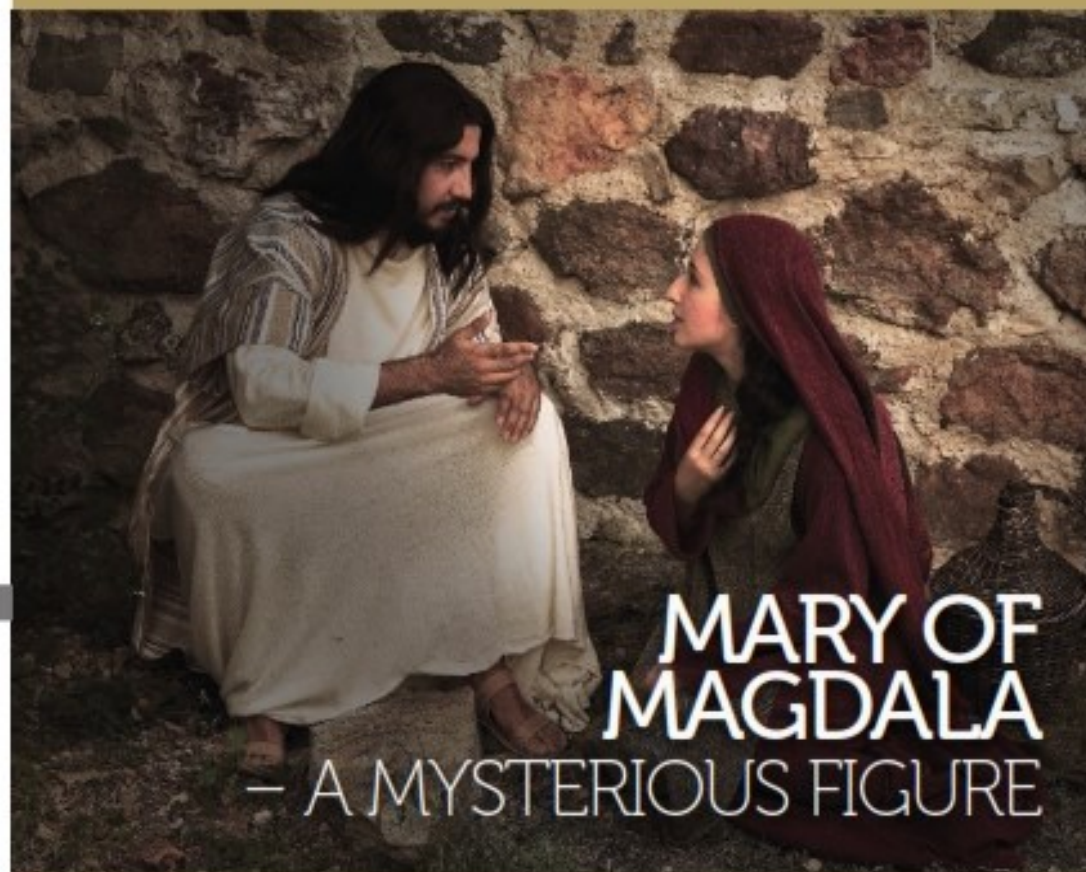
23 July 2017 - 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Psalter Week 4

SERIES: WOMEN FROM THE BIBLE

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In this series, Máire Byrne examines key female figures from the Old and New Testaments.



When writing about Mary of Magdala (a town on the western side of the Sea of Galilee), it is always unfortunately necessary to spend some time unpicking what myths surround her. She is one of the most famous, and indeed mysterious female characters in the Bible. A woman who lived and served in close proximity to Jesus.



FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

16th July 2017

The Word of God goes out to all the world, let us listen and respond to it in our daily lives, so that we may grow in his love.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

23rd July 2017

We are aware of the power of evil and temptation in our world, but we must remember that the spirit comes to help us in our weakness, to give us strength.

WORDS FROM POPE FRANCIS ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY

"But do not let the day end without making peace in your family. Our first reaction when we are annoyed should be one of heartfelt blessing, asking God to bless, free and heal that person." Amoris Laetitia 104

THANK YOU on behalf of North West Hospice to all the volunteer collectors and parishioners who supported their recent Church Gate Collection. The Cathedral Church Gate Collection raised €1,600.32.

TROCAIRE EAST AFRICA APPEAL Envelopes are available for a special collection which we urge you to please contribute whatever you can to. The envelopes will be collected at all Masses next weekend (22-23 July). Thank you.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER Please note that during the months of July and August our weekly newsletter is issued every second week. The next issue will cover Sundays 30th July and 6th August and the cut off time for receiving notices is midday on the **Wednesday immediately prior** to the date of issue.

THE "LAND OF SAINTS & SCHOLARS – the story of the Catholic Church in Ireland" tells the story of the Catholic Church in Ireland in a beautifully illustrated format. The final chapter of the book dedicated to the Diocese of Elphin is written by Very Rev Francis Beirne of Ballyforan, Co Roscommon. Copies are available for sale at the entrance to The Cathedral at €15, a very suitable gift for children or families. For more visit the Schools page on our website.

WELCOME AND FAREWELL

We welcome Fr. Yashin Jos to the Cathedral Parish - He will be taking over the duties of Fr. Julian.
We wish Fr. Julian well in Ballinafad and we thank Fr. Julian for his ministry in our Parish.

BLESSED SACRAMENT CAR PARK

We continue to plead with our parishioners, Mass goes and others to **please not use the Blessed Sacrament car park** for either general parking or parking while at Mass but use the main car park for these times. Lack of space in the Blessed Sacrament Car Park is turning our regular and rostered adorers off, we cannot afford to offend them. Thank you for your cooperation.

BINGO - GILLOOLY HALL - TONIGHT, SUNDAY 16th July at 9.00pm

TONIGHT'S JACKPOT €1,800.

Raffle at interval with refreshments available. All welcome.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES

SUNDAY, 2nd July **PARISH ENV: €1,810 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,282**

SUNDAY, 9th July **PARISH ENV: €1,915 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,271**

THANK YOU for your contribution.

ST MARY'S PRESBYTERY ☎ 071 9162670 SACRISTY ☎ 071 9161261

✉ e-mail us @ news@sligocathedral.ie We welcome your comments.

3rd ANNIVERSARY OF EPISCOPAL ORDINATION - JULY 13th 2017

We remember Bishop Kevin in Prayer as he celebrates the 3rd Anniversary of his Ordination as Bishop of our Diocese.

GARLAND WEEKEND 2017 - at TOBERNALT HOLY WELL

Theme: "Healing through Reconciliation."

Garland weekend takes place at the Holy Well from 29 - 30 July 2017

Sat 29th July 7.00pm - Confession at the Holy Well

7.30pm - Evening Mass - Jesus our Healer

Sun 30th July 6.00am - Dawn Mass with **Camino from St. Anne's Parish** (Departing at 4.45am).

10.00 am - Morning Mass - Baptism - our call to Jesus
12 Noon - Mass with Prayers for Healing & Anointing of the Sick.

A camino from St. Anne's in Sligo to the Holy Well will take place on Sunday, 30th July from St. Anne's at 4.45am and arriving at the Holy Well for the 6.00am Dawn Mass. All welcome.

BAPTISMS We welcome into God's family OLLIE O'BRIEN, EDWIN KOENCK and KATIE CONLON who were recently baptised in our Cathedral.

TRIDUUM FOR VISIT OF INTERNATIONAL PILGRIM STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA In our Cathedral from Friday 11th to Sunday, 13th August. *All are invited to come and pray before this Image of Our Lady of Fatima. More to follow in our newsletter on July 30th.*

CONGRATULATIONS to our parishioner Seamus Kilgannon on his appointment as Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council. We pray every blessing on him and wish him success in his role.

SUMMER AREA MASSES - A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Rathedmond Estate: Thursday, 20th July at 7pm

Oakfield Park, Crescent & Ardee Area: Friday, 21st July at 7pm,

Sea Road Area: Friday, 28th July at 7pm

Rose Hill: Thursday, 3rd August at 8pm,

Maugheraboy: Wednesday, 9th August at 7.30pm,

Jink's Ave: Friday, 11th August at 8pm,

Thornhill: Thursday, 31st August at 8pm.

If you wish to host an Area Mass for your area please contact your area priest or The Presbytery on 071 9162670.

WEDDINGS Congratulations and best wishes to PHILIP DUNLEAVY and MARSHA CURRID-TROTTER who were recently married in our Cathedral.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGES

KNOCK Bishop Kevin will lead the annual Elphin Diocesan pilgrimage to Knock on Sunday 20th August 2017.

LOURDES Elphin Diocesan pilgrimage will take place from 28th August to 2nd September 2017. Booking forms available direct from Joe Walsh Tours on 01 241 0810. For sick/ assisted pilgrims who wish to travel, please contact Fr. Ray Milton on 090 6661115.

SUNDAY READINGS: 23rd July: 1st: Wis. 12:13. 16-19; 2nd: Rom. 8:26-27; Gospel: Mt. 13:24-43. **30th July:** 1st: 1 Kings 3:5. 7-12; 2nd: Rom. 8:28-30; Gospel: Matt. 13:44-52.

CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Upcoming **EVENTS**

THE WEEK AHEAD

Wednesday 19th July **"Wednesday Tea"** after 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Saturday 22nd July **Confessions** from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER

CHURCH GATE COLLECTION in aid of Concern Worldwide on weekend of 22nd & 23rd July 2017. Please support.

TRIDUUM OF GRACE A three night "Mini Mission" will take place in St. Anne's Parish, Cranmore Road, Sligo. From Tuesday, 25th July to Thursday, 27th July. Each night holds a special theme, Tuesday being Our Lady of Fatima, Wednesday on St. Michael the Archangel (with a Michaelite Father coming to speak) and Thursday being on the Most Holy Eucharist. Each night begins at 7.30pm. Please come along to these special nights of grace. All most welcome.




STOP SUICIDE will be holding their AGM on Thursday, 10th August at 8pm in the Beepark Resource Centre, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim.

LOUGH DERG 2017 You may begin the Three Day Pilgrimage on any day up to and including Sunday, 13th August. Advance booking is not necessary. Telephone Maureen or Lorraine on 071 9851518 or Email: info@loughderg.org www.loughderg.org

YOUTH 2000 ANNUAL SUMMER FESTIVAL will take place from 17th to 20th August 2017 in the Cistercian College, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary. This is a donation only Catholic festival for young people aged 16-35. www.youth2000.ie
PILGRIMAGE TO MEDIGORJE 23rd August 2017 7 nights half board in Guesthouse will cost €719 per person inclusive, ex Knock day flight. Please contact group leader Tom Moran at 086 0815635 or www.joewalshstours.ie

ANNUAL SLEEP OUT FOR NORTH WEST SIMON COMMUNITY on Fri 6th Oct in Sligo. It is to raise awareness of the local homeless charity and raise vital funds. For further details email mary@northwestsimon.ie or phone 087 7708865.

anniversary & remembrances

DAY	8.00 a.m. Mass	10.30 a.m. Mass
MON 17 th	—	JOHN, CATHY & BRENDAN CONLON & dec'd Family Members
TUES 18 th	—	JOE BURNS
WED 19 th	JOE KELLY	KATHLEEN, BERNADETTE, BERNARD & MARCENA FORDE
THURS 20 th	SEAMUS & KAY McDONAGH	LILY KELLY
FRI 21 st	MARGARET HIGGINS & FRANCIE GALLAGHER	MONTH'S MIND SEAMUS O'BOYLE 
SAT 22 nd	—	MONTH'S MIND DENIS WILLIAMS 
MON 24 th	TOM GILLEN	JAMES & LENA McCORMACK & deceased Family Members
TUES 25 th	LARRY McMORROW & deceased Family Members	JAMES DOWDALL & deceased Family Members
WED 26 th	—	PACKIE GILMARTIN
THURS 27 th	TOM & ETTA LYNCH	EAMONN CAWLEY
FRI 28 th	JOHN FOWLEY	BATTY FLANERY
SAT 29 th	JIM McLOUGHLIN	MONTH'S MIND LEO WARD 

rest in peace Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of: PAURIC HARTE, Harte's Shop, Lower John St; UNA SCANLON (née MORRISON), Seafield Ave, Cartron Point and MALACHY CHAMBERS, Maugheraboy. *May God grant them eternal rest and comfort and console their bereaved families and friends.*