

A SELF-MADE WOMAN

Lydia is a self-made woman and a very successful businesswoman who is referred to in the Bible as a "dealer in purple". This term means that she sold and traded purple linen and was involved in the dying process, which would have been a very profitable business. Purple at that time signified status and wealth. The Romans used purple and the various shades of it to designate the aristocracy (usually senators) and royalty (the emperor) in their empire.

Lydia comes from Thyatira in Asia Minor, and later she moves and works in the city of Philippi in Macedonia. As a Gentile who was attracted to Judaism and attended the synagogue, but never formally converted to Judaism, she sought to grow in her faith. Fortunately, she hears Paul and Silas preaching, which converts her and her entire household to Christianity, and she then uses her wealth and position to assist the infant church (you can read her story in Acts 16:14-15; 40).

CHARITY

She offers housing for Christian missionaries on their many travels. Her kindness and thoughtfulness go beyond occasional charitable acts. Instead Lydia personifies that ideal the obligation and duty of society's wealthy and powerful to help the less fortunate. She sets a good example by using her home and her money for the sake of those in need and for the spread of the faith. Although some forsake their



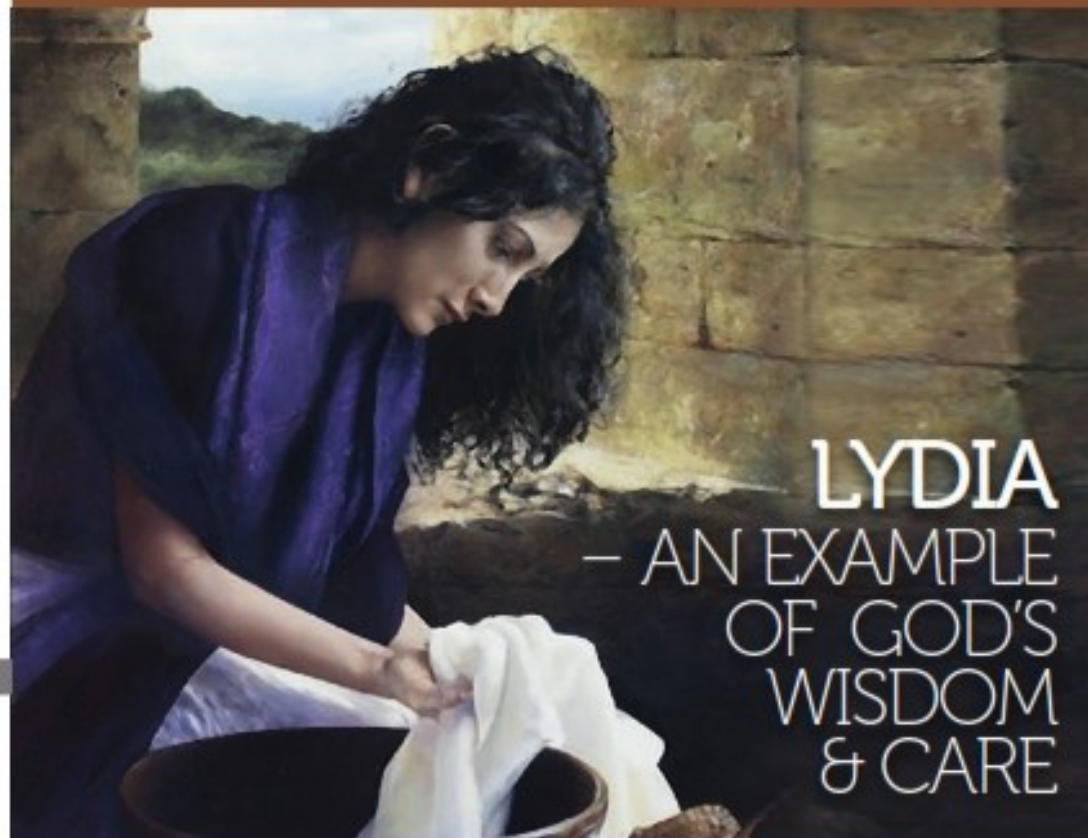
earthly treasures for the sake of serving God, others use the blessings they have in the forms of wealth and possessions and power or influence to also serve God by helping those less fortunate.

The story of Lydia in the Bible is a great example of God's wisdom and his care for believers. Lydia was a worshipper of God but, like Cornelius in Acts 10, had not yet heard the gospel. God rerouted Paul and friends and also ensured that Lydia would be in the right place at the right time to encounter Paul and hear the good news of Jesus. And, as Lydia heard the gospel, God opened her heart so that she received the life-giving message.

LUKE'S VIEW

Luke's placing of Lydia (an Eastern businesswoman turned Christian heroine) at Philippi (a city where many were converted by Paul, yet where polytheism and female participation in religion was thriving) had a theological message. For Luke, Lydia represents an example to the women of Philippi: even businesswomen who own homes and have servants should convert to Luke's understanding of Christianity, offer their wealth and resources to Christian missionaries (who were usually men) and allow men to keep or undertake leadership roles in the community. Luke's judgement does not have to be the final word however. Today, instead of viewing Lydia and other women like her as pawns in male leaders' games, women can recognise them as resilient, affluent, and independent people who, upon embracing the new Christian movement, became leaders in it. ❧

Photo: "Lydia" / Aerial by Shyph-Kay



LYDIA — AN EXAMPLE OF GOD'S WISDOM & CARE

Lydia is referred to as the first Christian convert of Europe. Lydia and others like her demonstrate that you can have wealth, power, position and influence, and be a devout Christian, as long as you recognise the plight of the disenfranchised and powerless and do something to help them. She is able to be poor in spirit by not allowing her material possessions to possess her. She shares liberally and happily, and her kindness helps key figures like the apostle Paul and Silas (a Christian leader from Jerusalem) when they need a place to stay after being released from prison in Philippi.

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Today's readings

1 Kg 19:9-11-13
Rm 9:1-5
Mt 14:22-33

GOD'S WORD TODAY

In today's Gospel, the story about Peter shows two sides of the apostle. The first is his generous commitment to Jesus. He is prepared to come to him even if it means defying the wind and the waves. The second side is his impulsiveness; he is liable to collapse in time of crisis. The best illustration of those two sides will be his denial of Jesus. He followed him to the house of the high priest when the others abandoned him. While he is there, a storm will break, and Peter will deny that he knows Jesus. He will prove again that he is a man of weak faith. Yet that is not the end for Peter. The Lord, who stretched out a hand to support him in the storm at sea and help him back into the boat, will meet him again after the resurrection as the forgiving Lord and restore him to his place as leader of the community.



ELIZABETH BECOMES PREGNANT (LUKE 1:5-25)

Elizabeth was past menopause, her husband was elderly, and she had given up hoping for child. But Elizabeth's life took an unexpected turn. She became pregnant through God's divine intervention to allow the couple to conceive.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH (LUKE 1:57-66)

While she was pregnant with the future John the Baptist, she gave shelter to her young cousin Mary of Nazareth who is pregnant with Jesus. At their meeting, each recognises that they and their children will be an extraordinary part of God's plan for humanity. When Mary enters the room, Elizabeth's unborn son moves in her womb as if to confirm the good news. Elizabeth makes her own bold proclamation of faith when she refers to her cousin Mary as "the mother of my Lord".

ELIZABETH GIVES BIRTH TO JOHN (LUKE 1:67-80)

A few months later Elizabeth bore the son she had always hoped for. She named him 'John'. Both her and her cousin's son are pivotal to salvation history. Elizabeth's son will herald the coming of the Messiah, while Mary's child is the Messiah himself.

ANNA

Anna is a female prophet, one of only six mentioned in the New Testament. She appears in Luke's gospel (2:36-38) and despite her

relatively short appearance, we are given a surprising amount of detail about Anna, including her name and her family. We also learn that she had become widowed after seven years of marriage and that it is likely that she is in her eighties, an advanced age for the time. It is not typical that the biblical text of the New Testament focuses on someone's age, but here the emphasis is on the fact that she has waited a very long time to see the Messiah (which would be in parallel with the wait of the Jewish people).

The text tells us that Anna never left the temple, but spent the time praying and fasting there. It is possible that a woman could have lived in the women's court of the temple but it is also possible that this idea is used to show how Anna's life was focused on and revolved around the temple as she dedicated her life to God and the wait for the Messiah.

Mary and Joseph are there at the Temple because they have brought their new-born son Jesus for the customary ceremony. After the birth of a male child, the mother was ritually unclean for seven days and had to remain at home for a further thirty-three after which, on the fortieth day, a purification sacrifice had to be offered and the baby boy was to be circumcised.

Anna came in just after Simeon proclaimed Jesus to be the long-awaited. When Mary, Joseph and Jesus enter the temple, the blind prophet Simeon "sees" Jesus and praises the child in song. The phrase in the original Greek seems to suggest that Anna sees what others cannot. Her reaction is immediate and dramatic; she does not have to think about what she has seen. Anna recognises the baby Jesus as the one who will redeem Jerusalem and proclaims this message to all around her. ■

words end



Today's readings

Is 56:1,6-7
Rm 11:13-15,29-32
Mt 15:21-28

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Today's first reading offers a beautiful image from the prophet Isaiah that challenges us to think about how we see "outsiders".

Isaiah is reflecting on the gracious welcome that God extends to pagans who convert. For God, it doesn't matter where people have come from, what colour their skin is, or what they have done in life. The only thing that matters is that they have a concern for justice, that they act with integrity, and that they love the Lord. If they do their best to live a good life, then God will reward them with

a place on the Holy Mountain.

For God, there is no such thing as an "outsider." Our God is a God of inclusion rather than of exclusion. If our worldview is limited, God's is infinitely bigger. No one has to fight or to struggle for God's love, since there is enough of it for all of us.

Just as God is open and accepting of the outsider, so also our parish and our Church must be a place of welcome for all.



SoulSpace

20 August 2017 – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Psalter Week 4

SERIES: WOMEN FROM THE BIBLE

Season colour: GREEN

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



ELIZABETH

Luke chooses to begin his Gospel with the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah, an aged, married couple who become the parents of John the Baptist. We are told Elizabeth's family background. She was descended from a long line of priests; Luke established this fact right at the beginning of his gospel, because he wanted to counter the slanders that were being bandied around about Jesus' legitimacy.

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NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

13th August 2017

Though hidden, God is always present to his people. He works quietly in history and in individual lives. Above all, he is present in Christ who makes his power available to us in prayer and the sacraments.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

20th August 2017

The message of salvation is for all who are sincere in their desire to seek God and to follow his commandments. We must try to recognise this sincerity in very many persons who do not share our faith in Christ.

TROCAIRE EAST AFRICA APPEAL Thank you to all who have contributed so generously to the Trocaire East Africa Appeal, the total amount raised was €5,940. Those who still wish to contribute can still return their envelopes at any of our Masses.

SUMMER AREA MASSES - A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

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.

BAPTISMS We welcome into God's family ERIN CALLAGHAN, ELIJAH BRENNAN, MARTIN REILLY AND THOMAS HARRISON who were recently baptised in our Cathedral.

WEDDINGS Congratulations and best wishes to GEORGINA GETHINS and RICHARD BRADLEY and GEMMA GRAY and EDWARD FITZGERALD who were recently married in our Cathedral.

MONEY ADVICE AND BUDGETING SERVICE

Are you struggling to make ends meet? Are you worried about money you owe to money lenders, electric/telephone providers, credit cards, banks and/or mortgage lenders? We can help you. For free and confidential advice, please contact Sligo MABS on 076 1072730 or email us at sligo@mabs.ie. or you can call to the office to make an appointment at Carbury House, Fish Quay, Sligo. MABS offer advice, support and information and can negotiate with creditors on your behalf.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER The next issue will cover Sunday 27th August and the cut off time for receiving notices is midday on the **Wednesday immediately prior** to the date of issue.

SUNDAY READINGS: 20th August: 1st:Is.56:1. 6-7 ; 2nd:Rom. 11:13-15. 29-32 ; Gospel:Matt. 15:21-28 . **27th August:** 1st:Is. 22:19 -23 ; 2nd:Rom. 11:33-36; Gospel: Matt. 16:13-20

BINGO, GILLOOLY HALL, TONIGHT, SUNDAY 13th August at 9.00pm

TONIGHT'S JACKPOT €2,000.

Raffle at interval with refreshments available. All welcome.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES

SUNDAY, 30th July **PARISH ENV: € 2,467 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,338**

SUNDAY, 6th August **PARISH ENV: €3,115 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,400**

THANK YOU for your contribution.

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

✉ email us at info@sligocathedral.ie We welcome your comments.

TUESDAY 15th AUGUST

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

We celebrate today the final blessing Our Lady received after her life of obedient service to God.

Through her Son we can all come to share God's life if, like her, we answer God's call and always rely on her help.

MASS TIMES: Vigil Monday 14th August takes place at **7.30 p.m.**

Tuesday 15th August 8.00am.; 10.30am. and 7.00pm.

PLEASE NOTE: There is no 12.00 noon Mass on Tuesday 15th.

ORDINATION REMEMBRANCE

MOST REV CHRISTOPHER JONES - BISHOP EMERITUS

On Tuesday 15th August, Bishop Jones celebrates the twenty - third anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination.

Let us remember him in a special way in our prayers.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF BLESSED MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sunday, August 27th 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Monday 28th August-Thursday August 31st 7:00 P.M.

Friday September 1st Mass at 7:00 P.M.
with Novena to follow.

Saturday September 2nd at 4.00pm Novena

Sunday September 3rd at 3.00pm Novena

Monday September 4th at 7.00pm

Feast Day Tuesday September 5th Mass at 7.00pm

With chief celebrant Bishop Kevin Doran



WORDS FROM POPE FRANCIS ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY

“Christian families should never forget that “faith does not remove us from the world, but draws us more deeply into it.” (Amoris Laetitia 181)

FATHER FLANAGAN AND BOYS TOWN conference to be held in the Library, Roscommon Town on Thursday, 24th August starting at 10.30a.m. Speakers include Bishop Kevin Doran, Prof Daire Keogh and John Waters. Admission free.

WELCOME

We would like to welcome Fr. Victor Samugana from the Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria to our Diocese and our parish. He has come to join our Diocese and parish for the next 3 years.

ONLINE THEOLOGY COURSE Application deadline 26th September 2017. Call 01 4048124 or email enquiries@priorsinstitute.com. www.priorsinstitute.com

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK - SUNDAY NEXT

Bishop Kevin will lead the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Knock on Sunday 20th August. There will be a 30km pilgrim walk from Castlereagh to Knock, starting at 6.40am. A programme for young people aged 12-17 will take place at the HUB (Knock Youth Ministry) from 11am.

CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Upcoming **EVENTS**

THE WEEK AHEAD

Wednesday 16th August **“Wednesday Tea”** after 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Saturday 19th August **Confessions** from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER

ST BERNADETTE'S CHAPEL, Rockwood Parade. Mass will be celebrated on Monday, 14th August at 5.15 p.m. All welcome.

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

SUMMER CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS Youth Workshop August 14-17 1-4PM €95. Adults August 19th 10-1.00pm Writing the Poem & 2-5pm How to Get Published. €35 for one course (each additional €30) Courses held at Yeats Memorial Building, Sligo. Ph 083-8561559 to register




THE IRISH CANCER SOCIETY OPERATES A FREE VOLUNTEER DRIVER SERVICE that is available to patients attending the following hospitals for chemotherapy treatments; Sligo General Hospital; Galway University Hospital & Merlin Park University Hospital. Volunteer drivers will pick a patient up at the door of their home, drop them at the hospital door and then when finished treatment, pick them up and drop them home again. All volunteer expenses are paid. Patients wishing to avail of this free service should contact their healthcare professional, visit website irishcancer.ie or contact the Irish Cancer Society for more on 01 2310 522.

THE “COACHING ON THE GREENS” an initiative being run by St Mary's GAA club. From August 14th to August 30th, coaching sessions on the green area in the following estates:

1. Rathedmond Estate on Mondays from 5pm to 6pm
2. Maugeraboy Estate on Mondays from 6:30pm to 7:30pm
3. Sea View Park on Wednesdays from 5pm to 6pm
4. Summerhill Estate on Wednesdays from 6:30pm to 7:30pm

All children between the ages of 6 and 10 are welcome to attend there is no charge.

anniversary & remembrances

DAY	8.00 a.m. Mass	10.30 a.m. Mass
MON 14 th	BESSIE & TOMMY MCGOWAN	1st Anniversary ANN KELLY 
TUES 15 th	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY
WED 16 th		Months Mind PAURIC HARTE 
THURS 17 th	PATRICK HARAN	
FRI 18 th	MICHAEL CONWAY	JOHN & OWEN SKEFFINGTON & JOSEPH & CATHERINE NOONE
SAT 19 th	ALLEN HENRY & EILEEN O'CONNOR	Months Mind UNA SCANLON 
MON 21 st	MAI BENNETT	
TUES 22 nd		BISHOP CONWAY
WED 23 rd	JOHN DEVANEY	TED & BERNADETTE GRENNAN
THURS 24 th	BirthDay Remembrance MARTIN SWEENEY	MADELINE LAVIN
FRI 25 th		
SAT 26 th	BirthDay Remembrance BETTY COMISKEY	MALACHY CHAMBERS

rest in peace Your prayers are asked for the repose of the soulsof: TERRY GANNON, Cedar Drive, MICHAEL GARRETT, Orchard Lane, formally Crossmolina, Mayo and Sr Mary Gilbride of The Ursuline Sisters Sligo.

May God grant them eternal rest and comfort and console their bereaved family and friends.