

DIOCESAN NEWS

Women's History Month will feature scholar

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

In the seventh chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, the writer tells how a woman came into the home of a Pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner.

The woman — a publicly known sinner — brought with her a flask of alabaster that she broke open. She then poured the ointment over the feet of Jesus. Washing his feet with her tears, she then wiped them with her hair. Jesus complimented the woman on her great love, and told her her sins were forgiven.

And, according to Luke, that woman was a prostitute, right?

Wrong.

Actually, nothing in the story necessarily indicates that the woman "who showed great love" was a prostitute, according to Sister Barbara E. Reid, OP, a Scripture scholar slated to speak in Rochester next month.

In fact, in her 1996 book *Choosing The Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke*, Sister Reid notes that, for all we know, the woman was a wealthy citizen who had committed sins other than prostitution. She may have even been considered a model of discipleship, since she washed Christ's feet — presaging how Jesus washed the Apostles' feet at the Last Supper, Sister Reid wrote.

"This story challenges the modern reader to look again and to be converted from our misperceptions, prejudgments, and stereotyped views of women that can blind us to the full identity of Jesus," wrote Sister Reid, professor of New Testament Studies at Chicago's Catholic Theological Union.

This is just one of the many ways in which Christians need to think anew about the Bible, Sister Reid said in a Feb. 19 telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*.

Too often, Christian commentators — be

they conservative or feminist — see the Bible rigidly through their own eyes, rather than through the eyes of those who wrote it, she said. For example, she said, a study of Scripture and Jewish culture shows that while Jesus highly valued women, he was not as revolutionary in his attitudes toward them as some commentators have claimed.

"To say that Jesus was a feminist in the way that we talk about it now is just ridiculous," she said.

Indeed, Jesus was a Jewish man whose "attitudes toward women should be understood to represent a possibility within emerging Judaism, not in total contrast to it," Sister Reid wrote in *Choosing The Better Part*.

Diocesan Catholics will get a chance to hear Sister Reid explain how she sees the role of women in the Bible during two appearances in Rochester next month.

Sister Reid will speak about "Women in Scripture" at Nazareth College's Arts Center, 4245 East Ave., on Friday, March 5, at 8 p.m. Admission is \$15. For information, call 716/336-4370.

On Saturday, March 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sister Reid will host a workshop on "Women in the Bible: Icons of the Reign of God" at St. Bernard Institute's Strong Hall Auditorium, 1100 S. Goodman St. Admission is \$30. For information, call 1-800-388-7177 or 716/328-3210, and dial ext. 347 for both numbers.

Sister Reid's appearances here are part of the diocesan celebration of Women's History Month during March, according to Gloria Ulterino, director of the diocesan Office of Women in Church and Society.

Ulterino's office, along with the Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality Center, St. Bernard's Continuing Education, and the Diocesan Women's Commission, are sponsoring Sister Reid's visit.

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In addition to Sister Reid's talks, other

events marking Women's History Month in the diocese are taking place. Among them:

• "Another Conversation with Women of the Early Church," is a dialogue performance presented by Ulterino and others, that features imagined talks with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Martha.

"Conversation" dialogues will take place at these churches: St. Gabriel's, 78 Shethar St., Hammondsport, on Sunday, Feb. 28, 3:30-5 p.m.; St. John the Evangelist, 55 Martha St., Spencerport, on Tuesday, March 2, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.; St. Louis Church, 64 S. Main St., Pittsford, on

Tuesday, April 13, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.; and the Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality Center, 402 Rogers Pkwy., Rochester, on Tuesday, April 27, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Admission is free to all performances.

• On Sunday, March 14, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., a group of Catholic women and St. Monica Church's Contemporary Choir will present "Miriam's Well" at St. Rita's Parish Center, 1008 Maple Drive, Webster. The performance will tell several stories about women from Scripture using music. Admission is free and open to the public, and refreshments will be available. Information is available by calling 716/671-9793.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Ash Wednesday observed

Father Robert Ring applies ashes to the forehead of Tricia Gould, 4, during a 12:10 p.m. Ash Wednesday service Feb. 17 at Guardian Angels Church, Henrietta. Tricia and her mother Ann are parishioners of Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford, but found the time of the Guardian Angels service more convenient.

Obituaries

Sister Lawler; teacher, secretary

Sister Elizabeth Lawler, SSJ, a long-time teacher and secretary, died Jan. 12, 1999. She was 86.

Sister Elizabeth, an Auburn native, entered the Sisters of St. Joseph out of St. Mary's Parish. She earned her baccalaureate degree from Nazareth College.

Among the schools she taught at were St. Patrick's, Dansville; St. Paul's, Oswego; St. Bridget's, Rochester; St. Stephen's, Geneva (two stints); St. Francis Xavier, Rochester; St. Agnes, Avon; St. Patrick's, Corning; Blessed Sacrament, Rochester; Sacred Heart, Perkinsville; St. Joseph's Villa, Rochester; St. Michael's, Penn Yan; St. Alphonsus, Auburn; St. Augustine's, Rochester; and St. Joseph's, Wayland.

She was also a secretary at DeSales High School, Geneva; and St. Paul's School, Oswego.

In addition, Sister Elizabeth logged 14 years as secretary in the congregational archives.

A funeral Mass for Sister Elizabeth took place in the motherhouse chapel Jan. 15. Father James Lawlor was the principal celebrant, with Msgr. Emmett Murphy, Msgr. William Shannon and Father Donald Curtiss serving as assistants.

Sister Elizabeth is survived by a niece and nephew, cousins, friends and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Contributions in Sister Elizabeth's memory can be made to the St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary.

Sister Aquina Kelly, SSJ; secretary

Sister Aquina Kelly, SSJ, who served as a secretary in schools and institutions in the diocese — including 22 years at St. Agnes High School, Brighton — died at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary Feb. 14, 1999. She was 89.

A Rochester native, Sister Aquina entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Ambrose Parish in 1929. She taught for two years at St. Patrick Cathedral School, then in 1933 began her career as a secretary. That career included stints at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira; Nazareth Academy, Rochester; and St. Joseph's Villa, Rochester. She spent 22 years at St. Agnes High School until the school closed in 1982. She then worked in Nazareth Academy's alumnae office until failing health led her to move to the infirmary in 1992.

The funeral Mass for Sister Aquina was celebrated Feb. 16 in the motherhouse

chapel. Msgr. William Shannon was the main celebrant, assisted by Msgr. Emmett Murphy and Father Donald Curtiss.

She is survived by two brothers, Daniel and Frank; nephews and nieces; and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Contributions in Sister Aquina's memory can be made to the infirmary.

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Ex-school official admits guilt in sex case

Stephen M. Ward, former assistant principal at Aquinas Institute in Rochester, admitted in Greece Town Court Feb. 11 that he had sexual contact with a boy under the age of 17 last summer, court officials said.

Ward pleaded guilty to second-degree sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child, both misdemeanors, before Judge Charles Rogers. Each charge carries a penalty of a \$1,000 fine and/or up to one year in jail.

The charges did not involve an Aquinas

student, nor did Ward's admitted actions take place either on school property or during a school activity, according to Greece police. Ward is slated to be sentenced on April 26; he has been free on his own recognizance since his arrest Aug. 19, 1998.

Ward resigned from his post at Aquinas prior to the beginning of the school year last September, according to Patrick A. Hanley, the school's president.

— Rob Cullivan

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