

Women in Leadership



Biblical Roots

1



Leadership Women

- What is your understanding of leadership?
- Of women in leadership?

2

Leadership Women

What is your understanding of women in leadership in the Church?

What does this mean ... what might it look like?

Is there equity between woman and man – **or** are our roles complementary?

3

Leadership Women

What might, in your view, the "signs of the times" saying to the Church today?

In Cork?

To what extent might the Church in Cork, Ireland, Europe be differently organised to the Church in another continent?

4

Dei Verbum 8

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat_ii_cons_19651118_dei_verbum_en.html

This tradition which comes from the Apostles develop in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. **For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down.** This happens through the **contemplation and study** made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke, 2:19, 5:1) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her.

The words of the holy fathers witness to the presence of this **living tradition**, whose wealth is poured into the practice and life of the believing and praying Church. Through the same tradition the Church's full canon of the sacred books is known, and the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her.

5

John XXIII's opening address, October 11, 1962



- 'Our task is not merely to hoard this precious treasure, as though obsessed with the past, but to give ourselves eagerly and without fear to the task that the present age demands of us – and in so doing we will be faithful to what the Church has done in the last twenty centuries. ... You do not need a Council to do that. But starting from a renewed, serene and calm acceptance of the whole teaching of the Church in all its scope and detail as it is found in Trent and Vatican I, Christians and Catholics of apostolic spirit all the world over expect a leap [balzo] forwards in doctrinal insight [penetrazione] and the education of consciences [la formazione delle coscienze] in ever greater fidelity to authentic teaching. But this authentic doctrine has to be studied and expounded in the light of the research methods and the language [formulazione letteraria] of modern thought. For the substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. [Altra è la sostanza dell'antica dottrina del depositum fidei, ed altra è la formulazione del suo rivestimento] (Lettere, p. 427 see Abbott, p. 715 for comparison).

6

Leadership
... Women

Can unity contain plurality?
What might God in the revealed word of the scriptures be saying to us today?

7

Scripture --- Women --- Leadership

'For the substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another.'



8

Pope Paul VI

The modern woman will note with surprise that Mary of Nazareth, while completely devoted to the will of God, was far from being a timidly submissive woman or one whose piety was repellent to others; on the contrary, she was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the humble and the oppressed, and removes the powerful people of this world from their privileged positions.' (*Maria's Cultus*, 37)



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Women in leadership in the Church

Cork 2022

- Ecclesial leadership is preaching and teaching impacts
- Decision-making

10

Women in leadership in the Church

Cork 2022

- THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION
- THE FACT THE JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

11



12

Then God said

²⁶ "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created humans (adam) in God's image, in the image of God God created them; male and female God created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply ... And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

13



14

The Book of Judith



15

The Book of Judith – Canonical?

- The rabbis did not count Judith among their scriptures
- Not included in the Bible by the Reformers
- In the Septuagint (LXX, earliest extant Greek translation of the Old Testament)
- One of the seven deuterocanonical books in the Catholic bible
- 'So perhaps the Church is not as patriarchal as it is portrayed' (*In our Time* BBC4). <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0002h17>

16

Judith, a heroine in leadership

- Israel delivered from foreign might by means of a simple widow
- Exalt God
- Celebration of a heroine in leadership

17

Deliverance **"BY THE HAND OF A FEMALE"**

- A story of God's deliverance of the Jewish people
- Phrase repeated many times (cf. 8:33; 9:9, 10; 12:4; 13:4, 14, 15; 15:10; 16:5)
- Strikingly recalls the reference to the "hand" of God in the Exodus narrative (cf. Ex 15:6)
- A story of historical fiction, a literary work

18



19

The Book of Judith

- Well regarded in the early Church
- St. Clement of Rome (bishop, 1st c) proposed Judith as an example of courageous love (1 Corinthians 55)
- St. Jerome holds her up as an example of a holy widow and a type of the Church (*To Salvina*: Letter 79, par. 10; see also *To Furia*: Letter 54, par. 16); Mary as a new Judith (*To Eustochium*: Letter 22, par. 21).

20

1 Corinthians 55: Examples of Such Love

To bring forward some examples from among the heathen: Many kings and princes, in times of pestilence ... have given themselves up to death, in order that by their own blood they might deliver their fellow citizens [from destruction]... **Many women also, being strengthened by the grace of God, have performed numerous manly exploits.** The blessed Judith, when her city was besieged, asked of the elders permission to go forth into the camp of the strangers; and, exposing herself to danger, she went out for the love which she bare to her country and people then besieged; and the Lord delivered Holofernes into the hands of a woman. (Judith 8:30)

21

The Book of Judith c. 1

It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh ... all who lived in the whole region disregarded the summons of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, and refused to join him in the war; for they were not afraid of him, but regarded him as only one man. So they sent back his messengers empty-handed and in disgrace.

22

King Nebuchadnezzar's revenge Campaign of Holofernes

- 4. Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, called Holofernes, the chief general of his army, second only to himself, and said to him, "Thus says the Great King, the lord of the whole earth: Leave my presence and take with you men confident in their strength, one hundred twenty thousand foot soldiers and twelve thousand cavalry. March out against all the land to the west, because they disobeyed my orders... I am coming against them in my anger ... to those who resist show no mercy, but hand them over to slaughter and plunder throughout your whole region.
- 14 So Holofernes ... summoned all the commanders, generals, and officers of the Assyrian army... 20 Along with them went a mixed crowd like a swarm of locusts, like the dust[b] of the earth—a multitude that could not be counted. ... He surrounded all the Midianites, and burned their tents and plundered their sheepfolds. Then he went down into the plain of Damascus during the wheat harvest, and burned all their fields and destroyed their flocks and herds and sacked their towns and ravaged their lands and put all their young men to the sword.
- All the people who lived along the seacoast ... feared him greatly.

23

The Campaign against Bethulia, c.7.12-15

- let your servants take possession of the spring of water that flows from the foot of the mountain ... So thirst will destroy them, and they will surrender their town. Meanwhile, we and our people will go up to the tops of the nearby mountains and camp there to keep watch to see that no one gets out of the town. 14 They and their wives and children will waste away with famine, and before the sword reaches them they will be strewn about in the streets where they live. 15 Thus you will pay them back with evil, because they rebelled and did not receive you peaceably.

24

The Distress of the Israelites 'In the town they were in great misery' (7.32)

- 19 The Israelites then cried out to the Lord their God, for their courage failed, because all their enemies had surrounded them, and there was no way of escape from them. 20 The whole Assyrian army ... surrounded them for thirty-four days, until all the water containers of every inhabitant of Bethulia were empty; 21 their cisterns were going dry, and on no day did they have enough water to drink, for their drinking water was rationed. 22 Their children were listless, and the women and young men fainted from thirst and were collapsing in the streets of the town and in the gateways; they no longer had any strength. 23 Then all the people, the young men, the women, and the children, gathered around Uzziah and the rulers of the town and cried out with a loud voice ... 29 Then great and general lamentation arose throughout the assembly, and they cried out to the Lord God with a loud voice.
- 30 But Uzziah said to them, "Courage, my brothers and sisters! Let us hold out for five days more; by that time the Lord our God will turn his mercy to us again, for he will not forsake us utterly. 31 But if these days pass by, and no help comes for us, I will do as you say."

25

Judith (c.8)

- ▶ 8 Judith ... was the daughter of Merari son of Ox son of Joseph son of Oziel son of Elkiah son of Ananias son of Gideon son of Raphain son of Ahitub son of Eliah son of Hilkiah son of Eliab son of Nathanael son of Salamei son of Sarasadai son of Israel.
- ▶ Widow, wealthy - sackcloth around her waist, widow's clothing
- ▶ 8.6 She fasted all the days of her widowhood ...
- ▶ 8.7 She was beautiful in appearance, and was very lovely to behold.
- ▶ 8.8 No one spoke ill of her, for she feared God with great devotion.

26

Speculum Vignum

Himmerode Abbey, Germany 12th c

27



Title-page to the Book of Judith in a 15th century German Bible, workshop of Diebold Lauber (1441-1449) Heidelberg University Library, Cpg 21, fol. 70v

- Piety
- Strength
- Beauty

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Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, 1455–1460.
Bronze, [Palazzo Vecchio](#),
Florence, Italy

In 1455, Cosimo de' Medici, head of the great Florentine banking family, commissioned *Judith and Holofernes* as a decoration for the gardens at the Palazzo Medici. The freestanding statue was to accompany an earlier sculpture by Donatello, *David*, another depiction of the triumph of weak over strong, intended as a metaphor of Medici rule in Florence; the statue was accompanied by an inscription, "Kings reign fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues; behold the neck of pride severed by humility." *Judith and Holofernes* depicts the moment just before Judith beheads Holofernes. Judith wears a contemplative expression as she stands above the Assyrian leader, brandishing her sword.

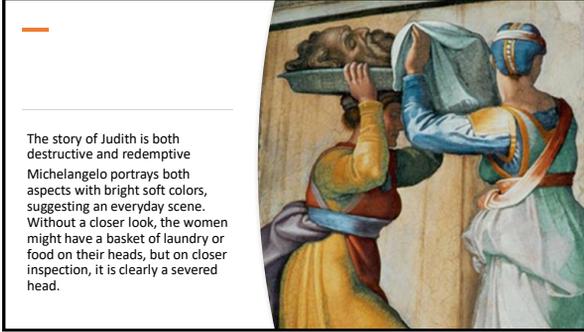
29

The Return of Judith, 1470. Tempera on wood, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

- Botticelli (1444–1510), Florentine Renaissance painter, produced many works under the patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici.
- The Return of Judith was painted together with the Discovery of the Body of Holofernes around 1470; the same year Botticelli separated from his teacher Filippo Lippi and opened his own workshop.
- Wielding her sword, Judith walks forward in a contraposto stance characteristic of women in Botticelli's paintings, such as Primavera. Her expression is at once forlorn and determined. Behind Judith, her maid follows rapidly, balancing Holofernes' head in a sack on her own head. This work has been in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence since 1632.



30



The story of Judith is both destructive and redemptive. Michelangelo portrays both aspects with bright soft colors, suggesting an everyday scene. Without a closer look, the women might have a basket of laundry or food on their heads, but on closer inspection, it is clearly a severed head.