



February 2023

When I think of our Lord travelling and relating the Parable of the Sower, I think also of the women who accompanied him and his disciples. "These women were helping to support them out of their own means", it says in Luke 8:3, and it's an easily-missed but remarkable observation – the only other woman mentioned in the bible, with her own means, is the noble wife of Proverbs 31.

So this Mothering Sunday, I hope you'll join me in remembering the Parable of the Sower, and celebrate the power of women, supporting themselves and others.

The two go hand-in-hand in Burundi, where women like Aquiline from the Buhiga Diocese in northeast Burundi know all about sowing, harvesting, and supporting a family.

Aquiline is one of around 50 women in her community, and thousands of women in Burundi, East Africa, who are participating in our Mothers' Union Sustainable Literacy, Economic and Social Empowerment project. Before the project, Aquiline says, "I didn't go to school since daughters were not sent to school. I stayed at home to help my mum take care of the younger children." Her situation is typical in Burundi, which is one of the world's poorest countries.

When she grew up, she married, and both she and her husband were illiterate. They depended on selling their harvest of beans at the market, but, as Aquiline told us, "my husband was cheated of money because he was illiterate."

This Mothering Sunday, you can give a gift of perseverance for mothers and women like Aquiline. You might choose to dedicate your gift to someone you particularly admire for their hard work and their faith.



A Gift of Perseverance

Mary and her family were so poor that they had no change of clothes, and those clothes they did own were dirty and in rags. *"I was hiding and very dirty and couldn't wash my clothes. I got a loan of 20,000 but as I was not skilled enough, I was worried I couldn't manage the loan. I was not confident."*



Give the gift of perseverance this Mothering Sunday

Aquiline heard about the project from her church. She learned literacy and numeracy, how to read the bible out loud in church, how to read the scales so that she couldn't be cheated at the market, and how to manage the family money from the harvest. "I used to have low self-esteem and didn't even want to go to the market," she said. As her confidence and her skills grew, she changed.

Going to the market on her own, she says: "I saw a woman who was selling sweet potatoes. I could see that she made a profit, and it gave me an idea."

From the Mothers' Union project, Aquiline took out a loan to buy sweet potatoes and sell them at a profit herself. "Then I went home and told my husband I was starting a business. I was able to send all my six children to school, and from our harvest profit we could buy copy books and food. Next I took out a loan and bought a goat."

Your Gifts of Perseverance this Mothering Sunday can enable more women like Aquiline to sow the seeds which can help her grow a new and better life – for herself, her family, community and church.

You'll find a wonderful array of life-changing gifts in the catalogue I've enclosed with my letter. For Aquiline, her life started to change with the seed of managing money, and through persevering she was soon leading the way for her family and helping them flourish.

Please help support more women like Aquiline to lift themselves and their families out of poverty this Mothering Sunday. The women like her who have participated so far all talk of love and care now rippling through their communities. That's the true power of your kindness, faith and support.

Thank you, and Happy Mothering Sunday to you and your loved ones,

Sheran Harper

Sheran Harper

Worldwide President, Mothers' Union

PS. You can choose a Mothering Sunday Gift of Perseverance from the catalogue enclosed.

Dedicate your gift to a loved one, or give in memory of someone special.



Aquiline's first loan was for 10,000 Burundi Francs, with which she bought sweet potatoes and made a profit.

For 100,000 Francs, she could then buy a goat. After five months of taking care of it, it would sell for 150,000.

But if she keeps looking after it until it breeds, selling the kids brings her around 300,000.

You can give a gift of perseverance using the catalogue enclosed or by visiting

www.makeamothersday.org

Deadline for all orders to be received is 9th March 2023



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Give the gift of perseverance this Mothering Sunday

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families