

**Moravian Womens Association  
Wonder Women- then and now!  
Devotional Paper - May 2021**

**Professor Sarah Gilbert**

Many of us will have gratefully received the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine recently.

Sarah Gilbert is the female scientist behind this vaccine, who is being rightfully lauded around the world for her ground-breaking work. Like so many of the women we have learned about over the last year, she would never describe herself as a wonder woman, and doesn't enjoy the limelight!

Here are 6 things to know about Sarah Gilbert:

- 1 Sarah Gilbert is a Professor of Vaccinology at the University of Oxford. She specialises in developing vaccines against flu and viruses.
- 2 She is the co-founder of Vaccitech, a biotech company specialising in the development of vaccines and therapies for infectious diseases, cancer, hepatitis B, HPV, and prostate cancer among others.
- 3 Sarah was born in Kettering, Northamptonshire in April 1962. Her father worked in the shoe business. Her mother was an English teacher and also a member of the local amateur operatic society. She dreamt of working in the field of medicine in high school, and graduated from the University of East Anglia with a degree in Biological Sciences. After various research posts and jobs, she pursued Vaccinology at Oxford University in 2004, becoming a Professor in 2010.
- 4 Sarah started work on the design and creation of novel flu vaccinations, and led the development and testing of the universal flu vaccine in 2011, and the first trial of an Ebola vaccine in 2014, followed by Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). She mostly works on producing many different vaccines against many different viruses that have potential to cause outbreaks, such MERS, Nipah and Lassa.
- 5 The United Kingdom approved the COVID-19 vaccine she co-developed alongside the Oxford Vaccine Group on December 30, 2020.

In an interview with the BBC, Sarah told how she had to work day and night since the outbreak of COVID-19. She got work e-mails at 4 am. In the same interview, she also said. *“From the beginning, we’re seeing it as a race against the virus, not a race against other vaccine developers. We’re a university and we’re not in this to make money”*.

6 Sarah’s colleagues and friends say she is ‘*a conscientious, quiet and determined person and someone with true grit.*’ She is a mother of triplets, who participated in the trials of the vaccine. To support her career and family, her partner is the primary home care-giver.

**Reading:**

Romans Chapter 14 verses 1 to 10.

**To consider:**

We get vaccinated not just for ourselves, but for the sake of the community. You may know someone who has refused to be vaccinated. Do you find it difficult not to judge them?

**Naomi Hancock - April 2021**

Read more about Sarah Gilbert at: <https://www.shethepeople.tv/news/who-is-sarah-gilbert-10-things-to-know-about-the-woman-scientist-behind-oxfords-covid-19-vaccine/>