

Powerful callings

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At first read, this Sunday's Colossians text landed for me with a bit of a thud between the rich narrative images of Genesis and Luke. But the text engages the themes of calling and vocation in important ways. The voice here is less the frank and practical Paul; it's a mystical voice which, placed alongside Mary and Martha in the lectionary, sits in conversation with those blessed sisters.

Paul rather audaciously makes the claim that he has a commission to speak to and through the mystical body of Christ. He makes no bones about it: he feels called, and that kind of prophetic speech is just what he's going to do. Suffering is not going to stop him; indeed, he chooses to interpret that suffering as a sign that he's on the right track.

One wonders if some of that calling has descended upon Mary as well. Sure, Martha wants Jesus to tell her sister to get back to work. But Mary has taken her place among the disciples. And despite all the voices in her world that would tell her she doesn't belong in the intimate presence of the "image of the invisible God," what is quite visible is that she's staying the course.

When the voice of Jesus himself affirms Mary's calling, I wonder if we can truly experience the power of this affirmation. She's claimed the "better part" when so many voices would give her no part at all. And that's a miraculous calling indeed.