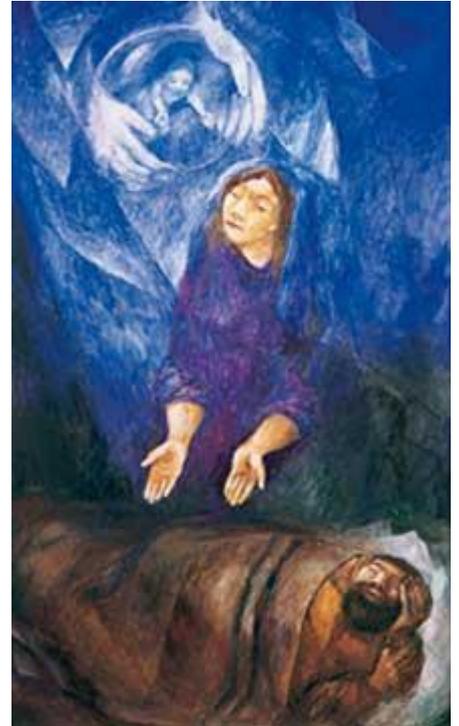


Launching the year of Courage

The Call of Mary, Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.



What can we know about Mary?

If we look beyond the traditional portrayal of Mary as a pious, ethereal creature...

- ✚ she was a young women of a particular place in a particular time
- ✚ betrothed to Joseph, far stronger meaning than to be engaged as we might understand it today
- ✚ to all intents and purposes married although living apart
- ✚ not even permitted to mix socially with other men prior to their wedding
- ✚ young girl from the poorest strata of her society
- ✚ facing suspicions of adultery and claims over the illegitimacy of her child
- ✚ she must have known herself to be in a very difficult situation.

And yet she responds with "let it be with me according to your word."

What did Mary find within herself to respond in such a way?

What can we learn from her response about Courage?

What calls us to be part of the Stewardship Council?

What are we saying 'yes' to?



Speaking and acting with integrity

Integrity calls for a response that is:

- Authentic
- Whole-hearted
- Consistent
- Unified
- Sound
- Lacking in corruption!

While...

- Sensing the disturbance
- Naming the fears and doubts
- Recognising the need for creative strategies
- Support with and from others

Can we use this as a 'strategic plan' for school leadership as a council?

Final prayer

Prayer for a Questioning Heart (Seasons of your Heart, Macrina Wiederkehr) (read by all)

It seems to me Lord
that we search
much too desperately for answers
when a good question
holds as much grace
as an answer.

Jesus
you are the Great Questioner
Keep our questions alive
that we may always be seekers
rather than settlers.

Guard us well
from the sin of settling in
with our answers
hugged to our breasts.

Make of us
a wondering
far-sighted
questioning
restless people
And give us the feet of pilgrims
on this journey unfinished.