



Our Mother Saint Paul

Beverly Roberts Gaventa

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In his epistles, Paul at various points uses maternal imagery to talk about his apostolic labors, sometimes actually referring to himself as a mother. For example, Paul writes that he must behave "like a nurse caring for her own children." Later, he writes, he "is in labor again" and must continue to nurse his fellow Christians with milk. These images, though known among earlier generations of Christians, today remain largely both unacknowledged and unexplored in thinking about Paul and his work. In *Our Mother Saint Paul*, Beverly Gaventa retrieves these images, explores their significance for understanding apostolic ministry, and demonstrates how they point beyond their original contexts and offer unique perspectives for understanding Paul's thought as well as the larger, cosmic understanding of the gospel.



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