

*Maria Velaochaga, rscJ from Peru*

We, a community of older sisters, live at the seaside in a large, new, functional house, surrounded by flowers; it is an environment conducive to contemplation.

We begin the day with personal prayer and the Eucharist, after which each one goes to some ministry suited to her capacities. I go to Bethany. This is an attractive room with a large, ample table set in its midst, around which all comers are welcomed: priests, religious, lay men and women, young and old. Some who come are sick or out of work, some suffer from physical or mental problems, others come seeking information – all are Jesus coming to Bethany.

Seated around the table we listen and share in friendship. RscJ and volunteers do all they can 'to be and recall Jesus in everyday life'. In spite of our physical and spiritual limitation, we live our vocation as a free gift to others; in all things we seek to express the faithful love of the Heart of Jesus.

*The Ministry of Art*

As has been said, there have always been rscJ who were specially gifted with artistic talent. Many of them have used the arts as a means of making known the love of God; often, as will be seen in the concluding pages of this chapter, it is during the 'third age' that these ministries are most fruitful.

Dorothy McMichael, rscJ of the USA, spent her working life teaching biology in Sacred Heart schools. Since her retirement in 1985 she has been working for Neighbourhood Artisans in Detroit, which offers training in screen printing. This organisation helps students from the inner city to learn a craft. It was set up in collaboration with Oonah Ryan rscJ who was appointed Co-Director in 1998. 'My role', Dorothy explained,

is to prepare art for the screen-printing process. In addition I paint tiles for kitchens and bathrooms and help out with the workshops for the youngsters who receive very little in the way of art from their schools. I have also been involved in several 'spin off' programmes.

In June 1996, Oonah, Dorothy and Kinue Matsuzaki, an rscJ teaching art in Detroit, spent two weeks in Omaha at Summer ETC (Exploring Things Creatively). Summer ETC is one of the many projects set up by USA Society schools with the aim of sharing their resources with underprivileged youngsters in their area. Directed by Josephine Ellen (JoEllen) Sumpter rscJ, secretary to the Duchesne Academy, Summer ETC held its first session in 1995 and then offered tuition in dance, music, theatre, visual arts and creative writing. The tutors recruited by JoEllen were professional artists or teachers and among them were several rscJ.

Dorothy is committed to the practice of a broad spectrum of the arts. 'As I grow older,' she commented,

I have been drawn more and more to drawing and watercolour as an expression of my admiration and awe of the natural world and as a way of spiritual growth; I have found a great spiritual renewal in exploring Oriental brush painting, as well as Western-style watercolour. I think that creative activity, especially in the visual arts, is an essential part of education and should not be looked upon as 'icing on the cake'. This has so often been the case with educational systems, which tend to cut out the arts when funding becomes difficult.

As for JoEllen, she was delighted to be instrumental in providing high quality arts instruction, participation and exposure for several racially mixed and socially disadvantaged local Omaha schools.

Margret Fühles rscJ taught German literature, Latin and theology to students in Bonn. Since 1983, when she studied psychodrama