



*Sister Mary Charles teaching at St. Anthony's School
Duluth, ca. 1955*

In most communities in those early days of my art journey, the visual arts were considered somewhat of an extra and not taken too seriously. My first assignments were to teach elementary, high school, and college students. Each of those proved challenging, since I worked directly with people. One summer I took classes at the Chicago Art Institute, perhaps with an art future being planned for me. This was interrupted by a quick pursuit of a master's degree in education in order to be able to teach children's literature, language arts, and the various methods courses needed by the young women seeking an elementary education degree at our college. Further summers at Notre Dame eventually earned me an MFA, a professorship in art, and the chair position in that department at The College of

“Look for a lovely
thing, and you will
find it. It is not far.
It never will be far.”

—SARA TEASDALE

St. Scholastica, Duluth. Administration proved to be too much “head stuff” and not enough “heart stuff.” My Meyers-Briggs INFP was being over-stretched! I harbored a deep yearning for more quiet, more time and space to create and to attend to a voice which kept inviting me to bring the creative world to children. In my own life I had experienced next to nothing in the way of art either in elementary, high school, or college. I was convinced that every person, deep within, has a creative spark needing to be released—best in childhood—in order that they be whole.

In 1967 I was allowed to move into an old carriage house owned by our Community. Having stood idle for many years, it needed lots of work. The spirit of Vatican II was blowing open the windows of change—but I had barely time to notice! I was completely caught up in the adventure and challenge of converting this Barn (as it was later to be dubbed by the children) into a place in which to live, create, and teach. Only many years later was I to recognize that this truly had been a Vatican II adventure.