

THE ARTIST IN COMMUNITY

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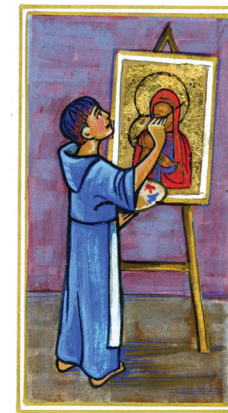


Images from the illustrated
The Rule of Saint Benedict,
St. Scholastica Monastery

Grounded in her commitment to and practice of a life of prayer and work which she lived with her Sisters, Sister Mary Charles carried that respect and love of the transformational importance of community to all activities of her life.

Sister Mary Charles McGough was a member of St. Scholastica Monastery and in her 61st year of monastic profession when she passed away. As a Benedictine she would have heard read daily a selection from *The Rule of St. Benedict* (the *Rule*). One of the foundational values of the *Rule* is the importance of community. Grounded in her commitment to and practice of a life of prayer and work which she lived with her Sisters, Sister Mary Charles carried that respect and love of the transformational importance of community to all activities of her life. Whether as teacher of children, artist, mentor, neighbor, community activist, or friend, she brought people together, not only to enjoy one another, but more importantly, so she and they could draw energy from the rich diversity of talent inherent in the persons gathered. She created community in the instinctive knowledge that sharing life, sharing talents, is life-giving, a way to praise God.

St. Benedict devotes a chapter of the *Rule* to “The Artisans of the Monastery” where he offers two



injunctions: the artisans are to practice their craft with humility, and, in selling their work, they should set their prices a little lower than their fellows outside the monastery, “so that in all things God may be glorified.” Many of her friends thought Sister Mary Charles was too attentive to the latter directive. But it was her practice, if someone liked a piece of her work but could not afford it, to ask what they could afford and offer the piece at that price. And she did practice her craft with remarkable humility, seeing herself as mentor and guide, intent on helping others discover the creative spark within themselves. Among her gifts was the ability to bring out the best in people, to encourage them to take creative risk, and to be confident the work they were doing was good.