



SMC



Fear Not Little One, 1962,
lithograph on paper, ed. 6/10
13½" x 9¾"
St. Scholastica Monastery



The Vision (*St. Francis*), 1979,
woodcut on paper, 8⅝" x 5⅞"
St. Scholastica Monastery

Virtually every artwork Sister Mary Charles made resulted from a personal relationship or encounter. Many works came from getting to know children and families who participated in the Barn program, many others from the relationships she developed within Duluth's various religious communities.

Having completed graduate work in education and art, Sister Mary Charles trained and worked first as a teacher and then a college art professor. In 1967 she petitioned Mother Martina Hughes, St. Scholastica Monastery Prioress, to let art be her full-time work and ministry. Sister Mary Charles was passionate about her "calling" to art and also very practical in her argument for art programs as a form of community outreach. The sea change brought by Vatican II provided an opportune time to make the case for art as a ministry. "I feel that this request to begin an art center is not impulsive, avant garde, or erratic. It has been long in my mind, and makes, I think, the best use of my training and abilities" (McGough).



Our Lady of Korsun
(*Korsunskia*), 1991, *acrylic and gold leaf on wood, 14" x 12"*
St. Scholastica Monastery



Someday, 1972, *woodcut on paper, 32" x 19½"*
St. Scholastica Monastery

Unlike most artists of her time, to whom individual inventiveness, new media, gallery shows, reviews, and "fifteen minutes of fame" indicated success, Sister Mary Charles was after a different measure of success—that of finding spiritual joy in art and sharing it with others. The Monastery's decision to allow her to develop a ministry through art was momentous for her and for the larger community.

