

congregations across the state and the Midwest. She also used her icons as a gift of comfort. She once gave an icon of St. Michael to some parents who were grieving the loss of their child. For those who could not afford to buy an icon, she always found a way for them to receive one and spread her message of peace.

Sister Mary Charles also sought to spread God's love in her work through other personal means as well, such as including something specific to the person who



Our Lady of the Pines, 2006
16" x 12"
Our Lady of the Pines Church, Nevis, MN

commissioned the icon. In an icon commissioned by Our Lady of the Pines Church in Nevis, Minnesota, Sister Mary Charles included pine trees in the background of the icon to show the presence of the Virgin among the people of Nevis, Minnesota, a place full of pine trees.

St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys, Pennsylvania, commissioned an icon of Mother Benedicta Riepp. Sister Mary Charles included a depiction of the monastery building in the arms of Mother Benedicta showing that this monastery remains in her prayers. There are many other examples where Sister Mary Charles took the time to carefully research and paint icons that would have deep meaning for their owners.

For Sister Mary Charles, iconography brought her great spiritual joy and peace. She wanted to spread that spiritual comfort through her own icons and through teaching others the art of iconography. For her, it was a ministry to which she was wholly dedicated. She once wrote, "Today, as I sense the technological takeover of the human spirit, I am convinced of the importance of creating beauty, forming it with heart and hand, and offering it to a world possessed with speed, information, and impersonal screen gazing. Perhaps art can help us all to slow down, be silent, and stand in awe before the beauty all around and within us. A worthy ministry."

Page 51: Our Lady of Glastonbury, 1994
40" diameter
Glastonbury Abbey, Hingham, MA
(and images of the icon in progress)

FURTHER READING

Evdokimov, Paul. *The Art of the Icon: a Theology of Beauty*. 1990. Translated by Fr. Steven Bigham. Redondo Beach, CA: Oakwood Publications.

John of Damascus. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*. 2003. Translation and introduction by Andrew Louth. Crestwood, NY: SVS Press.

Martin, Linette. *Sacred Doorways: a Beginner's Guide to Icons*. 2002. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press.

Ouspensky, Leonid and Vladimir Lossky. *The Meaning of Icons*. 1983. Crestwood, NY: SVS Press.

Tradigo, Alfredo. *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*. 2006. Los Angeles, CA: JP Getty Museum.