



We Rise Today Through The Strength of Heaven.

Saint Patrick, 500 CE



THE SISTERS OF THE ORDER OF SAINT HELENA

Back row: Srs Carol Andew, Sam, Bishop Visitor Carlye Hughes, Srs Ellen Francis, Miriam Elizabeth
Front row: Srs Mary Lois, Ann, Ellen Stephen, Rosina, Faith, Linda

CONVENT OF SAINT HELENA

414 Savannah Barony Drive, North Augusta SC 29841 osh.org sisters@osh.org
Office: Phone 803-426-1616 Fax 803-426-1208 office_manager@osh.org
We will notify you in advance when we know the guesthouse is reopening!

OSH Sisters' Lenten Practices in 2023



Sr Miriam Elizabeth: From a recent art experiment, I have a pile of collages, each created in five minutes on a sticky note. I plan to use them as daily prayer cards, adding words or marks as the Spirit leads me.

Sr Rosina: I am drawn to study more about the Shroud of Turin. I also want to work with Henri Nouwen's book, *With Burning Hearts, A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life*, since Eucharist is the center of monastic life.



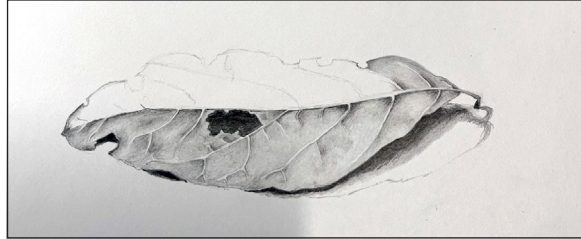
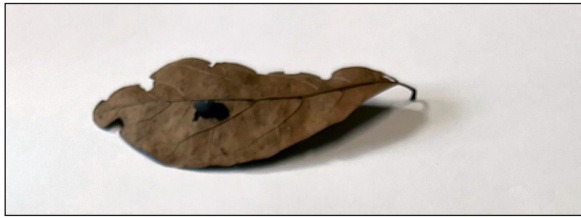
Sr Mary Lois: Listening to the audio Bible will be my personal Lenten practice this year. I am hoping that reflection on scripture will foster growth in faith and a deeper connection with God during this season leading up to Easter.



Sr Linda: I need to quieten inside so I can recognize God's loving Presence. Centering Prayer, alone and with friends at Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, will be my basic practice for letting go of my noisy thoughts and worries.

Sr Sam: This Lent, I bring mindfulness into more diligent practice: to identify less with the fish that swims through the river and more with the river that sees the fish.



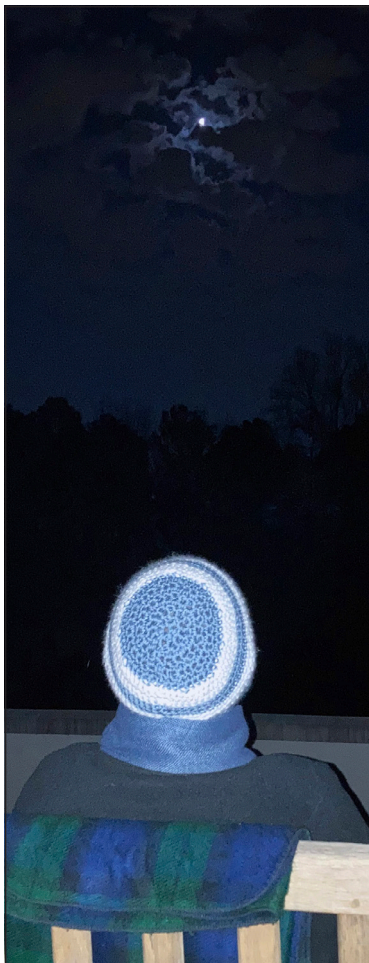


Sr Ellen Francis: This year during Lent, my discipline will be to draw every day. This is partly because I am resuming iconography, and drawing is the foundation of all visual art. It's also because drawing is itself a contemplative practice.

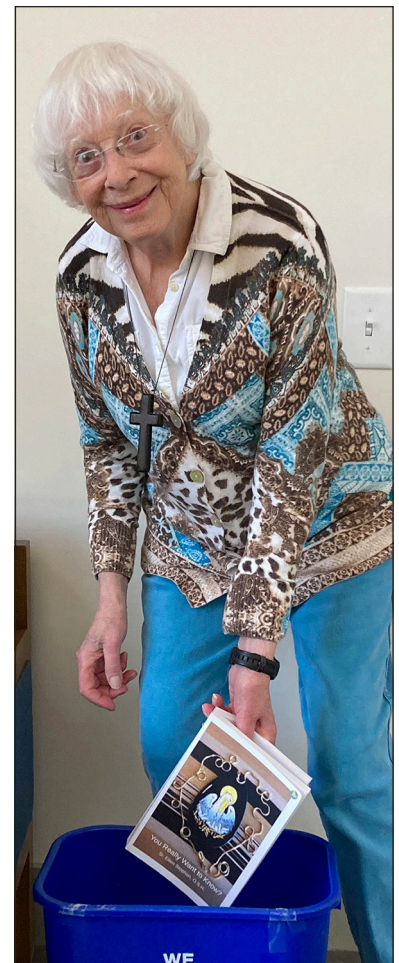
Sr Ann: Sitting outside in the dark of the morning, I open myself to the dawning of a new day—in the natural world, and within. Immersing myself in the quiet awakening centers me. "I myself will waken the dawn." (Psalm 108:2)

Sr Carol Andrew: I would like to spend time in prayer with each of the losses I have experienced in the last three years, and ask to see God's gifts within them.

Sr ES: I collect things: Christmas cards, photos, pens, worn-out shoes, paper clips, souvenirs from missions, the proof copy of my published book. But I took a vow of poverty. Each Lenten day I discard, delete, or recycle one item.



Sr Faith: I do not usually do any Lenten resolution. Yet since the past twelve months have been such a strange blessing, I will live this Lent with curiosity, humility, and gratitude, rather than expecting God to do what I ask.



Art as Spiritual Practice

As I write this meditation, I am enjoying a four-week artists' residency in Summerville SC as part of a three-month sabbatical after my time of serving on the leadership council. This is the first time I have ever been able to focus exclusively on icon painting, drawing, and playing my guitar. Even as I miss my sisters, this is a blessed time.

There is a stage in learning a craft when the technicalities are all-absorbing and there is lots of struggle, even periodic discouragement and frustration. Gradually, as one perseveres, there comes a time when the creative energy starts to flow, and less and less attention needs to be paid on how to do it and more on the experience of the craft and what can be expressed through the particular medium.

Recently, I have resumed drawing and painting icons, moving again through technicalities and more into creative flow. I'm finding that creating and practicing my art is a deeply spiritual practice because of the depth of focus I've been able to achieve.

There is a tradition in icon painting that Christ is watching while the iconographer is painting. A little intimidating, perhaps, but also an affirmation that the Spirit is a collaborator in the process. We could imagine the divine presence with us in any creative endeavor!

The time that we spend creating and crafting may be among the most

importantly human and spirit-filled activities. It doesn't matter whether we are a master painter, a virtuoso musician, or whether we are arranging flowers, decorating a child's birthday cake, knitting a scarf, cooking a meal for loved ones, or writing a special letter—all are creative. All are infused with the Spirit of God and can help us focus on the present moment. All are expressions of who we are, complete in our humanity and infused with the divine.

—Sr. Ellen Francis, OSH

What creative activities give you a sense of the presence of God? How do you experience the flow of creative spiritual energy when you are occupied with a familiar craft?

