

BASILICA

THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY

SPRING 2017



A REVOLUTION
OF LOVE AND
TENDERNESS

A Revolution of Love and Tenderness

In our community

“You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself...And who is my neighbor?”

— Luke 10:25-29

SCRIPTURE encourages us to love God with every fiber of our being, finding God’s love in every facet of our life. As we open our life to God’s love, we resonate deeper with love — knowing ourselves in new and unique ways. The way we feel, the way we pray, the way we act, and the way we think are shaped and changed by God’s love.

The life of Saint Vincent de Paul demonstrates the transforming power of God’s love. As Saint Vincent de Paul faced challenges and hardships, he brought every facet of his life to prayer. He found God’s love right in the midst of the struggle. This love enabled him to face his own shadows and faults, repent and find forgiveness. In letting go of his need for perfection and by admitting his own shortcomings, he found freedom, acceptance, patience, and love for himself and others.

There is simplicity and power in the witness of Saint Vincent de Paul. As he loved himself more fully — embracing the strengths, as well as the limitations and faults of his life — he could love others more fully. When I am angry at another’s impatience, how often do I find myself full of impatience? Saint Augustine states, “First see whether you have learned to love yourself.... If you have not learned how to love yourself, I am afraid that you will cheat your neighbor as yourself.”

BY JANICE ANDERSEN



PHOTO © ELYSE RETHLAKE; ART BY MARY ANN OSBORNE, SSND, *ONE BREATH*

Jesus questions the way we define 'neighbor.' He calls us to look toward those outside our circle. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus challenged the leaders of his community to reach out and help the most marginalized and discredited person in society. He challenges us to go out of our way for every person we meet, even when it's frightening.

God's love does not find fulfillment staying private. We are called to be public — to love our neighbor through acts that change the nature of society. We are called to be bold — to act in ways that will protect the lives of the most vulnerable in our community. We are called to persevere — to work continuously to ensure all have the necessities to reach their God-given potential, and

promote a society which provides for the good of all.

God's incredible love infuses every facet of our life, compelling us to reach out and change the world. It alters our view of the world. Fear falls away, replaced by faith. Retribution loses its power, replaced by forgiveness. Our desires, hopes, and dreams are shaped by God's love — characterized by generosity, acceptance, humility, and compassion.

As we accept this call to make the love of God our center, we connect with one another in three distinct yet complementary ways. Together, through all our interactions with one another, we seek to serve, accompany and defend.

SERVE:

With our focus on the common good, and a particular care for the most vulnerable, we seek to recognize and meet the needs of our brothers and sisters. We extend a hand without reservations or fear, with tenderness and openness.

ACCOMPANY:

Recognizing that God is present, we walk with and support one another through every facet of life. Practicing active listening and respecting the sacred story of the other, we develop relationships, remain open to transformation, and assure one another that we are never alone.

DEFEND:

There are times when it is not enough to just serve or accompany. We must defend, advocate, and work to change systems that oppress or abuse our brothers and sisters. We must build strength together and work to change systems that cause hurt or violence.

We are each called to serve, accompany, and defend. The times and places may differ, but we must act, utilizing our unique gifts. All three actions are important components of our Christian life. Saint Vincent de Paul urges, "let us do the good that presents itself to be done...." Pay attention. Even when conflict and tension abound, seek to understand what is happening in your neighborhood, city, state, country, and world. Live in the moment. What is calling for your attention? There are opportunities to learn and act each day. Together, our actions will create a ripple effect and change the world. This is a Revolution of Love and Tenderness. ✚

Janice Andersen has been The Basilica's director of Christian life since 1994.

Revealing the Stories

Visiting the artist's studio



PHOTOS © ELYSE RETHLAKE



BY KATHY DHAEMERS

VISITORS to the studio and gallery of Sister Mary Ann Osborne, SSND are surrounded by stories carved in wood or printed on paper. These stories are taken from Scripture and inspired by feast days such as the Annunciation, Epiphany, and Pentecost. They draw viewers in and invite them to discover their own stories.

The work of Sister Mary Ann is also inspired by conversations, writings, and music, old and new. Her art at times comments on local and international events, peace and justice issues, and acts of nature, like the tornado that devastated her home town of Saint Peter, MN, in 1998.

Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) has been a major influence on Sister Mary Ann's work. The art she created for *With Passion*, her 2015 exhibition at The Basilica,

was inspired by quotes from Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger and Pope Francis. An exhibition she conceived for Saint Paul Monastery in Saint Paul, MN a few years ago was entitled *Love Cannot Wait*. Sister Mary Ann borrowed this title from 1882 writings by Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger. An imagined diary of the foundress accompanies the art. The work is now rotated monthly in a space near the Monastery's Good Counsel chapel.

Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger's influence on Sister Mary Ann actually goes back to the very beginning of her art making as her first carvings (1985) were created to honor the SSND foundress on the occasion of her beatification. At that time Sister Mary Ann had taken only two summer workshops in wood carving, for a total of three weeks. After thirteen years of teaching in elementary schools in Minnesota, North Dakota,



and Iowa, Sister Mary Ann felt her future had a different path. She loved the students and enjoyed teaching but she felt called to teach in a new way. She was given permission to study and work as an apprentice with a wood carver in Faribault, MN. The original agreement was for one year, then followed by a second year. By 1988 she was a full-time artist, with her first studio space at Our Lady of Good Counsel. A couple of years later she pursued a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Metropolitan State University and studied for six months with Franciscan Sister Sigmunda May in Stuttgart, Germany.

The artist spends most of her days working in her sunny studio, a former laundry where she moved in 2004. Sometimes she will sketch ideas on paper, but she prefers to start with the wood carving soon after some initial drawing directly on the surface.

She usually begins with the faces. When studying with Sister Sigmunda she was encouraged to follow her heart, listen to God and let the characteristics of the wood guide her process. For carvings she typically uses kiln dried wood, bass or linden. The embellishments she adds, to her wood sculptures often have their own stories. She has repurposed arches and copper from buildings under renovation. And people often drop off items they think she may be able to use; parts of a beautiful broken vase, pieces of glass or silver, or small logs from a beaver dam. Eventually these items find their way into a piece of art.

Continued



Sister Mary Ann's studio is located in Florian Hall at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato. She welcomes visitors.

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Sister Mary Ann has admired and been inspired by other artists including her teacher Sister Sigmunda May, Corita Kent, Henry Moore, Joseph O'Connell, Ernst Barlach, and Käthe Kollwitz. Her work can be found around the world in churches, schools, hospitals, and homes. In addition to wood carving, she does woodcut prints and works with glass.

The Basilica selected her piece *One Breath* from our art collection to visually represent the Revolution of Love and Tenderness initiatives this year. The piece of art was selected given its heart shape reference embracing the people of the world with love and tenderness and will be displayed in The Basilica throughout the year. Sister Mary Ann shares the meaning as, "Through the spirit we must work together sharing love and tenderness, to make the world a better place. All it takes is one breath of God in our direction."

It is good to keep in mind that *Love Cannot Wait* has been the directional statement for the School Sisters of Notre Dame for the past five years. The statement commits this international congregation of women religious to embrace dialogue as a way of life that leads to new discoveries about themselves and others, and to conversion, reconciliation, and healing. It is a call to change lives and the world. Sister Mary Ann does this beautifully through her art. ✚

Kathy Dhaemers has been The Basilica's associate director of sacred arts since 2000.



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