

The Canticle

August 2023
Volume 41 No. 1

Voice of
The Community
of St. Francis,
Province of
The Americas



Sr. Maggie, CSF: 1947-2023

Sr. Maggie died May 13, 2023, after several years of living with Alzheimer's. She was 76 and in the 16th year of her Profession in the Community of St. Francis. Sr. Maggie was born Sara Margaret Simpson and spent her early years in Knoxville, TN. For most of her

adult life she worked as a computer programmer and systems analyst, eventually settling in Seattle, WA, where she did office administration and computer programming for several health care organizations. She was in a committed partnership with a Navajo physician for 16 years, which ended with the tragic death of her partner in an automobile accident.

This death led Maggie to bury herself in work, volunteer work at a domestic violence shelter and a hospice, and in her practice of Art as Meditation. She entered an intense period of reconnecting with her spiritual roots in the Episcopal Church and her call to contemplation in the Zen tradition.

In 2004 at age 57 she became a postulant in the Community of St. Francis. She made her First Profession of Vows in 2007 and her Final Profession in 2010.

Maggie's ministry as a CSF Sister included involvement with the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, which eventually led her to participate in the weekly Interfaith Silent Peace Vigil in downtown San Francisco. She also volunteered at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality where she helped make and serve soup and found a compassionate and engaging community of hungry people and those who were moved to feed them. In 2014 she began helping with office work at the Family Link, the hospitality ministry founded by the late Sr. Ruth, CSF, that offered accommodations and support to people with loved ones experiencing life-threatening medical conditions.

Maggie attended St. John the Evangelist Church for 10 years where she served as a Healing Minister and Lay Eucharistic Minister. In 2012 she discovered Open Cathedral, an outdoor interdenominational Sunday Eucharist for folks in the skid-row of San Francisco. In the diverse congregation of people living inside rundown buildings and outside on the streets of the city's poorest neighborhood, Maggie found a community of people she could love unconditionally. She always came away feeling blessed and uplifted by the honesty of the people at Open Cathedral.



For CSF, Maggie served as Guest Sister and Provincial Secretary. Between 2008 and 2018, Maggie was co-facilitator of the Advent Silent Retreat at the Bishop's Ranch. Over the years many attendees were nourished by her prayerful presence.



At the heart of Maggie's vocation as a Franciscan Sister was her continuing engagement with the contemplative life. Much of her contemplation took place during her practice of Art as Meditation. The inner pages of this newsletter will give you a small taste of some of the fruits of her labors. She herself was more interested in the process than the product. She was fascinated with the creative process in art and writing.

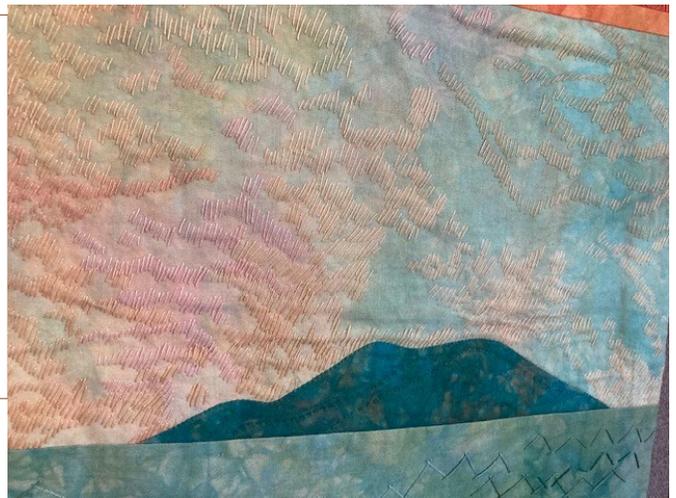
More photos of Maggie's art will be posted on our Facebook page in September: Community of St. Francis, American Province.



**SR. MAGGIE'S ART AS MEDITATION—
AN ART EXHIBIT AT THE RECEPTION FOR
THE MEMORIAL SERVICE JUNE 17, 2023**
Every Stitch A Prayer

Maggie was primarily a textile artist, but she branched out into a variety of paper arts and beading as well. She made many beautiful textile hangings and other smaller textile works. She used undyed muslin which she then hand dyed, mostly using a resist process to produce variegated colors. Her textiles were generally completely handmade. Every stitch was by hand. In fact, every stitch was a prayer, and several of her textile hangings had thousands of handstitched decorations on top of the quilting and/or appliqué.

Detail of clouds made of stitches above a hill on one of her textile hangings.



Her paper art was similar to her textile art. She mostly focused on this medium after she joined CSF because it was much cheaper than textiles. She experimented with many ideas which she often made into cards. She became fascinated with handmade books and produced several—from simple accordion-folded books to bound books with elaborate textile covers (mostly covered with beads). Her masterpiece was “The Book of Eve.”

Yes, Maggie was into beads! Some of her textiles are also covered with beading. She beaded jars to make pencil holders, candle holders, and other more exotic creations, such as the one made out of a hot sauce bottle. (Note: her beads were sewn, not glued, onto the jars).



Maggie's art was all an expression of her inner life. She would work out issues in her life. She came from a dysfunctional family background where she was not nourished or affirmed, so she never ceased asking herself questions about her self-worth. She explored feminist images and issues. She loved nature and found exploration of the desert and wilderness places to be very productive to her art and her understanding of herself and God. The moon, rocks, flowers, lonely landscapes (especially in the Southwest)....

She was fascinated with asymmetry and found much inspiration for her art in the shadows of tree limbs on buildings, meandering cracks in sidewalks and interesting patterns of worn brick walls.

She was also inspired by writings on solitude, silence, wilderness and searching—especially poetry, which she also wrote herself. In her paper art she often combined quotes from her extensive reading with her art meditations.

*must everything be accessible?
we work so hard to make it so
and all the time I remember
how important it was
that some things were always
beyond our reach*

God

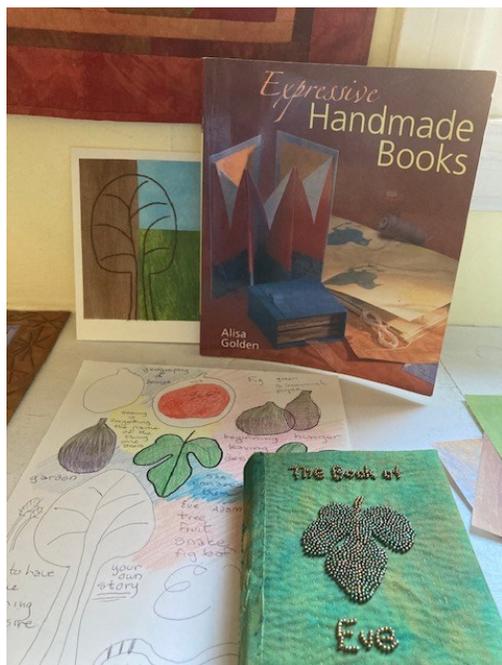
and my grandmother's china

*I smashed the dishes when she died
and I am now both closer
to that distant God
and much more far away,
a place of paradox and longing*

*the china is gone
and I do not want
an easy
accessible*

God

SMS



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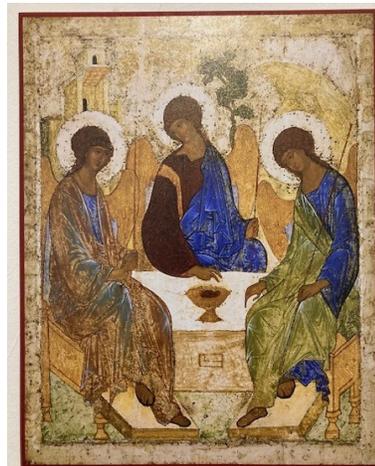
The Canticle
is the newsletter of the
Community of St.
Francis, a religious
order for women in the
Franciscan tradition in
the Episcopal Church.



Sr. Maggie, CSF

COMPANIONS IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

Our next Ten-Day Intensive Residential Program in Franciscan Spirituality will be held over St. Francistide, between September 29 and October 8, 2023. There will also be programs offered in 2024 during Holy Week (March 22–31), during summer (July 12–21), and St. Francistide (Sept. 27–Oct 6). Please get in touch if you are interested.



Sisters Jean and Pamela Clare with our Minister General, Sr. Sue (Left) from London, in our chapel. We have had a copy of Rublev's Trinity icon hanging in our chapel for 49 years. It was getting a bit tattered, so we now have a new one dedicated to our beloved departed CSF Sisters from the Province of the Americas: Elizabeth Ann, Cecilia, Ruth, and Maggie.

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