

IHMs in Action: Coming Closer to God Through Icons

"Our companions, the holy ones of heaven, are present through the window of an icon. The Church teaches that an icon as sacred art has inherent power," Sister Nancy Lee Smith explains.

Her ministry is to create these beautiful works, and then to teach others how to use them in their everyday prayer lives, weaving her spirituality background together with her art, including small groups, parishes, religious communities and large conferences.

"As a college girl in Kirkwood, Mo., I was kneeling in front of an icon when I felt drawn to give my life as an IHM Sister," explains Sister Nancy. "The image was the 'Mother of Perpetual Help.' It was Dec. 8. I knew clearly from that moment that this was my path, even though I had just met the IHM Sisters on only one occasion at the parish. Ever since then, the compelling power in icons has spoken to my heart, never quite leaving me."



Sister Nancy completed a degree in fine arts and, much later, had an opportunity to immerse herself in learning the art of icon writing, apprenticing with a master from Moscow. Saint Joseph Studio on the Motherhouse campus is where she produces commissions of both icons and other types of paintings.

"Life journeys start with early graces that we seldom understand at the time," she states. "It's only in looking back that we begin to see threads of love drawing us all along."

To arrange a guided tour of her studio or outside presentation, call 734-457-0018, or visit [Saint Joseph Studio](#) Web site.