



## ICONOGRAPHY

For a few summers in the past, I had the opportunity to go to Montreal for a week of Iconography with the Russian Iconographer, Alexander Sobolov. Since I was teaching full time, I was unable to apply what I had learned. However, in November, 2017, I was granted a very unique experience.

Upon my retirement, I requested to pursue the writing of Icons with the same teacher. I contacted him only to learn that he had moved to Spain. I thought for sure I would have to put this dream to rest. It was then that the Sector Leadership offered me three months in Spain to study with Alexander Sobolov.



For lodging, I was fortunate enough to stay in one of the small apartments which Alexander usually rents to tourists. It worked out well as this was not the tourist season.



In order to reap the full benefit of my time in Spain, I worked alone in the morning, and around 11:00 AM I would go for a walk on the eight-kilometer beach on the Mediterranean. It was perfect since my apartment was only two blocks away. Alexander would come in the afternoon, correct my work, then we would work together on the Icon I was writing on average three hours. Depending on how advanced I was, I would sometimes work in the evenings. On most evenings I would

attend Mass at 7:00 PM. It made for 'intense' days, as Icon writing takes a lot of concentration, and it is quite a multi-faceted process, beginning with the preparation of the boards right up to the final oiling.

Alexander teaches the ancient method of writing which employs all natural substances, the colors are ground plants and minerals, some consisting of semi-precious stones such as lapis-lazuli. A mixture of egg yolk and wine is used as a medium for the pigments. Many layers of color are applied. The background is usually of 24k-gold leaf laid upon a base of clay with vodka and rabbit skin glue. To rim the halos in red on the gold we must add ox gall to our paint.

When the icon is nearing completion, highlights are added using

stout beer boiled to a molasses consistency. When this is dry, gold leaf is applied using rye bread. Once all is finished, the icon is then 'anointed' with a thick layer of linseed oil which is rubbed in every twenty minutes for several hours. When completely dry, the back and sides are covered with walnut shell upon which is applied a mixture of bees wax and turpentine.



My only disappointment was in not having more contact with the local people. I would have class six days a week which did not leave much time for visiting. Apart from the beautiful beaches, the town I was in, Fuengirola, was entirely a tourist area mostly for Scandinavians who go there to escape the cold. My words cannot adequately express my gratitude to the Sector Leadership for this precious time spent with my teacher. The timing was perfect, as he left five days after my departure to

begin a four-year contract to do the entire interior of the new Maronite Cathedral in Montreal with icons (10755 St. Charles Avenue).

Françoise DeMers, CSC



## ENTERING THE NOVITIATE



On March 4, 2018, Marie-Flore Louis and I, Roselande Saintus, experienced a simple celebration of our official entrance into the Novitiate. We were accompanied on this special day by our companions Sisters Fabienne, Celine, and Agnes, as well as by all the sisters from Lima. We know that all of you in the various Regions were in communion with us. Sister Elvia Atoche, delegate to

the Regional Animator, received our official entrance into the Novitiate.

It is with joy that we share our gratitude with you. Thank you to the General Administration for accepting us in the next phase of our formation as we continue this journey here in Peru – a new land and new culture for us. Thank you to the sisters of the Region of Latin America and especially to everyone in the Community of Luz de Maria who not only welcomed us but also accompanied us during our early days of adaptation. We also wish to thank all the sisters who have come to this celebration – for their presence meant a lot to us.

We now have the joy of living with the sisters to share our gifts and talents and to learn from everyone. During this Novitiate experience we hope to live a deep intimacy with God in order to discover the full meaning of our call.

To do so, we count on your prayerful support the support and rely on your experiences to help us mature and to live this stage of discernment well as we give ourselves to God.

Marie-Flore Louis, Novice

Roselande Saintus, Novice



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