



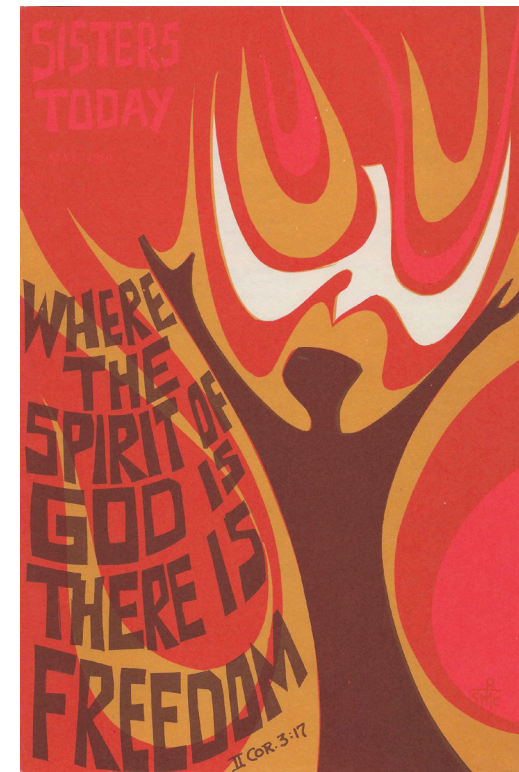
SMK

THE WORLD WILL BE SAVED BY BEAUTY

Sister Mary Charles McGough

It took many years in community before I regarded my gift of art as ministry. Somehow, the paintings, carvings, and printmaking seemed self-serving and not nearly as important to the world as nursing the sick, educating youth, administering hospitals, and the like. The question always haunted me: “Am I really touching anyone’s life?”

My first faltering step on my art journey as a form of ministry began in 1967 when Father Daniel Durken of Liturgical Press requested a design for the Christmas cover of *Sisters Today*, which was meant to be a “one-time-only” commission. For the next fourteen years, for nine months each year, I selected quotations from writers I found inspirational and illustrated these thoughts for the cover designs. Evidently this did minister to many, since I often received comments from subscribers. One most memorable comment was from Father Anthony, a Trappist monk and former abbot of Mepkin Abbey in South Carolina. He wrote to inquire about the cover design that read: “i found god in myself / and i loved her / i loved her fiercely” (Ntozake Shange). Father Anthony, intrigued by this quotation, asked which woman mystic this was. I replied that she was a contemporary black playwright. This initiated a correspondence between Father Anthony and me over the next twenty years, culminating in a cherished visit with this saintly man just weeks before his death. Indeed, we had ministered to one another.



Cover design, *Sisters Today*, May 1980

