

# CLARE

## GALLERY

at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry

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### ***Mary Billingsley's "Shrines" exhibition at Clare Gallery explores the process of art-making, as well as the glorious life of Christ.***

*Hartford* — Mary Billingsley is an accomplished Connecticut artist who, since 1990, has been working on a series of paintings based on the life of Christ. These paintings are a splendid expression of her commitment to her elaborate art-making process, as well as a highly creative expression of personal faith.

Each work begins with choosing a specific scene of Jesus' life to depict. Then the artist gathers relevant objects that will be part of this scene and creates a 3-D "still life." Some of her props are religious objects, while others are everyday objects. The artist makes some architectural structures herself, while other objects such as dolls are borrowed. Very often the still life takes on a symmetrical composition, which reflects our cultural sense of a shrine.

The art-making process does not stop with the still life. Viewing herself as a painter, the artist moves the process onto a 2-D surface. Ms. Billingsley creates a drawing of the still life, which is then transferred to watercolor paper and painted in gouache. Finally, each painting is digitally scanned and printed on fine art paper.

Sacredness is reflected in each still life by its subject matter and its very formal presentation, as well as the process by which the work was created. For this reason, the artist has chosen to call the series "Shrines." **The exhibition opens December 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 and continues through January 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, with a reception and artist talk on December 6<sup>th</sup> from 5–7 pm. All are welcome.**

The Clare Gallery primarily features exhibitions that emphasize world religions or interfaith themes, as well as social justice themes, on either a global or local level. The Gallery is housed in the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry at 285 Church Street. The Center is part of St. Patrick – St. Anthony Church, a vibrant and active downtown faith community.

The Clare Gallery's hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays; Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The Gallery and all related events are free and open to the public. Free parking is available directly across from the church, and the facility is handicapped accessible. More information may be found on the church's website: [www.stpatrick-stanthony.org](http://www.stpatrick-stanthony.org).