Italic Gracefully Taylored by Sister

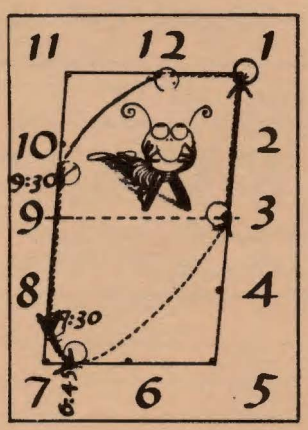
Sister Grace Taylor, OSB, MALS, of Queen of Angels Priory, Mt. Angel, Oregon—calligrapher, teacher and author of books on italic handwriting for school children—is a native Oregonian, born in Condon in Gilliam County. While growing up in a family with four sisters and two brothers, she went horseback riding a great deal, which gave her time to meditate. She entered the convent at an early age, and became interested in calligraphy while making charts in the convent. She said as soon as she got a calligraphy pen in her hand, she knew it was a friend.

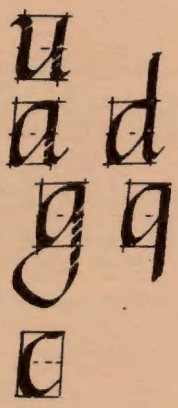
Before she began working with calligraphy, her doctor discovered a disease which threatened the amputation of her hands. However, by the use of her relaxed wrist action with her writing of calligraphy, she eventually learned to relax her wrists completely, and she has enjoyed over 20 years of beautiful writing.

She taught grades 1-7 prior to studying calligraphy with Lloyd J. Reynolds in 1962. LJR gave her an assignment to become a great calligrapher; but she felt she had another goal in mind, and that was to teach teachers to write calligraphy. In 1967 she earned her master's degree in calligraphy at Reed College. Although she refers to Lloyd Reynolds as an exacting master, she has always been grateful for his careful critique of her work.

Her first teaching assignment in calligraphy was in 1963 in Albany, Oregon. She was the first in the field teaching teachers calligraphy, at that time for Portland State University. She devised her own handout sheets, which were printed on a ditto machine. One day in passing in the hall, LJR suggested she get an offset press. Upon her inquiring what that might be, he told her to go to the duplicating room to find out. Sister did find out about an offset press, and subsequently this led to the purchase of other needed equipment to handle the volumes of handouts and information that sprang like a veritable fountain of ideas to help the calligraphy student. Her electronic paper cutter, collator, bookbinding machine, tablet binder, plate developer, etc., have since been added to the original press. She hires printers to run her press when her work-load gets too heavy.

For those of you who have not had the privilege of visiting her in her ABCDARIUM (or as she often





Start with 10 o'clock, continue to 12 o'clock, continue to 9:30, to 7:30, to 6:45; swing up to 3 and stop at 1:00 o'clock. Remember, smooth fluid writing. The movement comes the free wrist, exceptions: exits h, m, and n.

The 5° letter slant slopes gently as it continues up or down. This slant plus the movement of the broad edged pen nib at a 45° makes the letter look more curved than it is. A light touch is touch is very important. The curved look is most misleading for the beginner.

refers to it, her "warehouse), it is a calligrapher's mecca. When one sees the huge double-classroom-sized room lined with shelves full of wonderful calligraphic handouts that she has designed, written out and printed by herself, it is hard to see how one woman could accomplish so much. I suppose many a calligrapher has mused, "To have the time to write calligraphy that a nun must surely have." Nuns have too little time for themselves nowadays with all their commitments.

She has been busy writing her books for school children for 13 years and is now putting some final touches on them. All the while she has been writing them, she has been teaching all over. She is determined to finish her books, and this necessitates burning the lights into the late hours to accomplish it. Her books are for the kindergarten level through 8th grade, with a teacher's manual. The Pentalic Corporation in New York has accepted them for endorsement and will soon be publishing them. The fruition of Sister's dream to help children learn to write beautifully is the result of her determination and the many years of association with Lloyd J. Reynolds, who was constantly urging her on and encouraging her in this endeavor.

Any article about Sister Grace would not be complete unless it mentioned her Karate cats that she raises. They belong to royalty in Thailand, and the sale of her kittens enabled her to purchase her first offset press and other equipment.

Inquiries concerning her books can be addressed to her at 840 South Main, Mt. Angel, Oregon 97362.

When asked recently about her future plans after finishing her books, she smiled and said she longs to find a little time to write out some ideas she has had, beautifully. Sister, you deserve some time for that, after all your hard and beautiful work.

A footnote from one of Sr. Grace's students & fans: Since using her teaching sheets along with LJR's 'Italic Calligraphy & Handwriting' in my own teaching for the past five years with adults; I have seen students progress more rapidly in the correct way to write Italic. I have taken classes from a number of calligraphy teachers & feel that Sr. Grace's approach eliminates a lot of wasted time with incorrect practice! THANK YOU, SISTER GRACE!

Patty Manning