

# ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

**THEY ALL CALL US MUMMY:** Travelling in an old commuter omnibus, I felt depressed from a long and hard day. I was suffering from a terrible cough and my voice had gone. I was making crafts for resale and the day had been so challenging, squeaking to people and scribbling notes trying to communicate hoping the gestures of my hands would help. I thought of my



children and the promise of a bright future and hope that we had growing up; the dream to become someone in the career you loved. My heart sank as I wondered whether my children will have a chance in life. As these dark conversations within me continued I felt much activity beside me and yet not a sound. I looked at two people and realised they were hearing impaired. One young man was dressed in a work suit and his companion in casual attire. They were also mute but were signing happy stories, breaking momentarily to laugh silently and clap hands. They were a beautiful sight to behold. Something about watching them made me both thankful and realise I am on the right path. I make regular prayers to God to bless the works of my hands so they may glorify His Holy name. It dawned on me that little by little I am living my dream of being an artist. Even though at times I juggle multiple roles just to make it through the day. I am fortunate that most opportunities allow me to live my dream as an artist even if they are small. It had not all been bad. As I made earrings with my sister Salome we were chuckling between my squeaks and we were united in our creativity. Few people have the sibling bond I share with her and my cousins who in my culture are also my sisters. Her children are mine and mine are hers. They all call us Mummy. There is so much joy and peace when we make things and we have made crafts all of our lives. The healing of art has

inspired my desire to train in art therapy and to work with my community here in Zimbabwe. Training is however only offered abroad, but my time will come. Even though officially I am the artist in the family, she too is quite an artist and I often bounce ideas off her and my mother who are my rocks. They have an eye for beauty and fine finish so they always critique my work as well. I love experimenting with different mediums in all my art work. I love textures especially those found in nature. They inspire me as nature itself does. Natural lines and tones, organic shapes, animals, birds and other creatures all contribute to my artistic inspiration. I love all things African especially our fabric because the designs are bright, vibrant and colourful, much

like the 'conversation' between the two young men from the commuter omnibus. It's clear that I love what I do no matter how small or big the reward or where I am in life. I have good days and bad days but my art remains my joy through it all. I am reminded of Jesus' command to love. In loving my art, my sister has found an expression of love also. My art has bound me to many who are now my brothers and sisters too. When someone wears what we create there is so much joy from the silent acknowledgement that God has indeed blessed the



works of our hands and minds. So, as I watched the two mute and hearing impaired young men

disembark from the commuter omnibus, a wave of gratitude surged over me. I often see the mute and hearing impaired selling airtime, fruit etc. at street corners. They serve and engage in communication with us but everyday life goes on. Each day ends and they start again. I was humbled. The path I have taken with my art is the beginning of something greater. Even these small steps collectively will go a long way towards my goal. **Christine Ndoro.**



*Christine and Salome are both struggling single mothers. Christine, left, is also a talented painter and a member of ArtPeace. The other photos show some of their crafts with sister Salome modelling their lovely jewellery. Catherine Mungaraza, a Zimbabwean nurse based in the UK currently visiting her family in Zimbabwe, has kindly offered to bring parcels of sculptures and jewellery samples including hand painted items to be displayed at St Andrew's early in October for a limited time before transfer to the Southwark Cathedral shop. **Johnston Simpson***