Art faculty discuss balancing teaching, creativity

By Kathy McLimans

Six fine arts faculty members discussed their ideas about balancing teaching and creativity as artists in a recent gallery talk hosted by the Rev. Don Doll, S.J., chairman of fine arts.

The Rev. Michael Flecky, S.J., said he sees being a teacher and an artist as "two different muscles."

"As a teacher, I tend to be organized, to have objectives and a clear purpose. I'm not going to waste their (the students') time," Flecky said.

"As an artist, I have to get into a whole different gear. I try to be playful with my work."

"It's hard to be free to wander and explore when I'm the teacher. I have to be the authority."

Jerry Horning said he enjoys the security of teaching. He also said that for too many artists, producing art in order to survive becomes mechanical.

"I like not feeling that I have to go make something," he said. "Rather than make coffee cups, I teach. There are enough machines in the world already."

The instructors were asked how they help students cope with the fear of failure.

Mary Beth Fogarty said she tells her students, "As we grow spiritually, we push out our parameters. If you see the need to grow, you're going to have to take those risks."

Doll discussed his participation in the production of "A Day in the Life of America." On May 2, 1986, 200 photojournalists from all over the world photographed peopele and places across America for a documentary book. Doll took photographs at a Sioux reservation in South Dakota.

"I was extremely nervous," Doll said. He found a man painting wooden crosses in a cemetery. "I thought, 'My God, here is a historically significant person,'" he said.

After that, he said he regained his confidence and had a good day photographing.

Bob Bosco and John Thein also wrote about their artwork and teaching methods.

The gallery talk was held in conjunction with the Faculty Art Show. Various pieces by the faculty are on display in Arts 212 until March 15.