

The giftedness in *holding all in common*

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“True stewardship is not about what we do, but rather about who we are. It defines a way of life for intentional disciples.”

From *Stewardship: A Disciple's Way of Life* by Barbara Vite

At the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province associate gathering this past fall in Elm Grove, Wisconsin, associates and their companion sisters delved into that part of our *Love Cannot Wait* directional statement that focuses on holding all in common.

The words of **S. Mary Kay Gosch**, recorded on DVD, touched our very being as she spoke about the presentation given at the General Chapter that described the world as a village of 100 people with limited resources. We quickly saw the necessity of conversion of mind and heart in a world where five would control 32 percent of the world's wealth; 18 could not read or write, and 33 would not have water, etc.

We were then invited to reflect on these world descriptors and challenged to respond in a new way to the concept of holding all in common. Every response was collated, flashed on a large screen, and read aloud. Someone remarked about the inspiring sense of unity that was felt in the room. Some of responses include the following:

- **Use of gifts:**
 - I need to begin with my attitude... see all as gift.
 - Everything I have or use is gift.
 - As we love our neighbor, our gifts would be freely given to people who don't have these gifts.
- **Education as gift:**
 - How can we use our gift as educators to help transform the human heart?
 - My education has not been for myself, but to be shared with others. My opportunities for spiritual growth are not for my own enrichment only but to be shared, to help others grow spiritually.
 - Educate, educate, educate – from young on.
- **Gift of self:**
 - Gifts are given to be passed on to others. The gift of recognizing the needs of another can be passed on by a simple smile, an inquiry regarding how the person is, a gentle pat on the back.



Associate Pat Herro and S. Immaculata Zoelle

- I can share myself, my presence, being available.
- Willingness to share/give what I have to another: time to listen, to help, to give.

“One of the most precious things for me is the gift of time. I have choices around the stewardship of that gift. I feel that when I spend time in prayer or reflection, I can offer the world a positive energy, a healing remedy, if you will. My silence and prayer lifts up all the peoples of the world. I bring the needs of our world to our loving Creator God each day. And, at each liturgy, I bring all of humanity, the broken Body of Christ, to the table of sacrifice. We are all there, offering ourselves to God!”

There seemed to be a genuine sense of wanting to embrace the challenge of holding all in common as we left that Saturday in October. Our prayer included this thought from the North American Conference of Associates and Religious: “Lead me to share my abundant life with those who are in need of the gifts I have to give.” □

