Blog
Religious Life




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She was in a wheelchair, dealing with memory and speech issues, yet, she was the sweetest person despite it all.

I had just been received into the novitiate, I was just out of college and in my early 20s. The sisters sang "Ubi Caritas" and walked in procession to hug me and welcome me to the community. She couldn't walk, so I walked down the chapel aisle to her. I bent over to hug her and she whispered:

"Don't let anyone ever convince you that your job is your prayer."

I stored those words in my memory and heart. Many years later, now living a Benedictine monastic life, those words keep coming back to me as I try to find the balance between work and prayer. Editing for Global Sisters Report means spending countless hours in front of a computer.

In consecrated life, we often place a lot of emphasis on ministry — even here at Global Sisters Report, we very easily talk about ministry and social justice issues. However, we don't speak as much about the wealth of wisdom that sisters leave behind. There is so much more to our lives than the ministries we serve! In every religious house across the world, one can find so much joy, laughter, stories — and wisdom — that people who have never visited could never imagine.

When I have asked sisters about a piece of wisdom that they have received in religious life and that still sustains them, I was always so touched by the responses. These words of wisdom by sisters have nurtured me over the years with the challenges and changes I've encountered in religious life. I've clung to them, replayed them in my mind and used them to guide me in a life that, 20 years later, I still love.

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That prompted an idea to share the wisdom that I and other sisters have received over the years with and among Global Sisters Report readers.

Here are some of the gems that sisters shared that they have received in an early "trial run" of this project:

- "To listen without reacting. It meant breathing, being silent, and not getting caught up in other people's reality or emotions."
- "The important thing is not to save the institution but to be faithful to your calling."
- "To always keep alive the spirit of prayer, gentle service to all without exception, and the affection shown to sisters through various forms and details."
- "A well-formed conscience is the stronghold where only God and I, and those whom I let in, enter. There is no better guide than it to live an authentic fidelity."

Encouraged by those responses, we decided to launch a new video series to highlight the pieces of wisdom that are passed on in religious life and that sustain us on the journey. We will be showing these short videos every Wednesday on our social media accounts, which is why we are calling the series "Wisdom Wednesday."

So, we invite you to visit our social media accounts (see below) to find these stories of wisdom from around the world. If you want to share a piece of wisdom that you have received, please click here for the instructions on how to record a 1 minute video, and email your video to our social/multimedia editor Olivia Bardo at obardo@ncronline.org or to me at hleija@ncronline.org.

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