

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Sherry Bohlen, Membership Coordinator

Reflections on WomanSpirit Retreat

In early February, I attended a WomanSpirit workshop where I met Sister Simone Campbell (of “Nuns-on-the-Bus” fame). During her dynamic and engaging keynote address, she shared sage advice to help us through the challenging times ahead.

She offered the following 5 steps that she feels are imperative for us to “Reweave the Fabric of our Society”.

1. We must have long and available memories and we must share stories of what matters. We must tell our own stories and we must listen to the stories of others.
2. We must be willing to touch the pain of the world. We must be willing to experience it as real. We must have the courage to have our hearts broken open and to weep. We must be willing to linger in the experience of the pain and not try to immediately fix it.
3. We must allow the wellspring of hope that arises out of this active experience of pain. We must look for evidence of hope in the everyday events of our lives.
4. We must have effective discourse with people of different generations and of different cultures. We must be willing to look beyond our differences and find our common interests – our common ground. We must find a common vision and collectively fight for it.
5. We must develop the capacity to sustain long-term tension with the dominate culture. And we must find ways to connect meaningfully with our community to sustain long-term engagement.

Sister Simone then shared 4 “Virtues to Practice” as we reweave the fabric of our society.

1. Exercise “joy” and look for it in all things.
2. Practice “holy curiosity”. Ask to hear the stories of others and get to know how they came to their point-of-view.
3. Engage in “sacred gossip” and share the stories of people.
4. Do your part. But don’t feel that you have to do it all. Leave some work for others to do.

Challenging times demand that each of us re-examines and re-invents the fabric of our society to meet the changing landscape of our times. As we do the work, may we each channel the spirit of Sister Simone and others who have gone before her.

Read more about Simone Simone and her work at Network -- <https://networklobby.org>.