This Christmas consider giving the gift of gratitude! It never gets old, used up or stale. It will remain fresh and sincere with repetition, and you will be amazed how easy it is to wrap!

Gratitude involves so much more than just giving. It is the realization and understanding that our whole life depends on God’s generosity to us. We are nothing without Him. Our nothingness and total reliance for everything are the keys. Letting go of the worries, the fears and the stresses that keep us apart from a true relationship with Jesus gives us the freedom just to be. It is in receiving this gift of understanding that we learn to trust, completely.

Pope Francis teaches us the way: “Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way” (Evangelii Gaudium). Disciples with a stewardship heart will head these words and those which follow: “At times we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it” (ibid).

We can clearly see the needs of others through the eyes of a grateful heart. “Giving back” is an old expression we often hear at Christmas, but its meaning is ever new. Sharing our abundance is a natural response to being grateful!

As Christmas arrives, may you know God's infinite and unconditional love; may your gifts be received with joy; and may you have peace in your heart and your life.

Gratitude—the gift that keeps on giving!

Happy Christmas to all!

Barbara Dowding
National President