

Presentation Newfoundland & Labrador Associate Handbook



*If I could be
of any service...
... in any part
of the globe,
I would willingly
do all in my power...
Nano Nagle*

Above: Artwork by Lisa Pirez, pbvm, which includes the sculpture Nano and the Children by Annette McCormack, installed at Ballygriffin Centre, Ireland.

Profile: Nano Nagle

In the face of fear, she chose to be daring,
in the face of anxiety, she chose to trust,
in the face of impossibility, she chose to begin.

To universal misery, she opposed ministry to persons,
to ignorance, knowledge,
to disillusionment, tenacity of purpose,
and to multiple vexations, singleness of heart.

Faced with failure, she held fast to hope,
faced with death, she believed in a living future,
and programme for that future she gave in one word,
LOVE.

Raphael Consedine pbvm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Part 1: Exploring the Call

Who is Nano Nagle?

Honora (Nano) Nagle was born in 1718 in Ballygriffin, County Cork, Ireland. Nano, the eldest of seven children, was a spirited child and grew up in a wealthy household. Nano and her sister Ann were smuggled to France by their father to further their education. When Nano finished her schooling she loved nothing better than to be part of the high society Parisian scene. Following her father's death in 1796, Nano returned to Ireland. Nano's lifestyle changed dramatically when she discovered that Ann had sold some expensive material which she had brought from France to buy food for a poor family. This would mark a major directional change in Nano's life, and she began to wonder how to devote her life to the service of the poor and desolate of Irish society.

As Nano walked the streets of Cork, she was constantly disturbed by the poverty she witnessed in her native Ireland. Not contented with just witnessing poverty, her heart urged her to do something about it.

Nano Nagle – socialite turned social worker, lady of fashion turn educator, woman of wealth made poor, observer turned activist – chose to commit her life and her fortune for the poor of Ireland.

Knowing from her prayer and contemplation that God was all sufficient, she placed all her trust in God. In response to God's call, Nano and her three companions began a religious order of women who would bring to those in need the presence and love of God and the possibility of change.

Nano's age and health, the few who shared her vision and the uncertainty of the future of her religious order, did not deter her from caring for the oppressed of Ireland. In placing herself on the cutting edge between the gospel and the miseries of her day, Nano became a Social Reformer. Her commitment, dedication and determination broke down the barriers of indifference and discrimination and led her to establish a Congregation marked by compassion, love, care and concern. Nano's vision for her Congregation was "dedicated service to the needs of the poor, the aged, the forgotten, the dying". Following in the footsteps of Jesus, Nano believed her vision would one day be realized.

The people of Cork loved her because of her continued love and care for them. Nano loved at the risk of losing her freedom, being ridiculed and she exhibited courage when weariness and loneliness sought to overwhelm her. Nano served others with a deep passion, commitment and purpose that came from her love of God. Nano's total dedication to God and the poor is her legacy to all Presentation Sisters and Associates. In 2013, Nano was declared Venerable by Pope Francis.

Nano's Charism

Nano Nagle personified an intense, deep trust in the providence of God. This trust was deepened by a lifelong contemplation of the living word. On special occasions she would spend many hours in prayer and fasting which renewed her. Her vision of proclaiming the reign of God was partially fulfilled by educating and liberating the vulnerable and powerless. She portrayed a compassionate love and devotion for those in any kind of need.

She spent her life bringing about a world of truth, goodness, justice, love and peace as proclaimed by Jesus. She emitted optimism even after rejection and setbacks. Her signature was always *"your affectionate sister or friend."* She was very thoughtful with simple deeds and many cups of tea were shared.

Who are the Presentation Sisters?

The Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (PBVM) founded by Nano began from small beginnings that spread across Ireland and around the globe. Four pioneering sisters - Sisters Bernard Kirwin, Magdalen O'Shaughnessy, Xavier Maloney and Xaverius Lynch - carried her vision and spirit to Newfoundland in 1833. They came at the invitation of Bishop Michael Fleming to establish a school that would offer improved educational opportunity for girls and young women in St. John's. For 187 years Presentation sisters continued to respond to this call. In the spirit of compassion and justice, they have provided leadership and ministry in the fields of education, health care, pastoral care, religious education, spiritual renewal, justice and ecology throughout NL and beyond. Nano's spirit and the spirit of these first four woman and their followers continue to guide us as we endeavor in new ways to meet today's emerging needs. Today, the NL Province also has ministries in Ottawa, Canada and in the Commonwealth of Dominica in the West Indies. Dominica. Sisters from our NL Province are ministering in Ireland at Ballygriffin, Nano Nagle's birthplace, at our Mission House in Lucan and at Monasterevin, Co. Kildare as a member of our Central Leadership Team respectively.

In 1976 a group of pioneering Presentation Sisters led the fusion from the individual/autonomous PBVM Congregations into ONE new Congregation now known as the Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (PBVM). On November 1, 2014, the Sisters of the NL Presentation Congregation merged with the Union of the Sisters of the PBVM. This was indeed a historical moment. Two years later two sisters from Ireland were appointed to the Newfoundland and Labrador Province. This, no doubt, brought back many memories of our beginning when four sisters sailed from Ireland to start a foundation in St John's. As we move forward as a Province of the Union of Presentation Sisters *"we are called to awaken to the spirit of God present and active in all that exists, to a Spirituality of Being in Communion and participate in the universal mission of Jesus Christ."*

Presentation people now have provinces in the following countries: Africa, Australia, Canada, England, India, Ireland, Latin America, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Slovakia, Thailand and the United States of America, bringing to fruition Nano's words *'If I could be of service in any part of the world, I will willingly do all in my power...'*

In 1988 the International Presentation Association (IPA) was formed. IPA encompasses three global congregations - the North American Conference, the Australian Society and the Union.

Who are the Presentation Associates?

Presentation Associates are Presentation People who are called to deepen their spiritual growth through a sharing of their own personal gifts and talents to extend the mission of Jesus through their own life situations. Associates welcome mutual opportunities for prayer, service, celebration and hospitality and share in the vision and charism of Nano as given expression in today's world. They participate in an orientation and discernment process before making a commitment to become an Associate.

What is the purpose of the Associate relationship?

Our Associate relationship with the Presentation Sisters is a way for individuals to respond to a call to share in the spirituality and charism of Nano. The purpose of the relationship is to foster respect and mutuality in a manner that enhances, supports and challenges both Associates and vowed members to more fully live Christian values and the spirit of Nano in their respective life situations.

Why become an Associate?

- to deepen your spirituality and live more fully the gospel values of compassion and justice
- to experience the mutual support of a faith community
- to honor the presence of God within oneself and the earth/environment/creation
- to use your gifts and talents to extend the charism and vision of the Presentation Sisters in your respective life situations
- to engage in opportunities that foster personal growth
- to become more actively involved in ministry/service

"Religious and associates need one another...because true companions make possible the growth of the other." Joan Chittister, OSB.

Part 2: Nurturing the Call

The Invitation

The invitation may be extended by Presentation Sisters and Associates to people who are 19 years of age and older who are called to a deeper living out of the gospel values and the mission and charism of the Presentation Sisters. The person who has extended the invitation should then advise, in writing, the unit coordinator in that area (East, Central or West).

Once the invitation is accepted, the unit coordinator of the area will have a conversation with the person to provide an opportunity to share information. The person will then be informed of the next step in the process.

The Inquiry

The inquiry is an information session in which the unit coordinators will provide information about the orientation process as well as an opportunity for the person to ask questions.

Once the inquiry session is complete, the person will discern and make a decision on participating in the orientation process. Once they have made a decision, they will advise the unit coordinator. Those who have decided to continue will complete an application to engage in the orientation process.

The Orientation

The orientation is a continuation of discernment that takes place over a period of six months to one year. It involves regular monthly meetings facilitated by the unit coordinator(s). To foster reflection and discussion, resources are provided about the mission, charism, the new story, social justice and the history and spirituality of PBVM. The process culminates in a retreat wherein an opportunity is offered for reflection and discernment before the individual requests to become an Associate. The orientation may include opportunities to participate in prayer, rituals, celebrations and social events.

The Initial Commitment

Once the orientation process is completed an interview will be held with the unit coordinator. The purpose of the interview is to review the readiness of the candidate and to mutually determine if the person is ready to become an Associate. If there is mutual agreement, the individual makes a formal request to become an Associate. Upon receipt of the request, the unit coordinator will complete a recommendation to the leadership team. A commitment ceremony is held for all accepted candidates where the agreement of associate relationship will be formalized.

The Commitment Renewal

A commitment renewal happens annually. This will involve discernment to continue as an associate or to journey in a new direction.

The Gatherings/Rituals and Celebrations

- Presentation Celebrations (e.g., Presentation Day, Funerals of Sisters)
- Christmas/Advent celebrations
- Mercy-Presentation Speakers Forum
- Retreats
- Monthly gatherings
- Events hosted by Virginia Water Contemplative Centre, St. John's and the Nano Nagle Spirituality Centre at Barachoix Brook

Testimonials:

It keeps me more in tune with the Gospel message and Nano's cry for the poor. It energizes me and heightens my awareness to show the face of Jesus to those with whom I come in contact. The respect and openness that I experience in the Group keeps me grounded. I am humbled and encouraged to listen more attentively and to embrace our differences and similarities. ~ Seana Lee

Becoming an Associate is a lot like falling in love – you hardly know your loved one at the beginning, and you don't know exactly where the relationship is going, but time and experience deepen your knowledge and illuminate the nature of your relationship – not only with Nano's charisma, but with others and with God. ~ Deirdre Greene Lono

I feel blessed being a part of a community that embraces the new way of thinking about creation and therefore is helping me to be more conscious of how the decisions I make affect others, the environment and the planet. While my experience as a presentation associate continues to evolve, I am grateful to be part of the unfolding story of Jesus' Dream. ~ Marie O'Brien

Glossary:

Presentation People: PBVM Sisters, Associates, Employees and Volunteers

International Presentation Association (IPA): the Association comprises three global Presentation Units – Union of Presentation Sisters, Conference of Presentation Sisters of North America, Presentation Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea. (source <http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/>)

Union of Presentation Sisters: Starting in Ireland, new convents developed independently; following the Second Vatican Council, these autonomous groups of Presentation Sisters came together as the Union. Today, the Union of Presentation Sisters is a Congregation of 1300 sisters working internationally across 17 countries: Canada, Chile, Dominica, Ecuador, England, Holy Land, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Slovakia, Thailand, United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Conference of Presentation Sisters of North America: The Conference represents hundreds of Presentation Sisters from six congregations: Aberdeen, South Dakota, Dubuque, Iowa, New Windsor, New York, San Francisco, California and the United States Province of the Union. While the NL Province of the Union withdrew from formal membership in the Conference in 2021, we are still connected with the Conference in a more informal relationship.

Presentation Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea: Congregations of Lismore, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Wagga Wagga, Western Australia and Papua New Guinea with ministries in Peru.

Congregational Leadership Team (CLT): The Leadership Team of the Presentation Sisters Union

Unit Leadership Team: The Leadership Team of the NL province

Unit: The NL Province of Presentation Sisters

Unit Link Sister: The Sister who links with the Unit regional coordinators

Unit Coordinator: the Associate who coordinates the Associate groups in their area

Group Coordinator: the Associate who coordinates the specific group of Associates

Role of Unit Link Sister is to:

- Work collaboratively with the area coordinators to enable them to carry out their respective roles or any direction of the Congregation
- Share experiences that will be helpful to the Associate Movement as a whole (e.g., opening any new mission, other international and IPA outcomes)
- Ensure Sisters receive publications/material: encouraging them to engage and share it with others
- Meet with the Unit Leadership Team a minimum of two times a year.

Role of the Unit Coordinator, in consultation with the Unit Link Sister is to:

- Provide leadership to the groups in the Unit
- Maintain contact with and enthuse the groups in the Unit
- Support Unit and Group Coordinators
- Create opportunities for groups to gather, learn, reflect and pray (e.g., retreats)
- Meet with Group Coordinators a minimum of twice per year and, when and where feasible, evaluate and plan together
- Work collaboratively with Unit and Group Coordinators to develop procedures and processes for the Associate relationship
- Nourish the spirit and spirituality of Nano across the Groups in the Unit
- Encourage gatherings of the Presentation People in the Unit
- Coordinate orientation process for new persons
- Meet with the Unit Leadership Team two times a year
- Facilitate smooth and seamless Leadership succession planning with new Unit Coordinator.

Role of Group Coordinator is to:

- Schedule regular meetings for the Group
- Arrange the place and the setting for the Group
- Prepare meeting materials
- Facilitate and/or arrange facilitation for the meetings
- Nourish the spirit and spirituality of Nano in their Group
- Foster opportunities for all members to participate within the group setting
- Maintain contact and enthuse the associates in their Group
- Provide regular update to associates in their Group on activities/happenings in other groups within the Unit
- Liaise with Unit Coordinator and Unit Link Sister as needed
- Meet with Unit Coordinator and Unit Link Sister a minimum of two times a year

Resources:

- **Websites:**

Presentation Sisters NL Province: www.presentationsisters.ca

Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: www.pbvm.org

Conference of Presentation Sisters: <http://www.sistersofthepresentation.com/>

The Australian Society of Presentation: <http://presentationsociety.org.au/>

International Presentation Association (IPA): www.internationalpresentationassociation.org

- **Books/Publications about Nano and Presentation Sisters:**

Nano Nagle Resource Room (located at The Lantern)

Presentation Sisters NL Archives (located at Presentation Convent)

“By degrees, with the assistance of God, we may do a great deal.” (Extract from Nano’s Letter to Miss Fitzsimmons, 28 September 1770)

Approved by PLT 2021



Above: Foundresses by Mary Southward, CSJ