



## OPENING RITUAL

Prepare the space beforehand with a glass for each person and wine or some other beverage ready to pour into the glasses. Have ready a lantern, matches, three candles, a cloth or some other symbol representing your country. Also have in the space the Mary Southard picture of Nano Nagle and her companions. This prayer will take approximately one hour.

### Acknowledging our Ancestors

*Voice:*

Come original guardians of this place.  
Come with the heart you wore as you stood on this hallowed land,  
You who easily tended Earth  
Holding her treasure with uncalloused care.

(cf Joyce Rupp)

Place a cloth or symbol of your land in the sacred space.

### Acknowledging our Presentation Ancestors

*Voice:*

Come Nano Nagle, Woman of Light.  
Come Mary Fouhy, Elizabeth Burke,  
Mary Ann Collins  
and all those Daughters of Light  
who have lived the Gospel  
in the spirit of Nano Nagle over  
225 years.  
Come with your spirit of courage  
and daring as we gather in this  
place.



Light the lantern, hold it up high and place it in the centre of the sacred space.

## A TOAST

Fill a glass for each person with wine or some other suitable beverage. Ask one person to give a toast to Nano Nagle and all our Presentation Foremothers honored in this prayer. Then together raise your glasses and recite the following toast:



We lift our glasses to Nano Nagle  
and to those spirit-filled women who poured out the wine of their lives,  
their dreams, their prayers, their struggles  
to show us the way.  
We take time to remember these  
and all men and women whose lives were stirred and transformed  
by a faith in what they could not see;  
those who became bearers of light, hope, healing, justice,  
and peace for us and for our world.  
We hold them in our hearts.  
We remember their stories and the light of their faith and of their deeds.  
We pray that we too may be people of light.  
We toast them with love and blessing!

Adapted from *A Ritual to Connect You to Daily Life*  
in *Midwives of an Unnamed Future*, page 37



*Right:* For believing that transformation of society towards God's dream of justice and peace was worth committing your lives to.

*All:* God of the generations,  
When we set our hands to labor,  
Thinking that we work alone,  
Remind us that we carry  
On our lips  
The words of prophets,  
In our veins  
The blood of martyrs,  
In our eyes  
The mystics' visions,  
In our hands  
The strength of thousands.



Jan L Richardson, *In Wisdom's Path*

## PRAYER FOR A BLESSING

May the blessing of light be upon us –

- \* a blessing of light in our hearts, making them alert and responsive to the cries of Earth and the cries of those made poor;
- \* a blessing of light in our eyes, opening them to the injustices around us;
- \* a blessing of light in our minds, gifting us with an understanding of human hearts and social systems and how best to bring about God's transformative dream for the whole of creation;
- \* a blessing of light in our actions, witnessing God's tender care for all, especially those who are most vulnerable and oppressed;
- \* a blessing of light in our whole being, making us Children of God and People of Light.

## Acknowledging the Beings of the Present Time

*Voice:*

We acknowledge all those who share this beautiful and endangered planet with us – human brothers and sisters and all other species.

We acknowledge the Presentation family across the world, the diversity and depth of Presentation commitment.

May their presence inspire us to walk lightly on the earth.

*Light a candle, hold it up high and then place it in the sacred space.*

## Acknowledging the Beings of the Future

*Voice:*

We acknowledge the beings of the future who will come after us on Earth – it is for their sakes that we live and work to make this world the best possible place for all beings – a place where there will be blue sky, fruitful land, and clear waters.

*Light a second candle, hold it up high and place it in the sacred space.*

## Acknowledging Each Other

*Voice:*

We acknowledge each one in this room by bowing to each other respectfully.

We honor the dignity, experience and wisdom of each one.

*Light a third candle, hold it up high and place it in the sacred space.*



## SHARING THE STORY

**Reader 1:**

Last Wednesday the indisposition of Miss Nagle was announced in the sorrowing faces of the poor of this city to whom she was the best of benefactors and patronesses. She died about noon this day, and truly indescribable is the universal lament for the departure of this lady who for many years was the object of unexampled admiration and unlimited esteem of all ranks of people.

*The Hibernian Chronicle 26/04/1784*

**Reader 2:**

Her little community gathered about her, learning from her how to die, as they had learned by her conduct how to live. They asked her blessing and her last advice – She gives it to them – ‘Love one another as you have hitherto done.’ A heavenly sentence worthy of the life it concluded.

Dr Coppinger 1784

**Reader 3:**

How often have we seen her passing with steady composure through the rigours of every season to tend her little flock? How often have we seen her, after a well spent day, returning through the darkness of the night, dripping with rain, mingled in the bustling crowd, moving thoughtfully along by the faint glimmer of a wretched lantern, withholding from herself the necessities of life to administer the comforts of it to others....

Dr Coppinger 1794



**Reader 4:**

Nano built a home for destitute women. “I am building the house I spoke to you about for the old women, for which I was obliged to apply to the charity of the public as I was not able to build it at my expense.”

Letter from Nano Nagle to Teresa Mulally 1783

**Reader 5:**

To be a Catholic in eighteenth century Ireland was to belong to an oppressed majority. To be also poor, female and a child was to touch the nadir of public disregard. When Nano confronted the realities of the Cork of the poor, her heart took her to the most needy of its voiceless ones. She chose to work for the education of poor girls.

Raphael Consedine pbvm, *Listening Journey*, page 42



I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me.  
I am honored by their passion for our liberty.  
I will stand a little taller, I will work a little longer.  
And my shoulders will be there to hold the ones who follow me.

Joyce Johnson Rouse (from *Earth Mama: Love Large* album)

**A PSALM OF REMEMBERING NANO NAGLE AND OUR PRESENTATION FOREMOTHERS**

*Left:* For your openness to God’s spirit at work in your lives  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.

*Right:* For opening your hearts to the cry of those made poor by unjust systems  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.

*Left:* For your courage in responding to the needs of your times at great personal cost  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.

*Right:* For bringing the light of hope to the dark places of ignorance and despair  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.

*Left:* For bringing the light of compassion to the dark places of poverty, sickness and suffering  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.

*Right:* For bringing the light of justice to the dark places of injustice and oppression  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.

*Left:* For feeding the flame of your love for God by fidelity to prayer and contemplative action  
*All:* We remember you and give you thanks.



All these were glorious in their time, each was illustrious in their day.  
 Some of them left behind a famous name  
 and people tell the story of their deeds.  
 But of others there is no such memorial.  
 Yet these also were good people whose virtues have not been forgotten.  
 Their wealth remains in their families, their heritage with their descendants.  
 Through God's covenant with them their family endures  
 the generations follow for their sake.  
 And for all time their descendants will endure  
 their glory will never be blotted out.  
 Their bodies are peacefully laid away but their name lives on and on.  
 At family gatherings their wisdom is retold  
 and all those present proclaim their praise.

## SONG

*(Sing the following song OR say the words OR sing another song that you prefer)*

### Standing on the Shoulders

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me.  
 I am stronger for their courage, I am wiser for their words.  
 I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future.  
 I am grateful for their vision, for their toiling on this earth.

We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us.  
 They are saints and they are humans, they are angels, they are friends.  
 We can see beyond the struggles and the troubles and the challenge,  
 When we know that by our efforts things will be better in the end.

*Chorus:*

They lift me higher than I could ever fly!  
 Carrying my burdens away.  
 I imagine our world if they hadn't tried,  
 We wouldn't be here celebrating today.  
 We wouldn't be so very blessed today.



### Reader 6:

Fifty beggars were the company invited. She did not sit at the head of her table, to the honours of it in the usual way; but she brought in the first dish with her own hands, stood behind their chairs while they enjoyed themselves at dinner, and helped to attend them as their menial servant.

Dr Coppinger



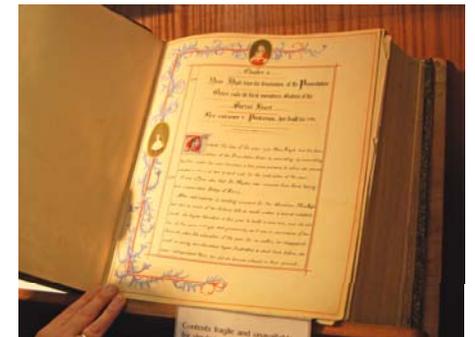
### Reader 7:

What will become of the innocent orphans, hundreds of whom she drew from vice and ignorance? What will become of the sick, naked, afflicted, whom she so often relieved and comforted with her unbounded charities? The object of greatest distress was that of her greatest compassion.

Sr Ursula Kavanagh, one of the first Irish Ursulines

### Reader 8:

Miss Fouhy and Miss Elizabeth Burke were the young ladies whom she made choice of to assist her in the great and arduous undertaking which she was about – They were both natives of the City of Cork, remarkable for talent and gifted with the most sincere piety. Miss Nagle largely expended money on their improvement – She had them perfected in painting, and in every other branch of polite education, which could afterwards tend to promote the glory of God and to make them worthy ornaments of the religious state... They were joined by Miss Mary Ann Collins, also a native of Cork. This young lady was remarkable for the most sincere piety, was an accomplished model of every virtue, and having imbibed, during her intercourse with our venerable Foundress, all her sentiments, all her spirit, she became in after life, a faithful copy of this admirable woman, this true and faithful servant of God.



Annals of South Presentation



### Reader 9:

Miss Nagle ... merely wished them to become (what she herself was) the servants of the poor; and to be free, to seek them out in their hovels of misery and want and woe – she wished them to deserve its being said of them, as it was of her, that there was not a garret in Cork which she did not visit and did not know – this was the road pointed out by Miss Nagle, to be trodden by the members of her Congregation – and she walked in it herself – her example traced the way to them – and they faithfully followed it... She never spared herself, and she exacted from her associates all those practices of self denial which she so unrelentingly imposed on herself. Their meals were mean and frugal; and, poor and comfortless as they were, no sooner were they ended than they were obliged instantly to repair to their schools...

Annals of South Presentation

### Reader 10:

When Nano died 26 April 1784 the members of her community were Mary Ann Collins (48 years of age), Mary Fouhy (48 years of age), Miss Olliffe and Miss Hodnett who made their first vows in 1784, Johanna Connell (novice, Nano's cousin), Anastasia Tobin (novice), Mary Tobin (novice), Margaret Tobin (novice). By the end of 1784, Miss Olliffe, Miss Hodnett and Johanna Connell had tuberculosis. Miss Olliffe went home to die, Miss Hodnett went home then returned to the convent and died in June 1785. Johanna Connell died 8 January 1785. Mary Tobin left in 1785 and led the life of a hermit and a saint. Anastasia Tobin was professed 3 January 1785, then joined the Ursulines after Johanna Connell's death and 15 months at home. That left, one year after Nano's death, Mary Ann Collins, Mary Fouhy, Margaret Tobin (20 years old) and Margaret Collins, Mary Ann's 30 year old sister who joined them at the end of January 1785. It was another five years before they had a novice. Nano's hopes and disappointments were lived in those years which called for a great trust in Divine Providence.

Raphael Consedine pbvm, *Listening Journey*, pages 100-109

### Reader 11:

It was Mary Ann and her companions who formed the living link with Nano. It was their task to give to those who came later what she had given to them. Mary Ann could not see into the future; she could scarcely have realised that without her fidelity there was little hope for a future for the group at all.

Raphael Consedine pbvm, *Listening Journey*, page 98

**Share the story/stories of your foundress and Presentation foremothers.**



## REFLECTION AND SHARING

- What challenges you or moves you as you listen to these stories?
- How are we continuing the heritage of Nano Nagle and our Presentation foremothers?

### A Reading from the Book of Proverbs 31:10, 17, 20, 26

The truly capable woman – who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls... She puts her back into her work and shows how strong her arms can be... She holds out her hands to the poor, she opens her arms to the needy... on her tongue is kindly instruction.

### A Psalm in Praise of Godly People – Sirach 44:1-9, 10-15 (adapted)



Now I will praise those godly people,  
our ancestors  
each in their life-time gave God glory through their deeds.  
There were those who ventured out and established  
settlements;  
others gave wise advice,  
or talked about what might happen in the future.  
There were princes and rulers;  
Authors skilled in compositions and writers of clever  
sayings;  
composers of psalms and passages of poetry.  
Strong and dependable people, strongly established  
and at home with their achievements.