

Presentation Day Novena 2015



“To love others is to come close to them, to identify with them, and to do all in our power to shelter them and work for their well-being.”

-*The Rebirthing of God*, John Philip Newell

Reflection and Sharing

How do we live up to Nano’s example of loving without counting the cost in our time and in our situation wherever we are?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond: Let love be our lantern.

Closing Prayer

Oh God, we are one with You. You have made us one with You. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, You dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. Oh God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept You, and we thank You, and we adore You, and we love You with our whole being, because our being is in Your being, our spirit is rooted in Your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in one spirit which make you witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious. Amen

Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*
(New Directions: 1975)

Today in 2015 we still follow in the footsteps of Nano Nagle, our foundress and model.

Our love and true concern for all our brothers and sisters with whom we share this world is demonstrated in HOW WE LOVE.

Watch the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txLfjk4qMWE>

Novena created by the Dubuque Presentation
community in Chicago, Illinois.

Keyword artwork by Sister Marilyn Breen.

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 beg.

To universal misery, she proposed 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;
A programme for the future she gave in one word;

LOVE

-Raphael Consedine, PBVM

Nano's own words demonstrate her abiding love and concern not only for those in Cork, but wherever there was a need, "If I could be of service in saving souls in any part of the globe, I would willingly do all in my power."

-*Letters of Nano Nagle*

"I often think my schools will never bring me to heaven, as I only take delight and pleasure in them."

-*Letters of Nano Nagle*

And Nano's final words to her young community were to assure the continuation of this greatest of all gifts. "Love one another as you have hitherto done."

-*One Pace Beyond*

Reading

Love and ever more love is the only solution to every problem that comes up. If we love each other enough, we will bear with each other's faults and burdens. If we love enough, we are going to light that fire in the hearts of others. And it is love that will burn out the sins and hatreds that sadden us. It is love that will make us want to do great things for each other. No sacrifice and no suffering will then seem too much.

*House of Hospitality, Dorothy Day,
Sacred Journeys, Jan L. Richards*

As we prepare to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, you are invited to join Presentation people across the globe in considering some of the characteristics of Nano Nagle which are a part of our rich legacy.

In the introduction to Raphael Consedine's *Fire on the Earth* she quotes from a letter by Bishop Francis Moylan after the death of Nano describing the small community, "Her spirit animates the Sisters that compose it." Sister Raphael explained that, in speaking of Nano's spirit, Bishop Moylan meant "the sum of the values and attitudes which guided her understanding of her own life and call, her relationship with others, with her world, with life itself, and – in, through and beyond all these – with the mystery of God." Today, more than two centuries later, Presentation people of very different cultural backgrounds and in very different times still draw inspiration from these same values and attitudes. We see these values lived out in the characteristics/qualities which were evident in Nano's life. How can we live those same values and demonstrate those same characteristics in the place and time in which we live today? Although there are many qualities that could be named, we have chosen only a few.

The prayer for each day will focus on a different characteristic.

We invite you to share your thoughts as you pray this novena by adding comments to the blog:

<https://pbvm2015.wordpress.com/>.

We also invite you to tell us the needs to which you respond in your region of the world.

Today we reflect on Nano's **trust** in divine providence. We remember our Presentation family in India and Pakistan.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator,
Christ who shows us the way
and in the Spirit who continues to give us hope and courage.
Amen



We pray the novena for Presentation Day as an international community praying for a deepening of our sense of unity and trust in God. We are different than we were last year and the world has also changed, yet much is the same. Nano served the poor of Cork, today we respond to poverty, injustice and great need wherever we live. The poor still teach us and challenge us.

Scripture

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.
They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.
It shall not fear when heat comes
and its leaves shall stay green
In the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Some of the following are examples taken from the writings of Presentation Sisters who have reflected and penned in prose or poetry illustrations of this great love.

NANO

Love, was her only concern
Love, made her give life.

You were only a woman
Who loved the down-trodden ones
A woman who pleaded for others, especially the poor
You searched for those depressed,
And ensured them life
Great is your work, Oh Nano!
A part of God's plan.

You gifted a future to the hopeless
You lived fully the essence
Of womanhood, to be the life-bearer
Life nurturer among your people
A movement of the Great Spirit.

-Sebastiana Luis, PBVM, Paroda, Goa, India,

Reflecting With Nano, published by Presentation Sisters 2009

The following excerpts are taken from "How can we explain Nano Nagle's enduring influence over a period of 225 years?"

Claude Meagher, PBVM, Co. Limerick, *Reflecting with Nano*

"Nano's story may be briefly summarized—it is the story of love—a love so great that it was to finally consume her frail body in its flame."

"Love inspired by faith urged on by hope and driven by deep compassion for the poor pressed Nano into doing and suffering great things for Christ."

"Nano's love for the poor was no ordinary human love; it was the compassionate love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for His bruised and broken ones."



Today we reflect on **love** and pray for the Nagle and Rice Families.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator, and Christ who shows us the way and the Spirit who continues to give us hope and courage. Amen.

Scripture

1 Cor. 13: 4-7

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude; it does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

As we come to the final day of our novena in preparation for the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary it seems appropriate that love is the quality on which we reflect.

“And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

-1 Cor. 13:13

Nano's love for God and God's people has been talked about, written about and prayed over for many years. The long hours in prayer, her attentive listening and complete openness to God's will in her life, the generous outpouring of herself to the ministry of God's people are testimony to Nano's extraordinary love. Nano's special devotion to the Sacred Heart was exemplified in her choice of the name of her fledgling community, The Sisters of Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Reading: TRASNA

The pilgrims paused on the ancient stones
In the mountain gap.
Behind them stretched the roadway they had travelled.
Ahead, mist hid the track.
Unspoken the question hovered:
Why go on? Is life not short enough?
Why seek to pierce its mystery?
Why venture further on strange paths, risking all?
Surely that is a gamble for fools - or lovers.
Why not return quietly to the known road?
Why be a pilgrim still?
A voice they knew called to them, saying:
This is Trasna, the crossing place.
Choose! Go back if you must,
You will find your way easily by yesterday's fires,
there may be life in the embers yet.
If that is not your deep desire,
Stand still. Lay down your load.
Take your life firmly in your two hands,
(Gently... you are trusted with something precious)
While you search your heart's yearnings:
What am I seeking? What is my quest?
When your star rises deep within,
Trust yourself to its leading.
You will have the light for first steps.
This is Trasna, the crossing place.
Choose!
This is Trasna, the crossing place
Come!

-Raphael Consedine

Reflection and Sharing

As we recall the stories which have been passed on to us about Nano Nagle, we have learned that her journey was marked by a spirit of trust in God. In the many twists and turns of life, Nano turned to prayer in the face of challenges from family, friends and the Church. Trust in God's love and the deep call to serve the poor inspired her to take the next step when she couldn't see beyond it. How are we called to trust today? What crossings face you today? How is this like Nano's experience?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond: Help us to trust.

Closing Prayer

A Prayer for Pilgrims and Journeyers

A journey once taken alone
we now choose to take together.
Moving forward as one body
into a future filled with possibility,
We walk without maps, but we walk confidently,
and we walk with hope, because we have chosen
to be lights for each other, while on the way.
We travel forward along a way we have not gone before;
we travel as one who is led, arms outstretched
as one who is called forth to life.
We travel in need, dependent on Holy Mystery for strength,
for assurance,
dependent on each other,
God's instruments for love.
Leaving known paths behind us
we choose to journey in faith and service.
As the journey brought us here, so now we begin it anew,
in good company.

-Edward Hays

<https://pbvm2015.wordpress.com/>

When Nano Nagle took as her religious patron St John of God, she was giving expression to one of her deepest spiritual insights arising from her contemplation of the incarnate Word – her acceptance of His own identification of Himself with man-in-need. The sixteenth century Portuguese adventurer had been converted from a life of self-satisfaction to one of humble service of the poor. In Paris Nano had seen the continued living out of his vision of love in the Hôpital de la Charité. A legend popularised in the stories of his life clothed spiritual reality in telling of how he had washed and kissed the feet of a beggar brought in from the street, only to find them marked with wounds, and to hear a voice saying to him, “John, to Me is done all that you do for the poor in My Name. I reach out my hands for the alms you give. Mine are the feet that you wash.”

-Raphael Consedine

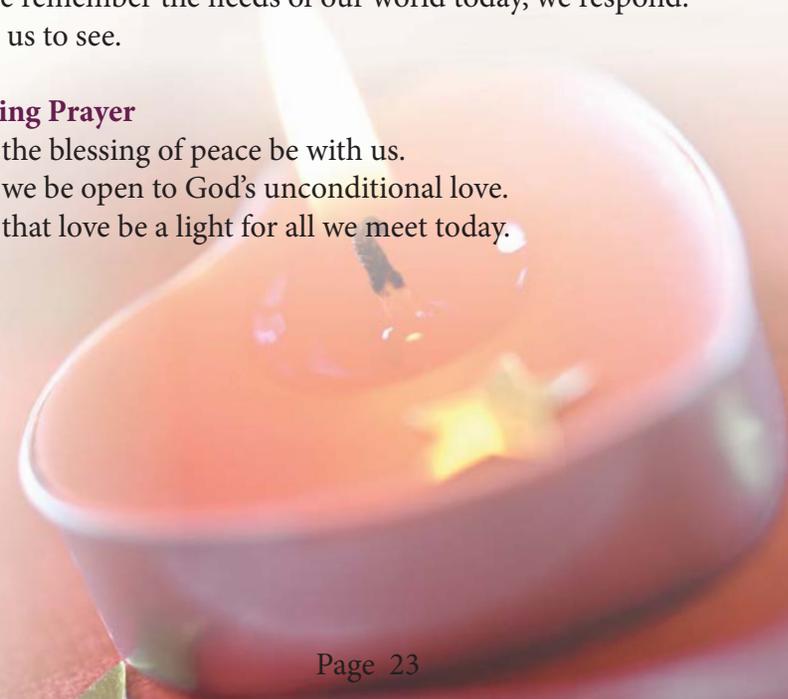
Reflection and Sharing

How does my prayer/contemplation lead me to see in new ways? What is the greatest challenge for us as we seek to live active and contemplative lives? How can Nano be a model for us?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond:
Help us to see.

Closing Prayer

May the blessing of peace be with us.
May we be open to God's unconditional love.
May that love be a light for all we meet today.



Day 8

November 19, 2015

Today we reflect on finding God in the ordinary which requires a **contemplative** spirit. We remember our Presentation family in Ireland, England, Slovakia and Palestine.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator,
Christ who shows us the way
and the Spirit who reveals God in new ways each day.
Amen

Nano is said to have prayed four hours daily and to spend herself for the children, the poor, and the suffering. Nano was both active and contemplative. Because she knew God's great love for her, she was able to see God in the dark streets of Cork and in the injustice around her. Nano was able to be the lantern which lighted the hovels and attics, incarnating God's love in dark places.



Allow time for quiet between each quote.

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

What we take in by contemplation, we pour out in love.

-Meister Eckhart

The day of my awakening was the day I saw, and knew I saw, all things in God and God in all things.

-Mechtild of Magdeburg

Day 2

November 13, 2015

Today we will reflect on Nano's **compassion** for those made poor and will pray especially for our Presentation family in the Philippines and Thailand.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name
of God our creator,
Christ who shows us
the way and the Spirit
who continues to give
us hope and courage.
Amen



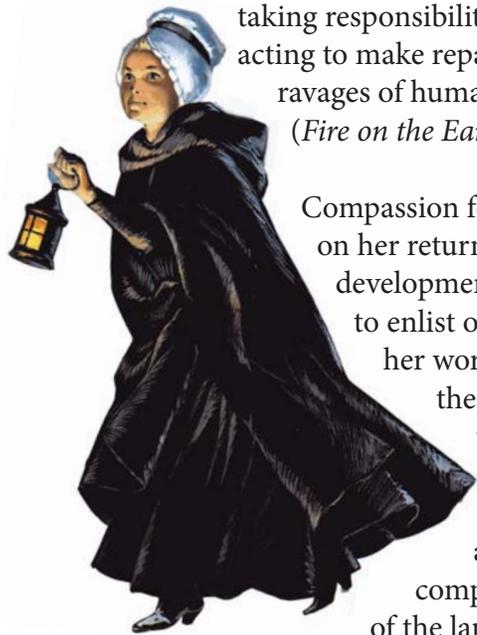
Scripture

Matthew 9:36

At the sight of the crowds Jesus' heart was moved with compassion because they were troubled and abandoned, like a sheep without a shepherd.

Nano Nagle's gradual awakening to the plight of the poor was certainly influenced by her experience of seeing the poor workers waiting for Mass on her way home from the ball one early morning, through Ann's selling of the silk for a future gown to buy medicine for the sick, and through her accompaniment of Ann as she made charitable visits. However, "Nano had yet to realize that having made this half-unwilling response to her own honest appraisal of her life, she had set her feet on a long road," (*One Pace Beyond*).

After various soul-searching experiences and especially after the death of her beloved sister, Ann, Nano's life began to change. Nano's spirituality grew in her devotion to the Sacred Heart. "Looking on the heart of Jesus, Nano learned the meaning of compassion as suffering with another: suffering with the weak, the sinful,



the ignorant, the oppressed, entering into their lives, taking responsibility for the sin of her world, and acting to make reparation-that is, to repair the ravages of human sinfulness in human lives,”
(*Fire on the Earth*).

Compassion for those she encountered on her return to Ireland led to the development of schools and her desire to enlist others to help her carry on her work. And after the work of the day, her nights involved the care and concern of the sick, suffering, elderly, and widows. Nano was known and easily recognized for her compassionate presence by the glow of the lantern which lighted her way.

Reading

“Compassion is sometimes the fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else’s skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too.”

-*Fredrick Buechner, American author*

“Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society’s most neglected members. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor, and to come to their aid. ...We incarnate the duty of hearing the cry of the poor when we are deeply moved by the suffering of others.”

-*The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis*

This is what it means to be a man or woman for others: to stand in solidarity with those on the periphery of society, humbly providing the opportunity for them to be seen, to matter, to know that their life story has value. In so doing, we gain a deeper understanding of who we are, as God’s beloved creations, not alone, in isolation, but in relationship with and for one another.

I also expect from you what I have asked all the members of the Church: to come out of yourselves and go forth to the existential peripheries. “Go into all the world”; these were the last words which Jesus spoke to his followers and which he continues to address to us (cf. Mk 16:15). A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world’s goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine...

- *Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation on Consecrated Life*

Reflection and Sharing

Nano Nagle stood at the periphery and from there she saw and reached out to those made poor. What does this mean for each of us as we consider the part of the world where we live and serve?

Sometimes we see differently if we just make a small shift. Move to a new position today – at the table, in church, drive a different way to work and see what you see. You might enjoy the following visual experience: vimeo.com/118793707

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond:
Make us edge walkers.

Closing Prayer

May the blessing of peace be with us.

May we have the courage to step to the edge and to allow God to lead us.

May our eyes be open to see the needs around us.

Day 7

November 18, 2015

Today we reflect on what it means to **stand at the periphery** in the midst of those who suffer. We pray for our Presentation family in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Song

“Open My Eyes” by Jesse Manibusan or song of your choice

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator,
Christ who shows us the way
and the Spirit who leads us to the edge where we see anew.
Amen

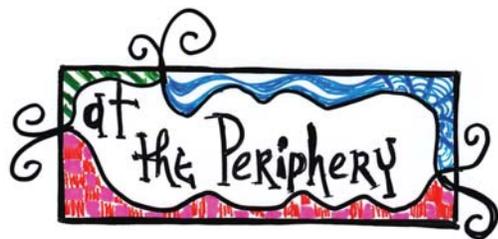
I am convinced of one thing: the great changes in history are realized when reality is seen not from the center, where one’s viewpoint is equidistant from everything, but from the periphery.

-Pope Francis

“We stand at the margins and we look under our feet and we hope for the erasure of the margins because we’ve chosen to stand there and we’re confident because Jesus did it way before us.”

“Stand at the margins and what gets revealed to you is not your superiority but your brokenness.”

-Greg Boyle speaking at Dominican University
<http://events.dom.edu/power-boundless-compassion>



In *Rebirthing of God*, author John Philip Newell relates how Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1991, from her Buddhist inheritance and practice, describes compassion. It is, “The courage to see. The courage to feel. And the courage to act.” Newell continues, “To live compassionately, she says, is to courageously see the connection between ourselves and those who suffer. Not only do we see the connection and become aware of it, but we allow ourselves to feel it. Finally it is not just to see and feel the connection but to act on it, to courageously take responsibility for those who suffer.”

Reflection and Sharing

Do I see the connection between myself and those who suffer? Do I feel the connection and courageously act on it? How will I live compassion today?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond:
Give us compassion.

Listen prayerfully to the song “May We Become the Compassion of God.”

-Kathy Sherman, Album, “Bits of Light and Grace”

Closing Prayer

God, you who have given us hearts yearning to relieve the suffering of others, bless us with energy and courage to walk in Nano’s footsteps ready to do all in our power to make a positive difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters today. Amen

<https://pbvm2015.wordpress.com/>

Day 3

November 14, 2015

Today we invite you to reflect on [zeal](#) as we pray especially for our Presentation family in New Zealand.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator,
Christ who shows us the way
and the Spirit who continues to give us hope and courage.
Amen

Scripture

Luke 12: 49

I have come to bring fire to the earth!
How I wish the blaze were ignited.

Reading 1

Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him, Abba Joseph, as far as I am able I say my little office, I keep my little fasts, I pray my little prayers, I meditate a little, I live in peace, and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?" Then Abba Joseph, stood up and stretched his hands toward heaven. His fingers became like ten torches of flame and he said to him, "Why not be turned completely into fire!"

-Illuminated Life, Joan Chittister

Reading 2

To be aroused by life is to let our hearts take us where we are needed. "It is not a matter of thinking much," says nineteenth century Spanish Carmelite nun Teresa of Avila, "so do whatever most kindles love in you."

Reading 3

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean--
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects
far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of
liberation in realizing this.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's
grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the
difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not
messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

-Ken Untener

Reflection and Sharing

What does being prophetic mean for me? How do I feel about this call? Do I have a circle of friends who support me when I need to make hard choices?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond:
Help us to take one step beyond.

Closing Prayer

Gracious and merciful God, you do not wish your beloved children to wander in loneliness and pain. As Jesus did, you call us always to minister to those who hunger and thirst for justice and peace. Strengthen our hearts and hands for the service of the poor, give us courage to speak for those who have no voice, make us wise and guide our steps as we continue this journey each day. We ask this through Jesus our Messiah forever and ever. Amen.

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than God. Prophets tend to be on the side of the poor and the powerless, for they know that God himself is on their side.

At times, like Elijah and Jonah, you may feel the temptation to flee, to abandon the task of being a prophet because it is too demanding, wearisome or apparently fruitless. But prophets know that they are never alone. As he did with Jeremiah, so God encourages us: “Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you” (Jer 1:8).

Reading 2

Somewhere there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.

-*Starhawk Spiritual Literacy*, page 471

A Future Not Our Own

It helps now and then to step back and take a long view.
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work.
Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of
saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession
brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church’s mission.
No set of goals and objectives include everything.
This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one
day will grow. We water the seeds already planted
knowing that they hold future promise.

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down--
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don’t know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

-“The Summer Day” by Mary Oliver

Reflection and Sharing

Nano admired those who lived with zeal. What does zeal mean to you? What most kindles zeal in you?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond: Fill us with zeal.

Closing Prayer

May we be alive with a
fire that burns brightly
and gives light to our
world.

May that fire warm
hardened hearts and reach out to those who have lost hope.
May we all know the fire of God’s love and share it abundantly.
Amen.

<https://pbvm2015.wordpress.com/>



Day 4

November 15, 2015

Our reflections for today will center on the gift of **hospitality**. We remember our Presentation family in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator, Christ who shows us the way, and the Spirit who continues to give us hope and courage. Amen

Scripture

Luke 14:14

When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.

Reading

Hospitality is the way we come out of ourselves. It is the way we turn a prejudiced world around one heart at a time.

-Sister Joan Chittister



Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

-Hebrews 13:2

“How shall we live? Welcoming to all.” -Mechtild of Magdeburg

Hospitality seen through the lens of the Celtic tradition

Frank MacEowen in his book, *The Mist-Filled Path: Celtic Wisdom for Exiles, Wanderers and Seekers*, writes, “One of the abiding cultural traits in my upbringing was the spirit of hospitality. I never gave it much thought when I was growing up. It was simply a part of life. Hospitality was an unspoken code and governed all human interactions in my extended family and in my immediate culture.”

Day 6

November 17, 2015

As we pray today we will consider the gift of being **prophetic** and we will pray for our Presentation family in North America, Central and Latin America.

Opening Prayer

We begin in the name of God our creator, Christ who shows us the way and the Spirit who calls us to speak for the poor. Amen



Sometimes we think of prophets as those who see the future. Prophets in the Old Testament were able to see the wrongs in their world and to have the courage to act in order to make changes. Nano Nagle saw the wrongs before her and found ways to respond to them.

Reading

I am counting on you “to wake up the world”, since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy. “Radical evangelical living is not only for religious: it is demanded of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way.” This is the priority that is needed right now: “to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth... a religious must never abandon prophecy” (November 29, 2013).

-Pope Francis

Prophets receive from God the ability to scrutinize the times in which they live and to interpret events: they are like sentinels who keep watch in the night and sense the coming of the dawn (cf. Is 21:11-12). Prophets know God and they know the men and women who are their brothers and sisters. They are able to discern and denounce the evil of sin and injustice. Because they are free, they are beholden to no one but God, and they have no interest other

A Reflective Pause

Begin with reflective music

Our prayer today will be one of silence as we hold all of creation in our hearts and experience the unity as we pray together. Be with Nano and all the Presentation people on whose shoulders we stand and with whom we minister today.

20 minutes of silent prayer

Write a letter to Nano today. Write whatever you are feeling at this time ... gratitude ... fear ... challenge ... hope. This letter may be shared on Presentation Day if you wish.

<https://pbvm2015.wordpress.com/>

Use the *Glimpses of Light* page to share insights today. Perhaps you could add another quality which you admire in Nano.



“How is it with your soul?” In the Celtic tradition it is part of their spiritual practice to gather in circles around the hearth or in nature in the forest. This prayer style was no doubt familiar to Nano as well, and hospitality, a characteristic quite natural to her. The word hospitality fittingly shares a root with the words hospital and hospice. Nano’s whole life was one of offering hospitality. Her welcoming heart was experienced in the classrooms during the day and in the lanes and dimly lit homes of the poor and sick during the evening hours.

Woman of Welcoming Heart

They know her in the crowded lonely ways
woman of welcoming heart, whose lantern sheds
kind beams for eyes waste-misted by the weary miles
for them her hands are open, for her their doors.
Room is made by dim and smoking fire,
some small crust shared,
and she receiving, knows still more to give,
and, welcomed, grows in art of welcoming.



Apart, in shadowed hours of night and dawn,
leaning heart to heart on the One who pulses life
into the lowliest and least of all that lives,
she learns to unclasp the last-kept store,
and lay it down in welcome: ‘Take and share.’

Until, the last loaf broken, the last wine poured,
she can dare the outer darkness, the fine-piercing sword,
and bear to be bereft....

heart certain that beyond this last black mile
light streams from beckoning windows and from
wide flung door,
where she will hear the voice grown dear in silent listening years:
‘Woman of welcoming heart, here is your home.’

-Raphael Consedine, PBVM

Christmas Day 1777

We all remember well the story of Christmas when Nano and her small newly-formed community hosted 50 guests for dinner. It was Mary Ann Collin's suggestion to invite a crowd of guests for Christmas dinner. Nano's response to the suggestion, "If we used the new classrooms with all the tables and benches, we would have room for fifty. I'd like to invite fifty of the poorest people we can find. We won't be able to afford anything elaborate, but we could give them a good dinner." *One Pace Beyond*

Although this was not exactly what Mary Ann Collins had in mind, the end result was a never-to-be forgotten memory which prompted Mary Ann to suggest that this Christmas invitation should be an ongoing affair for many years to come.

We, as Presentation people, are called to carry that spirit of hospitality into the world of our day.

Nano Nagle's Reach

In the grip of her legacy
daughters and friends
dance their way into the not yet
with tender care for each other
and lantern-light hospitality
for the least and the last.

- Corine Murray, PBVM, Dubuque, Iowa



Like the mist, which slowly moves and blends with all that it encounters, so too are we beckoned to move through the Soul of the World and blend in ways that foster the hospitality of the heart.

-*The Mist-Filled Path*, Frank MacEowen

Reflection and Sharing:

Using the question from MacEowen's book, "How is it with your soul?" take time for reflection and then seek out a small group or one other person and share your answers. How might this answer inspire a greater spirit of hospitality in the places you find yourself?

As we remember the needs of our world today, we respond: Give us welcoming hearts.

Closing Prayer

O God, bless all Presentation people with the welcoming heart of Nano. She accepted all even the unacceptable, respected and welcomed those she encountered in the hovels she visited, and loved all those God chose to place on the path she walked. Give us the desire and the generosity to open the doors of our homes as well as our hearts to those we encounter in our daily lives. Amen

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