Dear Sisters and Associates

Our Seventh International Presentation Association (“IPA”) Assembly, held in Sydney, Australia from September 24-30, 2017 was rich in blessings as we journeyed together under our assembly theme, “Our Feet Know the Way, Our Hearts Carry the Light.” Seventy-nine sisters, associates, friends of Nano and co-workers gathered at Mary MacKillop Place, a site unlike any other because Australia’s first Saint, Mary MacKillop, lived, died and is buried there. The site was truly an oasis in the midst of the city of North Sydney where we could spend time in prayer and contemplative dialogue as we worked to chart a new course for IPA.

Our Australian sisters, associates and coworkers carefully attended to all our spiritual and corporal needs through beautiful prayer rituals, delicious meals and comfortable accommodations. After warm words of welcome at the assembly opening on Sunday afternoon, we participated in a moving aboriginal ritual healing.

We were blessed to have Sr. Shalini Mulackal, PBVM, a feminist theologian in the Vidya Jyoti Theologate at Delhi, India as our keynote speaker who invited participants to reflect on our Christian faith and commitment to join the struggle for justice in a non-violent manner, as only love is worthy of faith. Participants were challenged to engage in the radical practice of non-violence of the mind, ridding oneself of anger, hatred and prejudice, so as to have correct insight to face oppression and injustice and encounter the truth of God that can be found in any oppressive situation.

Our facilitators, Sr. Marlette Black, PBVM and Sr. Anne Lane, PBVM expertly guided us through the task of analyzing the many proposals put forth to the assembly by using the contemplative dialogue process.

Most of the work of the assembly resulted from the recommendations of the task group commissioned by the IPA leadership group in 2015 and more recently from the results of the research report conducted by David Rose, one of the original members of the task group. The engagement with the
report and the feedback from members prior to the Assembly informed the proposals that emerged along with the reports from the IPA directors, networker, NGO representative and finance committee. Listeners Shalini Mulackal and Anne Young distilled what they heard in the working sessions and reflected back to the participants the following day in a creative and prayerful manner.

The week’s work was intense, but mid-week we were treated by the Australian Society to an evening dinner cruise on Sydney Harbor. This event deepened our bonding as we celebrated in song and dance and were buoyed to continue our work for the remaining three days. On Thursday, participants attended two of four breakout sessions focused on our IPA goals of climate change, indigenous issues, women and children and displaced persons presented by IPA members from around the globe.

In addition to working on the proposals, the assembly participants also reviewed and revised where necessary our IPA direction, identity and mission statements. These reflect the evolution of our universe and world and the structures of IPA. Following the assembly, an advisory board has been commissioned to study how the structure of IPA can be strengthened to enhance its effectiveness at both the grass roots level in each region and at the United Nations. The participants’ work was accomplished in an efficient and peaceful manner.

In closing, our feet knew the way to the magnificent land of Australia while our hearts left there carrying Nano’s light more brightly. We extend our deepest gratitude to our sisters and associates and all Presentation people in Australia for their all-encompassing hospitality and ask the Spirit of God and Nano’s spirit to grant them peace and joy now and into the future.

*Patricia Anastasio, Mary Deane, Elena Hoye, Gabrielle Morgan and Elsa Muttathu*