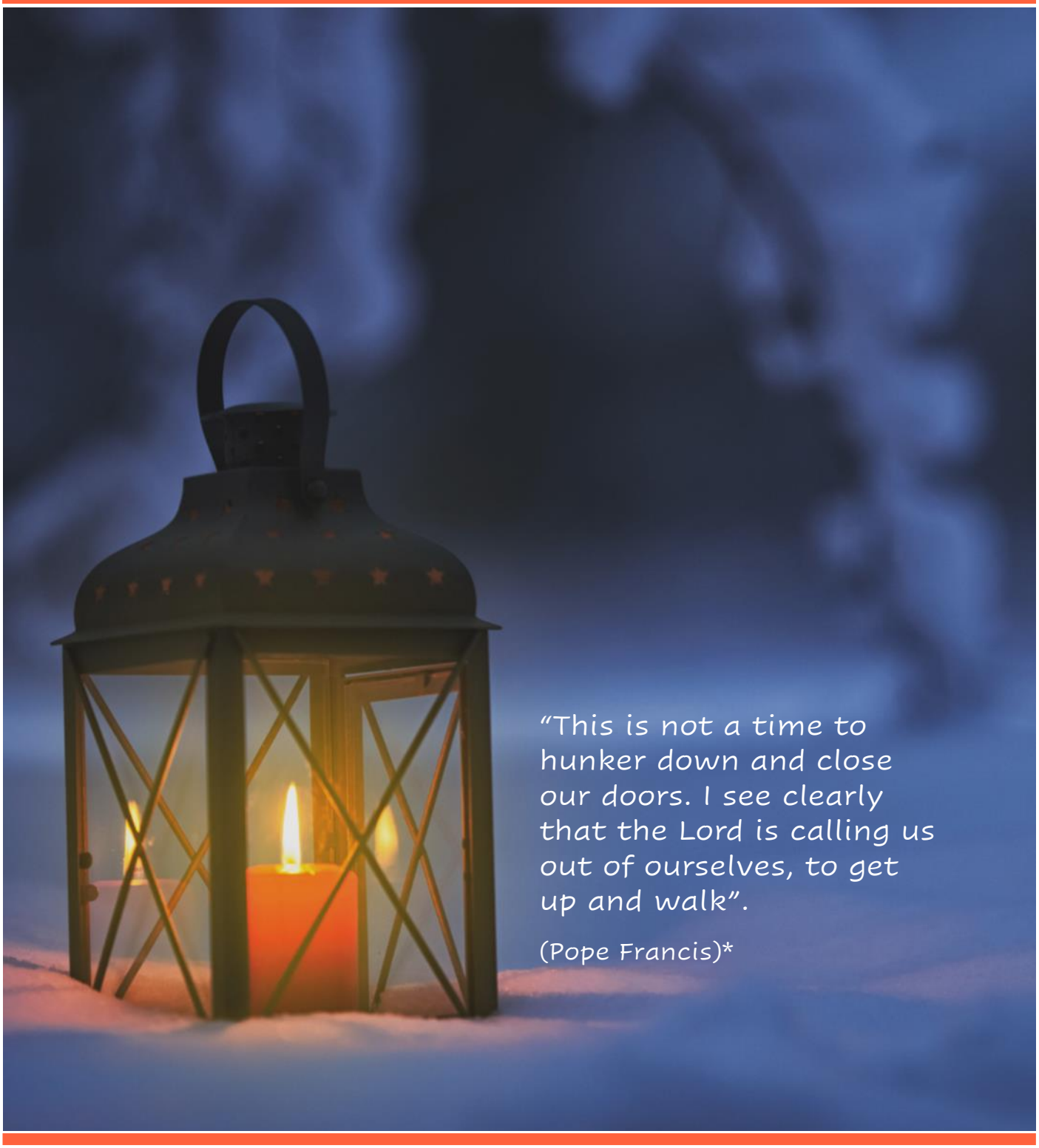
Words & Deeds

A magazine of the Presentation Sisters Union—NE Ireland

Autumn into Winter 2023

Volume 3 : Issue 2



CHY: 7265 Reg. No: 200 153 50 *(From Pope Francis in the Foreword,' First belong to God', by Austen Ivereigh, SJ, 12 Oct.

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‘Always a step beyond’.

The articles in this issue of Words & Deeds almost without any planning at all, seem to share the dynamic and inspirational nature of the Presentation journey as a *Way of Life* responsive to the plan of God for our times and for every time.

We are very definitely on a journey as Sr. Dominica shared, at the bicentennial celebration of the Maynooth community: *“In talking about the Sisters in Maynooth, we weave through the similarities between the Maynooth Foundation and the work of Nano Nagle, the Foundress of the Presentation Sisters. Keenly aware of the plight of the poor in Cork, Nano Nagle did not engage in civil rights marches nor align with creating unrest. She chose a path which she saw would have the potential ‘to transform peoples’ lives’”.*

Mr. Billy Ryan, Principal of Presentation Secondary School Wexford expressed this sense of journeying onwards from the graced footsteps of those gone before, saying: *“Today we are the current custodians, and when we leave, we will pass this ethos and vision on to those who come after us. … Many future generations of students will follow the guiding vision of Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters. We keep all of the past and current Sisters in our thoughts and prayers. Every new chapter in life is a chance to be grateful for the past and hopeful for the future".*

We give thanks too for all generous affirmations and recognitions of the value of the work we do from iScoil Tech4Good Award, to School of Sanctuary (Wexford) and Nano Nagle Place’s ‘Great Place to Work’ Award, to Sr. Jo McCarthy’s ‘Cork Person of the Month’! It is about right, that we are more about the people than the place. That we are more a sum of deeds than words or accolades, as we make a live and very real contribution to life at every age, and in every sector of our world, both locally and globally.

Our commitment to Justice work and the living out of a *spirituality of justice,* gains momentum from our Justice Day gathering and from the outcomes of our 8th IPA Assembly, based on hearing the God of the Universe and discerning a plan of action that comes from attending and ‘listening’ to the ‘beckoning’ of the Spirit.

Conversations, partnerships and collaborations ensure that the reach of our action and advocacy work is as wide and effective as possible, and as responsive and relevant as it can be in addressing the reality of those kept poor, and the needs of people and planet today. We know that *‘God’s call is everywhere’* and that God continues to call us as individuals, as community, as a synodal church, as Presentation ‘peoples’ to walk with dignity alongside every person recognising we all belong to God.

May we continue to be moved by the Spirit, like Simeon and Anna, ready to undertake that next journey no matter how far it will take us or how unknown the territory.

“There is nothing for it but to go, and by our going take the vows the pilgrim takes: to be faithful to the next step; to rely on more than the map; to heed the signposts of intuition and dream; to follow the star that only you will recognise; to keep an open eye for the wonders that attend the path; to press on beyond distractions, beyond fatigue beyond what would tempt you from the way. There are vows that only you will know; the secret promises for your particular path and the new ones you will need to make when the road is revealed by turns you could not have foreseen”. ~ Jan Richardson

May Venerable Nano Nagle be our Guide.

Foreword

The Pencil in God's Hand

"In talking about the Presentation Sisters in Maynooth, we weave through the similarities between the Maynooth Foundation and the work of Nano Nagle, the Foundress of the Presentation Sisters. Keenly aware of the plight of the poor in Cork, Nano Nagle did not engage in civil rights marches nor align with creating unrest. She chose a path which she saw would have the potential 'to transform peoples' lives'. She sought to transform society through Christian education". ***(From 'Some Thoughts shared for the Bi-Centenary' by Sr. Dominica Murphy, for the celebration of 200 years of the Presentation Sisters in Maynooth, held on 6th October 2023 (1823 to 2023).***

Foundation history

The Foundation of a community in Maynooth, County Kildare (quite some distance from Cork) was made as early as forty-eight years after the Foundation of the Congregation in Cork, in 1775.

The Sisters were invited to Maynooth by Abbé Anglade a priest from Maynooth College, who was a fugitive from the French revolution. He had arrived in St. Patrick's College and was trying to help the people of the town. He asked the Presentation Sisters from Fairview (later George's Hill Dublin) to come to make a foundation in Maynooth.

Four sisters left Fairview for Maynooth on 6th October 1823, transported by the great grandfather of a parishioner. Mother M. Andrew was the youngest of the group while Mother M. Aloysius, twenty years later was to leave Maynooth for Madras where the Maynooth Presentation Sisters would make their first foundation in conjunction with Rahan Presentation Sisters.

The foundress of the Maynooth convent was Sr. M. Augustine Drumgoole. Other founding Sisters were Mother M. Andrew McKeever, Sr. M. Peter Fitzharris and a novice Sr. M. Aloysius Neville. Mother Andrew (Elizabeth McKeever), had been the first postulant of George's Hill. She was to be the superior in Maynooth for thirty consecutive years.

The 3rd Duke of Leinster welcomed the sisters and granted them a 100-year lease on the then disused Charter School which was transformed into a convent. During this transformation, the Sisters took up temporary residence in a nearby cabin.

They were in their new home named 'Nazareth', by Christmas 1824, and in 1826 the foundation stone for their free school was laid by the Duke of Leinster. Where the school was set up then, links directly now to the present-day Girls' School in Maynooth. Initially the school taught the 3R's of Reading Writing and Arithmetic. Aligned with this, Nano's schools, and all Presentation Sisters shared their belief in God, teaching the children prayers, and how to pray in order to help them understand their place in God's world and the joy of being a child of God.

Alongside education, the School provided lunches for those children who were fed before they went to school. The Duke of Leinster's wife together with the Sisters, and Abbé Anglade saw the need and provided funding to make this possible. Then, in 1828, an Industrial

School was opened at the request of Duchess Emily. Here, children made clothing, straw hats, and surplices, frocks and shirts, bonnets and bibs. They were paid for their work and also got their meals. The Duchess was the chief patron and oversaw that most of these girls were well trained, considering that they would be an asset for employment. The Industrial School closed in 1841.

The convent chapel was built in 1832 through the generosity of Abbé Anglade and his confreres, and in 1833 he inaugurated a Breakfast Room Fund to ensure breakfast and books were available to all the poor children

By 1873 the convent buildings were roughly seven times as large as they had been at the time of the foundation (1823). Six years later a further extension was made through the generosity of a Colonel John McDonald, the father of one of the sisters.

India received its first Presentation foundation in 1841, when Mother Xavier Kearney and sisters from Maynooth Rahan and Mullingar convents established themselves at Madras. (Chennai).

Further landmark moments

The sisters celebrated the first centenary of the establishment of the Convent in 1923, and in 1973 celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Foundation. In 1923 The Children of Mary presented the Community with a Silver Basket which was part of a display of artefacts in The John Paul II Library in Maynooth College, as part of the bicentenary celebrations. Another of the historical items included in the exhibition was a Cross made from a Famine Coffin by a Dr. Willis from Cork. Only three were made, and the one on display is the only one still in existence. It was given to the Presentation Sisters for safe-keeping.

In 1969 the sisters were given the present of a bicycle by the actress Julie Andrews, remembered for her role in the Sound of Music film. She had spent a summer and autumn in Carton House while filming a different film, and on her departure she gave the sisters her bicycle!

Fast forward to 1972 and with the influx of families into Maynooth it became clear that a new school was needed. This was completed in 1972, and an eight-room extension added in 1982, with yet another extension in 2008.

The closure of Maynooth Convent took place in 1993, with six Sisters now living in the local community in two adjoining houses. It is thought that between seventy to eighty sisters worked in Maynooth during the 200 year period being celebrated (1823—2023).

Why celebrate 200 years?

This special period of celebration offers the opportunity to acknowledge the work and dedication of so many sisters throughout all those years. They experienced challenges, like everyone else during this time of foundation and ongoing development. The Famine years must certainly have taken their toll on them, but they carried on as best they could and prayed for better outcomes.

This bicentenary celebration of the life of the Maynooth community also recognises the dedication of so many lives to God, through the Presentation Sisters' 'Way of Life'. In order to grow closer to God, and to bring the Gospel alive in their service, they gave witness to God's people taking the opportunity that this offered to share the life and legacy of Nano Nagle. We thank God for the wisdom that guided them in their lifestyle, and for their efforts to make a difference in their place of ministry in Maynooth.

This celebration is also an opportunity to thank and compliment the people of Maynooth for their support for the Sisters through the years. As Sr. Dominica shared at the celebration:

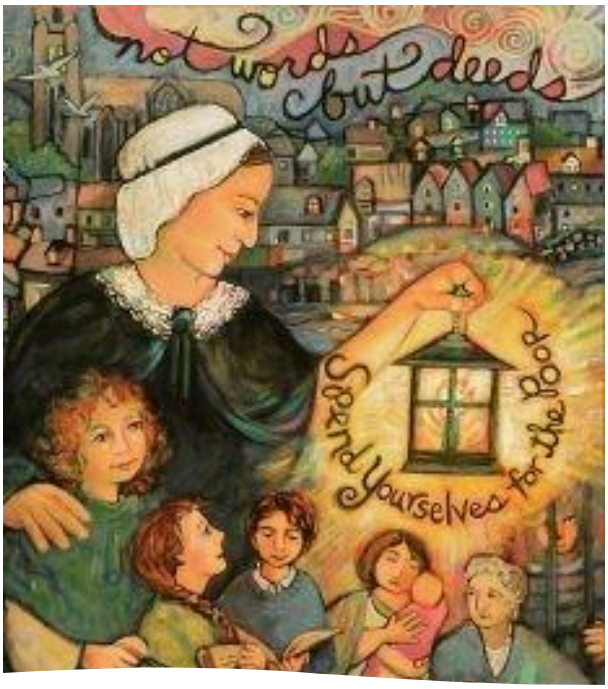
"We look at this time, to appreciate both the past and prepare for the future. To have courage to take steps in making sure that the legacy of Nano Nagle will find expression in new ways as things change around us here in Ireland. We ask you to join with us in thanking God and Nano for the wisdom they gleaned in their lives. We are one in Faith in the Congregation and in the Parish. The Presentation Congregation was instituted to ensure continuity of her mission into the future. In this climate of uncertainty we have to leave the future in God's Hands and realise like others, that the Pencil is in God's hands".

Sr. Dominica Murphy

Stone inscription image across page: "The Tree of Liberty: 1798-1998: What is that in your hand? It is a branch. A branch of what? Of the tree of liberty. Where did it first grow? In America. Where does it bloom? In France? Where did the seeds fall? In Ireland".

‘The Pencil in God’s hand’ …/

Maynooth: Celebrating 200 years of Presentation Life.



(**Image:** Nano Nagle, Foundress of the Presentation Sisters, by Jen Norton).

For full text of the greeting from Sr. Roisín Gannon (Aquinas) See HERE

Greetings from Newfoundland

From Newfoundland, I send you love and congratulations on your 200th anniversary. It is a wonderful occasion and calls for great celebrations of a rich history. I am only too sorry not to be present. Maynooth was my first appointment when out of college, and having spent twenty-five wonderful years there, it holds a special place in my heart. When I first went to Maynooth, it was a small town with a big school.

I take this opportunity to thank the Sisters with whom I lived, the Teachers with whom I worked, and of course, the children (now adults) who impacted my life so very much. You taught me well! I think of you all today and I see you in my mind’s eye. […] May you enjoy your celebrations over the next few days. May you be blessed in many ways and may Nano walk beside each of you and guide you with her Lantern. You have kept Nano alive and well and I am proud of you. With much love and best wishes. (**Sr. Roisín Gannon, PBVM)**

“If ‘twere done when ‘tis done … Then ‘twere well it were done quickly”

Describing the closure of the convent in 1993, Sr. Alphonsus Dunne recorded:

“ .. it was a time when we gradually learned the lesson of ‘letting go’ and ‘letting God’ continue to loosen our grip on so much we held dear. A salutary lesson!”

We had a Mass of Thanksgiving for the 170 years God had given to the Community since the first four Sisters quietly moved into the old Charter School.

Present at the Thanksgiving were representatives from Maynooth College, as successors of Abbé Anglade who was instrumental in making the 1823 Foundation, alongside all those who had funded, supported and cared for the Sisters down the years. Also present were the few surviving Sisters from ‘Old’ Maynooth and our fellow workers from school, kitchen and garden. A quiet & happy evening together.

“And then the exodus. It was hard work, but it was done together. Old neighbours wondered in and out among furniture vans and trucks to say a tearful good-bye to the convent. They watched in silence as the altar was removed to the parish Ladychapel, and so much else going ‘somewhere’. Four of our lovely stain glass windows made their way to a church in Zimbabwe, one other to a little church in the Curragh, and the last, depicting Our Lady’s Presentation came with us to our school. Apart from the Stations of the Cross which were packed for Australia, the contents of our sacristy and chapel remain in our parish church and in Maynooth College.*

The following day we returned to finalise packing-up, closed the door quietly and with each silently nursing her own feelings, the last five left as quietly as the first five had moved in”.

[A brief extract from the writings of Sr. Alphonsus Dunne].

Sr. Alphonsus Dunne is remembered as an inspirational teacher, but was really at heart a historian who loved recording all her observations. She shone a new light on her life in its day to day living, and her recordings of the extraordinariness of its people and happenings. May the Lord rest her lovely soul.

Note*: These windows went to Harare, to the church of Fr. Jim Doyle, (RIP) brother of Sr. Mary Doyle (Shantalla) community).

Image: An Oak tree was planted in the school grounds as a symbol of wisdom. Its roots will grow deep and branches wide, representative of the enormous impact that the Presentation Sisters have had, and will continue to have in the Wexford community.

Wexford bids farewell

Grateful for the past, hopeful for the future.

"It is my privilege on behalf of the Presentation Sisters to say a few words as the time has come for us to move on from Wexford. We are deeply moved by tonight's celebration but more importantly by your support of us over the years. We are so proud to leave behind a vibrant, thriving school community, and we will always carry you in our hearts as part of our Presentation Family. As the members of the last Presentation community here, Sisters Vera, Mai, Catherine and Helen close the door of our convent home in Francis St. for the last time, we know that the fire of these lanterns will continue to burn in your hearts, lit all those years ago in 1818 from that first fragile fire of wood shavings. May God continue to bless you". ***(From the address by Mary Hanrahan, at the Mass of Thanksgiving (13 October 2023).***

A world of thanks

"Words cannot express the effect that the Presentation Sisters have had on the community of Wexford Town and the wider environs. Through their work many people received a solid grounding in education that would serve them well throughout their lives. Not only did those educated by the Sisters receive a wonderful education, but we also received a holistic education, one based on respect and gratitude, and we all learnt the importance of giving back. I am grateful to have worked with so many Presentation Sisters over the years and also to have been taught by them in Enniscorthy. All of us owe them a world of thanks".

With these words, Mr. Billy Ryan, the Principal of Presentation Secondary School, Wexford Town greeted the large congregation gathered in Church of the Immaculate Conception at the closing Mass concelebrated with the Bishop of Ferns, the Most Rev. Ger Nash. This was a Parish, School Community and Local Community welcoming the sisters and saying thank you.

A great many past pupils, and teachers had travelled to be present. This was a valued opportunity to come together, to meet up again, and to exchange stories and memories.

The welcomes and tributes were heartfelt, the sharing rich, and the relationships built long-lasting. An Oak Tree planted in the school grounds, in memory of the Presentation contribution, was another very special moment for us, as was the welcome and hospitality provided later in the school concert hall.

In his closing words, looking towards the future, Billy Ryan said: *"Today we are the current custodians, and when we leave, we will pass this ethos and vision on to those who come after us. I have no doubt that the Presentation ethos will live on for another 200 years in Wexford Town. Many future generations of students will follow the guiding vision of Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters. We keep all of the past and current sisters in our thoughts and prayers. Every new chapter in life is a chance to be grateful for the past and hopeful for the future".*

See ***Branching Out Exhibition - The growth of Presentation Sisters in Wexford***

Image: (R) Sr. Eveleen Conlon with pupils from P7 and the Acting Principal of Presentation Primary School, Portadown**,** Mr. Gavin Fox, and (Left) the school community at their special assembly.

Marking 18 years of devoted service

On Friday March 31st 2023, Sr. Eveleen Conlon was invited to the morning assembly at Presentation Primary School (Portadown) to a ceremony to mark her retirement from the school's Board of Governors, and to thank her for her eighteen years of devoted service.

The acting Principal, Mr Gavin Fox, addressed the assembly and the children presented Sr. Eveleen with a variety of gifts. It was a moving assembly where the children participated in prayer and song.

Also in attendance were the members of Sr. Eveleen's community: Srs. Rita Flannery, Mary Turley and Yvonne Jennings, and a Trustee member of the Board, Mrs. Nuala Molloy.

Presentation Primary School which has served the Catholic community in Portadown since 1882 now has a predominantly newcomer population (see information about Presentation Primary School, Portadown across the page).

The spirit of Nano Nagle is alive and well!.

Sr. Yvonne Jennings

Image: Srs. Eveleen, Mary, Rita and Yvonne Jennings (Presentation Sisters, NI community) with Mrs. Nuala Molloy (Trustee Member of the Board), and a pupil from P7 class.

Presentation Primary School

Presentation Convent Primary School, (Portadown) was founded in 1900 by the Presentation Sisters. It was renamed Presentation Primary School in 1994 when it was amalgamated with St. Columba's Boys Primary School.

While there are no longer any Sisters among the teaching staff, the Catholic ethos continues to underpin the school's educational mission. Christian values are at the core of a commitment to provide a happy and caring environment in which the potential of every child can be realised. The school experience promotes the dignity and worth of each individual. In this way the school is faithful to its motto: *"Nurture the seed and it will grow."*

Just under half of the children attending the school are now drawn from ethnic minority backgrounds and include children from Latvia, Lithuania, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saudia Arabia and South Africa.

The school has met the linguistic challenges involved by providing both Polish and Portuguese classroom assistants, and is proud of having so successfully integrated children from many varied cultural backgrounds.

Effective collaboration with parents ensures that the rights and responsibilities of their children are understood and accommodated.

Images: The school hall resplendent with costumes and dishes from dozens of countries. It was wonderful to see parents from various nationalities getting involved alongside their children. Highlights included a hauntingly beautiful rendition of a 19th century Ukrainian prayer for peace.

School of Sanctuary Award

Presentation Secondary School, Wexford

Presentation Secondary School, Wexford became the newest Champion of School of Sanctuary (SoS) and the sixth school in Co. Wexford to receive such recognition. On 13th November, following a monitoring day which made a deep impact on the team and visitors alike, the recognition was confirmed.

Students across the globe

A stand out action in Pres. Wexford's Sanctuary journey was an initiative called *'Students Across the Globe'*. This idea came from students themselves, in response to the growing numbers of international students attending the school, some of whom knew little English and had come as refugees.

The group, representing all school years and many nationalities, took responsibility for speaking about what Schools of Sanctuary meant to them, and ways they have been aiming to express inclusion and welcome in every stage of school life.

The students were also *'buzzing'* with the success of fellow student, Heba Haj Habo, who graduated from the school before the summer. Heba is a hugely talented artist, now studying in SETU Waterford. A powerful exhibition of her artwork was recently launched in Wexford Arts Centre. Called 'My Memories', it depicts her family's five year journey seeking sanctuary from war-torn Syria and the family arriving in Wexford. See **HERE**

About School of Sanctuary Champions Wexford and Pres Wexford Facebook Page - SoS photos

"I was completely blown away by the level of work that has been undertaken in Presentation Secondary School to provide a safe and nurturing environment to all students – particularly refugees and those seeking asylum, and so impressed by the confidence and leadership skills of the students involved.

Throughout the whole schedule of events it was very noticeable that there is a great sense of community in this school and it didn't seem in any way staged or forced for the purposes of the monitoring event. I love that the celebration of tradition and culture was embedded within their curriculum, and not just something that is celebrated one day within the academic year. The vice-principal took the time to share a document that outlined how to phonetically pronounce first and last names to create a culture of inclusion. Something that may seem so minor to us can have such a big impact on a students' wellbeing and feeling of belonging". (South East Technological University (SETU) Schools Inclusion Coordinator).

The monitoring day coincided with an intercultural celebration in the school, attended by parents, students and teachers from neighbouring schools and the Mayor of Wexford, John Hegarty.

[As well as Sanctuary Ambassadors and Tiffy Allen (Places of Sanctuary Ireland National Coordinator), the monitoring team *included representatives of Wexford Local Development, South East Technological University (SETU) and Champion Schools of Sanctuary (SoS) teachers].*

iScoil receives IBEC Tech4Good Award

Image: iScoil CEO, Brian Fitzsimons with the iScoil Team takes receipt of the IBEC Tech4Good Award from Director of Technology Ireland, Una Fitzpatrick at the Award Ceremony.

About the Award

IBEC Technology Industry Awards Tech 4Good – Product/ Service Award highlights the unique contributions that the technology sector can provide to support our communities and enrich people's lives. The Award recognises where a company has made an exceptional contribution of benefit to wider society through their product/ service offering. Digital technologies can help us address the serious challenges that the world faces today, and they can help deliver change fast. As part of the application process and during the interview process, iScoil was asked to show:

- the nature of the challenge that the service addresses
- how the technology was applied that supported the changes and improvements
- the impact of this service.

The award ceremony

This year's awards ceremony on the 17th November 2023, was an inspiring showcase of innovation, resilience, and vision within the industry. In the words of Director of Technology Ireland, Una Fitzpatrick:

"The winners tonight are a testament to the remarkable achievements of organisations and individuals who have consistently pushed the boundaries of technology, transforming the ways in which we live, work, and interact. This year's winners have proven themselves as leaders in their respective categories, demonstrating exceptional dedication and creativity".

On receipt of this award, iScoil CEO, Brian Fitzsimons, said :

"It is an honour for iScoil to be recognised at the Technology Ireland Industry Awards. Our service is underpinned by technology, but the successes and impact are a direct result of having a brilliant team and a group of talented students, who, despite adversity, show incredible resilience and an inspiring desire to learn and progress in education. This award recognises their efforts!"

See About Tech Ireland Awards 2023

And Twitter video of the iScoil Award Announcement

An iScoil Student experience

"Since I got accepted into iScoil, I found myself going out a lot more, socialising more and just, in general, feeling a lot better. I don't feel stressed or worried every morning and I don't feel anxious. I feel excited to be able to log on and start my work, to talk to my mentor and my tutors if I need help. The teachers and my mentor are a big part of me enjoying it so much, they're not teachers that just want you to work and work. They let you take your time, they understand if you don't feel good or if there's something you'd need to do, and they are always there to help you as many times as you need. iScoil has really helped me get through my fears of school and helped me learn. And I hope a lot of other people could experience iScoil too. I hope to one day be able to go to college, and have a job I truly enjoy".

[Libby, a 15-year-old student at iScoil - see her story HERE].

Recognitions

Cork Person of the Month

Sr. Josephine McCarthy has been named as the Cork Person of the Month for November in recognition of over thirty years work in community development.

Sr. Josephine said that Nano Nagle has been a constant in her very colourful life that took her to Peru and Ecuador, where she worked for twenty years before returning to Ireland in the early 2000's.

In 2006, the Presentation Sisters established the Cork Migrant Centre (CMC) at Nano Nagle Place (NNP) in Cork City. The centre provides free, confidential information on access to services and immigration issues to EU and non-EU migrants. Sister Jo has been a key shaper and developer of programmes at the Cork Migrant Centre. Although she stepped down as director of the Cork Migrant Centre in 2018, she remains an active volunteer with Dr Naomi Masheti and her team. Sr. Jo's name will now go forward, alongside the other monthly winners, for possible selection as Cork Person of the Year for 2023.

Image: Sr. Josephine McCarthy, Cork Person of the Month, for November.

See Irish Independent Article - 4 Nov 2023

'Great Place to Work '

Nano Nagle Place

Image: The Winning Team at Nano Nagle Place!

"Nano Nagle Place is an unexpected oasis in the heart of Cork City that celebrates an iconic Irish woman who defied the penal laws and secretly opened schools to educate Cork's poorest children. This is the story of a heroic, forward-thinking, entrepreneurial woman who defied the constraints of 18th-century society to improve the plight of children, first in Cork, then Ireland and eventually around the world. This work was continued by the Order of Nuns founded by Nano Nagle, the Presentation Sisters who continue to reside in Nano Nagle Place making it a vibrant site of living heritage".

So reads the citation on the 'Great Place to Work' website confirming the Great Place to Work Certification awarded to Nano Nagle Place in October 2023. **#greatplacetowork** certification is a practical way of valuing organisations that choose to go the extra mile for their employees.

Congratulations to the team for this fantastic achievement! (**See** HERE).

(**Image: (L)** The Justice Day Gathering in Mt. St. Anne's, and Sr. Mary Hanrahan **(right)** makes a presentation to Sr. Ann Marie Quinn in recognition of her contribution and that of the IPA Team, to our Global Justice focus).

A profound sense of presence & practice

Province Justice Day 2023

The format of the day

Our annual Justice Day organised by the Justice and Friends of Nano Commission* has become a regular and important opportunity to share our work for Justice as well as being brought up to date on current issues, and discovering ways of enriching our practice. This year's Justice Day took place in October 2023, in Mount St. Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre. From the outset a reflection given by Sr. Lillie O'Reilly set the tone for a rich day of sharing on so many levels.

Dr. Niamh Brennan through her presentation *"A spirituality of presence to a Universe that is sacred"* led us in to a deeper sense of realisation of *'presence'* in the cosmos. Srs. Mary Hanrahan (Provincial Leader, NEP) and Eileen Nash (our delegate at the International Presentation Assembly (IPA), with Brian O'Toole (Director of the Inter-provincial Justice Desk) updated everyone on the proceedings of the 8th IPA Assembly which took place in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador from the 18th to 24th June 2023. This session closed with a presentation by Sr. Mary Hanrahan (Provincial Leader, NEP) to Sr. Ann Marie Quinn, Executive Director of the IPA in recognition of her work, and that of the IPA Team in bringing to fruition a reinvigorated and newly focused IPA, that will support our work for Global Justice until the next Assembly.

Closer to home, Srs. Margaret Mary Healy and Evelyn Byrne outlined the vision & practice of the Challenge to Change (C2C) Programme which is informed by the Presentation charism and ethos. Justice, human rights, sustainability and promoting right relationships are central to the work. C2C has been in existence since 2002 enabling students to understand how their local actions can have a global impact. In the final session of the day, Brian O'Toole shared the current work and focus of the Inter-provincial Presentation Justice Desk.

*__Members of the Justice Commission are:__ Ms. Carmel McHugh, Sr. Concepta O'Brien, Sr. Eileen Nash, Sr. Helen Lenehan, Sr. Lillie O'Reilly and Mr. Pat Breslin.

A spirituality of presence

(A brief insight from Niamh's presentation)

13.8 billion years ago our Universe began as a single point, the size of a pinprick. Which means quite simply that the origin of all things came from One Source. But it didn't just happen overnight. It required a journey - a 13.8 billion year journey! Within that journey Earth came into existence 4.5 billion years ago, so for two thirds of the existence of the Universe, there was no Earth! *"When we talk about the spirituality of Earth, we are referring to a quality of Earth itself, not a human quality but something that the human responds to". (*Thomas Berry, The Sacred Universe).

Science teaches us that everything that ever was and that will ever be, was contained in that fireball which burst into existence so splendidly and so mysteriously some 13.8 billion years ago. The origin of all things from one source.

What this tells us is that the creation of the Universe is a seamless event – nothing can be suddenly dropped into the world from outside of it but rather everything that is here now, comes out of this source.

What it also points out is that we, as humans, form a single community with all of Earth. There is no discontinuity, no separation between the human and the rest of life.

The additional point Niamh made is that, because the Universe is a seamless event from One origin point, it is also a physical and a spiritual reality from its beginnings. And this includes Earth, where we have our most immediate experience.

There is an intrinsic spiritual quality to Earth. Humans are in deep communion with the Universe and Earth processes whether we are aware of it or not. Our most immediate task when we wish for an ecological spirituality is to enter into this new sense/understanding of Earth.

Thomas Berry says that the human being activates the most profound dimension of the Universe in that we are the Universe's capacity to reflect back on itself in conscious self-awareness.

Degradation of natural world

When we talk about a spirituality of Earth, we talk about entering into a spirituality that is already present, that is part of what holds the world together, not something that only pertains to the human. In Laudato Si' Pope Francis quotes Pope Benedict who says this: *"The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast". (LS,*152)

For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. Pope Benedict makes the link between our external environment and what goes on inside us. And this is something that Thomas Berry has been saying for over thirty years. Pope Francis points out how our own spiritual deserts have resulted in the degradation of the natural world.

Our spirituality is not separate to the processes that brought life forth. In fact, our spirituality is shaped by the same processes that brought the world and this Universe into being. Not just our spirituality, but our humanity and our consciousness. But now, it is the quality or the

(**Image:** Dr. Niamh Brennan speaking at the Justice Day in Mt. St. Anne's).

depth of our inner life that is shaping our environment.

This new world of automobiles, highways, parking lots, shopping malls, power stations, nuclear-weapons plants, factory farms, chemical plants: this new world of hundred storey buildings, endless traffic, turbulent populations, mega-cities, decaying apartments, has become an affliction perhaps greater than the more natural human condition it seeks to replace.

We live in a chemically saturated world. It is not a life-giving situation. If not deadly it is degraded. Humans now live amid limitless junk beyond any known capacity for creative use. Our vision is impaired by the pollution in the atmosphere. We no longer see the stars with the clarity that once existed. ('The Universe Story', Thomas Berry p249). Such a chemically saturated world, an artificial 'wonder world' has come at the cost of the rainforests, the oceans, the air, the other species. This diminishment of the natural world, the reduction of its abundance & diversity consequently leads to a diminishment in the human experience and eventually, the human self.

For Thomas Berry the natural world is the primary revelation of the divine. When we degrade the natural world, we degrade the various ways by which the divine is revealed and the various ways in which the divine communicates. We silence a divine voice.

[A brief synopsis of the presentation by Dr. Niamh Brennan, NE Province Justice Day 2023].

Dr. Niamh Brennan is a writer and educator. Her research focuses on the ecological crisis & raising concerns about the future of all life, underscoring the role philosophy and spirituality play in ecological thinking.

(**Image:** Sisters Margaret Mary Healy and Evelyn Byrne preparing for their Challenge to Change presentation at the NEP Justice Day, Oct 2023).

(Image: An imaginative 'rapp' created by a Dublin school to alert all to carbon emissions associated with transport, made its way to the UN High Level Political Forum in July 2022, with video live-streamed worldwide, and narration by Brian O'Toole (Interprovincial Justice Desk). The image is of the protagonists.

Challenge to Change

'Doing what it says on the tin'

'Just Ways'

Raising awareness is a key element of each Challenge to Change project. Often the topics chosen for a project can be complex, difficult and often confronting e.g. child soldiers or human trafficking, but this doesn't deter the students from researching, caring and working to raise the profile and awareness of topics that perhaps we mightn't like to hear about.

Towards the end of the school year, all participating schools are invited to send representatives who will speak to their projects at special seminars that celebrate the achievements of all. This is when the C2C Project really comes to life. There is renewed energy and student creators are eager to explain their learning. They want to tell the best parts, the worst parts and the fun parts. They want to show their piece of work. But more than everything what stands out is their enthusiasm, their passion for their chosen subject, their authoritative explanations and their confidence and willingness to share alongside their ability to stand over their work. Students through their projects, have taken active, competent steps to make a positive difference.

"Challenge to Change is about doing. It is about learning by doing. It is about valuing all. It is about rearing young advocates and about integration of speaking and thinking, that puts the person and their dignity at the centre. It is about being moved by the heart as it taps into a curiosity, and promotes teamwork where participation and affirmation are the prizes".

Challenge to Change Workshop Dates 2024

April 2024 Tues. 23rd	Lyrath Hotel, Kilkenny
May 2024 Wed. 1st	Tullamore Court Hotel

"Students choose projects that relate to People, Planet, Partnership, Peace and Prosperity – the 5 P's of the SDGs".

See C2Change website HERE

(Images: L. Courtesy of Talitha Kum website).

Walking in dignity together

Combating the reality of human trafficking

RENATE Co-President, Ivonne van de Kar, was Key Speaker at The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) Conference on *"The role of Churches & faith-based organisations in fighting trafficking in Human Beings: Catholic initiatives."*

The conference was co-organised by COMECE and the Santa Marta Group, an anti-trafficking charity launched in 2014 to act as a catalyst for law enforcement, civil society and the Church to work together to combat this global crime. The Group is supported by Pope Francis, who described human trafficking as *"an open wound on the body of contemporary society; a crime against humanity."*

The conference hosted by Spanish MEP Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez, was held in the European Parliament in Brussels on 14th February, as an opportunity to celebrate the networking & collaboration which strengthen a common mission to combat human trafficking and exploitation. COMECE is engaged in advocating with the institutions of the EU for policies that address the scourge of human trafficking, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. In this context, we invite you to read the **latest contribution on the topic**.

Some of the facts

Nearly half of the victims of trafficking within the EU are EU citizens, and a significant number of them are trafficked within their own Member State. EU and non-EU victims are also trafficked from their country of origin via transit countries to their destination, both within and to the European Union. The EU Anti-Trafficking Directive has been the backbone of the EU's efforts in combatting human trafficking since 2011.

The Commission progress reports & the results of the EU-wide data collections demonstrate that trafficking in human beings has further evolved and the available means are not sufficient to fight it effectively.

According to the latest available data, between 2017 and 2018, there were more than 14,000 registered victims within the EU. The actual number is likely to be significantly higher as many victims remain undetected. The Commission acknowledged in the EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings 2021- 2025 adopted on 14 April 2021, that various reports indicate that the decade old Directive may not be entirely fit for purpose any longer. As a result, the Strategy sets out as a key action to evaluate the implementation of the Anti-trafficking Directive and if necessary, based on the outcome of this, propose revising it to make it fit for purpose, including assessing the possibility of having minimum EU rules that criminalise the use of exploited services from victims of trafficking.

The 'Walking in Dignity' App

Talitha Kum has just launched an App, which invites individuals to walk on a journey towards awareness of human trafficking and its prevention. The App is designed to teach, engage & care about the people facing human trafficking and to care for, heal, and empower survivors. See link below for all details.

Talita Kum Talita Kum launch 'Walking in Dignity App' **APT Ireland:** https://www.aptireland.org/

Other Key Note Speakers at COMECE:
Rev. William Kenney CP, Auxiliary Bishop Em. of Birmingham, member of the Int. Affairs Group of the Catholic Bishops' Conf. of England & Wales, & member of the S. Marta Group; H.E. Mgr. Noel Treanor, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union; Kevin Hyland, Strategic Director of the S. Marta Group; Fr. Patrick Gillard OP, Founder of SAWA, Belgium, and José Luis Bazán, COMECE Adviser on Migration, Asylum and Freedom of Religion outside the European Union.

(The Interprovincial Presentation Justice Desk for Ireland & England engages with the work of RENATE with Brian O'Toole from the Desk: **RENATE—Europe:** HERE **The Catholic Church in EU:** https://www.comece.eu/ *).*

(**Image:** An official photograph of all present at the 8th IPA Assembly in St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. (Courtesy of IPA Website)

Hearing the 'God' of the Universe

The eighth Assembly of the International Presentation Association held in St John's, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada, from June 18- 24, 2023, is now a graced memory for all who were blessed to be delegates (sixty-five persons). Presentation people passionate about contributing to strengthening the global effort to speak and act collaboratively for justice through the lens of the charism of Nano Nagle, gathered in St John's during these days. Presentation Sisters first came to this eastern most point of North America in 1833 echoing the 'lived' theme of the 2023 Assembly: **'Listen! God of the Universe beckons.'**

God beckons us today

The story of the four Sisters who bravely left Ireland 190 years ago to fulfil Nano's dream of gladly going anywhere to be of service to the Gospel, reminded Assembly participants that listening to God's call is at the root of the Presentation charism.

From the opening ritual, participants were invited into conversation with the Creator and all creation, in song and contemplative listening and through large and small group dialogue.

On the first full day of the Assembly, Dr. Jessie Rogers, scripture scholar and Dean of Theology at St. Patrick's Pontifical University in Maynooth, Ireland, guided the sacred conversations by offering insights into experiencing God as community, relationship and love. The contemplative day was framed with the question: *'How does our work and our way of being, promote love?'*

Following Dr Jessie's contemplative offerings, the Assembly facilitators, Dr. Judith King and Sr. Anne Lane, PBVM, began guiding the group toward fulfilling the purpose of assembly: reviewing the IPA's justice work, discerning new commitments and decisions on governance and structural issues required to better facilitate the IPA mission into the future.

To this end, the core focus of the following days was in reviewing and celebrating what had been accomplished since the last IPA Assembly in Sydney, Australia in 2017. The gathering was also enriched by the presentation of a play, 'Path through the Dark'.* The play offered a dramatisation of that period in Nano's life when she lived under the constraints of Penal Law, and still was able to respond to God's call to act on behalf of the poor

*This breathtaking one-woman show performed by Judi Chalmers was enhanced with music & song by Annette Buckley.

Hunger for Justice

At the invitation of the planning team, Sr. Joyce Meyer was asked to offer an inspirational message to spur transformational thinking for the justice agenda going in the future. Joyce spoke about the 'four hungers' saying:

"Hunger is a word that has caught me and led me into four of its dimensions: Human Hunger, Earth's Hunger for restoration and relationship, Hunger for Voice, and Hunger for Heart Intelligence".

Joyce elaborated on these four dimensions, explaining that the *fourth hunger* is that of our own hearts, also longing to be recognised and heard.

'Just Ways'

(**Image:** IPA Justice Contacts present at the IPA Assembly 2023. (Courtesy of IPA Website).

Today we idolise brain power and yet, according to current neuroscience research, the heart has a 5,000 times wider electro-magnetic field than does the brain. In other words, our hearts take in 5,000 times more information from our surroundings than the brain. She proffered—we need heart education.

Heart energy besides positive emotions includes intuitions, and feelings we push aside that make us uncomfortable, the hunches that come to us out of the blue that we ignore and later often regret. Using heart intelligence determines the kind of presence we bring to any situation or issue.

"For us, as Presentation People, our practices of contemplative prayer help us integrate these heart energies but they are also needed for our action". (Joyce Meyer, PBVM)

Significant issues for the decade ahead

Identifying significant issues now and for the decade ahead: Joyce shared that for her, they are the Four Hungers:

The hunger of families whose land no longer feeds them, families fleeing from conflict, natural disasters and economic shocks;

Hunger of our earth to be restored and related to;

Hunger of women, children & indigenous people to be listened to, to have voice in addressing the issues that impact them; and the Hunger of our own hearts to be deeply listened to in prayer, decision-making, and action while always asking these three questions:

1.What wants to happen in this situation?

2. What energies are needed for leadership and stewardship in this situation? and

3. What is the call to the next step to assist its evolution into the future?

As IPA, we can ask these same questions of ourselves alongside that of discerning:

What is the vision of IPA and its strong commitment to justice that is trying to emerge and lead us into the future?

It is not possible in this brief article to share the rich detail of the reports compiled after the Assembly. Perhaps some quotations taken from these reports, viewed alongside the images will give a sense of the inspired life of this Assembly and its outcomes. (**See** IPA Website **HERE**).

Living, listening and discerning together

Some quotations

From the Welcome & Opening Address by Julie Watson, PBVM Congregational Leader:

"We are here this evening because of the seeds planted by the women who gathered at a Congregational Leaders Meeting in Rome in 1981. Between 1981 and 1988 the seed continued to be nurtured, and in 1988 a new form of global interconnectedness was born in the IPA.

As Congregations we are united by the vision of one courageous woman Nano Nagle, who 250 years ago risked her own life and the lives of her family to step out and challenge the injustices of her time, enshrined in the Penal Laws in Ireland.

We also remember another woman, Mary Anne Collins one of Nano's companions who in the face of great challenges and poverty continued to hold the fragile Congregation for those immediate years after Nano's death. Without her tenacity and courage the work that Nano began would not have continued. As Sr. Mary O'Brien said recently as she reflected on Mary Anne Collins:

'Our origins are in fragility, and weakness and limitation', yet that did not prevent Nano and her companions from attending to the needs of the downtrodden and voiceless, and holding the flame of justice in a time of blatant injustice, not much different to our present times. Nano's spirit and vision continues to unite us all here at this time and invites us to embrace our reality in the context of the world that we are living in - a time of serious global challenges and uncertainties – a time that demands our creativity, great trust in God and deep faith – a time to dream the impossible … as possible".

Hearing the 'God' of the Universe …/

Dr. Jessie Rogers (who was a 'Guide to God's Beckoning' at the 8th Assembly) had also been invited to remain for a second day as delegates began their deep deliberations. She was asked to listen to what she heard was emerging 'between the lines and underneath the conversations'. The following is but one quotation from this feedback.

"I can hear you have a strong and clear sense of mission and that it is deepening and expanding. I was struck by the expression *'those kept poor'* which so powerfully highlights systemic injustice and shifts the whole paradigm from *'service to the poor'.* Yes, I can hear that there is a challenge to develop and change the structures to meet the new context and shifting realities, and honour that strong mission. (John 10:10)* which just kept coming up. It so perfectly names how the Presentation Family are called to be and become the presence of Jesus in the world today.

Your diversity is a gift not a problem, and do not let your identity be too narrow. As you become more visibly international, work hard on including everyone, particularly listening to those who do not have a voice of privilege.

Finally, it is clear your question at this 8th Assembly is not: *"Do we have a future?"* But rather: *"What kind of future is God beckoning us towards?"*

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full".

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From the IPA Directors Report 2018 to 2023. (Directors: Gabrielle Morgan PBVM Joy Peterson PBVM and Sharon Fagan PBVM).

"Amidst the challenges we are being called to find within the silence of our hearts, an openness to listen to the God of the Universe beckoning us to deepen our commitment to live a spirituality of being in Communion, so that we may live in unity with all of creation and promote a world that is just for all. As women and men of hope we are being invited to engage in a journey of transformation that involves deeper contemplation where we can learn to co-operate with grace and participate more fully in the ongoing story of creation. May we follow the light as did Nano".

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Dr. Despoina Afroditi Milaki IPA NGO Representative at the UN.

"We are all guided by the charism of the Venerable Nano Nagle and by our IPA values & mission to help the vulnerable, the impoverished and those in need. On my end, as the IPA NGO Representative at the UN, I would like to ask you to keep working together in different ways to promote YOUR work to UN level & to deepen the sense of interconnectedness and oneness that we uniquely experience as a big IPA family".

[**Note:** Dr Despoina Afroditi Milaki has taken up the important role of the Chair of the 2024 Civil Society Forum. Through this role the IPA can multiply its capacity for influence].

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Lancia Rodrigues, PBVM Spirituality & Charism Animator at IPA.

" the theme of this 2023 IPA Assembly is, *'Listen, God of the Universe beckons'*, deepens and widens the trust-ful scope in accepting God's presence to stretch our hearts and perspectives for God's life and mission, now. It also attunes us to the Synod inviting us to soulful listening, dialogue and discerning encounters for communion.

My hope is that IPA spirituality, both personally and in common, listens to the present reality of wars, climate disasters and abusive relationships by containing vulnerability like Jesus did with His heart's ears and eyes leaning to God who can create through us new possibilities. May we just choose to keep a space for love amidst everything, like we heard how the pioneering sisters to Newfoundland did when they stepped here".

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Anne Marie Quinn, PBVM, Executive Director, (IPA) in her Report:

"Nano's time was a time of darkness, a time where the people of Ireland were powerless & voiceless. Today our world is broken by the Cry of Earth & the Cry of the Poor. Our World is crying out for the light of Transformative Justice. It calls all of us committed to the work of Justice to live from a contemplative space, like Nano did in her time". "I would like to take this opportunity to express a few words of gratitude. Once again to express my thanks for the opportunity to serve IPA in the position of its inaugural Executive Director over the past 5 years. It is not a position I would have imagined I would have been in when I attended the 7th Assembly, but God works in mysterious ways".

'Just Ways'

Image: The Newfoundland & Labrador Leadership Team with the Honourable Judy Foote, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland & Labrador (ctr), together with Srs. Sharon Fagan (IPA Director) (2nd Left) and Miriam Martin (IPA Assembly Liturgist) (2nd Right), at the 8th IPA Assembly.

8th IPA Assembly Outcomes

The Trustees of the IPA decided to create a new organisational structure for the Association that will facilitate a more sustainable organisation for the future and will put structure on a more collaborative system between Presentation Sisters and partners in Justice work.

The Vision of IPA

A world in which the oneness and sacredness of life is honoured. *"Love one another as you have hitherto done" ~ Venerable. Nano Nagle.*

Mission of the IPA

To speak and act in partnership with others for global justice, from a contemplative stance, in a spirit of oneness with the whole of creation. "*Spend yourselves for the poor" ~ Venerable Nano Nagle.*

Our Call to Action

The International Presentation Association believes in and respects the dignity of all. In our advocacy we will honour and advance the rights of women and children, indigenous and tribal people, and our Planet Earth.

Images: Working sessions at the IPA Assembly 2023 (above).

From the 8th IPA Assembly Closing Address by Julie Watson PBVM – Congregational Leader.

"Our theme for the Assembly – Listen! God of the Universe beckons – has been the touchstone which invited us to be grounded in the God who calls us. To pay attention, to notice, to listen to God's call in the reality of our lives.

He came so that all may have life and have it to the full. When He saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion. He invites us to see and to act, to be moved with compassion, to be open to the other … This same invitation is the thread running through the life of Nano. … Nano's way of living was nourished by the Gospel. … Nano was moved with compassion to act against the injustices of her time … Now it is our turn to step up and be midwives of an unnamed future ... not just those of us gathered here at this Assembly but each one of us across the globe committed to the charism of Nano, and the call of Jesus to be His disciples, are called to live the values of justice and service in our communities and in our ministries".

Image: (R-L) Sr. Julie Watson, PBVM Congregational Leader, and Sr. Anne Marie Quinn with Judy Foote (ctr) Lt. Governor of Newfoundland & Labrador.

(**Image:** (left) Sr. Anne Lyons meeting with the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, Frances Collins who expressed great interest in the Cause of Irish Founders, and how she can help in her ambassadorial role. (right) Anne at South East Radio (Wexford) in conversation with Maria Colfer, communicating the life & spirituality of Nano Nagle, and promoting Nano's Cause).

From the Postulator's Diary

Together in advancing the Cause of Nano

Greetings once again to each of you across the globe! You may have been wondering had I 'disappeared' this past year? Metaphorically speaking 'yes' – but my disappearance was under a volume of books, lectures, study, thesis, and exams for the second and final year of the Advanced Diploma Course for Postulators. The life of a *'studentessa'* at the Pontifical Lateran University has now come to an end. The happy news is that as of July 7th 2023, having successfully finished all exams and *l'esame finale*, I am now officially recognised by the Dicastery of the Saints as Postulator for our Congregation.

Where to, from here?

Since my return, the recurring question of enquiry to me is *"so where to from here?"* – an important question indeed, and one that is already occupying my thoughts as I ponder how we, as the Presentation Congregation and colleagues actively collaborate in the ongoing Cause of Venerable Nano Nagle.

I left Rome with a strong exhortation from members of the Dicastery for the Cause of Saints to *"get working on the miracle."* I sense an 'urgency' about the Cause of Venerable Nano, and while I am already actively seizing any opportunity that comes my way to promote her cause for Beatification, I appeal to each of you, to reignite, to *'fan into a flame'* once again alongside the passion, zeal, energy, devotion, belief, and confidence in the fact that God has chosen Nano Nagle, as a profound witness to a life of heroic holiness, and to living out the Gospel.

The Cause of Ven. Nano

The cause of Venerable Nano Nagle is not asleep! When Pope Francis officially declared Nano Nagle 'Venerable' in 2013, that completed that stage of the process. In this act, her life of heroic virtue was publicly declared to the entire Church worldwide. The next phase now in her process, is to work and prayer for her Beatification.

Towards Beatification

Beatification requires evidence, and the approval of a miracle through the intercessory power of Venerable Nano Nagle.

Many of us remember the momentum and energy and passion for Nano's life and legacy that was expressed in so many ways during the tercentenary year (2018) of Nano Nagle's birth.

Todays local and global circumstances must surely urge us to respond through prayer and generous action, to the cry of those made poor. Reflecting on the life of Ven. Nano Nagle, we find in her an authentic example of advocacy for social justice, both in her day and in our time.

Pope Francis has recently inaugurated a Year of Prayer in preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year. He calls on the faithful *"to pray more fervently to prepare ourselves to live properly this grace-filled event and to experience the power of hope in God."*

Reflecting on the Year of Prayer, Pope Francis highlights the importance of

"rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer, prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, and prayer in the world."

Prayer is an important and vital part of what we can do collectively and individually. Let us never underestimate the power of a *'life-filled'* community praying through the intercession of Nano Nagle for the needs of others, and of our world.

Pope Francis recalls that *"prayer is the breath of faith; it is its most proper expression. Like a silent cry that comes forth from the heart of those who believe and entrust themselves to God."*

Nano Nagle heard and responded to the 'Cry of the Poor, the Cry of the Earth' as do Presentation people around the world. Indeed, the Pope himself, during this year, has announced that he will set up a *"School of Prayer."*

"This School," will be a series of moments of encounter with specific groups of people to pray together and better understand the various forms of prayer: from thanksgiving to intercession; from contemplative prayer to the prayer of consolation; from adoration to supplication.

The Year, is also a time to discover how to pray and, above all, how to rediscover in this age of digital culture, that prayer can be effective and fruitful.

Are there possibilities in this for us, in finding creative ways to advance the cause of Venerable Nano?

What can we do?

Continue the great work that you are already doing to promote devotion to Nano Nagle.

Continue to hold Nano up as a model of a woman who dared to give all and risk her life for God's world.

Continue the ministry of Prayer through the intercession of Nano Nagle. I noted when studying, that while individual prayer to Nano is a right a good thing to do, the power of the group praying and interceding solely through the intercession of Nano is deemed very important. (While we have other favourite saints that we admire and pray to; the Dicastery's advice is prayer solely through Nano especially in a very significant need such as healing for a seriously ill person).

Continue to intercede with the Lord that if it is His desire and will and for His Glory, Nano Nagle may be His instrument of healing grace and grant us the required miracle that will move forward the Cause of her Beatification and eventually Canonisation.

(**Image:** (L-R) Sr. Nisha (India) with Sr. Anne Lyons and Sr. Helena (Poland) after the completion their final exams (Rome, July 2023).

Continue to carefully RECORD any campaign of prayer through Nano's intercession. Such records are vital and invaluable towards any future investigation of an 'alleged miracle'.

Continue to record any FAVOURS that you learn of, which are attributed solely through Nano Nagle's intercession. Every little piece of information is significant.

Above all let us never cease to pray together and to pray for each other especially united with the prayer-filled focus of this year.

Anne Lyons

Contact Email: postulator@pbvm.org

(**Image:** Sr. Anne Lyons speaking about Ven. Nano Nagle and her Cause with Pope Francis. (Papal Audience, 16th November, 2023).

Prayer for the Beatification of Venerable Nano Nagle

O God,
who kindled in the heart of
your servant, Nano Nagle,
the fire of your love,
and a consuming desire to serve
You in any part of the world,
grant that we also may love You,
and make you much loved.

And if it be for the glory of God,
and the salvation of souls,
grant that soon she may be raised
to the altars of your Church.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Listen in to:
Anne Lyons on South East Radio Wexford in 2023—

21 October

28 October

4 November

And on **Radio Maria** talking to Deacon Don (#E21), 23 August 2023 HERE

Launch of Co. Kildare LEADER Partnership Strategic Plan: 2023 to 2028

Background

County Kildare is a significant population base within Ireland. Over the last two decades, it has experienced the second fastest rate of population growth in the country. It is now the fourth highest populated county, after counties Dublin, Cork, and Galway.

Recent history has shown us the uncertain nature of life and the need to develop resilience in communities. Firstly, COVID 19 had a significant impact on populations in County Kildare, particularly in already vulnerable populations who experienced increased economic hardship, food poverty, mental health challenges and general health and wellbeing issues. More recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to a significant inward migration of persons from Ukraine. Both the pandemic and the Ukrainian war have precipitated a significant cost-of-living increase which continues to have a profound impact, especially on disadvantaged groups.

The origins of County Kildare LEADER Partnership emerged in the mid 1990's and is linked to both the advent of social Partnership, and as a result of Ireland joining the European Union. In 2008 the Government implemented a rationalisation programme called the Cohesion Process which amalgamated local and rural development companies, in many cases in line with local authority boundaries. From this process County Kildare LEADER Partnership was established and commenced trading in 2009.

In 2012 when refugees came to live in Naas the company was involved in an inter-agency collaboration and has consistently supported work with asylum seekers and refugees with other key stakeholders

The company has collaborated with a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations over the last fifteen years, and moved to its current location in Kildare Town after the COVID pandemic in 2022. This new location provides ample facilities as a base to support individuals and groups in the years to come.

Partnership development

Co. Kildare LEADER Partnership's (CKLP) understanding of development takes a life cycle approach and is aimed at the development of individuals and communities, from childhood to old age. They do not see progress solely in economic terms, but rather as a interconnected process which has the person at its heart.

Therefore, the work of CKLP supports a diverse range of activities impacting on individuals, groups, organisations, and communities in County Kildare. Central to its focus on an inclusive and equal society is the participation of all members of the county, including vulnerable and marginalised groups, understanding that everyone has a contribution to make to the whole of society. Through the delivery of its programmes, LEADER Co. Kildare works

(**Image:** (R-L) Srs. Mary McDermott and Sheila Fox with Minister Martin Heydon, Mr. Emmett O'Hara (Head of Credit, Clann Credo) and Mr. Pat Leogue, CEO of CKLP). (Right) Sr. Mary McDermott speaking to Martin Heydon TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Research and Development, Farm Safety, and New Market Development.

with agencies and service providers, local authorities, local businesses and the community and voluntary sector.

Through the programmes they implement on behalf of funders they have a particular focus on individuals and families living in disadvantaged areas of the county, those who are unemployed, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, members of the Traveller and Roma community, people with disabilities, older people, individuals who have been impacted by addiction, those struggling with their mental or physical health and other groups. They wish to ensure that the voices and views of people who are seldom heard are taken into account.

The launch of the Strategic Plan

The launch of the Strategic Plan coincided with an Open Day which CKLP held to welcome the local community and to offer an opportunity for local people to view the former Presentation Convent and the work that CKLP undertakes with individuals and groups with the assistance of funding from various Government departments and other sources.

In welcoming the Minister, Chairperson Colm O'Gógáin described how the Board of the company had decided to embark on a review of its direction and focus, and in doing so set out a Strategic Plan that would take account of the very significant changes which have and are taking place in the environment in which it operates. *"Some of these challenges have been Brexit, COVID, the war in Ukraine as well as the changing demographics in County Kildare".*

The CEO of CKLP Pat Leogue outlined the thrust of the new strategic plan which is committed to supporting individuals and communities in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders in the years ahead. He stated that the plan *"sets out a framework for the further development of our company and how it can respond to some of the challenges that face County Kildare. Many of these challenges relate to a lack of resources and services to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population".*

Mr. Leogue highlighted the need to support communities to lobby for better services, particularly for those who are vulnerable.

Minister Martin Heydon officially launched the plan and commended the Board on their vision and foresight in developing the Strategic Plan. *"The board have recognised the challenges around them and developed a plan to build on their strong contribution to date and to help them to address the needs of a growing Kildare population into the future."*

The Open Day in the former Presentation Convent provided an opportunity for local people to view their old school buildings, and to meet the sisters who had lived in the convent, some of whom also taught in the school during their time in Kildare Town. Local historian, Mario Corrigan also provided a talk on the history of the Presentation Order in Kildare Town which was well received. Apart from acting as offices and training rooms for CKLP the former convent is also used by a number of local groups on weekday evenings as well as weekends. Further development work is planned for early 2024 and CKLP plans to have office and meeting room accommodation available for hire by local organisations by March 2024.

You can view the **CKLP Strategic Plan** **HERE**

For further info. On Co. Kildare LEADER Partnership See **HERE**

Towards the 2024 Assembly

At the end of their meeting in December 2023, the members of the Ordinary Council of the Synod of Bishops adopted a Document for the work to be engaged in by the Catholic Church until the celebration of the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2024.

In addition to the accounts of the participants, the fruit of the First Session (October 2023) is gathered into the Synthesis Report, approved at the end of the work and now available in many languages on the Synod 2021-2024see (www.synod.va/en.html). This document constitutes the reference point for the journey of the People of God in the time between the two Sessions.

The synod process

The synodal process will continue along the following lines:

- the level of each local Church,
- the groupings of Churches (national, regional and continental),
- and, that of the Church as a whole.

As Pope Francis recalled in approving these lines of work, *"the Synod is about synodality and not about this or that theme… . The important thing is how the reflection is done, that is, in a synodal way."*

The local Churches and the groupings of Churches are invited to contribute by deepening aspects of the Synthesis Report that are fundamental to the Synod's theme. These contributions are guided by the question: *"HOW can we be a synodal Church in mission?"*

The second session of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality will open on October 2 and end on October 27, 2024, preceded by a two -day retreat. And, contrary to expectations, the synod will be more or less the same length as the first session. As is already known, almost all the synod's 365 members (incl. women & men who are not bishops) who participated in last October's synod will continue to focus *on the theme: "For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission."*

Themed Study Groups

Pope Francis has also announced the establishment of study groups to delve into some of the themes that had emerged last October in the first session of the synod, although he has not yet specified which of the many themes that emerged from the first session, will be subjected to study. This is expected to be announced soon, once a common agreement has been reached between the secretariat and relevant dicasteries (departments) of the Roman Curia, on themes and on the names of experts from around the world who may be called to give their specific contribution.

A rapid glance at the 81 proposals made in the synthesis report issued at the end of last October's synod, suggests that the following themes are likely to be among those discussed and researched in the study groups:

- the role and place of women in the church, including the question of the diaconate in general and the diaconate for women;
- the formation of priests; structures of synodality at the diocesan and parish level;
- the updating of the Code of Canon Law; the Roman Curia and synodality.

These and other issues, also mentioned in the document released by the synod secretariat in December (*Towards October 2024).* In a worksheet issued to help local churches reflect on the results from the 1st session, synod organisers suggest picking three priorities and initiatives to focus on. The document also encourages local communities to submit a sample of their reflections to a local committee of theologians, canonists & pastoral leaders.

Feedback is to be sent to the General Secretariat of the Synod by May 15, 2024, and on the basis of the material gathered, the working document of the second session will be drafted**.**

What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time?*

The Church in Ireland is committed to a national synodal pathway with a timeline that extends beyond the anticipated conclusion of the current Universal Synod.

The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference had made this commitment before the detail of the Universal Synod was announced by the Vatican, with a five-year timeline (2021-2026).

As the Synod on Synodality moves to the universal phase this work on the international level continues to provide inspiration & encouragement for the national synodal pathway in Ireland. The decisions taken by Pope Francis to extend the timeline for the work, adding a further global gathering in 2024, and to widen the participation beyond bishops, demonstrate a listening Church responsive to the learning from the synodal process.

Pope Francis is calling us to a rediscovery or reimagining of this synodal practice for the Church of today, bringing with it a deeper understanding of our baptismal calling and its significance in the life of the community of Christian disciples to which we belong.

The foundation for this work of renewal is the practice of deep and respectful listening, inviting all the people of God to contribute to the discernment that shapes and guides the mission of the Church, with a reassurance that everyone's contribution is welcome and valued.

Walking the Synodal Pathway in Ireland

It is anticipated that the work of the synodal pathway will continue to grow in the next phase, and that the governance model for this would move beyond the committee structure employed for the initial phase to an expanded structure with a series of working groups with delegated authority in key areas.

In addition, it is recommended that the governing body would include individuals with responsibility to provide a point of contact and support for dioceses (on a regional basis) as well as congregations/ movements/associations and the Councils and Agencies of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. The initial "Steering Committee", who will now be the *"National Animation Team for the Synodal Pathway"* to better reflect the fact that the role of the national body is to work collaboratively with the local church, taking forward those aspects of the work that require national-level planning and coordination.

"We are learning how to create an environment in which we can have conversations that have real spiritual depth and engage with the issues that are impacting the daily lives of people in our local church and in the surrounding community.

We look forward to continuing this journey together, as local church communities and as the Church in Ireland, in dialogue and friendship with Christians of other denominations, with other faith communities and with the wider society".

(From p40, Section 7 of the Steering Committee Report).

The Steering Committee seeks to point the compass rather than plot the final destination, recognising that the recommendations will have to be flexible to adapt to ongoing learning, as well as developments in the Universal Church, and that the work required will extend far beyond the three years of the next phase of the synodal pathway.

*[*This is the title of the report completed by the Steering Committee for the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland (6 Dec. 2023). This report attempts to capture some of the learning from this 2-year experience, offering initial recommendations for the work ahead].* **See** https://synod.ie/steering-committee-report/

Useful links:

In an exclusive interview with National Catholic Reporter in late January, Xavière Sr. Nathalie Becquart said that, through the October 2023 and 2024 assemblies of the Synod of Bishops, Francis is creating *"a path of conversion"* toward "*a new way to exercise the authority" in the church.* "I see that what we are doing is really to continue to implement the Second Vatican Council," she said, speaking in an interview at the synod office for NCR's "**The Vatican Briefing**" podcast.

The Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland

Conversations

TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope

(Rom 8:19-25)

Season of Creation 2024

The Symbol for Season of Creation 2024 represents the first fruits of hope. Recognising Hope is an instrument enabling us to overcome the natural law of decay. Hope is given to us by God as a protection and guard against futility, and it is only through hope that we may realise the gift of freedom in fullness. Freedom to act not only to achieve enjoyment and prosperity, but to reach the stage in which we are free and responsible.

This freedom and responsibility enables us to make the world a better place. And, it is only by working together with Creation that the first fruits of hope emerge.

In the letter of Paul the apostle to the Romans, the biblical image pictures the Earth as a Mother, groaning as in childbirth (Rom 8:22). Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his Canticle of Creatures. The times we live in show that we are not relating to the Earth as a gift from our Creator, but rather as a resource to be used.

There's a phrase commonly attributed to Saint Augustine that says:

"Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are."

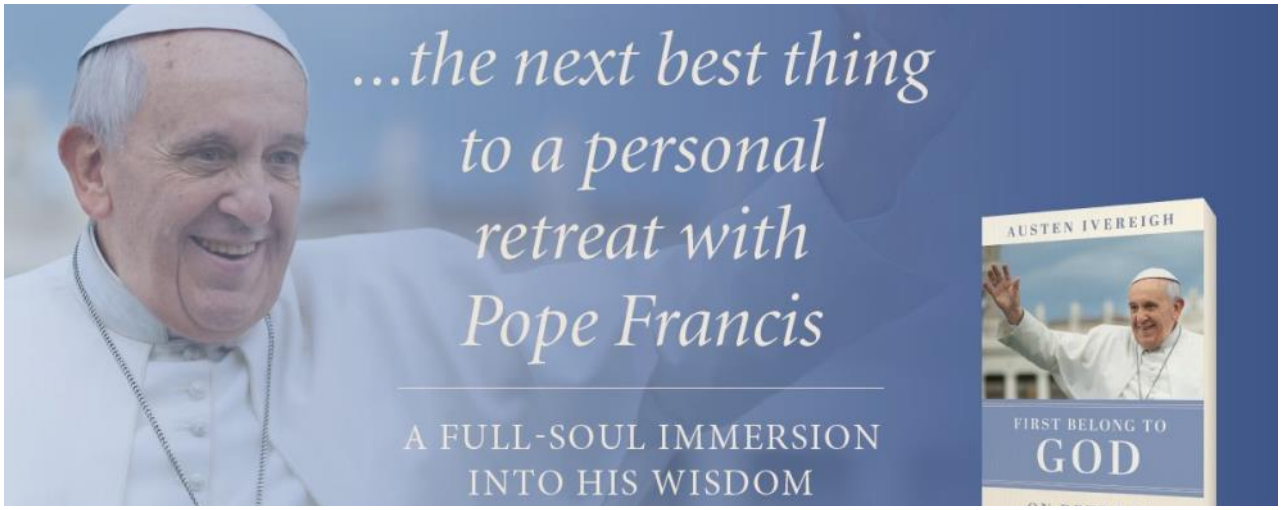
As we witness the cries and sufferings of Earth and all creatures, let holy anger move us toward the courage to be hopeful and active for justice. We believe that the incarnation of God's Son offers guidance enabling us to face the troubling world. God is with us in efforts to respond to the challenges of the world we are living in (cf. Rom 8:23).

This annual Christian celebration of the Season of Creation is convened each year to enable us to pray and respond to the cry of Creation. It takes place between September 1st, the Feast of Creation, and October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

See https://seasonofcreation.org/ and **Vatican News Press Release HERE**

Climate Change Assessment Report Ireland

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published Ireland's **first Climate Change Assessment Report**. The report provides a picture of where Ireland is in its response the climate emergency as well as insights as to the scale of the challenge for Ireland to become climate neutral and climate resilient. Ireland needs to pick up the pace of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to our changed and future climate. *"Having peaked in 2001, Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced in all sectors except agriculture. However, Ireland currently emits more greenhouse gases per person than the EU average. A legal basis for deep, rapid and sustained national emissions cuts now exists, although current policy and action remain insufficient to meet these aims". See also* **HERE**



First Belong to God

In his new book, *First Belong to God: On Retreat with Pope Francis*, Austen Ivereigh accompanies the reader on a journey to discover the truth of God's love for all creation. With the pope's own words and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola as our guides, we meet Francis as a spiritual director who shepherds us out of ourselves and towards the joy of belonging.

"The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God who loves us, gave us life. Our own response to love allows God's life to flow into us without limit … Our only desire and our own choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me". ~ St. Ignatius of Loyola.

In his article for *Thinking Faith* in which he introduces the book, Austin Ivereigh explains that in the concrete events and experiences that we live through, both as individuals and as societies, we constantly face tensions of time and space, fullness and limit. God's Spirit is at work in these spaces, and can be recognised by the consolation it brings, and the agitations it provokes. Adjusting to this, opening ourselves to the movements in these moments, is what we learn to do, through prayer and dialogue, and above all at special 'desert' times, times of exile and retreat.

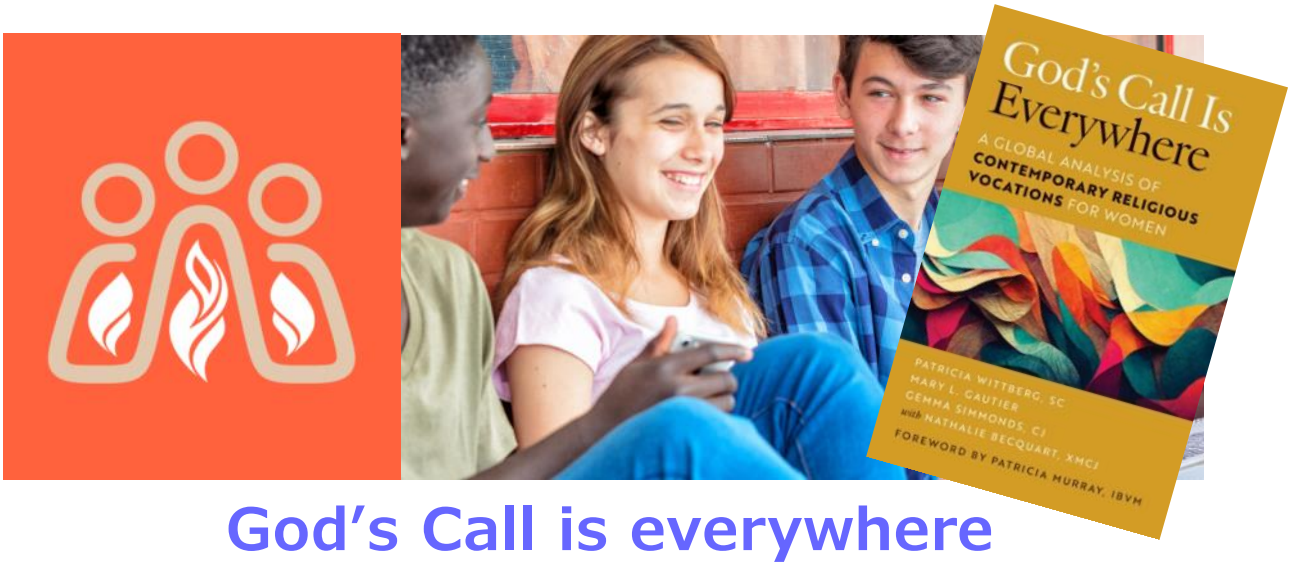
In the very beautiful foreword of the book, Pope Francis writes: *"As Pope, I have wanted to encourage our belonging 'first' to God., and then to creation and to our fellow human beings, especially to those who cry out to us. This is why I have wanted to keep in view the two great crises of our age: the deterioration of our common home and the mass migration and displacement of people. Both are symptoms of the 'crisis of non-belonging' described in these pages". ... Austin Ivereigh has done a great service bringing together the retreat talks I gave many decades ago with my teachings as Pope .. . This is not a time to hunker down and lock doors. I see clearly that the Lord is calling us out of ourselves, to get up and walk. He asks us not to turn away from the pain and cries of our age, but to enter into them, opening the channels of his grace".*

The signature teachings of the pontificate: of Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, on our belonging to God; *Laudato Si'*, on our belonging to creation and our fellow not-just -human creatures; and *Fratelli tutti*, on our belonging to each other in human community, guide us to see that our task is to overcome our distrustful self-with-holding, our grasping rivalry, our desire to dominate and instrumentalise; these are the sinful states that keep us imprisoned in non-belonging.

The book's title is taken from para. 65 of *Gaudete et exsultate*: *'Only on the basis of God's gift, freely accepted and humbly received, can we co-operate by our own efforts in our progressive transformation. To learn to belong is to learn to accept the gift that God gives us in creating us and making us restless for life in him. With that understanding – and it must be grasped with the heart as much as the mind – comes the freedom to belong, to serve, to love'.*

Dr. Austen Ivereigh is a Fellow in Contemporary Church History at Campion Hall, University of Oxford. First Belong to God: On Retreat with Pope Francis, is available now from Messenger Publications and Loyola Press.

See Thinking Faith.org article by Austin Ivereigh



God's Call is everywhere

"Every so often a book is published on a particular topic that is essential reading. This is how I view ***'God's Call Is Everywhere: A Global Analysis of Contemporary Religious Vocations for Women'***. This is a masterful study because it provides both sociological data together with theological and experiential insights to facilitate reflection on how newer members view contemporary religious life in various parts of the world". (Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM Executive Secretary – International Union of Superiors General (UISG) Rome, March 2023).

'God's Call Is Everywhere A Global Analysis of Contemporary Religious Vocations for Women' is by Patricia Wittberg, SC, Mary L. Gautier, Gemma Simmonds, CJ with Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ, and with the Foreword by Patricia Murray, IBVM.

This book is a study that begins by focusing on data gathered from newer members from the United States, Australia, Canada, Ireland, France, and the United Kingdom. Some comparative perspectives are then offered from other parts of the world—Mexico, India, and Kenya—and from different generational perspectives.

In her foreword Sr. Patricia writes:

"We know that it is important to keep reading 'the signs of the times' to engage in ongoing discernment with regard to imagining the way forward for consecrated life. We particularly need to read 'the signs of the times' as described by those who are becoming new members of congregations today. How they are experiencing and responding to the call to religious life will differ from those who have been members for many decades".

The various chapters in this book demonstrate the willingness to re-examine consecrated life as it evolves and is being reshaped.

It is clear that change is occurring within female religious life in relation to the number of vocations. Recent statistics issued by the Vatican indicate that the total number of religious women in the world at the end of 2021 was 608,958, a decrease of 619,546 at the end of 2020. This is a far cry from the days when there were over 1 million religious women.

Yet, as we read in the initial chapter presenting an historical overview of consecrated life, that there have always been periods of decline and growth, if we look at patterns purely from a numerical perspective. It has been precisely during these times of diminution that the seeds of the new have been sown, which have led to a new understanding of the meaning and purpose of religious life and the emergence of new forms or new emphases.

Hearing all the voices

During the current synodal journey with its emphasis on walking together, we have been reminded that, in a spirit of radical inclusion, we need to hear all the voices and to make a special option for including the voices of younger people.

Therefore, reading the outcomes of surveys, focus groups, and interviews provides a way of entering into the experience of younger women who have joined religious life more recently in the United States, Australia, Canada, Ireland, France, and the United Kingdom.

Joining a religious congregation is often

seen by younger people to be counter-cultural.

Each chapter offers different windows on the experience of those discerning and entering religious life. Key areas of importance emerge in relation to those who have discerned a vocation to religious life and have responded to God's call.

These include the importance of prayer, of living an authentic community life, and of making visible the charism and mission of the congregation.

The responses show that the ministries of the congregation are seen to be a less significant part of the discernment. It is important to note the similarities and differences which are found across the responses from different parts of the world.

Factors such as nationality or ethnicity and social class do influence whether women are attracted to religious life and the type of religious institute that they are likely to join, as well as their hopes and expectations in relation to their vocation. Where theological and ecclesiological differences exist within the local church, these are replicated across the choice of religious congregations.

Discerning a religious vocation

Personal contact clearly plays a vitally important part in any discernment of a religious vocation. The first contacts with a religious institute generally come through meeting with or working with a member of the congregation or through a recommendation from a friend or spiritual director or perhaps through meeting congregational members at an event. Print materials, websites, social media, and even vocational stories are generally seen to be much less impactful.

Receiving encouragement and feeling welcomed during the discernment process and after entering the congregation are important experiences.

A qualitative study, focused on the UK and Ireland, looks at new vocations and vocational exploration. It affirms that women continue to hear and respond to God's call and that they are attracted by the witness of coherent commitment, prayer, community life, charism, and mission. Increasingly they are finding creative ways to deal with cultural and generational differences and to demonstrate a strong commitment to live in solidarity with those on the margins.

The perspective given in the book, on vocational discernment in Ireland highlights the difficulty when radicality of the life and cultural hostility confront one another. While numbers may be small, the quality is perhaps stronger than ever. The desire for intimacy with God and the opportunity to live an authentic Christ-centred life still calls women to respond. Those who are seekers tend to be older, professionally qualified, and deeply spiritual. They search for a community which provides the opportunity to deepen faith through prayer, silence, and ministry.

The context in Ireland presents a faith crisis rather than a vocation crisis, as the Church suffers the fallout from abuses of multiple kinds. The failures of the few have become the narrative of the many and these biases need to be confronted and exposed. The journeys of vocation and synodality seem to have coalesced, as seekers and believers find themselves invited to stay in the boat where Jesus is asleep, knowing that the new awakening will happen. This is a profound biblical narrative and image for reflection in many parts of the world.

Those entering today

Those entering today use a different language to describe their call and their hopes and dreams. We must listen to "the more" for which they are searching rather than imposing old models and ideas. To offer them experiences of intentional community living in larger intergenerational communities, we may have to imagine new configurations especially in international settings.

The concluding chapter brings together key insights that have emerged throughout the book. In highlighting problems and challenges, it sets out an agenda for reflection and action, particularly on the part of leaders and formators.

This book gives visibility and voice to many elements which have already surfaced in community conversations and documents on religious life, and in chapter deliberations.

"We pray that the voice and insights of younger members, together in dialogue and discernment with the wisdom & experience of others, may guide the preparation of the new wineskins needed to hold the fruit of the harvests coming from new seasons".

[Content for this article taken from the Foreword Text by Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM]

Moved by the Spirit

Simeon and Anna are the image and figure of those longing for God. Upon seeing the Lord enter the temple, they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit and recognise him as the child whom Mary carries in her arms. They had been waiting for him all their lives. Pope Francis, in his homily for the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life says:

"It is good for us to look at these two elders who were waiting patiently, vigilant in spirit and persevering in prayer. Their hearts have stayed awake, like an eternal flame. They are advanced in age, but young at heart. They do not let the days wear them down, for their eyes remain fixed on God in expectation. (cf. Ps 145:15)"

They have held themselves in expectation of this moment. Along life's journey, they have experienced hardships and disappointments, but they have not given in to defeat: they have not "retired" hope.

Pope Francis, asks us, like Simeon, to pick up this child, the God of newness and surprises. By welcoming the Lord, the past opens up to the future, the old in us opens up to the new that he awakens. This is not easy, we know this, because, in religious life as in the life of every Christian, it is difficult to go against the *"force of the old".*

"… The newness of God presents itself as a child ... Will we embrace the child, welcome the child, make room for the child? Will this newness really enter our lives or will we rather try to combine old and new, trying to let ourselves be disturbed as little as possible by the presence of God's newness?" *

"Brothers and sisters, these questions are for us, for each of us, for our communities and for the Church. Let us be restless, let us be moved by the Spirit, like Simeon and Anna. If, like them, we live in expectation, safeguarding our interior life and in conformity with the Gospel, if, like them, we live in expectation, we will embrace Jesus, who is the light and hope of life".

['Move by the Spirit of Simeon & Anna': from the Message of Pope Francis, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, World Day for Consecrated Life:2 Feb. 2024].

Far those who have far to travel

Still Space

If you could see the journey whole
you might never undertake it;
might never dare the first step
that propels you
from the place you have known
toward the place you know not.

Call it one of the mercies of the road:
that we see it only by stages
as it opens before us,
as it comes into our keeping
step by single step.

There is nothing for it but to go
and by our going take the vows
the pilgrim takes:

to be faithful to the next step;
to rely on more than the map;
to heed the signposts of intuition and dream;
to follow the star that only you will recognise;
to keep an open eye for the wonders that attend the path;
to press on beyond distractions
beyond fatigue
beyond what would tempt you from the way.

There are vows that only you will know;
the secret promises for your particular path
and the new ones you will need to make
when the road is revealed by turns you could not have foreseen.

~ Jan Richardson

See FULL TEXT of WDCL Message HERE

In appreciation ...

Sr. Genevieve and the family of the late Martha Kilbane would like to thank you for your varied expressions of sympathy on the recent of Martha. We greatly appreciated all the messages and support received from far and near. May you all be rewarded for your kindness and prayers. A novena of masses has been offered for your intentions during the Christmas season.

Sr. Genevieve Kilbane (Athenry)

~~~~~~~~~

Sincere thanks to everybody for your support; for your expressions of sympathy, phone calls, Mass cards, attendance at the removal and funeral Masses on the deaths of my sister Máiread and brother Tom R.I.P. Your support is greatly appreciated. Mass is being offered for your intentions.

Catherine Mulcahy (Dóchas Community, Tipperary Town)

~~~~~~~~~

On behalf of our family, I want to express our heartfelt appreciation for your outpouring of support at the time of my brother Liam's death RIP. It was an horrendous time for us as a family, the nature of his death has left us all still shocked and grief stricken.

As the oldest of the family, he held a particular place in all our hearts and we miss him greatly. His loss is felt most deeply by his wife Ursula, his three sons, and one beloved daughter and his grandchildren. We appreciated your attendance at Liam's removal and funeral mass, and the hundreds of mass cards and messages of condolence which were such a comfort to us at a very dark time. Mass will be offered for all your intentions as a token of our appreciation.

Sr. Mary Hanrahan (Province Leadership Team)

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On behalf of the Redmond family, thank you to all for the support and care shown to us during and after the death of our sister Anne. Thank you for all the many prayers and cards so gratefully received from the Sisters. As Anne's first anniversary approaches we remember her with much love, certain that her gentle soul now rests in peace with God.

Sr. Grace Redmond (Province Leadership Team)

~~~~~~~~~

On behalf of the Higgins and O'Halloran family, and on my own behalf, I would like to thank each of the communities and individual Sisters for their kind expression of sympathy on the death of my grand-nephew Adam Higgins and my brother-in-law John O'Halloran. Your support by way of prayer, phone calls, Masses and attendance at funerals has been very much appreciated. A Mass has been offered for your intentions.

Sr. Anne Marie Farragher (Province Leadership Team)

Crocus

I came down one morning
to a chilled and silent kitchen
to discover that outside,
a crocus had bloomed overnight,
under the old cherry tree,
in a place none had ever bloomed before.
How had it come there on that day,
in that place?
Bird carried, wind blown,
or old planting stirred anew?
But, why wonder at its coming?
All it asked of me
was to be seen.
I stood, still,
empty kettle in hand,
staring into the grey garden,
now sunlit, with the yellow frail petals
of an unexpected
and unlooked for flower.
It lasted just long enough
for us to hear,
behind the song of sorrow
we were singing in that house then,
a note of hope, a sound of Spring,
not now, but coming.
I knew then, and for evermore,
that at the right time, in the right place,
looked at in the right way,
even a tiny yellow crocus
can be a word from the Word.
So today I know that
when sadness sings her song
around my roots,
it is ok,
it is beautiful,
it is necessary,
but also it is an invitation
to wait and watch
for the yellow crocus
to bloom again,
as it always will,
announcing angel like,
the nearness of spirit's Spring,
not now, perhaps,
but always coming.

~ Bro. Richard Hendrick, OFM Cap.

Presentation Sisters

Who we are

Living in these times of great uncertainty
We dwell in possibility
Faithful to the promise of the fullness of life.

"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full". (John 10:10)

Called to live as consecrated women, we strive to witness to joyful, reflective, compassionate service, constantly calling ourselves to be aware of, and where possible to help those who find themselves on the edge, forgotten and neglected.

"The quality of our presence, our prayerfulness, and the gift of our lives, are of untold value for Presentation life and mission" ~ Our Way of Life, C11.

We are sustained in our commitment by our contemplative practices, and our life and relationships in community.
(An extract from the Vision Statement, of the Leadership Team, NE Province - August 2020).

Together with Presentation People everywhere, we continue to share in the dream of Nano Nagle (Founder of the Presentation Congregation) to:

Live Contemplatively ~ Walk Lightly on the Earth ~ Witness Prophetically

(Our Congregational Gathering, (CG2018).

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Social Media Links

Also

Friends of Nano Group
@WhatAboutTheBees

Words & Deeds

The motto inscribed on the Nagle family's coat of arms was ***'Not Words But Deeds'***. Nano Nagle and the Presentation People who followed her example have always taken these words to heart. This motto can be said to sum up almost two hundred and fifty years of active ministry & mission as Presentation Sisters spread across Ireland, and eventually to other parts of the world. Wherever the Sisters went, they responded in practical ways to address the needs of those kept poor. They continue this outreach today. Presentation Sisters are currently present in 24 countries.

Sharing Words & Deeds

If you have enjoyed reading this magazine, please share your copy with someone else who may not be familiar with the life of Presentation people. If this is your first contact with Presentation Sisters (NE Province) please also visit our website or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using the links on this page (these are already live and active on the E-copy of this magazine by clicking on the logos). The E-version of this quarterly magazine is also available on our website.

List of Contributors to this issue:

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