Zoom Along the Way

Sr. Margaret Murphy, PBVM

In June each year the Presentation Sisters gather at Holy Family Retreat Center in Connecticut for our annual weekend Assembly. During these days there are contemplative prayers, key-note speakers, reports from our leadership team, information from various task force members and discussion groups. In the evening the sisters look forward to social gatherings and sometimes “home-made entertainment.”

By now you are wondering if this gathering took place this past June. The answer is yes and no. Yes, we held our annual assembly. No, we did not gather in Connecticut. Covid-19 did not ask gently if we could be flexible, it intruded on all lives demanding that we alter our usual way of doing things. For many of the sisters who grew up in the pre-computer age, Zoom meetings are a modern marvel. In our midst we have sisters and friends who know how to use this marvel to great advantage and sisters who are willing to learn something new for a new time. From the comfort of our convents we were able to join in a virtual prayer service, see our key-note speaker and join in small discussion groups with sisters outside our own spaces...

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A Letter from Leadership

Fall, 2020

Dear Friends,

I don’t know about you but sometimes it’s difficult to find good in what we perceive as bad. Yet, if we try hard enough, we can usually find the good. This is where I find myself these days as we remain in the midst of a global COVID pandemic, surrounded by violence continuing to erupt throughout our country over the issue of racism. There is so much uncertainty, so much fear, so much grief, so many injustices... In the midst of it all, however, I look to God who is good and merciful and walks with each of us during these challenging days.

Just looking around us, we see so much good in families who have adapted to the “new normal” and are uniting in extraordinary ways. We see educators working diligently to provide the education our young people deserve in as safe a manner as possible and we see our parish priests creating innovative ways to welcome their parishioners back to the sacraments. We see so many generous people risking their own lives to save others. Their courage, dedication and goodness have blessed us with hope during these difficult times. Indeed, people are coming together to share that which is good.

The Presentation Sisters and Associates have also found new ways of being together, grieving together, and reaching out to others during these months of isolation. In this newsletter, you will read stories of our sisters and associates who are using the tools of technology in new and exciting ways. Our June 2020 Virtual Assembly incorporated prayer, listening, and discussion through the experience of using Zoom. Ongoing Zoom meetings and conversations have opened up a new world for many of our sisters and associates. As we continue to learn how to navigate the internet we remember our call to proclaim the Gospel in word and action – even during a pandemic.

How grateful we are to you, our generous and faithful donors, who have continued to support us during this time of unprecedented crisis with your prayers and financial support. Deep gratitude fills our hearts and we assure you of our continued prayers as together we face the challenges ahead. We share your grief in the loss of family members and friends and promise our prayers for those who struggle with the financial challenges the pandemic has created. Let us remember that God brings about good, all the time. Yes, all the time, God brings about good. It is up to us to find it.

With gratitude and in hope,

Sr. Martha Otterstedt, PBVM
Vice President
A Reflection on the “COVID-19” time

Associate Mary Jane Person

When we first were asked to “stay at home,” I thought that it would be for a week or two and didn’t really think that it would be so bad. I took some time to read and then cleaned and found plenty to keep me busy. But as weeks turned into so much more, I began to plan my time better. I took time to reflect on life and how I usually spent each day. I thought about people who have shared in my life’s journey and I pulled out the many pictures that I had collected, especially the ones that I had received each Christmas for many years and kept in albums. I thought about and prayed for all who shared in my life and ministry. It was a very meaningful time of remembering and being grateful for so many who had been partners in my faith journey.

So, I decided that I would gather some of the special ones and send them back to those who had sent them to me. I wrote a note “thanking them for sharing in my journey,” told them how they had hung on my prayer wall for a year, and were replaced with new ones the following year. I enclosed 2 or 3 with the note. Soon after, my phone rang, emails arrived, and notes expressing their gratitude for encouraging them to remember special times over the years.

Throughout this time of “staying at home”, I have found many ways to share with others, especially reaching out by calling people who live alone or those who are dealing with sick relatives, etc. The phone can be a gift when used to lift the spirits of one another. I have been involved in outreach activities and go out when it is safe to help others. We are truly blessed during this time…to have the time to BE for others and to BE for ourselves.

We remember the good people, events, and possibilities in our lives. We reconnect with the tools that are ours in these challenging times...such as phones, computers, and Zoom. We have the opportunity to learn from one another and the challenge to learn new ways to communicate in order to keep Nano’s fire burning. What would Nano say if she were with us now? I believe that she would be happy that we did not use this time to make excuses and she would be grateful that we cared for one another and reached out to see how each one was. We have not closed doors but opened our hearts to ways we could be helpful. We keep a positive attitude and find ways to “go one step beyond.”

We will not forget 2020 but we continue to keep Nano’s vision before us. Although we live in different times, we face the challenges with hope, love, and gratitude. Nano found her inspiration in her response to God who gave her the strength and will to reach out to others. We too must find our strength in prayer and live each day in gratitude. Even though we often cannot be actively involved during these “stay at home” times, we can reach out in many ways. We can do good deeds, offer support, and always keep a positive attitude as we wake each day with grateful hearts for the gift of faith, hope, and love…proud to follow Nano as Presentation Associates.

Mary Jane Person, PBVM Associate Minister and Co-Director of New Windsor Associates

Zoom Along the way (cont.)

…..We were happy to see all the sisters attending the meeting, including those in nursing facilities. Our sisters were located in New Windsor, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Yonkers, Crestwood, Kingston, Manhattan, Washingtonville and the Bronx.

The overall theme of our Assembly was hope: hope for religious life, hope for our world and hope within ourselves. For sure, the foundation of the Presentation Congregation is one of hope bolstered by an unshakable faith in God’s presence in all things. Our foundress believed that her contributions to alleviate the sufferings and injustices of her time made a difference in the lives of those she could reach. Without internet, email and Zoom, Nano Nagle was able to bring God’s message of hope far beyond her own constraints of continent and century. It is in that mystical legacy that we strive to do whatever we can to be people of hope ourselves and share that virtue with those we meet along our way.
Presentation Strong  
*Sr. Charlene O’Leary, PBVM*

Each evening the national news concludes with a final segment entitled “America Strong”. This portrays some person or groups who have done some kind, compassionate, even heroic service to others during this very different and difficult time of the pandemic.

If we presented a similar scenario entitled “Presentation Strong” there would be many participants. Sr. Linda LeBlanc and Marty Maillet would definitely be among them.

Sr. Linda and Marty educated and guided our Sisters all through the pandemic as to safe and careful manner of living.

Above all else is their loving compassion and care for our Sisters in long term facilities. These facilities have had to adapt difficult decisions to insure the health and safety of their residents; decisions which cause loneliness and even a feeling of abandonment to them. We have many Sisters in such facilities; some which require two hours of travel!

However, Sr. Linda and Marty have gone every week to our Sisters. Though they could neither see nor speak to them, they left “We Love You” packages for each P.B.V.M. and remembered daily in love and prayer.

In addition, Sr. Linda speaks to every Sister on the phone each day and offers comfort and reassurance. Sister has also set up Skype meetings allowing Sisters to see as well as talk with their Sisters.

We salute and thank Sr. Linda and Marty and pray, that with God’s help, this situation will soon be over.

We thank God for all our Sisters, for indeed we are “Presentation Strong” and Nano’s lantern continues to brighten dark spaces.

**Ministry during the COVID Pandemic**  
*Sr. Maureen Hickey, PBVM*

As a member of the Hospice of Orange and Sullivan County intake team, I am one of the RNs that review patients’ clinical information to determine if he/she qualifies for our services.

Intake interviews are completed with patients and families. Necessary equipment and medications are ordered. A team composed of a registered nurse, social worker, and chaplain is assigned to the patient and family. An admission date is set up and the patient is admitted.

On March 9th, the intake team was asked to work remotely from their homes due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Our daily team meetings to discuss patient needs and concerns in person became a conference call. Face to face consultations about how to handle patient care issues transferred to phone calls and text messages. Emails detailing new department of health regulations for hospice care were received almost daily in the early days of the pandemic. We adjusted our routine to abide by the regulations and keep patients, families, and community staff safe in addition to providing competent, empathetic care.

We continue to admit patients to hospice, including those who are COVID positive. We do more research into patients’ medical status and home environment to provide safe care for them and for the hospice team meeting their needs. Telehealth visits supplement home visits.

I am grateful I still have the opportunity to provide a supportive presence to those who I am blessed to minister to daily from my home. Forced separation from their loved ones in medical facilities has taken a toll on families who now bring them home to die. While caring for loved ones at home, they are isolated again from their support systems to maintain a COVID free environment. An intake interview can be more than setting up care. It is an opportunity to actively listen, reassure, and be supportive. I pray for the grace to continue to do so.
iPad Grant from SOAR!

Sara Gunn, Director of Mission Advancement

Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR!) has been assisting religious for over 30 years with various grants. They have been quite generous to the Sisters of the Presentation as well. This past year, they awarded the Sisters a grant to purchase iPads so that all could participate in meetings and gatherings and could also stay in contact with family and friends lessening the isolation that is prevalent during this difficult time.

This grant came from SOAR’s Coronavirus Rapid Response Fund.

Virtual Gathering of Presentation People

Mission Advancement Office

Planning began nearly a year ago for a gathering of Presentation People in South Dakota from throughout the country, including Sisters, Associates and staff. Everyone was quite excited at the prospect of seeing each other and sharing. Then the pandemic hit and a cross-country, in-person trip was not feasible. However, due to applications for mobile devices such as Zoom, planning for a virtual gathering began in earnest.

From September 24-26, 2020, we will gather virtually to deepen our understanding of our foundress, Nano Nagle’s story and the larger Presentation story. We will also seek to continue to deepen the story of Presentation People across North America and finally to gather in the spirit of Nano and the many Presentation People who have gone before us who have faced adversity and answered it with hope, compassion, tenacity, gentleness, and trust.

We will have photos and updates in the Spring 2021 newsletter.

Please join our Sisters & Associates in prayer for the following loyal friends who have recently passed away. We are blessed that the memory of loved ones, who kindled our spirits in some way by their love, their deeds or their commitment, remain with us after they are gone.

Mr. Byron Ahlemeyer
Ms. Rose E. Arnold
Ms. Sophia Benyo
Rev. Robert Bruso
Ms. Yvonne Castrogiovanni
Mr. Paul Celuzza
Ms. Donna Colligan
Mr. Vincent Corio
Ms. Ann Curtin
Rev. Joseph Daly, CM
Mr. Michael Dinean
Ms. Ann Duncan
Ms. Frances Fellner
Ms. Corrine Gammino
Msgr. Richard Guastella
Ms. Ruth Harrington
Ms. Doris Hobbs
Mr. Richard Higgins
Fr. Patrick Jennings
Ms. Mary (Tully) Kelly
Ms. Mary Kolodziej
Mr. Robert LeBlanc
Sr. Bernadette Liegey, S.C.
Ms. Lucy Lutz
Ms. Marian McGuire
Ms. Josephine Mancuso
Ms. Gloria Marcotte
Ms. Katherine Massell
Ms. Francis McCarthy
Ms. Joan Monahan
Ms. Naomi Morris
Ms. Marilyn Mulcahy
Ms. Marguerite Normandin
Ms. Ann Radlein
Mr. Joseph Raimon
Ms. Mary Reilly
Mr. Jerome Robinson
Associate Beverly Romasco
Associate Barbara Roser
Mr. Patrick Ryan
Ms. Mary Shannon
Mr. Rodney Stewart
Fr. Conan Timoney
Mr. Anthony Tocci
Fr. Jon Tosi
Ms. Patricia Welch
Ms. Agnes Young
Sr. Margaret Garvey

Sr. Margaret was born in Central Falls, RI on September 13, 1919 to John & Margaret Garvey, one of seven children but the only girl.

On September 24, 1937, Margaret entered the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 24, 1937 and professed her final vows on August 20, 1942. She earned a Bachelor's degree from Catholic Teacher's College in RI, a Master's degree from St. Rose's College in Albany and courses at Salve Regina University in RI, Assumption College, Worcester, MA and Georgetown University.

She taught in Fitchburg, MA, Clinton, MA, Riverside, CT and Central Falls, RI. She was also principal in Ayer, MA, Fitchburg, MA and Central Falls, RI.

After retiring from teaching ministry, Sr. Margaret was CCD coordinator at St. John's parish in Clinton, MA and later became the Consultant for Elementary Catechesis in the Office of Religious Education in Providence, RI, a position she held for 12 years.

She also served as a member of the General Council in the congregation and was instrumental in the establishment of the first Senate of Religious of the Diocese of Worcester, being its first President. In the Diocese of Province, she served as Vice-President of the Sisters’ Senate.

Throughout Sr. Margaret's 52 years in Catholic Education, she was awarded numerous commendations and citations. When her years were completed, she volunteered in Central Falls and was recognized by the Housing Authority Commission and Staff of that city for her years of volunteer service.

Sr. Margaret’s greatest wish was to live to 100 years old and then go home to God the following day. God called her home, not the next day, but eight months later on May 11, 2020.

Truly, Sr. Margaret Garvey was one of a kind – knowledgeable, talented, honest, persistent, capable, faithful and caring. She was passionate about life, ahead of her time in her thinking and proactive in her doing. She was a faithful daughter of Nano Nagle, a spirited woman who lived her life displaying – Not Words But Deeds.

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In Memoriam

“The souls of the just are in the hand of God.” (Wisdom 3:1-9)

Sr. Joan Mary Gleason

(Sr. Mary Laurentia)

May 11, 2020, at the age of 88 at Sapphire Nursing and Rehab Center in Newburgh, NY.

Sr. Joan Mary was born on November 2, 1932, in Goshen, NY, and entered the Sisters of the Presentation on September 8, 1951. She professed final vows on April 27, 1957.

She graduated from St. Michael High School, Manhattan, and earned her BS and MS degrees from Fordham University.

During her ministry, Sr. Joan Mary taught at St. Frances of Rome and Immaculate Conception Schools, Bronx; St. Paul the Apostle School, Yonkers; and St. Raphael School, Long Island City. She served as principal of St. Rose of Lima School, Rockaway Beach, and St. Bartholomew School, Yonkers.

She also served as Coordinator of Religious Education in St. Mary’s Parish, Marlboro, NY.

Sr. Joan Mary will be remembered for many things:
- Her independent spirit
- Her sense of humor
- Her love of parties and get togethers
- Her passion for social justice and her defense of the most vulnerable in any situation

She was a woman of deep faith and trust in the God who loved her; fiercely loyal to her Presentation Community, her family and her friends.

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A Prayer for Those Who Have Died

God of Consolation, We remember those who died. For those who have passed away quietly, we ask for joyous passage into your spacious heart.

For those who have suffered great pain, we ask for respite and the comfort of your compassionate embrace.

For those who have died too soon, in sudden and unexpected ways, we ask for peace and surrender into your loving care. Grant all of those who have died the grace of your eternal life and light.

Amen

Author: Unknown
Sr. Eileen Crawley
Sister Eileen Crawley, 94, formally known as Sister Mary Martha, died May 12, 2020, at St. Patrick’s Manor in Framingham, MA.
Sister was born in Central Falls, RI on November 14, 1926, a daughter of the late Patrick and Mary (Lavin) Crawley.
Sister Eileen entered the Sisters of the Presentation in 1942 and professed her final vows in 1948. She graduated in 1944 from St. Xavier Academy, Providence, RI. She is also a graduate of Regis College in Weston, Ma with a BA in English and Boston College with an MA in English. Sister pursued Post Graduate Studies at Notre Dame University, Indiana, and Fitchburg State University.
Her ministry included teaching in Connecticut, Rhode Island, in Leominster, Clinton, and Fitchburg where she taught at St. Bernard High School for fourteen years. She also worked at the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul, and Our Lady of Victory/St. Vincent DePaul, both in RI.
Sr. Eileen Crawley
- a woman who revealed in her every day life that joy is a sign of God’s presence.
- a capable teacher and administrator.
- a faithful community member and faithful friend to many.

Sr. Mary O’Neill
Sr. Mary O’Neill (Sr. Mary Nathanael) passed away at home in New Windsor, NY on Saturday, May 23, 2020, at the age of 88.
Sr. Mary was born on November 16, 1931 in Long Island City, NY, and entered the Sisters of the Presentation on September 8, 1950. She professed final vows on April 29, 1956. She graduated from St. Michael High School, Manhattan, and earned a BS in Education from Fordham University.
During her ministry, Sr. Mary taught at St. Andrew School, Clifton, NJ; St. Mary School, Pompton Lakes, NJ; St. Paul School, Yonkers, NY; and, Our Lady of Solace School, Bronx, NY. She taught and served as principal of St. John School, Goshen, NY. After her teaching career, Sr. Mary worked for Catholic Charities and served as pastoral minister at St. Mary Parish, all in Marlboro, NY from 1984-2003. She then worked in direct service to the poor at Newburgh Ministry in Newburgh from 2003-2018.
Seventy years ago, Sr. Mary O’Neill left her home and family in Astoria, NY to join the Congregation of Presentation Sisters. It was a journey she embraced wholeheartedly. Her service to God’s people included teaching, outreach to the home bound in Ulster Country as part of Catholic Charities and more recently, direct service to the disadvantaged and homeless in the City of Newburgh. Her religious name was Sister Mary Nathaniel and like her patron she was truly “without guile” (complicity).

Sr. Margaret Mary Welch
Sister Margaret Mary Welch, formerly known as Helen Welch, died July 5, 2020, at St. Patrick’s Manor in Framingham, MA. Sister was born June 20, 1932, in Fitchburg, MA, the daughter of the late Helen (Hession) and Alphonse Welch.
She was a graduate of St. Bernard’s High School and entered the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 24, 1955, professing her vows on August 20, 1963. Continuing her education, she received a BS and MED degree from Fitchburg State College and an Education Correspondence Course from St. Nicholas Montessori. Sister Margaret’s career included: St. Leo School, Julie Country Day School in Leominster, St Bernard, Holy Family in Fitchburg, St. Catherine, St. Mary in CT, and St. Joseph Montessori in Fall River.
Sr. Maggie loved children and felt most comfortable working in the pre-primary and primary grades. She was known for her perfection in teaching penmanship and loved teaching little children religion. Her artistic touch is seen in the many posters, signs and cards she made displaying beautiful calligraphy. Anyone who was a recipient of her cards treasured them.
She was also most supportive of our Associate Ministers. She attended the monthly prayer gatherings and meetings, and volunteered to help with the cooking when we had the retreats at Camp Joy. One could always feel Sr. Maggie’s love as we gathered for an Associates’ meetings.
Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, inspired by our foundress, Nano Nagle, commit ourselves to the Gospel values of hope, justice, freedom, and human dignity. In union with one another, we pledge ourselves to act for and with the poor and oppressed of our world, and to care for the earth.

Prayer Association

Our Sisters are mindful in their daily prayers of the intentions and prayer requests of our friends and benefactors. Masses are offered on the first Wednesday and the third Thursday of each month for all who have asked for prayerful support in the various aspects of their lives. Giving one of our attractively designed cards lets people know that you are remembering them in a unique way during a special time in their lives. The usual donation is $5.00 to be sent after you have used the card.

If you would like any of our beautiful prayer cards for Birthdays, Healing, Special Occasion, Thinking of You or Sympathy you may send your email requests to missionadvancement@sistersofthepresentation.org or you may write to Mission Advancement Office, Mt. St. Joseph, 84 Presentation Way, New Windsor, NY 12553.