

SPRING/SUMMER 2025



SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR STORIES
PRESENTATION

LANTERN

NEW WINDSOR

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MISSION *Statement*

We, the Sisters of the 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 Earth.

Presentation Lantern is a semi-annual publication of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In this issue



PAGE 6-7

Illuminating Our Partners

In honor of our 150th anniversary we held a gala friend-raiser in New York in May. Guests enjoyed reconnecting with the sisters and each other, learning more about our mission and supporting our continuing efforts.



PAGE 10-11

Spotlight on Lauryn Sweeney

Currently in the process of becoming an associate minister, Lauryn Sweeney has a deep connection to the congregation. She explains how her vocation as an educator will allow her to share the mission with others.



PAGE 12-15

Extending the Mission

We are continuing to find new ways to shine our lanterns in the dark spaces of our world, providing hope for those we encounter. As we do so, we are carrying forward our mission to serve those in need.

On the cover, Sister Mary Catherine Redmond shares a moment with a guest at our Christmas meal in New Windsor. Read more about this event on page 12.



From left, Sisters Catherine Cleary, Laura Urbano, Mary Catherine Redmond and Dorothy Scesny.

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Dear Presentation People,

And the mission continues ...

At the end of March, Presentation sisters and associate ministers came together to address what we are being called to in light of the changing focus in our country. We who stand for equality for all were struggling to find ways for every person to experience “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” The question that urged us on was: “What does God and humanity expect of men and women religious at this historical moment?” Believing in the God-given human dignity of all people, we chose to act in ways that serve the common good and honor the human rights of all peoples, especially the most vulnerable.

Through prayerful reflection and shared insights, we affirmed our dedication to living out our faith through actions that call forth compassionate policies that uplift rather than undermine the dignity of all.

As people committed to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, we knew that living the Gospel message is giving voice to the voiceless. We asked ourselves: “What can we do?” “What ought we do?” “What are we being called to do?” And so, we addressed how finding ways to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, and to welcome the stranger is what we have always done and will continue to do.

In mourning the death of Pope Francis, we again heard over and over the message Francis continually echoed and hoped all would make a part of their lives: “Live the values of the Gospel with faithfulness, courage, and unreserved love for the poorest in our midst and the most marginalized in our neighborhoods.”

When Pope Leo XIV greeted the world in St. Peter’s Square and proclaimed his desire for a synodal Church, walking with others and always seeking peace, charity and compassion for all who are suffering, as wise, nurturing and supportive women in mission, we chose this as our focus.

Sisters Mary Catherine Redmond, Catherine Cleary, Dorothy Scesny and Laura Urbano, Leadership Team

Mary Catherine Redmond Catherine Cleary Dorothy Scesny Laura Urbano



Sharing Our Light

Not Words But Deeds



Top, Sister Noreen Perelli plays her violin as part of the music ministry at the assembly.
Presentation sisters and associates gather for the annual assembly.
Right top, Sister Norma Carney and Associate Vera Pimpiano share Nano's flame during the opening ritual.
Right bottom, Sister Mary Byrnes and Sister Brian Barnicle enjoy a conversation at the assembly.



BY MARY CATHERINE REDMOND, PBVM

Our congregational assembly, held March 28-30, 2025, was an experience that deepened our vocation as vowed women religious and associate ministers. We reflected on our history and the living out of our current chapter commitment statement as we prayed, reflected, shared and moved into action.

Simone Campbell, SSS, invited us to deepen our insights and awareness of those in need. Judie Chalmers, portraying Nano Nagle in the play "Path Through the Dark," asked repeatedly, "Have I done enough?" as she told the story of Nano, concluding with the words, "You are equal to any task put before you."

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On our final day together Barbara Mullen, CSJ, led us through a process that called us to action. Hope leads to prophetic imagination which calls us to acknowledge the pain of this time and act on it. At the conclusion of our table conversations, the umbrella of our action was **human dignity** – reverencing the rights of every human being. The two areas of focus that arose from human dignity centered around food insecurity and immigration.

The work of the core groups (economic, environmental and racial) which has been focused on providing education through our monthly focus publication sent to sisters and associates, now shifts to action as we focus on the Gospel value of human dignity. This movement mirrors our chapter commitment as expressed in a statement we released following our assembly:

We, as Presentation sisters and associate ministers, believe in the God-given human dignity of all people. Our Gospel values compel us to demand the right of all to adequate food, shelter and medical care. We challenge the present administration to act in ways that serve the common good and honor the human rights of all in society, especially the most vulnerable. We also urge our leaders to consider in their decision-making the care of Earth as it impacts food insecurity and the world which we will leave to the next generation."

A planning group has been formed to begin the work of action, with a focus on how we can respond as a community to our commitment to the Gospel value of human dignity. As they examine proposed actions offered at the assembly various committees will be formed to move the work forward.

A Path Through the Dark

Judie Chalmers, a professional actress from Ireland, traveled to New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts to present her play, "A Path Through the Dark," to audiences of sisters, staff, associates and other partners. With each showing, Judie brought to life the story of Nano Nagle, expanding on her upbringing and the events that led her to devote her life to the poor and to educating children in a time when it was against the law to educate Catholic children in Ireland.

Nano's courage and commitment to serving those in need was an inspiration to all who were able to immerse themselves in the experience. In addition, Judie offered the opportunity for audience members to experience Cork in the 1700s by using virtual reality glasses. This project is being developed in Ireland and those who tried the VR glasses were impressed with the experience.

We are most grateful to Judie for her willingness to be with us during these days. She truly enflashed the spirit of Nano and participants left the performances moved, with many asking themselves the question Judie offered in the person of Nano several times, "Have I done enough?"

Top right, Sister Clare Roche has a conversation with actress Judie Chalmers after her performance.

Lower right, Sister Irene Goguen experiences Ireland in the 1700s through the use of VR glasses.



Illuminating Our Partners

Gala in New York Shares Mission

Nearly 130 sisters, associates and partners in mission gathered in New Rochelle, New York, for a 150th anniversary gala celebration in May. This event provided an opportunity for donors to support the mission of the congregation and to hear more about current efforts to continue to serve those in need.

Those gathered heard from Associates Noelle Molloy and Sharon Dapolito about why they choose to partner with the Presentation Sisters. In addition, several partners were featured in a mission video, sharing how they continue to live the mission.

Maryann Gisler, director of development for the congregation, shares, “We are so grateful to all who

supported our 150th gala. It was truly wonderful to celebrate with those who were able to attend. Your support is so important to us, and we are deeply grateful to have you as a partner in mission—reaching out to those most in need, especially women and children who are impacted by economic, environmental, and racial inequities.”

You can view videos from the event, including the mission sharing, and more photos at:

sistersofthepresentation.org/photoalbums/150th-anniversary-gala

sistersofthepresentation.org/videos



Dan Cronin, brother of Sister Nora Cronin, RIP, and his family at the gala.



Sisters Hannah Cox and Mary Eileen Troy with friends from their days serving in Howard Beach.



Sister Martha Otterstedt with friends.



Some of the alumni of St. Michael's in Manhattan gathered at the gala.

Sharing the Mission

Noelle Molloy



I have been an associate minister since November 2023; becoming an associate was the best decision that I ever made.

"Not words but deeds," the most powerful quote from our foundress Nano

Nagle, was a way of life for me even before becoming an associate. I have always felt that if I say something I need to be willing to do something. This is a sure sign that I was meant to be a Presentation associate.

The first people to teach me about *not words but deeds* were my youth group members. Prior to becoming an associate, I was a youth group leader for six years. The youth group taught me how to serve with love, dignity and respect. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end, and they decided to go off to college and leave me. When they left me, I was lost and needed to find another way to put words into action and that is when the Presentation Sisters found me.

I equate being an associate with being a part of the body. At our recent assembly in March, we were asked to stand on a body part and identify what part of the body of Christ we think we are. I stood on his feet but, quite honestly, I had a hard time picking just one part because we all are different parts at different times. In my eyes there is no part that is more important than another. We need each part of the body to function just as we need each other to fulfill our mission of addressing the needs of women and children.

I am honored to be a part of such a beautiful community that is committed to the Gospel values of hope, justice, freedom and human dignity. The opportunity to serve effectively happens when we talk less and do more and when we support each other. As Nano Nagle said, "There is no greater joy than to be in union." So, I hope as an associate I can continue to strengthen my partnership with all those who share in the Presentation mission and charism.

I will continue to take down my lantern and let my vision guide my feet with the question in my head, "Did I do enough?"

Sharing the Mission

Sharon Dapolito



I was a student at St. Bartholomew in Yonkers, where several Presentation sisters taught. I am currently a volunteer with the congregation and an associate minister. As I reflect on my journey, I find

myself at a remarkable full circle moment, one that fills my heart with gratitude, humility and a deep sense of connection to the Sisters of the Presentation.

When I think back to my earliest years of education, I cannot help but remember the nurturing environment the sisters created. Their dedication to not only teaching but also forming us as individuals of integrity, compassion and service left an indelible mark on me. It was in those formative years that I learned the values that would guide me throughout my life: kindness, a commitment to justice and the importance of giving back to our communities.

The lessons I learned from the sisters were not limited to the classroom. They were lessons of life, of how to live with purpose, how to lead with love, and how to serve others selflessly. As I moved forward in my own life, I carried those lessons with me, and now I am profoundly grateful for the incredible opportunity to come full circle from student to volunteer and eventually to associate minister. I have had the privilege of walking alongside the sisters, serving in a capacity where I could give back just a fraction of what was so generously given to me.

In this moment, I am reminded of just how deeply interconnected our lives are. I received a gift many years ago in the form of education and guidance. Now I have the chance to share in that same gift, to contribute to the mission and to walk in the spirit of love and service that has been such a beacon in my own life.

Thank you to the sisters for not only shaping my education, but also for allowing me to be part of this beautiful journey. Thank you for welcoming me into your community, for nurturing my spirit and for showing me what it means to serve with an open heart.



Sisters Pat Dowler and Dale McDonald



Associate Pauline Aliskevicz

Sharing the Light

Celebrating 150 Years of Mission



Sister Dorothy Scēsny



Sister Maria Lopez and Associate Katie Boudreau



Sister Linda LeBlanc, Associate Pauline Aliskevicz and Associate Patricia Lanza



Deb Wright, St. Bernard's School



From left, Sisters Brian Barnicle, Mary Naccarato, Irene Goguen, Dale McDonald, Eileen Carmody, Dorinne Lambert, Pat Dowler, Linda LeBlanc, Anna Raimon, Mary Catherine Redmond, Laura Urbano, Paula Cormier, Barbara King, Kathryn Geisel, Maria Lopez and Charlene O'Leary.



Sister Dorinne Lambert



Sister Brian Barnicle



Sister Paula Cormier



Lauryn Sweeney pictured with Sister Dorothy Scesny, IPA NGO Despoina Afroditi Milaki and Delois Blakey, goodwill ambassador to Africa.

Spotlight on Mission Partner Lauryn Sweeney

A Journey of Faith, Justice, and Global Advocacy

At just 21 years old, Lauryn Sweeney embodies the spirit of a global changemaker deeply rooted in faith and purpose. Originally from Southern California, Lauryn’s journey to her role as an associate minister is a testament to the power of community, the Holy Spirit and allowing her faith to shape her.

Lauryn’s connection to the Presentation Sisters began with her ties to the Presentation Sisters at St. Irenaeus Parish and School in Cypress, California. She grew up hearing from her mom, Jannine, about how the Sisters had helped build the kind of Catholic environment she valued. By the time she was a student at St. Irenaeus, the sisters were no longer actively teaching at the school, but their presence could still be felt. Lauryn also came to know them through their volunteer work, especially the food drive ministry of the parish.

As a student at Fordham University in New York, Lauryn encountered Sister Mary Catherine Redmond at Fordham’s weekly praise and worship. “In March of my sophomore year, Sister Mary Catherine gave a reflection for Women’s History Month,” Lauryn shares.

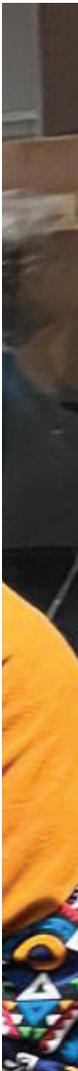
“Her words that night were honest and deeply rooted in prayer and lived experience.”

After that reflection Lauryn and a friend shared pizza with Mary Catherine. That casual evening of conversation was the beginning of a meaningful relationship.

“Over my time at Fordham I came to deeply respect Mary Catherine for the way she leads. She is a servant leader with humility, clarity and a vision rooted in prayer. Her leadership flows naturally from who she is. She has shown me that holiness is not about perfection. Instead, it’s about being authentic and leaning into the gifts God has given you and using them for others,” Lauryn says.

Lauryn says that Mary Catherine has been a steady presence and mentor, not only for her but also for so many young women at Fordham. “She listens, accompanies and invites us to live more deeply into who God is calling us to be,” she explains.

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Lauryn first learned about the associate minister program while on a retreat in New Windsor in the spring of 2024. By 2025, she found herself thinking more seriously about what kind of faith community she wanted to stay connected to after college.

“As a young person in the Church, it can be hard to find spaces that feel both grounded in faith and active in justice,” she shares. “The Presentation people community feels like one of these spaces. Their ongoing work and the way they talk honestly about injustice made me want to be a part of it.”

She was also influenced by her internship with the International Presentation Association (IPA). Inspired by her academic interests in international economics, politics, and theology, Lauryn joined the IPA as an intern—a role that transformed her passion for global advocacy into purposeful action.

At the heart of Lauryn’s ministry is a commitment to justice and a spiritual calling to a “wider sense of we.” Her work with IPA, especially in advocacy for the rights of women and children, care for the Earth, and respect for Indigenous peoples, resonated deeply with her values. “It just felt like it named something that was already within me,” she reflected.

One of Lauryn’s most impactful experiences was participating in the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations. There, she found inspiration in the intergenerational voices of women



At the March 2025 assembly Lauryn Sweeney experienced the life of Nano Nagle through the “A Path Through the Dark” play presented by Judie Chalmers, who let her try on “Nano’s” cloak.

who have long championed gender equality. “Just being in the room and having a voice, no matter how big or small, makes a difference,” she said, underscoring her belief in the power of civil society and faith-based advocacy.

Lauryn also helped organize a youth-led side event at the UN Youth Forum, focusing on the intersection of gender equality (SDG 5) and marine conservation (SDG 14). Collaborating with other young leaders and seasoned advocates, she helped create a space for vibrant, intergenerational dialogue.

In March 2025 Lauryn had the opportunity to gather with Presentation sisters and associates at their annual assembly. She found it to be one of the most impactful experiences with the Presentation community so far.

“What struck me most was how open the space was for hard, honest conversations,” Lauryn explains. “There were a wide range of personalities and perspectives in the room, yet everyone showed up with a shared commitment to discern how they might continue standing for justice in today’s social and political climate.”

Lauryn is inspired by how the sisters are creatively pursuing their ministries despite that fact that their age makes the ministries look different than they once did. She finds hope in their discernment of the question: *What role do I have in the body of Christ now?*

Looking ahead, Lauryn will pursue a master’s degree in education and teach middle school social studies and religion in South Texas. She sees this as a natural extension of her commitment to the Presentation mission: “I hope to share the Presentation mission by bringing a sense of global consciousness into the classroom. I want my students to understand that their lives are connected to a much wider world and that their choices, actions and perspectives matter beyond themselves.”

For Lauryn, sharing the Presentation mission means not letting her faith become disconnected. She will strive to allow her faith to shape how she engages with her students, her community and the world, always with a concern for human dignity.

A Division I volleyball player in college, Lauryn brings the same team spirit and resilience from the court to her ministry and advocacy. Her story is one of faith in action—committed to justice, grounded in community, and full of hope.



Presentation people gathered to provide a meal in Newburgh this past December as an extension of our mission to serve those in need.



Tending the Light

Meal in Newburgh: Mission in Action

In honor of the 150th anniversary of our foundation and in the spirit of Nano Nagle, who, with her sisters, served 50 poor people in Cork, Ireland, on Christmas Day in 1775, we held a service day on December 23. On this day sisters, staff, associates and partners in mission joined together to serve the poor of Newburgh.

Those who took part in the service experience were moved by their time spent not only serving a meal, but also listening to our neighbors who are often not heard. "Each person made a difference in the lives of the people we served," Sister Laura Urbano shares. "It also made a difference for each of us because we could experience the joy of what it means to be Presentation people."

We are continuing to find new ways to shine our lanterns in the dark spaces of our world, providing hope for those we encounter. In the months following this project Presentation people have begun a recurring service to provide lunches and toiletries to our neighbors in Newburgh. In addition, we have started a project to provide lunch for guests of Fearless! Hudson Valley, a ministry that provides services to victims and survivors of interpersonal violence, human trafficking, sexual violence and other crimes. We also strive to find ways to individually and collectively respond to the needs of organizations with like missions, like Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity, Orchard Street Rehab Center, and local food pantries, to better carry forth our mission to act for and with the poor and oppressed of our world and to care for the Earth.

On Mother's Day some of our New England associate ministers delivered gifts to mothers living at the Orchard Street Rehab Center, extending our mission to serve women and children.



Presentation people in New York regularly volunteer with Habitat for Humanity to provide homes for those in need in the area. Tasks range from cleaning to landscaping to painting and more.



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Sharing the Light

Thirteen New Associates



Top, new associate ministers in New York include: Marianna Kennedy, Patricia Fuller, Christine Calhoun, Bill Collopy, Vera Pimpiano, Sharon Dapolito and Lisa Olson.

At right, Peggy Sue Griswold and Charlene Duddy were welcomed as associate ministers in Massachusetts.



Below, In Louisiana we received four new associates. From left, Sister Dorothy Scesny, Sybil St. Julien (new), Carol Allen, Donaldo Batiste, Teresa Jones Bergeron (new), Nellie Dennis (new), Sister Laura Urbano and Wildred Wolfe-Miller (new).



In Loving Memory



Sister Marie (Mary Mercita) Sullivan

**June 12, 1929, to
January 5, 2025**

Sister Marie Sullivan was born in Clinton, Mass., and graduated from St. Bernard's High School. She entered the congregation on September 24, 1951.

Sister was primarily a teacher and librarian. She served in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, but her favorite place was the Red Cloud Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

A talented musician, Marie taught recorder and piano in schools and through private lessons.

Sister loved nature and enjoyed travel and camping.

Enhancing the Mission

In a variety of ways and locations, our sisters and associates are moving our mission into action as they work to advocate for and serve those most in need among us.

Top row: Following our Christmas meal in Newburgh, associates and sisters began an outreach program for those in need in Newburgh. They are working to take lunches and toiletry items to the streets of Newburgh, sharing and extending a listening ear to those they encounter.

Middle row: Sister Maria Lopez, left, joined Sister Eleanor Joyce and Associate Theresa Gaffney for a Hands Off Protest in New York. Sister Dorothy Scesny, right, joined associates and other partners in a protest in Massachusetts.

Bottom left: Sisters Gloria Perez, Norma Carney and Laura Urbano joined Orange County and Hudson Valley religious leaders, food banks, families, farmers and U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer to demand action against cuts to SNAP, an anti-hunger program.

Bottom right: associates and sisters engaged in service activities in New York, Massachusetts and Louisiana, pictured here, during the National Day of Service in January.



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Sale of Convent Extends Mission

Legacy Continues in Massachusetts

Above, the Church Street convent property. Inset, during a moving coin ceremony Gary Soldato presented Sister Mary Catherine Redmond with a challenge coin, a military symbol of appreciation, for the congregation. In return, Mary Catherine offered a lantern to the group, symbolizing carrying forth the light of the Presentation mission through this new partnership.

In a historic move that reflects both our commitment to service and continued dedication to the community, we are announcing the sale of our convent building in Leominster, Massachusetts, to Clear Path for Veterans, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping military veterans transition to civilian life with dignity and support.

The convent, which served as the heart of the Presentation Sisters' activities in Massachusetts for many years, will now house Clear Path for Veterans' expanded programs, offering a safe haven for veterans and their families as they navigate challenges related to mental health, reintegration and career development.

"We are honored to be passing on the stewardship of this sacred space to Clear Path for Veterans," said Sister Mary Catherine Redmond, president of Presentation Sisters. "As women religious, we have always believed in providing support to those in need. This partnership reflects our ongoing mission of compassion. The work that Clear Path does is truly life-changing, and we are proud to contribute to their mission of healing and empowerment."

Since its founding, Clear Path for Veterans has been a beacon of hope for local veterans. Their motto, "supporting the journey home," seeks to connect veterans with their community when they arrive home by offering wellness programs that include spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, physical and occupational wellness. By acquiring the convent property, the organization will be able to extend its reach and deepen its impact.

The sale of the convent building is part of our ongoing efforts to align our resources with the needs of the community, ensuring that our legacy of service continues for generations to come. As we move forward in our mission, we remain committed to living out our faith in action, fostering relationships, and providing support where it is needed most. The convent's new purpose, dedicated to veterans, embodies the spirit of the Presentation Sisters' mission, continuing our work in a new and profound way.

For more information about Clear Path for Veterans, please visit www.clearpathne.org.



ON OUR JOURNEY

Women of Courage, Faithful to the Mission

**Sisters of the Presentation
of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

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Picnic Celebration Closing Our Anniversary Year



September 20, 2025

Mark your calendar to join us in New Windsor as we celebrate the closing of our 150th anniversary year and look to the future with hope.