

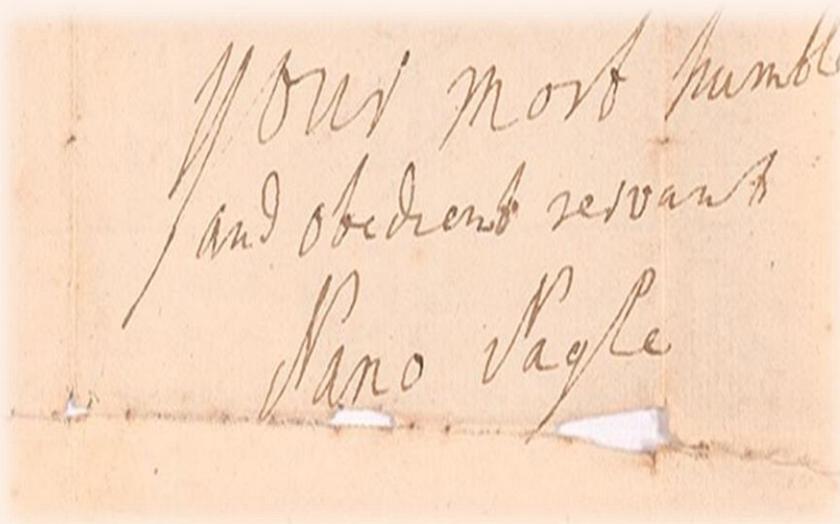


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The First Letter of Nano Nagle

Submitted by: Sr Assumpta O'Neill, pbvm



Venerable Nano Nagle wrote many letters in her time, the earliest one on record being written in the year 1769. Sr Assumpta O'Neill gives her explanation of this first letter written by Nano to Eleanor Fitzsimons:

On 17 July 1769, Nano sat down to write a letter. The letter is addressed to a Dublin woman called Eleanor Fitzsimons (Nellie to her friends). It is the earliest letter we have and it's quite long. Nano begins by

acknowledging the receipt of two letters from Eleanor, who was then a novice at an Ursuline Convent in Paris. The second section of the letter is an expression of compassion so characteristic of Nano. The essential meaning of compassion is to feel the suffering of another. We see it in Nano in her attitude to the poor Mass-goers in Paris. It is the moving spirit of her whole apostolate. Five new characters appear in the next paragraph. They are:

- Miss Coppinger and her mother
- Miss Shea and her father
- Mr Doran

It seems the two girls are planning to join Eleanor in Paris and the letter explains why they have not yet set out on the journey. Mr Doran is a Jesuit who came back from France after the suppression of the Jesuits. He is an uncle of Francis Moylan. Now watch a few lines down for the magic statement; "I will tell you how I began..." and so she does. Nano can certainly tell a story. Her uncle Joseph appears (she was the beneficiary

of his will) and her sister-in-law makes sure the boys as well as the girls will have schools. Fr Moylan, who is mentioned towards the end of the letter, is a young priest, seventeen years junior to Nano. Ordained in Toulouse he served as secretary for a year to the Archbishop of Paris and thought of becoming a Trappist. He was persuaded that his zeal was much needed in his own country. His young step-sister is also mentioned. She was undecided about her future just then. Keep an eye out for her later on!

Note also in this letter how Nano gives God the title 'Almighty'. It seems to have been her favourite way of naming God and is in itself an act of faith. Considering that this letter is more than 250 years old, there is surprisingly little difference between her English and ours, but a note may be called for on the use of the word 'ladies'. At the time, it was a word commonly used to mean 'nuns'. For example, in Waterford slightly later a legal document of the time mentions "the ladies of the Presentation and the Gentlemen of the Monastery" (Christian Brothers).



In 2018, to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Birth of Nano Nagle, the Congregational Leadership Team of the Presentation Sisters sponsored a PhD research project conducted by Deirdre Bennett, PhD scholar, and directed by Professor Deirdre Raftery - in collaboration with the School of Education and the Digital Library at University College Dublin. One element of this project was the Nano Nagle Digital Collection (which includes the digitisation of the Letters of Nano Nagle). You can view the letters on the UCD website:

<https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:153347>

Embracing Life - A Covid-19 Reflection

Submitted by: Sr Annmary Andrews, pbvm



Embracing life as it unfolds, makes sense to me today. Earlier, the word surrender, letting go etc. remained in my head. I had left Dominica, where I have been in ministry with Mary Therese and Lynette, in March 2020 for my home leave, combined with the first death anniversary of my dear mother, when our family would gather together to remember and to celebrate the continued presence of our ancestors gone by. As I reached Kerala, India, the lockdown began due to Covid-19 restrictions. I was advised by my family members to remain housebound for the safety of all.

During these days of lockdown, restrictions of many sorts and observing the sufferings all around me, I was forced to interact with nature. I had a lot of time to reflect on my own life in relation to the acceptance of my lived reality. I felt called to embrace life as it unfolded before me.

In my life, I always wanted to embrace people and situations according to my own expectations. I found it extremely challenging to love and accept situations and people that did not meet my expectations. I wanted to have control over every situation and people who came into my life.

I was inspired to use the time given to me fruitfully, so I spent my time observing what was happening within me and all around me. I was also able to reach out through WhatsApp to many individuals and families experiencing sickness, challenges of many kinds and even death. A lot of my time was spent in the garden observing, cultivating and harvesting etc. I realised that all the seeds I put down did not sprout, all the flowers bloomed did not produce fruit. I had no choice but to accept the reality of what was happening around in nature and in my own life.

I became conscious of the life force, the energy, behind all that was in nature. I realised that I had no control over my own breath, life and death. The Covid situation today, is affirming again that I need to surrender to that greater reality and surrender to the God of love and peace. I was challenged to look at all that I learned regarding God, faith etc. in my childhood, during formation, and later in my life in communities. I asked many questions about God, faith and ministry as a Presentation in today's context.

I feel that we as a PBVM family, can make a lasting contribution to the world. We can make a difference in the lives of people, we can minister to and for the sustainable development of our mother earth. We need to creatively identify and tap all the resources, both personnel and finance, and use them creatively and effectively, for promoting life in our communities and in the wider society around us.

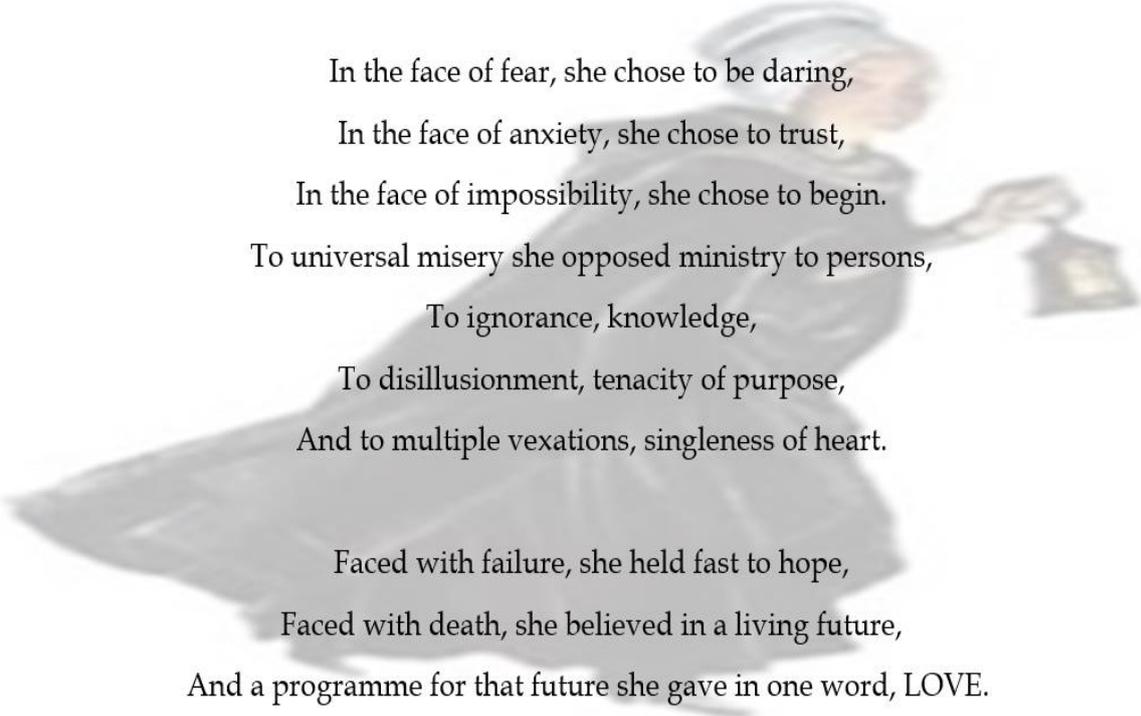
In today's society there are efforts made by scientists and spiritual leaders, calling all people of good will to come together to promote life, love and peace. Pope Francis is a great example, inspiration and encouragement for all of us. Ours is a time when many are trying to make sense of their own religion and are striving for a spirituality that can bring meaning and purpose in their own lives and in the lives of those who find their lives very challenging and meaningless. I ask myself "what am I called to do as a Presentation Sister today?"



I was reminded of Nano, who faced the challenges of her time with great faith, courage and compassion. Today, there are greater needs, resources and opportunities for us as Presentations. The IPA webinar that took place was a tangible example of this reality for me.

I am reminded of the poem by Raphael Consedine;

Nano Nagle



In the face of fear, she chose to be daring,
In the face of anxiety, she chose to trust,
In the face of impossibility, she chose to begin.
To universal misery she opposed ministry to persons,
To ignorance, knowledge,
To disillusionment, tenacity of purpose,
And to multiple vexations, singleness of heart.

Faced with failure, she held fast to hope,
Faced with death, she believed in a living future,
And a programme for that future she gave in one word, LOVE.

This Covid time when we are faced with many uncertainties and challenges like the existence of us as Presentation Sisters, the existence of all living species and mother earth, we have a greater mission before us. We need to gather all our faith, courage, strength, love and perseverance, in order to journey ahead. We need to make systemic changes to issues related to our own personal life, life in communities and in the mission.

News from Canada

Submitted by: Sisters Kay Rex and Mary Ryan, pbvm

Ministry Reflection - Xavier House



Xavier House, previously Xavier Convent, the home of our Sisters who lived and worked in the Corner Brook area, opened its doors to a new ministry in 1985. It is now a supportive home for women and men suffering from complex mental health issues. As the Leadership Report of 2020 states: "As part of our ongoing ministry among those made poor, this ministry creates an atmosphere of love, healing and joy, in which all receive respect, dignity and professional care." This is the only ministry of its kind in

Newfoundland.

Since 2017, Xavier House has been operated by lay leadership in compliance with Western Health, but under the umbrella of the Congregational Leadership. To quote from the Leadership Report of 2020, "we have enlarged the Board with directors of varying and necessary expertise and plan to move from the position of Chair as soon as we plan for our continued sponsorship of this vital ministry which has been close to our hearts for over thirty-five years."



For over these many years, our Sisters worked and volunteered here at the House. It was work like none other as they built on the gifts of each individual resident. Cards, painting, bowling, darts, sing-a-longs, dancing, you name it, all is intended to involve the residents and make them feel good about themselves.



Birthdays, Christmas and other milestones are celebrated in great style. Some of the newer residents are emotional as they have never had a celebration of their birthdays before and they break down with tears of joy. As so many of the staff admit, they themselves come in with a smile and leave with cheerful hearts. There is a lovely positive air here at all times. We have our ups and downs, of course, that's life, but staying down is not who we are here at Xavier House.

While I don't work here, I'm involved with all their major activities and eat with the staff each day. That, too is something peculiar to Xavier House. They have their own Dining Room and after the residents are served first, they gather for the lunch that is provided for them. Sometimes, that's where the most meaningful conversation takes place.

So, why would I share all of the above? I'm not part of the staff but live in the Convent area on the back of Xavier House. I mix among staff and residents and experience the above from day to day. Anyone writing up the purpose of Xavier House would probably not include these little touches but that's what makes the House so special and different from other workplaces. Students who come here for their work terms just fall in love with the place and the residents.

When Covid restrictions are not in force, I'm ministering to the sick and elderly at the Long-Term Care Residences and other Senior's homes, often leading a sing-a-long or visiting the sick in their own family homes. Being the choir director and organist at the Cathedral keeps me in touch with the lives and concerns of the choir members and the congregation at large.



When Covid is over, we'll be able to continue with our plans for liturgies for the residents. One of the residents sings with the Adult choir and looks forward to Sunday morning. He has a nice voice and blends in with the other members. He just wandered up to the choir one morning and took his place among the others. Thank God, he can sing in tune and we could welcome him sincerely. So, that's why my Presentation presence at Xavier House here in Corner Brook is so giving and special!



Xavier House is now separately incorporated with its own Board of Directors and operates as a charitable entity. While Xavier House is under the direction of Western Health, we as Presentation Sisters still hold the licence and subsidise the operation for the benefit of the residents.

My Pastoral Ministry in Bishop Falls, NL Canada



Day to day life in Parish Ministry can bring a lot of variety, both challenging and gratifying, especially in these Covid times. I am always happy to serve and sometimes in ways that are quite unplanned or simply spontaneous and unpredictable. In Nano's words, "if I could be of service...I would gladly do all in my power."

In our Parish here in the small community of Bishop Falls, I primarily assist with our Catechists in coordinating the Religious Education Program Grades 1-8, including

Sacramental Preparation. I am also involved in the Parish RCIA Program (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Serving in the Parish is truly a gift. The gifts go both ways, as with all our ministries.

The needs are very local and at the same time, the focus can become both ecumenical and global. That was the case with a recent World Day of Prayer Celebration when a Salvation Army Major was our guest speaker and the concentration was on the women of Zimbabwe with the theme, 'Rise, take up your may and walk'. Our Zimbabwe connection as Presentation Sisters is very strong. We have been 'twinning' with our Sisters in Zimbabwe for more than twenty years and savour the connection.



During last Fall our local Knights of Columbanus members invited a group from the community to an Appreciation Luncheon to honour their community involvement. I was readily and happily counted among them along with the other catechists. In small communities like ours, Parish and community are so often synonymous.



This past Christmas, with Covid preventing our 'Carol Sing-along', we instead had a 'Memory Tree'. I was again happy to participate with the Parish. The tree was decorated by our Parish Secretary with very touching white paper dove ornaments she had made bearing the names of loved ones. Families in turn made a monetary donation to the Parish which continues to be used to support Parish happenings and address Parish needs throughout the year.

Where I minister is nearly a four-hour drive from our Motherhouse in St John's. As weather and now, Covid allow, I also look forward to our gatherings with all of our Sisters from around the Province during the year ahead.

Celebration of Perpetual Profession in Sehore Community, India North

Submitted by: Sr Phyllis, pbvm



3 July 2021 was a memorable day in the history of Sehore Community as five of our young, vibrant Sisters made their Perpetual Profession on this day at Sehore Chapel, amidst the onslaught of a Covid-19 second wave looming large in the country.

Availing of the professional expertise of the CMI Fathers made it possible for us to do the live streaming of the entire ceremony so that the Presentation Family and well-wishers across the globe



and the near and dear ones of Sisters Jayasri Vedanayagam, Maria Stephy Arockiasamy, Anish Priya Peter, Kessy Rodrigues and Infant Deepika Dharmar could partake in the celebration within the safety and comfort of their own homes.

The local Ordinary, Most Rev Dr Leo Cornelio - the Archbishop of Bhopal, was delighted to be the main celebrant for this particular group of Sisters as he had officiated their First Profession seven years ago and had seen them sent out to their respective mission places in different parts of the country. This fact made

the event an extra special one and gave a personal touch to the whole celebration. Rev Fr Francis Scaria, the Parish priest and the co-celebrant of the day was also the one who guided and directed their retreat prior to their Profession. The Province Leader and the Team Member, the immediate accompanying Formators and the Novice community from Gandhi Nagar were the only off-line participants present, other than the community at Sehore.



Immediate after this soulful Eucharistic celebration we had a short felicitation of the newly professed and the cutting of the ceremonial cake, followed by the Agape meal together, which made it an unforgettable day for all.

Significant International Dates in September

There are many dates throughout the month of September that hold both humanitarian and ecumenical importance.

5 September - International Day of Charity



Charity, like the notions of volunteerism and philanthropy, provides real social bonding and contributes to the creation of inclusive and more resilient societies. Charity can alleviate the worst effects of humanitarian crises, supplement public services in health care, education, housing and child protection. It assists the advancement of culture, science, sports, and the protection of cultural and natural heritage. It also promotes the rights of the marginalized and underprivileged and spreads the message of humanity in

conflict situations. In the [2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development](#) adopted in September 2015, the United Nations recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable

development. The Agenda also calls for a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. It also acknowledges the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals, and that of civil society organizations and philanthropic organizations in the implementation of the new Agenda.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/charity-day>

9 September – International Day to Protect Education from Attack



Around the world, attacks on children continue unabated, as warring parties flout one of the most basic rules of war: the protection of children. The protracted nature of conflicts today is affecting the futures of entire generations of children. Without access to education, a generation of children living in conflict will grow up without the skills they need to contribute to their countries and economies, exacerbating the already desperate situation for millions of children and their families. A child's right to education cannot be safeguarded in conflict zones without education itself being protected. Education can be a life-saver. Out of

school, children are easy targets of abuse, exploitation and recruitment by armed forces and groups. School should provide a safe space where children can be protected from threats and crises. It is also a critical step to breaking the cycle of crisis and reduces the likelihood of future conflicts. The Day draws attention to the plight of more than 75 million 3-to-18-year-olds living in 35 crisis-affected countries and to their urgent need of educational support. It expresses concern over the effects of continued violence on these children and their ability to access education, whose consequences require special attention beyond the needs of learners whose establishments were temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/protect-education-day>

15 September – International Day of Democracy



The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has resulted in major social, political and legal challenges globally. As states around the world adopt emergency measures to address the crisis, it is critical that they continue to uphold the rule of law, protect and respect international standards and basic principles of legality, and the right to access justice, remedies and due process. UN Secretary General António Guterres has urged governments to be transparent, responsive and accountable in their COVID-19 response and ensure

that any emergency measures are legal, proportionate, necessary and non-discriminatory. "The best response is one that responds proportionately to immediate threats while [protecting human rights and the rule of law](#)," he said.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/democracy-day>

21 September – International Day of Peace



Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire. In 2021, as we heal from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are inspired to think creatively and collectively about how to help everyone recover better, how to build resilience, and how to transform our world into one that is more equal, more just, equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and healthier. The pandemic is known for hitting the underprivileged and

marginalized groups the hardest. By April 2021, over 687 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered globally, but over 100 countries have not received a single dose. People caught in conflict are especially vulnerable in terms of lack of access to healthcare.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>

26 September – International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons



Achieving global nuclear disarmament is one of the oldest goals of the United Nations. It was the subject of the General Assembly's first resolution in 1946, which established the Atomic Energy Commission (dissolved in 1952), with a mandate to make specific proposals for the control of nuclear energy and the elimination of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The United Nations has been at the forefront of many major diplomatic efforts to advance nuclear disarmament since. In 1959, the General Assembly endorsed the objective of general and complete disarmament. In 1978, the first Special Session of the

General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament further recognized that nuclear disarmament should be the priority objective in the field of disarmament. Every United Nations Secretary-General has actively promoted this goal. Yet today [around 13,080 nuclear weapons remain](#). Countries possessing such weapons have well-funded, long-term plans to modernize their nuclear arsenals. More than half of the world's population still lives in countries that either have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances. While the number of deployed nuclear weapons has appreciably declined since the height of the Cold War, not one nuclear weapon has been physically destroyed pursuant to a treaty. In addition, no nuclear disarmament negotiations are currently underway.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/nuclear-weapons-elimination-day>

Keep up to date with our Presentation Sisters, Friends of Nano and Associates around the world. If you have a story or article you would like to share, please email it to

communications@pbvm.org

