



Nano's Echo

Newsletter of the Friends of Nano

A Spirit-led initiative of the International Congregation of Presentation Sisters (Union) which celebrates and promotes the charism of Nano Nagle in new and creative ways

DECEMBER 2021

At the heart of our movement lies:

A partnership with the Divine

we attend to God each day and our actions are informed by that commitment.

A passion for the poorest

we stand with the poorest in society.

A covenant with creation

honouring all of creation, we live and promote sustainable lives.

Nano's Echo is for everyone. Please share it far and wide.

For nothing will be impossible with God. Luke 1:37

Christmas is so much more than the birth of a baby!

As we edge closer to Christmas it can be easy to get caught up in a secular culture of Santa Claus, decorative trees, gifts, and shiny lights. These things are not a problem unless they become the sole focus. As adults we may reflect on the birth of Jesus to uncover what may need to be birthed anew in us.

The coming of the Christ child may be seen as a continuation of the great love story that is played out in the Old Testament and the covenant God made with the people of old. God was with them through floods, plague, pestilence, displacement, wars, famines and in the midst of all the chaos. The people expected a saviour to come and create something new. God's covenant was fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

The Old Testament stories are echoed today as we recognize the current mess in our world: climate change, displaced people, famine, civil unrest, a global pandemic, and the list goes on. God is still with us and we may expect something new to be born once again. While the chaos of the present day may seem overwhelming, we are called to collaborate with God. Can we be open to respond to this invitation?

Christmas was a special time for Nano and we know it was Christmas Eve 1775 that the Presentation congregation was born. Christmas Day 1777 Nano invited 50 beggars

for dinner and Nano and her fledgling community waited on them.

In the following pages you will discover

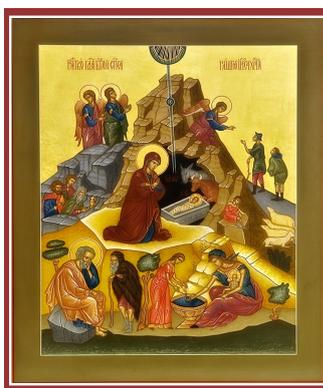
Friends of Nano in New Zealand, America and Pakistan, inspired by Nano to provide food and essentials for people on the margins, with special celebrations at Christmas. There is a story from England showing that sometimes the marginalized are our own family members. South India is birthing something new in the creation of a **Friends of Nano**

group for children. North India shares a story of practical support given to a family after the loss of a son, husband, and father to the pandemic. Presentation Day in the Philippines was celebrated by visiting and taking gifts of food to some elderly in the community. A sister in Pakistan shares how she appreciates ministering alongside **Friends of Nano**. All the stories show **Friends of Nano** continuing to respond to God's call, demonstrating that Christ is alive in the world today. Included on page two are bonus videos on prayer and on the final page an excellent presentation on Nano's early years.

Let us pray we will be able to slow down and enter into a contemplative space to be more aware of how God is with us, always has been, and always will be.



Mary-Ann Greaney
New Zealand



Click to play

We pray we will be overflowing with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love and when Christ comes this Christmas He will find a warm welcome in every person we meet.

Thinking about our partnership with the Divine

Sometimes prayer seems to evade us, it can be hard to find time or may even seem pointless. Maybe we have become a little stale in the way we pray. Advent and the weeks following may be a good time to review our prayer life and perhaps try a new way of praying. On offer are two excellent and engaging video clips on prayer. Robert Barron and James Martin are highly regarded, and in 2017 Pope Francis appointed Martin as a consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communications. If you are able to gather in groups in these Covid times you may like to view and reflect together.



Robert Barron is auxiliary bishop in the Los Angeles Archdiocese and offers a 13 minute presentation on prayer. His talk offers recommendations on how to improve your prayer life. It is helpful and worth a listen.

To view videos click on the photo



James Martin is an American Jesuit priest and prolific writer of spiritual books including books on prayer. The half hour clip is from his recent book 'Learning to pray' where he speaks about prayer in general and shares different ways of praying.

Christmas Dinner

Today I was asked, "When is dinner?" Inspired by Nano's Christmas dinner shared with fifty beggars, Stewart and I participated in starting a parish outreach dinner for the hungry. The dinner was initially sponsored by the Presentation Sisters. These days funding and catering come from parishioners. The guests have been coming now each month for seven years. They appreciate the food that we try to make a treat, rather than simply sustainable, but more than this they enjoy the fellowship. Guests and volunteers eat together, they break bread and share their stories. Most come every month and others come off the street responding to the invitation posted outside the Church.

Like Nano, Stewart and I have learnt the value of hospitality. The meal preparation, the eating and sharing of food, the fellowship, is Eucharist. Unfortunately, the doors that separate the body of the Church from the foyer where the dinner is held symbolise for us the disconnection of the poor and marginalised from our Sunday Mass. Our dinner guests religiously come to dinner every month but would not come to Mass on Sunday.

Our grandchildren love to help when they can. It makes them aware that people are struggling in our community. Like our dinner guests they are not so keen to come to Mass on Sunday. We are privileged to be in communion with our dinner guests once a month. The answer to the question, "When is dinner?" is Tuesday December the 21st. It will be Christmas dinner. Come early, when again we will enjoy food and fellowship with friends we know and those we are hoping to meet.



Teresa and Stewart Homan
New Zealand

Joy Project: Christmas collaboration in North Dakota

Nano provided the model for collaboration by reaching out to the Ursuline Nuns three centuries ago, although there were obstacles to be overcome. Perhaps collaboration is the key to change in our world today. For the last five years, the Sisters and **Friends of Nano** in Fargo, North Dakota, have collaborated with the **Joy Project** started six years ago by Marisa Bengston-Loerzel to provide meals and gifts to people in shelters and temporary housing on Christmas Eve. They started with three locations: the Gladys Ray Shelter, the Dorothy Day House and Project Hart and last year served almost 400. Because of the pandemic, this project has had to adapt.



Nevertheless, Jess Gordon will coordinate **Friends of Nano** efforts to cook for 50 people at the Gladys Ray Shelter, including staff from Presentation Partners in Housing, on Christmas Eve 2021. This project mirrors the legacy of Nano's Christmas dinner for 50 homeless people in 1777 and it follows her call to action, "Not Words but Deeds." (Picture is from 2019, when cooking was done in the shelter, and meals didn't have to be delivered in containers. **Click on picture** to view short clip.)



Kathy Hogan
America

Christmas is the presence of a happy family all wrapped up with one another



Christmas is a time for giving and receiving, for caring and sharing. Christmas is a time for making an effort to be with those who are important to us. It allows us to be together and do things that don't happen every day, to bond deeper and appreciate each other even more.

Christmas is about spreading love to everyone. So we **Friends of Nano** Peshawar tried to spread love with the ones who do not have resources and loved ones to take care of them. Nano invited 50 beggars on Christmas eve, so we maintained the tradition and celebrated this time of joy with the most needy.

We are happy and feeling blessed that we celebrated this time with the people neglected and shared love and joy...We will continue and carry on Nano's mission and take one step beyond.



Carol Sohail Bhatti
Pakistan

Angel's story

Angel was born on April 22, 2012, the 11th child to my wife's brother, Juanito Guelen Ci, and wife Susan Delos Reys Cantoria-Cid, in Masbate, South Luzon, Philippines. Unfortunately, Juanito met an untimely death prior to the birth, and Susan was unable to look after the



new-born Angel. Due to lack of care, Angel became ill and ended up in hospital. My wife Gina and I decided we needed to get Angel proper treatment and provide her a healthy future. As we were living in the UK, we asked Gina's sister Perla to look after Angel. After leaving hospital Angel lived with Perla and her family, and we travelled

to the Philippines twice during this three-year period. As we had a house in San Pedro Laguna, just south of Manila, we decided that Angel's education would be better served by moving Angel there. We also appointed a solicitor to start adoption proceedings and enrolled Angel at the Sisters of Mary Immaculate School, where

her teacher, Sr Suzette, taught Angel for two years preschool.

In September 2016 Gina and I moved to the Philippines on a permanent basis to improve our bonding with Angel and to advance the adoption process. Angel completed her Grade One year at Mary Immaculate School with good marks.

The adoption petition was submitted and we had assessments by social services, medical and psychological tests and court appearances.

Angel settled in well at her new school, at the end of Grade Two, and made her First Communion there.

The Philippines was badly affected by the Covid pandemic and this caused cancellations for quite a few court hearings. Angel's school had to go to distance online teaching.

In August 2021 we got the good news that the court had granted our adoption petition. There are still a few more obstacles to cross before we can bring Angel to the UK but we live for that day.

Bas and Gina Walton
England

The First Noel



Friends of Nano for school children

"I can assure you my schools are beginning to be a service to a great many parts of the world" (Nano Nagle).

At a Province level gathering of **Friends of Nano** of South India Province, held in February 2020, it was suggested we start a **Friends of Nano** group for the children of our schools.

Alas Covid and resulting school closures caused a delay.

Now that schools have reopened, we have started a Children's **Friends of Nano** group at Theni, a small town in the southern part of our province. The venue is our Presentation Convent School. When approached, the headmistress of our school gladly agreed to our plan and helped to identify interested children. Twenty students of grade nine and eleven (under age 15) volunteered to join the movement.

With the blessings of the Provincial Leadership Team, Headmistress of school, and Animator and Sisters of the local community, the movement was inaugurated on 3rd December the Feast of St. Francis Xavier.



In the initial three months it has been planned to train the students on the following:

- 1) Biography of Nano - her charism and spirituality and the history of the **Friends of Nano** movement.
- 2) Awareness of climate change, domestic violence against women and children and child abuse
- 3) Leadership development, time management, life style modifications, building relationships etc.
- 4) Contemplative dialogue.

After training we will encourage, guide, and support the students to take up activities of their choice which would be possible for them in the local area and school.

We pray to Nano to spread the light of her lantern and guide and lead us in this new endeavour.



John Britto
South India

That's what friends are for!

The love and concern for another emanates from the will to be there for him/her. The selfless and generous gesture might be a miracle for the one in need. I could witness the presence of Ven. Nano Nagle, inspiring me to respond to the needs of those around me. I kept pondering on the thought, how the Lady with the Lantern acted when faced with challenges and sufferings of others.

Who could have fathomed that the class of 1993, Hotel Management Course at Delhi would come together after more than 28 years since college graduation to help the family of a close friend and batch mate, Mr. Tapan Sinha, who succumbed to the pandemic. He left behind his aged parents, a homemaker wife, a college daughter and

the younger one in class 11. The savings were meagre owing to the pandemic.

Seventy of us came together and contributed five million rupees towards this noble cause. It was given as a loan by the group with a clause that none of us would ask the friend's wife ever to return it. We also ensured that Saniya, the younger daughter, was enrolled in the prestigious STEP programme of The Oberoi Trident Hotel, Mumbai, India, ensuring her a good job.

It is heartening to have friends who care. May God and Ven. Nano bless our humble endeavours eternally.

Dhira Madan
South India



Francis of Assisi, is credited with staging the first nativity scene in 1223. The only historical account we have of Francis' nativity scene comes from *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan monk who was born five years before Francis' death. There were live animals - an ox and an ass.

Reaching out to the elderly

After a year of no outreach program due to the Covid pandemic, this year has been a “relief”. In line with the celebration of Presentation day, the Parolitas (**Friends of Nano**) introduced an adopt-the-aged program on November 18, 2021.



Inspired by the mission and charism of the Presentation Sisters and Nano Nagle, we identified fifteen poor

elderly men from six barangays (small village) of our community to receive a pail of groceries, dressed chicken and a loaf of bread. The gift is a simple manifestation of concern and love from us and a few generous alumni from our institution. The opportunity to see their actual miserable situation and listen to their different inspiring stories moved us to be more sensitive and compassionate. We ended the moment of sharing with a prayer for the family and gave them tomato seedlings, a symbolic token of appreciation for accepting us. We challenged them to let the seedlings grow and yield fruit to share with others.

It's not just the act of giving (dole out) that matters but the joy felt by both the giver and the receiver as a result of this activity. The joy behind every smile that met us during this visit, their feeling of being able to survive, made this experience for us Associates meaningful and fulfilling.



Myrna Denaque
Philippines

We network with people and groups whose charism and values resonate with ours

With immense joy I would like to express my deepest gratitude for working with **Friends of Nano** in Khushab, Josephabad. We organized the nine Days of the Presentation Novena in our chapel in a prayerful and reflective way. As a result of this, the women who participated were able to learn about those women in the Old Testament who struggled and had trusted in



God's providence. This spiritual journey enabled them to cope with the daily struggle and they related their own stories with those women beautifully. Their cooperation was beautiful and meaningful.

After completing the novena, on 23rd November, we Sisters arranged the programme to pay tribute to their dedicated and committed service. We started with the name of almighty God. Then we had a festive lunch and recreation with them. All went very well, and they were grateful to God and to us as well. We were full of praise for all the sisters who worked with us in the past and we prayed for them.

May the loving Lord continue to bless each one of us that we may work together in His vineyard to serve the people joyfully.



Saima Fazal PBVM
Pakistan

Did you know that Nano is considered a double foundress? Not only did she found the Presentation Sisters in 1775 but also the **Irish Ursulines** in Cork in 1771. There are links to other foundations also. **Edmund Rice**, the founder of the Presentation and Christian Brothers was so greatly impressed by the ministry of Presentation Sisters for the poor, he was motivated to do something similar for boys. He was instrumental in helping sisters set up the Waterford foundation and is known to have helped individual sisters financially. **Catherine McAuley**, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy received her novitiate with the Presentations at Georges Hill, Dublin.

Nano's early years



The young Nano by Ella Yates. The mural is at Ballygriffin. Completed in 2014

Mary Brien PBVM offers a webinar that is a real gold nugget. **Click on the image** to take you to the webinar. Mary has some excellent material on Nano that has come to light in more recent years - material that was unknown to earlier biographers. The presentation lasts an hour including some technical challenges at the beginning. You may like to use the webinar as a basis for further reflection on Nano. The presentation was made possible by Nano Nagle Place in Cork.



A prayer for Christmas

God in the return to a simplified Christmas; God in the advent of extravagant joy:

May we, who are so accustomed to connecting happiness with an accumulation of things, receive the gift of valuing the connections we already have.

May a stripped down celebration and a slower pace to the holiday reveal the treasure that was ours all along.

And may we find in the strangeness of this year's Christmas the wonder that was present in its first incarnation.

Amen.

Corrymeela Community, Ireland

If I were . . .

If I were a flame
I would be a lantern
Light in the darkness
Becoming the symbol of the Lady with the lantern
As the light of her lantern brought hope
Into the lives made wretched by poverty and
oppression

If I were a word
I would be "Passion"
A strong desire to do great things
Defined by the one who practiced me
A lady with courage and strength
Whose faith was firm

And if I were a story
I'd be the Story of Nano Nagle
Great inspiration and endless change
Pursued by Jesus Christ and His
Blessed Mother
A friend of poor and lover of children
Who became the symbol of
Presentation sisters worldwide.



Carol Sohail Bhatti
Pakistan

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