

Associate Partnership

CHARISM



Associate Partnership

.....

Conversation Three Charism

Welcome

God is manifest in the day-to-day ordinary and extra-ordinary experiences of our lives.
You are each invited to share an experience or insight from your life since we were last together.

Prayer

Light a lantern and enter into prayerful meditation.

Reader 1

Charism

Charism is the heart of the founder aglow at one period in history

Beating on in us in another day and age ...

Charism is tree, branch, flower, fruit ...

An ever-changing, always rooted obsession

For the coming reign of God, where the reign of God is needed most,

One that develops from age to age

And then grows up in a new way in the next one.

Charism is a living passion for whatever dimension of the life of Christ ...

Peace, truth, healing, mercy ... is missing now.

Here in our time,

Where we are.

(Joan Chittister, OSB)

Quiet Reflection/Contemplation

What word or phrase from the poem speaks to you, challenges you, or do you have a question about?

Reader 2 *(1 Corinthians 12:4-11)*

The variety and the unity of gifts: There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction given by the same Spirit; and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing through this one Spirit; one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy; another the gift of recognizing spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as God chooses.

Associate Partnership

.....

You are probably very familiar with this translation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Listen to it now from a different translation.

Reader 3 *(The Message)*

God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

Quiet Reflection/Contemplation

How would you explain/describe the purpose of the gifts and how are they meant to be used? If you had to name your gifts what would they be?

Shared Reflection on Charism, Hospitality and Radical Hospitality

Definitions of Charism

Charism is a Greek word meaning "gift." Charisms are universally present in the Church. Often they are gifts quite ordinary in nature and are given to individuals for the good of others. We understand charism as both a gift and a call to become someone and/or do something on behalf of others. The action of the charism is directed toward the reign of God.

A charism is a gift of the creative Spirit, a sign of God's unconditional and boundless love for the world. The person or group who receives a charism, receives it for the benefit of others. A charism, by its very nature, is to be shared; it cannot be retained within boundaries. It is a gift of dynamic life and energy for the building up of the Church. *(Associate Handbook, page 5)*

How are charisms in this sense different from talents, skills and other gifts we might have?

Think of specific examples from Nano's life that demonstrate her charisms. Do you think Nano would have named her actions as charism? Explain your thoughts.

Associate Partnership

Founding Charism of the Community

Charism is a word often used in religious congregations to refer to the distinct spirit that animates a religious congregation. (*Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, Nashville*)

“The founding charism is the gift or gifts which enable the founder/foundress to commence and develop the congregation. In a sense, there is only one founding charism: the gift of the faith-insight, courage and creative energy to develop a Gospel response to particular needs in the single and universal mission of the Church. However, because this charism is shaped and coloured by the spirituality and life-experience of the recipient and by the particular situation in which it’s exercised is called forth, each founding charism acquires its own distinctiveness.”

(*Fire on the Earth, page 13*)

“For the first community this founding charism becomes in turn the major shaping force of their shared lifestyle and spirituality: their life as community is a particular way of response to the Gospel. Particular Gospel insights become important to them and are emphasized in the lived tradition or the written constitutions.

Presentation women throughout the world have continued to seek renewal and to base our renewal on the Gospels and on the original vision and true spiritual heritage of our congregation. We have made serious efforts to revitalize traditional ministries and to introduce new ones in order to share the Gospel with the poor-the over-riding reason for our presence in the Church as a religious congregation.” (*Fire on the Earth, page 14*)

“Nano’s overriding concern was reaching the people with the Good News in word and action.”

(*Fire on the Earth, page 18*)

The sisters (and associates) are the guardians of Nano’s dream to engage in the mission of God in a distinctive way. Nano’s charism is nurtured and maintained by the community.

(*International Presentation Association (IPA) Website*)

The Presentation charism is defined as an active love which moves persons to share the Gospel with the poor. The over-riding charism of the Dubuque Presentation Sisters is hospitality.

(*Associate Handbook, page 5*)

Associate Partnership

.....

Hospitality

Hospitality was a characteristic of Nano's life. This hospitality was an essential aspect of her solidarity with those who were poor and vulnerable. It was Nano's way of being present to those who were poor, her style of service. She was not judgmental of their personal circumstances; she was not critical of their way of life, nor condescending towards them. She did not expect more from them than their social, political and economic realities enabled them to give. She was hospitable towards them. Her style of being present was that of a "welcoming heart" and a practical intelligence that enabled her to be compassionate as well as strategic in addressing the unjust structures that kept them poor. This is the gift and the challenge she has left us as Presentation people. (*International Presentation Association (IPA) Website*)

What draws you to hospitality?

How would you describe a "welcoming heart?"

We each have weaknesses and limitations. What are some examples that might hold you back from living hospitality?

Quiet Reflection/Contemplation

What is stirring within you at this time?

Radical Hospitality

As Dr. Gina Wolfe stated in her presentation at 2017 Community Days, "Radical hospitality should both disturb and stretch us. It is not always comfortable or popular, and it is not just an invitation, it is an imperative. Think about the many Gospel stories that recount the countless times Jesus abandons the social conventions of his times – he eats with sinners and tax collectors; he touches lepers; he speaks to women, even the Samaritan woman at the well; he washes feet. Sometimes he welcomes those who come to him; other times he goes out to them. At all times, however, he makes manifest the hospitality of God, the invitation to participate in God's redemptive love. We are called, as others before us have been, to participate in this hospitality. Sometimes we're the guest, sometimes the host; at all times, however, we are called to reverence one another, to engage in mutual reverence.

We live in a culture that more often than not sees things in terms of winners or losers, or what economists call a zero-sum game – one person's gain is another person's loss. Radical hospitality challenges us to recognize, accept and appreciate God's graciousness and abundance and to acknowledge that in its extravagance God's love overflows so that all can share in it – no one loses. We are called to share in God's abundant redemptive love; to welcome in and invite others to share in it; and to reject any understanding of God's love as exclusive. We are reminded of God's ever-present invitation to share in the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One of the most powerful, significant and often overlooked characteristics of this love is that it is a love of extraordinary abundance. It is extravagant. It knows no bounds. Sometimes we forget this. We're so used to thinking in terms of limitations and scarcity." (*Dr. Gina Wolfe, 2017 Community Days*)

Associate Partnership

.....

How would you explain the world's view of hospitality as different from radical hospitality?

In what ways does the call to radical hospitality disturb and stretch you?

“The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity” (*Laudato Si* #240). This “web of relationships,” as the Pope calls it, grounded in God’s redemptive love calls us to mutual reverence and solidarity in order that the reign of God might be more fully present in all of creation.

Solidarity insists that I recognize that my good is tied up with the good of all creation. It demands that we move beyond any theoretical or conceptual understanding. It focuses on concrete lived reality – the actual living with, accompanying, and companioning of the other who is Christ among us – as well as demands that we work for structural and systemic change in order that God’s justice be concretely realized. Think of Nano Nagle – her actions, her life, her being – all were at one and the same time directly involved with those she served; challenging existing oppressive structures while effecting real positive change; and steadfastly connected with God and God’s redemptive love. Her life, I would argue, was not compartmentalized. Moving purposefully with her lantern through the cold, damp, dark streets of Cork in solidarity with those living in the most desperate conditions was an extension of, not separate from, the hours spent kneeling in prayer and adoration of God.” (*Dr. Gina Wolfe, 2017 Community Days*)

God’s redemptive love is at the heart of hospitality. *How do you welcome God into your life? What are you doing to foster that love?*

What character traits do you recognize as necessary to be a person who lives by the light of radical hospitality? Think about Nano’s example as you name the characteristics.

How do you already embody the gift of hospitality, and how have you experienced that in the Presentation community?

As an associate how do you envision yourself carrying out Nano’s charism of hospitality?

Associate Partnership

.....

Closing Prayer

Stand in circle and read aloud poem.

Read Together.

To Nano Nagle
Take down your lantern from its niche and go out!
You may not dwell in firelight certainties,
Secure from drifting fog of doubt and fear,
You may not build yourself confining walls
And say: 'Thus far, and thus, and thus far shall I walk,
And these things shall I do, and nothing more.'
Go out! For need calls loudly in the winding lanes
And you must seek Christ there.
Your pilgrim heart
Shall urge you still one pace beyond.
And love shall be your lantern-flame.

(Raphael Consedine, PBVM)

Pass around lantern and each person speak a word or phrase from today's conversation that is in your heart or that you want to reflect on further.

Associate Partnership

.....

Preparation for the Next Gathering

- Determine next gathering date and time
- Look ahead at the next section on Mission
- Upcoming gatherings or events at Mount Loretto or other venues

(An important piece of the associate partnership is to make connections with sisters and associates and to continue to grow in understanding of the Presentation mission. When possible you are encouraged to participate in the various opportunities that are offered.)

Additional Resources to Consider

Books

- [*Turning to One Another*](#) by Margaret Wheatley
- [*The Circle Way*](#) by Christina Baldwin & Ann Linnea

Music

- Standing on the Shoulders
(bit.ly/song_standingontheshoulders)
- Room at the Table
(bit.ly/song_roomatthetable)
- Draw the Circle Wide
(bit.ly/song_drawthecirclewide)

Websites

- Sisters of the Presentation
(www.dbqpbvms.org)

