



PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

offering hospitality to the world



The COMMITTEE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY by the
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The PURPOSE

The purpose of Presentation Doorways is to further the mission of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our associates by sharing the news and views of the congregation with our partners, families and friends. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our congregation and to invite others to become involved in our mission.

Your THOUGHTS & COMMENTS

We invite your input. Please send or email photos, stories and information about our sisters, associates, former members, family and friends, or any ideas which relate to the purpose of this publication. Submit to:

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Cover PHOTOS

The doorways represented on the cover are snapshots of significant doors in the Presentation history and present day ministries: (Left to right) Doorway of Hotel Hope, a nonprofit hotel for homeless women and children in New Orleans, Louisiana; Doorway of St. Vincent's Academy (now St. Columbkille) in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1879; Doorway of Céad Mile Fáilte (100,000 Welcomes) located on the property of the Presentation Motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road in Dubuque, Iowa; Doorway of the Presentation Motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road in Dubuque, Iowa; Doorway of Casa Betania, home for retreats and a gathering space for students in Tarija, Bolivia.

PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

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Cover PHOTO

Faithful friend and tutor, Sister Therese Corkery enjoys helping Afghan children learn English. Lasting friendships have been formed through weekly tutoring sessions. Sister Therese expresses, "My life has been changed by those with whom I minister. Experiencing a different culture enables me to recognize and respect the dignity of each and every person, encouraging me to follow the Good News in my daily life."

A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

by JOETTA VENNEMAN, PBVM

Advent is a season that not only marks the beginning of our liturgical year but one that marks our entire life. Advent gets its name from *adventus*, the Latin word for *arrival*. Our lives are ever-arriving from moment-to-moment, day-to-day. Believing in Divine presence, we ask, "How is it that we wait for Jesus in these moments? Do we wait with wonder, imagination swirling and excitement within as children do upon approaching Christmas or other special occasions? Do we wait anxiously, unknowingly, and with fear as perhaps an expectant Mary did?"

Faithful waiting on God makes us stronger and can change who we are. It is during our active waiting that our character is refined. We grow in humility, carefully listening and watching intently for evidence of God's movement in our lives and in the world around us. Scripture provides many stories of how this transformation of heart happens during the waiting and watching. Zechariah waiting for the return of his ability to speak and attempting to communicate with hand gestures. Simeon and Anna waiting to see the Messiah while praying in the Temple. Mary and Joseph waiting to be married as Joseph trusts in the message as heard from an angel. The wise ones watching for a special star at Jesus' birth.

Each of these stories contains characters who were unlikely to be the face of God, yet were the face of God's radical hospitality. Attentiveness to the unexpected other provides this glimpse. What would it be like for us to journey throughout our lives and this Advent with attentiveness to all unexpected others? Is it possible for us, as with those with whom we journey, to allow for our own personal transformation by opening ourselves to God's hospitality during this season of Advent and our lifetime of Advents?

A favorite Christmas song, "Joy to the World," invites us to "Let every heart prepare him room." What would it mean to welcome the unexpected other in marginalized people with the same enthusiasm and love as we do newborn babies? What would it mean to carefully listen to those whom we often dismiss? What would it mean to step out of our comfort zone and experience others such that our beliefs are humbled and transformed? Might these individuals be those who teach us to be heralds of the good news? How much hope might we offer in this process?

This process of making room for the unexpected other in our broken world on the part of each of us is also a call to our Presentation charism of radical hospitality. Making room to receive and to allow God's radical hospitality to work through us, with and for another, is the true meaning of God's becoming incarnate. Advent is merely a season to gently remind us of what matters most as we journey through life together with all our sisters and brothers.

Sister Carmen Hernandez Sister Rita Menart Sr. Mary Lou Specha Sr. Joetta Venneman

Sisters Carmen Hernandez, Rita Menart, Mary Lou Specha, Joetta Venneman



SISTERS
OF THE PRESENTATION
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
DUBUQUE, IOWA

Our MISSION

We, the Sisters of the Presentation, are called to evangelize, offering hope and love to our broken world by incarnating the hospitality of God, confronting injustice and working for peace.

Our DIRECTION

We, the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Dubuque, Iowa, Associates and Companions in Mission, are called to live our charism of radical hospitality in response to the cry of women and children made poor, our wounded Earth and all creation.

Our COMMITMENTS

We invest time, energy and resources to a process of inner work, opening ourselves to personal and communal transformation.

We listen and respond to the cry of women and children and advocate for racial equity and immigration reform.

We foster connections with people and land to nurture healing of our wounded Earth.



Nano Nagle established schools for the poor and uneducated. Her vision was for children of future generations to have a voice, so no one would be outcast, so no one would be uneducated. Her gospel vision was for justice and to empower others. Photo source: theteenagertoday.com.

The Life of Nano Nagle

by JOY PETERSON, PBVM

During the late 17th century and continuing for another 100 years, Catholics in Ireland struggled under the British Penal Laws. These laws forbade Catholics to set up schools or go abroad to attend Catholic schools. They could not own a horse worth more than five pounds, study law or medicine, hold any government office, serve an apprenticeship, purchase land nor hold a mortgage. All bishops and friars were forced from the country and threatened with death if they returned. Catholic families were forbidden to speak Gaelic or play Irish music.

Into this milieu in 1718, a baby was born to Ann and Garret Nagle of Ballygriffin, County Cork. She was given the name Honora but was called Nano by all who knew her. The commentaries on her childhood tell of a child protected from the harsh realities felt by the majority of Catholic families. Nano's uncle, Joseph, was a barrister in Cork and, even though he could not legally practice law, he managed to keep the English courts from taking his family's properties, thus allowing them a degree of prosperity.

Few stories about Nano's childhood survive, but by all accounts she was an adventuresome and bright child. As

the eldest of seven children, she was frequently tasked with supervision of her four sisters and two brothers. She and her siblings were given the opportunity to study in secret under the guidance of an itinerant teacher. The quality of such an education left much to be desired and so by the time Nano was 10 years old, her family had arranged for her to be smuggled into Europe, probably to a convent school in Belgium, to continue her studies. This was a common practice for Catholic families of means, but imagine the loneliness of a child separated by such a distance from all that was familiar. In a few years, her brothers and her sisters had also been sent abroad to be educated.

On finishing her education, Nano went to live with relatives in Paris in the society of the wealthy. In Nano's own admission, this was a carefree lifestyle she found satisfying. She spent leisurely days attending soirées and enjoying the interactions of Parisian society. In France, there were no constraints on her faith practices and so in the midst of the social life, she was also deepening her relationship with God.

From 1728 to 1746, Nano lived away from Ireland. Her sister Ann joined her in residing with relatives in Paris, but at hearing the news of their father's death they immediately left to be with their mother in Dublin. In France, Nano had lived a life sheltered from the poverty of Paris. In Dublin, it was impossible to ignore the pervasive poverty and accompanying disease, famine and ignorance. Still, Nano lived a life of privilege distanced from the struggles of most. When deep loss touched her spirit as first her mother and then her sister Ann died between 1746 and 1748, her loneliness without them opened a space in her heart that left her questioning the meaning of her own life. Unable to live alone, she returned to Ballygriffin to live with her brother and sister-in-law where she began to see more closely the effects of poverty and lack of education on the Irish.

In the mid-18th century, few avenues were open to women who felt drawn to respond to the cries of those in poverty. Nano's discernment led her to believe God had called her to live as a woman religious, so she again travelled to France. Little is known about her time in the convent except that she later wrote that her spiritual director had told her she would "run a great risk of salvation" if she did not listen to God's call to return to Ireland to find a way to address the ignorance and poverty that controlled so many under the Penal Laws. Nano was a single woman with some financial support but that seemed insufficient in light of the immensity of the challenges. The Presentation poet Sister Raphael Consedine writes in her profile of Nano:

**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.**

Having exchanged her silk gowns for a simple black dress, Nano settled in the city of Cork with her brother Joseph and his wife Frances. Bit by bit, she separated herself from their life of comfort and spent more time with impoverished women and children. Believing that education was key to ending poverty, she began to search for ways to educate young girls. In 1754, she rented a mud hut and opened her first school for girls, and while she had hired an experienced teacher, each day Nano spent time teaching catechism. This school was so successful that in a short time she had opened five schools for girls.

In time, Nano recognized that if her dream of educating more children was to succeed she needed help. Her life of holiness and dedication to those in poverty eventually drew others to join her. In 1775, Nano and three other women responded to God's call by establishing the Sisters of the Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, later known as the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Mural painting of Nano Nagle by Eleanor Yates as part of the Nano's Pilgrim Artist Project sponsored by the Union of Presentation Sisters in County Kildare Ireland.

Over the years, Nano's compassion for those in need had extended to the elderly and the sick. She so frequently spent her evenings visiting them that she became known in Cork as the Lady of the Lantern. Her lantern light became a guide into the darkest of places. When she died in 1784, her dream of establishing a home for aged women had been fulfilled. However, her desire to establish a safe place for women driven by poverty and violence into prostitution was left for others to bring to fruition.

Nano Nagle shows us the importance of having a lantern mentality – the determination to shine light in dark places – light which brings hope and comfort; to be with those who suffer and to help change the structures which keep them poor. Nano's light transformed dark places into places of acceptance and care which changed lives. People knew that someone cared and sometimes that is enough to change a life.

Caroline Thompson, Mercy Partners Newsletter, 2017

Nearly 250 years later, the flame of Nano's lantern has spread to 23 countries on six continents while Presentation Sisters and people continue to dream with Nano, working to end injustices with passion and commitment. This woman's welcoming heart transformed the lives of thousands in her time and captured the imagination of following generations to seek out timely and effective ways to meet the needs of each age.

Pope Francis Addresses Climate Crisis

by DAVE MCDERMOTT, JUSTICE PROMOTER

Care of God's Creation has long been one of the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching; but the theme was only touched upon in early papal encyclicals. This changed dramatically on June 18, 2015, with the publishing of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' document on Caring for Our Common Home. *Laudato Si'* translates to "Praise be to You" and connects directly to St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures* in which the great saint praises the sun, moon, earth, water and other natural creations. With *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis clarifies and broadly expands Catholic teaching concerning the care of creation. He identifies the interconnectivity of social issues and offers concrete steps to create a more just and sustainable way of life.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis asserts that the science linking human action with climate change is incontrovertible, emphasizing it is now time for humanity to bond together and create a culture where the created world is treated with reverence, wonder and respect. This vision is in stark contrast to the dominant cultural understanding of the earth as a commodity to exploit.

Pope Francis taps into a stream of thought that sees the interconnectivity of all human action. In this way, forced migration, racism, consumerism, throw-away culture and climate change (to name a few societal ills) are not separate justice issues, but rather manifestations of the same problem. Pope Francis labels this problem as the undervaluing of all life in general and human life in particular. He also warns against what he calls the "technocratic paradigm" which sees all problems as situations for technology to solve. This creates the illusion that humanity can become ever-more powerful and in control of the natural world.

The Presentation Community Responds

Presentation Sisters have committed to an ongoing journey toward sustainability and integral ecology. In response to this ground-breaking encyclical, a committee was formed, the history of which is explained by committee member Jean Lange: "The *Laudato Si'* Committee began as the Nonviolence Promise Group. Initially the group focused on John Dear's book, *The Nonviolent Life*. The focus of the first year and a half was on nonviolence toward self, which requires daily meditation, contemplation and mindfulness.

The focus then moved to nonviolence toward others and, finally, nonviolence toward creation. With the global launch of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform in November 2021, our focus on nonviolence toward creation naturally flowed into this initiative and work immediately began to create and upload a plan to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. Thanks to the efforts of Sister Suzanne Gallagher, this goal was accomplished in September 2022 with the intention to achieve real and lasting solutions to the ecological crisis and promote concrete actions to protect our common home. The committee is now charged with carrying the original plan forward and updating the plan as time passes."

Year One Laudato Si' Goals

The initial plan emphasized a time of reflection, education and connection that was fitting of a document as involved as *Laudato Si'*.

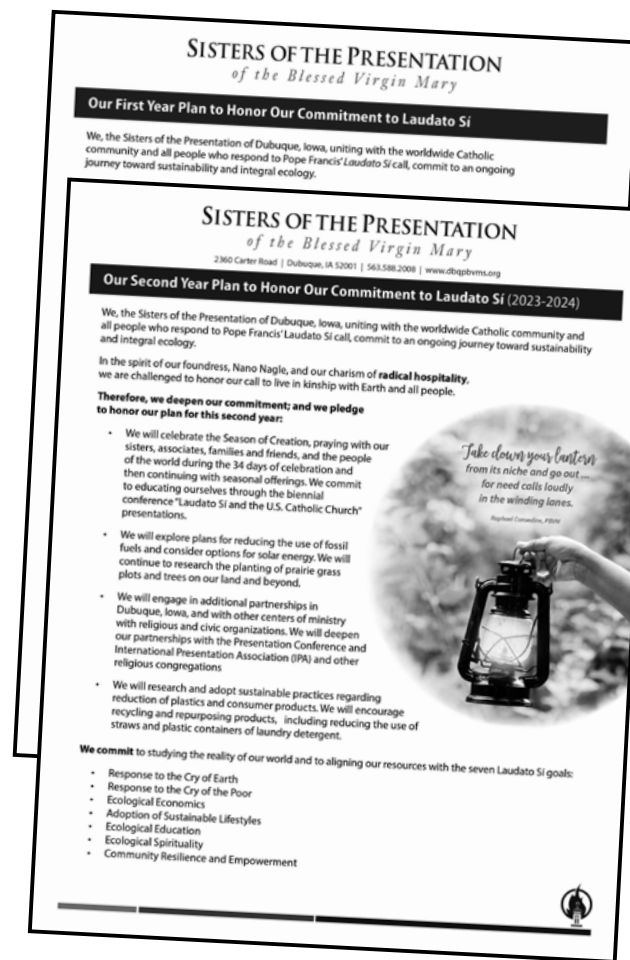
Committee member Sister Diana Blong states, "We celebrated the Season of Creation, praying with our sisters, associates, families, friends and the people of the world during the 34 days of celebration. We explored plans for reducing the use of fossil fuels, considered options for solar energy and reviewed present initiatives of responsible investing of our resources."

Year Two Laudato Si' Goals

Year two goals focus more intently on actions developed through the contemplation of year one. These actions include exploring campus-wide solar energy projects. Pending budget approval, the first phase of these solar projects may take place in 2024, with the hopes more will happen in 2025.

A land-use subcommittee of *Laudato Si'* met with a Dubuque County Department of Natural Resources representative about exploring ways to plant native tall-grass prairie in various locations on the Mount Loretto grounds. These prairie plots provide tremendous habitat for native pollinators and birds, hold and create topsoil and reduce the need to mow the turf grass they replace.

Future goals for the *Laudato Si'* committee include education and reduction of plastic, especially single-use plastic.



Laudate Deum

On the Feast of St. Francis, October 4, 2023, Pope Francis published a follow-up letter to *Laudato Si'* known as an apostolic exhortation titled, *Laudate Deum*, meaning "Praise be to God." This letter is used to implore humanity to do more to combat climate change. In the eight years since the publishing of *Laudato Si'*, the effects of climate change have become ever more apparent.

Pope Francis uses a good portion of the letter to again address those who deny the problem of climate change, taking a point-by-point approach to rebut each of their arguments. He claims forcefully that not nearly enough has been done to fend off the most extreme effects of a warming planet and that a broad coordinated international effort is needed.

Uncomfortably for those of us who live in the United States, Pope Francis explicitly calls out the lifestyles of U.S. citizens as being particularly carbon intensive. Each U.S. citizen has seven times the carbon footprint of individuals in developing nations, but in many cases the people in developing nations unequally share the burden of a changing world.

The climate crisis is one of the defining issues of our time. In *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis highlights and outlines the challenges before us all. The *Laudato Si'* Committee has taken his call seriously and is working to educate and implement changes that will allow us to see the interconnectedness of the created world and reduce our carbon footprint.

2023 Annual Appeal Radical Hospitality Our Key to Transformation

Radical hospitality is the key to transformation of ourselves and the world. The core of radical hospitality is the profound practice of opening our hearts with love, empathy and generosity to others.

Our Presentation mission is to serve, educate and advocate – serving those made poor, educating the uneducated, advocating for the vulnerable and transforming unjust systems through our various ministries. As partners in mission, your commitment of support makes our ministries possible, profoundly impacting our ability to carry out our mission.

The Presentation Sisters strive to be rich examples of the communal call to live radical hospitality. As women of welcoming hearts, our works and actions are to make a difference in each and every person we encounter.

As we embrace 2024, the gift of your faithful partnership is a constant reminder that our journeys cannot and will not be made alone. Your partnership is a symbol of hope and love, supporting our call to live radical hospitality to ourselves, to others, to Earth and to women and children. For this, we thank you.

Your gift to the 2023 Annual Appeal will help to continue the mission of the Presentation Sisters. Donations can be made online at www.dbqpbvms.org by clicking the Donate Now button.

For more information, contact Karen Tuecke in the Partners in Mission Office at 563-588-2008 ext. 109 or partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org.

May this season of light inspire you and guide you to share compassion and love with all those you encounter.



Patti Cullen, partner in mission, with her daughters Carrie and Mandy, and her mother, Ann Weigel; Benjamin Cullen.

Finding Our Way

by KAREN TUECKE, PARTNERS IN MISSION COORDINATOR

"God blessed us with three wonderful children, Benjamin, Mandy and Carrie, our greatest gifts from Him. With three little ones, life kept us busy running in circles. Many times we were just trying to figure out which end was up! Over the years, we were always very busy, but also very blessed," expresses Patti (Weigel) Cullen. She and her husband, Terry Cullen, just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

"I'm the middle child of five, born to my parents, Ann and Richard Weigel, with older brothers Al and Tim, and younger siblings Pam and Greg. We were country kids who hung around our neighbors, the Cullen kids, on their farm. It was always an incredible adventure!"

Patti shares, "In 2010, my dad joined our Heavenly Father, to be reunited with Greg, my little brother who was killed in an auto accident in 1981. Mom's faith accompanied her loss. Profound statements she used and continues to share with others are, 'If I can't raise my son, who better than God to do so,' and 'Don't place a question mark, where God has placed a period.' A woman I once viewed as weak became one of the strongest I know. A true warrior."

On November 11, 2014, there was another excruciating loss. With pain in her eyes, Patti explains, "This was the day we learned Benjamin, our firstborn and only son, made the lone decision to take his life. Ben's devastating suicide blindsided our entire family! As Ben's mom, I questioned, 'How do I go on? Is it possible? Do I want to?'"

Patti recalled the drive to Ben's home as one of the longest rides of her life. "Upon arriving, we waited, what felt like forever, to see Ben. When it was time, we entered his room. I ran to my beloved son, dropped to the floor and lay over Ben in agonizing grief, sobbing hysterically and trying to make sense out of this. Then, a calm suddenly came over me. I looked up at my family standing above me and declared, 'We will find goodness in this.'"

Patti realized immediately that those words proclaimed from her mouth were not hers. This was divine inspiration from God! "I have clung to His words ever since," says Patti.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

In 2015, the *Telegraph Herald* featured an article about the Cullen's losing Ben to suicide and their desire to start a survivors of suicide support group. As God would have it, this article fell into the hands of Sister Kay Cota. "Sister Kay sent us a letter introducing herself and commended us for our efforts. She offered us love, prayers and support with an invitation to visit. Following her outreach, Terry, my mom and I were blessed to meet Sister Kay."

Having facilitated several retreats, Sister Marie Barth joined in and offered the family countless resources, prayers and support. "Both offered encouragement as we ventured into uncharted territory of our grief and healing journey. It was then, Ben's Hope was created."

"On weekends, Sisters Kay and Marie hosted retreats," states Patti. "Mom and I visited regularly and, at times, others would join us. We embraced the opportunities to learn, rest and refuel. We were never ready to leave. Our standing joke was and still is, pack extra underwear in case we stay an extra night!"

Sisters Kay and Marie have not only been a beacon of light in our lives, but have become friends we consider family.

Patti Cullen

Ben's Hope later became the acronym BENS Hope signifying, "Because Everyone Needs Some Hope," after God put this on Terry's heart. BENS Hope became the family's ministry and outreach expanded. In addition to a monthly survivors of suicide meeting, they also host an annual BENS Hope 5K/2M suicide awareness/prevention event every September and Healing Hearts retreats.

Sisters Kay and Marie graciously assist with the Healing Hearts retreat efforts hosted at Mount Loretto and all of the sisters offer prayers. "The retreats focus on moms who have lost a child. Since both mom and I have had the misfortune of losing a child, who better to host retreats and offer hope to other moms?" explains Patti. "The weekend retreats are at no cost. It is felt the moms have already paid the biggest cost, they have lost a child. Everything from room and board to meals and materials are covered by the ministry. In turn, BENS Hope donates to the sisters to bless them for the opportunity to walk with these mothers on their grief

and healing journey. Looking back, it is so apparent how God orchestrated all of this! For that, we are truly grateful."

God also gave Terry the idea for BENS Hope Helping Hands. "Each February we accept applications from people who are struggling, doing something good in the community or continuing their education in a mental health related field. Three recipients are chosen and blessed with a monetary donation from BENS Hope with the announcement on a special day ... March 5, which also happens to be Ben's birthday. God has the best ideas!"

"Following Ben's suicide, God instructed me to journal about my loss. He told me that His son Jesus died to save others. These journal entries would become a book called *Tears of Love*. God said this book will help save the lives of others." At first, Patti adamantly declined the call, but God was persistent. "Mom and I spent a great deal of time at Mount Loretto while *Tears of Love* was in its final stages. While I was in my room working on the book, Mom could be found in the puzzle room, spending time with the beautiful sisters who join her."

"We have been blessed by everyone at Mount Loretto. We enjoy the fabulous meals, lovely services in the chapel and countless conversations. Sisters Kay and Marie have not only been a beacon of light in our lives, but have become friends we consider family."

The recent years have definitely been transformative as Patti and Ann's faith grew. Patti left her 43-year career to focus on BENS Hope. "While rules, regulations, policies and procedures once consumed my time, my new priority is to be a light in this world, offering hope and helping others who are struggling," explains Patti. "Pastor Mark Dieter made a statement that stuck with me. 'We all have a theology of God based on our circumstances and these circumstances reorganize and reshape us and our lives.' I agree. With faith, BENS Hope came to be. And we are astonished, humbled and honored at the work God is doing through us."

Patti sends a message to all, "During the ebbs and flows in life, we find ourselves questioning the hardships. No one requests hardships. This is when faith comes into practice ... where our faith is tested at levels we never thought possible and where growth and incredible things can happen if we are open to listening to God. I'm not saying that everything we are dealt is easy to get through. What I can say, from my experience, is that it is possible to get through if you have faith, and let God guide you."

Visit www.bens-hope.org to learn more.



Left to right, back row: Judy Zahren-Kalb, Jo Gullickson, Delynn Fangman, Ben Roberts, Colleen Venter, Dave McDermott, Becky Searcy, Sister Rachel Dunlap, Thalia Cutsforth, Jean Lange, Sister Carmen Hernandez, Dianne McDermott and Constance Bellaver; Front row: Radie Roberts, Darla Budden, Sister Rosalyn Ulfers and Susan Brimmer.

Service & Awareness Opportunity Seeing with New Eyes

by RADIE ROBERTS, ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP CO-DIRECTOR

Seventeen Presentation people gathered on Friday, October 6, at the St. Isidore Catholic Worker Farm in nearby Cuba City, Wisconsin, for a service and awareness opportunity. The group began the day learning about the Catholic Worker movement started by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933. The aim of the movement is to live simply in accordance with the social justice and charity of Jesus Christ, with a firm belief in the intrinsic dignity of every person. One of their guiding principles is hospitality towards those living on the margins of society. There are more than 185 Catholic Worker communities world-wide who are committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer and hospitality for the homeless, exiled, hungry and forsaken.

The St. Isidore Catholic Worker Farm describes itself as an intentional Christian community on 25 acres in the southwest corner of Wisconsin near the borders of Illinois and Iowa. The workers tend organic gardens, cows, chickens and bees. Subsistence living, or the state of having what you need to stay alive, but no more, is one of the tenants embraced by the farm. The workers practice gift economy, a type of economic system in which goods and services are not sold, but rather given without

any explicit agreement for immediate or future quid pro quo. The workers share daily morning prayer, participate in activism for social change and practice hospitality to pilgrims and the marginalized.

Service day participants shared fellowship, gathered in sung prayer, took a tour of the farm and enjoyed delicious chili, made completely of items grown on the farm. Many hands made light work of cleaning garlic, onions and peppers, stripping basil leaves, shelling dried beans, extracting honey and sharing in conversation and laughter while completing these tasks. All of the produce cleaned and prepared is either consumed on the farm or sold locally to help support the farm and its mission to help those in need.

Associate Sue Brimmer shares, "The hospitality at the Catholic Worker farm was remarkable. We were welcomed and treated the entire day with so much warmth, kindness and generosity. The entire experience was very spiritual and filled with gratitude to our Lord for the bountiful harvest. I am so thankful for this inspiring experience with such loving people."

In Loving Memory Associate Gino Pacetti

April 25, 1935 – November 4, 2023

Gino Pacetti, age 88, of Oak Lawn, Illinois, passed away at home on Saturday, November 4, 2023. Gino was born on April 25, 1935, in Chicago. He was the dearest husband of the late Patricia Pacetti and loving father of Catherine, Thomas, Patti Anne and James. Gino's family brought him great joy, especially his nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. Gino spent his career as band director at several high schools in Chicago and was an active member of St. Germaine Parish.



Gino, along with his late wife, Patricia, were among the first group of Presentation associate commitments on June 4, 2000. He loved being an associate and spent many years connecting at Community Days, service opportunities and with his Chicago associate group. Gino wrote, "The sisters have truly been an inspiration. The love and care they have for one another, the joy in being together and their consideration for others is refreshing. It was an unexpected honor that we would be considered as Presentation associates. We think we have always been saying 'yes' to this association and to keep the light of Nano Nagle shining."

Family, friends, Presentation Sisters and associates gratefully remember Gino's love for God's people shown through kindness, generosity and hospitality. May he rest in peace with his beloved wife Pat!

Presentation Associate Identity Statement

Dubuque Presentation associates are women and men called to share in the life, spirituality and mission of the Dubuque Presentation Sisters. Grounded in prayer, we support and encourage one another as we seek to embody the Presentation charism of radical hospitality both individually and communally. In the spirit of Nano Nagle, we reach out with hospitality and compassion as we seek justice and respond to the needs of the world.

Blessing Bag Project

For the third year in a row, the Associate Partnership Office invited all Presentation people to help fill Thanksgiving bags for local needy families. This mission was a joint project with Resources Unite and Western Dubuque High School, with the goal of providing bags with everything a family of six needs to sit down and enjoy a holiday meal together. Each bag included canned vegetables, instant mashed potatoes, stuffing, a packet of gravy, cornbread mix, cake mix and a ham.

With the assistance of Western Dubuque students in a service-learning class, 1,300 phone calls were made to people served by Resources Unite in the past year asking if they would like a Thanksgiving Blessing Bag. Josh Jasper, director of Resources Unite, states, "We care for others and want to do what we can, when we can, to help our neighbor in need. It may ebb and flow throughout the year, but this is who we are. This is the time of year that reminds us of our best selves. Thank you all for everything that will be. We are honored to be the bridge from your compassion to those in need."

Approximately 1,000 families throughout the tri-state area will receive a blessing bag. Presentation people were given the option to purchase food from items listed above and drop off at Mount Loretto, or make a monetary donation towards purchasing ham. Presentation people rose to the challenge and raised \$675! Food donations overflowed at the front doors of Mount Loretto and in the Associate Partnership Office. We are so thankful for your generous support of this very worthwhile project.



Radie Roberts, Associate Partnership co-director, and Jean Lange, house administrator, organize collected food for the blessing bags.

Social Justice Actions

Prayer Service for Peace in the Middle East

On Tuesday, October 17, Presentation people and members of the Dubuque community gathered in Sacred Heart Chapel to pray for peace in the Holy Land. The prayer service was a response to a felt community need to offer prayer for the inexplicable suffering of the people of Israel and Gaza. A rotation of readings, silence and song created a contemplative atmosphere for prayer. The Safe Passage Singers, a group of local women who sing simple and repetitive songs with people who are in life transitions, blessed the gathering with their music.

After attending the service, Sister Paula Schwendinger expressed, "Thank you for all the time, energy and talent that was put into the beautiful prayer service. Everyone who attended could not help but be profoundly touched by the atmosphere and the soothing music. May the peace which touched each of us be magnified into the places we live and work, and may others be blessed through the peace we experienced."

Prayer cards, like the one to the right, were handed out during the prayer service for everyone to keep handy so they can pray it daily. May we all hope and pray for an immediate end to violence in the Middle East.

The prayer service can be viewed on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/dbqpbvms>.

Understanding the Crisis Between Israel & Gaza

On Monday, November 13, Dr. John Eby gave a presentation on Understanding the Crisis in Israel and Gaza to educate all present on the current situation in the Holy Land. Dr. Eby is a professor of history at Loras College and a founding member of the Dubuque's Children of Abraham group that works to create interfaith dialogue between Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Dr. Eby began by giving a broad history of the region and was careful to point out key and decisive moments that have led to generations of simmering hatred. Complicated by the antisemitism and Islamophobia that the Jews and Muslims face, the situation resists easy answers. Dr. Eby was clear that everyone can help locally by befriending people of various faith traditions to help them know they are safe and valued members of the community.



Dave McDermott, justice promoter, with Dr. John Eby



IN THE MIDDLE EAST

God of mercy and compassion,
of grace and reconciliation,
pour your power upon all your
children in the Middle East:
Jews, Muslims and Christians,
Palestinians and Israelis.
Let hatred be turned into love,
fear to trust, despair to hope,
oppression to freedom,
occupation to liberation,
that violent encounters may be
replaced by loving embraces,
and peace and justice
could be experienced by all.

Reverend Said Ailabouni

Reflections on the Journey Sister Marjorie Loughren

by MAURA MCCARTHY, PBVM

Sister Marjorie Loughren has deep Iowa roots. Her close knit Irish family of 10, along with the bountiful community of St. Patrick Parish in Monti, Iowa, was the epicenter of her spiritual life. She engaged wholeheartedly in the lively activities of her younger high-spirited siblings, her parish events and her wonderfully fun, loving parents.

Sister Marjorie attended school with her siblings in Monti and then went on to finish high school in 1966 at St. Patrick's in Ryan, approximately eight miles away. She felt called to become a Presentation Sister that same year, not because she was drawn to the life by one of the sisters, but simply felt called by God. Sister Marjorie, like her family members, enjoyed sports, especially basketball, baseball and football. She became an avid Iowa Hawkeye fan, and also a follower of the Minneapolis Timberwolves, the University of Minnesota Gophers and the Twins.

Sister Marjorie received her bachelor's degree at Clarke College in mathematics, education and theology. She also went on to get clinical pastoral education at the Mental Health Institute in Independence. Her compassionate listening skills have been cherished by her students over the years. She taught in Iowa and Illinois for 16 years before beginning her teaching ministry at St. Pascal Baylon in St. Paul, Minnesota, for the next 36 years.

In the mid-1970s, during a week of summer religious vacation school in Monti, Sisters Louann Doering and Marge Healy had the opportunity to experience life with the Bernard and Loretta Loughren family. Both recall that the nightly family rosary was priceless because of the unintentional drama during prayer time. Once the oven kitchen timer went off and two of the daughters jumped up and ran to the kitchen to pull a cake out of the oven. Another night, the stereo started full blast when accidentally bumped. All played games after the family rosary and Bernard loved to play tricks on everyone. The sisters considered it a gift to be with the Loughrens for a week.

Sister Marjorie's classmate, Sister Anne McCormick declares: "I couldn't have asked for a better classmate than Marge. She may be younger than I am in years, but she has often been my 'go to friend' when I'm not sure of what I should say or do – she is a good and patient listener."



Sister Marjorie Loughren shares her joy with all whom she encounters.

An earth-shattering tragedy that greatly affected Sister Marjorie was the death of her youngest sister, Sara, and her three young children, in a plane crash while on the way to a skiing trip in Colorado. Sister Marjorie was very close to Sara, who resided near St. Paul, and the entire Loughren family was heartbroken with the unexplainable loss. Sister Marjorie became aware that this event was transformative, allowing her to awaken within herself a depth of compassion for the sufferings of others.

Barb Oberg, a teaching partner and friend for 24 years states, "Sister Marjorie expects respect in her classroom toward her and each student. She also sets standards and rules to follow. She is strict, but fair. If students need extra help, she helps before or after school or during lunch recess. She takes her job very seriously and makes learning fun with games because she is educating for the future."

Committed deeply to the ministry of teaching, Sister Marjorie comments, "I am passionate about education because it is the root and means for all the good that is possible in our world. I believe that God's grace is always available to bring about peace in every situation if only we remain determined and faithful."

Sister Marjorie's favorite Scripture quotation from Micah 6:8 sums up her life: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God."

Keeping Their Names Alive Among Us



Sister Mary Deborah Paige

June 19, 1930 – September 15, 2023

During her 46 years of service as a teacher, Sister Deborah Paige navigated the big change from typing class to keyboard skills with all that it entailed. Then, she generously shared her learnings with colleagues and students. Sister Deborah frequently went the extra mile to guarantee that her students were successful, not only in their classwork but also successful in life. She had an eye and a heart for those who struggled and who may have felt lost. In addition, she faithfully showed support for her students by attending their sports events and concerts.

She learned important lessons about gardening as a child and was dedicated to utilizing her skills especially during her retirement years which began in 2000. When planting and harvesting tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, onions, etc. like every good gardener, she kept one eye on the sky. She had a deep sense that someone plants, another may water, but God makes things grow.

She also enjoyed the outdoors, reading, shopping, puzzles and baking. She valued Catholic education, prayer and community service.

"My Presentation community is my family – not without contrast but unexpectedly beautiful and strong with bonds of love and loyalty, tradition and faith," expressed Sister Deborah at her 50th jubilee. "They encourage me to live simply, care deeply, love generously, speak kindly and leave the rest to God."



Sister Mary Lois Lehmann

January 9, 1926 – October 26, 2023

Sister Lois Lehmann was well known as a conversationalist and storyteller. She enjoyed traveling, over the years visiting Bolivia; Guatemala; Mexico City; Lima, Peru; the Holy Land; Rome and Assisi, Italy; Germany; France and Ireland. Sister Lois' hobbies included playing the guitar, doing puzzles, playing cards and exploring her gifts in art class.

As the matriarch of the Lehmann family since her mother's death in 1985, Sister Lois kept in contact not only with her brothers and sisters, but also with her 27 nieces and nephews, 79 great nieces and nephews and 105 great, great nieces and nephews, all of whom she knew by name.

In a 61-year journey of carrying Nano Nagle's lantern in full-time ministry, Sister Lois walked many steps to spread the Good News, spending 43 years as an elementary teacher and 18 years as a pastoral minister. "Like Nano I traveled many roads to serve God's people."

Reflecting on her life, Sister Lois said, "I am grateful for my faith, family and Presentation community. I have a deep gratitude for the many people with whom I journeyed over the years. I was able to be a visible presence of Christ and the Church, to bring the consolation of prayer to the dying and to minister to people of all faiths. I pray that I helped spread the Gospel message by sowing seeds of love, joy, hospitality, generosity and peace."

Read more about Sisters Deborah and Lois at dbqpbvms.org/news-events/obituaries.

Mount Loretto AND BEYOND

Featured below are special times in the lives of Dubuque Presentation Sisters and associates.



Celebrating Presentation Day

November 21 is the day that Presentation Sisters across the world celebrate the special feast day of the Presentation of Mary at the temple. This celebration stands as a reminder that we carry on Mary's joy for God and life with our pledge to go forth in any part of the world in joyful service, wherever we are needed. Sisters, associates and employees came together to celebrate with prayer, friendship and, of course, a delicious meal.



SHOW LOVE. OFFER HOPE. LIVE HOSPITALITY.
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY

FOLLOW US @DBQPBVMS | WWW.DBQPBVMS.ORG



Contact Sister Jessi Beck at vocations@dbqpbvms.org

PLEASE CONNECT WITH US.

For updated information about the activities and events of the Sisters of the Presentation, please visit our website at www.dbqpbvms.org or call 563.588.2008.

PLEASE JOIN US.

December 3 & 17, 2023

Advent Women's Prayer

Zoom at 5:00 p.m. CST

Open to single women aged 18-45
interested in prayer and faith sharing.

December 25, 2023

Christmas Day

9:00 a.m. Mass

January 1, 2024

New Year's Day

9:00 a.m. Mass

April 5-6, 2024

Dubuque's Got Sisters

Check www.dbqpbvms.org for details

PLEASE PRAY WITH US.

December 16, 2023

Christmas Dinner provided for
Dubuque Rescue Mission
and Hope House guests

February 2, 2024

World Day for Consecrated Life

March 8-14, 2024

National Catholic Sisters Week

21st of each month

Pray for Vocations

25th of each month

Pray for Benefactors



SISTERS
OF THE PRESENTATION
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
2360 CARTER ROAD
DUBUQUE, IA 52001-2997

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Send changes to info@dbqpbvms.org
or call us at 563.588.2008. Thank you.*

CONNECT WITH US @DBQPBVMS



WWW.DBQPBVMS.ORG

***May the peace,
the love and the joy
of Christmas
fall gently over you
and those you love
this holiday season.***

*Wishing you a joyous Christmas
and a Happy New Year!*



SISTERS OF THE PRESENTATION | DUBUQUE, IOWA