

# PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

*offering hospitality to the world*





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PUBLISHED TRIANNUAL 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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The Presentation history is a shared story – sacred and collective – grounded in the heritage and values that continue to inspire and guide us forward, transforming both us and those we serve. We invite you to be drawn into our unfolding story – a journey of faith, determination, resilience and service that has defined our mission for over 150 years.

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## Cover PHOTO

Presentation associates gather during Community Days to honor the 25th anniversary of the Presentation Associate Partnership program. Though not all could be present in person, the spirit of unity and shared mission was felt by all.

# A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

by CARMEN HERNANDEZ, PBVM

## With Grateful Hearts: A Continuing Celebration of 150 Years of Tending the Light

With grateful hearts, sisters and associates came together for our annual meeting to rejoice in the gift of time together. As the sacred milestone of our 150th anniversary continues to be celebrated, we also recognize the 25th anniversary of our Associate Partnership program, acknowledging with deep gratitude those, past and present, as well as the dedicated leaders who nurtured this path of deep connection and commitment. Little did I know the opening words of my welcome to those gathered would be lived out in our days together: "Trusting the promise that 'hope does not disappoint,' may our days together become a pilgrimage of the heart, opening us anew to the movement of the Spirit in our lives and in our shared story."

As we continue to mark the 150th anniversary of our founding, we find ourselves both grounded in gratitude for the past and filled with hope for the future. This milestone anniversary has consistently invited us both as sisters and associates to reflect on the journey that has shaped us and to look ahead with faith and anticipation. The road forward is bright, guided by the same spirit that inspired Nano Nagle to serve with courage and compassion.

Reflecting on why anniversaries such as ours are celebrated, the following comments from a few participants gave meaning to this question.

- "The virtual 150th heritage tour was deeply moving. While we had originally planned to ride a trolley, the pouring rain shifted the experience online – which turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Seeing and hearing about the places where our story began in Dubuque helped me feel more connected to our roots and the courageous women who came before us."
- "Sister Lynn Levo, CSJ's talk, *A Paschal Journey to Transformation*, was deeply enriching. She spoke of this as 'a time for transformation – reminding us of who we are no longer and who we are not yet.' Sister Lynn invited us to see our journey as a Paschal journey, from Good Friday to Easter and beyond, graced by the Spirit. Transformation, she shared, is about naming reality honestly and creating a future not ruled by the past. It is a call to live a resurrected life, both personally and communally."
- "The day of reflection on 150 years was a sacred pause – a time to listen, to be still and to feel the Spirit stirring within. It reminded me that our legacy is alive in each of us."

This edition of *Presentation Doorways* invites you into stories that echo the themes of identity, purpose and belonging – threads that continue to weave us together, both now and in the past, as a community of faith and service. May these stories inspire us all to carry the light of Nano forward with renewed hope and commitment.

Our prayer for all is that as we continue this sacred time of celebration, may we be drawn to the holy ground from which each of us springs, to the web of life-giving relationships we share and to the unfolding legacy of Nano that continues to shimmer through the ages.

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

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



### 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.



Left to right: Sisters Dolores Zieser, Joellen Price and Louise Scieszinski enjoy a moment during a break.

# A Journey of Transformation Community Days 2025

by JOY PETERSON, PBVM

On July 16, 2025, the annual gathering of the Presentation Community opened with the 60th jubilee celebration for Sisters Lynn Marie Fangman, Marge Healy and Jennifer Rausch. The evening's festivities began with a prayer service centered around the theme, Journey of Hope, and closed with a shared meal and joyful conversation.

The following morning, Sister Carmen Hernandez, congregational leader, extended a welcome to sisters and associates gathered for Community Days: "With grateful hearts, we come together to rejoice in the gift of these days, as we mark the sacred milestone of our 150th anniversary. We also wholeheartedly celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Associate Partnership program. With joy and reverence, we step into this time, holding close our theme: Journey of Transformation."

Journey of Transformation was highlighted on the first day of the gathering through the guidance of Sister Lynn Levo, CSJ, Ph.D., a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet and licensed psychologist, lecturer and consultant. Her presentation, *A Paschal Journey to Transformation*, spoke to the call to live in trust and possibility, identifying this "as a very acceptable time." While some may feel the challenges of this time make it difficult to see this as an acceptable time, Sister Lynn reminded the group that all are called to break down the walls of prejudice and fear by "disarming our hearts, opening our hands and taking courageous steps to bring about a new creation of love and freedom."

Speaking in the language of the Paschal Mystery, Sister Lynn identified the endings many are experiencing as Good Friday suffering. It seemed that everyone who was





Left to right: Participants focus on Chapter commitments and the ongoing journey of transformation; Sister Carmen Hernandez, Associate Marlene Weber and Sister Julianne Brockamp appreciate time to reconnect; The Zoom associate group members present for Community Days pose for a group picture: Associates Donna Ewy, Carol Witry and Bren Connors, Sister Julie Marsh, Associates Terese Veverka Black and Billie Greenwood. Associates Lydia McDonald and Bernie Graves were not present.

present could identify with times of being called to let go of how they expected life would go and surrender to the life that is happening. She advised the group to grow in naming reality by not denying grief or sadness. Offering understanding and a listening heart to each other helps move beyond Good Friday to the in-between time of Holy Saturday, a time of learning to live with curiosity, letting go of over self-reliance and choosing to be hopeful. Transformation resides in the Easter moments where empathy, compassion and forgiveness are mutually shared, and a feeling of new life is experienced.

At the 2023 Chapter, sisters and associates committed to invest "time, energy and resources to a process of inner work, being open to personal and communal transformation." A committee has been working on developing a design for participation in Circles of Trust to bring this commitment to action. These circles offer an invitation to create a communal space in which to honor the sacred story of each person. Informed by the guidance of Sister Lynn for creating a safe environment for everyone, sisters and associates were encouraged to join a Circle of Trust through virtual meetings, in-person meetings or in a personal prayer setting.

The creativity of sisters and associates came to light on the second day of the gathering when the focus turned to celebrating the story of 150 years of the Dubuque Presentation foundation. A storyteller brought to life the remembrance: "The story begins as Mother Vincent Hennessy, Ellen Ahearn, Kate Reide and Alice Howley travel to Iowa in response to Bishop Hennessy's request for sisters to teach the Irish immigrants who have recently settled in the area. The dedication and faith of these women is evident as they left their homeland with little hope of ever returning. After a long journey by ship and train, they finally

**The story begins as Mother Vincent Hennessy, Ellen Ahearn, Kate Reide and Alice Howley travel to Iowa in response to Bishop Hennessy's request for sisters to teach the Irish immigrants who have recently settled in the area. The dedication and faith of these women is evident as they left their homeland with little hope of ever returning.**

reached Dubuque only to discover that they did not have a place to live, and the bishop was away."

Listening to the founding story led to a time of reflection, table sharing and a contemplative walk with a partner. The teams shared their reflection on significant events in the history of the community as well as consideration of the crossroads before the group at this time. The groups of two joined another group over a scone and a cup of tea before returning to the meeting room.

In the afternoon, several associates shared stories of their experiences of living out the associate identity statement which calls them to share in the life, spirituality and mission of the sisters, seeking to embody the Presentation charism of hospitality both individually and communally. The stories of travel to the U.S. border in support of immigrants, visiting Tanzanian sights where wells were being dug in villages and connections to the Presentation charism experienced during the recent Ireland pilgrimage touched the hearts of all.



Left to right: Participants got creative during their reflections on what dreams offer energy and hope for the future; Sister Gina Foletta, Sister Elena Hoyer and Associate Charlotte McCoy share conversation during a small group discussion; Sisters Joan Brincks and Janet Goetz bless each other with oil during a closing ritual at Community Days.

Day three dawned with thunderstorms which made the plan for a trolley ride to community heritage sites too challenging. Through the marvels of technology, with a steady hand for a camera and a good driver, one car set out through the rain to re-enact the arrival of Mother Vincent and her companions on November 13, 1874, and to trace the Dubuque homes of the congregation. The creative planning team quickly adapted their well-prepared script to accompany the remote camera. The morning closed with a ritual honoring the 25th anniversary of the Associate Partnership program.

In the afternoon, the various justice groups presented updates on the work of their committees. The Land Justice Committee guided a conversation toward culture shifts in imagining land and property use. Another committee spoke of commitments to advocacy for immigrants and immigration issues. An update by the Laudato Si' team was presented on prairie development and the installation of more solar panels.

Saturday evening's liturgy included a commissioning, celebrating the collective mission and dedication of Presentation Sisters and associates. Sister Carmen Hernandez addressed all present, "Presentation Sisters and associates, during our time together we have shared deeply about our journey of transformation. As we remember our Chapter commitment, may we continue walking this path with open hearts. Let us ask God to unlock our hearts and give us the courage to embrace the journey with love. It is with great joy that we send you forth to bring hope and love to our world. We celebrate the call that unites us. We rely on the strength and support of one another. As you return to your home and daily life, remember that love is our map for the journey."

Each participant was gifted with a mini travel bag, commissioning them forward and urging them to "go

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*Sister Carmen Hernandez*

gently, go boldly – with love as your guide." The evening concluded with a festive banquet celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of the Presentation and the 25th anniversary of the Presentation Associate Partnership.

The sisters met on Sunday morning to further the Chapter 2023 recommendation that there be both exploration and experimentation of leadership structures that support the mission. Another Chapter recommendation to seek partnerships in using land and building resources was highlighted in the presentation of plans for making space within the motherhouse for other organizations to utilize.

In the closing ritual, sisters blessed each other in prayer for courage, wisdom and guidance. Together, the community proclaimed their intent, "With Nano Nagle and Mother Vincent Hennessy and all on whose shoulders we stand, we go forth to proclaim hope and love to a broken world. In gratitude for 150 years of sharing love, compassion and hospitality through the winding lanes of Dubuque and beyond, we go forth to continue to spread the Gospel call to love unconditionally." All responded, "With the help of God, we can do a great deal."

# Executive Director Jean Lange

## A Modern-Day Nano

by JOY PETERSON, PBVM

In early 2025, after serving for nearly 15 years as house administrator of Mount Loretto, Jean Lange became the first executive director to lead the organizational systems of the Presentation Congregation. As executive director, Jean monitors, analyzes and supports various departments and functions of the organization, ensuring they run efficiently and align with the mission and charism of the Sisters of the Presentation. She meets regularly with the administrative staff to advance an environment of trust and mutual respect, empowering department heads to work together and make decisions independently. Overseeing the annual operations budget of Mount Loretto calls on Jean's ability to integrate her experience from the past years of management into the larger picture. She will also represent the Sisters of the Presentation at community events and other public engagements.

Sister Carmen Hernandez, congregational leader, has described the executive director's role this way: "As we experience aging membership and adapt to the shifts happening in religious life, Jean is helping us navigate these challenges and plan for our long-term sustainability. Her support in the life and mission of the motherhouse community allows leadership to dedicate more time to strategic visioning."

The transition to this new role highlights many of Jean's strengths as a leader. She came to Mount Loretto with years of experience working in elementary school settings including teaching, managing school technology systems and serving as principal in two different Catholic schools. These roles prepared her for the flexibility needed for motherhouse administration. Jean's skills in listening to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of each sister ensures quality in her care, just as her ongoing work with both sisters and staff contributes to fostering a culture of hospitality and mission for Mount Loretto.

Asked about how she is experiencing this new role, Jean reflects on being uplifted by the positive support and encouragement she has received from both the sisters and the staff. She also highlights the collaborative spirit that underlies the professional performance of the staff.

When Jean is not engaged in her work at Mount Loretto, she and her husband Jeff enjoy spending time with their



Jean Lange emulates the spirit of Presentation foundress, Nano Nagle, in her new role as executive director for the Presentation Sisters.

adult children and grandchildren. Weekend trips in the family recreational vehicle allow for time together outdoors as well as yearly long-distance trips to national parks. Bike rides along trails mean time for discovery of natural beauties and making shared memories. This care for her family carries over into Jean's concern for the wellbeing of the sisters and staff at Mount Loretto.

Jean's life has been shaped by faith, family and a commitment to service. Her calm and steady presence, ability to listen deeply and genuine love for those she serves has made her a trusted leader and colleague to both sisters and staff. She has a gift for making others feel seen and supported.

As Jean embraces this next chapter as executive director, the Sisters of the Presentation give thanks for this modern-day Nano who embodies the charism of hospitality, lighting the way with unwavering dedication, compassion and quiet strength.





# *Transforming Over 150 Years* **Our Dubuque Foundation**

by HERMANN PLATT, PBVM

"If I could be of service in saving souls in any part of the globe, I would willingly do all in my power." Inspired by these words of Nano Nagle, and encouraged by Vatican Council II, the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque, Iowa, launched a journey of transformation that would take them to distant places beyond the United States, including South America, Africa and Ireland.

In Dubuque, one more move in 1969 relocated the sisters across town to 2360 Carter Road, the site of the former St. Bernard Seminary. With extensive grounds came an awareness of the need to care for Earth as well as its inhabitants. The encyclical by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, became a handbook for study and action in this regard.

Nano, in addition to establishing schools, saw other needs in the city of Cork and tried to meet as many as possible. Visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, desiring to establish a home for elderly women, nothing was beyond her vision of bringing the light of hope to the most vulnerable.

Although originally dedicated to working in Catholic schools, by 1941, Dubuque Presentation Sisters had begun to move into parish work. The diversity of work broadened as needs became evident. Just as Nano did in her day, the sisters heard the call and stepped up to fill the need.

Responding to the call of the church and of Vatican II for North American religious congregations to share their resources with Latin America, each religious community

in the archdiocese pledged to send missionaries to South America. In 1971, two Presentation Sisters established a center in Entre Ríos, Bolivia, where they provided education, medicine and preparation for catechists. More recently, assistance in securing documentation of their birth has become a need for the Guarani people to receive government benefits. Other ministries were developed in Guatemala and Tanzania.

In the United States, immigrants and migrant workers cried out for help with learning English, securing housing and working to get their citizenship papers. Parish work in Florida, and the establishment of two centers in Iowa for assistance to immigrants served to alleviate some of these needs. Ministries at the United Nations and in the halls of Congress brought Presentation presence to new locations.

New opportunities to serve God's people found Presentation Sisters serving on committees working for an end to human trafficking and restoring the rights of the native peoples of the U.S. – the possibilities were endless.

As awareness of needs grew, the importance of forming partnerships became evident. The Associate Partnership program became a reality in 2000 when the first group of candidates committed themselves to following Nano's lead in serving the poor among us. Since then, 203 people have joined in the work, some for a time, some more permanently. Currently there are 125 members in the group, spread from Vermont to California.





*Far left to right: In 1969, the sisters purchased Mount St. Bernard Seminary as a new motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road, retaining the name Mount Loretto; As new needs emerged, sisters began serving in various roles of pastoral ministry; Responding to the call of the church and of Vatican II for religious congregations to share their resources with foreign missions, Sisters Ileen Sweeney and Maura McCarthy served the poor in southern Bolivia, where sisters continue ministering today; With a strong desire to serve the needs of all, sisters were drawn to serve in Hispanic and migrant communities. (Pictured is Sister Jeanette McCarthy); An Associate Partnership program was initiated to nurture mutual and supportive relationships with Christian laity; To address unmet housing needs for women and children in Dubuque, the Presentation Sisters joined five other women religious congregations to form the non-profit Opening Doors, establishing Maria House for transitional housing, Teresa Shelter for emergency shelter and Francis Apartments for affordable housing.*

The Associate Partnership is made up of people who, though not vowed members of the Presentation Community, are committed to serving with community members to achieve shared goals. The group has evolved over the last 25 years, remaining faithful to their identity statement and goals. They describe themselves as women and men who feel the call to share in the spirituality and mission of the Dubuque Presentation Sisters. Through prayer, mutual support and encouragement, they seek to embody the Presentation charism of hospitality, reaching out with empathy and compassion, seeking justice and responding to the needs of the world.

As new needs emerged, new partnerships were formed within the civic community of Dubuque. Collaborating with other religious communities in the area, Presentation Sisters have shared in providing for women and children who are homeless. Women's shelters, low-rent housing, food pantries – this list covers only a glimpse of the various activities in which sisters and associates are involved.

The International Presentation Association (IPA), the Conference of Presentation Sisters (CPS) and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) extend the reach of the local group, all striving for advocacy, justice and care for the earth.

Sister Beth Kress served as inaugural IPA coordinator in its earliest stages from 1989-1995. She comments on the purpose and work of IPA, "The International Presentation Association advocates for Presentation people to continue the work of Nano. Launched in 1989 by 15 Presentation congregations, IPA began with a broad vision and goals. My role was to communicate and promote the global



*Presentation Sisters from around the world united to create the International Presentation Association (IPA) which works for world-wide justice and supports a non-governmental organization at the United Nations. Sister Beth Kress (second from right) was named the first coordinator, followed by other sisters who held various positions within IPA.*

Presentation charism and mission for justice among the then over 3,000 sisters and associates serving in 18 countries."

Since 1997, IPA has been accredited as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations. Presentation people have held internships with IPA's efforts for women and children, care of the earth, Indigenous and tribal people through the UN Economic and Social Council from 1989-1995.

Ever evolving, circles are widening with opportunities to collaborate with like-minded people inspired by similar Presentation values.

Protection of Earth is a priority as evident in the increasing use of solar power, the planting of pocket prairies at Mount Loretto and the commitment to plant 150 trees in honor of 150 years of service in the United States. The community continues to explore the needs of Earth and the past exploitation of Indigenous people.

As the Sisters of the Presentation celebrate their 150th anniversary, the question arises, "What does the future hold?" There is a firm hope that the spirit of Nano will continue to motivate others to follow her example in being an advocate for those who have little or no access to life's basic needs.

The latest Chapter of Affairs in 2023 outlined the future direction of community endeavors in three commitment statements.

- 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 the healing of our wounded Earth.

The community also pledged themselves, individually and communally, to educate themselves on the principles of *Laudato Si'*; to develop processes which will allow members to flourish and thrive; and to use their resources of land, finances and buildings responsibly.

As the Dubuque Presentation Sisters mark 150 years of mission and ministry, their story is far from over. What began with Nano lighting her lantern on the dark streets of Cork, Ireland, continues today in countless acts of compassion, advocacy and transformation around the world. Presentation Sisters, associates and their partners in mission step boldly into the future, trusting that wherever there is need, the call will be heard and answered with love.



*In honor of the 150 trees for 150 years initiative, a tree is planted at the Archdiocese of Dubuque Pastoral Center.*



## *A History of Shared Mission*

by JOEL THORESON, ARCHIVIST

Prior to Vatican II, inter-congregational interactions between sisters of various communities were relatively rare. The Visitations Sisters in Dubuque welcomed and housed the Presentation Sisters upon their arrival in 1874, and the Sisters of Mercy's various medical institutions were used at times. Teaching ministries, however, were independent of each other, with a single community serving a particular parish.

The Archdiocese of Dubuque's first interparochial high school was established in Cresco, Iowa, in 1951, followed by a number of others throughout the 1950s. Those in smaller towns often remained served by just one religious congregation, while Regis High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, included teachers from several congregations in 1958, though not from the Dubuque Sisters of the Presentation.

The first to include Presentation Sisters was Wahlert High School in Dubuque in 1959, the largest of the consolidated high schools. Bringing together the former academies of the Dubuque Presentations, Franciscans, Visitations, Dominicans and BVMs, the first faculty included sisters from all of these congregations. Presentation Sisters were Sister Angela Feeney as dean of girls, Sister Ernestine Meyer who taught home economics and Sister Fleurette Einikey (*pictured above*) as the librarian. Other sisters listed included Sisters Anastasia Burns, Anne Uhl, Constance Quillin, Victoria Gereau and Wilfred Kress.

In the Sioux City Diocese, Bishop Garrigan High School in Algona, Iowa, brought together students from various parishes when it opened in 1959. The 12 sisters on the initial faculty were from the Presentation and Franciscan congregations of Dubuque. Later faculty members included sisters from the Sisters of Humility from Ottumwa, Iowa (later Davenport), and the Sisters of St. Francis from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Today sisters from various communities come together in many ways – locally, nationally and internationally – serving the church and promoting justice.



# Social Justice Actions

by DAVE MCDERMOTT, JUSTICE PROMOTER

## *The Céad Míle Fáilte House Goes Solar*

In exciting news, the Céad Míle Fáilte (CMF) House on the Mount Loretto property will soon have a ground-mounted solar array that will offset 100% of its electrical usage. This project will not only reduce the facility's carbon footprint but also exemplifies a deep commitment to sustainability and care for creation. Once the panels are installed, the CMF House will be the second building at Mount Loretto to have all of its electrical needs met with solar, joining the Visitation House which had roof mounted panels installed in 2024.

This initiative directly supports the goals of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment, which calls for urgent action to protect our common home. The solar installation reflects a holistic approach to ecological conversion – one that integrates faith, science and social responsibility. The Sisters of the Presentation's commitment to renewable energy is more than a technical upgrade, it is a spiritual and moral statement rooted in hope and action.



## *Pocket Prairies: Small Spaces, Big Impact*

Led by the Laudato Si' Justice Team, traditional lawn is being transformed on the Mount Loretto grounds into vibrant pocket prairies – small, intentional patches of native grasses and wildflowers that bring ecological richness to landscapes. These mini-meadows are not only beautiful, but they also serve a vital environmental purpose. By replacing turf grass with native species like coneflowers, milkweed, black-eyed Susans and prairie dropseed, pocket prairies restore habitat for pollinators and improve soil health. Their deep roots help manage stormwater and reduce the need for mowing and chemical inputs, making them a sustainable alternative to conventional lawns.

Visible results are already blooming in year two of the project. Butterflies, bees and other pollinators are flocking to these floral havens, drawn by the nectar-rich blossoms and sheltering foliage. These small prairies create a ripple effect, supporting biodiversity and connecting people with the rhythms of nature. Two more areas were planted this fall – one along Carter Road and the other at the far southeast corner along Asbury Road. There is much excitement around the biodiversity these new prairie patches bring!





*Presentation pilgrims gather at the gate to Nano Nagle's birthplace in Ballygriffin, Ireland.*

## *A Journey Back to Our Roots* **Presentation Pilgrimage**

*by* JANET LEONARD, PRESENTATION ASSOCIATE & PILGRIM

Nano Nagle, foundress of the Sisters of the Presentation, followed her call to educate Irish Catholic youth who were forbidden to learn how to read and write under the penal laws in the 1700s. In 1875, four brave women traveled from Mooncoin, Ireland, across the Atlantic, to further Nano's dreams by educating Catholic youth in the Midwest. To celebrate 150 years of Presentation heritage, a pilgrimage to the Emerald Isle from June 15-25 became a reality.

There was much excitement and anticipation in the air as 33 Presentation pilgrims gathered at Mount Loretto with sisters, associates and family. Surrounded with love and support, each pilgrim was presented with a journal, a prayer partner, a blessing and assurances of many prayers for a safe and meaningful pilgrimage to the past.

As the pilgrims explored the beauty and depth of Ireland's spiritual heritage, they were reminded that Nano's legacy is not just history, it is a living call that continues to shape lives and bring hope to Ireland and around the world.

A highlight of the trip was visiting the small village of Mooncoin which included touring the church and cemetery where several Presentation Sisters are buried. It is here where Bishop John Hennessy suggested to Mother Vincent Hennessy that the youth of Irish immigrants in his diocese of Dubuque needed Presentation Sisters. From this gentle request came the beginning of Presentation ministries in Iowa and beyond.

The Nano Nagle Place and Museum (winner of the 2022 Council of Europe Museum Prize) is a tribute to cherished memories of Nano in Ireland. In the convent which Nano built and worked were sacred objects of Nano, lovingly preserved behind glass, including her rosary and prayer book. Her writing desk and the clock from her childhood are proudly displayed in her parlor. The museum depicts the story of Nano's sacrificial life and her vast influence upon the Irish people.

Associate Becky Searcy shares, "The highlight for me was touring Nano Nagle Place and Museum. The sisters greeted





*Left to right: Prayers brought from Dubuque were offered at Nano's grave; A beautiful mural painted by Eleanor Yates in the former Presentation Sister's convent depicts the life of Nano Nagle and is now part of the Díséart Institute of Irish Spirituality and Culture in Dingle; Presentation employee, Jerry Hermesen, his wife, Presentation associate Kris Hermesen and Sister Annette Kestel braved the wind and mist to enjoy the breathtaking Cliffs of Moher.*

us with warm Irish hospitality with tea and scones. We ended with a beautiful prayer service with the Presentation Sisters living there, filled with prayer and music brought from Dubuque. We each had the opportunity to touch Nano's tomb and receive blessing and healing."

The pilgrimage continued with a trip to Ballygriffin, where Nano was born and grew up. Again the pilgrims were warmly welcomed with tea and scones before learning more about Nano from Presentation Sister Anne Lyons, the postulator for Nano's cause for canonization. Through her ministry of gathering facts for this cause, Nano was declared 'venerable' in 2013 by Pope Francis.

There was time to quietly walk in Nano's footsteps – literally. The peacefulness of the Nagle Mountains, the Blackwater River and the hills where Nano played and prayed was deeply moving. The next stop was the church where Nano was baptized. The baptismal font was prominently displayed in a side chapel with facts about Nano.

The next morning some pilgrims joined Presentation Sister Bride Given for a walking tour beginning at St. Finbarr's Church where Nano once prayed and walked to her schools. The afternoon brought the group to Cobh Harbor, where Mother Vincent and her three traveling companions left Ireland for their new ministry in Dubuque.

After enjoying sunshine for the first half of the trip, the next morning changed as associate Deb McClimon notes, "We experienced the Ireland weather I was prepared for – rain, mist and wind. We stood at the westernmost point of Ireland on the longest day of the year!"

In the afternoon, a visit to the Díséart Institute of Irish Culture and Spirituality, included the Nano Nagle Room with four murals depicting Nano's life and mission.

Sunday morning began with Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral, next to St. Brigid's Presentation Secondary School where Nano's ministry continues.

As the journey deepened, so too did the pilgrims' connection to Nano and her legacy. Associate Laurie Noel reflects, "These days have been truly awakening – walking in Nano's footsteps, living Nano's life. Grateful beyond words for this experience and the incredible group I have shared it with. As we travel these winding lanes, I carry Nano's words with me: 'If I could be of service in saving souls in any part of the globe, I would gladly do all in my power.'"

While the heart of the pilgrimage honored Nano and Presentation heritage, the journey also included visits to sacred and cultural sites that offered a deeper understanding of Ireland's rich spiritual heritage. Pilgrims paused in reflection at the Papal Cross in Dublin's Phoenix Park, wandered the ancient monastic grounds of Glendalough and stood in awe at the Rock of Cashel, where St. Patrick baptized Ireland's first Christian king. They took in the dramatic Cliffs of Moher, visited St. Brigid's Well and Glenstal Abbey, explored the misty Killarney National Park to Ross Castle and walked among the ruins of Clonmacnoise. These experiences, steeped in the faith and story of Ireland itself, beautifully complemented the Presentation journey and deepened the pilgrims' sense of connection to the land that shaped Nano's legacy.

Sister Annette Kestel expresses, "We are grateful for all we have seen and experienced, for the beauty we have met, for the new places we have visited, especially those sacred to Nano and Dubuque Presentation people. We are particularly grateful for Mother Vincent Hennessy, Kate Reide, Alice Howley and Ellen Ahern and their courageous response to God's call to serve the poor and uneducated. May a portion of their spirit always enflame our hearts and urge us one pace beyond comfort and safety."



*Sister Annette Kestel (middle) visits with Sisters Cecelia Marie Auterman (left) and Julia Wingert (right) in her new ministry role as coordinator of community life for her Presentation Community.*

## *Walking with Others in Faith* **Sister Annette Kestel**

*by* JOELLEN PRICE, PBVM

Sister Annette Kestel recently participated in the 150th anniversary Presentation pilgrimage to Ireland, celebrating 150 years since the foundation of the Presentation Sisters in Dubuque. Reflecting on the journey, Sister Annette asserts, "Our pilgrimage to Ireland helped me to recognize and renew my desire to honor our Presentation legacy in my ministry. It was a powerful experience to walk in the places where our founding mothers walked, remembering always the four courageous women who left Ireland to initiate the future of the Dubuque congregation.

We visited the Nano Nagle Center in Cork, Ireland, toured the museum and grounds, and gathered for prayer around Nano's tomb with Presentation Sisters who live in Cork. This beautiful experience of communion as followers of Nano reminded me that we are so much bigger and more connected as Presentation people than I could ever imagine."

Sister Annette, daughter of Robert and Henrietta Kestel from Schaller, Iowa, communicates her gratitude for learning to care for others from her family. "I believe this was initially fostered by my parents and family. My brother, George, was born with Down syndrome and required extra care from our family, especially from my mom. Her example of concern and care deeply impacted my brother Jeff and me. It helped us to be more aware of the needs of others and to appreciate diversity."

For the past six years, the mission of the Sisters of the Presentation has been reflected in Sister Annette's work at Epiphany Parish in Mason City, Iowa. She affirms, "I am grateful to my Presentation congregation, Epiphany Parish and the school staff for helping me develop pastoral leadership and community formation. I believe my parish ministry, as well as my years as an elementary school teacher have reflected our charism of hospitality and our



**The gifts God has given me in life are enough.  
It is my responsibility to appreciate and  
develop these to the best of my ability.**

*Sister Annette Kestel*

call to bring the good news of God's love and care to others, especially those who suffer. I think that God has gifted me with the ability to see needs, even simple ones, and to respond as best I can. This was true for me as a teacher and in parish ministry, and I hope it will continue.

Working with families planning funeral services for their loved ones has been a great privilege. Often the deacon on staff or I were the first parish pastoral presence after a death. Making the funeral arrangements was never easy but certainly was a sacred time to hear the stories of their loved ones and learn to see the deceased through the eyes of the family. It has been a great gift to get to know the people of the parish and to accompany them during times of celebration as well as times of sadness."

In her work with adult Christian Initiation (OCIA), one incredibly rewarding experience was accompanying a family of five to the parish Easter Vigil and experiencing them receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. "I was really touched by their words of gratitude. It was a joy to journey with this family and others through the initiation process, see them engage in the parish community and share their gifts with others. My hope is that everyone I have met in my ministry has felt cared for and welcomed. As a woman in parish ministry I have received great support and encouragement from those with whom I have worked."

As the Sisters of the Presentation celebrate their 150th anniversary, Sister Annette was asked what tending the light means to her personally in her daily life. "For me this means being open to all those with whom I come in contact and being willing to adjust my plans according to their needs. Offering my attention and kindness to those I meet has been both a challenge and a great gift. Meeting people where they are and caring for them has been a beautiful experience of seeing the face of Jesus in others and learning from them."

As Sister Annette leaves parish ministry and moves into her new ministry role as coordinator of community life for her Presentation Community, she plans to take all that she has learned and use these gifts in service: "The gifts God has given me in life are enough. It is my responsibility to appreciate and develop these to the best of my ability."



# GIVING TUESDAY

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2025**

GivingTuesday is a global movement that celebrates the power of radical generosity. Launched in 2012 as a day to encourage people to do good, it has grown into a worldwide effort inspiring millions to give, collaborate and uplift their communities every day.

Imagine a world built on shared humanity; a world where kindness and compassion guide our actions every day. Whether it is supporting a local nonprofit, lending a hand to a neighbor or speaking up for what is right and just, every gesture matters. Even a smile, a shared moment, a helping hand has a ripple effect. When we show up for one another, we create a stronger, more connected world. That is the heart of GivingTuesday. Please, share your story using #GivingTuesday and #DBQPBVMS to inspire others. Together, we can build a brighter future.

**Please consider supporting the  
Sisters of the Presentation on GivingTuesday  
as we continue our mission to help those  
most in need, especially women and children.**

To learn more, contact Karen Tuecke at [partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org](mailto:partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org) or visit [www.dbqpbvms.org/give-back/givingtuesday](http://www.dbqpbvms.org/give-back/givingtuesday).

# Lives Touched by Presentation Sisters

## Embracing the Mission

by KAREN TUECKE, PARTNERS IN MISSION COORDINATOR

In every generation, some individuals quietly change the world – not through grand speeches or public accolades, but through presence, prayer and purpose. The Sisters of the Presentation are among them. For 150 years in the United States and beyond, they have lived out the vision of their foundress, Nano Nagle, embracing the needs of those made poor, the forgotten, the young and the vulnerable with faith and fierce compassion through radical hospitality.

But what does “embracing the mission” really look like? For many of our partners in mission, it starts with a personal encounter with a sister who saw them, supported them, taught them or simply showed up.



All of these women taught at Immaculate Conception School in Charles City, Iowa, growing together in love and kindness. Back row: Sister Anne McCormick, Marilyn Rochford, Susan Strong, Lynn Redenius, Sister René Laubenthal and Sister Sheila Kane. Front row: Sister Ellen Mary Garrett, Sister Linus Coyle, Sister Catherine Wingert and Sarah Barrett.

also fun to work with,” she reflects. “I continued to teach at the Immaculate Conception for 27 years and was truly fortunate to work, pray and play with several beautiful Sisters of the Presentation.”

Even in retirement, the mission continues. Marilyn now helps Sister Diana Blong with parish ministry. “My husband and I still live in Charles City, and I continue to be active in the parish with Sister Diana and her many projects.” Over the years, Marilyn and a few of her Immaculate Conception colleagues have made cherished visits to Mount Loretto.

Sister Jennifer Rausch, Marilyn’s first cousin and special friend, is another connection. “The Presentation Sisters have been a part of my life for over 50 years,” she says. “I would like to thank all of the sisters who have been such a large part of my life and have touched my heart and soul!”

### *Nano Lives On – In Vermont and Beyond*

For Terese Veverka Black of Rutland, Vermont, the journey with the Presentation Sisters is deeply personal. “I lived as a Presentation Sister for 10 years, and even though I moved on in a different direction, the Presentation Sisters have been in my heart and soul ever since.”

Her bond with the community never faded. In fact, it grew stronger. On June 1, 2025, Terese, affectionately known as “Terse” to the sisters, became a Presentation associate, formally embracing the mission in her daily life.

Today, Terese lives out Nano’s call to love in action by giving back in many ways: she works with former prisoners,

### *A Young Teacher and Lifelong Friendship*

Marilyn Rochford’s journey began in 1972 as a new teacher in Charles City, Iowa. “I was 21 years old and was super excited and nervous about having my own classroom of little people and being a ‘real’ teacher,” she remembers. “Boy, did I have a lot to learn!” Fortunately, she was not alone. Marilyn was hired to teach first grade with Sister Anne McCormick, who became her “rock and mentor.”

Over the years, Marilyn taught with several Presentation Sisters, including Sister Kay Cota, and grew alongside them in faith and vocation. “They were all so helpful and

**She (my mom) always said these lovely humans were her “sisters” and developed nurturing, special relationships with them for years. As a child, spending time with sisters was very normal to me. Now I realize how very blessed I was.**

Nancy (Gauthier) Buntrock





*Left to right: Sister Joy Peterson reconnects with long-time friend and Presentation associate, Terese Veverka Black; Sister Emilie Bormann and Nancy (Gauthier) Buntrock (and, of course, Pope Francis) share a special friendship; Some of the Clark and Rottinghaus family came together to celebrate Larry's mother, Mary Catherine's birthday. Back row: Sisters Rosanne, Michael and Anthony Rottinghaus, Mary Catherine Clark, Larry Clark and Dan Clark. Front row: Larry's son Chris and his sister Connie. Missing: Larry Clark's sisters, Marlene, Patty, Mary Lou and Donna.*

supports her church's outreach ministry, serves as power of attorney for an elderly man, mentors a teenage girl and helps coordinate housing efforts for people experiencing homelessness, among other quiet acts of service.

Through it all, she says with conviction, "Nano lives on!"

### ***A Childhood Surrounded by Sisters***

Nancy (Gauthier) Buntrock's story began in Monticello, Minnesota, where Presentation Sisters served at St. Henry Parish. For Nancy's mother, who had only brothers, the sisters became chosen family. "She always said these lovely humans were her 'sisters,' and developed nurturing, special relationships with them for years."

Nancy, an only child, grew up surrounded by Presentation Sisters and love. "As a child, spending time with sisters was very normal to me. Now I realize how very blessed I was." When her mother passed away in 2018, Sisters Irma Ries, Jennifer Rausch, Diana Blong, Emilie Bormann and Carrie Link provided comfort and peace. "They each seemed to know just what I needed to hear, and simply their presence brought me peace."

Since then, Nancy has turned to the sisters for prayer in life's hills and valleys. "It means more than I can express to know they are praying for my family and me." Her appreciation led her to visit Iowa, where she learned more about Nano's story. "The passion for education they all live out is inspiring," says Nancy, now in her 30th year as an educator. "Who knows how much of my career path was subtly influenced by these special women?"

### ***A Family Legacy of Faith***

For Larry Clark, the Presentation Sisters are truly family. From an early age, Larry remembers making joyful visits to Mount Loretto to see his three aunts – Sisters Michael,

Anthony and Rosanne Rottinghaus. "We played games, especially softball, and explored the grounds, especially the kitchen," he fondly recalls.

Though his aunts and many of the sisters from those early years have passed on, their example still inspires Larry as he continues to carry the flame of their legacy. "The wonderful memories I have and the powerful, positive impact the Presentation Community continues to make are why I support their mission today."

Reading *Presentation Doorways* cover to cover, remaining active in his parish and staying rooted in the example of faith set by his aunts and extended family, Larry adds, "Wishing the Presentation Sisters a blessed 150th anniversary!"

### ***Carrying the Flame Forward***

These stories reflect more than shared memories – they reveal how the Presentation mission lives on in new and meaningful ways. Whether it is mentoring young children in a classroom, volunteering with the marginalized or reaching out in prayer, the mission of Nano continues to burn brightly through those who have been impacted by the Presentation Sisters.

Marking 150 years of Presentation ministry honors not only the past but also the enduring spirit that continues to shape lives and communities today. Looking ahead, may the mission be embraced with the same courage, humility, and hope that have always defined the Presentation way.

"So, to the sisters – thank you," expresses Marilyn, Terese, Nancy and Larry. "For your courage. For your witness. For every prayer whispered, lesson taught, injustice challenged and life uplifted. You have shown us that embracing the mission is a daily choice and through your example, we find the courage to do the same."



Left to right: Newly-committed associates: Laura Ryan Ripley, Bob Gardner, Debbie Gross, Terese Veverka Black, Teresa Koch, Connie McDermott, Terry McDermott and Kris Hermesen.

# Welcoming New Associates

by RITA WATERS, RSM, ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP CO-DIRECTOR

Inspired by Nano Nagle and the spirit of radical hospitality, eight dynamic individuals became Presentation associates this spring. During their orientation, they were blessed by open-hearted sharing, many kindnesses and prayerful support. Together, they formed deep bonds, becoming soul friends. They share what drew them to this sacred journey.

## *Terese Veverka Black*

Terese says, "I want to be an associate because you are in my blood – and heart and soul. After spending 10 years as a Presentation Sister, I cannot *not* be a part of a group of women I have loved for 45 years."

Earning a degree from Clarke College, Terese taught at Resurrection, St. Columbkille, St. Dorothy and Columbus High School before doing missionary work in Bolivia. After leaving the Presentation Community, Terese married Rob Black. They had two children, Rachel and Jimmy, in addition to Rob's daughter, Kira.

Terese carried the charism of Nano into her work as director of Rutland Dismas House, which assists formerly incarcerated persons. Now retired, Terese does volunteer work, plays guitar at Mass, travels and enjoys reconnecting with family and friends.

## *Robert Gardner*

"What does the Lord ask of you? Only this: to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God." This simple, yet powerful Scripture captures what I believe is my mission in life," says Bob. "Following in the footsteps of Nano, Mother Vincent Hennessy and many remarkable women, I choose to live as the Presentation Sisters do ... putting God's love in action by living a life of radical hospitality."

A lifelong Iowan, Bob was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and continues to reside there. Although teaching in Catholic schools has been his life's work and greatest passion, he currently serves as pastoral minister at St. Ludmila Church. Bob shares that several beacons of light guided him to the Presentation Associate Partnership: the Presentations' extraordinary dedication to Catholic education; their radical hospitality, which welcomes, includes and supports all; the legacy of his mother, who was taught by the Presentation Sisters in Ryan, Iowa; and the incredible feeling of being truly at home at Mount Loretto.

## *Debbie Gross*

Debbie grew up in a faith-filled, fun family in Waterloo, Iowa, but has lived in Dubuque for the past 36 years. She was married to her "best friend, the most incredible man"



for 40 years. They have two daughters, Kate and Megan, and five grandchildren. In April 2024, her beloved husband Terry passed away. She says that he taught all of us how to live, and die, gracefully.

Debbie worked in youth ministry, parish ministry and as a campus minister at Loras College before retiring in 2022. A vital part of her life is her faith-sharing group of 36 years. "The mission of radical hospitality is how I try to live my life," says Debbie. "I am thrilled to say 'Yes!' to this community as an associate. I love the symbol of the lantern and I pray that all of us can be 'Nano seconds' of light to one another."

### *Kris Hermesen*

Still a farm girl at heart, Kris grew up in a family of nine in western Iowa. She earned degrees from Briar Cliff College and Clarke College and taught elementary school for over 30 years before retiring in 2021. She and Jerry have been married for 39 years; their family includes their son Josh, his wife Janet, their son Jon and his girlfriend Jess.

Kris was drawn to the Associate Partnership, knowing very little about the amazing woman Nano was. Kris states, "In 2022, Nano was publicly acclaimed as the 'Greatest Irish person of all time,' a woman whose only claim to such an honor was a life dedicated to the poor. Nano became the lantern for others. She challenges me to live simply, take risks and to share my gifts. I pray that we, as new associates, will take up our lanterns and bring light and hope to others."

### *Teresa Koch*

Teresa grew up on her family's farm near West Union, Iowa, where she learned the value of caring for the earth. She was the second of four children whose parents were devout and involved Catholics. She married Joe Koch, and together they had three children: Christa, Danny and Benjamin. They later divorced. Teresa has been passionate about teaching the faith to her children and their family was highly involved at St. Joseph Parish in Key West.

When she was 16, Teresa started playing the organ at Mass and has continued to sing and play at numerous parishes throughout her life. She loves combining music and faith and has devoted most of her career to teaching music in Catholic schools.

When she was invited to be an associate, she was so excited that she admits, "I didn't discern. I didn't pray. I just acted."

### *Connie McDermott*

Connie, formerly from Epworth, Iowa, has called Dubuque home for 15 years. She and her husband Terry have three children, Tara, Eric and Leah, and consider their spouses "our kids" as well. They have six grandsons and a granddaughter. Connie is presently retired but has worked for the Catholic church in various positions for a total of 31 years. She laughs, "God likes to keep me close!"

She avows, "The charism of the Presentation Sisters is radical hospitality. Something I experience very strongly whenever I am in their presence. 'Radical' – meaning bold, true, profound, challenging societal norms, a transformative experience of God's grace. These are the people I want to spend time with."

### *Terry McDermott*

Terry spent his first 57 years in Epworth, Iowa, born into a half-Irish, half-German Catholic family. He attended St. Patrick and was taught by the Presentation Sisters. After graduation, he worked at John Deere for 43 years.

He recalls that the visiting presider at their wedding offered the Eucharist to Connie, still a Methodist then, and held it out until she finally took it. Terry asks, "Radically inclusive, wasn't it?" It made a memorable impression on him. Attending liturgy at Mount Loretto, they again encountered radical hospitality. Terry and Connie's shared journey drew them to the Associate Partnership. Terry expresses, "Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of an organization that has an open heart to all people, no exclusions."

### *Laura Ryan Ripley*

Laura grew up in a loving Catholic family, and attended Catholic schools through college, solidifying her vocation to teach in Catholic schools for the past 34 years. She has been married to her husband Shane, also for 34 years, and they have three children: Christopher, Monica and Isaac.

Laura met two Presentation Sisters in particular who deeply influenced her. College professor Sister Joan Lickteig ignited a fire that formed her and her classmates into quality teachers who taught with passion and generosity; and Sister Carmen Hernandez inspired other teachers to emulate her commitment to high standards of professionalism, deep concern for students and attentive listening.

Laura testifies, "Whenever I enter this beautiful Presentation motherhouse, I feel God's holy presence among you as you manifest the spirit of Nano. It is now my season to follow God's call and the charism of radical hospitality."

#### **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.

## In Loving Memory Associate Marlene Hagemann

August 20, 1953 – July 16, 2025

Associate Marlene Hagemann passed away on July 16, 2025, after battling Parkinson's disease. She was born on August 20, 1953, daughter of Emil and Marian (Drees) Stelken of Farley, Iowa. Marlene married David Hagemann on June 19, 1976. Marlene and Dave made their home in New Vienna, Iowa, where they raised their son, Steve. Marlene spent her free time spoiling her grandchildren, nieces and nephews with tea parties and funny socks.



Marlene Hagemann

Marlene became an associate on August 12, 2000, and was an associate for 23 years. In her letter of commitment, she stated, "I look forward to serving the poor, elderly, disabled, etc., right along with the sisters. It also may be a good way to keep an eye on my oldest sister, Sister Janet Stelken."

Marlene is missed by all who knew and loved her.

*To read Marlene's full obituary, visit  
[www.kramer-morrisfuneralhome.com](http://www.kramer-morrisfuneralhome.com).*



Left to right: Clean-up crew: Associates Dianne McDermott, Delynn Fangman, Dora Serna, Deb McClimon, Bonnie Hancock, Ben Roberts, Radie Roberts, Jeff Lange and Jean Lange.

## Service Opportunity Cemetery Clean-Up

On Sunday, July 13, 2025, nine Presentation associates participated in a cemetery cleanup at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Key West, Iowa, at the Sisters of the Presentation section. This joint project included trimming of weeds and clearing grass by the Key West Knights of Columbus. This allowed the associate group to focus on clearing, spraying and scrubbing the grave markers in preparation for a historic trolley tour honoring the 150th anniversary, which included a stop at the cemetery. The associates also cared for the adjacent area where the Sisters of the Visitation are buried. The remaining two Visitation Sisters reside at Mount Loretto.

During the service project, Sister Corine Murray visited the cemetery to place ribbons on grave markers for the upcoming trolley tour. She reflected, "With every headstone there is a story. We might not have access to all those stories, but the sisters who knew those individuals have treasured memories. The Presentation Sisters are very appreciative of the associates who were out there cleaning on their hands and knees!"

In tending to the grave markers of those who came before, the associates embodied the very spirit of the Presentation service, reverence and care for one another and Earth. Their efforts ensured that this sacred space, rich with legacy and love, would be ready to welcome visitors and invite reflection during this milestone year.



## Want to Know More?

**Contact Sister Rita or Radie to learn about  
the Presentation Associate Partnership.**

563.588.2008 Ext. 608  
[associates@dbqpbvms.org](mailto:associates@dbqpbvms.org)



# *All Souls Day – November 2, 2025*

## Circle of Illumination

As the Sisters of the Presentation's 150th anniversary year draws to a close, the community remembers and celebrates the lives and legacies of those who have shaped their journey and illuminated the way forward.

Throughout the month of November, the sisters hold in prayer the souls of the dearly departed, lifting up their names and memories with love and gratitude.

You are invited to join the Sisters of the Presentation virtually for their Circle of Illumination prayer service on All Souls' Day, Sunday, November 2, at 6 p.m. As hearts gather in prayer, no matter the distance, the community will honor those who have gone before, those who have shaped lives, guided hearts and continue to inspire the mission.

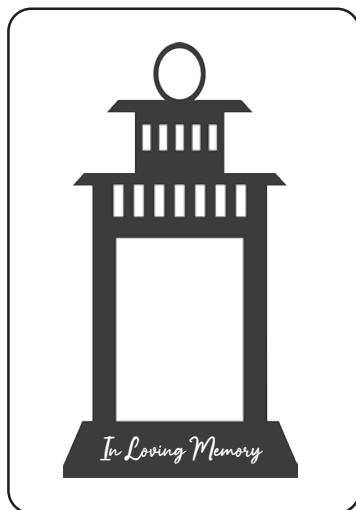
### *How to Participate*

An All Souls' Day mailing will be sent in the coming weeks. Inside, you will find a card with a lantern illustration. Loved ones' names may be written within the lantern and returned by October 30, 2025. Intentions may also be submitted to Karen Tuecke at [partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org](mailto:partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org).

Your intentions will be placed in an individual luminary and lifted up in gratitude and remembrance – a visible sign of those who are missed so deeply.

Displayed beautifully around the driveway at Mount Loretto, the luminaries will form a circle of hope, healing and light in honor of all those held in loving memory.

A small candle included in the mailing invites everyone to participate from wherever they are. All are encouraged to light the candle on November 2 and join in spirit and prayer, united in a circle of light.



**PLEASE JOIN US ON  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2025**



*Circle of  
Illumination*

**6 P.M.  
SISTERS OF THE PRESENTATION  
DUBUQUE, IOWA**

***Join us virtually by scanning  
the QR code or visiting the link  
[bit.ly/circleofillumination\\_livestream](https://bit.ly/circleofillumination_livestream).***

*Once you scan the QR code or visit the link,  
you will be prompted to enter the password:  
**TendingtheLight***



# Tending Our Earth: 150 Trees for 150 Years

As the Sisters of the Presentation celebrate 150 years of service, they honor their deep commitment to caring for Earth. You are invited to participate in "150 Trees for 150 Years" initiative by either planting a tree or sponsoring one. Each tree represents the sisters' ongoing dedication to fostering a sustainable future. To honor your planting or sponsorship, a leaf with your name will be added to their tree display. You can track the progress toward 150 trees by visiting their website. Their goal is halfway met! Help grow a lasting legacy!

For more information, you can visit

<https://dbqpbvms.org/150-trees-150-years>

Join in This Collective Effort

Plant a Tree



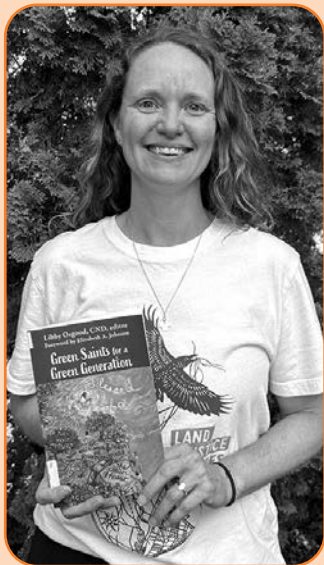
Sponsor a Tree



We Are Over Halfway to Our Goal!

## Inspiring a Greener Future

Sister Jessi Beck recently contributed a chapter titled "Saint Ignatius: Grounding and Guidance in Times of Ecological Crisis" to the award-winning book *Green Saints for a Green Generation*. Written by 12 women, scientists, theologians and religious sisters, the book features global exemplars whose lives reflect a deep ecological spirituality. Sister Jessi's contribution highlights how the wisdom of Saint Ignatius can guide spiritual responses to today's environmental challenges. The book was named one of Spirituality & Practice's Best Spirituality Books of 2024 and won third place in the biography category of the 2025 Catholic Media Association Book Awards. These honors recognize works that promote Catholic values and inspire faith-filled reflection. A children's version is in the works, with hopes of publication in 2026, continuing the mission of shaping hearts and minds for a greener, more compassionate future.



## Life-Changing Water Project

Access to clean water is a daily convenience many take for granted, while others must carry it long distances from streams to fulfill their needs. In Chicabracán II, El Quiché, Guatemala, a new water system, using pumps and gravity, has transformed lives by reducing illness and freeing time for education. The Presentation community partnered with Global Partners: Running Waters\*, contributing \$25,000, while local residents provided \$14,000 in labor and materials. A local committee will manage the system, which now serves 101 families (606 people). The project reflects the Presentation Chapter commitment to foster connections with people to nurture healing of Earth and responding to the needs of women and children.

*\*Global Partners: Running Waters was started by Sister Jan Gregorcich, SSND, a friend of Sisters Marge Healy and Rita Menart. (<https://globalpartnersrunningwaters.org>)*



# Mount Loretto AND BEYOND

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

## They Are Not Disposable Exhibit

Artist Steven Parlato was welcomed to Mount Loretto for a powerful in-person discussion and reading of his poetry about his "THEY ARE NOT DISPOSABLE" exhibit. The moving portrait series depicts 16 Black Americans whose lives were stolen due to racial violence. Each portrait is a collage made from trash and found objects.

Dubuque area women religious congregations were key to bringing Steven's art to Dubuque, and he graciously returned that kindness by offering an opportunity for community conversation. With humility and deep conviction, Steven walked the sisters through his journey of inspiration and creation of the portraits and how he grew into the responsibility of telling these painful yet vital stories.

By the end, every sister present joined together, speaking aloud the names of those whose lives were represented in his work in a collective act of remembrance, solidarity and commitment to racial justice.



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**EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY**

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### PLEASE CONNECT WITH US.

For updated information about the activities and events of the Sisters of the Presentation, visit our website at [www.dbqpbvms.org](http://www.dbqpbvms.org) or call 563.588.2008.

### PLEASE JOIN US.

**November 2, 2025**

Circle of Illumination  
6 p.m.

*See page 21 to join us virtually!*

**December 2, 2025**

GivingTuesday

### PLEASE PRAY WITH US.

**November 1, 2025**

Feast of All Saints

**November 2, 2025**

Feast of All Souls

**November 2-8, 2025**

National Vocation Awareness Week

**November 13, 2025**

Foundation Day (1874)  
Conclusion of 150th Anniversary  
Celebration

**November 21, 2025**

Presentation Day

**November 27, 2025**

Thanksgiving Day

**21st of each month**

Pray for Vocations

**25th of each month**

Pray for Benefactors



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OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
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*Help us keep our database up-to-date.  
Send changes to [info@dbqpbvms.org](mailto:info@dbqpbvms.org)  
or call us at 563.588.2008. Thank you.*

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## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE



*Left to right: Sisters Marge Healy, Lynn Marie Fangman and Jennifer Rausch.*

**We honor and give thanks for the lives and ministries of three Dubuque Presentation Sisters who celebrated their jubilee on July 16, 2025, at the Sisters of the Presentation (Mount Loretto). Sisters Lynn Marie Fangman, Marge Healy and Jennifer Rausch observe 60 years of religious life.**

These three extraordinary witnesses of endurance, grace and dedication have been a blessing for many – family, students, parents, community members, parishioners, professional colleagues, the sick and elderly. We are grateful for their combined 180 years of faithfulness and the impact they have in our lives.

**{ Read more about each sister at [dbqpbvms.org/news-events/jubilees](http://dbqpbvms.org/news-events/jubilees). }**