

Presentation Sisters– Walking in Hope



Image by [Myriam Zilles](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Going Deeper

Presentation Sisters– Walking in Hope

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

In County Cork, Ireland in 1718, Honora Nagle founder of the Presentation Sisters was born.

Her Christian name was soon replaced in the family circle by the affectionate diminutive, "Nano", the name which clung to her all through life.

Sent abroad for education, Nano grew to womanhood largely unaware of the distresses of her people. That understanding came later, when family circumstances brought her back to Ireland. She saw then with painful clarity how thoroughly the penal laws had done their work, particularly in the material and spiritual degradation of the poor. Without legal right to exist, Catholics were forbidden to worship. Forbidden to teach, it was a Church seemingly without hope of a future. In an economy controlled for the benefit of the powerful, the poor sank into sub-human conditions, beyond the touch of hope.

With what must have seemed, to those who knew her, surprising suddenness, Nano Nagle altered her whole way of life. In defiance of the laws which put a price on the head of a Catholic teacher, she began to devote her energies to the education of the poor girls.

At first alone, later with the support of her family, particularly her Uncle Joseph Nagle, she established a whole network of schools in Cork. When the school day was over, she was to be seen walking the lanes of Cork to visit the sick and needy. It was said of her that there was not a poor cottage in Cork that she did not know. Her figure, bearing a lamp through the night, became a symbol of hope and life for many.

Surmounting great difficulties, she introduced the Ursuline Order into Cork to perpetuate her work. When she found the Sisters unable to do all that was needed, she gathered about her the little group of women who were the founding nucleus of the Presentation Congregation.



Mandalas

The "circle with a centre" pattern is the basic structure of creation that is reflected from the micro to the macro in the world as we know it. It is a pattern found in nature and is seen in biology, geology, chemistry, physics and astronomy. Wherever a centre is found radiating outward and inward, there is wholeness--a mandala.

Mandalas are common to many faith traditions, and in the Celtic tradition, became prominent in the middle ages. Many of the stained glass windows created during the time use the structure of the mandala to tell a story.

Mandalas have 4 quadrants and centre which is the main focus – a message of the story. Each of the quadrants in some way develops the story.

God in my life Mandala

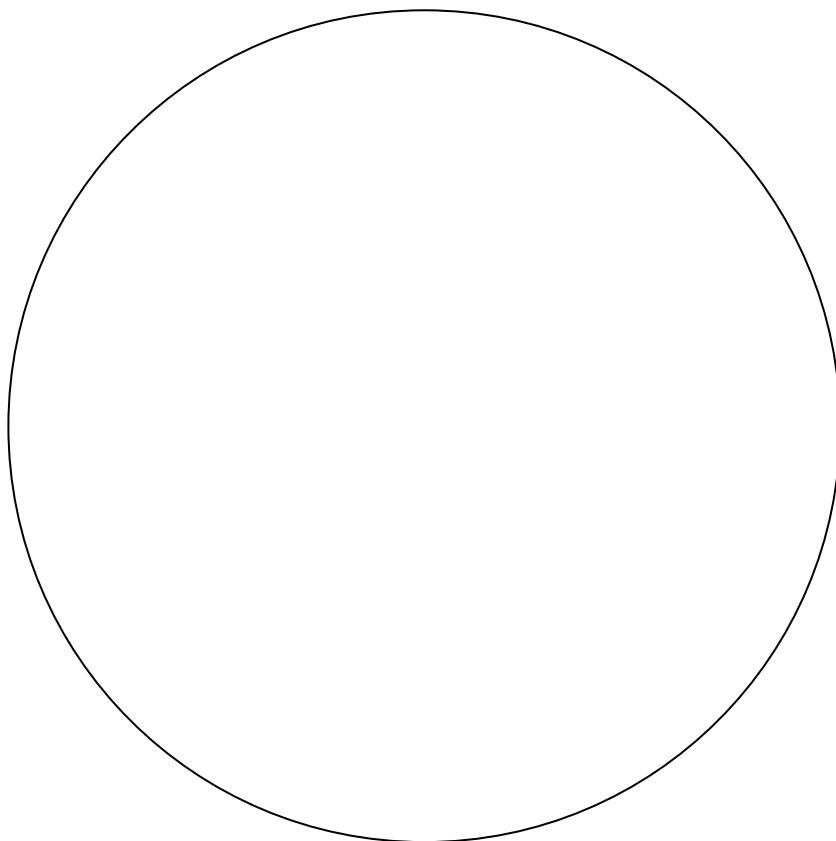
Create a mandala to represent God's influence in your life

Create a centre point to represent God – consider the shape and colours you use.

Think of the rest of the circle as your life.

Use shape and colour to represent the important things and relationships you have in your life .

Consider how God may be present in them, through you.



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Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect



In the degraded condition of her people Nano Nagle recognised not only the effects of political oppression and economic change, but a call from God.

She knew herself called to make some move against injustice. She felt compelled to help those deprived of hope and meaning, to give them the opportunity to take hold of their unpromising present and to create a future for themselves and others.



The lantern she carried through the darkness in the streets and lanes of Cork became for the poor a symbol of God's love, touching and transforming the harshness of their lives and offering hope. Today, for Presentation Sisters around the world, that lantern has become the defining symbol of their mission.

Since 1866 and the foundation of their first Australian convent and school in Richmond, Tasmania, the Presentation Sisters, founded by Nano Nagle, have continued to be a visible presence of God's love here in Australia. In our Archdiocese, many of our schools were founded by the Presentation Sisters, and they too remain a strong presence.

As times changed, many sisters have moved from school-based ministries to other ministries where increased emphasis is being placed on both direct service to those in need to alleviate their suffering and on working to change the social conditions that cause their impoverishment.

Nano Nagle's work in Ireland established a vision that education, in its myriad forms, is a means of empowering people for life. Her vision continues in the choice of Presentation Sisters to work as lanterns of hope for the many individuals, families and groups on the margins of society, here in Queensland and around the world

*Adapted from Society of Australian Presentation Congregations [online];
Available from URL: <http://pbvm.org.au/nano.html>*

We Listen

A Reading from Genesis 9:12-16 (NRSV)

God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

We Respond

Covenants are binding agreements – unbreakable.
Your love for your children or parents or nieces and nephews is a covenant relationship –it is unbreakable, untouchable, eternal.

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Genesis.

- Draw a rainbow and write in the arcs of the rainbow the words or phrases from the reading which stand out for you.
- What words give you hope? Write them down.

Mandalas

Hildegard von Bingen, a Christian nun in the 12th century, created many mandalas to express her visions and beliefs. As you take this quiet time, you can begin to fill your mandala to represent your feelings and beliefs.

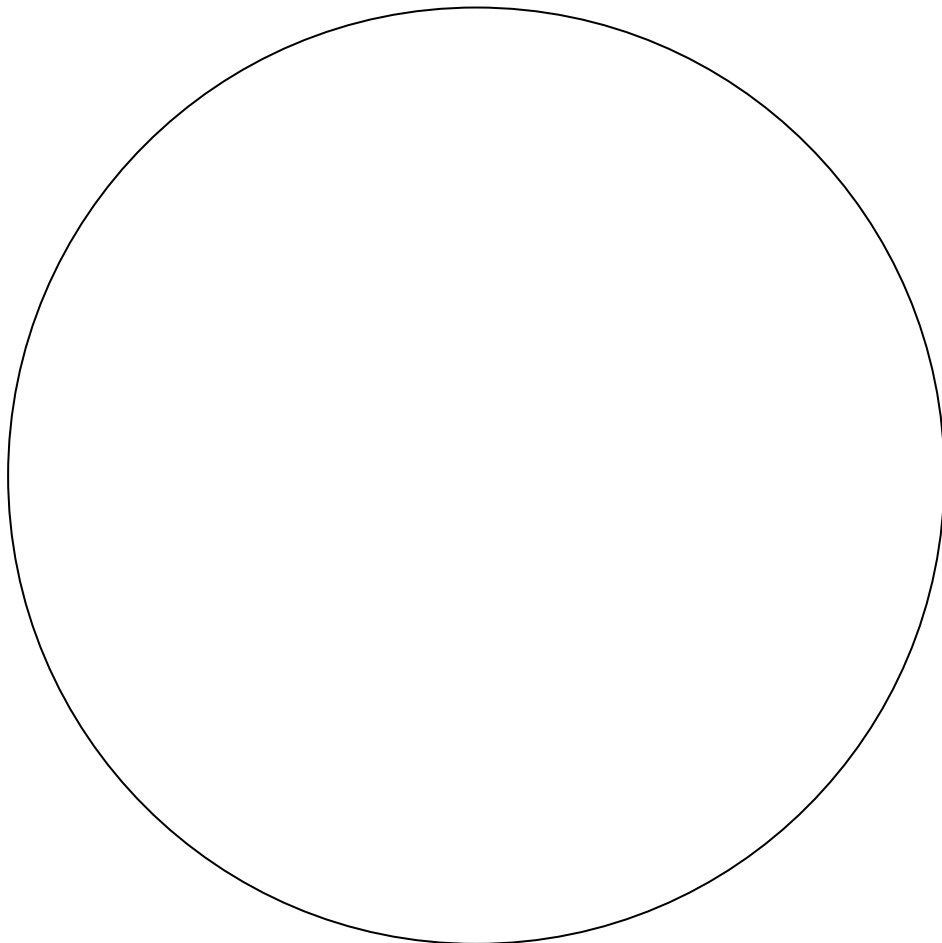
Covenant Mandala

Create a mandala to represent God's covenant of love and Jesus' promise – 'life to the full'.

Create a centre point to represent God – consider the shape and colour you use.

Use shape and colour to fill the rest of the shape with words, symbols and drawings of the story of your life. Try to focus on those things / events that have given you life, helped you grow....

Where is God leading you next?



One Pace Beyond

Take down your lantern from its niche and go out!
You may not rest in firelight certainties.

Secure from drifting fog of doubt and fear.
You may not build yourself confining walls and
say:

"Thus far, and thus, and thus far shall I walk.
And these things shall I do, and nothing more."

Go out!
For need calls loudly in the winding lanes
and you must seek Christ there.
Your pilgrim heart shall urge you still one pace
beyond
and love shall be your lantern flame.

~ by M. Raphael Consedine PBVM