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Attendees including Presentation Sisters and lay women and men pose during a gathering September 2026 in Bloomington, Minnesota. (Courtesy of Joyce Meyer)



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In Bloomington, Minnesota, this past September, the flame of love, compassion and justice ignited in over 65 Presentation Sisters, as well as lay women and men from North America and beyond, as we birthed the Presentation Movement. Our theme, "Rooted in Hope, Rising in Courage, Leading with Light," strengthened our mission to grow into an expansive network, ensuring the spirituality and charism of our foundress, Nano Nagle, will flourish into the future. Nano's compassion, willingness and grit to act in the face of danger, defying oppressive laws in 18th-century Ireland to assist street children, still draw us to her.

The Presentation Movement was inspired by our approaching 250th anniversary, changing demographics, new challenges of mission, and conversations among the four North American congregations of Presentation sisters, their associates/co-journeys, colleagues and friends.

The energy behind this movement has only been increasing throughout the last decade. In 2017, a group of younger sisters reflected together about the future and their part in shaping it. Then, in 2022, the tent widened to include associated lay members, friends and colleagues to celebrate a renewed, shared spirit of prayer, inspiration and mission.

We prayed and played together, sharing how we were living Nano Nagle's charism/spirit and mission, and two vibrant groups with members from different national Presentation groupings flourished after this gathering. One was committed to care of creation and another to North America vocations. A third emerged as serious immigration issues erupted in our country and beyond.

The four North American leadership teams acknowledged this intercongregational development and decided it was time to form a "wisdom group" of co-journeys/associates representing each congregation to gather the hopes and dreams of sisters and colleagues about what this group could become. Focus groups were held in person and on Zoom, and the resulting enthusiasm and findings, including the idea of calling it a movement and recommending that a 501(c)(3) be formed, were taken to congregational leaders. The group was not only encouraged to move forward but given funding to support it.

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On the day the inaugural conference opened, people gathered with unbridled excitement, and I was delighted and surprised at all the diversity. The program was simple and focused, and we spent 2 1/2 days sharing and learning. Judie Chalmers, an Irish actress, enthralled us with a performance on the first day portraying Nano's compassionate love and commitment to justice, setting the stage for conversations about how to keep the fires burning.

It also prepared us for the second day, when Tom Allen from the Loyola Spirituality Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, illustrated how Nano's compassionate love and justice ministry shaped her spirituality and reflected her image of God the Sacred Heart. He emphasized how Nano's spirituality of service drew her into mutual relationships/solidarity/oneness with the vulnerable she served, the end goal of true Christian development. He reminded us that authentic justice is always built on discovering ourselves in others, because no matter how different they may seem, we are one in God's eyes.

Allen outlined how service is a transformational pathway to true justice, starting with compassion as we engage in relief work, usually a type of we/they relationship. This may lead to working for structural change, another we/they relationship, and then, being humbled by those we serve, but still, a we/they relationship. A final transformation brings us into solidarity, where we become deeply aware of our shared humanness and oneness in God with those we engage. As we spend time reflecting on our interior experience of service, we may find ourselves at any one of these stages. Ultimately, this work transforms our way of being in the world.

In the second half of the day, we participated in various service opportunities with children, youth and those without homes. After returning to the meeting, we spent personal time praying and exploring how we might have experienced this practice in light of what Allen had presented. The purpose was not to judge ourselves, but to develop reflective awareness of how we engage in service.

On the last day, the group reflected on what we need to do to sustain this spirit, stay connected, and invite others to join us in this movement of compassion, justice, spirituality and service. This group captured the Presentation/Nano Nagle spirit where everyone is welcome: those of differing faith traditions, ethnic backgrounds, cultures and professions. Even the waiters asked how they might join, commenting that they had never experienced such a joyous group.

Where the Spirit takes our Presentation Movement is in God's hands, of course (with our efforts and energy, too), but everyone left trusting that the light of compassionate justice that Nano Nagle instills in us will continue to shine, especially for those often left behind.