

## **250th Anniversary of the foundation of the Presentation Sisters by**

**Venerable Nano Nagle**

**in Cork on**

**Christmas Eve, 1775**

Foundation.

Venerable Nano Nagle, (born in Ballygriffin, Co Cork), with three companions, took their vows as religious on **Christmas Eve, 1775**. The following day they entertained 50 poor people to lunch. The Congregation was originally named the *Sisters of Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart*.

At the time of her death in 1784, Nano had seven schools in Cork city, (5 for girls, and two for boys). The curriculum included rudimentary skills like writing, reading, numeracy, needle work in addition to religious instruction. She employed young women as teachers but reserved instruction in the faith to herself, travelling from school to school daily and finishing c. 5pm. In addition to the educational enterprise, Nano was a constant visitor to the poor and housebound in their homes, bringing food and such comforts as she could. All of this work took place in the shadow of the **Penal Laws** which were still in force. She made her way through the streets by the light of a lantern and was known by her clients as the "**Lady with the Lantern**". She died on April 26, in Cork, 1784.

### **Presentations across the world.**

Her legacy has spread throughout the world with Presentation schools in every continent. One of Nano's sayings was "If I could be of any service in saving souls in any part of the globe, I would do all in my power".

The first foundation was from **Presentation Convent Galway** to *Newfoundland, Canada, in 1833*. *Manchester, England*, was founded by Sisters from **Clonmel community** (with a little help from Carlow) in 1836. *San Francisco in 1854* was founded by Sisters from **Kilkenny** and **Midleton**. *Hobart in Tasmania* was founded by Sisters from **Fermoy**, in 1866. *Victoria in 1873* from **Limerick**. *New York (Manhattan and Harlem) in 1874* was founded by Sisters from *Terenure, Clondalkin and Tuam*.

In the same year **Kildare** community sent a foundation to *New South Wales in Australia, to a place called Wagga Wagga*. **Lucan**, Co Dublin, founded Lismore, NSW, 1886 and **Sneem** went to Geraldton in *Western Australia in 1891*.

Over time, each of the foundations listed above gave birth to other schools. Sisters from *Rahan in Offaly, Mullingar and Maynooth* established the first Presentation community and school in **Madras**, India, in 1842. Today, there are 2 provinces of Presentation Sisters in India, north and south, and one in Harare neighbouring Pakistan. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *England* established a school in, **Harare**, Rhodesia. Foundations in **Zambia** were made in by the Sisters of Kildare and Leighlin diocese in the late 1960s while the First Presentation Convent in the Philippines was founded by the Kilkenny Sisters in 1960.

In more recent years the missionary impulse of the Presentation Sisters has been concentrated on countries in South America such as Chile, Ecuador, Peru and in Thailand. A mission to **Slovakia** to work with the **Roma children**, initiated by the Irish Sisters (after the Fall of the Iron curtain), and supported by Sisters from India, has only recently come to an end.

Nano Nagle was declared **Venerable** in Rome by Pope Francis in 2013.

Nano died in 1784 and her remains are buried in Nano Nagle Place, Cork, in the garden of the first Presentation Convent founded by her.

**This year, 2025, marks the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation on Christmas Eve in 1725.**

**The year of commemoration initiated by the Congregational Leadership in Ireland commences on November 20, 2025 (eve of Presentation Day ) and will continue into 2026.**

