**Presentation Day 2024**

Every November, Presentation Day is celebrated around the world to honour the Irish woman and foundress of the Presentation Sisters, Venerable Nano Nagle.

The prayer this year focuses on the now famous Nano Nagle Icon. The Presentation Sisters have provided a very helpful booklet that assists those seeking to pray with this beautiful icon. For a soft copy of this booklet see: <file:///C:/Users/kateliffey/Downloads/Exploring%20the%20Nano%20Nagle%20Icon%20booklet.pdf>) Much of the material for this prayer service is drawn from this booklet.

In this booklet we read that, “An icon is a religious work of art” and that “an icon is a visual doorway leading us and helping us to focus on God. It enables us to reflect silently and patiently.”

The Icon of Nano Nagle was ‘written’ by Irish artist Desmond Kyne in the 1970s. Icons are described as being written rather than painted. The Icon portrays Nano Nagle immersed both in the mystery of God and amongst the people of 18th century Ireland.

The material presented here for Presentation Day 2024 can also be adapted for use for relevant parts of a Presentation Day Mass and can also be used as a standalone prayer service for groups or a whole school assembly. We know that many of our CEIST schools in the Presentation tradition, have a Nano Nagle Icon in their school. This can of course be referred to as you pray this prayer service with the children in your school. The images used here can be the basis of a PowerPoint combining images from your own school, including your school crest.

This prayer service seeks to bring the Icon into this year’s prayer time in a way that invites engagement with specific panels of the Icon at specific moments of the prayer. The richness of the Icon will not be captured here and schools themselves have found incredibly creative ways of encouraging pupils to engage with the image of the Lantern, the story of Nano and the Icon itself.

The suggested hymns are presented here as illustrative; your own staff will be best placed to choose hymns and songs most suitable for you’re the children in your school and the school context. You can also adapt this material to suit your school’s history and traditions.

A colorful stained glass window

Description automatically generated

**Opening Hymn**: Shine Jesus Shine, Grahan Kendrick.

**Principal:** Welcome everyone to our prayer service today to mark Presentation Day. Every year, this very important day is celebrated here in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (school’s name). *(A short piece on the school’s founding and history can be shared here*). As we begin our prayer together, we’re going to be quiet now together for a minute to bring ourselves into God’s presence.

An icon is a holy picture. Here is an icon of Nano Nagle. Can you see her famous Lantern? Can you see the clothes people wore at that time? Look at all the lovely bright colours, the patterns, the light, the shapes and all the people in the Icon. It’s very, very busy isn’t it!

Nano Nagle is a very important person in the history of our school and other Presentation Schools and she is at the centre of the icon. So who was Nano Nagle and why is she so important not just to us in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but to so many other people in Ireland and around the world? Let’s hear a little bit about her from some of our fifth and/or sixth class pupils, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Note this material is adapted from: <https://nanonagleplace.ie/the-story-of-nano-nagle/> )

**Reader 1:**

If Nano Nagle were alive today, she would be the kind of person to win a Nobel Prize. She’d be world famous. When you weren’t allowed to, Nano had opened seven schools for poor children across Cork city. Even though she was born to a wealthy family in 1718, she gave it all up to help people who weren’t as well off as her.

She had a lovely childhood in Cork but because of the Laws at the time, Nano’s family had to have Nano educated in France. Afterward she went to Paris to live with her relations. She saw things in Paris that changed her life in a big way.

When her dad died and she and her sister Ann returned to Dublin to be with their mother, Nano began visiting poor families with Ann. But her sister Ann died suddenly, quickly followed by her mother. Poor Nano! Nano decided she would devote her life to helping the poor.

**Reader 2:**

Because of the laws at the time, Nano had to work in secret. She began by opening a school for young girls in the early c. 1750s. This girls’ school focussed on reading, writing, Catechism (Catholic religious instruction) and needlework. We teach a lot of other subjects in our school now! But at the time, people were just so happy to be getting any education at all!

Within ten years she was operating seven schools across the city of Cork, teaching both boys and girls. During the day she visited each of her schools, and at night she visited the poor of Cork city. This was dark and dangerous work. Nano travelled by the light of the lantern she carried, and across the city of Cork she became known as ‘Miss. Nagle,  ‘the Lady of the Lantern’. You can see the Lantern in the icon there.

**Reader 3:**

Nano needed helpers and other women joined up with her. They became known as the Presentation Sisters.

Nano’s long days and constant walking across the city meant that she started to get sick. She died at the age of 66 in 1784. Her order, the Presentation Sisters, have continued her work across the world and into the present day. In 2005, she was voted Ireland’s Greatest Woman ever in a poll of 22,000 people run by Radio 1 in Ireland.

A screenshot of a video

Description automatically generated

**Principal:** Thank you. We listen now to our Opening Prayer read to us by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reader 1:** Opening Prayer

Loving Father, Nano Nagle was an amazing woman. You call on each of us to be amazing as well. But not for our own sake, not to be the most popular or the cleverest, or the sportiest but to be people who look after other people. With your love for us, and our faith in you, great things can happen in our lives as well. Bless us today as we reflect on what the story of Nano Nagle has to teach us about ourselves and our world.

**Principal:** We are now going to invite some of our pupils to present some symbols to our sacred space. A symbol is something that invites us to think more deeply about something. As these symbols are presented to the sacred space, look deeply at them and then look at our icon. See what ***you*** can see for yourself.

**Reader 3:**

Our first symbol is of a schoolbook. It is brought to our sacred space by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In the Icon, in the top left-hand corner we see Nano teaching the poor children of Cork. You will notice that many of the children aren’t wearing shoes. Poverty was a big problem in Ireland at that time. Going to school gave these children and their families hope. We also see her with a book; the book has empty pages. This is because Nano taught from her heart. We thank God today for the ways in which our teachers teach from their hearts. We thank God for their kindness, for their sense of humour, for the ways they show they care for us in how they treat us. We thank God for the fun we have together in our school.

A stained glass window with a person reading a book

Description automatically generated

Our second symbol is of a lantern. It is brought to our sacred space by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A candle is always a symbol of light. Although Nano lived in very dark times, the Icon is full of light and brightness. Can you see all the brightness in the Icon? The Icon is full of hope. The Icon here shows us Nano’s care for the sick, the lonely and the old. Nano carrying a lantern through the dark lanes and alleyways would have been something people really noticed and appreciated. Would you believe that there wasn’t a single house in the city that she did not know or did not visit? There’s lots of ways we shine light in the lives of others; by going out of our way to help a friend who is struggling, by making sure to include children who feel isolated or lonely, by fundraising for good causes, by speaking the truth, by helping out at home when we’re needed and just in general by being our most awesome selves. We can be icons of hope in our world today.

A screenshot of a video game

Description automatically generated

Our third symbol is of a prayer book and a bible. These are brought to our sacred space by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

A close-up of a heart

Description automatically generated

This part of the icon shows Nano saying her prayers. Nano could only do what she did because of her faith. We pause to think about God’s love for each and every one of us. We take a moment in complete stillness and quiet to say thank you God for our faith; it will help us do great things in our lives.

We now present a symbol of rosary beads. It is brought to our altar by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Nano had a great devotion to Our Lady.



The Presentation of Our Lady was the favourite title under which Nano prayed to Mary. Today the 21st November is the Feast of the Presentation,

During our prayer today we turn to Mary as Nano did and pray for the courage these two women showed throughout their lives. May we also be brave to take risks to do what is right and just.

**Principal:** Our final symbol is the whole community gathered here. Though we are many, we all belong here in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (school’s name) Your friends are here; many of you have sisters and/or brothers who are here; some of you have parents who came here. This is a place where we pray for you and with you. You are an important part of our Presentation family; a family that stretches around the world

As we reflect further on the Icon of Nano Nagle, we pray together in Song

**Hymn:** Christ be our Lord, B. Farrell

**Principal:** We listen now to the word of God

**Reader 4:**

A reading from St Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians.

If I am clever and can speak lots of languages, but do not have love, I am only a loud gong. If I can understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I own to the poor and give over my body to hardship, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm:** You are Mine, David Haas



**Hymn:** Faith, hope and Love (D. Hass)

**Principal’s words (optional):**

The images we’ve seen today can be summarised with three simple words; Faith, Hope and Love. And they’re all interconnected in the Icon in front of us. They’re there in Nano’s prayer but they’re also there in the way she cared for people. What made Nano special is that she really lived all three together. She could have looked at world at the time, thrown her arms up and just given up. She could have taken a much easier path. But in her faith and in her love she found hope. She also found faith, hope and love in her family, among her friends and in her community.

In our school, we try to do the same. You can do great things and you don’t have to do them on your own. There’s lots going on in our world that’s really hard; we only have to think of climate change and the confict that’s happening in the middle East. But we believe each of us, with God’s help, can make a difference in our own lives to make the world a better place, just as Nano did.

(You might give some examples here from your own school of faith, hope and love in action. Feel free to add images to your PowerPoint that express faith, hope and love in your school).

Of all the images presented to us today, perhaps it is the image of Nano with her lantern that is the most important one of all.

**Principal:** We pray now together…. And our response is ….. **Lord graciously hear us.**

**Readers 5, 6, 7**

Faith:

A close-up of a heart

Description automatically generated

Faith: In our school and in our world, we pray we will all have the courage to take time to pray, to be quiet in ourselves. We pray for the peace that praying brings. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

Hope:

A screenshot of a video game

Description automatically generated

Hope: Sometimes life is hard. We pray that we’ll have Nano’s courage to see where hope can bring us. Lord help us to shine the light of hope in the dark places in our world. We pray at this time especially for peace in our world. We pray also for the courage to act with hope to take care of our planet. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

Love:

A stained glass window with a person reading a book

Description automatically generated

Love: We pray in gratitude for the love we experience in our families, in our school and among our friends. Love is what makes sense of everything in life. We pray at this time in a special way for those who are sick or lonely. We pray that we can be like Nano and have the courage to reach out to those who most need us at this time. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

**Principal:**

(Final words and words of thanks)

**Closing hymn:** City of God (D. Schutte)