

Presentation Cojourners



Presentation Sisters

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.

(from ONE PACE BEYOND:

The Life of Nano Nagle

By M. Raphael Consedine, PBVM



PRESENTATION COJOURNERS HANDBOOK

Mission statement

Called by God to share in the mission of Jesus, the Cojourner, journeys with the Presentation Sisters in proclaiming God's love. The Cojourner strives to address the interrelatedness of poverty, care for creation and global sustainability through prayer, education, advocacy and action.

Call

Christian baptism calls all people to participate in Jesus' mission of bringing God's love to the world. The Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary offer an opportunity to women and men, as Cojourners, to journey with the Sisters in proclaiming God's love.

History of the Presentation Sisters

The congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in Ireland in 1775 by Nano Nagle, a woman who heard God's call to serve the poor, sick, and deprived. Her followers carried her missionary zeal to many parts of the world, including the Dakota Territory.

At the request of Bishop Martin Marty, Nano's Sisters came to Dakota Territory to educate the children of the settlers and the Sioux people. In 1886, the Presentation Sisters of Aberdeen, South Dakota were begun. The congregation grew with new members from the Dakota area and Ireland. Over time the Sisters have responded to the needs of the people through education, health care, parish ministry, homes for the aged, social services, hospice and other ministries worldwide.

The Presentation Sisters draw their strength from the Eucharist, prayer and living in community. The Aberdeen Sisters of the Presentation interpret the spirit of their early Sisters as prairie spirituality. This spirit is characterized by grateful dependence on God, hope for the future, simplicity, and common sense.

History of Presentation Cojourner Relationship

In response to Vatican II, Sisters felt called to bond more closely with the laity. In 1980, the Presentation Sisters affirmed the concept of extended membership, now called Presentation Cojourner Relationship.

The seed of the Cojourner relationship evolved in friendships developed between individual Sisters and lay persons. Over a period of time, persons expressed a desire to pray with the Sisters and to participate in retreats, prayer experiences, workshops and support groups. Others have shared ministry experiences as co-workers in schools, hospitals, foreign missions, parish ministry, and a commitment to the oppressed and suffering.

From these experiences, common ideas and ideals surfaced, as individuals sought deeper involvement with the Presentation Sisters. The Presentation Cojourner Relationship is so called because it best describes the invitation to women and men to journey with the Sisters as they search together for ways to respond to the oppressed and to promote the dignity of persons.

Out of the Presentation Sisters' history of responding to the needs of the people and adapting to the signs of the times the Presentation Cojourner Relationship was born.

Purpose

The Presentation Cojourner Relationship provides an opportunity for women and men to participate in prayer and service with the Presentation Sisters while continuing to live out their individual life plans. Cojourners and Presentation Sisters experience mutual enrichment as they share their gifts and talents in the Church.

Through this relationship, Cojourners broaden the scope of influence of the vowed members by sharing in the ministry of the Congregation; in turn, they are supported and encouraged in their own unique vocations and ministries.

Relationship

Potential Cojourners include Christian Women and men, eighteen years and older, who are capable of making a mature commitment and who feel called to enter into this relationship with the Congregation. They are invited by a Presentation Sister to apply for admission to the Cojourner Relationship and are accepted through the steps outlined in the application process.

Personnel

The Director is responsible for the Orientation Program and its implementation. The Director is assisted by a Co-director and a Team consisting of lay women and men and Sisters. New members are selected by the Director and Team and approved by the Leadership Council. The term for membership on the team is ordinarily four years and can be extended for another four years. Members of the Presentation Congregation serve as companions for the Cojourners during the Orientation Program. After that the Cojourners are encouraged to participate in a local community group.

Presentation Sisters believe:

That we are called to collaborate with others in responding to the universal baptismal call to the mission of Jesus

That we build God's kingdom of peace and justice through love and service, especially to the vulnerable and poor

That we are called to unity in diversity: *There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:5)*

That we are called to use our gifts for the common good

That the charism that we hold in common with Nano Nagle is also found in women and men not called to vowed membership

That we are called to support and encourage women and men who choose to serve God through a closer association with us as Presentation Sisters

Opportunities for Cojourners include:

To respond to an inner thirst and longing for a deeper share in Christ's call and mission of salvation

To be bonded with the Presentation Sisters and other Cojourners in the mission of Jesus

To respond to a call of friendship and collaboration with the Presentation Sisters in their spirit, charism, hospitality and service

To make their gifts and talents available to others through participation in the work of the Congregation or ministry in the local parishes

To enrich their lives and the lives of others with richer and deeper prayer and community

PROCESS OF BECOMING A COJOURNER

Initial Steps:

Through invitation, inquirers make contact with a representative of the congregation.

They may attend an information session or visit with the Director of Cojourners and make application.

Beginning the Process:

The orientation process encourages inquiry, reflection and active participation in rites leading to discernment of the call to a Cojourner relationship.

The candidates participate in a series of orientation sessions:

1. *Universal call to Holiness*
2. *History of the Congregation and Cojourner relationship*
3. *Life of Nano Nagle and her spiritual journey*
4. *Presentation Spirituality and my spirituality*
5. *Discernment: What call am I experiencing in my life?*
6. *Growing in prayer*
7. *Mission and Ministry of the Sisters*
8. *Justice is Our Work*

Deepening the process:

The Candidate makes a formal request in writing.

The Director makes recommendation to the President.

Upon approval of Leadership, the Candidate is formally received as a Cojourner.

An agreement between the Congregation and Cojourner is signed usually for one year.

Presentation Cojourners are committed to

1. Fostering a spirit of community in their daily lives

- ◆ They are mindful of the instruction Nano Nagle gave on her deathbed, *“Love one another as you have hitherto done.”* (Annals, Presentation Convent, Cork Ireland).
- ◆ They remember all the Sisters and Cojourners in their daily prayers.
- ◆ They maintain an active relationship with the Presentation Sisters and Cojourners by:
 - ◆ Keeping informed of what is happening via the Community Website and the Quick Update.
 - ◆ Making an effort to attend Community and Cojourner functions when possible.
 - ◆ Promoting the spirit of community in their own family circle, with other Cojourners and within groups or organizations to which they belong.
 - ◆ Maintaining an ongoing relationship with their Companion Sisters or group.

2. Sharing in the mission and ministry of the Congregation

- ◆ They seek to find ways to meet the needs of others, especially the poor and underserved.
- ◆ They choose a specific ministry focus related to the Presentation mission to which they commit themselves through prayer, service or ministry.
- ◆ They seek to join the Presentation Sisters in their pursuit of peace and justice issues.

3. Deepening their prayer life

Cojourners are asked to take opportunities to grow in their spiritual life including communal worship, personal prayer and reflecting on scripture.

COMMITMENT SERVICE

President/Representative:

_____, you have expressed a desire to become a Presentation Cojourner. Is it your intent to further our Presentation charism of *alleviating oppression and promoting human dignity* in your individual life style?

Cojourner Candidate:

It is. I desire to deepen my life with God and respond more fully as a Cojourner in the spirit and mission of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through prayer and service, I wish to do my part to extend the Presentation mission in my daily life.

President/Representative:

We, as Presentation Sisters, welcome you as a Cojourner and present you with this Cojourner pin as a reminder of your commitment.

COJOURNER AGREEMENTS

Agreements with Cojourners are made between the Cojourner and the Congregation. The agreements are made annually for the first three years. After a person has been a Cojourner for three years, he or she may choose to renew for a period of 3 years.

FINANCIAL POLICY

Presentation Cojourners are financially independent. To help cover costs, Cojourners are encouraged to contribute to the Congregation.

RENEWAL CEREMONY

President/Representative:

God has guided and directed our lives over the past years with compassion and love. Today, we are invited to respond to that love by renewing our commitment to God as Cojourners and as Sisters.

Cojourners:

I desire to continue to deepen my life with God and respond more fully as a Cojourner, in the spirit and mission of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through prayer and service, I wish to do my part to extend the Presentation mission in my daily life.

President/Representative:

With grateful and joyful hearts, we Presentation Sisters receive your Cojourner Renewal. Sisters of the Presentation, how do you intend to offer your support to these Cojourners?

Sisters:

We extend to you our hospitality, continued opportunities for enrichment, growth in faith, and our continued prayer. Above all we share with you our mission to “respond with compassionate love to the needs of the Church through prayer and apostolic service. In the spirit of missionary zeal, we remember Nano’s love for the poor and the rural heritage of our foundation.” (Constitutions, p. 12)

TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

After prayerful consideration, Cojourners may choose to discontinue the relationship at the time of renewal. Upon the recommendation of the Cojourner Team, an agreement also can be terminated by the President/Council for a valid reason. Leadership will communicate this to the Congregation.

If there is no communication with the Director concerning the person’s choice to renew/discontinue the relationship by December 31st, the Director will schedule an exit interview with the Cojourner.

At the reception ceremony for Miss Oliffe on Presentation Day, 1782, the preacher quoted from the words of Isaiah read by Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth:

**“The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free, and
to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.”**

(Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18)

Then the preacher added this challenge:

**Behold here is the spirit of your order,
the object of your mission.**

(Listening Journey, p.367

by M. Raphael Consedine, PBVM)





Sisters of the Presentation
of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In Joyful Service

