

Union of Presentation Sisters, NL Province, Canada
First NL Provincial Gathering, June 27 – 30, 2016
St. John's, NL, Canada

In 2014 as the NL Congregation of Presentation Sisters we celebrated our Fusion with the world-wide Union of Presentation Sisters and became a Province of Union. In what was a moving and historical moment for us, we held our first NL Provincial Gathering at The Lantern in St. John's, NL Canada from June 27th-30th. Indeed, "We Walk One!"

"Many Lanterns, One Flame", our theme, was given life as the procession of Lantern bearers, representative of all present - and with our Earth Ball, representing The New Earth Story, held high, wended its way throughout the room to the singing of Sister Miriam Martin's song "Light for the Journey", symbolizing Nano Nagle's journey and our own.



Click [HERE](#) to play song clip of "Light for the Journey"

Give us Light for the Journey (Refrain)

Lyrics and Music by Miriam K. Martin, PBVM

Give us Light for the Journey.
Give us light for our way.
The path is winding and dim.
Turn us to fire within.
Give us Light, give us Light.





Sister Sharon Fagan, our Provincial Leader, extended a warm welcome to all present. Special welcome was given to Sister Frances Murphy, our Union Congregational Leadership Team Link who had joined us from Ireland, along with Sister Roisin Gannon from Ireland and Sister Bernadette Doherty from England.

Sharon noted that Both Bernadette and Roisin had been appointed by the Congregational Leadership Team to serve as part of our NL Provincial Leadership Team over the next four years with three others of our Sisters whom we would elect during the week.

Gratitude was expressed for their willingness and generous spirit in committing to go “one pace beyond” with us in this new venture.



Special mention was given to the many Associates present with us, as well as others in leadership roles as employees and collaborators, affirming their role among us in our shared ministries and the witness of their own lives to Nano’s Charism and to the Gospel.

Sister Pat Kozak was welcomed back as our facilitator.

Sharon thanked her for the gift she has been to us the past 5 years, as well as a friend to our Community, as she accompanied us on our journey, especially towards Fusion with Union, happy she continues to work with us.



In welcoming all of our Sisters, Sharon affirmed our desire to be open and faithful to our God moving among us and calling us ever one pace beyond as we seek to create an integrated space in which we can listening with discerning hearts, open to the promptings of the Spirit among us, fired by the light of Nano and the wisdom of one another.

Sharon concluded by declaring this first Provincial Gathering now open, with a spontaneous Alleluia bursting forth in song from all present.



As we gathered at The Lantern we were also especially mindful of our Sisters who were unable to serve as delegates yet were very present among us as Prayer Partners, most of them living at our Motherhouse. At the end of each day two of our delegates would meet with them to share our day.

As we moved into a time of Reflection, Miriam, as she would often do during the week, led us in the singing of “One Flame, Many Lanterns” which she had composed for our Gathering.

Click [HERE](#) to play song clip of “One Flame, Many Lanterns”



One Flame, Many Lanterns

Lyrics and Music by Miriam K. Martin, PBVM

One flame, many lanterns.
One fire, many lamps.
One dream that we follow, burning bright.
One flame, many lanterns.
One fire, many lamps.

One call to communion Surging life –
One flame, many lanterns. One fire, many lamps.
One circle of wonder. Earth’s delight.
Burning bright. Surging life.



As Pat, our facilitator, cited the many wonderful images in Miriam's music, and those experienced during the evening, the fire, and the lanterns processing in and around, she also paid tribute to the images of the faces of all those present and the palpable energy that filled the room.

Moving through our week, our singing of "One Flame, Many Lanterns" was intermingled with presentations, quiet reflection time and table conversations with one another.

Together we walked through our NL Presentation journey from our last Chapter in 2011 up to this Gathering, being continually invited to lean into the heart of God as we seek to give new expression to our Religious Life in 2016 and into the future which beckons us. Sharon and each of the other Leadership Team members, Sisters Lois Greene, Frances Molloy, Angela McGrath and Sandy Butler, in their reflections reaffirmed that all of us working together are indeed the heartbeat of our charism, seeking to ever more faithfully follow in Nano's footsteps.

Key areas were noted as calling us to further conversation as we journey forward, calling us to ways to live more deeply into our commitment to life in Union, always in a radical Gospel response, a saying yes with a communal freedom to go where God leads.

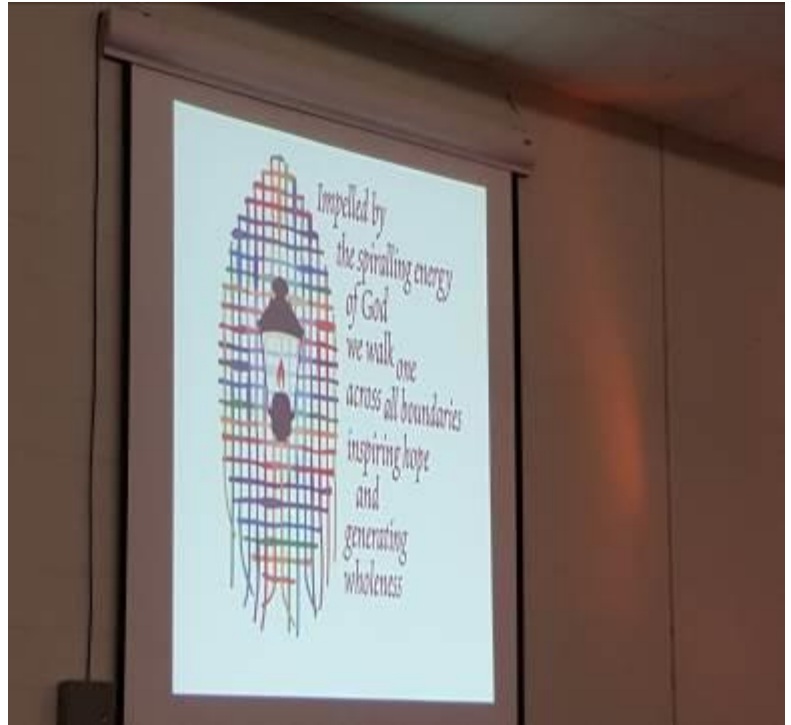


Included, too, was time for our Associate Relationship Report presented by Sister Ruth O'Reilly, Co-Director, and our three other Associate Co-Directors, Bride Doyle, Pauline Lake-Devine and Stella Galway, tracing its history, sharing challenges and blessings, presenting recommendations for the future. Prominent was the commitment to continue to review our Associate Relationship and reflect on how we might build on this relationship as it evolves.

Sacred time was also devoted to a moving remembering of our 31 Sisters who have passed away during the present Leadership's term of office with a slide show prepared in collaboration with Sister Patricia Whittle and Wanita Bates in our Archives and accompanied appropriately by Liam Lawton's very moving song, "There Is a Place".

Focused time was spent with our Congregational Gathering 2012 Calls, Pat stressing our time with these as being even more important than our elections. Frances, our Congregational Leadership Team Link, reflected with us on how they came to be.

Frances also spoke of the woven fabric image and another Congregational Statement and the many threads woven into Union over the years, NL being the most recent. She affirmed how each thread brings new colour, new energy and new vibrancy, enriching the lives of each of us as together we co-create the fabric of the Congregation and deepen our lived experience of the Spirituality of Being in Communion.



And what might a cat and a dolphin teach us about the Spirituality of Being in Communion? Ask Frances ... or perhaps take a moment to view the video we shared that day to our delight: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu9GjDfwcdA>



Following our Gathering Prayer on the last day, Sharon invited us to move into the elections. Sister Betty Rae Lee was elected and confirmed as NL Provincial Leader. Sisters Lois Greene and Sandy Butler were elected as the two other members of our Leadership Team. They would serve along with Bernadette and Roisin who, as earlier noted, had already been appointed as part of the Team.

Gratitude abounded as we brought our Gathering to a close ... to our outgoing team, to one another, to our loving, wise and faithful God, and to so many among whom and with whom we minister and live, and to so many who continue to grace us and challenge us.



It had indeed been a graced four days, affirming the path that we are travelling, or perhaps affirming the path that we are creating as we walk, and in the words of a beloved Presentation Sister from Australia, Raphael Consedine, who had many years ago graced us with her presence, ever calling us to go “One Pace Beyond”.



As we began our Closing Prayer Ritual, once again “One Flame, Many Lanterns” echoed through the room and the outgoing and incoming Leadership Teams were invited to come to the front for a blessing. After blessing all those assembled, members of both Teams wended their way throughout the room gifting each Sister with a personal lantern, the flame already alight.

Sharon, as NL Provincial Leader, then declared this our first NL Provincial Gathering 2016 officially closed.



In a spirit of joy and thanksgiving, wonderfully reflective of such a graced four days, and given expression in both song and quiet dance with Lanterns held high, our Gathering concluded, as it had begun, with the singing of “Light for the Journey” and the exchange of a sign of peace and blessing for one another, followed by a special closing dinner at our Motherhouse.

Click [HERE](#) to play the closing song clip of “Light for the Journey”

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**And our God looked with us at all that together we had done ...
and God saw that it was very good ... and on the fifth day we rested!**



With all of our Sisters and Presentation People
across the globe and down through the years
may we respond to Pope Francis' call to live the joy of the Gospel.
May we wander, like Nano, through the winding lanes of life
carrying many lanterns but only one flame of light
for a world in need which we are being called to serve
as together we follow the charism of Nano Nagle.

