



## **Congregational Gathering 2018** Nano Aflame! Stoking our Passion ... Becoming Fire ... Radiating Love

### **Newly Elected Leadership Team - May 10, 2018**

Our newly elected Congregational Leadership Team for 2018 - 2024 consists of:

Sister Julie Watson (Ireland), Congregational Leader  
Sister Sharon Fagan (NL, Canada), Assistant Congregational Leader  
Sister Neneth Robledo (Philippines)  
Sister Aurea Dias (India)  
Sister Anne McDermott (Ireland)

We wish our new Congregational Leadership Team every blessing as they lead us into the future and we assure them of our prayerful support.

The following are introductions to the Team:

#### **Sister Julie Watson**

**Congregational Leader** Email address: [juliewatson@pbvm.org](mailto:juliewatson@pbvm.org)



The eldest of three girls, I was born in the seaside town of Youghal, Co Cork. Thus far I have enjoyed a very interesting life filled with many blessings, joys and sorrows. I first came to know the Presentation Sisters when I went to school in Dungarvan. While there my father died. His death had a huge impact on my life. However, the Sisters were very understanding and encouraged me a lot. Their interest, not just in me, but in all the students set the first seeds of the call to religious life in my heart. When I look back I realise the great influence they had on my life and on my journey since. It was from them that I first heard about our Sisters in Pakistan and India. Meeting the Baileboro Sisters in the mid-70s deepened my desire to go to Pakistan. Even though it took many years to arrive in Pakistan, the intervening years of initial formation, training, experience of community in the South West Province and getting to know many Sisters enriched my life in numerous ways.

After completing my Leaving Certificate, I made contact with the Sisters in Youghal just at the time of Union. I joined the Congregation in Fermoy in early 1977; from there I joined 13 other novices at the Interprovincial Novitiate at Castleconnell in September 1977. The years in Castleconnell were times of newness and learning – I learned a lot about myself, about religious life and the joys and struggles of living with others in community. It was there that I first heard of stillness prayer, introduced to us by Fr Paddy Cususk, SJ a regular visitor to Castleconnell. After the novitiate I spent nine years in the South West Province in the communities of Milltown and Listowel. I trained as a Primary School Teacher and on completion of my training I taught in Listowel. While there I had many opportunities to be involved in different aspects of ministry, within the community, as well as outreach in the parish and surrounding

areas ... it was a time of richness, learning and searching, a time to develop a real sense of belonging and rootedness in Presentation. From there I went to Pakistan in 1988 and lived and ministered there until I was elected to the Congregational Leadership Team in 2012.

I spent 24 very fulfilling years in Pakistan living in three different communities – years that were filled with many experiences which stretched and enriched me in numerous ways. As education is one of the greatest needs in Pakistan, teacher training and principalship were my main areas of ministry, besides carrying other responsibilities in Finance and Unit Leadership. Prior to returning to Ireland I was fortunate to live in the novitiate community in Rawalpindi which was a life-giving and challenging experience.

In 2012 I was elected to the Congregational Leadership Team – suddenly I found myself in very new and unfamiliar situations! These past six years have been very privileged ones – with many opportunities to meet many Sisters from different parts of the Congregation, visit many Units, communities and places of ministry.

Preparing for the Congregational Gathering has deepened my sense of call to live from a contemplative stance. Listening to others share their own vocation story has deepened my own call. Through Contemplative Dialogue I have come to a stronger sense of how God is at work in our lives in community and across the Congregation. I feel challenged by the fragility of life all around us and at the same time by the call to live in the present moment and to be a prophetic presence in today's world – continuing to say 'yes' as we reach out from our own brokenness and fragility. I feel challenged to be a woman of hope, of faith, grounded in the Divine and present to the ordinary reality of everyday life.



**Sharon Fagan -  
Assistant  
Congregational  
Leader**

I was born in St John's, Newfoundland and entered the Presentation Sisters in 1967. My experiences in ministry include teaching elementary school, nursing as a Community Health Nurse in rural Newfoundland, Director of Nursing at Presentation Motherhouse, Director of Associates for the Presentation Sisters in Newfoundland and Administrator of Presentation House Emergency Shelter for Children. I served as a member of the International Presentation Association Executive Team. I also served as a Council member and as Leader with our NL Presentation Leadership Team. I am energized by the contemplative dialogue process we have engaged in together. I think it is a process that opens our minds and hearts to possibilities as we listen to God's spirit and the wisdom of one another and discern the call that needs to be heard for this time in the life of the Congregation.

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**Neneth Robledo**  
**Member of**  
**Congregational Council**

I am from a very small island called Camotes Island in the middle of the Philippines. I met the Presentation Sisters when I was in college and I joined them in 1996, after 6 years of teaching in the public schools. I have spent 7 years in Leadership Ministry in the Philippines, and have worked in the school Nuestra Senora de las Nieves High School in Himamaylan City. It has been a wonderful experience, before the Congregational Gathering, to bring into consciousness the different milestones of grace in my life and to name what we have gone through in our different/varied yet so deeply connected journeys. The journey going forward beyond 2018 is very challenging – it asks so much of our imagination in the midst of the pressing realities we are in.

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**Anne McDermott**  
**Member of**  
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I returned to live in Ireland in 2014 after 28 years in Zambia. The international dimension of our congregation has always been a source of life and energy for me. I moved into ministry in Mount St Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre. Ministry there has allowed me to touch into a sense of deep gratitude for lives that are daily given in quiet ways with no fanfare. I'm looking forward to exploring together how we can continue to radiate love, in our younger missions where we are still blessed to have energetic younger Sisters and in our older missions where our physical energy is waning, but our love and wisdom is expanding! My hope is to trust the unfolding mystery and allow 'Life to live me' (Brenda Peddigrew) when feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of the responsibility.

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**Aurea Dias**  
**Member of**  
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I returned to live in North India in 2016 after 25 years in Zambia. I have moved into facilitation ministry - working with Presentation Sisters in South and North India Units, the Christian Brothers and the Missionaries of Christ Jesus. For me a big challenge is that as a Congregation we will be able to listen together to the Spirit of God urging us to move One Pace Beyond, into the Unknown where life calls to new needs. Are we ready for such a kind of collective daring? Another simple challenge is: will we be able to live what we propose or will it stay as a beautifully worded document only? I have hope! I see so many new shoots already sprouting: our vibrant Sisters (young and not so young), Co-workers, Associates, Friends of Nano and many others. Above all I have hope that we are held and energized by the Spirit permeating everything and everyone.

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