

Nano Nagle and an Evolving Charism A guide for Educators, Leaders and Care Providers

Thank you Fr Christopher (Dillon) for your words of wisdom and the eloquent way that you were able to weave together the various strands of the book and the various contributors. Your challenge to us as Religious in Ireland to fund a Chair to research the contribution of the Religious Congregations to society is well worth considering.

I feel very proud and humbled to stand here on behalf of the Congregation and the many people who are inspired by Nano. I say thank you to everyone who has contributed to *Nano Nagle and an Evolving Charism*. It is the fruit of much collaboration, combining scholarly work, research and theological reflections on lived experience and the articles offer many insights, wisdom and guidance for us today.

The beautiful picture on the front of the book (artwork from students in Binalbagan college, Negros, Philippines) captures for me so much of the energy, vibrancy, diversity and movement that is reflected in the various articles, in the story of Nano and in our story.

A special thank you to the editors - Bernadette Flanagan, Mary O'Brien and Anne O'Leary and to all the contributors who have already been named, those of you who are present with us this evening and those who are unable to be here but remembered very specially.

We thank all of you for helping us to understand the context which shaped the responses of Nano and her early companions. Your explorations help us to also understand the contexts throughout the world which have inspired and continue to inspire Sisters, partners in mission and Friends of Nano to respond in diverse ways - to be the compassionate heart of Jesus for today and to be of any service in any part of the globe.

This is a timely guide and reminder as we move towards the Tercentenary of the birth of Nano next year that Nano's vision is not narrow, it is as broad as the universe and that her vision continues to inspire us today.

Our Congregational Gathering next year has the theme: Nano Aflame- stoking our passion...becoming the fire...radiating love – and finds much resonance in the book.

Some of these words reflect the zeal that Nano refers to in many of her letters and that is also explored in the book. It's not a word that we would use as much today but it speaks of enthusiasm, passion, commitment, and courage which are just as essential for our life today as for Nano.

There is much richness in the book and I encourage you to read it. I will just mention a couple of images from the book that caught my attention.

One is the image of the mustard seed that Fr Christopher has also spoken about:

Nano's determination, her unwavering faith in Divine Providence and her awareness of limitation found expression in the humble, mighty mustard seed.

We are reminded that our story is rooted in small beginnings, Nano began in small ways, with much courage, little fuss, she did all in her power to do what was needed to be done, to plant the seed trusting the outcome and growth to divine providence.

The image of the dawn chorus for the evolving charism also caught my attention - how it begins with one voice and then it grows as all the other birds find their voice and it becomes a beautiful song – a wake up call to creation that spreads across the world.

The contribution of Nano, each Presentation Sister and each member of the Presentation family to that chorus is and has been vital. Our hope is that this song does not stop with us, that it will continue to wake up the world - as Pope Francis has called us to do - in spreading love, compassion, joy and hope in our world.

It maybe a new song, a new harmony or a new choir but we trust that this song will continue to be sung and continue to wake up the world.