

Anne Marie Quinn

In her own words



INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION
ASSOCIATION

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What inspired you to take on the role of IPA's Inaugural Executive Director?

When I was invited by our Congregation Leader to apply for the position of the IPA's inaugural Executive Director, I was somewhat reluctant for a number of reasons. These were mainly two: I would of necessity be leaving the position I then held within my own Province as Director of a Way of Life Office, and on reading the Job Description it was clear to me that it would be a very responsible and challenging position for which, in my view, there would be other sisters better suited.

In discerning what I should do, there were three main factors that moved me to apply for the position. I had the privilege of attending both the 6th and 7th IPA Assemblies, which deepened my understanding of and passion for IPA's work for justice at local and global levels. In addition, at this time, especially the words of Venerable Nano Nagle echoed in the ear of my heart: "If I could be of service ... in any part of the world, I would willingly do all in my power". As a Presentation Sister for 50 years, my ministries have always been within my home country of Ireland. Was I now being called to respond to her vision by serving – from a base here in the land of Nano - a global network of the Presentation family, the International Presentation Association? Was I being called to go "one step beyond" as Nano did?

Finally, in this context, the words of Sr Raphael Considine's profile of Nano spoke to me:

In the face of fear, she chose to be daring.
In the face of anxiety, she chose to trust.
In the face of impossibility, she chose to begin.





What were some of the most memorable or defining moments of your time leading IPA?

There were many memorable and defining moments, but I will just share a few of them.

One was the solidarity experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The IPA Core Team and Justice Contacts, together with the IPA Directors, were to gather in person in April and May 2020, at venues in Chicago and Bangkok, to work on drafting an IPA Strategy and Implementation plan. This was towards fulfilling one of the commitments of the 7th IPA Assembly.

In March 2020 it became evident that travel was not possible. However, knowing that our Justice work needed to continue, we as a global network gathered online to draft both the IPA Strategy and Implementation Plan. It was a time when great resilience was shown by all involved. Despite lockdown, much good strategic work was done, and lasting bonds were forged, for example between Justice Contacts around the world and Core Team members.



Another defining moment was identifying professional organisations and people with whom we could work to enable the organisation to flourish. One such organisation was Caplor Horizon Charity. While participating in a Human Rights Training Programme in Geneva, I met two of its Directors. We in IPA worked closely with Caplor Horizon Charity over the years. IPA also engaged the services of Dr Judith King, another professional facilitator. Judith worked closely with IPA Directors, the Core team, and me. She also collaborated with Caplor Horizon during the IPA Strategy Process and its implementation.

I've also had many moments of deep gratitude, one of them being when securing funding. Adequate funding may not of itself guarantee development, but it helps greatly to enable progress to be made. Receiving a grant from Conrad Hilton Foundation and later a substantial donation from an IPA Congregation enabled us to establish a Restructuring Fund, this substantial help provided greater confidence in the sustainability of IPA.



A highly memorable moment during my years of service was the visit which I made, together with IPA's Representative at the UN Dr Despoina Afroditi Milaki, to the North India Unit. This visit was an enormous privilege. It afforded us the opportunity to experience first hand the work of justice at the local level. Our trip brought us face-to-face with people in their real contexts. We witnessed how the funds received by the sisters from the 2022 IPA Eradication of Poverty Project Fund had enabled Santal women and girls in Jiajor to receive proper education and develop skills that would help them earn a living.

Through our encounters we were able to encourage and dare I say inspire them as we shared the work of IPA at the UN level. They were enabled to see how they participate in our global advocacy efforts through their dedicated work and their stories. We in turn were blessed to receive the hospitality and care of all in the North India Province, the Leadership Team, the sisters, along with the entire IPA community there.

The launch of IPA's research publications, "Policies for Gender Justice" and "Making Uncomfortable Conversations Comfortable" were also defining moments for all involved.

As a faith based organisation IPA prioritises its faith perspective in its work at local and global levels. Its Priority Action Focus Groups on the Rights of Women and Children; Care of Earth and Indigenous and Tribal People work continuously to encourage and support the whole network to continue their action and advocacy. These areas of concern have designated days on the UN Events Calendar . IPA is supported by its charism and spirituality personnel in honouring these days by their Prayer Services, which encourage us to pause and pray. International Women's Day is one of these significant days which for me will remain in my memory.



The IPA 7th Assembly gave impetus to the purpose and action of IPA by specifying that a new organisational structure be devised and implemented. It stipulated that a new governance structure be initiated and a strategic plan of action for justice be developed. I was grateful that the journey from that time enabled the 8th Assembly in its turn to discern the further development of an optimum structure to meet current circumstances, challenges and aspirations .

It goes without saying that the IPA's 8th Assembly was a defining moment for IPA and for me personally .

Presentation Sisters and women and men passionate about contributing to strengthening the global effects to speak and act collaboratively for justice through the lens of the charism of nano Nagle gathered in St John's for the 8th IPA assembly .



Why do you feel that the work of IPA is important?

The work of International Presentation Association (IPA) is important in my view for many reasons – one being how it facilitates collaboration in the work of justice between the Units of the Union of the Presentation Blessed Virgin Mary, the Congregations of the North American Conference and the Congregations of the Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The idea of IPA as a global network emerged from informal meetings on the margins of a Leaders' Meeting in Rome in 1981. In time this idea resulted in the birth of IPA, in 1988, to focus on the work of justice. In forming IPA, the sisters believed that the work we would do together would have potential to transform lives.



In 2000, IPA was granted accreditation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations, giving Presentation Sisters at the local and community level an effective platform on which they would be represented at global level. Since then, IPA networks have been further expanded to include the activities of Presentation People around the globe.

Another reason IPA is important is that it honours and develops the legacy of those on whose shoulders it is standing - those who have gone before us and who have brought the organisation to what it is today. God is continually beckoning us to respond to the needs of each age, to listen with a contemplative ear to what the hungers of the world are asking of us.

The International Presentation Association in its call to action believes in and respects the dignity of all. In its advocacy, it honours and seeks to advance the rights of women and children, Earth, and indigenous and tribal people.

Nano's spirit and vision continue to unite us all at this time, and invite us to embrace the reality of the world we are living in, at a time of serious global challenges and uncertainties, a time that demands our creativity, great trust in God and deep faith – a time to 'dream the impossible... as possible'.





Is there anything you wish for IPA's future

It is my earnest wish at this time:

That as an organisation, IPA will continue to respond to the needs of those on the margins of society, in the spirit of Nano Nagle: 'Go out for need calls loudly in the winding lanes; your pilgrim heart shall urge you still one pace beyond, and love shall be your lantern flame'. (Sr. Raphael Consedine);

That, remembering Nano, we will remind ourselves as IPA to continue to be courageous, to step up to respond to the needs of our time and make a difference through each small action we take, actions that emerge from a contemplative stance;

that the practice of the IPA Eradication of Poverty Fund will be continued, to enable those working with passion and commitment to work towards ending injustice;

that IPA will continue to advocate for 'those kept poor', those experiencing systemic injustice;



That IPA will continue to develop its structures to meet new contexts and shifting realities, and honour that strong Christian mission. 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10);

That it will continue to ask the question, 'What kind of future is God beckoning us towards?'

It will expand the IPA research projects and publications.

As I ended my term in October 2024 and handed the lantern to the incoming Executive Director, Jessica Dewhurst, my feeling was one of gratitude for what had been, and a deep sense of appreciation for all who had journeyed with me over my six-year term.

Blessings

Ann Marie Quinn (Sr.)
Inaugural IPA Executive Director