

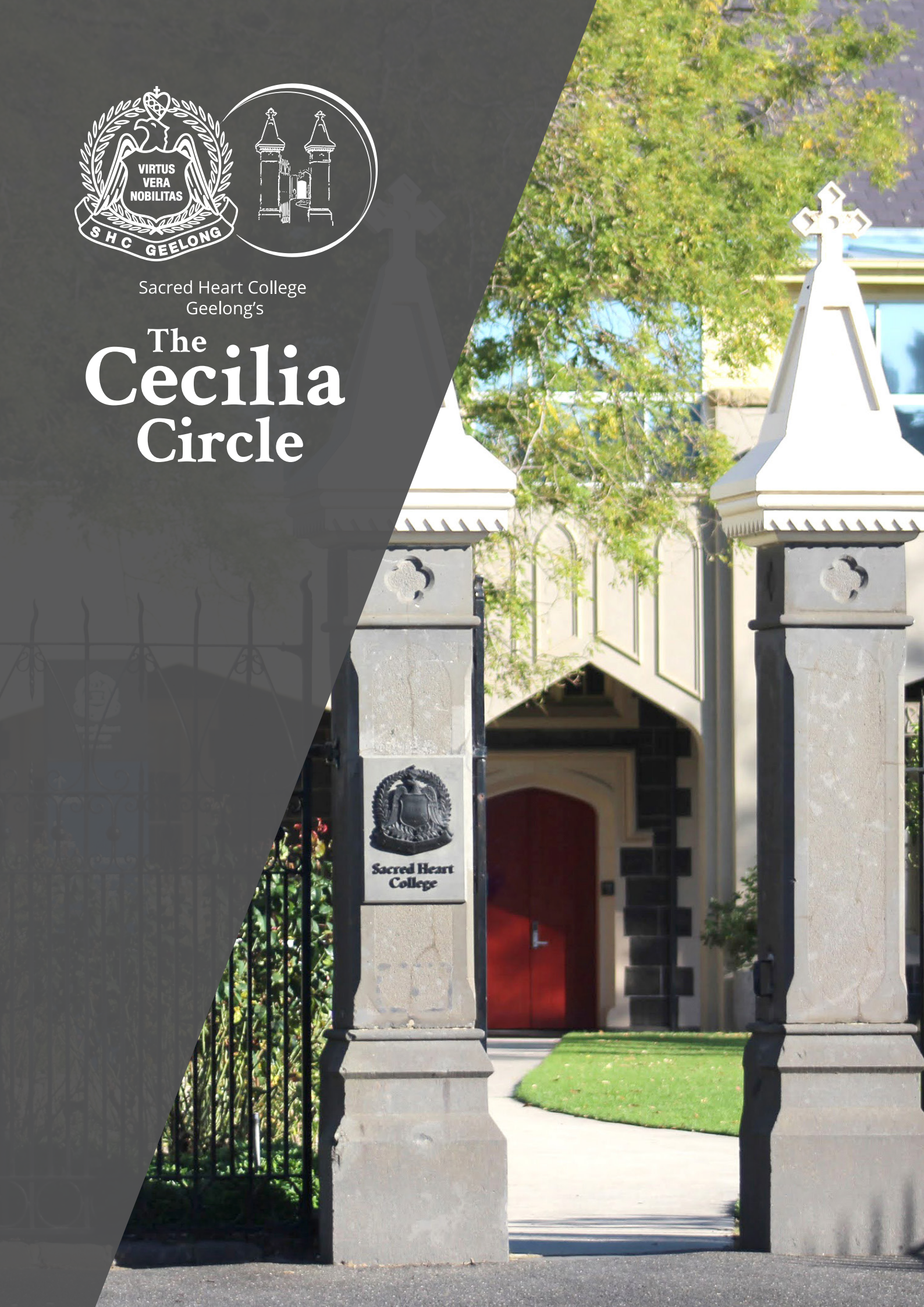


Sacred Heart College
Geelong's

The Cecilia Circle



Sacred Heart
College



Our Mercy Story

Catherine McAuley was born in Dublin on 29 September 1778 and had two siblings, James William and Mary. Her father, James died in 1783 and her mother Elinor, in 1798. In 1803 Catherine became the household manager and companion of an elderly, childless couple, William and Catherine Callaghan. Following the Callaghans' deaths, Catherine became the sole heiress of their property. In 1822, aged 44, she used the bulk of her inheritance to expand her outreach to those in need and began to build the House of Mercy in Baggot Street, Dublin.



Mother Catherine McAuley
Foundress of the Sisters
of Mercy

Catherine's plan was to gather young women, especially from the middle-classes, who would help her to provide educational, religious and social services for women and children at risk of homelessness through poverty and exploitation. Catherine McAuley established the Sisters of Mercy in 1831. Nearly 192 years on, her work continues to inspire people throughout the world.

Mother Mary Cecilia Xavier Maguire (c1819–1879)

In 1859, six women set sail from the House of Mercy in Baggot Street, Ireland to Australia and settled in Geelong on Newtown Hill. Rev Mother Xavier Maguire and Sisters Gabriel Sherlock, Mary Margaret Mulally, Mary Regis Manley, Mary Rose Lynch and Mary Aloysius Ryan (a novice) quickly began their work of caring for Geelong's orphans, visitation of the sick and giving religious instruction.



Mother Xavier Maguire and five sisters
depart Dublin on the Ocean Chief



Mother Xavier Maguire
1860-1879

Just after they arrived, on 12 December, a meeting of townspeople was called to make arrangements for the establishment of a convent in Newtown. The following resolution was passed:

Resolved: That being fully aware of the blessings in education, both to the higher and lower classes, in charitable ministrations, irrespective of creed or country, to the poor, the sick, and the dying, conferred by the Sisters of the order of Mercy, wherever they have settled, we hail with pleasure the arrival in Geelong of an affiliation from the parent house in Dublin.

Resolved: That feeling sincerely grateful to those ladies for leaving home and friends and coming so many thousands of miles to diffuse amongst us these blessings, we form a committee for the purpose of procuring for them a suitable residence to enable them to carry out more efficiently the objects of their sacred institute.

The committee wasted no time and a sum of 1000 pounds was donated from the generous community of Geelong. Sacred Heart College Geelong was officially opened as a school for day students in 1860. Mother Xavier Maguire belongs to a largely unsung host of women religious who have contributed so much to the development of the Catholic Church and also to the life of the nation.

Her legacy as a Sister of Mercy is one of inspiring leadership, facing all obstacles with courage and stamina to bring her vision to reality. - Helen Mary Delaney RSM, author of 'Mother Xavier Maguire - A Woman of Faith and Vision'.

The Poynton Family

Patron Family, The Cecilia Circle Bequest Program

The Early Years - Kathleen Poynton

Kathleen Poynton was born on 20 December 1909, the daughter of John Poynton and Henrietta (nee Atkins). One of six children, three boys and three girls, Kathleen was educated at Saint Agnes' Primary School.

SHC Alumni

Kathleen's secondary education was at Sacred Heart College Geelong and here began a lifelong and loving association with both the College and the convent. An extremely talented musician, she played the piano, completed a commercial course and after leaving school, worked as a law clerk in the local Geelong firm of Harwood and Pincott.

A Sister of Mercy

Kathleen entered the novitiate at Rosanna on 30 April 1932 and was received on 16 November the same year. Given the name Sister Mary Ita, she was professed in February 1935 and finally professed on 25 January 1940.

After her profession in 1935, Kathleen completed her teacher training at Mercy Teachers' College in Ascot Vale, and then for 24 years was a music teacher. She first taught at Ascot Vale and then at Heidelberg. At the beginning of 1953 she was appointed Superior at Geelong and began a period of thirty years in which she held positions of authority and responsibility.

After six years at Geelong, she was appointed Superior at Heidelberg and at the chapter in 1960 she was elected Provincial of the Melbourne Congregation. At the next chapter she was re-elected Provincial and was elected Provincial Vicar at the Chapter in 1972 and remained at Rosanna until she was appointed Superior at Bendigo at the beginning of 1974.

After she had completed eighteen years of leadership at province level, she lived at Rosanna and Belmont before once again undertaking the responsibility of community leadership for a further three years at Mercy Family Care in Geelong. Following that, she went to Kilmore and then in 1987 to Lilydale where she quickly became and remained a most valued, loved and indeed pivotal member of that community.

A Woman of Prayer

Sister M Ita was a woman of prayer, who carefully and prayerfully considered what was the most appropriate course of action to take in any given situation and resolutely followed the path she saw as necessary. This great strength of Ita's was tested to the utmost during her years of congregation leadership, particularly leading the sisters through the great changes that came after Vatican II.

Many people turned to Ita for advice which was given with a wisdom distilled from long years of prayerful reflection on her life experience, a realistic understanding of human nature and a non-judgmental appreciation of each person.

Sister M Ita remained a faithful member of the community until her death in 1998. Her connection to Sacred Heart College held fast and true to the end, and her requiem mass was celebrated at Newtown where she is buried in the Convent cemetery.

Continuing the Family Connection - Barry, Margaret and Rebecca

1947 - Sr Ita's nephew, Barrie Poynton attended Sacred Heart College junior school with his brothers

1959 - Barrie's wife Margaret (McCarthy, 1959) was head prefect of the College

1992 - Barrie and Margaret's daughter, Rebecca, completed her studies at Sacred Heart College.

The Poynton Family - Patrons of the Cecilia Circle Bequest Program

Both the connection and support that the Poynton family has provided to Sacred Heart College over their 100-year association makes them a shining example of the true effect that the impact of gifts such as those given to both Catherine McAuley and Mother Xavier Maguire can make - a real and lasting difference to people's lives, through education, care and service.

In October 2022, the College launched the Cecilia Circle Bequest Program and proudly announced the Poynton Family as the new patrons. May the family legacy continue to live on through the Cecilia Circle and honour the faith and service of Sr Ita.





A Gift in your Will - Next Steps

Gifts to the College's bequest program will be acknowledged in the new Cecilia Circle. As a valued member, donors will be invited to events and have their name – or their family's name – recognised in school publications. Or if preferred, gifts will remain anonymous.

We recommend that you seek advice from your solicitor or financial planner to ensure that the wording of your Will reflects your exact wishes. You may also want to speak to an accountant with respect to taxation and financial matters.

If you choose to leave a bequest to Sacred Heart College Geelong, we ask that you (or your solicitor) provide us with notification so that we can discuss with you how your gift can be targeted to ensure its long term impact.

If you would like more information please contact: **Catherine Middlemiss, Director of Development**

P: 5222 0459

E: camiddle@shcgeelong.catholic.edu.au.

Your inquiry and any information provided will be held in strictest confidence.

Thank you for considering a gift to Sacred Heart College in your Will.

✂ CUT HERE ✂

Name: _____

☐ ***I wish to create** a legacy and leave a bequest in my Will to Sacred Heart College Geelong.*

Please contact me via phone:

☐ ***I have already made** a bequest in my Will to Sacred Heart College Geelong.*

Please contact me via phone:



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