

Celebrating



175 Years of Mercy Education in Australia



Mercy
Education

1846 – 2021

Editorial

As part of this commemoration, we have endeavoured to develop a comprehensive sense of the scale and reach of the Mercy commitment across the nation, at least as far as it pertains to education.

We are very grateful to the many schools that accepted our invitation to be part of this special edition. Most of the schools featured are secondary schools, although we are very grateful to have three primary schools included as well. In addition to the schools highlighted in this edition there are hundreds of other parish and diocesan schools across Australia where Sisters of Mercy have taught or been a Principal. Primary schools in which the Sisters of Mercy taught dwarfed the number of secondary schools, but as these were generally parish schools the secondary schools remain a more visible presence today. Please rest assured that this commemorative edition is equally intended to honour the great contribution of the Sisters of Mercy in primary schools from coast to coast.

Finally, we are most grateful to all those researchers who have supported this issue – either at the local school level or at congregational level. Special thanks to those Sisters and staff who combed through congregational archives to support our endeavours: Annie Medley and Team (ISMAPNG), Sr Jennie Ryan RSM (North Sydney), Sr Catherine Reuter RSM (Brisbane) and Sr Mary-Louise Petro RSM (Parramatta).

Brenda Keenan, Joe Konyenburger & Effie Coulson



Standing on the Shoulders

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me

I am stronger for their courage, I am wiser for their words

I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future

I am grateful for their vision, for toiling on this Earth

We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us

They are saints and they are humans, they are angels, they are friends

We can see beyond the struggles and the troubles and the challenge

When we know that by our efforts things will be better in the end

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me

I am honored by their passion for our liberty

I will stand a little taller, I will work a little longer

And my shoulders will be there to hold the ones who follow me

They lift me higher than I could ever fly

Carrying my burdens away

I imagine our world if they hadn't tried

We wouldn't be here celebrating today

by Joyce Johnson Rouse

Welcome

This year, 2021, we celebrate remarkable achievements – Two hundred years of Catholic Education and 175 years of Mercy education in Australia.

While our focus is on the arrival and work of the Sisters of Mercy it is most important to note that there were Christian schools in existence in the late 1700s. Fr John Therry arrived in Australia from Ireland in 1820 and later that year commenced the first Catholic school, in Parramatta New South Wales. By 1833, there were at least ten Catholic schools in the 'colonies' and the early establishment of these Catholic schools rested with lay Catholics. Between 1838 and 1900 many religious orders arrived in Australia from Ireland, Austria and France to continue the work of Catholic education and two Australian orders were founded – the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Sisters of St Joseph. Catholic schools flourished and by 1900 were well established across the populated areas of the country.

We know that Mercedes College in Perth, Western Australia, was the first school established by the Sisters of Mercy in Australia in 1846, opening on 2 February and having five students enrolled by the end of the first day. In the 175 years since that eventful day, Mercy schools are now found in every corner of the country. Thousands of students, staff and families have been influenced by the Mercy Values of Justice, Compassion, Hope and Hospitality. Mercy education is vibrant and relevant and new schools are embracing these values.

As we celebrate the past but also look to the future, we must be sure in our convictions of what is valuable while being ever ready to embrace change and progress to ensure our students receive the best possible education.

Sr Sylvia Williams RSM | BOARD CHAIR



Mercy Education

200 years of Catholic education,
175 years of a Mercy inspired Catholic
education and all amid a global pandemic.

Like Catherine McAuley in Dublin nearly 200 years ago and St Mary of the Cross MacKillop a century ago, our school leaders have navigated serious health epidemics to continue supporting young people in their education. The more things change, the more they can seem to remain the same.

Year 2021 though has seen our Mercy-inspired schools overcome current adversity and rise to the challenge of educating children and assisting families in the partnership of spreading the good news. In this commemorative edition prepared by Mercy Education, some of the 'too many to list' schools that were administered, founded, owned or staffed by the Sisters of Mercy have an opportunity to celebrate and display their mercy-ness in this celebration of 175/200 years.

Mercy Education Ltd is the education ministry for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG), one of the four Congregations of the Sisters in Australia. It is great to see schools and historians from all four congregations participating in this commemorative issue.

Across six States and two Territories, encompassing seven Archdioceses and 21 Dioceses, Sisters of Mercy and lay colleagues have cared for, educated and empowered thousands of young women and men and followed in Catherine's footsteps: *"Compassion should be our animating principle when undertaking instruction with children and adults, since they are made in God's image"*.

The students of Mercy schools have taken up Catherine's legacy, inspired by her words: *"What an ineffable consolation to serve Christ Himself, in the person of the poor, and to walk in the very same path He trod!"*

Congratulations to all the members of our Australian Mercy community.

Christopher Houlihan | CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Dedication

The Ancient Greek term ‘kairos’ refers to a moment in time – specifically to the right, critical or opportune moment. This commemorative edition is truly occurring at a kairos moment for the Sisters of Mercy in Australia. Consider:

- The 175th anniversary of the arrival of Mercy in Australia
- The 200th anniversary of Catholic education which was a consuming focus for so many of the Sisters
- The aging populations of Sisters who have now all but withdrawn from our school communities
- The forthcoming transfer of the great Mercy legacies of health, education and welfare from the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea to Mercy Ministry Companions

And whilst this edition rightly recalls the work of Mother Ursula Frayne RSM and her lasting contribution to the Australian Mercy context, what is perhaps most notable is that she was far from unique.

The organisational structure of the Sisters of Mercy encouraged each foundation to seek out new needs and new locations for mission. Part of their great strength, and their global spread, is due to the abundance of courageous women who would pack their bags, often with very limited notice, and undertake arduous sea journeys to unfamiliar places – all in service of the mission of Mercy.

We pay tribute to some of those Sisters here – recognising their leadership and also their lesser known, but no less courageous, companions.

We also remember those many Sisters who have made moves within Australia, be it across the district or across the country, to support the service of the mission.

This commemorative edition is dedicated, with much gratitude, to the 8,167 Sisters of Mercy who have enlivened our Australian Church since 1846. Your example will continue to guide us in the generations to come.

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDERS

1846	Perth, WA	Mother M Ursula Frayne RSM
1859	Geelong, VIC	Mother M Xavier Maguire RSM
1859	Goulburn, NSW	Mother M Ignatius Murphy RSM
1861	Brisbane, QLD	Mother M Vincent Whitty RSM
1865	North Sydney, NSW	Mother M Ignatius McQuoin RSM
1866	Bathurst, NSW	Mother M Ignatius Croke RSM
1872	Warrnambool, VIC	Mother M Philomene Maguire RSM
1875	Singleton, NSW	Mother M Stanislaus Kenny RSM
1875	Yass, NSW	Mother M Paul Fielding RSM
1876	Bendigo, VIC	Mother M Aloysius Martin RSM
1880	Adelaide, SA	Mother M Evangelista Fitzpatrick RSM
1884	Grafton, NSW	Mother M Stanislaus Simpson RSM
1885	Emmaville, NSW	Mother M Vincent Mulhall RSM
1888	Cooktown, QLD	Mother M de Sales Meagher RSM
1888	Parramatta, NSW	Mother M Clare Dunphy RSM
1890	Yarrawonga, VIC	Mother M Ignatius Walsh RSM
1891	Mansfield, VIC	Mother M Alacoque Ryan RSM
1899	Victoria Park, WA	Mother M Clare Buggy RSM



Celebrating 200 Years of Catholic Education

Catholic education is celebrating 200 years in Australia, marking the bicentenary of the first Catholic school established in Parramatta in October 1820. The formal celebrations were due to be held from October 2020 to October 2021. However, due to pandemic restrictions, the celebrations were deferred until the 2021 school year. A National Mass was celebrated in all states and dioceses on the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians on 24 May 2021.

The first Catholic school in Australia was founded in October 1820 by Irish Catholic priest Fr John Therry and run by a lay person, George Marley, who was a convict. The school, which Catholic historians believe was in Hunter Street, Parramatta, taught 31 students. By 1833, there were 10 Catholic schools in the colony.

Over 200 years, Catholic schools have grown to become the largest provider of schooling in Australia (outside government) with one in

five school age students attending a Catholic school. This represents 777,000 students in 1,755 schools across the country and employing over 100,000 teachers and staff.

The Sisters of Mercy have been present for 175 years in Australia. As this commemorative magazine clearly demonstrates, they were one of the most significant and prolific contributors to the establishment and development of Catholic education across Australia. As such, it is wonderful to be celebrating this significant 175th anniversary at a time when the two-century contribution of Catholic religious and lay people to the educational life and culture of Australia is being recognised.

The below historical images all relate to the first Mercy schools established at Victoria Square Perth and now known as Mercedes College.



1848 – Pro-Cathedral, Mercy convent and school.



1896 - The Opening of the Ladies College.



Our Lady's College (Studio Postcard).



Watercolour by John Campbell.

Sketches of Conventual Life in the Bush

HOW IT CAME TO PASS THAT SUCH A THING AS A “BUSH CONVENT” WAS ESTABLISHED

The Order of Mercy had been founded about twelve years. From the parent House in Dublin it had extended to the principal towns in Ireland, to England and even to North America, but as yet the line of separation between the two Hemispheres had not been passed by our Sisters – when one day in autumn of 1845 a newly consecrated Bishop was introduced to the Convent in Baggot Street.

Their object was to induce the Superioress, Mother Catherine Marmion, to send a colony of her religious to the new diocese of Perth, W.A., a country not far from the 32nd degree South latitude. Many were the arguments made use of by the Right Reverend prelate to obtain our Rev. Mother's concurrence in his design, but that which most of all excited her zeal and sympathy was his Lordship's statement that there were “seven schools”, containing about “four thousand children” and “no one” as he expressed it “to break them the bread of instruction”.

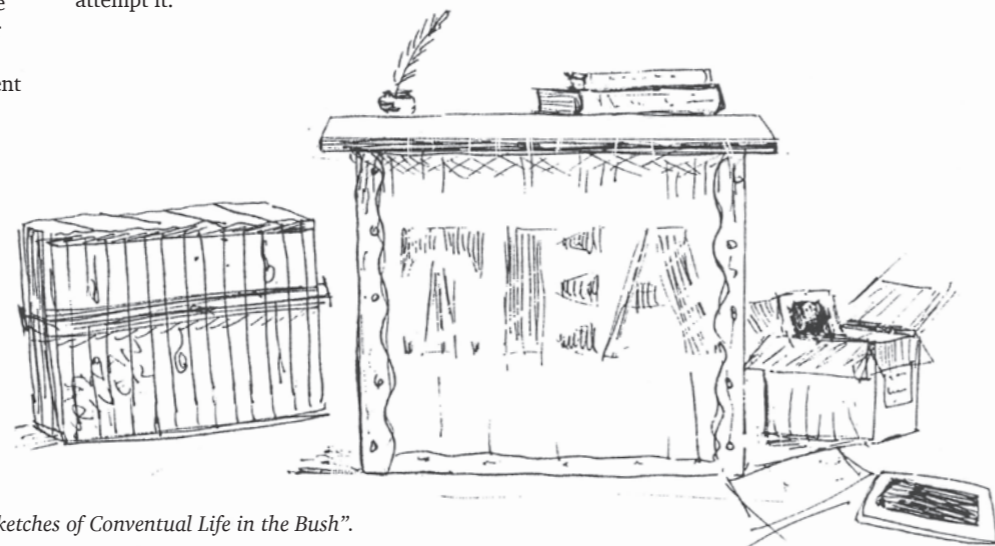
Nothing was decided on that visit, but the Bishop returned the next day, and at length obtained Rev. Mother's consent to the proposed undertaking; this accomplished, His Lordship hastened to London to secure passages in a good fine ship “The Elizabeth”, 600 tons, which was about to sail for the distant land.

Rev. Mother's next care was to select suitable Sisters for such a very hazardous enterprise, and, as if to prove that the works of God depend not upon the instruments employed, she named my very unworthy self to be superior and guide of the little band of missionaries, viz. three professed and three novices, whom after due deliberation, she fixed upon for the new Foundation – so thus it was a convent came to be established in the Bush.

A DAY ON BOARD

You will feel interested I know in hearing how we spent our time during our long voyage. A description of one day will suffice for all. At an early hour, about four o'clock a.m. at a given signal we arose, dressed etc. and proceed to the Chapel cabin, where we assisted willingly at two masses; not infrequently we waited for four or more – for the simple reason that we could not get away. Then, office recited in Choir most days, occasionally in silence if the weather were rough, meditation and spiritual lecture, then breakfast, after which various duties of a domestic nature were performed. Then to our places on the poop, where we generally spent the day, some reading, others sewing or writing or chatting, just as it pleased us. Dinner as a matter of course, followed by recreation, other spiritual exercises, a very slight supper an hour or two on deck, where on moonlight nights, we said night prayers and read the appointed meditation for the next morning.

Thus glided away the days and weeks of the four months and upwards, but you must not think that they were gloomy or monotonous. Far from it. We had abundant sources of recreation in the ever changing sea, now calm and unruffled like a lake, again lashed to fury by the winds, and, to our inexperienced eyes, ready to engulf us together with our floating Convent. The glorious firmament on high was also an unfailing source of entertainment, and we spent many hours very agreeably in seeking out those constellations with the names of which we had been familiar since childhood. But no pen could describe the surpassing loveliness of a night scene in those tropical regions, so I shall not attempt it.



SCHOOL PREPARATIONS

But in the midst of our domestic arrangements we did not lose sight of the works peculiar to our vocation. It was duly announced that we would open school on a fixed day, and dear Sister Mary A.H. received in anticipation the charge thereof together with a supply of school books, copies, slates, which the Bishop had brought from Europe; but school room, table, desk or form we had none. To requisites which seemed indispensable, my reply was “do the best you can”. Thus authorised, the Sister like an obedient, good religious, as indeed she was, set to work. Once more the packing cases were called out of their hiding places and did duty as desks. A few planks placed on bricks which we picked up about the grounds served for seats and a verandah back of the convent would make a very good school, at least during the summer of that delightful climate.

On February 2nd we opened school and at the appointed hour every catholic girl in the place presented herself for admission. So you will naturally suppose that the verandah was no large enough to contain them all. No such thing. The total number amounted to one!!! Before the end of the week four others came in from the country and that was all that called themselves catholics. This was rather discouraging to persons who had come a journey of 16,000 miles in order to teach some at least of the four thousand little ones, who, we were told, “had no one to break for them the bread of instruction”.

Ursula Frayne

Ursula Frayne (1816-1885), mother superior, was born on 5 October 1816 in Dublin, Ireland. In 1834 she entered the Institute of Mercy, founded in 1831 in Dublin by Mother Catherine McAuley, and took the name Ursula in place of her baptismal name Clara. In 1842 she was appointed Superior of the institute's first foreign mission foundation in Newfoundland and in 1845 went on foundation to Perth, Western Australia, at the request of the newly consecrated Bishop John Brady for Sisters to staff his proposed schools. She and her companions arrived in Perth on 8 January 1846.

From the outset the Sisters of Mercy experienced great hardship. So small was the Catholic population that government aid, granted to denominational schools in 1849, was insignificant and the bishop, who was close to bankruptcy, could not be relied on for support. Shocked by the conditions under which the Sisters worked in the first two years, the Dublin mother-house sent money for their return passages. This money Mother Ursula gratefully acknowledged but she refused to abandon the mission. However, she soon realized that the Sisters would have to supplement their meagre income. In 1849 she opened the first secondary school in Western Australia, a ‘select’ fee-paying school catering for an almost exclusively non-Catholic clientele; it brought much-needed security. Its success determined the pattern of future Mercy expansion, which was to establish, almost simultaneously and often within the same building, three separate schools: a ‘select’ fee-paying school, a primary school and an infants’ school. By 1856, despite the impending withdrawal of government aid, the schools of the Sisters of Mercy in Western Australia were flourishing.

At this time, Ursula Frayne responded to a request from Bishop James Goold for a Victorian foundation. She arrived in Melbourne in March 1857 and within six weeks had raised loans to pay off the mortgage on her convent in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy. Rapid expansion followed. Large building programmes were undertaken for educational and social work, culminating in the erection of the first wing of the present ‘Academy’ in 1870 at a cost of £6000. The Sisters of Mercy were the first teaching nuns in Victoria and under the vigorous leadership of Mother Ursula their establishment included a boarding and day school for girls, together with two primary schools and a domestic training school for orphans. She also founded the St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage at South Melbourne.

Her letters give evidence of the qualities which distinguished her as a religious: intelligence, blended with shrewd, practical wisdom; tenacity and great powers of endurance; strict and loving observance of the Rule; and a keen Irish wit.

Biography by Imelda Palmer

Pictured: Bronze statute of Mother Ursula Frayne RSM at Mercedes College, Perth. Excerpt from the local newspaper of the day.



THE INQUIRER.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1846.

We have this week to announce the arrival of the *Elizabeth* from England, with 32 passengers on board—an arrival the more welcome as it was wholly unexpected; the only vessel looked for at this time having been the one which should bring out our new Governor, Colonel Clarke.

Among the passengers by the *Elizabeth*, is the Rev. Dr. Brady, who, we understand, has been raised to the rank of Roman Catholic Bishop of Western Australia. Dr. Brady is accompanied by six Sisters of the Order of Mercy, and by a numerous body of Priests and Assistants, whose mission, we believe, has reference, not only to the spiritual wants of our Roman Catholic brethren, but has been directed also for the conversion and improvement of the Aboriginal tribes.

Mercedes College, Perth

MERCEDES COLLEGE, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1846

2021 is a special year for Mercedes College as we are celebrating our 175th anniversary. As Mercedes is the oldest Mercy school in Australia, and the first Australian Mercy foundation, we are also celebrating 175 years of Mercy education in Australia! The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Western Australia way back in 1846, and from the humble beginnings of just one student, Mercedes College was born. Our College community is the custodian of the flame of Mercy education carried to Australian shores by Mother Ursula Frayne RSM. Our students have the responsibility to embrace their Mercy education and to make a difference to the world outside school.

Ursula was a modern woman for her time, a social activist and a woman of action. She developed relationships with aboriginal women, businessmen, government officials and the clergy. Ursula believed education was the key to change peoples' lives for the better and she established a school that to this day empowers young women to be the best they can be and to proudly take their place in the world.

As part of the 175 Year celebrations throughout the year a number of schools have accepted invitations to tour the College, and the Sisters of Mercy Convent. Students learn about its rich history and how today, our students embrace what it's like to learn in the heart of Perth's CBD.

Our key celebration took place on 9th March 2021, and the day included a Mass at St Mary's Cathedral which included a re-enactment of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy, the first student and the increase in numbers. There were many Sisters of Mercy present and guests enjoyed a morning tea following the Mass. All students enjoyed a special treat and photographs to capture this special moment.

A special assembly was also held with a focus on why we are proud to be part of the Mercedes College community. Guest speakers featured past staff members including Sr Mollie Wright, a student, teacher, Sister of Mercy and Principal of the College (1978 – 1996) as well as current students. Throughout the day a range of artworks were exhibited that included a papercut timeline of the history of the College, an urban cross stitch design featuring the Catherine McAuley rose, an embossed quilt, memory boxes and a House banner made from small papercut flowers. These featured prominently in special installations in and around the College.

The day culminated in photos taken of our students forming the number 175 on the oval taken by a drone. A fitting conclusion to an exciting day acknowledging with gratitude the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy!

Principal Kerrie Fraser noted that being in the heart of the city offers so many wonderful opportunities and provides a stimulating atmosphere to enhance student learning. She thanked all staff members for helping to make our 175th Anniversary celebrations, and every other day, so special for our students. *"Their commitment and tireless work to ensure our students receive the best education and guidance possible, are a great tribute to all those Sisters of Mercy who have taught at the College over these many years."*

Pictured: Our Lady's College, one of the four original buildings still on site. 175 Year drone shot of students (March 2021). Students with Sister Mollie Wright (ex-student, teacher, and Principal from 1978 to 1996) at the 175 Year 'Mercedes Day' celebrations.



Convent of Mercy

This reflection by Sr Mary Wickham RSM was published in April 2021 to commemorate the handing over of the Mercy Convent at Fitzroy after 164 years of continuous occupation by the Sisters of Mercy – dating back to Mother Ursula Frayne. Whilst it will certainly ring true for Melburnians, we believe that it offers a timely opportunity for all Mercy schools to reflect on the great loss that has been experienced with the gradual withdrawal of the Sisters from our schools. It also offers us a sense of hope and joy as these historic buildings go on in the service of the same mission, emphasising the mighty foundations on which our current endeavours are built.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE VOICES IN THIS PLACE

There will always be voices in this place,
voices of prayer and promise, sounds of laughter and longing,
plain speaking truth and tales of need and beauty.
There will always be voices in this place,
voices that belong to hearts learning mercy,
hearts that are at home here, one with its history and purpose.

At first it was the fresh air of the farms of Fitzroy,
in a settlement a mere twenty or so years established,
Flinders Street Station a couple of years old,
the great Cathedral and Exhibition Buildings not yet built,
and these two rickety, leaning houses watched a city change:
the Victorian edifices the gold rush ushered in,
the ambiguous scrapers of the current sky,
as successive peoples escaped from war and strife,
the varied cultures and races seeking life,
that made this city great.

All the while the Women lived here,
spinners of kindness and culture, singers of hope and of spirit,
an eclectic mix of the fit and the frail.
The city spread, the needs beckoned,
their responses diverse and innovative,
while monarchs, mayors, bishops and baristas –
the generations – flourished and fell, one to the next.

The women lived and grew old here,
dispersed each morning just out the door or along the tramlines,
at end of day gathered back in by the house for sustenance,
and for the unique companionship of the affiliated.
The women knew the seasons of the spirit
and the phases of the body,
they braved the loneliness and loveliness of their vocation
that had brought them from as far as Ireland,
and as close as the suburb adjoining.

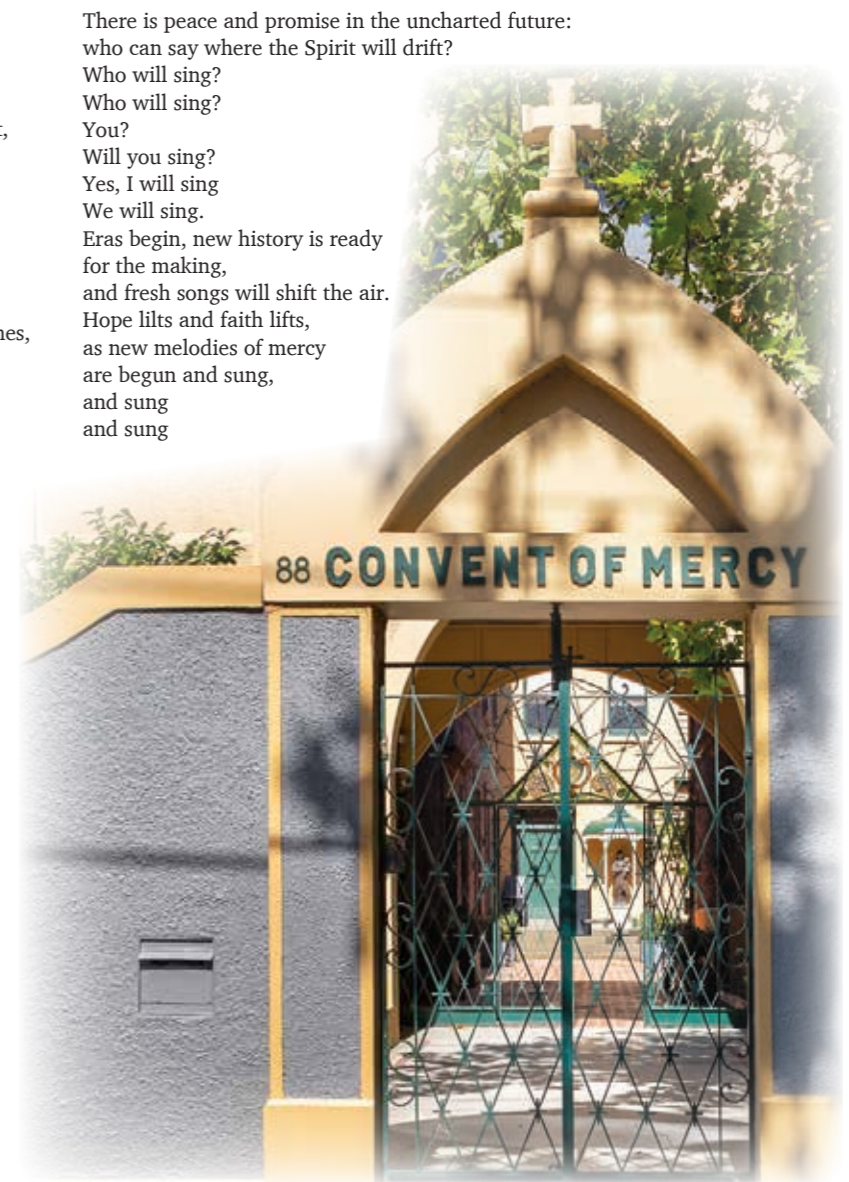
Their span has known almost breakneck change,
former customs now quaint and curious,
new ways asserting and evolving,
wars and wonders,
diseases now unseen and diseases terribly new,
Titanic the event and its movies,
Charles the Dickens and the Darwin,
Brahms to Beatles,
Dame Nellie to Dame Edna,
Phar Lap and Ned Kelly,
Olympics and Westgate Bridge,
the disasters and triumphs of the city within earshot,
the great dome and the spires, the hospitals and theatres,
chalk to computer,
costumes medieval to modern,
horse to steam to petrol,
moon landing, climate changing:
the teeming, tumultuous life of the city.

The noble elms that line the streets have seen
the seasons through and grown old with the women.
The newer choices have made their choice rare,
their paradoxical success in enhancing life for women

has narrowed the number in their own house.
Instead of choirs there are small ensembles still singing,
Spirit blowing where it wills.

There will always be voices in this place,
and hearts will be learning mercy.
Eras pass and songs come to an end.
There is sadness, a deep grief of the world turning.
They leave, the last of the line to call it home,
and one history is finished.
A wistful but grateful Amen we say.
But the bones of the one who began it – they stay.
The old walls weep and the spirits whisper their stories:
it has been a fine time.

There is peace and promise in the uncharted future:
who can say where the Spirit will drift?
Who will sing?
Who will sing?
You?
Will you sing?
Yes, I will sing
We will sing.
Eras begin, new history is ready
for the making,
and fresh songs will shift the air.
Hope lilts and faith lifts,
as new melodies of mercy
are begun and sung,
and sung
and sung





Pictured: Sr Perpetua Walsh and Sr Lucy Murray, Sr Margaret McKenna.

ACADEMY OF MARY IMMACULATE, FITZROY, VICTORIA 1857

The Nicholson Street Convent has a special place in the story of Mercy – the second school established in Australia by Mother Ursula Frayne RSM and the first Mercy school in Victoria.

Over the years, the Academy of Mary Immaculate has grown and flourished and generations of Academy women have made a significant contribution to society. While many Sisters of Mercy have contributed generously to the life of the Academy, for this celebration we recall three in particular.

Numerous past students speak of the exceptional and awe-inspiring teacher, Sr Perpetua Walsh RSM, one among 20 young Irish women who came to Australia in 1912 to join the Mercy order. Sr Perpetua taught at the Academy for all but four years of her teaching career, including nine years of principalship (1947 – 1955). She left an indelible impression on her many generations of past pupils, and her name is still mentioned at every Alumnae reunion.

Sr Lucy Murray RSM joined the Sisters of Mercy in 1934 and lived most of her life in the Nicholson Street community teaching at the Academy. She was, at different times, both Superior of the community and Principal of the College. Sr Lucy used to say “I love every stone in this building” and everyone who came in contact with Sr Lucy could also express how much they loved her. She was a woman of grace, ever ready to offer hospitality and welcome.

Whilst Sr Margaret (Meg) McKenna RSM worked at many schools over the years, her final appointment as Principal was at Sacred Heart Primary School in Fitzroy (1986-1992). From 1992, Sr Margaret worked in a parish pastoral role. She was very active in supporting students in their transition into secondary school at the Academy. Sr Meg was kindness personified and made a significant difference in the lives of those she touched.



ALL HALLOWS' SCHOOL, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND 1861

At 10:00pm on 10 May 1861 a signal from the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company's wharf at the end of Market Street, Brisbane, marked the berthing of the Yarra Yarra from Sydney. The townspeople who gathered at the wharf greeted the new arrivals, among whom were the first Catholic Bishop of Brisbane, Most Rev James Quinn and the Sisters of Mercy who accompanied him. Mother Vincent Whitty RSM and her companions, were called to Brisbane from Ireland to help provide schooling for the children of the city and those in the bush with little means of an education.

The School was first established in rooms at the St Stephen's Cathedral precinct but in 1863, the Sisters and students moved to the current site on Duncan's Hill. Adderton House was purchased as the site for the new school which soon became a boarding and day school for girls.

In 2021, All Hallows' School celebrates 160 years of educating women of vision and mercy. It is the oldest secondary school in Queensland – established just two years after the colony of Queensland was formally separated from New South Wales. Today, the College continues Catherine McAuley's vision to educate, inspire and shape young women's lives in the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy.

All Hallows' School is grateful for the firm Mercy foundations provided by the Sisters who instilled in the culture, a belief in the power of education and the importance of justice and compassion.

Pictured: 1920 Tennis Team on the Centre Court outside Main Building. Adderton House c1858, the Sisters and students moved to this site on Duncan's Hill in 1863.

SACRED HEART COLLEGE, GEELONG, VICTORIA 1860

In June 1859, the Archbishop of Melbourne, Most Rev James Goold, petitioned the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin to establish a community in Geelong. A party of six joined 300 passengers on the 'Ocean Chief' which set sail from Liverpool on 5 September 1859 for a three-month voyage to Australia.

I am not going with an idea that I shall not have crosses and difficulties but I think I am going with courage, prepared to meet everything and with my entire confidence placed in God. ... I hope I may be faithful.
– Mother Xavier Maguire, 1859

Mother M Xavier Maguire RSM, Sr M Gabrielle Sherlock RSM, Sr M Margaret Mullally RSM, Sr M Regis Manly RSM, Sr M Rose Lynch RSM and Novice M Aloysius Ryan arrived in Geelong on the 3rd of December 1859 where they immediately set about providing a Catholic education for all who desired it. A boarding and day school was opened in 1860 with 12 students and in 1861 an orphanage was established for 50 young girls. The Sisters also supported local parish primary schools in the Newtown area and visited the sick and aged in their homes.

Within a few years of their arrival, a large convent including a chapel and school buildings had been built. By the turn of the century the school was registered as a junior school, and senior school with boarding.

Now proudly celebrating 161 years of educating girls, Sacred Heart College continues to operate on the same site since it was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1860. With enrolments of 1,500 students from all socio-economic areas of Geelong, the College remains committed to the Mercy values of our founding Sisters with comparatively low fees, social outreach programs and equity scholarships for students whose families are experiencing financial hardship.

Pictured: 1887 – Boarding students with a Sister of Mercy, 2019 – 160th Anniversary Mass celebrating the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Geelong.



EMMANUEL COLLEGE, WARRNAMBOOL, VICTORIA 1872

The timing could not have been much worse. As the Sisters of Mercy, led by Mother Philomena Maguire RSM, sailed away from Dublin in 1872 to embark on their journey of establishing a school in Warrnambool, they could not have known that by the end of that year Victoria's Parliament would pass an Act abolishing all funding to religious schools, adding yet another layer of difficulty to their mission.

Despite the hardships, with the support of the local community the Sisters had opened St Ann's College, a day and boarding school at Wyton House by July. From its earliest days, St Ann's was a forward-looking school. It was only in the previous year of 1871 that girls were allowed to sit for the Matriculation exam for the first time, yet the Sisters provided a broad and worldly education that expanded the horizons of girls living in a small country town.

In 1902 Brother Egan arrived in Warrnambool to set up a Christian Brothers' community and school for boys. The local community again responded generously and the school soon opened and was known for next 80 years as CBC.

By 1990 the Australian educational landscape was very different to that of the 1870s. Across Australia single-sex schools began to open their doors to both genders, or combined to operate as single co-educational facilities. The same conversations occurred in Warrnambool and in 1991 St Ann's and CBC joined forces and Emmanuel College was born.

Generations of Emmanuel students were influenced by the Sisters with their can-do approach to life. Our alumni continue to bear witness to the inspiring role models the Sisters proved to be. Emmanuel College has been on an amazing journey since its inception. Much has changed since our founding Sisters accepted the challenges given to them but the Sisters' enduring values of Faith, Hope and Love remain as important today as they were in 1872.



Pictured: Early days – The Convent Mercy, Wyton. The final year of St Ann's 1990 before amalgamating with CBC.



MONTE SANT' ANGELO MERCY COLLEGE, NORTH SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES 1875

Mother Ignatius McQuoin RSM, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney, arrived in Sydney from Liverpool, England on 15 November 1865. She quickly established a school at St Patrick's, Church Hill and began carrying on the work of Mercy.

In 1873, Mother Ignatius moved some Sisters to a cottage she rented on the corner of West and Carlow Streets – the first site of the College. On 1 April 1879 the College moved to its present site, to the house called Masalou previously owned by the Hon Francis Lord MLA and bought on behalf of the Sisters by George Whiting. The name was changed to Monte Sant' Angelo. Mother Ignatius continued to guide the College until her death in 1893.

For 146 years Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College has educated and cared for young women in the Mercy tradition of Religio, Scientia and Cultus and we hold steadfast the belief that our lives are shaped by what we believe, know and value. As a College community we are committed to the Mercy values, continuing a tradition of excellence in Catholic education in the way of our founders, the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney.

It is our continued mission to enable all our students to be guided by their beliefs and values. Our College is blessed to be the beneficiary of a formidable legacy of excellence and equity in all-girls' education, countered by an explicit ethical and moral code inspired by Catherine McAuley and Elizabeth McQuoin.

The work of the Sisters provides us with a model to aspire to. Our hope is that the next generation of College leaders, students and families will take comfort in our strength, in awe of our collective courage, faith and perpetual commitment to the education of young women.

Pictured: In 1912 Boarders and Students gather on the College's Circular Drive. 2021 – Monte students gather on the College's Circular Drive.

CATHERINE MCAULEY COLLEGE, BENDIGO, VICTORIA 1876

Catherine McAuley College (CMC) has a proud tradition of Catholic education dating back to 1876 when Mother M Aloysius Martyn RSM and the pioneering Sisters of Mercy arrived in Bendigo.

In 1875, the Bishop of the new Sandhurst Diocese, Dr Martin Crane, asked the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland for help as government grants to denominational schools had been completely removed. Existing schools, established by Dr Backhaus, were overcrowded and understaffed.

Mother M Aloysius led a party of seven from Swinford. After a terrifying sea journey on the Dunalistair, they arrived in Melbourne in December 1875, where they rested before travelling to Sandhurst (Bendigo) in January 1876. The Sisters were welcomed by a solemn Mass of "great pomp and ceremony."

The house arranged by Bishop Crane for the convent is now known as the Mercy Building. The Sisters initially assumed responsibility for the infants and girls of St Kilian's Parish school. In April 1876 they opened the fee-paying St Aloysius Select School next to the convent. "There was a large attendance of young ladies anxious to place themselves under the care of the Sisters."

In 1897 the school was renamed St Mary's College after undergoing a major expansion. From 1983 – 2012, the Sisters of Mercy, Marist Brothers and the Bishop of Sandhurst co-governed the school, re-named Catholic College Bendigo. In 2013, the College returned to the sole governance of the Sisters of Mercy and in 2018 was re-named Catherine McAuley College.

We sincerely thank the Sisters of Mercy for their extraordinary service to the Bendigo community. During the past 145 years, thirteen Principals have been Sisters of Mercy and there has been a constant involvement of Sisters with the school from 1876 - 2020, most recently with the dedicated service of Sr Kathy Ryan RSM.



Pictured: Original Convent Building (1876): The place arranged by Dr Crane for the convent was only a short distance from the Hustlers Reef Mine. The original convent building, now extended and known as the Mercy Building, still stands.

St Mary's College (date unknown, between 1930 to 1950): Sr Walsh, Sr O'Connell, Sr Burke and Sr Steele at the door of the original convent building.

JAMES SHEAHAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, ORANGE, NEW SOUTH WALES 1878

CATHERINE MCAULEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, ORANGE, NEW SOUTH WALES

In 1878 seven Sisters of Mercy, led by Sr M Bernard Sheehy RSM, arrived in Orange. Six of them were Irish, one Australian. Their school had an enrolment of 180 students, ranging from Kindergarten to Secondary, and this work was the foundation of Santa Maria College which commenced in 1924. Santa Maria taught girls until the end of 1979, when it merged with the De La Salle boys' school to become James Sheahan Catholic High School.

Although the Sisters no longer teach in Orange some Sisters continue to live here. Catherine McAuley Primary School maintains a strong focus on the Mercy tradition, as does James Sheahan Catholic High School. Among our year 7 class names are the first seven Sisters to come to Orange. Year 9 also bears the names of Sisters who taught at James Sheahan and Santa Maria where the Sisters of Mercy taught until 1979 when it became our primary school.

At school we acknowledge Catherine McAuley and John Baptist de la Salle each time we pray. Indeed the charism of the Sisters of Mercy, along with that of the De La Salle Brothers, is a great part of the very essence of our school.



Students from Santa Maria and De La Salle Colleges attend the 1967 Graduation Ball. Principals Sr Paula Smith RSM and Br Cassian are shown with the Bishop of Bathurst, Most Rev ARE Thomas.



ST MARY'S COLLEGE, GUNNEDAH, NEW SOUTH WALES 1879

The College was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1879 and 142 years later the Mercy Tradition continues. The Boarding School for girls existed from 1896 until 1986 and provided Catholic education to hundreds of girls throughout the Northwest. This wide net strengthened the bonds of many generations who are loyal to their alma mater.

Throughout the years changes in curriculum have been implemented, building projects have been constructed and specialist teachers employed. The availability of the internet has offered courses in a wider range of disciplines, meeting the needs and gifts of individual students. At the end of 2002, the College transferred from the governance of the Sisters to become a systemic school with the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Armidale. The Mercy Tradition, however, remains strong. All students and teachers are schooled in compassion and respect for one another with a strong emphasis on caring for the poor through fundraising and donations to Mercy Works and Caritas.

Pictured: Physical Education on the Mercy Convent Lawn 1950s.

RED BEND CATHOLIC COLLEGE, FORBES, NEW SOUTH WALES 1880

The Sisters of Mercy have played a substantial role in Red Bend's history. Firstly, the Bathurst Mercy congregation founded a girl's primary and secondary school in Parkes in 1880, which the Sisters of St Joseph subsequently took charge of from 1883. However, in 1922, Sisters of Mercy from the west amalgamated to form the Wilcannia-Forbes congregation, bringing their novitiate to Parkes and running the school.

Meanwhile, in 1881, the Bathurst Sisters of Mercy started a girls' high school in Forbes in a small wooden building. Both the schools in Parkes and Forbes were renamed 'Our Lady of Mercy', taught to grade 10 level and included boarders. Forbes included boys from 1894-1926.

In 1977, these two schools combined with Marist Brothers College for boys, Forbes, to form the co-educational boarding school: Red Bend Catholic College. The Sisters of Mercy taught there alongside the Marist Brothers and lay teachers until 1995; notably Sr Patricia Phillips RSM and Sr Marie Ralph RSM who served there for 22 and 14 years respectively. In 2020, a Sister of Mercy, Sr Elizabeth Young RSM, joined the school as a chaplain.

Pictured: The first Sisters of Mercy to teach at Red Bend Catholic College, Sr Pauline Hartshorne RSM and Sr Kathleen Williams RSM.





Pictured: Srs Patricia Pak Poy RSM, Helen O'Grady RSM and Deirdre Jordan RSM, 1963. Mother M Dolores RSM and Mother M Michael RSM, addressing our girls before departing for Goroka, Papua New Guinea, August, 1961.

ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE, ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1880

In 1880, 24 Sisters of Mercy arrived in Adelaide from Argentina via Dublin. Twelve would establish the Adelaide Congregation, while twelve went to Mount Gambier. At Lot 374 Angas St, St Angela's (later to become St Aloysius College) was founded to educate girls to realise their potential and to contribute more fully to the wider community. The College still encompasses the founding site but has expanded well beyond it. The Mercy Mission demands a commitment to the life of Jesus Christ with a call to proclaim, to liberate and to heal. The Spirit of Mercy lives on, with a charism of loving kindness, awareness of the worth and needs of others and a willingness to serve.

Testimony to our Mercy philosophy is the calibre of young women graduating from the College: women of strength and integrity, with a strong sense of social justice, possessing the gentle, compassionate humanity which is Mercy. Students model the values of hospitality, respect, justice, service and compassion. The community's social and cultural diversity is honoured. A high level of fee remissions, alongside a range of scholarships (for Refugee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students), maintains this diversity.

Our Mercy in Action Passport (MiAP), Justice and Mercy (JAM) group, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and other curriculum extension programs develop a social responsibility with opportunities to contribute to society. Just as the original Sisters embarked on an adventurous mission to Adelaide 141 years ago, St Aloysius College empowers girls and young women to observe the signs of the times, move as the need arises and to approach the future confidently.

The history of the College has been profoundly shaped by the values and mindsets of the early foundresses. With only 11 Principals over 141 years, many significant figures have contributed to the strength of our ethos. We are deeply grateful to those Mercy women who guided and strengthened this community for so long.



Pictured: Side view of the College, date unknown. The College today, also taken on the tennis court (now also the basketball and volleyball court). Notice the signage heralding the transition to co-education in 2023.

ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE, NORTH MELBOURNE, VICTORIA 1887

In 1886 Mother M Xavier Fallon RSM, with five other sisters established the first Convent of Mercy in Hotham, as North Melbourne was then known, in a terrace house in Flemington Road opposite the Children's Hospital. In 1887, in response to parents' requests to provide a 'Select Day School for Young Ladies', the Sisters started to teach French, Singing and Drawing to a few students – the first class of the College.

In 1890 the sisters moved to Curran Street and began providing primary and secondary co-education. Sr Gonzaga, who was Principal from 1920-1924, had a major influence on the growth and direction of the school. She changed the name to St Aloysius' College, after her own patron saint and adopted his motto 'Ad Altiora'. Primary classes were phased out in 1952 to cater for a rapidly growing secondary sector. The historical development of the school can be linked to significant building programmes from the early 20th century through to today.

The four House teams are named after significantly historical people, namely, Catherine McAuley – foundress, Mother Xavier Fallon – first Principal, Clare Scully – the first pupil of the College, Lucy Verdon – first female science graduate from Melbourne University.

Over its long history, the College has continued to provide education to students of wide-ranging abilities, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds. Great emphasis is placed on the care and respect of each individual and this, together with its reputation for fostering high levels of achievement, makes the College an attractive alternative to students from a wide geographical region.

The College always strives to meet the needs of its community, which is why in 2020, recognising the desire of local families to be able to educate their sons and daughters together, St Aloysius College made the decision to transition to a co-educational School commencing with Year 7 classes in 2023.



ST MARY'S COLLEGE, SEYMOUR, VICTORIA 1880

St Mary's Parish School commenced in 1880 in the 'old church' which in later years became the Parish Hall. Students moved into a brick classroom, in 1893, which is the oldest building on the current site.

On 15th May 1900, five Mercy Sisters travelled from Mansfield to Seymour. They started Sacred Heart College, for primary and secondary students, in a small cottage and then moved into the purpose-built convent on the present site. In 1946 the primary classes moved from Sacred Heart to St Mary's and Sacred Heart continued as a secondary school. The schools continued to flourish and eventually in 1988, both St Mary's Primary School and Sacred Heart College amalgamated to become St Mary's College F-10. Over the years, the College has had numerous Mercy sisters, teaching and leading the school. Sr Rose McGiffin RSM was the last Mercy Sister to hold the position of Principal, finishing in 1993.

The College has maintained a strong connection with the Mercy tradition, becoming an affiliated Mercy school in 2019.

Pictured: Celebrating 200 years of Catholic Education and 140 years in Seymour. Seated is Sister Mary Dennett RSM (Principal 1980-1985), surrounded by our students and teachers in front of the Mercy Centre, built in 1903.



DAMASCUS COLLEGE, BALLARAT, VICTORIA 1881

Damascus College and its foundation colleges have a long and proud history dating back to 1881. 2021 signifies the 140-year anniversary of the College and the significant contribution of the Sisters of Mercy in Ballarat.

In 1881 Mother Agnes Graham RSM, Sr Philomene Graham RSM, Sr Xavier Flood RSM, Sr Joseph Howard RSM and Sr Bridget Cousins RSM established the Ballarat East Convent of Mercy in Victoria Street, Ballarat. The Sisters began with teaching music to girls in the convent and Sacred Heart College soon formed with students ranging from Prep to Year 12.

History has seen the evolution of Catholic education in Ballarat, to meet the needs of the time in the spirit of Catherine McAuley. In 1995 through the collaboration and innovation of the Sisters of Mercy and the Priests of the Diocese, the three foundation schools amalgamated to form Damascus College.

The Damascus community is forever grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for their vision, their commitment, and their leadership in bringing the light of Christ to the community within the Diocese of Ballarat.

Pictured: Sacred Heart College Victoria Street Campus Circa 1886.



TRINITY COLLEGE, COLAC, VICTORIA 1888

Trinity College is a Catholic co-education secondary school with a student population of 780. The College currently attracts enrolments from Colac and surrounding towns. The College has a proud history and celebrates the charisms of the Mercy Sisters and Christian Brothers. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Colac and established St Joseph's College as a parish school in 1888 which amalgamated with Trinity College in 1984. The College is an affiliate school with both Mercy Education and EREA and makes sure that the students are educated in both traditions. Our school buildings and House names include Rice and McAuley in honour of the founders of the Christian Brothers and Mercy Sisters.

Trinity College and the town of Colac remain indebted to both the Christian Brothers and Mercy Sisters along with the Parish of St Mary's for their hard work, commitment and dedication to ensure a high quality Catholic secondary education was and continues to be available to the families in the area.

Pictured: St Joseph's College 1906.



OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE, PARRAMATTA, NEW SOUTH WALES 1889

Led by Mother Mary Clare Dunphy RSM, the Parramatta congregation's nine founding Sisters arrived from Callan, Ireland, in 1888, at the invitation of Cardinal Moran, the then Archbishop of Sydney.

The Sisters established many ministries including Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta, one of the oldest Catholic girls' schools in NSW. From 1889 until 2003, only seven women held the position of College Principal, all of whom were Sisters of Mercy. This continuity in vision over the years saw a treasured legacy established, including an unwavering commitment to social justice.

The College site honours the contributions of the Sisters of Mercy through the names of buildings and spaces including the Brigid Shelly Building, the Edith Angel Hall, Frances Kearney House, the Martha O'Sullivan Technology Block, the Janet Woods Building, Kavanagh Place, the Barbara McDonough Student Centre, the Christina Creede Music Centre and the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre.

In 2021 it was announced that the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy had chosen Mercy Partners to take on the custodianship of OLMC into the future.

Pictured: Sister Immaculata teaching a Science Class c1940.



SACRED HEART COLLEGE, KYNETON, VICTORIA 1889

In 1889 the Sisters of Mercy, under the leadership of Reverend Mother Mary Gabriel Sherlock RSM, opened a secondary school in Kyneton, just days after arriving in the township. The school moved to its current site in 1907 and became known as Sacred Heart Convent School. The school has educated generations of young women and men during its 132 years and continues to maintain its rich history of Catholic education in the Mercy tradition. The values of service, hospitality, justice, compassion, respect and courage inform all aspects of College life.

In 1891 Frances McAuley, whose father was the nephew of Mercy Foundress, Catherine McAuley, entered the Mercy Convent in Kyneton, making her profession in 1892 with the name of Sr M Catherine. Before entry to the convent, Frances (who had been born in Colac in 1871 and educated with her sisters Emily and Jessie at the Convent of Mercy Geelong) had taught in the primary and secondary school in Kyneton. Her friendly smile and depth of understanding won for her many genuine friends, and helped to influence the great number of pupils who were fortunate to come under her care.

In 1895, Sr M Catherine was placed in charge of the new Malmsbury Parish primary school and later taught in Lauriston, Trentham, Kyneton, Woodend, Warrnambool and Burnie. Sr M Catherine retired from teaching a few years before her death spending her last days in Kyneton. The College is proud of its familial link with our Mercy foundress through Sr M Catherine and is grateful for the works of all the founding sisters. The Mercy story is shared with students on commencement at the College including an opportunity to pay their respects at the graves of the founding Sisters at the historic Kyneton cemetery.

Pictured: First students in front of the original Convent, Wedge Street, Kyneton. Sacred Heart College (Current) – High St frontage.



ST MONICA'S COLLEGE, CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND 1890

St Monica's College was started in 1890 by several devout Catholic women who soon realised they needed more support. The Sisters of Mercy became involved and took over the running of the College in 1892. From its earliest days it has always held the Mercy charism of working hard and thinking of others at its core. All of this is captured in the College motto 'walk in the path of justice'.

Since then, the College has grown to be a day and boarding college for over 700 young women. St Monica's has grown to become a highly regarded school achieving outstanding academic, sporting, and cultural results while being very involved in many Catholic and community service activities. Sr Therese Masterson RSM still works at the college and the Mercy tradition lives on in our dedicated and faith-filled staff.

Our Mercy tradition is also realised by the College Houses – McAuley, founder of the Mercy Order; Morrissey, first Mercy Principal; MacKillop, Australia's first saint; and Masterson, Sister Therese who has given over 50 years' service to the College.

Pictured: Sisters of Mercy on Lawn of Morrissey House 1890s.



OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL, DELORAINÉ, TASMANIA 1895

When a small band of five sisters arrived in Deloraine from Goulburn on January 28, 1895, they would never have imagined the impact that they and their successors would have on the education of the young across Tasmania. From humble beginnings as a day school in the bar of an old hotel, the Mercy Convent School grew. A secondary boarding school for girls, new classrooms, science room, home economics and library facilities contributed to its enviable reputation and high standard of education.

The quality of these teaching sisters saw the establishment of Stella Maris Parish school in Burnie (1900), and the reinvigoration of St Patrick's Parish school in Latrobe (1903) and drew secondary girls from across Northern Tasmania. Our Lady of Mercy College, Deloraine with the smallest choir from the smallest state, under the guidance of locally born Sr Ignatius Gannon RSM, won the Commonwealth Jubilee Schools Choir competition held in Melbourne in 1951.

Over 125 years later, as a primary school, we continue to live the Mercy charism and share in the proud history of Mercy education.

Pictured: 1925 Senior scholars at the school on the occasion of the official opening of the new school building by Archbishop Mannix.

Mount Lilydale Mercy College

MOUNT LILYDALE MERCY COLLEGE, LILYDALE, VICTORIA 1896

On Sunday November 15th, 1896 His Grace, the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Rev Dr Thomas Carr, officially laid and blessed the Convent of Mercy's foundation stone on Rourke's Hill in Lilydale. In front of a large crowd, he told those who had gathered: *"The object of my visit to Lilydale is especially gratifying and afforded me more pleasure than any other function I have been called on to perform throughout the Archdiocese. I look on the establishment of a Catholic school as a work of the first importance in a parish, particularly when the school was to be conducted by Religious Sisters. Nothing was better calculated to prepare youth for a happy eternity than to combine a deep religious training with a thorough secular education."*

Instrumental in the establishment of the convent and school at Lilydale were four Sisters of Mercy from Carrick-On-Suir, Ireland; Mother M Alacoque Ryan RSM, her sister Sr M Agnes Ryan RSM, Sr M Patrick Maguire RSM and Sr M Brigid Bradshaw RSM. They had all studied at the Convent of Mercy in that town before the Order appointed them to Mansfield, Victoria, where a convent and school had been running since 1891.

The Sisters of Mercy are great teachers and the conditions under which the sisters worked and taught when they arrived on Rourke's Hill in 1896 would have been very difficult. However, through the hardships they endured a legacy was created. Under the guiding hand of Mercy Foundress Catherine McAuley these sisters thrived by remembering one of her practical sayings *"you should remember that not to advance is to go back."* Certainly, our contemporary world bears no relation to the world of 1896, yet a teacher or student from those times would still recognise the intrinsic values of the College.

Until 1975 Mount Lilydale Mercy College was essentially a primary school, a secondary school and boarding school for girls. However, this changed when the need for a Catholic boy's school in the district became evident due to population growth. The Sisters of Mercy accepted the challenge to launch this Catholic co-educational secondary college, beginning a new era in 1975, with the first 120 boys enrolled. Primary education ceased at that time.

The introduction of boys signalled a rapid period of expansion for the College which saw enrolment double to pass 1,000 students and an extensive building program to provide facilities, some of which still serve the College.

Today, Mount Lilydale Mercy College is a Catholic co-educational secondary school with a proud 125 year history of shaping and enriching young lives. The College continues the Sisters of Mercy tradition of being a place of learning, a place of hope and a place where our core values of compassion, justice, respect, hospitality, courage and service are central to all that we do.

Mount Lilydale Mercy College sits atop of Rourke's Hill a beacon of hope for all who enter. The concept of *"Be Your Best, Give your Best"* invites each and every person to develop their gifts so that they can use them to be of service and for the betterment of the other.

Pictured: Early days of teaching. Mary Wheelan teaching outdoors. Early days music students. Sisters Power and Lynch.



PADUA COLLEGE, MORNINGTON, VICTORIA 1898

In 1898, the Sisters of Mercy opened the College of Our Lady of the Sea Boarding School for Young Ladies in Tanti Avenue, Mornington. In the following year, the Mercy Sisters established the Padua House Preparatory School for Little Boys. The name 'Padua College' was assumed in 1960 and had both day students and boarders until there was no longer a need for boarding facilities. The leadership and administration of the College passed from the Sisters of Mercy to the first lay Principal in 1976.

From these small beginnings in 1898, Padua College has developed into a thriving, multi-campus Catholic community, providing a co-educational secondary education to over 2500 students. Coming up soon to 125 years of existence, Padua College has consistently offered students the very best education and pastoral care, always remaining true to its Mercy charism. Students are encouraged to reach their full potential and in the words of the College Song, students are encouraged to "dream great dreams...if we persevere, we conquer all".

Pictured: Early 1900s school photo of College of Our Lady of the Sea Boarding School (COLS) for Young Ladies boarders.



NOTRE DAME COLLEGE SHEPPARTON, VICTORIA 1902

Catholic secondary education commenced in Shepparton in 1902, when the Sisters of Mercy opened Sacred Heart College with an enrolment of just nineteen students. For some fifty years, the Sisters were responsible for Catholic secondary education in the area and catered for day pupils, many of whom were from other Christian denominations, and also for boarders.

In 1983, a decision was taken by the Bishop of Sandhurst and the Superiors of the two religious congregations concerned to amalgamate Sacred Heart College and the Marist Brothers' St Colman's College (est. 1951) across the road. The new College was given the name of Notre Dame in recognition of the commitment of the two founding orders, the Marist Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy, to Mary, the Mother of God. This name is derived from the French translation of Our Lady.

Today Notre Dame College has over 1,700 students and derives its strength and vision for the future from the long tradition of service to the people of the Shepparton area.

Pictured: Sacred Heart College student – 1920s.



ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, MILLICENT, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1898

The Mercy Sisters, who began St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, set out from Ireland and went to Buenos Aires in Argentina, where they started work opening schools and centres to care for the sick.

However, the political climate in Argentina at the time was volatile, and Catholics were being persecuted. Consequently, the contingent of Mercy Sisters set sail again in 1890, heading for Adelaide. A few months later, a small group of Sisters, under the leadership of Mother Evangelista, left Adelaide and headed for Mount Gambier.

After nine years, a group of Sisters saw a need in Millicent. The Mercy Sisters purchased some land and tenders were sought to build a convent and a schoolroom. In 1899, the Sisters welcomed their first students. The original school building was called The Academy and was situated on the grounds of the Convent. The first Sisters who worked at the Academy were Rev Mother de Sales Byrne RSM and Sisters Evangelist, Antonia, Berkman and Josephine. In 1969, the name was changed to St Anthony's School.

Pictured: The original Convent frontage remains and is our Front Office.



ARANMORE CATHOLIC COLLEGE, LEEDERVILLE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1903

Mother M Berchmans Deane RSM and Mother M Aquin Gilchrist RSM established a new school at Leederville called 'Our Lady of Perpetual Succour'. The new school was more commonly known as Arranmore among the local community. This was the name that Mother Berchmans had given the new convent house, recalling the island on which she grew up in Ireland.

The school later became known as St Mary's – educating both boys and girls to sixth standard and girls only in high school. In 1942, a high school for boys, called Christian Brothers' College Leederville, was founded by the Christian Brothers. For over 40 years, the two schools operated separately but side by side. To meet the growing demand for places and to enable more educational opportunities, the two schools amalgamated in 1986 and became Aranmore Catholic College. The first Principal of Aranmore was Br Kevin Paull and the first Deputy Principal was Sr Joan Buckham RSM.

Today, Aranmore is blessed to have on staff Sr Janina Pascoe RSM and Sr Emma Llewellyn RSM, Board member Sr Joan Buckman, and Sr Catherine, Sr Mary and Sr Kaye as neighbours who regularly visit the College.

Pictured: St Mary's College Leederville 1954 Sr M Bernadine with students.

MARIST REGIONAL COLLEGE, BURNIE, TASMANIA 1900

The Sisters of Mercy have had a rich history in Burnie since they arrived in 1900. Throughout the years, the Sisters became a familiar sight in Burnie and surrounds as they visited the homes of families, their pupils, the aged, poor and sick.

The Sisters originally taught their students in the church until the formal school building was established in 1912. The Stella Maris primary school continued to grow and formed the foundation for the Stella Maris Regional College which commenced in 1966. After the amalgamation of Stella Maris Regional Girls' College & Marist Boys' College in 1972 four of the staff members of the new school were Sisters of Mercy. In 1985, the College welcomed Sr Joan Thomas RSM as our first female Principal and the first female Principal of a co-educational secondary College in Tasmania. Sr Kathlyn O'Brien RSM is always available with a listening ear and a wealth of knowledge for our staff and students, and we look forward to seeing her again when restrictions allow.

So many of the sisters have touched our lives in so many ways and as a College and community we give thanks.

Pictured: Schools Board Class 1968.



MERCY REGIONAL COLLEGE, CAMPERDOWN, VICTORIA 1907

Catholic Regional College was established in 1973 as a response to the withdrawal of Mercy Sisters from secondary education. But the roots of the Sisters of Mercy in education in the region go back to 1907 when the parish priest of Camperdown invited the Sisters of Mercy to come and teach. Since that time, the Sisters have taught at all of the predecessor schools that form the origins of Mercy Regional – including St Patrick's School, Camperdown; Catholic Regional College (CRC); St Joseph's School, Noorat; St Colman's School, Mortlake; and St Thomas' School, Terang.

Over the first thirty years, the Sisters were an integral part of the school's identity. Sr Beda Ryan RSM was among the first staff of the College working hard to ensure successful education at the new innovative school.

Another prominent figure in the history of the College was Sr de Chantal Wardle RSM who is remembered fondly for her good judgement, patience, and care for the community. Sr de Chantal was the last Sister of Mercy to work at the College but the link with the congregation remains through the name Mercy Regional College which was adopted in 1998.

Pictured: Pioneering staff, 1973.





ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE, MILDURA, VICTORIA 1906

In 1892, Sr Gertrude Enright RSM led a foundation to Wentworth from Deniliquin. In her time there, and under very difficult financial circumstances, she was able to set up work for the Sisters, train the novices, supervise the schools, teach music, visit the sick and those in jail, and set up and supervise the boarding school.

In 1906, at the request of the Bishop of Ballarat, Mother Gertrude Enright RSM, Sr Evangelist Mulvey RSM, Sr Bridget Kilmurray RSM and Sr Lucy Chubb RSM left the Wentworth Parish to create a separate parish in Mildura. They opened a co-educational school and added accommodation for boarders in 1911. The school, convent and boarding house were initially situated on Pine Avenue. In 1922, they were relocated to the current site on Twelfth Street. A new chapel was constructed in 1934.

Sr Magdalen Edgeworth RSM, as Mother Superior and Principal, was responsible for the construction and completion of a new grand Convent in 1939. This new convent was blessed and officially opened by Bishop Foley on 19 March 1939.

A total of 136 Mercy Sisters have called the Mildura Mercy Convent their home. As the College expanded and numbers of students increased over the years, the Sisters decided that the Convent should be used for curriculum-based activities. In 2002, the Mildura Sisters of Mercy graciously and formally passed on the Convent to the College.

In 2021, the convent became home to the Mercy Heritage Centre – a collected historical record of the 115 year legacy of Mercy in Mildura. The College community has been delighted by this opportunity to properly celebrate and recognise the devotion and unwavering commitment the Sisters of Mercy have shown to the people of Sunraysia for over a century.

Pictured: First Mercy Convent – Pine Avenue 1906. Mercy Convent – Twelfth Street 1939.

OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE, HEIDELBERG, VICTORIA 1910

In January 1910, five sisters from the Convent of Mercy in Fitzroy came to Heidelberg to conduct the primary school and the proposed Catholic High School: Sr M Basil Emoe RSM (Superior and Principal), Sr M Kevin Jennings RSM, Sr M Benedict Hamilton RSM, Sr M Lawrence O'Toole McMahon RSM and Sr M Patrick McGinnis RSM.

On 1st February, they held the first secondary classes for six students in a room at Roma, a private residence in Cape Street. When the first school building was completed in 1911 the school was known as 'Superior High School'. Sr Basile Emoe, founding Principal, is believed to have taught her first class where the Centenary Building now stands. In 1927 the school became known as Our Lady's College and in 1962 it was renamed Our Lady of Mercy College.

The Sisters of Mercy have always been bold and visionary in their aspirations for Our Lady of Mercy College. They strategically acquired surrounding property and built new and modern facilities that would enable young women the opportunity to be well educated and prepared for the world into which they would emerge as adults.

Sr Mercedes Hogan RSM, Principal 1956-1960, is believed to have purchased the property in Yarra St where the College Theatre and Gymnasium facilities are now located. The Theatre is named in her honour.

Sr Mercedes and her successor Sr Mary McAllen RSM (known then as Sr Bonaventure) worked hard to make the college a respected secondary school which would take students all the way through to Matriculation, something quite unusual for girls in the 1950s and 1960s. Sr Eileen Ann Daffy RSM, Principal in 1982-1983, continues to serve the community as a member of the College Advisory Council.

The College has grown and changed with the times; remembered fondly as the Red Brick School, the beautiful arches of the original convent building still greet you as you enter today.

Pictured: 1950s Rose Arbour. Circa 1957 Senior School.



Mount St Bernard College

MOUNT ST BERNARD COLLEGE, HERBERTON, QUEENSLAND 1921

One hundred years ago, in March 1921, the first boarders commenced at Mount St Bernard College (MSB) in Herberton. Originally the dream of Fr Bernard Doyle, the College became a reality through the hard work and dedication of the Sisters of Mercy of Far North Queensland.

The College was managed and staffed by the Sisters for many years. These Sisters provided education and guidance to many young men and women, ensuring their time at the school was rich in music, prayer and skills they would take with them into their lives after school. The dedicated Sisters nurtured tens of thousands of young people from around the Far North until the management of the College was handed over to the Cairns Diocese in 2006.

MSB has continued to educate young people with the same underlying Mercy values and is proud to be celebrating its long history in the North Queensland community. From the farming communities of the initial years, to supporting the war efforts, to now caring for boarders from very remote areas of the country, Mount St Bernard has continued to provide a place where those that need education can access it. The College is a culturally diverse community where a holistic education is provided. A legacy from the Sisters of Mercy, the academic, spiritual, emotional, physical and social development of students is nurtured in a supportive and caring environment.

In the Mercy spirit, Mount St Bernard has adapted to the needs of the community. Initially, the school supported many farming families. During the war years, the College saw an influx of students from more coastal regions. The Sisters organised the digging of air raid trenches and embraced the newcomers, both students and military personnel into the college community. In the years following the war students from Papua New Guinea began attending – bringing with them a new cultural aspect. This cultural life of the College was further enhanced with the enrolment of students from the Torres Strait Islands.

During more recent years, it was identified that many young people from remote Indigenous communities needed a supportive boarding environment to successfully complete their education. Mount St Bernard has again adapted to ensure that the cultural, emotional and academic environment that it provides nurtures this success and gives students skills that enable them to contribute positively to their communities.

Throughout this centenary year, we have had the opportunity to speak with many past students about their time at the school and how it has shaped their future lives. Many have fond memories of their time boarding at Mount St Bernard, the Sisters who cared for them and the bonds they made with their fellow students.

To ensure this rich history is preserved, the College has created Heritage Rooms to archive and display records and memorabilia of the life of the College and the Sisters of Mercy who dedicated so much of their lives to supporting the young people who attended. A labyrinth has been created where past and present students and staff can record their part in the College's history with an engraved paver. The labyrinth provides a type of spiritual pilgrimage as one walks its path in deep prayer or meditation where for generations to come people can reflect on the generations before them who have played their part in the MSB story; and whose own stories have been formed in some way by MSB and the Mercy Charism.

Pictured: Mount St Bernard College in the 1920s. Students in front of the newly built Convent 1929. 2021 Students and staff in front of the convent that was completed in 1921.





ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE, LESMURDIE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1929

Our College was founded as a peaceful outpost of the original St Brigid's Convent and school in West Perth. In 1928, Mother Brigid Watson RSM had the vision and foresight to purchase 'a magnificent property in the eastern hills behind Perth' from the Red Cross. This property was often referred to as 'St Brigid's in the Hills'.

The six Sisters and thirty-five boarding students who journeyed up the hill in April 1929 were to find the Heritage building in need of work and cleaning in order to establish dormitories, classrooms and a Chapel.

In the tradition of their foundress, Venerable Catherine McAuley, Mother Teresa Rielly RSM organised the tasks required and, over the next 20 years, established a College with a fine reputation in beautiful surroundings.

With the commitment of the Docherty family, in particular the three Docherty sisters, lawns were established and they ensured that meals and laundry were of a high standard. The Sisters rose very early each morning for prayers and Mass, following which they taught all day, attended to the welfare of boarders at night, provided meals and supervised study. The girls were always encouraged to pursue excellence in all they did. Mother Philip Shine RSM will be remembered for developing a strong tradition in musical performance. Sr Pius and Sr Mary Rose worked tirelessly over many years to teach generations of young women how to make a difference in living out their lives of 'Mercy in Action' - in imitation of the loving community created by the Sisters of Mercy at St Brigid's College.

We continue to give thanks for the Sisters who have given so much to our College since its foundation and honour their memory in the naming of our buildings, awards and Houses, and giving us opportunities to retell their stories and be inspired.

Pictured: First Day in 1929. One World Building.



SANTA MARIA COLLEGE, ATTADALE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1938

Santa Maria College's Mercy heritage and history go back to the arrival of seven Sisters of Mercy in Perth in 1846. They were led by Mother Ursula Frayne RSM and proved themselves to be resourceful, resilient, and strong women. The Sisters opened their first school on St George's Terrace in February 1846, Mercedes College.

In 1937, as the demand for boarding places increased from country families, the Mercy Superior at the time, Mother Brigid McDonald RSM, and her Council resolved to build a new ladies' college for boarding students, to be called Santa Maria Ladies' College.

The Sisters found bushland in Attadale, the site of our current property. It was described as "the mosquito-infested back swamps of Perth". The area was all bush, but this did not deter the women, and they purchased the land. Santa Maria opened its doors in 1938. There were no neighbouring houses to Santa Maria which meant the Sisters were very isolated. One male worked at the College, in a maintenance role, leaving the Sisters responsible for everything else.

Money was scarce and the Sisters often went without. They managed the College, did all the teaching, cared for the boarders, and completed all the chores while still developing their faith.

The post-war period brought with it rapid expansion in residential development around the College. There was a growth in student numbers and the student population at Santa Maria changed from primarily boarders to a majority being day students.

Today Santa Maria is a vibrant community of over 1300 students from Years 5 - 12. We enjoy beautiful, modern facilities and lead in the areas of technology and innovative education. However, we retain the vision of those early Sisters of Mercy and strive to provide a nurturing environment for a holistic, values-laden, education.

Pictured: Foundation students in 1938. Santa Maria College, 1938.



CATHERINE MCAULEY WESTMEAD, WESTMEAD, NEW SOUTH WALES 1966

The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta were approached in the early 1960s by the newly established Catholic Education System of schools to take responsibility for a new regional school for girls to be located in Westmead. The Sisters of Mercy were already staffing St Patrick's Parramatta, a parish primary school, and they were excited at the prospect of building up a new separate secondary school for the girls currently in their care.

Sr Joseph Mary Coyle RSM, Principal of St Patrick's at the time, began the negotiations for registration in 1964. During the next two years the preparation was a huge task, the bulk of which was undertaken by Sr M Eugene Dobson RSM, Principal at St Patrick's from 1965 and the founding Principal at Catherine McAuley Girls High School in 1966. Sr Eugene was followed by Sr M Anne Ryan RSM who was Principal from 1966 - 1973. It was the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta who gave the school its founding principles and established many of the traditions which still form an intrinsic part of the school today.

Pictured: The Catherine McAuley school crest is based on one that has been used by the Sisters of Mercy in Australia since the mid 1960s. The seven bars represent the seven spiritual and corporal works of mercy.



MACKILLOP COLLEGE, BATHURST, NEW SOUTH WALES 1967

For many years prior to 1967, the secondary education of girls in Bathurst was in the hands of the Sisters of Mercy at St Mary's College in central Bathurst (next to the Cathedral) and the Sisters of St Joseph at Perthville.

The implementation of the 'Wyndham Scheme' which changed the face of secondary education in New South Wales, presented the two boarding Colleges with very grave problems. The then Bishop of Bathurst, Albert Thomas, elected to overcome the deficiencies of the two Colleges by building a new College with modern facilities to meet the new challenge, staffed by the two Religious Orders. Accordingly, the Diocesan Catholic Girls High School came into being. The new school was opened by His Eminence, Cardinal Norman Gilroy on February 26, 1967. The Bathurst Advocate described the School as "ultra modern...providing the children with comfortable seating and surroundings, visual aids and modern equipment..."

Mother Basil Griffin RSM was the first principal of the Diocesan Catholic Girls High School. In 1995, the school changed its name to MacKillop College and still maintains a close connection with the Mercy nuns in the Bathurst area.

Pictured: Departing school on the first day - 31 January 1967.



MERCY COLLEGE, KOONDOOLA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1972

In 1972, Mercy College Koondoola was accessed by the Sisters and the students by walking along a limestone track through the bush from the nearest gravel roads some distance away. The first building catered for female students from Year Five to lower secondary and we have now grown to 1,600 students from Kindergarten to Year Twelve.

The student cohort presently represents fifty-six nationalities, with the majority of them, or their parents, being born overseas. Harmony Week, liturgical movement and our Soccer Academy are just three ways we celebrate our cultures and next year we look ahead to our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

The school motto is 'Love in Action', which is a rephrasing of a maxim of Catherine McAuley: "The proof of love is deed". In all things, we strive to live our motto through our Mercy College values of Justice, Compassion, Service, Excellence and Dignity. The ethos and spirit of the Sisters of Mercy underpins all that we strive for and we end term three with our Mercy Day, our major fundraiser for Mercy Works.

Pictured: Lunch break Jan 1972 - Left to right; Sr Pauline McCarthy RSM and Sr Paula McAdam RSM outside canteen.



CATHERINE MCAULEY CATHOLIC COLLEGE,
MEDOWIE, NEW SOUTH WALES 2021

In founding a Mercy-inspired school in 2021, Catherine McAuley Catholic College (CMCC) demonstrates a passionate commitment to the ideals and character of the Sisters of Mercy. With two of the feeder schools to the College, St Michael's (Nelson Bay) and St Brigid's (Raymond Terrace) also being in the Mercy tradition, the alignment of CMCC's charism creates a holistic formation in values for these young people.

The College seeks to honour and continue the ongoing commitment to education in the Port Stephens area pioneered by the Singleton congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. The formation of students at CMCC in the College values of courage, compassion, hospitality, and faith in action remains our highest priority.

With the College opening to students in 2021, a significant journey is beginning in forming hearts and minds in the area. While the brand-new facilities are greatly appreciated by students, staff, and the community, what is of the greatest importance is a daily reckoning with the College's moral imperative: to *"empower a Mercy-inspired community of confident, agile, reflective learners"*

Pictured: An historic first day at Catherine McAuley.



CATHERINE MCAULEY COLLEGE,
MACKAY, QUEENSLAND 2022

In October 2020, the Catholic Bishop of Rockhampton, Most Rev Michael McCarthy announced the establishment of a new Catholic Secondary school in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. Bishop McCarthy said Catherine McAuley was the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy and the name reflects the significant contribution the Sisters have made to the establishment and development of Catholic schools in the Mackay region since 1880.

"Catherine McAuley devoted her adult life to ministering to the poor and destitute where she emphasized the importance of education, justice, service, stewardship and respect for the dignity of each person. These qualities have inspired thousands of students who have received a quality Catholic education at a Mackay Catholic school, founded and or staffed by the Sisters of Mercy over the past 140 years" Bishop McCarthy said.

The new school is being established on the former site of the Sugar Research Institute – and will integrate with the striking, heritage listed buildings on site.

Pictured: The former Sugar Research Institute building which will form part of Australia's newest Mercy College.



Mercy Education is delighted, as we celebrate the 175th anniversary of Mercy education in Australia, to see the work, model and mission of Mercy being extended into new school settings.

A note on nomenclature

- Sisters of Mercy have been referenced, in the first instance (when known), by their full name.
- The RSM suffix indicates membership of the Religious Sisters of Mercy. The suffix has not been used where surname information was unavailable or in subsequent references in the same article.
- It was common practice in the early Australian congregations for each Sister of Mercy to take two religious names, the first of which was Mary. This was commonly abbreviated to the capital letter M, and this approach has been taken in this issue.

Acknowledgements

Front Cover	Stained Glass Installation at The Academy of Mary Immaculate “The Mercy Story – Mercy in the Past” by David Watt & Kevin Foley
Page 1	Standing on the Shoulders by Joyce Johnson Rouse © Rouse House Music ASCAP. 1995
Page 4	“Come and sit a while with Ursula” Bronze Statue of Ursula Frayne by Gael O’Leary Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy
Page 5	Some material and statistics used are from 200years.catholic.edu.au Image Credits: A: Photo 1848 Pro cathedral, Mercy convent and school B: Photo 1896 The Opening of the Ladies College (Rostrevor Building) Both items from Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of WA C: Studio Postcard (date unknown) Ladies College Convent of Mercy Victoria Square D: Watercolour (date estimated early 1900’s) by John Campbell Both items courtesy ISMAPNG Archives
Page 6	Mother M Ursula Frayne, “Sketches of Conventual Life in the Bush” Courtesy of ISMAPNG Archives
Page 7	Biography of Ursula Frayne - Imelda Palmer, “Frayne, Ursula (1816–1885)”, Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/frayne-ursula-3572/text5527 Inquirer Excerpt - https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/65770165 “Traveller” Bronze Statue of Ursula Frayne by Gael O’Leary Mercedes College, Perth
Page 9	“There will always be voices in this place” by Sr Mary Wickham RSM Used with permission of the author and the Academy of Mary Immaculate Photography by Peter Casamento
Page 24	Photo of Sugar Research Institute Wikimedia Commons / Queensland Heritage Register
Rear Cover	Stained Glass Installation at The Academy of Mary Immaculate “The Mercy Story – Mercy in the Future” by David Watt & Kevin Foley

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