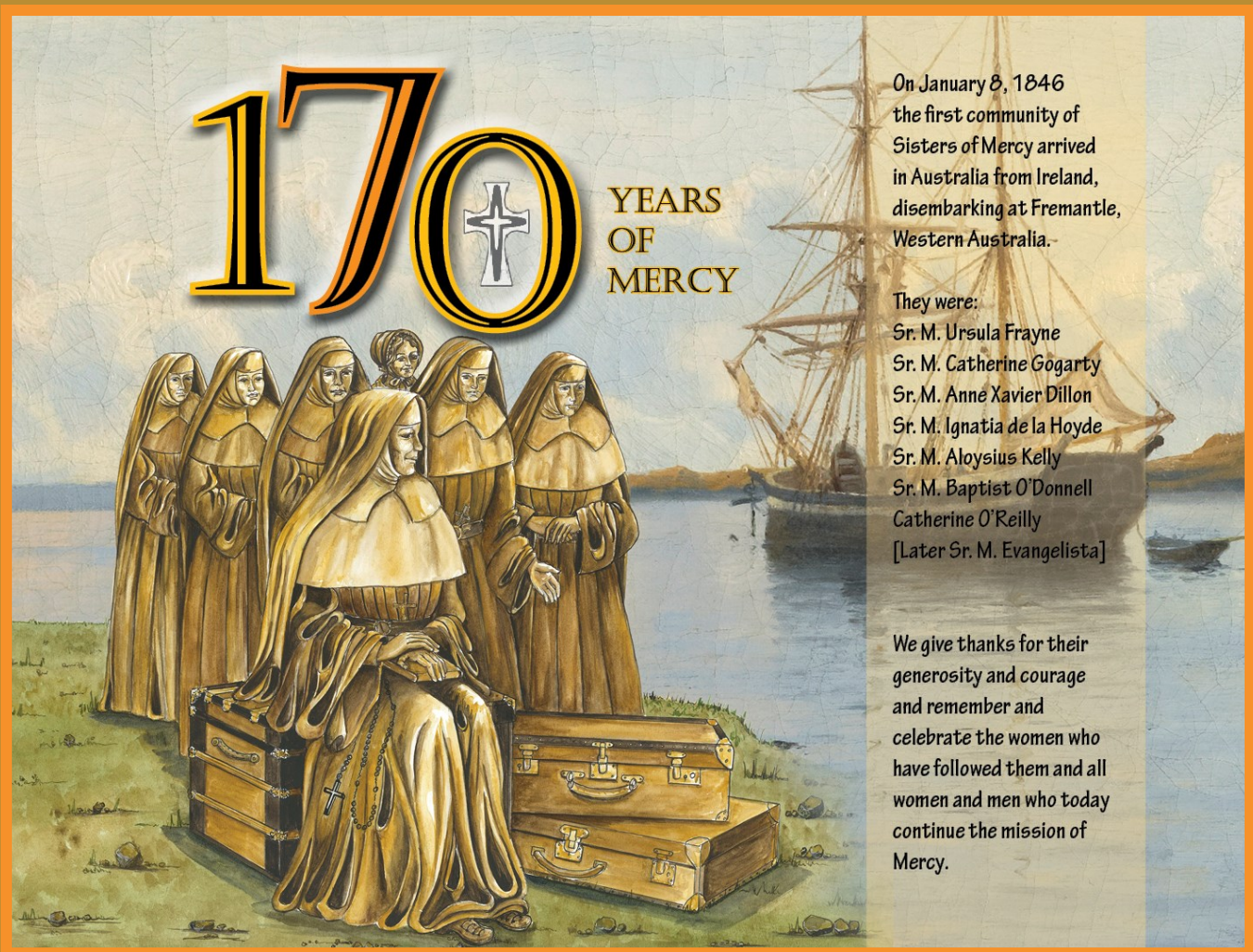


# Walking in their Footsteps

## 9th April 2016



# The Meaning of Pilgrimage

Christian pilgrimage is always a privileged act of devotion. We don't have to go, but we are welcomed to come and meet with God. Christians go on pilgrimage because of a decision to set time aside to meet with God and be changed.

**Spiritual pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place.** This place may be holy for personal reasons (like a family estate or grave site) or for religious reasons (Jesus or a saint lived there, an important church is there, or a particular community of people). But unlike a tourist, a pilgrim goes with a purpose. The goal of a Christian pilgrimage is to first and foremost meet with God. But there may be secondary purposes as well. Pilgrimage is inherently a careful and considered journey.



## The Pilgrim Shell

**The pilgrim symbol.** Medieval pilgrims often wore a scallop shell attached to their cloaks or hats during their journey to Santiago. More than being just a symbol or a pilgrim badge, the scallop shells also had a practical purpose: they were a handy and light replacement for a bowl so the pilgrims could use them to hold their food and drink on their long journey. Pilgrims would also be given food at churches and other establishments, and a scallop shell scoop was the measure for the food they would be donated.

# Timetable for the Pilgrimage

**9.00am**

Pilgrimage begins at the Bell Tower on Riverside Drive.

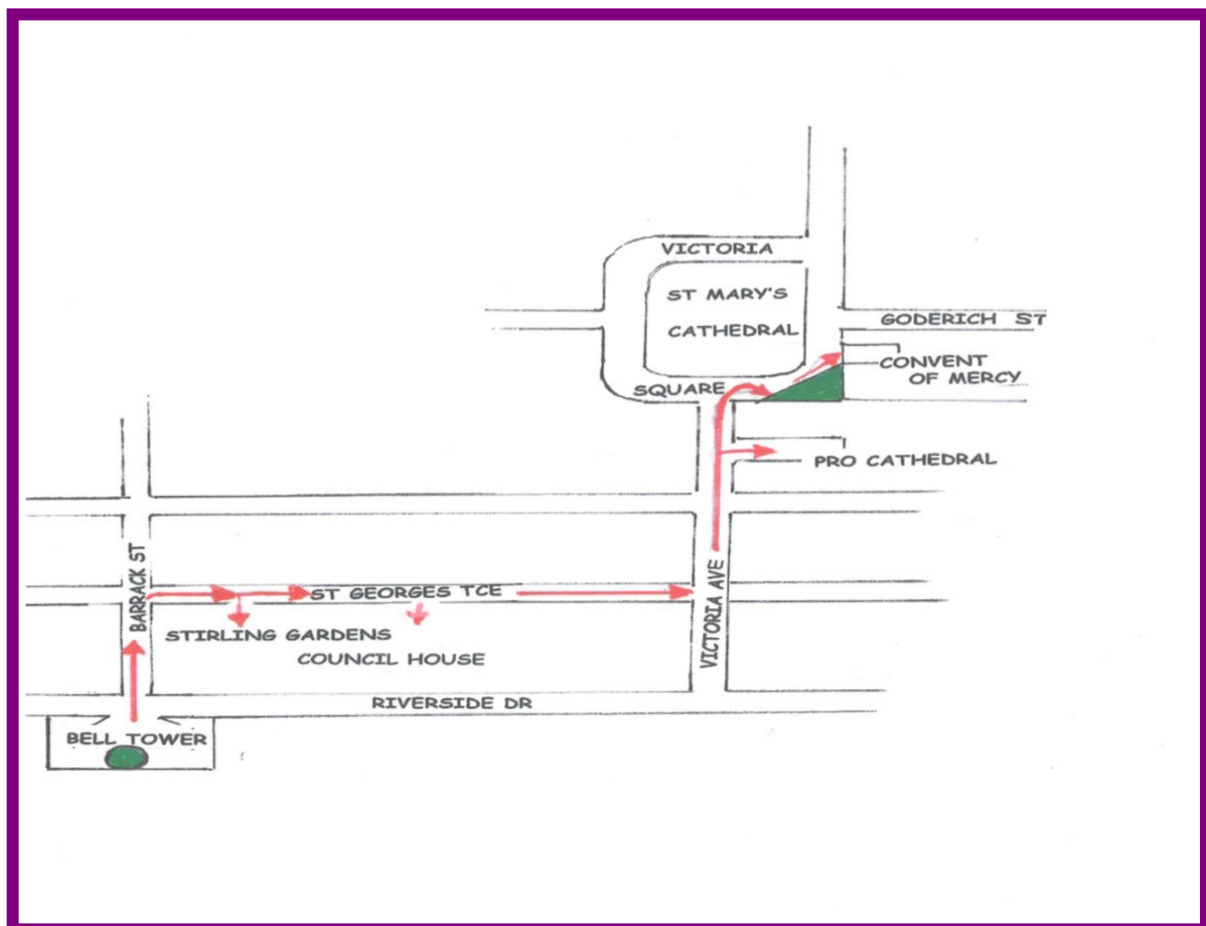
[see map below].

A Pilgrim Guidebook will be distributed at the Bell Tower. Begin your pilgrimage once you have received the Guidebook.

**10.30am**

The Blessing of the Holy Door at the Mercy Convent at Victoria Square followed by Morning Tea.

## Pilgrimage Route



**The pilgrimage begins. Travel with friends or alone. May the experience of God's grace be in abundance for you as you make this journey.**

# Walking in their Footsteps

*The booklet script is a direct quote from Ursula's letters written at the time. She described her impressions and those of her companions as they walked that first pilgrimage!*

## 1. Bell Tower

*Face the river and read the following passage:*

*Ursula writes: "At length we came to the landing place, a veritable jetty, upon which were assembled a crowd of sightseers, a few of whom hailed us with delight. Others looked on with indifference and the greater number with positive displeasure."*

*Now turn and look to the city and read the following passage:*

*We landed, taking with us such small matters as we did not want to lose sight of. The crowd preceded us and we followed. Our way was along a very dusty quiet country road as we thought, but which we afterwards found was the principal street of the city.*

*Continue your pilgrimage - check your map.*

## 2. Stirling Gardens

*Stop and read the following passage:*

*By degrees the crowd dispersed, and only a few persons remained with us to the end of our march, which to some of us seemed endless.*

*Share your thoughts with a companion as you continue your pilgrimage - check the map.*

**What conversation do you think would have been taking place among the Sisters as they walked?**



### 3. Council House

*Stop and read the following passage:*

*But I must describe our appearance which indeed was very odd. The procession was headed by the Bishop and two or three Catholic men; then came the nuns - two and two, then the priests, next the students, two of whom carried a long flat leather box containing the portable altar and vestments etc. The said box so carried, together with our long black cloaks, the dark dresses of the priests and our slow pace through sand, encumbered as we were by various parcels, gave our progress quite the appearance of a funeral procession. Amongst these encumbrances was a certain box in which the Bishop kept his money.*

*His Lordship had entrusted it to my special care and it was amusing to hear every five minutes or so, these words in a loud whisper "Is the money safe? Is the money safe?"*

*Share your thoughts with a companion as you continue your pilgrimage - check the map.*

**If you were an onlooker what words would you use to describe the group?**

### 4. The Pro-Cathedral

*Stop outside and read the following passage:*

*At long last we stopped at the Catholic Church, entered, returned thanks to Almighty God for his watchful care over us during the voyage, and for bringing us safely to our journey's end. A few minutes sufficed for this duty. We arose from our kneeling position and walked out from the Church expecting to be conducted to the house provided for us, but alas!*

*Time to enter the Pro Cathedral. As you do you will hear the Te Deum as the early Sisters did.*

## 5. Enter the Pro-Cathedral

*Sit and reflect on the following passage:*

*Our arrival was totally unexpected. Were it even otherwise, there were no persons on Swan River to undertake the task of providing for our requirements. We were doomed to disappointment. No home had been provided. Our arrival was totally unexpected.*

*We stood in the wilds of Australia on that mid-summer night and we could truly say with our Divine Model "We have nowhere to rest our heads. But praised be to Him who sustains us in our need.*

*Continue your pilgrimage - check your map.*

## 6. Grassed Area

*Walk towards Victoria Square Convent and stand in the grass triangular area to the right of the Convent.*

*No thought of discouragement disturbed my mind, and as for the Sisters, they seemed cheerful and happy. We retraced our steps down the road, and in a short time observed a cottage where lodgings were to let. Mrs Crisp, a Methodist lady, owned the lodgings which were situated on the corner of Barrack St. and Hay St. (A tobacconist shop is situated on the site today). We entered and speedily made arrangements to stay for the night at least. All this took place on Friday 9th January 1846, precisely four calendar months from the day on which we left the convent of our profession, St Catherine's Baggot Street, Dublin.*

**Where in your life do you find mercy?**

## 7. Walk towards the Convent front door and Enter!

*Friday January 16 1846, the "Convent" was all ready for our reception. On Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup> 1846 we date the foundation of the first Convent of Mercy in Australia.*

*Move through the Heritage Centre and absorb a sense of what it was like for the early Sisters. Your Pilgrimage concludes in the Conference centre with the Blessing of the Holy Door during morning tea.*

# Called to the Ministry of Mercy

## Prayer for the Opening of Local Doors of Mercy

### Welcome

**Song:** *What Mercy May Yet Be.*

What Mercy may yet be is held in mystery,  
Yet we can find a path that winds throughout our history.  
Where Mercy may yet go is in our hearts to grow.  
The Living Source reveals a course that we will come to know.  
  
What Mercy may yet be is in us as a seed,  
It is our task to till and plant, to water and to weed.  
When Mercy may be strong is in us as a song.  
We shape our part within its art and for its time we long.

Text and Music Cynthia Serjak rsm 2003

### Reading from Pope Francis' *Misericordiae Vultus* –

*Proclaiming the Jubilee Year of Mercy*

We need to constantly contemplate the mystery of mercy.  
It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it.  
Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.  
Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us.  
Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of ... brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and [humankind], opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever...

With sentiments of gratitude for everything the Church has received, and with a sense of responsibility for the task that lies ahead, we shall cross the threshold of the Holy Door fully confident that the strength of the Risen Lord, who constantly supports us on our pilgrim way, will sustain us. May the Holy Spirit, who guides the steps of believers... lead the way and support the People of God so that they may contemplate the face of mercy.

[Today this Holy Door] will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope.

### **Knocking at the Door**

*The refrain, the knocking and the question are repeated three times*

**Refrain:** “I Stand at the Door and Knock”

**Leader asks:** Who knocks at this Door of Mercy?

**Assembly responds:** naming persons who are in need of the mercy of God and of our Mercy.

### **Reading: from the Gospel of Matthew**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by the angels, then he will take his seat on the throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.” Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?” And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.”

### **Reflection**

*Doorkeepers of Mercy*

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/146739024>



## Intercessions

**Leader:** In the words of Pope Francis, “It is time for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters.” Ready to respond to this call to mercy, we pray for the needs of our world.

**Our response will be:** May we be signs of your Mercy.

**Reader 1:** Your people hunger for food and love, for education and adequate health care, for freedom and safety. Your people thirst for justice, for clean water, and so we pray...

**Reader 2:** Your people long to be known, they long for a homeland, for right relationships, for welcome. They long to see your face. Your people suffer from ills of body, mind and spirit. Your Earth suffers from pollution and degradation and so we pray...

**Reader 3:** Your people are imprisoned in unjust structures and political regimes, in dangerous relationships, in demeaning work environments.

Your people seek compassion, comfort, companionship and counsel and so we pray...

**Reader 4:** You have called us Mercy, to be responsive to the needs of Earth and of all people and so we pray...

## Concluding Prayer

Each time we cross the threshold of this Holy Door, dear God, may we be reminded that we are indeed called to the ministry of Mercy. We ask for the grace to live lives worthy of this call – to be signs, in active and practical ways, of the tender love with which you embrace us all. In this Holy Year strengthen our resolve to work for the transformation of our world to a place where all know themselves to be blessed and welcomed as you welcome us to this holy place and time. Amen.

**Song:** *"What Mercy May Yet Be"*

What Mercy may yet be is wanting to come free.

It's hard to know what we must let go and how we shall agree.

How Mercy may be formed is gospel in its core.

The path unfolds in minds and souls and shapes us more  
and more.

What Mercy may yet be is bound in Trinity:

Creating, saving all-embracing presence of the Three.

How Mercy may yet serve is wisdom to be learned.

As God allows, our time is now! To God's will let us turn.

This year of Jubilee is calling us to be

A witness to God's mercy at our time in history.

May Mercy now abound wherever we are found

With joy we claim this Mercy name, so let our thanks resound!

