

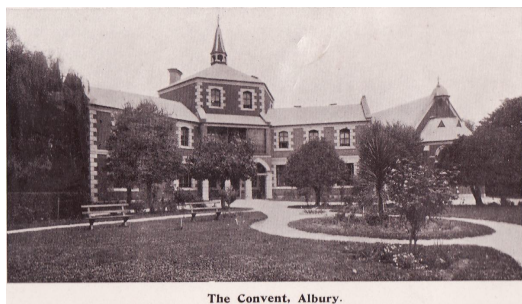
SISTERS OF MERCY CELEBRATE 150 YEARS

October 2009 will mark 150 years since the Mercy Sisters arrived from Ireland to the Catholic parish of Goulburn. This was the first Congregation of Sisters of Mercy to arrive in New South Wales, and the first Congregation of Religious west of the Great Dividing Range.

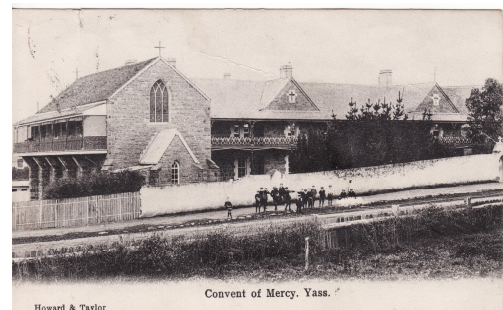
In 1859 when the Sisters arrived at the invitation of the Catholic clergy, Goulburn was the centre of a parish that extended into Tasmania. As women from the local Catholic families began joining the Congregation, the Sisters were able to move to more towns in the parish. A list of the places where the Sisters established communities and took on responsibility for pastoral work and schools gives an indication of the spread of the Catholic population and the desire of the clergy and of the sisters to minister to their needs. Between 1859 and 1948 Mercy convents were founded in Albury, Yass, Boorowa, Cootamundra, Young, Murrumburrah, Tumut, Junee, Gundagai, Grenfell, Deniliquin, Corowa, Wilcannia, Wodonga, Deloraine, Wyalong, Gunning, Jerilderie, Crookwell, Tocumwal, Barmedman, Galong, Stockinbingal, Bethungra, Finley, Goolongong, Murringo, Griffith, Dee Why, Henty, Binda, Howlong, Captains Flat and Braddon. The sisters ministered – and continue to minister today - in the fields of education, health care, prison visitation and welfare.



Convent of Mercy, Goulburn



The Albury Convent



Convent of Mercy Yass

On Sunday October 25 2009 the Sisters are hoping that friends and co-workers, ex-students and those they have cared for will be able to join them for the day. Notices about the weekend have been sent to all the parishes, schools, hospitals and welfare centres in the dioceses of Canberra-Goulburn and Wagga Wagga where the sisters have been involved.

On Sunday, Archbishop Coleridge will be the main celebrant at the Sesquicentenary Mass in Sts Peter and Paul's Old Cathedral. Afterwards there will be luncheon in the grounds on the former Mercy convent (now Trinity Catholic College). Guests will have the chance to view the sesquicentenary Mercy exhibition and the historic chapel, convent and school.

To mark the anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters, the Catholic schools of Goulburn and district are planning local functions including a Family Barbecue and Art Exhibition on Thursday. Archbishop Mark Coleridge will celebrate Mass in Sts Peter and Paul's Old Cathedral on Friday October 23 for the schools and their communities.

The Goulburn Parish will hold its annual parish dinner on Saturday October 24 in honour of the sesquicentenary.

Among the guests on the weekend will be Sisters from The Irish Mercy communities of Westport and Rochfortbridge which sent the original sisters to Goulburn and Yass. Also invited are representatives of Australian Religious Congregations, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Gerard Hanna, other bishops, priests, and representatives of Parishes, Federal, State and Local Governments.

Overall planning for the sesquicentenary weekend has been in the hands of a committee from the schools, parish and sisters. This group is working enthusiastically to gather information, share resources and plan the October functions. Thanks to the hospitality of the staffs of Sts Peter and Paul's and Trinity Catholic College, there is always a place for the group to meet.



Goulburn Planning Group:

L to R: Jackie Kruger with Christian Doggett Cady, Sr Angela Jordan, Mary- Jane Carroll-Fajarda, Sue Burgess, r Ursula Drennan, Pat Bourke, Sasha Doggett Cady, Carmel Halder and Sandra Martin
(Absent: Matthew Ryan, Gloria Guerts, Maree Wilsmore, Rose Liardet and Sr Loretta Corrigan)



Sisters Sesquicentenary Committee:

Back: Srs Ursula Drennan, Angela Jordan, Gabrielle Maree Owen, Rosarii O'Connor, Catherine McMahon

Front: Srs Bernice Keane, Aileen Wailes, Frances Fitzpatrick, Lorraine Cupitt, Monica Purcell, Barbara Murray (Absent: Loretta Corrigan).

The sisters have their own Committee of twelve sisters who have been calling on the rest of the Congregation for help in getting ready for the weekend and for the sesquicentenary exhibition. This is being professionally curated and visitors will get an insight into the spirit, life and work of this group of women. The items for the exhibition have been taken from the Sisters' extensive archives or loaned by the sisters.

The exhibition will be officially opened in Goulburn on the sesquicentenary weekend, and will also travel to other centres of significance to the Congregation. From late 2009 to March 2010 it will be on the road. The 2009 venues are:

October 24, 25, 26: Goulburn, Trinity Catholic College Study Hall

Oct 31, Nov 1, 2: Young, McAuley Hall

November 6, 7, 8: Queanbeyan Arts Centre (co-inciding with the Institute of Sisters on Mercy Australia Social Justice Conference)

November 14, 15, 16: Yass, Mount Carmel School Study Hall

November 21, 22, 23: Albury, Sacred Heart Parish Hall



Curators Nancy Clarke and Claudia Hyles in the exhibition room

There are other events happening in the sesquicentenary year. The Mercy Ex-students are holding a Sesquicentenary Reunion on the weekend of May 23 and 24 in Goulburn. The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia are hosting the international Mercy Justice Conference, the theme of which is “Embrace the Other and Welcome Difference”, at the Queanbeyan Arts Centre on November 6, 7 and 8.