

GUNNING
 JERRILDERRIE
 CAPTAINS FLAT
 TOCUMWALL
 CROOKWELL
 BARMEDMAN
 HENTY
 GUNDAGAI
 GALONG
 DENILIQUIN
 GRIFFITH
 GOOLGONG
 YOUNG
 GOULBURN
 BINDA
 COOTAMUNDRA
 SYDNEY
 HOWLONG

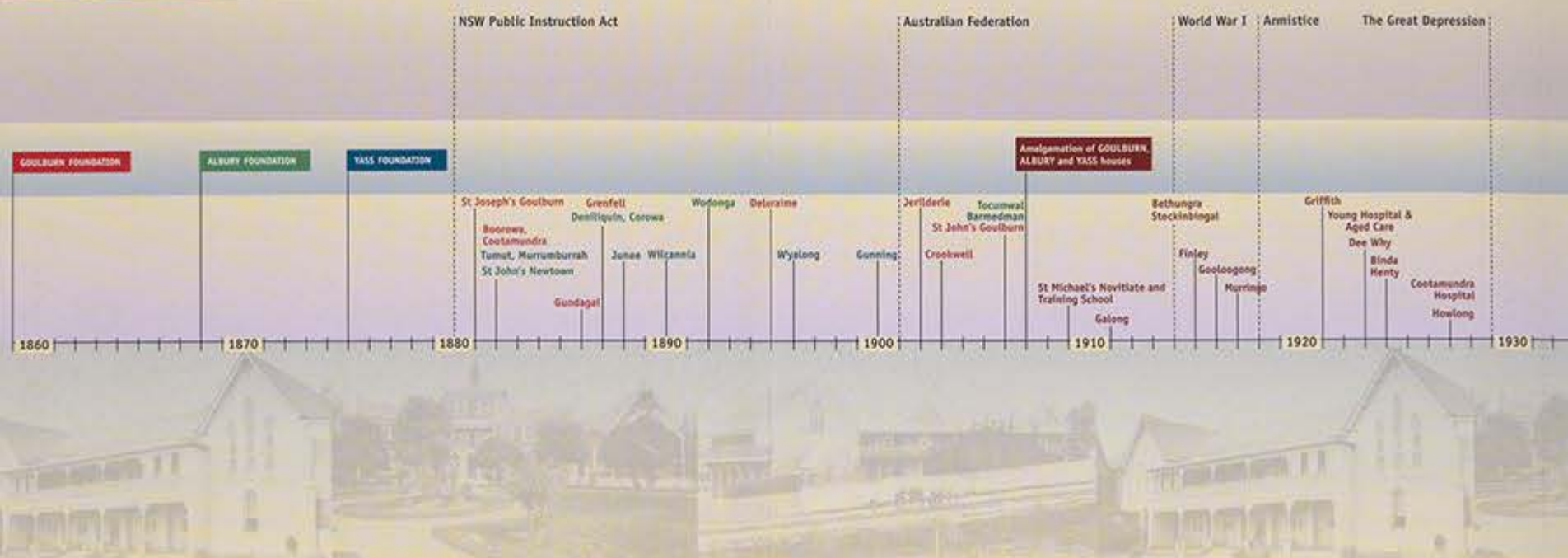


WALKING NUNS

Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation
 Sesquicentenary

WYALONG
 BETHUNGRA
 MURRUMBURRAH
 WILCANIA
 MURRINGO
 YASS
 BOOROWA
 TUMUT
 ALBURY
 GRENFELL
 BRADDON
 JUNEE
 DEERWHY
 COROWA
 STOCKINBINGAL
 FINLEY
 DELORAINIE
 WODONGA

SISTERS OF MERCY GOULBURN CONGREGATION



1859 – 1875

Two groups of Mercy Sisters from Ireland arrive in the Goulburn diocese. The first, led by Sister Ignatius Murphy, are from the Westport Mercy community and arrive following the request of Archdeacon McEnroe for religious. They are an autonomous foundation, formally linked to the Irish Sisters of Mercy only by the common Rule and Constitutions of the Congregation. In 1868 Sister Ignatius makes another autonomous foundation further south, in Albury. The Sisters are supported by the Parish Priest, the Rev Michael McAlroy, and by donations and assistance from the people of the parishes.

The second group of Sisters is led by Sister Paul Joseph Fielding, and they are from the Rochfortbridge Mercy community. They arrive in Yass in 1875 and, with support from the Rev Dean O'Keefe and his parishioners, begin a third autonomous Mercy foundation in the Goulburn diocese.

The Sisters instruct adults in their faith, and visit the sick and dying, and also prisoners in the local gaols. They teach the children, and in all three towns begin to accommodate boarding students. In Goulburn they care for orphan girls.

1880 – 1906

In the wake of the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880, which initiates a system for 'free, compulsory and secular' education, Catholic communities want their own schools. As the Sisters are joined by young women from southern New South Wales and Victoria, they are able to begin houses in other towns (called 'branch houses', with links back to their founding house). Each house manages its own income, and this includes fetes, donations at the convent kitchen door and fees for music, typing and elocution lessons. Goulburn sends Sisters to Boorowa, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Grenfell, Jerilderie and Crookwell, and to Deloraine in the Mobarat Diocese. The Albury community opens Corowa, Deniliquin, Wodonga, Tocumwal and St John's Orphanage in Newtown (Thurgoona). The Yass community opens branch houses in Tumut, Murrumburrah, Junee, Wyalong, Gunning and Barmen. Wyalong becomes a separate foundation because of its isolation, and is only reaffiliated to the Yass foundation when the railway is completed. In 1890 Paul Joseph Fielding leads the group to Wilcannia in the new diocese of Wilcannia.

In the original foundations, the works expand: in Goulburn a low-fee Boarding School and an Orphanage for girls (1881), and the Misses Bell, trained in Cambridge, are engaged to 'lecture, demonstrate and organise the teaching profession'. A boys' orphanage begins in Goulburn in 1906. In Yass, the school for aboriginal children opens in 1883, and the Albury Sisters purchase more land to allow the school buildings to extend.

1907 – 1927

In accordance with church directives, and within the boundaries of the Goulburn diocese, the three foundations of Goulburn, Albury and Yass form a single Congregation, now called 'The Amalgamated Houses of the Sisters of Mercy in the Goulburn Diocese'. Brigid Hartnett is the first superior of the new Congregation, which now numbers over a hundred Sisters. The generalate, novitiate and training school are housed in Goulburn at St Michael's.

New branch houses begin in Galong (a boarding school for boys) (1911), Bethunga and Stockinbingal (1914), Finley (1915), Gooloogong (1916), Murringo (1917), Griffith (1921), Dee Why (1923), Binda and Henty (1924), and Howlong (1927). In 1912 Our Lady of Mercy College Goulburn receives registration under the Bursary Endowment Act. In 1919 in Goulburn St Brigid's School opens, complete with toilets. In 1917 The Christian Brothers take on the boys' school in Albury. In 1921 Barmen is transferred to the Sisters of St Joseph.

In 1923 the Mercy Sisters take responsibility for the Sacred Heart Hospital and Mount St Joseph's Home in Young, from the Sisters Servants of the Sacred Heart who are recalled to England. In 1927 the Cootamundra Sacred Heart Hospital is also transferred. Nurses trained elsewhere or by the Sisters collaborate in the hospital work. Thus begins a long and happy association with the lay nursing staff.



GOULBURN CONGREGATION

WALKING NUNS

Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation
Sesquicentenary

Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation
Canberra 2009

This catalogue was published on the occasion of the exhibition marking the sesquicentenary of the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation, displayed at Goulburn, Young, Queanbeyan, Yass, Albury, 24 October - 23 November 2009.

Published by the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation
Canberra ACT 2009

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Title: Walking nuns : Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation sesquicentenary.
ISBN: 9780646521282 (pbk.)
Notes: Bibliography.
Subjects: Sisters of Mercy—New South Wales—Goulburn—History.
Monasticism and religious orders—New South Wales—Goulburn—History.
Nuns—New South Wales—Goulburn—History.
Other Authors/Contributors:
Sisters of Mercy (N.S.W.)
Dewey Number: 271.92009447

Exhibition curators: Nancy Clarke and Claudia Hyles

Exhibition co-ordinator: Frances Fitzpatrick rsm

Catalogue text: Nancy Clarke. Text for Chapter 4 provided by a group of Sisters of Mercy

Editor: Claudia Hyles

Designer: James Grounds

Printed by Union Offset Pty Ltd

Cover image: Based on a series of banners representing the Goulburn Mercy houses produced for the sesquicentenary by SignageOne, Goulburn
Inside cover: Based on a timeline produced for the Exhibition by Rosanna Horn Design
Frontispiece: From a modern painting depicting Catherine McAuley. Extract from letter of Catherine McAuley to Sister de Chantal McCann superimposed
Sesquicentenary Logo: James Grounds

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my dear Sisters -- ever your affectionate
in J. L. M. L. McAuley

Foreword

The Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation Sesquicentenary Exhibition offers a view of the life and spirit of this group of women and of the rural communities from which they came. It is a view essentially from the outside, through the eyes of the curators Nancy Clarke and Claudia Hyles, who drew on the Congregation's Archives and on the oral histories of the Sisters to assemble the exhibition.

The picture presented in the exhibition is of a group of Religious Women who approach a vocation to serve "the poor, sick and ignorant" with the down-to-earth practical energy and sense of fun that their Foundress, Catherine McAuley, epitomised. The story is told of their lives as Sisters of Mercy guided by the Foundress' Rule and Constitutions. Also presented is a history of their initiatives in education, health and welfare, and the evolution and final handing on of these to others. Now at work predominantly within the agencies of other organisations that search out the needy, the Sisters have faced this transition with the same equanimity they brought to the task of beginning and maintaining extensive institutions and organisational networks.

The Sisters' works have been driven by a fundamental desire to serve the poor, and they were begun at a time when little other help was available for those in need. They are products of their time and have been part of developing policies and changes in Australian society. The exhibition aims to capture something of the Congregation's rich, and perhaps ambiguous history, not denying the harsher complexity of life either within the institutions run by the Sisters, or in the rural areas they served, but not failing to honour the spirit and integrity of the lives lived there. There is a second thread running through the exhibition, of a sparse existence made joyful by the sharing of gifts: the Sisters have always received the friendship and generous support of others who have chosen to toil alongside them and who have given what they could so that the works of Mercy might be done.

The Sisters are deeply indebted to Nancy and Claudia for curating the exhibition, and to those who assisted them. Thanks too to all those who loaned items for the exhibits, or who gave donations of many kinds.

Sister Marie Duffy
Congregation Leader
Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation
24 October 2009

Introduction

Nineteenth century European settlers in Australia, many of them Irish Catholics, had pressing social and spiritual needs. Schools, care for the sick and poor, and spiritual care and instruction were all urgently needed.

The Sisters of Mercy had been established in Dublin in 1831 for precisely these purposes. The Congregation had spread rapidly in Ireland, England and America, where the Sisters gained a reputation for dedication, practicality and energy, and for working well with the clergy.

On 28 October 1859 six Irish Sisters of Mercy arrived in the town of Goulburn, New South Wales. They were accompanied from Sydney by the two most important Catholic dignitaries in New South Wales, Archbishop Polding of Sydney and his Vicar General, Abbott Gregory, as well as the wife and daughter of the manager of the Commercial Bank in Goulburn. The journey of just over 200 kilometres took three days, largely by carriage. Dean Walsh of Goulburn joined them at Marulan, and a group of prominent Goulburn citizens including the Mayor and the other priest resident in Goulburn, Father D'Arcy, rode to Governor's Hill to meet and welcome them.

Small foundations of Catholic religious women were already established in Australia, including a group of Sisters of Mercy who arrived in Perth, Western Australia, in January 1846 and who in 1857 had extended their work to Victoria. By 1859 there were several small communities of Catholic religious women in Sydney – Benedictine Sisters, Sisters of Charity and the recently founded Good Samaritan Sisters – but there were as yet none in the growing regional areas beyond the city, and so the new Convent of Mercy in Goulburn was the first foundation of religious women in inland New South Wales.

From it a second foundation was made to Albury in 1868, with two of the original Irish group among the founders. In late December 1875 a group of Mercy Sisters came from Rochfortbridge in Ireland to establish a new community in Yass. In both Albury and Yass, as at Goulburn, the Sisters were made welcome along the way and it is clear that for each of these towns the arrival of the Sisters was a momentous occasion for the whole community whether Catholic or not, marked by civic attention as well as celebratory Masses with lengthy sermons from the bishops presiding.



Sisters at Cootamundra 1968

The “Catholics of Yass” recorded their gratitude for the presence of the Sisters in a speech on the occasion of the opening of the Yass Convent in February 1878 when they spoke of “the realisation of those hopes which many years ago we entertained of having a religious community established in our midst – the happiness of this hour repays all the weary waiting of the past”.

At the time of the arrival of the Sisters, there were one or two priests resident in each of the towns, serving scattered rural communities. Catholic schools run by lay people had been set up in Australia some years previously, but the system was struggling, and there was an increasing determination among the clergy and particularly the bishops that the school system they were planning would be run by members of religious communities. Large numbers of women and men religious would be required for this work. The Sisters who came from Ireland brought with them an enthusiasm for teaching and a strong missionary fervour that rapidly attracted new members from the Australian communities they were working among.

In 1907 the Goulburn, Albury and Yass groups along with the branch houses each had established, amalgamated to become the Goulburn Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. They had moved out of the boundaries of the Goulburn Diocese to Deniliquin, Wodonga, Wilcannia and Deloraine (in Tasmania) but these foundations did not form part of the newly amalgamated group.

The growth continued across southern and western New South Wales: day and boarding schools were established in towns large and small, and orphanages, hospitals and aged care institutions were founded in Goulburn, Albury, Cootamundra and Young.

In 1918 the new Diocese of Wagga Wagga was created, and so the Goulburn Congregation extended across two dioceses, as it still does.

Throughout this period of expansion, religious life was highly regarded as a vocation for young Catholic women, and large numbers joined the Mercy Sisters. Not all of those who joined were suited to the life of a Sister: some left before making their final vows, and particularly in the period after 1970 others decided to leave the congregation even after final profession, but the number of those who

entered the Community and spent their lives as Sisters is impressive – a total of five hundred and forty two in the one hundred and fifty years between 1859 and 2009.

Apart from the founding groups, very few of the Sisters came from Ireland: the Goulburn Congregation is notable in having drawn almost all its members from Australia, mostly from within areas where the Sisters had established schools. Some towns like Crookwell, Griffith, Cootamundra and Grenfell became known as fertile ground for vocations and there was a strong tradition within some families of generations of religious men and women.

Since the 1970s a decline in the number of people entering Catholic religious communities in most western countries occurred and this has been the case for the Goulburn Mercies. Social developments have also brought other changes, and throughout this period some schools were closed as populations shifted, others amalgamated, and orphanages were replaced by cottage care. New opportunities arose for some Sisters to work further afield, in the Kimberley, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan and South Africa.

More recently remaining schools, hospitals and aged care facilities were transferred to other hands, including diocesan education systems, Centacare (now CatholicCare), and Mercy Health. The pastoral and welfare work of the Goulburn Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy to the “poor, sick and ignorant” continues in other ways.

The work of the many thousands of religious women in Australia in education, health, care for the aged, pastoral welfare, and the disadvantaged has been to varying degrees acknowledged, but the history of particular groups including the Goulburn Mercy Sisters is not always well documented. Formal records are often fragmentary, and some of the history is recorded only in memory and tradition.

The Spirit of the Sisters of Mercy

Identifying particular qualities that define the Sisters of Mercy is not simple, though in their own writings the term used most is “Spirit” – they write of the Spirit of Mercy, or of the Foundress, Catherine McAuley, or of the *Rule and Constitutions* she had written.

Catherine herself and the early days of the Institute she had founded were in the living memory of the Sisters who came to New South Wales. They were committed to the Mercy Spirit, and expressed this in lives that although bound by their vows, were resilient, optimistic and adventurous. They had experienced hard times in Ireland. Some of the Goulburn group had known the harsh years of famine and others had worked with victims of cholera during the epidemic of the 1850s. They were familiar with and inspired by the missionary foundations that the Mercy Sisters had already established in England, America and elsewhere in Australia, as well as the Sisters' work in the Crimea. Their links back to Ireland were strong but none of them ever returned there. Their attachment now was to the *Rule and Constitutions* and to the Australian mother houses of Goulburn, Albury and Yass.

The Goulburn Mercies grew into a group whose members have largely been drawn from regional and rural New South Wales and Victoria, and their work has caused them to move around among a variety of cities, towns

and villages. In all their work they have demonstrated practical, down to earth energy and a certain fearlessness in looking to the future.

Throughout 150 years they have undertaken new works as needs were identified, working within rather than against the system, clerical or state, to achieve the desired end – a new school, a changed curriculum, better care for neglected children, the sick and the aged. As circumstances changed they too have made changes, withdrawn, and handed work to others, always striving to ensure that the enterprises they were handing on had been well managed. In most cases they have not sought publicity or even acknowledgement for the work they have undertaken and once a work has been completed they have shown little interest in retaining a record of their presence.

However they were not always so detached in matters relating to the internal life of their own Congregation and their relation to other Mercy Congregations. A feature of Catherine McAuley's vision was that as new houses were



World distribution of the Sisters of Mercy

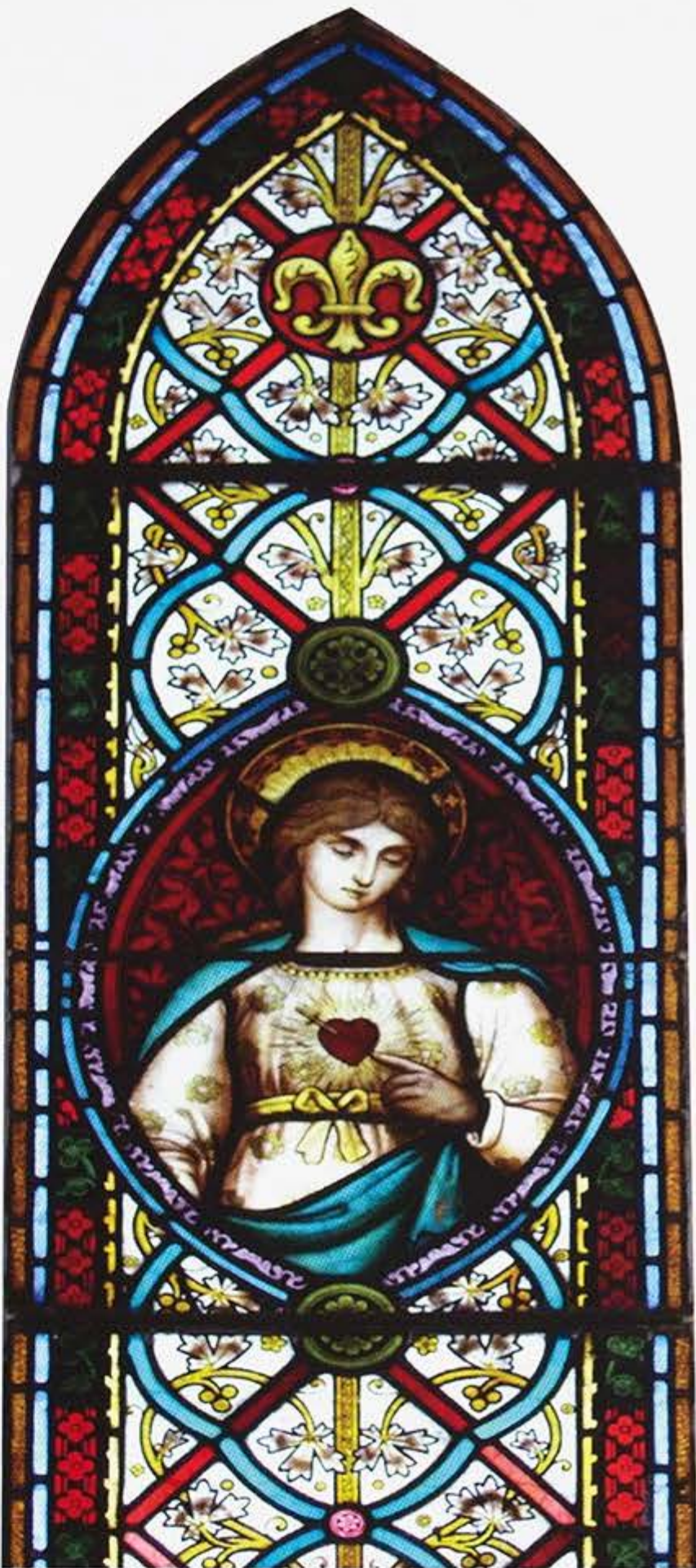
established they became autonomous. So Albury, founded from Goulburn, was independent of it, and Yass, founded from Ireland was independent of both its mother house and the existing Mercy communities in the Goulburn Diocese. In 1907 the three foundations amalgamated but this was in reality only a token merger, with each of the constituents retaining as much of its own identity as possible, attempting in effect to maintain the tradition of autonomy. They were perhaps concerned that external changes may bring changes to the Mercy Spirit.

As with their response to the 1907 amalgamation many Sisters initially regarded the prospect of closer unity with other Mercy Congregations through membership of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (1954) with some caution, but the changes it brought were in fact embraced as were those that followed when the Congregation became a member of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia.

The Sesquicentenary Exhibition

The Committee of Sisters created to plan the events to mark the sesquicentenary of the arrival of the Sisters in Goulburn decided to include an exhibition presenting aspects of their life and history. This would travel to some of the main centres of their work – Goulburn, Albury, Yass and Young. They sought curators from outside their own Community, and Nancy Clarke and Claudia Hyles undertook this task under the overall guidance of the Committee Chair, Sister Frances Fitzpatrick rsm. Full access to all records available was provided to the Curators, as well as much specialist advice and information.

The exhibition, designed to be highly portable, needed to appeal to several audiences – the Sisters themselves, the extended Catholic community including former students and colleagues, people for whom the Sisters of Mercy have cared, students at schools where the Sisters have worked, and members of the general community with an interest in education and welfare.



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Goulburn Chapel

Chapter One

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841)
and the Sisters of Mercy

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) and the Sisters of Mercy

On 12 December 1831 in a solemn religious ceremony in Dublin Ireland, three women, middle-aged Catherine Elizabeth McAuley and two young companions, vowed “perpetual poverty, chastity and obedience, and to persist until the end of [their] life in the Congregation called of [sic] the Sisters of Mercy, established [sic] for the Visitation of the Sick Poor, and charitable instruction of poor females”. Each took a new name in religion, and Catherine became Sister Mary Catherine.

The three new Sisters returned immediately to the Dublin house that Catherine had built as a House of Mercy in 1827. This house now became the first Convent of Mercy.

From an early age Catherine had been drawn to care for the “poor, the sick and the ignorant”, and on inheriting a fortune she enacted her plan to build a large house in central Dublin which she would use as a school, as a refuge for homeless young women “of good character”, and as a base for visiting the poor, the sick and those in prison.

Although a deeply committed Catholic she was not attracted to the life of a nun, but her work and personality attracted a number of well educated young women who joined her in Baggot Street. Increasingly they lived as a community and adopted many of the customs and practices of convent life.

The group attracted criticism as well as admiration but the Archbishop of Dublin, Daniel Murray, knew that pressing social needs were being met, and approved of the way this was being done. He encouraged Catherine to formalise her group as a religious community although not an enclosed one. The new Congregation received approval from Rome in 1835, and their Rule was approved in 1841, just months before Catherine’s death.

There was great need in nineteenth century Ireland for the work the Sisters undertook, and the decentralised structure that Catherine had developed was appealing to the Bishops. Requests for new communities poured in, and by the time of Catherine’s death there were twelve Mercy foundations in Ireland, and two in England.

The work of the Sisters with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, and the support of eminent people like The Liberator, Daniel O’Connell, enhanced their reputation, but much of their appeal came from recognition that they were authentically meeting a need of the time.



Providing Counsel
Clare Augustine Moore (1808-1880)

Each of the Houses became in turn the source of new foundations – at first in Ireland and England, and then quickly across the world in Newfoundland, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South America. Later communities were established in Central America, the Caribbean, Oceania, Asia and Africa.

In 1846, Sister Ursula Frayne founded the first Australian house in Perth and from there she established the Melbourne house in 1857. The next Australian foundation was in Goulburn New South Wales in 1859.



Visiting the Sick
Clare Augustine Moore (1808-1880)

Catherine McAuley

We have no image of Catherine McAuley taken from life. A sculpture was made immediately after her death and we have recollections, such as the perceptive description written by Sister Clare Augustine Moore. She met her first in 1829, when Catherine was fifty, and later wrote:

She was very fair with a brilliant color on her cheeks, still not too red. Her face was a short oval but the contour was perfect. Her lips were thin and her mouth rather wide, yet there was so much play and expression about it that I remarked it as the next agreeable feature in her face. Her eyes were light blue and remarkably round with the brows and lashes colorless but they spoke. In repose they had a melancholy beseeching look; then it would light up expressive of really hearty fun, or if she disapproved of anything they could tell that too.

A number of short biographical sketches written by Sisters who knew her, survive. A few were letters, but most were written as official records for different Communities. Together they give an invaluable, though incomplete picture of Catherine's life and personality.

We hear her voice in her own extensive correspondence. Over 250 of her letters survive, most of them to members of her Institute, but others are to her brother, nephews, the Archbishop, the Pope, her solicitor and tradespeople. The tone varies but to her Sisters she was typically personal and encouraging, delighting in composing humorous verse, a tradition that has persisted in the Congregation.

Her voice is also heard in the collections of her "sayings", maxims and instructions, recorded from recollection or notes, and gathered and published in different formats after her death.



Catherine McAuley (1778-1841)
Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy



Maxims & Counsels by Catherine McAuley (1900)
Mother Mary Catherine McAuley by Eily MacAdam (1938)
Thoughts from the Spiritual Conferences by Catherine McAuley (1946)

Our Lady of Mercy

The Sisters of Mercy have special devotion to Our Lady. She is the “principal Patroness” of the Congregation and her Feast Day is 24 September.

In 1890 Pope Leo XIII conferred an image of Mary Mother of Mercy on the Congregation as the “proper emblem” for the entire Order.

The image was copied from a fresco in the Church of San Pudenziana in Rome, and depicts Mary crowned, and seated on a throne, with the Christ child on her knee. The pose is regal, with Mary looking directly out to the viewer. In her right hand she holds a standard surmounted by a Cross. The child sits erect and also looks directly forward.



The Rule

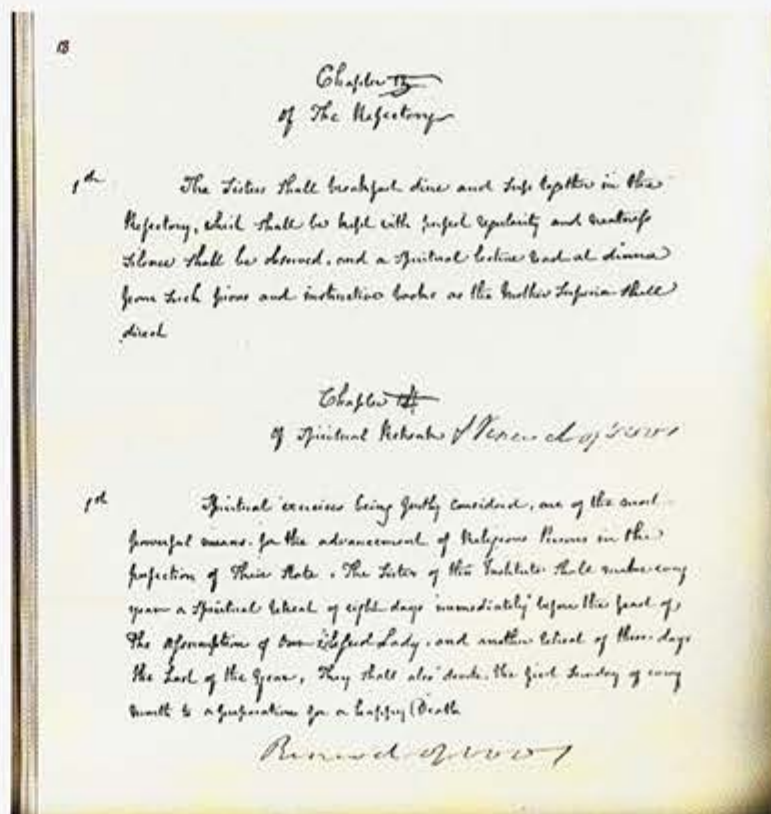
For the newly formed Congregation to be recognised as an official religious institute within the Catholic Church it needed an approved Rule that identified its character and purpose, and established the way its members lived and managed themselves.

Catherine McAuley wrote a first version of the Rule in 1833, adapting it from the Rule of the Presentation Sisters. In it she identified the particular character of the new Congregation as “a most serious application to the Instruction of poor Girls, Visitation of the Sick, and protection of distressed women of good character”.

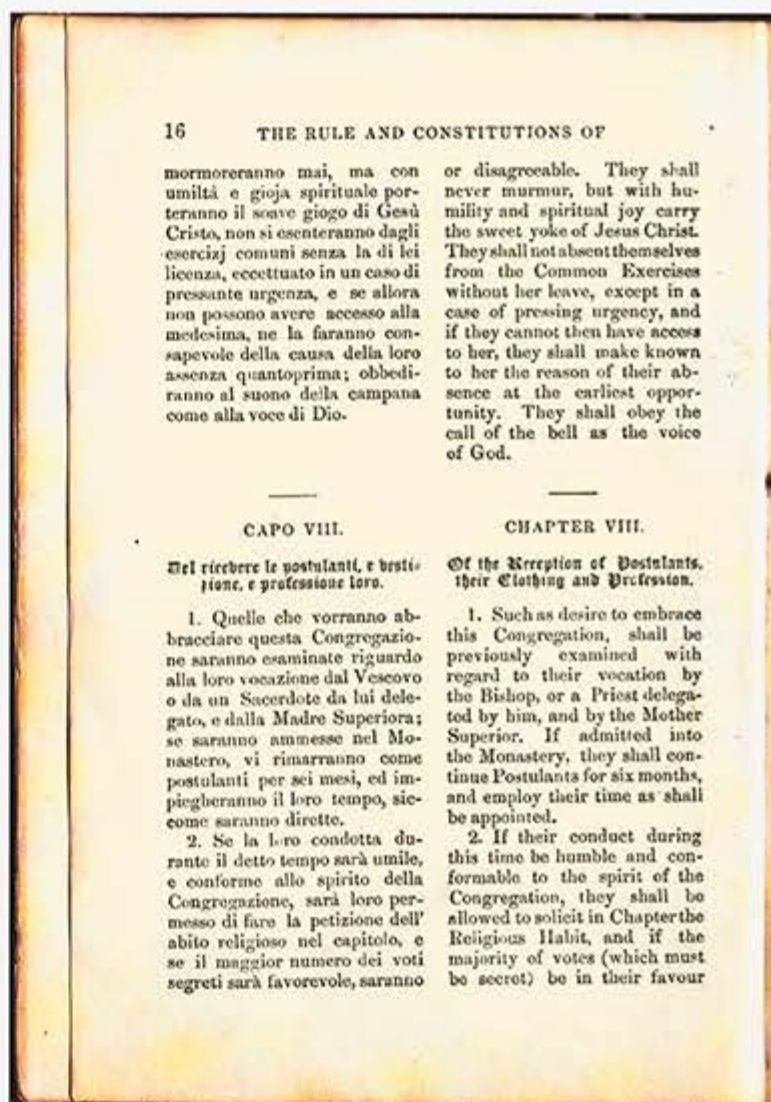
Archbishop Murray of Dublin first edited and then endorsed the handwritten document. It was sent to Rome, translated into Italian and on 6 June 1841 the *Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy* was approved by Pope Gregory XVI. Until 1863, when an approved translation back into English was published in Dublin, copies in English were handwritten by the Sisters, with some variations in wording. Sister Clare Augustine Moore created a wonderful illuminated version for the Dublin community.

The Goulburn foundation (1859) precedes the first printed editions of the Rule, so any copies brought to Goulburn would have been handwritten. How many there were and what became of them is not known. A small handwritten copy in the Goulburn Archives may have been one of these but there is no firm evidence for this. It does however have a link back to the Westport community from which Goulburn was founded in that it is inscribed with the name of Sister Paula Cullen, Foundress of Westport.

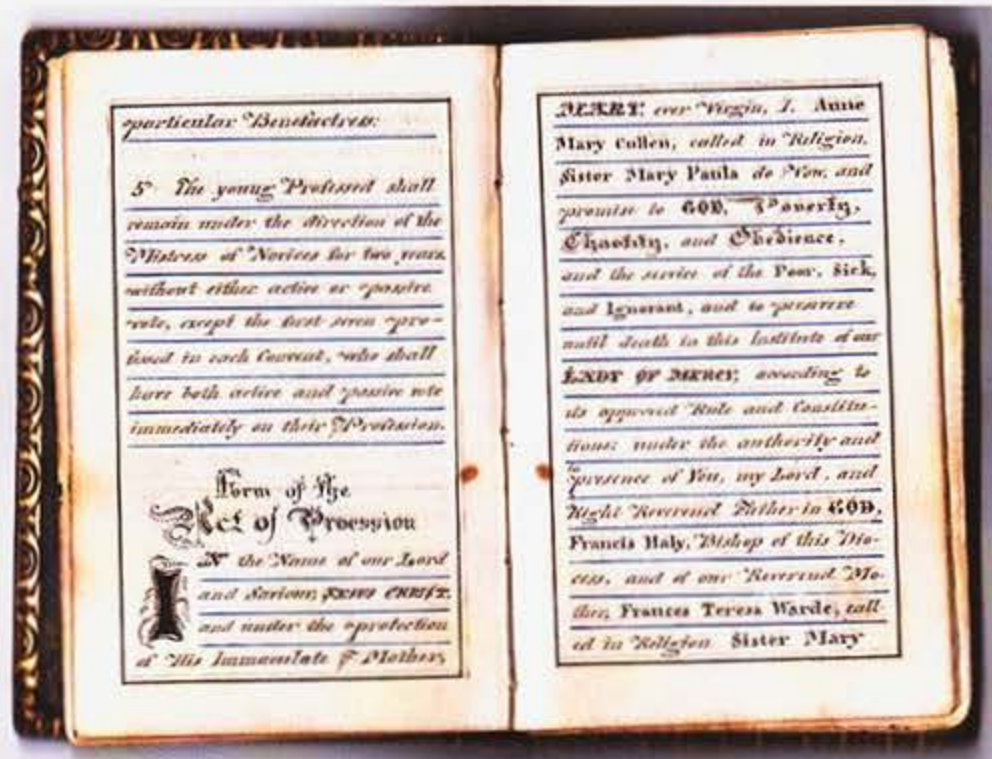
A large handwritten copy of the Rule was brought from Rochfortbridge in Ireland by the founding Sisters of Yass in 1875. By this time, printed copies of the Rule were available, but it seems clear that this handwritten copy was specially made for the departing Sisters, as a gift and remembrance. Only two thirds of the copying was completed – the text of Chapter XXII is included, but not its chapter heading *Of the Care of Sick Sisters and of Suffrages for the Dead*, and the remainder of the Rule is not included, strongly suggesting work done against a deadline but unable to be finished in time.



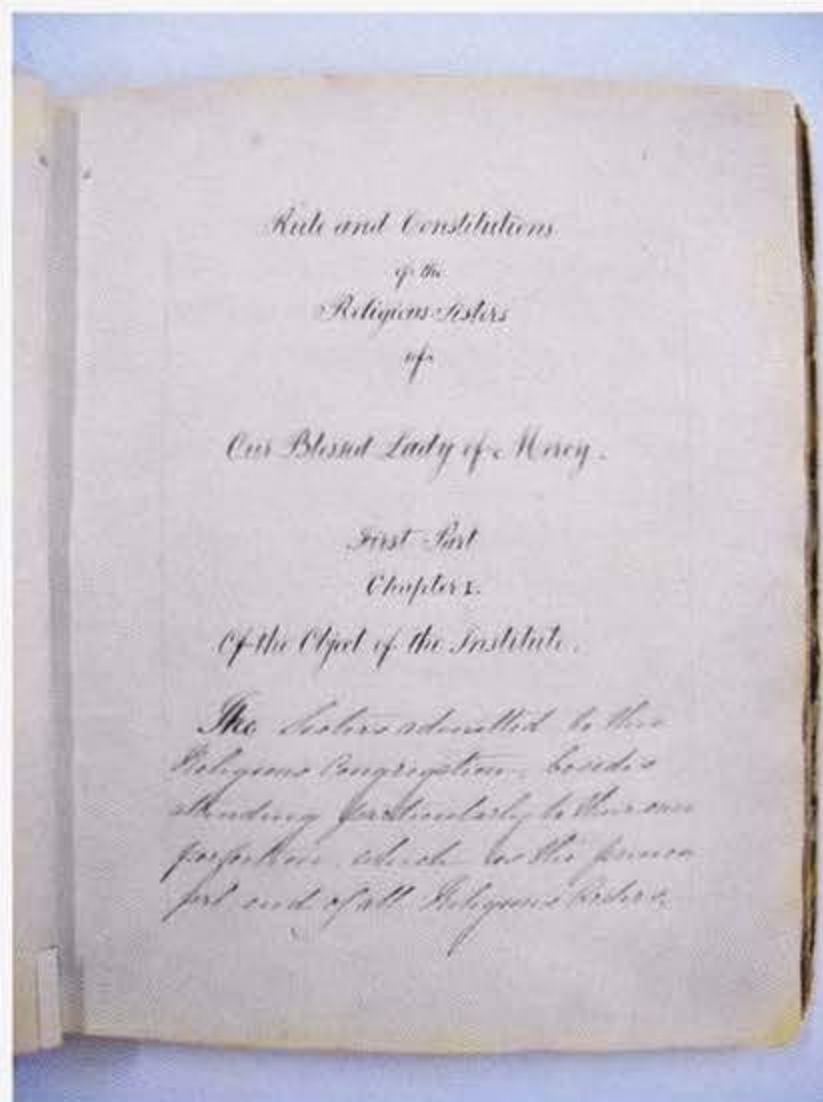
Catherine McAuley's 1833 Rule



The Rule & Constitutions of the Religious called Sisters of Mercy
In Italian & English 1863



Handwritten Rule, inscribed with the name of Sister Paula Cullen. This may have been brought to Goulburn from Ireland by the new community. Sister Paula Cullen, first Superior at Westport, accompanied the Goulburn-bound Sisters as far as the Port of Liverpool in 1859.



Handwritten Rule
This copy of the Rule was brought from Rochfortbridge in Ireland by the founding Sisters who came to Yass in 1875. By this time, printed copies of the Rule were available but this handwritten copy was probably specially made for the departing Sisters as a gift and remembrance.

Applying the Rule

The Rule and Constitutions were binding on the Sisters, but were open to interpretation.

Two frequently consulted publications helped address this problem. The *Guide for Religious Called Sisters of Mercy* explained each section of the Rule. It was particularly consulted during the novitiate, the period of training before Sisters made their vows. A shorter practical guide, *Customs and Minor Regulations of the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy*, gave detailed instructions on matters like prayer, behaviour, dress, and how the day was to be spent.

The Sisters were readily recognised by their “uniform”, the habit, which was first worn when they were received as Sisters of Mercy. The habit had been adopted by Catherine McAuley for her new Congregation, and was worn by all Sisters of Mercy although in many places including Australia it was most unsuitable. Strict rules governed the fabric, style, construction and wearing of the habit. On the wall of her bedroom each Sister had a copy of the prayer to be said when putting on the habit.

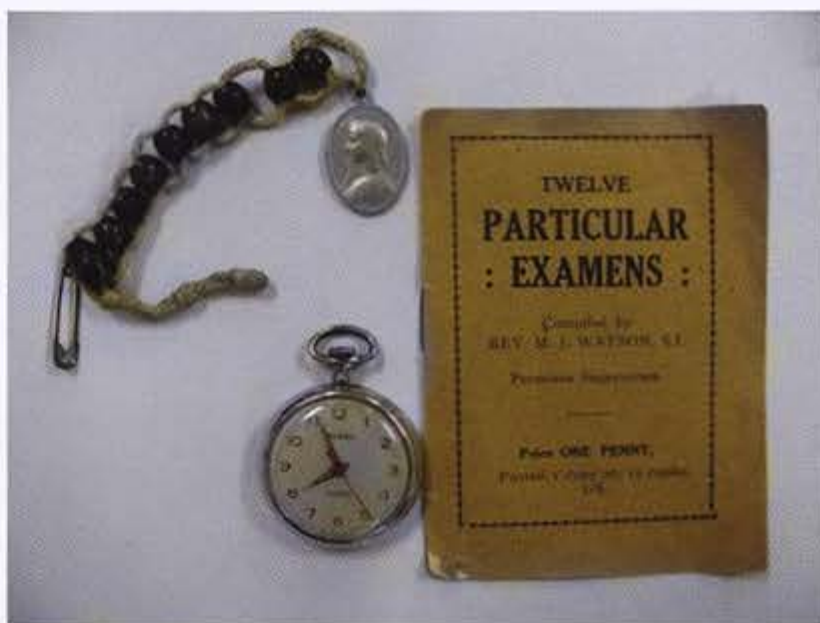
Sisters wore a pocket watch and conscience beads, which were hidden under the guimp. The number 166 is engraved on the back of the watch depicted. As an indicator of the detachment from worldly possessions that the vow of Poverty expressed, objects held by Sisters were identified only by a number and not the name of the Sister. After the death of a Sister, this number was given to a new member of the community.

A large Rosary hung from the belt or cincture. The distinctive Mercy Cross was made of ebony and ivory, without a figure – a reminder to the Sisters that through their vows they placed themselves on the Cross.

On making their final vows, Sisters receive a silver ring, a sign of consecration. Engraved on the ring is the Sister's motto which appears on her Act of Profession.



Rosary with original Mercy Cross



Aids to Prayer throughout the Day

Walking Nuns

Traditionally nuns had lived in enclosure and for many Catholics the notion that they might go outside the convent and work among the poor and sick was positively offensive.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries three Congregations were founded in Ireland to work outside the convent among those in need – the Presentation Sisters, the Irish Sisters of Charity, and the Sisters of Mercy.

Catherine McAuley was aware of the possibility that the presence of her Sisters in the streets could be misunderstood, and the Rule provided clear instructions about the way the Sisters should walk when visiting the sick: “No Sister shall go out unless she be accompanied by another Sister – the greatest caution and gravity shall be observed in the streets; walking neither too slow nor in a hurried pace; not stopping to converse with, or salute those whom they meet.”

Nevertheless, those who disapproved of the Sisters working outside the convent called the Sisters of Charity “Walking Nuns” to distinguish them from “real nuns”. Later the term was also applied to the Mercy Sisters. Although originally a derogatory term, for the Sisters it became a badge of honour which has now been incorporated into the logo for the sesquicentary of the Congregation.

Not everyone disapproved. In late 1840, Catherine wrote to Sister Frances Warde on the suitability of cashmere cloaks, adding:

While providing for the head and shoulders, do not neglect the poor feet, to which the Repealer [Daniel O’Connell] has directed particular attention – O’Connell’s speech at a public dinner – Carrick-on-Suir ... “Look at the Sisters of Mercy – hear, hear – wrapped in their long black cloaks, they are seen gliding along the streets, in this humble attire, while a slight glance at the foot shews the educated Lady . . .” This afforded great amusement here – each claiming for her foot the tribute of praise.

In another letter she gives a slightly different version of this story, adding:

They [the Sisters in Dublin] have lately made some very nice cloth Boots, and got them soled and caped [capped] with leather. When finished they do not cost quite 4 shillings. Dear Sister M. de Sales commenced the work, and it now goes on rapidly. They are exceedingly neat & warm – any kind of stocking will do. I have been long recommending these home made Boots, both for neatness and economy.

Clearly these home-made boots were valued as cost-savers – all that walking meant that footwear wore out quickly.



Sister Jude visiting someone in need in Albury in the 1980s – continuing the tradition of the “Walking Nuns”

Chapter Two

Goulburn, Albury, Yass

Goulburn, Albury, Yass

In late April 1859 the Sisters of Mercy at Westport in Ireland were invited to provide a group of Sisters for the growing town of Goulburn New South Wales. Sister Ignatius Murphy was chosen to lead the new community: Sisters de Pazzi Dolphin, de Sales Meyler, Stanislaus Maxwell, Ligouri Mooney and Rose Hughes. They acted quickly, leaving Westport for the long journey on 28 June. Archbishop Polding, whose diocese still covered all of New South Wales, welcomed them to Sydney and travelled with them to Goulburn. They arrived in Goulburn on 28 October 1859.

Work on building a convent and school lagged until the energetic and visionary Father Michael McAlroy was transferred to Goulburn from Yass. By 1862 the first part of the convent was occupied, followed the next year by completion of the school and the Chapel. Over the next few years eight more women joined the group. The first in 1860 was Australian-born Catherine Donovan.



Albury Convent

In 1868, the new Bishop of Goulburn, Dr Lanigan, transferred Father McAlroy to Albury and he asked that a band of Mercy Sisters accompany him. From the expanded Goulburn community, two members of the pioneer group, Sisters Ignatius and de Sales – with Camillus O'Donnell and Xavier McDonnell – volunteered, arriving in Albury on 22 July 1868. Here again they lived and worked in makeshift conditions until a school and convent were built.

Rapid growth of the Catholic population brought the need for more priests and sisters than the local community could provide. In 1874 Father McAlroy was in Ireland seeking more Sisters for the Diocese of Goulburn. The Sisters from the convent at Rochfortbridge in north-eastern Ireland volunteered with enthusiasm, but finalising arrangements for their departure for Yass took over a year.

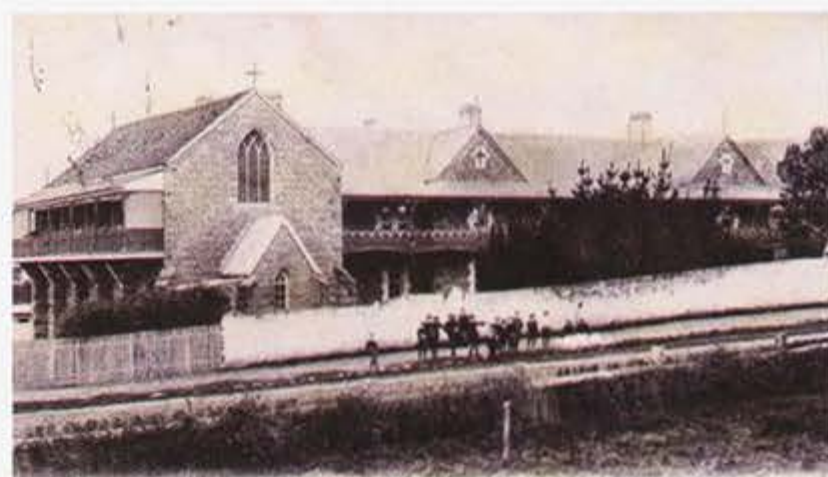


Goulburn Convent

On 29 December 1875, Sisters Paul Fielding, Alacoque McLaughlin and Bernard Grennan, along with four young women intending to join the new Mercy community, arrived in Yass to an enthusiastic reception of citizens and indigenous people.

These three foundations, operating independently of one another, thrived. Twenty new convents were established in southern New South Wales, one in Tasmania, and schools and orphanages were opened.

In 1907, following a recommendation from Rome, and with the active encouragement of Bishop Gallagher of Goulburn, the three groups agreed to come together as one Congregation. On 27 November 1907, Bishop Gallagher appointed Sister Brigid Hartnett from Goulburn as the first "Mother General of the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Goulburn" and the first General Chapter in 1908 confirmed her appointment.



Yass Convent

Goulburn

The *Annals of Mount Saint Mary Convent Westport* provide a vivid picture of the new mission to Goulburn, and of the group of Sisters who volunteered for this work. In addition to the narrative of events, there are biographical entries for each of the six, incorporating information that was clearly sent back to Ireland from Australia.

From these entries and the later histories of the Sisters it is evident that this was a well-balanced group, with a range of experience and talents. Most of them had experience of working with victims of the Westport cholera epidemic of 1854 and were well prepared for a challenging life. They also had the benefit of having lived and worked together for they had all been received and professed in Westport. In addition, Sister Ignatius Murphy, who had been appointed Superior for Goulburn, had recently completed a term as Superior at Westport, so the group was accustomed to her authority.

Ignatius was the oldest (born in 1820), and with her previous experience as Superior and before that as Bursar, was well qualified for her new role. Her Assistant, Sister de Pazzi Dolphin, was her contemporary in religion and from 1855 had worked with Ignatius as Bursar of Westport. In 1851 both Sisters de Pazzi and de Sales Meyler (then a very young novice) had been part of the group that had established the convent at Ballinrobe in Ireland, so each of these had had prior experience of the challenges of a new foundation. Of the others, Ligouri Mooney had been professed for only two years, but was a little older when she had entered. Stanislaus Maxwell was very young (only about 23) but had been professed for four years. Rose

Hughes had been born in the United States but professed in Westport, “a good and useful Lay Sister”. There are glimpses of the personalities of the Sisters in the *Annals*, particularly Ligouri, who suffered from homesickness, or at least nostalgia, the *Annals* saying “so warmly and devotedly was she attached to the house of her Religious infancy that her most enthusiastic wish was that everything she saw at the Mount might be re-produced in Goulbourn [sic], so that her new home would be different only in point of latitude and longitude.”

One striking feature of this foundation is the speed with which it progressed. The letter seeking Sisters was received on 1 April, and they left Westport on 28 June 1859. In the *Annals’* account of their departure a most telling sentence is “the Sisters had to take an enormous supply of coifs, guimps and underwear to last during this very trying voyage as the ship possessed no facilities for laundry”.

Accounts of the departure of the Sisters from Ireland, arrival in Australia and onward travel to Goulburn are enthusiastically recorded in the Sydney Catholic newspaper, *The Freeman’s Journal*. In his sermon on their arrival in Goulburn, Archbishop Polding

alluded in terms of gratulation to the advent in the district of the Sisters of Mercy. These talented ladies would devote a large share of attention to the education of the children, and he regarded their presence as a great blessing. ... He paid a high tribute to the liberality of the inhabitants of Goulburn, and hoped they would follow it out, and that within the next twelve months the walls of the convent would be reared.



The Goulburn Convent, School and Cathedral, 1928
Oil painting by Wallace

Within weeks the Archbishop had sought a land grant for construction of a convent and school, but progress on the site was slow. It was not until Polding transferred Father Michael McAlroy from Yass to Goulburn that real progress was made. Once in Goulburn he moved quickly, and was responsible for the construction of the first of a series of fine buildings – Saint Patrick's Convent and the school which later became Our Lady of Mercy College. The Chapel built as part of this complex included a plaque acknowledging the Sisters' gratitude to him. "PRAY FOR THE REVd MIC. McALROY to Whose Exertions THE SISTERS OF MERCY are Indebted for the Erection of

this CONVENT and CHAPEL A.D 1862." In 1891 this chapel was replaced with the beautiful building that still stands.

The first Sister to enter the community in August 1860, was Catherine Donovan (Sister Mary Joseph), the daughter of the wealthy Sydney merchant, Jeremiah Donovan. An extended account of her reception including much of the text of Father D'Arcy's florid sermon was published in *The Freeman's Journal* on August 8 1860. Joseph spent many years as Superior of Goulburn's first branch house at Boorowa, which became the beneficiary of the generosity of members of her family.



Father McAlroy in the original Goulburn Chapel



Ciborium brought to Goulburn in 1859
Inscription: Presented by the Vy Revd Dean Burke, PP Westport, Co. Mayo, Ireland to the Sisters of Mercy as a mark of his affection on their leaving his parish for Australia July 1859. Hoping they will pray for his soul.

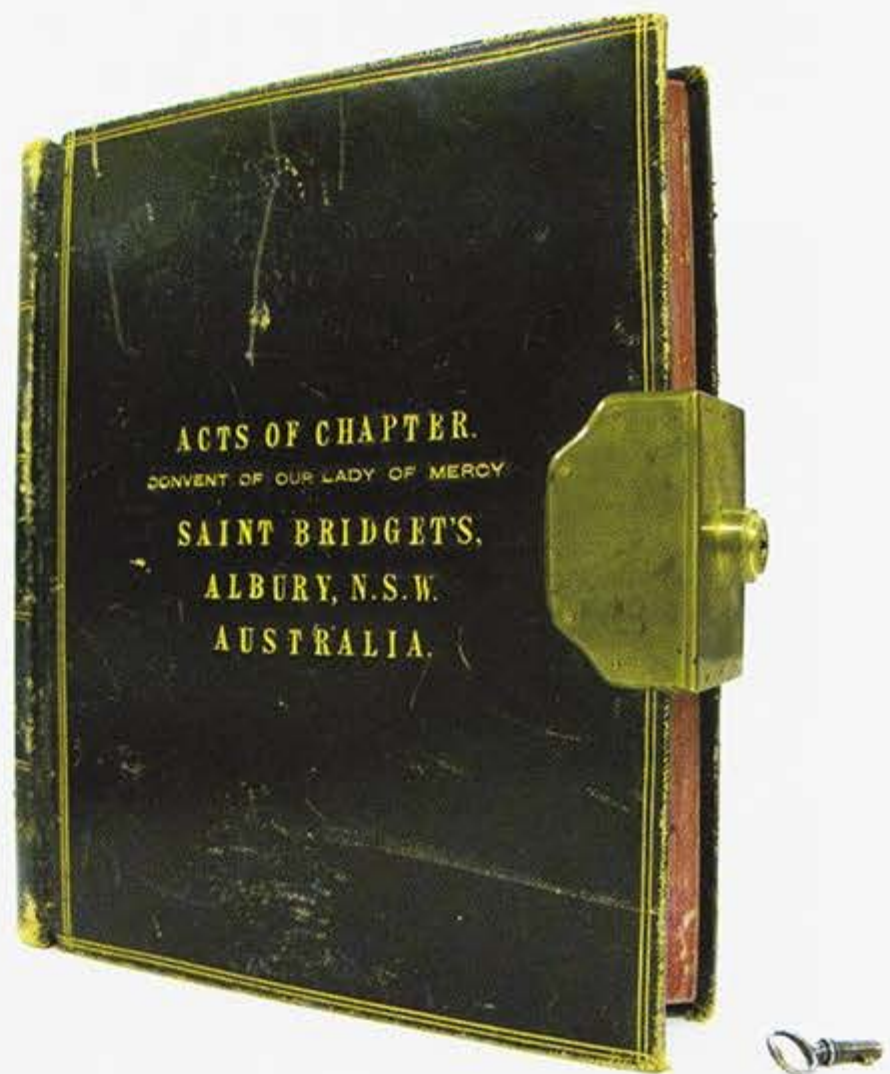
Albury

One of the first acts of the newly appointed Bishop of Goulburn, William Lanigan, was to appoint Father McAlroy as Parish Priest of the growing town of Albury in 1868. Father McAlroy asked for a contingent of Mercy Sisters and two of the original Goulburn group, Ignatius Murphy and de Sales Meyler, volunteered to start the new Convent of Saint Bridget. Ignatius was appointed Superior and de Sales her Assistant.

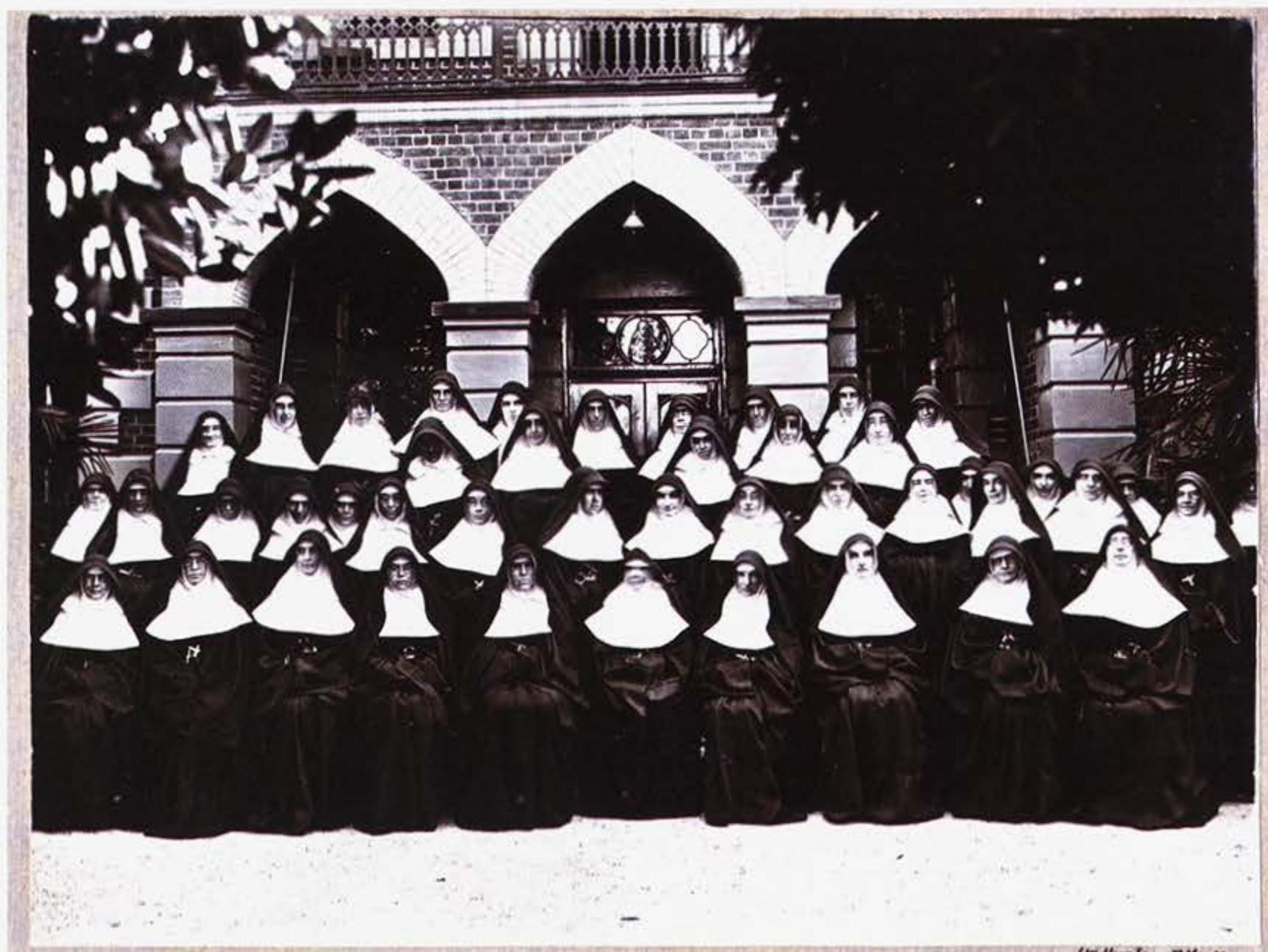
The other founding members were Sisters Camillus O'Donnell and Xavier McDonnell who were among the eight Sisters who had joined the Goulburn community since 1859, and two other young women, Fanny McGrath and Eliza Enright, who wished to join the community. Their journey to Albury took six days. Along the way they were welcomed by families whose daughters they had educated at Goulburn. The first night was spent in Yass, with some of the group staying at the home of Mr and Mrs Owen Hilly. Two days later their daughter Jane followed the Sisters to Albury, entering as their second postulant and becoming Sister Bridget. The second night they stayed at Jugiong where they were presented with a purse of sovereigns. Girls from the Sheahan family from Jugiong had been among the first group of boarders at Goulburn. The Sisters were also welcomed generously at Gundagai and Germanton.

The group arrived in Albury on 22 July 1868, and as at Goulburn, stayed in the Presbytery which was vacated for them until their convent was built. Conditions in Albury appear to have been even more primitive than at Goulburn. On 24 July a Reception Ceremony was held for Fanny McGrath (Sister Joseph).

On 26 July Bishop Lanigan and Bishop Matthew Quinn of Bathurst laid the foundation stone for the new convent and on that occasion £1,770 was subscribed towards its cost. The indefatigable Father McAlroy raised the remaining funds and a fine complex of buildings was opened in 1870, and further extended a few years later. The Chapel was opened in 1879 and includes a stained glass window and a marble plaque in honour of Father McAlroy.



Acts of Chapter - Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Saint Bridget's Albury, N.S.W. Australia



Albury Convent Jubilee

Taken in 1918 outside Albury Convent on the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Albury

Yass

A romantic story is associated with the foundation of the Yass community of the Sisters of Mercy. In 1873 Bishop Lanigan had sent Father McAlroy to Ireland to seek Sisters for his Diocese. He had recruited a group of Presentation Sisters for Wagga Wagga, but shortly before his departure for Australia he was caught in a great storm, and sought refuge at the Convent of Mercy at Rochfortbridge. He spoke of the need for Sisters in Yass, especially to minister to its indigenous people – and immediately all of the Sisters volunteered! Some months later Bishop Lanigan wrote formally to Bishop Nulty in Meath, Ireland, asking for a foundation of Sisters for Yass.

A lengthy period of negotiation between the bishops followed. Whether from natural caution or because of reports of the difficult conditions that Sisters in Australia had experienced, Bishop Nulty sought a series of guarantees – that the Sisters would be provided with “A Proper Residence, Maintenance, Daily Mass and To be accompanied by a Priest”. In February 1875 Lanigan wrote, somewhat huffily, “When asking nuns to come into this Diocese, I considered myself bound to see them provided with what your Lordship requires” and then details the provision that would be made for them. “Should anything be wanted I hold myself responsible” he added, with a cajoling plea at the end that the Sisters would be sent “for the old Faith”.

The delays meant that this group had time to make better preparations than the earlier one. *The Rochfortbridge Annals* for August tell us that “M. M. Stanislaus and S. M. Paul [having gone to Dublin] have to select some pianos and harmoniums for the foreign missions and afterwards they intend visiting some of the convents in the neighbourhood of Dublin hoping that some of the young lady boarders would have vocations and would join as postulants for Yass.” They left Rochfortbridge on 21 August, and from London on the *Gainsborough* – which had such a large passenger list as to make the ship uncomfortably overcrowded.

On 29 December 1875, Sisters Paul Fielding, Bernard Grennan and Alacoque McLaughlin and four young Irish women arrived in Yass to a grand reception including a welcome by the indigenous leader. Until a convent was built, Dean O’Keefe gave up the Presbytery to accommodate the Sisters.

Just three days after their arrival, Margaret Nally, one of the young women who had come from Ireland, formally entered the Yass community as a postulant, later becoming Sister M Berchmans. The other three – Catherine Leahy, Anastasia Mullaly and Ellen O’Neill – were ceremonially received as novices on 30 April 1876, becoming Sisters Xavier, Joseph and Stanislaus.

In December 1877 the Sisters took possession of their new Convent, Mount Carmel.

Like Ignatius Murphy, Paul Fielding had true missionary zeal. In 1887 the new Diocese of Wilcannia was established in the far west of New South Wales, with John Dunne, a lifelong friend of Paul’s, as the first Bishop. He wanted a group of Mercy nuns and Paul, with six others from the Yass community, left for Wilcannia in July 1890. Later one of them, Gertrude Grogan, wrote a biography of Paul, *Life Story of a Valiant Woman*.



The Yass Founders, Paul Fielding, Bernard Grennan and Alacoque McLaughlin - 1875



Dear Mother Alacoque.

Forty six years ago the residents of Yass offered you a glad welcome on the occasion of your coming to our town as one of the first band of the Sisters of Mercy. To-day our greetings are warmer and gladder in the years that have elapsed since that first welcome you have been to us a true friend and a thoughtful living counsellor. We cannot forget that you left your beloved Convent in dear old Ireland and all its fond associations to traverse ten thousand miles of land and sea to the distant regions of sunny Australia to help in the enlightenment and sanctification of her children. You have ever been interested in our welfare and above all you have striven to promote our spiritual good by inspiring words and earnest exhortations. One characteristic of your work in Australia which appears in a forcible

way to us is that you have been in a special manner the friend of all those in need of sympathy and the sick have ever been the special objects of your devotedness. Petitions rise up to-day for you dear Mother and what a company of intercessors in heaven unite in pleading with us; among them the many souls whom you have helped on the last great journey. God will listen to us and in reward for your fifty golden years of labour He will pour out on you the full measure of His choicest graces. To our prayers we add our loving congratulations on the attainment of your Golden Jubilee and we beg you to accept the accompanying gift as a slight token of our appreciation. We are, dear Mother Alacoque,
Your sincere friends,

Agreed in behalf of the Parishioners, friends and
ex-pupils of Yass Convent: 9th Dec 1919

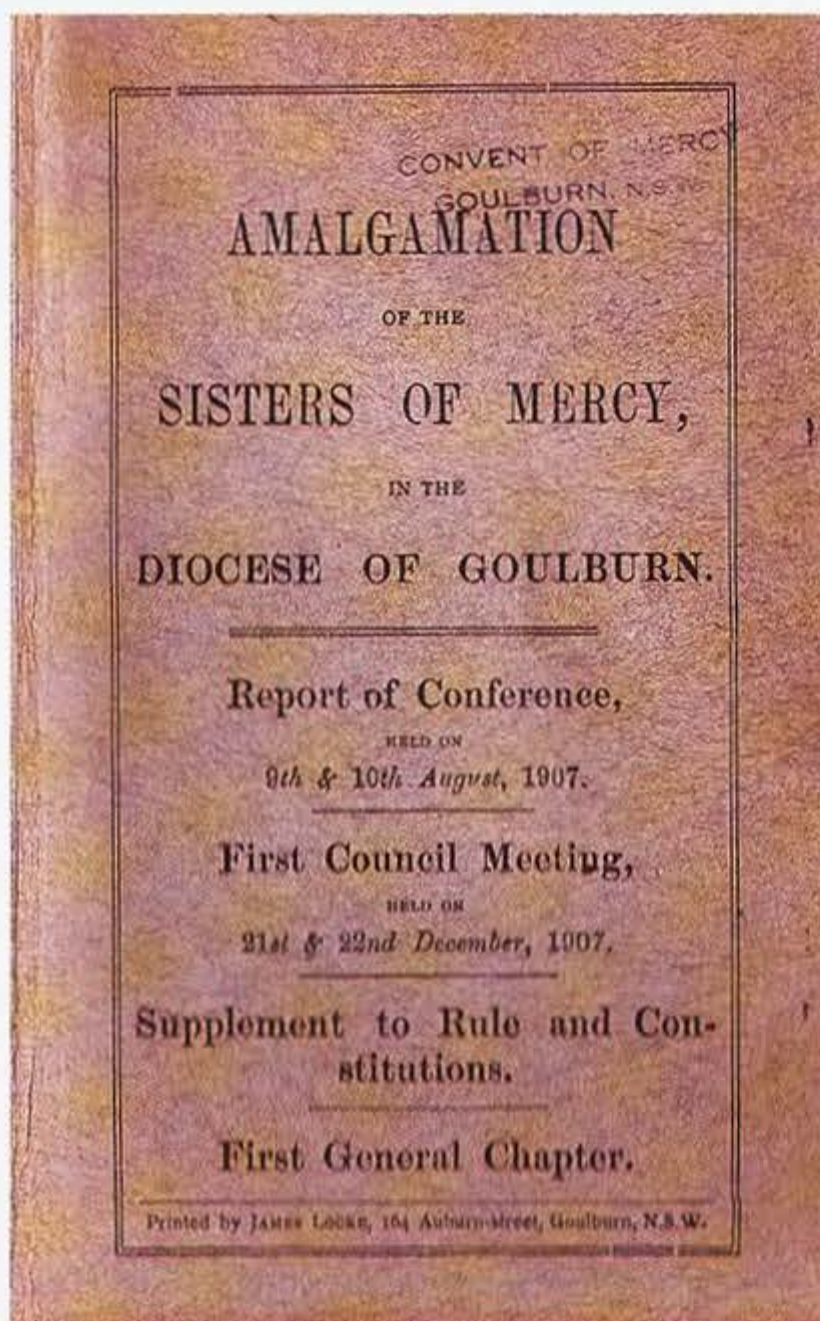
Illuminated Address given to Mother Alacoque McLaughlin on her Golden Jubilee - 9 December 1919
From the parishioners, friends and ex-pupils of Yass convent

Amalgamation

The first Rule of the Sisters of Mercy was based on the monastic tradition, and when new houses were established they became independent of the mother house, each with its own superior and house of formation or novitiate. However from the beginning there were exceptions: very small houses and those close to a mother house might be established as branch houses, and this practice increased as time went on.

Although Albury was founded from Goulburn it followed the original tradition of autonomy, and Yass too followed suit, even though the three houses were at that time all within the same Diocese. In the latter part of the nineteenth century each of them founded a series of branch houses. In 1906 advice was received that the Papal

administration regarded "amalgamation of the various communities of the same order in each Diocese under one Superior General.... [as] opportune". Bishop Gallagher of Goulburn called a conference of representatives from the three head houses, and after deliberation all members agreed in 1907 to amalgamate to form one Congregation. Mother Brigid Hartnett from the Goulburn house became the first Mother General of the amalgamated Congregation. She served in this role for two periods each of twelve years, with a short break between 1919 and 1923, finishing her second term in 1935. Although a central novitiate and Generalate were established, the amalgamation was kept as loose as possible, and for many years the Sisters maintained a primary loyalty to Goulburn, Albury or Yass.



Amalgamation of the Sisters of Mercy 1907



Sister Brigid Hartnett
First Mother General of the Amalgamated Houses of the Sisters of Mercy
in the Diocese of Goulburn

Chapter Three

Life as a Sister of Mercy

Life as a Sister of Mercy

On entering the Convent, Sisters of Mercy undertake a regulated life as members of a Community that is governed by the Congregation's *Rule and Constitutions*.

From the earliest days of the Congregation, each foundation – head house and branch houses – operated autonomously of others, and was led by an elected Superior. A small group of elected advisers, Assistant Superior, Bursar and Mistress of Novices, assisted the Superior in governing the Community.

Decisions specified by the Rule such as election of the Superior, and admission of new candidates, were made at meetings of Chapter, where professed Sisters cast votes. Other decisions were made by the Superior, independently or with the assistance of her advisers at Council meetings.

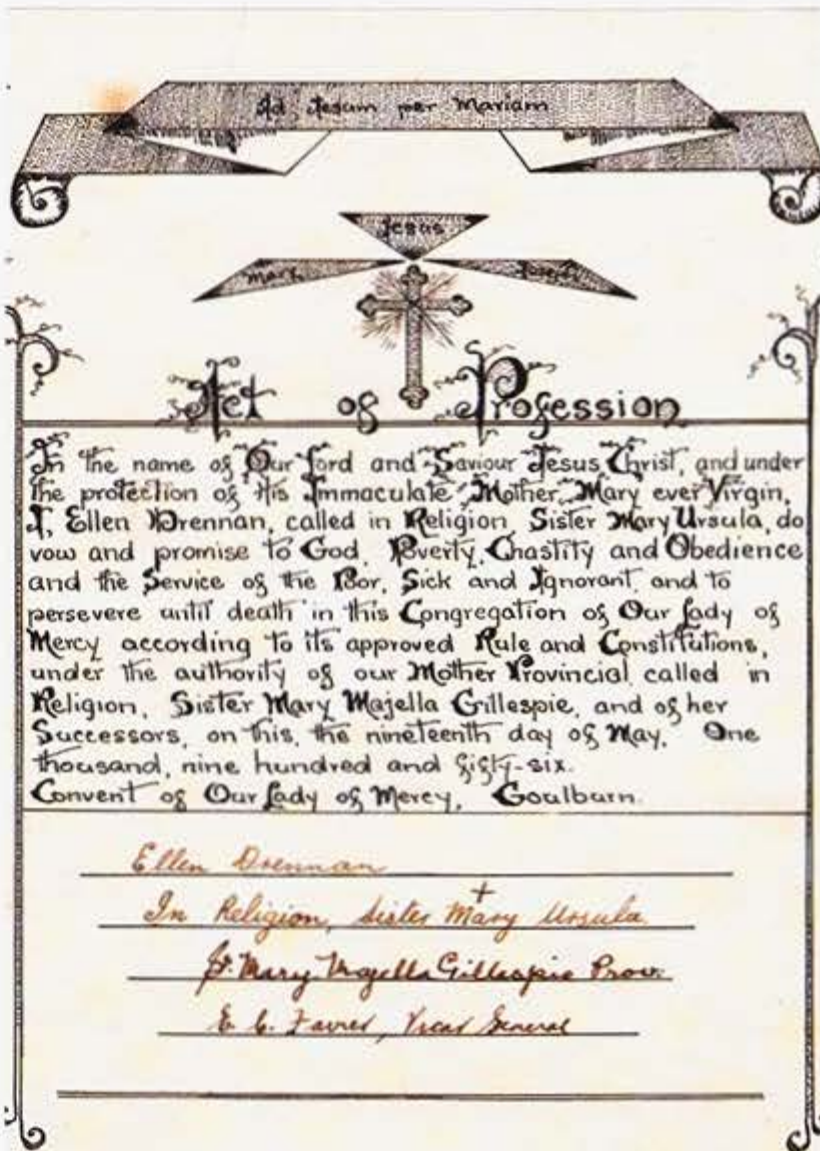
Although the Sisters governed themselves, they worked within the boundaries of a diocese, and at a more immediate level within a parish. Close working relationships with bishops, priests and local communities were essential for a religious community to thrive. Each foundation established its own novitiate where the critical work of formation of new Sisters took place. Novices quickly became accustomed to the daily life of a Sister, governed by an horarium - a daily schedule - that specified times for all activities spiritual and temporal.

The ongoing spiritual development of Sisters was assisted by daily prayer, spiritual reading, community life and regular retreats – periods of intense concentration on spiritual life.



Act of Profession - Madeleine Lawrence 1927

The structure, the formal *Rule and Constitutions*, and the less formal but crucial *Customs and Minor Regulations* were intended to ensure that each member was formed and guided spiritually, that the work of the Congregation and the local Community was carried out, that members of the Community lived harmoniously and that the Congregation continued to grow and develop.



Act of Profession - Ursula Drennan 1956

However, religious houses also needed to operate in a practical sense – buildings had to be constructed and maintained, income generated and bills paid. As congregations grew the tasks became increasingly complex and sound financial management skills and record keeping became even more important.

Convent buildings needed to be practical and appropriate. Catherine McAuley had been very particular about this. Basic, decent living conditions were provided but any rich ornamentation was limited to the Chapel. For the Sisters, living and sleeping arrangements were spare, with no luxuries. Fine china, linen and silverware were kept for visitors, especially the Community chaplain.

Some Sisters spent nearly all their lives in one house, but increasingly mobility between houses has become the practice, allowing for community change and renewal.

At life's end Sisters are buried where they die, and this is why the Goulburn sisters are buried in twenty five locations.

To LIVE

IS CHRIST

ACT OF PROFESSION

ALMIGHTY AND MOST LOVING FATHER, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, I, KERRY JOSEPHINE SHOEMARK, FREELY CHOOSE TO CONSECRATE MYSELF TO YOUR LOVE, AND TO SERVE YOU FAITHFULLY IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN UNION OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY. I BIND MYSELF TO JESUS CHRIST AND HIS REDEMPITIVE MISSION.

IN YOUR HANDS, SISTER MARY JOHN KEENAN, MY PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR, I VOW CHASTITY, POVERTY AND OBEDIENCE, UNTIL DEATH, ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTIONS.

MAY CHRIST WHOSE WAY I NOW CHOOSE, BY THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THROUGH THE PRAYER OF MARY, ENABLE ME TO CARRY OUT THE CONSECRATION I HAVE MADE.

SIGNED: *Kerry Shoemark*

WITNESSES: *Sister Mary John Keenan*

PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR: *Sister Mary John Keenan*

SACRED HEART CHURCH
NORTH ALBURY

25th NOVEMBER 1979

Act of Profession - Kerry Shoemark 1979

Act of Renewal

omnipotent and Eternal God, I, Sister Mary Benedict, do ratify this day in the presence of Our Heavenly Court, the Vows which I made at my Profession, and promise faithfully to observe Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, and the Service of the Poor, Sick, and Ignorant, and to persevere until the end of my life in this Institute of our Blessed Lady of Mercy according to its approved Rule and Constitutions and under her protection. I most humbly supplicate Thy Divine Goodness, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to grant me grace to fulfil these obligations. Amen.

Act of Renewal - Benedict Tanner

Act of Renewal - Benedict Tanner

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Chapter Three: Life as a Sister of Mercy

Maintaining the Mercy Way

The Mercy communities established in Australia were autonomous of the original house in Dublin and of one another, but closely bound by the Rule and tradition. In each new foundation the pattern of the Mercy Sisters' way of life was quickly established, with bound Acts of Chapter recording major decisions of the new communities.

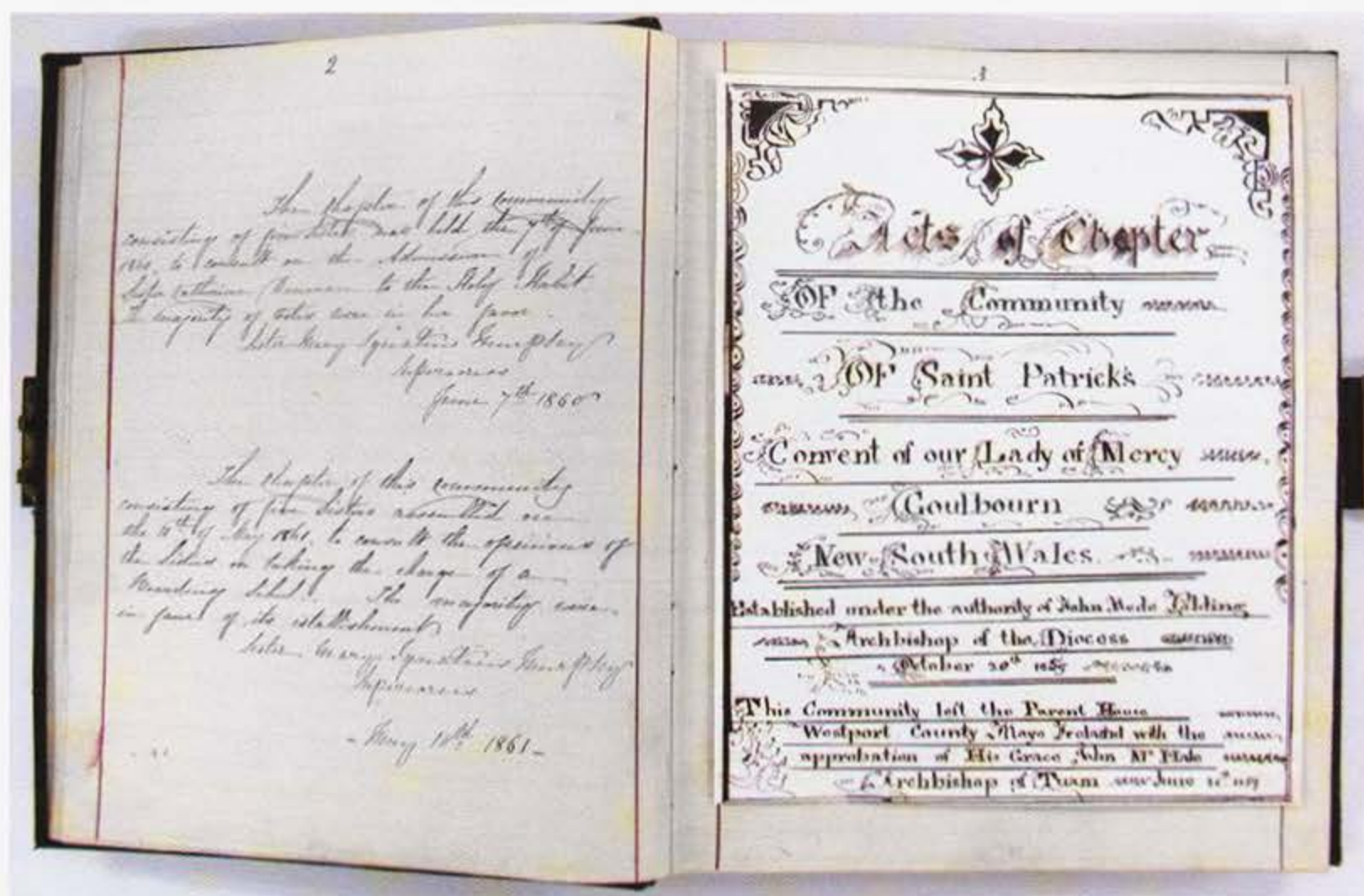
As already described, each new foundation took with it the *Mercy Rule and Constitutions*. As communities developed, and as the provisions of Canon Law required, each Congregation was expected to make appropriate adjustments to the text of what was now called the *Constitutions* and submit it to Rome for approval.

The amalgamation of the three houses of Goulburn, Albury and Yass required alterations to be made to the original Rule, and minimal changes were approved in 1908. It was not until 1930 that a fuller revision for Goulburn was developed and approved, and this in turn brought with it the need for adjustments to the *Customs and Minor Regulations* used in the Goulburn communities.

The new versions provide telling evidence of the Goulburn Sisters' unwillingness to move too far from their roots in Dublin at least with regard to the Rule.

Although incorporating what were considered essential changes, both the 1930 *Constitutions* and the 1931 *Customs* remain close to the originals in wording and organisation, and the Council Minute of April 11 1931 confirms that this was intentional: "The object of the Meeting was to deal with changes in the Customs of the Srs. of Mercy of the Amalgamated Houses. The copy [of the *Customs*] was that which came from Baggot Street Convent, Ireland. After much discussion it was decided to make as few changes as possible in the original text. In fact none but absolutely necessary changes were made". In reality the changes were so minimal that the newly revised documents were still full of inconsistencies and anachronisms.

A feature of the Goulburn Congregation particularly after the 1907 Amalgamation was the large number of branch houses. Because the *Constitutions* and *Customs* made only limited provision for these, separate rules for branch houses were developed for Goulburn but no attempt was made to incorporate them into the *Constitutions* for many years.



Acts of Chapter of the Community of Saint Patrick's Convent of Our Lady of Mercy Goulburn New South Wales
Entries for 1860 and 1861

Becoming a Sister

Entering religious life has always been a huge commitment, involving a lengthy period of formation and discernment, following processes which are both formal and rigorous.

A practice encouraged by Catherine McAuley was that Sisters setting out to form a new foundation should be accompanied by one or more postulants. This had the particular benefit that quite soon after the establishment of the new house, the impressive ceremony of a Reception would be held, encouraging the existing community members and attracting positive public attention.

However, not all postulants proved suitable for the Community. This was the challenging situation that the first group for Goulburn confronted. Adelaide Kirwan

travelled on the *Saldanha* with the professed Sisters and on arrival sought entry as a Sister, but the very first Act of Chapter of the new community records:

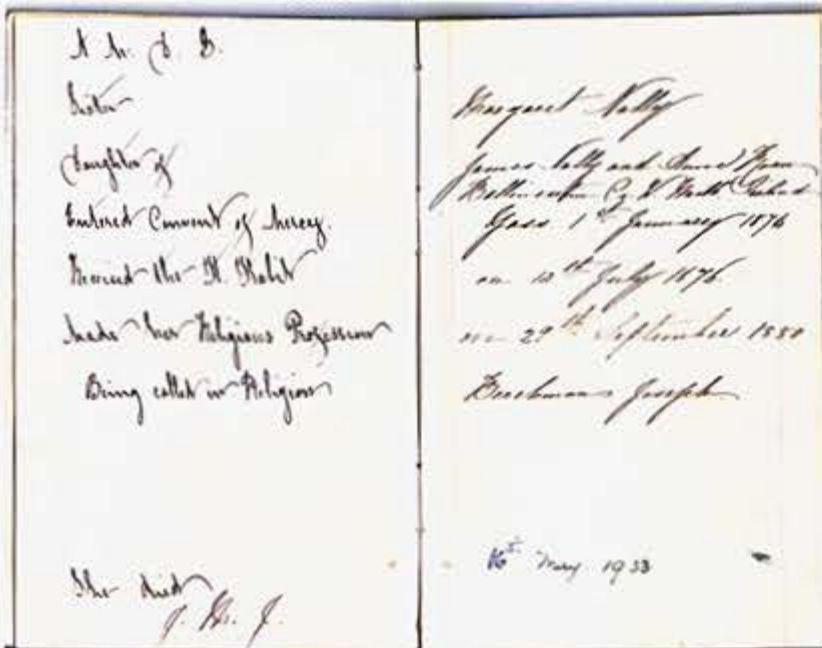
The first Chapter of this Community consisting of five Sisters was held the 23rd of May 1860 to consult on admitting Sister Adelaide Kirwin [sic] to receive the Holy Habit. The Chapter decided in the negative.

The reasons are not known, but Sister Ignatius was now faced with a dilemma. She had no legal responsibility for Adelaide, but clearly felt a moral responsibility to provide for her and sought the best outcome possible. In a letter (marked Private) to Archdeacon McEncroe in Sydney, dated 6 July 1860, she wrote:

*I am sorry to have to ask you to perform for me rather an unpleasant act of kindness.
The postulant we brought out with us, we found so totally unsuited for Religious life we could not possibly allow her to receive the Holy [Habit] and she is anxious to return to Ireland We all feel this is the best course for her as I could not conscientiously ask any Community in Australia to admit her The Dean and Father d'Arcy advised me to write to you and ask you if you know of any family returning to Ireland under whose care I could place her as tho' not very young. I would not feel happy if she were without protection during so long a voyage I think she could go in the second cabin the entire expense will devolve on us, and under the present circumstances, I must endeavor to incur as little outlay as I can*



Novices at St Michael's Novitiate, North Goulburn - early 1960s



Yass Register of Professions 1890 - 1892

Progress to final vows as a professed Sister of Mercy has varied slightly over the years. The following summary is taken from the 1930 Goulburn *Constitutions* and varies little from the original procedures.

Women interested in joining the Congregation applied for admittance as postulants. After a series of interviews they were accepted as postulants for initial formation under the supervision of the Mistress of Novices. This role was one of the most senior and important in the Congregation. On entry, postulants signed an undertaking that they were entering the Community freely, and would not expect or request any wages or remuneration. After six months, those who wished to continue asked to be received as novices, and members of the Congregational Council decided on their suitability through a secret ballot. In the ceremony of Reception the novices were clothed in the religious habit.

Undertaking to be signed in the presence of a Witness by Postulants entering a Religious Community in accordance with the instructions of the Plenary Council of Sydney, 1895, No. 90.

I, Sister Mary Edmund Farrell being about to enter the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy, Goulburn in the Diocese of Goulburn, as a Postulant, do hereby, of my own free will, and with full deliberation, and in consideration of my being received at my own request into said Institute, and lodged, fed, and clothed therein in like manner with other persons of similar degree and condition in said Institute, undertake and declare that in case I shall leave the Institute of my own accord, or be dismissed by my Superior, I shall not demand myself entitled to any wages or remuneration of any kind, other than such lodging, food, and clothing as is provided for the services I shall render or the duties I shall perform while I shall be in said Institute of Our Lady of Mercy at Goulburn as Postulant, or Novice, or Professed Sister, and that I shall not demand any wages or remuneration other than as is provided for the performance of such services or duties.

In testimony whereof I have hereto set my hand this sixteenth day of March in the year of our Lord, One Thousand nine hundred and twenty-four Sister Mary Edmund Farrell

Witness Sister M. Josephine Cain
A. Mary Bridget Hartnett

Two full years of intensive formation and training in the novitiate followed. If judged suitable by the Council the novice was admitted to Profession, received the full habit, and made temporary vows for a period of three years. Perpetual vows – final Profession – followed, in a ceremony at which the Sister received the Mercy ring. The vows were renewed annually.

Before the 1907 amalgamation there were novitiates in Goulburn, Albury and Yass, and for a few years, in Wyalong. From 1909 all postulants and novices for the Goulburn Congregation trained at St Michael's Novitiate in North Goulburn, a property bought for this purpose and much extended later. This building also served as the Congregational headquarters, where the Mother General now known as the Congregation Leader lived.

Undertaking of a Postulant - Edmund Farrell - 1924



Goulburn Register of Professions - 1859

Living the Religious Life

In their daily routine, Sisters have always integrated the religious and practical aspects of their lives.

Until the 1970s their religious observances were numerous and clearly prescribed. Each part of the day was marked by prayer, from rising to bedtime. When a priest was available they attended daily Mass. At dinner and supper their meals were accompanied by reading from a spiritual book. Two Exams were made daily. Prayers specific to the Congregation were added to the regular prayers of the Office and the Angelus. Set times were allocated for meditation. The Rosary was recited daily (often while walking). On set days and seasons such as Lent additional prayers were added to the regular ones.

Since the changes after the Second Vatican Council, this set prayer regime has become much more flexible, but the expectation of regular prayer and Mass attendance remains, along with an emphasis on continuing development in theology, scripture and spirituality.

Combining religious responsibilities with practical works, particularly in structured environments like schools and hospitals, requires energy and dedication and an understanding of priorities. For Mercy Sisters, performing the works of mercy takes precedence over additional voluntary prayers.

The Convent chapel has always been central to the lives of the Sisters. Particularly in the larger houses it became a place of great beauty as benefactors endowed stained glass windows, church silver and vestments. Smaller houses had simpler chapels, but they too were beautiful.



Candelabra from the original Goulburn Chapel

The personal and spiritual library of Sister Ellen Yates, Congregation Archivist, who died in 2008, is now located in the Congregation's Heritage Room. A collection gathered over a lifetime as a Sister of Mercy, it offers insight into some of the sources on which the Sisters draw for their spiritual nourishment and prayer.



Seminar on the Renewal of Religious Life 1973

Practical life

A religious congregation is a complex organism, with both practical and spiritual matters to be addressed. The elected Congregation Leader (known at various times as the Superior or the Mother General) of the Goulburn Mercies has overall responsibility for the task of leadership and management. She is assisted by a Congregational Council that represents all sections of the community.

The *Minutes of Council Meetings* from 1922 to 1962 provide valuable insights into the practical concerns of the Congregation. This was a period of consolidation after the pioneer period and before the many changes that followed the Second Vatican Council. The minutes record discussion of a wide range of matters.

An important recurring responsibility reported in the minutes was the appointment of local Superiors to branch houses. This was an increasingly complex task – in 1922 for instance there were twenty seven local Superiors.

Also mentioned are attempts to more closely amalgamate the three original foundations; attempts to unify the various Mercy Congregations in New South Wales or the whole of Australia; and attempts to standardise the *Rule* and the *Customs and Minor Regulations*.

Practical issues are addressed – the decision to accept responsibility for the Sacred Heart Hospital at Young, the need for a trained nurse in larger communities, improving the educational qualifications of the Sisters, the closure of small schools and the consequent difficulties, plans for expansion, the growth of communism worldwide, the dearth of vocations, and management of property and financial matters including the need to contain costs.

The challenges of managing the amalgamated community can be deduced from the minutes. It is clear that the practice of electing one Councillor from each of the founding houses of Goulburn, Albury and Yass was retained over this whole period, and that local affiliations remained very strong. The representatives from Albury and to some degree Yass had difficulty in attending the meetings, and the absence of the representatives is recorded, with an occasional note of exasperation.

By the early 1960s change came more rapidly – more schools closed as did the secondary sections of smaller schools, a Hospital Training School was developed at Albury, and in the very last entry in September 1962, the Sisters' prayers are asked for Archbishop O'Brien and Bishops Cullinane and Henschke as they left for the first meeting of the momentous Second Vatican Council in Rome.

Balancing the Books

Ensuring that new houses are financially viable has always been required of Mercy Communities. “No new Monastery shall be opened unless it have a certain [i.e. reliable] revenue for its support” and “the Bursar shall keep an exact account, in writing, of all she receives and expends”, but balancing the books has often been a delicate matter.

Meticulous records are required to be kept by even the smallest communities and reports submitted to the Congregational Bursar. The Congregational Archives holds many handwritten account books. Some are for large, comparatively complex communities including those with boarding schools. Others are for very small ones, like Barmedman, where one account book covers the period from 1907 when it was founded to 1921 when it closed.

The 1907 and 1921 entries are both signed off by Bishop Gallagher. These financial records provide a window into the preoccupations and daily life of the Sisters.

Although the Sisters have always lived remarkably modestly, some income is required. In the past, regular income was generated almost entirely from tuition fees from schools and for “extras” like music or typing and from interest earned from Sisters’ dowries. Bequests, donations and money raised by fetes and bazaars were crucial for funding new buildings and providing facilities and services.

A system of income sharing to support very small branch houses was introduced as part of the 1907 amalgamation, when a capitation fee to support the Novitiate was also introduced.

1920		St Joseph's Convent of Mercy, Barmedman		1920	
Receipts				Expenditure	
To Balance	£ 31 12 11 1/2			November Groceries - Mr. Horn	£ 9 10 3
November Music fees	1 19 3			" " Mr. Meagher	1 12 3
" " " A Larkin	1 12 9			" " Mr. Longuey	1 9 6
" " " "	1 0 0			Bread	15 6
" " " "	1 3 6			Dead List	10 0
" " " "	1 8 3			Meeting	2 4 0
" " School fees	2 8 0			Dental	12 6
" " Commercial Class	16 6			Tea	1 15 6
	10 8 3			Postage of stationery &c.	11 6
	31 12 11 1/2			Clothing	1 15 6
Balance in hand	£ 42 1 2 1/2			Meat	1 5 3
	14 1 3 1/2			Medicine	9 9
	£ 27 19 11			Sundries	6 4
					£ 14 1 3 1/2
December Music fees	2 10 0			December Fuel	19 9
" " " Miss Clarke	16 3			Postage	7 6
" " " " Miss D. Chace	1 9 0			Meat	1 13 1 1/2
" " " " "	1 10 0			Clothing	3 4 1 1/2
" " " " "	4 6 6			Bread &c. butter &c.	1 2 2
" " Donation from A.S.C. Guild	2 2 0			Gifts for Priest & Doctor	1 7 8
" " School fees	2 11 3			Fruit & vegetables	9 5
" " Printing fees	10 0			Medicine &c. Sundries &c.	9 3
" " Commercial Class	16 6			Exaction & blind & repairs to bazaar	15 6
	16 11 6			Travelling	9 7 2
	27 19 11			Religious expenses	6 5 0
Dec 20 School fees & Music fees & Larkin	44 11 5				£ 20 6 3
	2 17 3				
	46 8 8				
	16 6 3				
Balance in hand	£ 30 2 5				

Barmedman Account Book 1907–1921

Getting on with the Clergy

A good relationship with both the local Bishop and the local Parish Priest is essential for successful operation of any convent. On the whole the clergy have been highly appreciative of the work of the Goulburn Mercy Sisters, but there were occasional strains right from the start.

In 1859, although Dean Walsh vacated his presbytery to provide accommodation for the Sisters when they arrived in Goulburn, the relationship became increasingly uneasy, Ignatius writing to Archdeacon McEncroe in 1860 “if we were now entirely free from Dean Walsh we would be truly grateful”. It appears that the Sisters were in fact caught in crossfire between the Dean and his curate, Father D’Arcy.

A letter from Bishop Gallagher to Sister Stanislaus O’Neill, Mother Superior at Yass in February 1906 exemplifies some of the challenges and ways of dealing with them. Since their arrival twenty years previously, Dean O’Keefe had been wonderfully supportive of the Sisters, providing them with accommodation, building the convent and schools, and facilitating their work with the Aboriginal people. However in 1906 he decided to block access to some funds that Stanislaus had requested, perhaps for another building project. Bishop Gallagher writes a judicious letter to Stanislaus, treating her as an understanding equal.

I took it for granted that the Dean would strive to punish the Sisters by every means in his power. You can see now that I was right. I feel convinced that he will not Consent to one penny being drawn as long as he lives. And to force him by

law would entail an action in Equity which would exhaust the whole Fund – Hence I fear you need not look to anything more from this source during the life time of myself or the Dean. But there is not any danger of the “Yass Money” being ultimately lost. He will merely succeed in closing it up for a time.

I am sending you these two papers that you may keep them carefully. They may be required at a later date, while I, in journeying about am in danger of losing them.

His advice to “just wait” was sound: Dean O’Keefe left Yass for Ireland that same year, never to return. It is not known what happened to the money.

The Priest’s Parlour

Visitors to any of the convents would be invited into a reception room – a parlour – not into the convent proper. A frequent guest was the priest who said daily Mass for the Sisters and was normally offered breakfast afterwards. The room where this meal was served became known as the Priest’s Parlour. Larger convents may have had more than one parlour, with a smaller room set aside as the Priest’s Parlour.

Setting up breakfast for the priest acquired a ceremonial status. The Sisters recall the care with which this needed to be done. He sometimes preferred to eat alone – “eggs and bacon and no nuns” – and the best china, silver and handworked linen were kept for his use.



The Priest’s Parlour – a Reconstruction

Generous Benefactors: Donovans, Ryans and Countless Others

From the beginning the Sisters have benefited from generous gifts from many benefactors, some munificent like those from the Ryan and Donovan families, some more modest.

After the Sisters of Mercy came to Boorowa in 1882 John Nagle Ryan of Galong Castle donated forty acres of his Boorowa land to build the convent, and later his sister Miss Anastasia Ryan not only provided generously towards construction of the parish school at Galong, but also paid the cost of building a boys' boarding school there.

The brothers of Sister Joseph Donovan, the first Sister to join the Goulburn community, and for many years Superior of the Mercy Convent at Boorowa, were equally generous. In 1887 John Joseph Donovan paid nearly

£2,000 to build the Boorowa parish school. In 1897 he and his brothers paid for the construction of an oratory at the convent. The superb stained glass windows and the painted wooden altar from this chapel are now in the Funeral Chapel of Tobin Brothers in Belconnen. On his death John Donovan bequeathed a further eleven acres of land at Boorowa to the Sisters. Thomas, one of the younger Donovan brothers, left a generous bequest which came to the Sisters and paid for the construction of a new hospital in Cootamundra.

Countless others have provided for the Sisters in less grand but equally kind ways, including those who during hard times brought food to the back door of the convent, or at the start of the school year, stocked the convent pantries with groceries.



Sterling Silver and Ivory Trowel

Inscription: Presented to the Right Rev: J. Gallagher DD, Bishop of Goulburn by A. Ryan on the occasion of his blessing and laying The Memorial Stone of the Galong Convent and School. J Sharkey, Rector May 5th 1910

Food for the Household

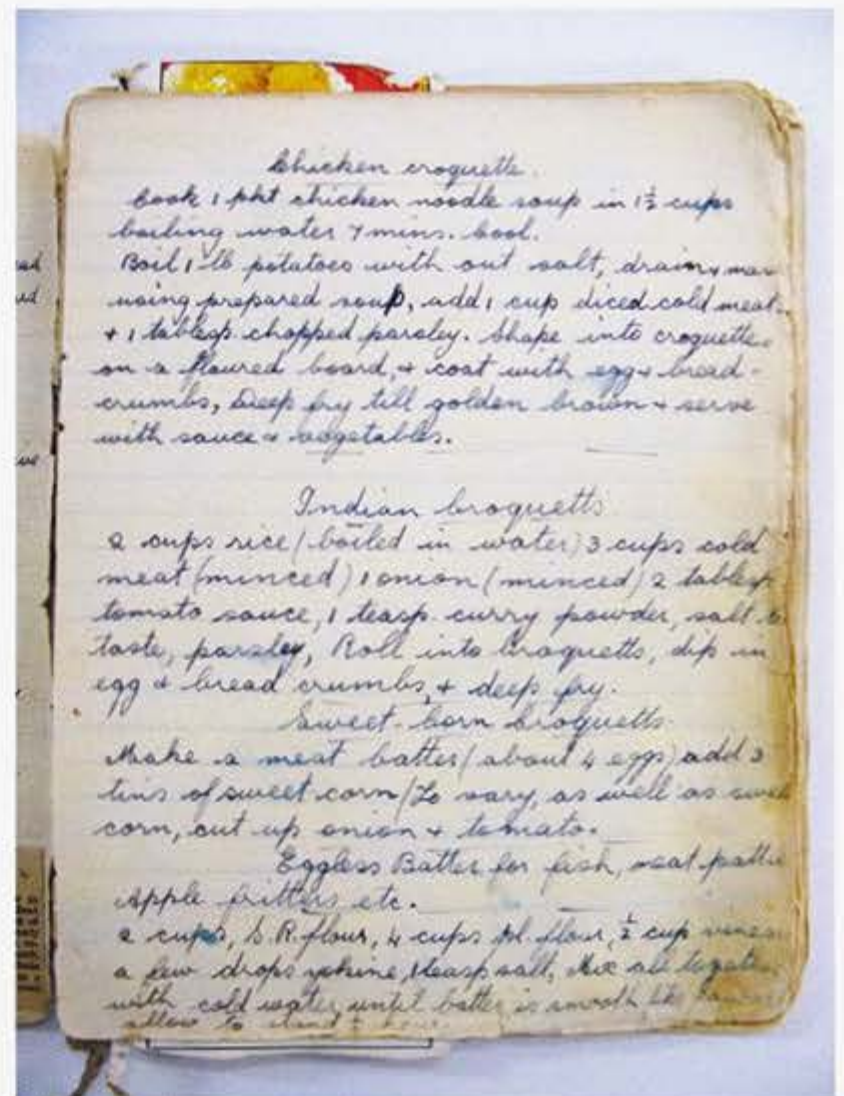


Sister Zita Gilbert (1900-1996)

With its roots in middle-class nineteenth century Ireland the Mercy Congregation was not surprisingly established with two classes – choir sisters and lay sisters. The early lay sisters were usually uneducated and performed manual work. They were identified by their modified habit and they did not join the choir sisters to say the Office. Sister Rose Hughes, one of the Goulburn pioneers, was a lay sister.

It is not known how many of the Goulburn Sisters were lay sisters, though the numbers would have been quite small. Some entries in the Goulburn Acts of Profession include the words “Lay Sister”, the first in 1872 and the last in 1932, but this is not a uniform practice. The division into two classes was formally abolished when the new *Constitutions* of the Australian Union of Mercy Sisters was approved in 1959, but in practice admitting women as lay sisters had been discouraged in the Goulburn Congregation for many years.

As educational standards rose and the size and complexity of schools, hospitals and orphanages increased, opportunities presented themselves for responsible work for Sisters whose talents did not lie in the classroom. Sisters Zita Gilbert and Margaret Herrmann entered as lay sisters, both spending many years managing complex domestic systems – Zita cooked for 120 children and four other Sisters at St Joseph's Orphanage at Thurgoona, and Margaret supervised the kitchen in the Mercy Hospital at Cootamundra. The skill, dedication and personalities of these and other Sisters who work in the domestic sphere have acquired legendary status, receiving recognition both within their religious communities and outside.



Sister Margaret Herrmann's Cookbook



Sister Margaret Herrmann (1912-2005)

A Convent Refectory

Like members of other Catholic religious communities, Sisters of Mercy make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Rule makes clear that these vows cover all aspects of life, and until the 1970s the way in which the vows were expressed in daily life was formally defined.

The requirement for simple and frugal living combined with the monastic tradition of communal dining in the Sisters' dining room, the Refectory. There are detailed instructions for the Refectory in the *Customs and Minor Regulations* (1931 Goulburn edition):

It is our custom that in the Refectory there should be a table across the upper end, to which are joined two more, parallel to each other ... A reading desk, a shelf or small table to receive the tin covers, etc., when removed, a few pictures on pious subjects, and a crucifix, complete the furniture.

There are drawers in our Refectory tables, but no Sister has any cup, plate, spoon, knife, etc., reserved particularly for her.

Except in the Infirmary, we do not use silver plate, glass or porcelain, even should a present of such be given to us.

We do not use tablecloths, but the Sisters are allowed Serviettes at meals.

During dinner and supper, one of the Sisters was rostered to read aloud to the Community from an appropriate religious book.

In a verse letter to Sister Ursula Frayne (October 1839), Catherine McAuley reminds the young Sister about simplicity in the refectory. Ursula has clearly asked for more elegant teacups to be sent from Dublin to Booterstown, perhaps on the grounds that what they have is unsuitable for serving the priest, but:

*Now as to the China, your taste must be bad
If you don't like what we send, more than those that you had...*

*Here again holy poverty's flitted away
'Tis plain you want nothing in this but display.*

She softens this message by suggesting that provided the tea is "well made and of exquisite flavor" "good Father John" won't notice the teacups, finishing with an extended joke about the risks associated with sending crockery to and fro between the two locations, and signing it off maternally "the affectionate Mother of Ursula Frayne".



Convent Refectory Table - A Reconstruction

Holidays

The need for designated holidays was not recognised in the *Constitutions* or the *Customs* of the Sisters, but within a few years of the establishment of the Congregation in Ireland, a house was bought for Sisters for rest and convalescence at the harbour town of Kingstown.

Sisters used to come “home” to the mother house for the annual retreat, and to some degree this would have been a holiday. More formal holidays became possible for the Goulburn community in 1914 when the uncle of Sister Casimir Cranney presented Sister Brigid Hartnett with a seaside cottage at Cronulla, asking that it be used for annual holidays. Bishop Barry clearly had reservations about the dangers posed by what he saw as relaxing the vow of poverty by recreational outings and beach holidays

in particular. He had been invited to a meeting of the Congregational Council (1st December 1928) and the Minutes record: “His Lordship said he feared the danger of a little laxity creeping in as regards Poverty through Motor Car Jaunts. Also he remarked on the Rush to Sydney of Sisters during Vacation. Of course this did not include visit to Doctor, or even a Sea side rest.”

The weatherboard cottage at Cronulla, known as “The Retreat” was extended and later replaced by a modern brick house. Holiday houses were bought by the Yass sisters at Avalon, replaced by one at Manly, and by the Albury sisters at Mornington, later at Mentone in Melbourne. Sisters talk of simple, happy holidays at the seaside, when the Rule was slightly relaxed.



Sisters holidaying at Cronulla c.1970

Always Occupied

Life as a Sister of Mercy is a busy one, not only because of the tasks to be done, but because of the Rule's directive: "the Sisters shall be careful never to indulge idleness, but be always occupied in some useful work".

The original daily schedule provided for two periods of recreation, which the Community would spend together. The *Customs and Minor Regulations* paint an evocative picture:

It is our custom that the Community Room be furnished with a table in the centre, with drawers, one of which is usually assigned to each of the Professed Sisters, and sufficiently long to allow of all the Sisters, Postulants and Novices as well as the Professed, assembling round it at recreation. Chairs to serve all the Sisters, a piano and any other musical instrument, prints, paintings, and sculpture on pious subjects, matting beneath the table, and a hearth-rug, writing desks, and whatever else is needed for the manual works of the Sisters.

A daily Spiritual Lecture was read, while handwork such as needlework and the making and mending of the Sisters' clothes continued. A library was provided, and a press in which to put work, to maintain the "neatness which must always be preserved in the Convent".

The traditions established early continued long, and fine examples of needlework, tatting and crochet work were and are still created. Catherine McAuley's early habit of writing humorous verse has become traditional in many communities, and on special feast days the Sisters might devise and present a concert.



"Useful Work" in the form of Crochet and Tatting



Illustrated Booklet of Original Verse by Sister Francis O'Grady (1933-1990)

Being Invisible

Although the Sisters of Mercy were not enclosed, the regulations and customs governing them made them “invisible” outside the convent. In the nineteenth century few women were included in public life but the Sisters wore the cloak of invisibility much longer than women in general society.

At grand events like the foundation of a new house, or the opening of new buildings, the presence of Sisters was occasionally noted in the press, but all speeches were made by others, typically the Bishop or the Parish Priest. In records of public meetings called to consider matters directly relevant to them, they are not mentioned.

Books written by Sisters did not include an authorial statement. This anonymity was traditional for most

works by women until the mid-nineteenth century, but as late as 1925, Sister Gertrude Grogan’s biography of Paul Fielding, *Life Story of a Valiant Woman*, did not carry her name.

It is in the photographic records that this invisibility is most obvious. Early photographs of public and private occasions show bishops, priests and important laymen from the community. Later images show important women, but not Sisters who were not seen even in photographs of groups such as ex-students. School photographs do not include the Sisters, though their unseen presence admonishing good behaviour is often evident. It was not until the 1960s that photographs of the Sisters became accepted, and even later that they became common. Even then, some Sisters resisted the lure of the lens.



Consecration of Children of Mary, Goulburn Convent Chapel – 1910
The Children of Mary are in white veils and the Sisters are in black in the stalls at the sides.

Travelling Light

As with other aspects of the Sisters' lives, where they lived as well as how they lived, was until the 1970s determined within the context of the needs of the local community, rather than the Sisters' individual preferences.

Just how long a Sister stayed in a particular community varied. One of the terms of the Amalgamation was that as far as possible the Sisters would be appointed only to houses associated with the parent house with which they were associated. It was not until the appointment of Sister Mary Majella as Mother General in 1951 that this practice changed, to some disaffection.

A local Superior was appointed to each house for three years though this term was sometimes renewed. Other Sisters' appointments were made annually, usually not in advance.

Each summer the Sisters would come "home" to make their retreat and await an announcement of the house to which they had been appointed. They would have brought with them all their possessions (originally in a tin trunk, later two suitcases) which they would then take with them to their new house, travelling by train until much later when a small number of cars was acquired for use within particular communities.



Houses founded by the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation
Design: Rosanna Horn Design

Chapter Four

“Hurra for Foundations”

Catherine McAuley was an enthusiast for foundations; in one of her letters of 1841 she wrote triumphantly “Hurra for foundations, makes the old young and the young merry”, and within fifteen years of her death there were 3000 Sisters of Mercy throughout the world.

The pattern of rapid expansion was repeated in southern New South Wales, driven primarily by the need of religious schools. In 1907, at the commencement of the Amalgamated Houses of the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Goulburn, there were more than twenty branch houses founded from Goulburn, Albury and Yass. More followed and eventually the Goulburn Mercies established houses in thirty-six cities, towns and villages.

Recording the history of these foundations for the sesquicentenary celebrations was carried out by a group of Sisters who undertook to bring up to date existing written and oral histories using text and photographs. The images vary in age and quality and in some case there were no photographs at all. Some houses had burnt down, others are now bed and breakfasts, or have assumed different roles in Church and school life.

Entries in this chapter were written by Sisters Aileen Wailes, Barbara Murray, Bernice Keane, Gabrielle Marce Owen, Monica Purcell, Rosarii O'Connor and Ursula Drennan. Sisters Christopher Ryan, Gwen Garland, Margarita Duffy, Shirley Garland, and Associate in Mercy Gloria Geurts made further valuable contributions. Many others lent photographs and filled gaps in the narrative.

Albury

Nine years after Mother Mary Ignatius Murphy and the Sisters from Westport founded the Goulburn Mercy Congregation, Rev. Dr. Michael McAlroy, their great benefactor and supporter, was appointed to Albury. He invited the Sisters to establish a convent and school in Albury. Mother Mary Ignatius Murphy, Sisters Mary de Sales, Camillus and Xavier composed the group with Fanny McGrath, a postulant newly arrived from Ireland and two servants. The 270 mile journey from Goulburn took six days in two wagonettes and the Sisters arrived on the grey wintry evening of 22 July 1868 to a warm welcome from the townspeople.

The Sisters' new home was the vacated presbytery which the ladies of the town had not had time to prepare. Despite the rather chaotic start to their life in Albury, the Sisters settled in quickly. On the first day children were enrolled in infants, primary and secondary classes. Four days after the Sisters' arrival, Jane Hilly arrived from Yass to become a postulant and the foundation stone to the new convent was laid, to be completed in 1870. By October three students became boarders and were soon joined by three others, the six forming the nucleus of St. Joseph's High School. Other ministries included visitation of the poor and the sick, instruction of adults and older children in the faith and visitation and instruction of prisoners in gaol.

There had been a denominational school in Albury conducted by brothers, Messrs Simon and Peter Cullen, in the 1860s. Between 1885 and 1898 the Patrician Brothers taught the boys in a hall on the corner of Olive and Smollett Streets. When they left Albury, the Mercy Sisters taught the boys until 1917 when the Christian Brothers arrived to establish Christian Brothers College (CBC), a primary and secondary boys' school.



The Sisters' Primary School for girls was St Brigid's. In 1951 the primary schools were amalgamated and in 1976 a new infants' school was constructed. As the schools grew, lay staff took on more roles. St Brigid's and CBC amalgamated to St Patrick's Primary School, and in 1979 Mr Stan Blakemore became the first lay principal since Peter Cullen more than a century before. Sister Patricia Osborne remained for some years as Religion Co-ordinator and now continues a pastoral role in the school.

St Joseph's boarding school served a wide area along the Murray River and across the Riverina. In 1904 Mother M. Malachy, a far-sighted superior, had acquired an area once occupied by the Presbyterian Church for extra playing fields and buildings for the expanding high school. A three storey building was finished in 1937. The influx of enrolments in the 1960s was accommodated in classrooms vacated when primary students moved to St Brigid's and in new classrooms erected almost coincidentally with the initiation of the Wyndham Scheme. After the famous Goulburn School Strike in 1962, specialist rooms were built with government assistance, supplemented by an Appeal run by the parishioners in the Centenary year of 1968. The Superiors and the successive principals Sisters Veronica, Cecilia McGrath, Antonia Ryan and Aileen Wailes, had been responsible for the funding of all extensions during that long period of time.

By the 1980s the boarding component was no longer a necessity for the country students, and there were also plans between the Sisters and the Christian Brothers to combine the Albury secondary schools. Sister Barbara Murray, St Joseph's principal, prepared it to form part of a co-educational, two-campus school. In 1983 Xavier High School began, with Br Henry Thornber as Principal and Sister Barbara Livermore, Deputy. During the principalship of Sister Angela Jordan, the two religious congregations moved to consolidate the school onto one site, and this took place in 2000. In 2001 principal Sister Frances handed Xavier to the Wagga Diocesan school system, and the first lay principal, Mr. Neville Powles, was appointed. Sister Cabrini still continues a Mercy presence in the school. The original St Joseph's High School buildings in South Albury are now occupied by St Patrick's Primary School.

In 1993, some months after a memorable wake to celebrate 125 years of Mercy living, the Sisters moved from Saint Brigid's Convent to the Mercy Convent in Olive

Street, a move that took approximately four hours. An important era ended and a new one began.

By 1936 Albury had grown towards the north and the Sisters started the Sacred Heart church-school at North Albury. St Anne's School, North Albury followed in 1956, and the Sisters administered it continuously until 2008, even though it entered the diocesan school system when this was set up in 1965. Principals, Sisters Basil Driscoll, Lucina Burt, Maureen Hummerston, Ambrose Ashburner, Teresa Tanner, Margaret Schmetzer, Josephine Doyle, Loretta Corrigan and Anne Hagan redeveloped and expanded the school, which celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2006. The Holy Spirit School, in the northern suburb of Lavington, was opened in 1971 by the Diocese, with Sisters also on the staff. Sisters in the two schools included Monica Esler, Frances Carey, Imelda Seymour, Patrick Mulkeen, Anne Gardiner, Vincent Garrity, Josephine Dick, M Ignatius, Jean Murray and Mary Esler. The focus of the work in the northern part of Albury was often on the poorer families in the outlying areas of the city.

There have been many vocations from Albury. The names of the founding Sisters are familiar to us today and others from later years such as Mother Mary Veronica, Sisters Aloysius, Genéviève, Cecilia, Antonia, Gertrude Mary, Thérèse and Teresina bring to life the spirit of love, compassion and generosity, typical of the daughters of Catherine McAuley.

Albury Mercy Hospital

In 1944 the call from the people of Albury for a Catholic Hospital was answered by the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn. On 29 April 1945, led by Reverend Mother General, Mother Colombière, Mother Hugh Berrell, Sisters Dorothy Hamilton, Agatha Collins and Mark Ryan, arrived in Albury to start their service in healthcare in the primitive setting of the former Chelvey Private Hospital, just up from the Convent of Mercy in Olive Street.

Amazingly, the Mercy Hospital, registered as a general hospital, was ready to receive patients on 8 May and the hospital would function here for twelve years. The site for the new Mercy Hospital, on Poole's Hill at the upper end of Kiewa Street, was chosen as early as 1945 and the

foundation stone was blessed and laid in June 1946. After ten hard years of construction, the five-storey, 90 bed hospital began its service in medical, surgical, maternity and paediatric care. A nurse training school commenced on day one, 1 December 1957, and continued until 1982. The hospital auxiliary began functioning prior to the opening and continues today.

Subject to the changing patterns of healthcare, the Mercy has undergone continuous adaptation, moving out of acute care and into the core services of geriatric medicine, rehabilitation, palliative care and the associated community services in 1999. The Parents and Babies Service continues from the Mercy. In 2008 the management of the Mercy Health Service was transferred to the Sisters of Mercy Melbourne.

The needs of the elderly have always been a priority for Mercy healthcare. This resulted in a 60 bed independent home adjacent to the Mercy Hospital. It was opened under the name of Berrelli in 1962 and then later changed to Marianella in 2003. Planning for another 60 beds in the now renamed Mercy Place is currently underway.

A self-contained unit attached to Marianella, known as Saint Anne's, was handed over to a community of Sisters with various ministries in 1989 and this existed for two or three years. Prior to that, Maureen Gannon, Congregation Leader at the time, had requested in 1986 that a third, smaller community be established at the Mercy Hospital. Known as McAuley House, the Sisters who made up the community were from both health and teaching apostolates. McAuley House ceased to be a residence at the end of 1998.

Wandoo Crescent is where a number of Sisters have lived since 2000. Just up the hill from the great complex of "The Mercy", Catherine McAuley's ministry and vision continues there in different ways.



Barmedman

Originally Barmedman belonged to the Yass parish but Catholics of the area were members of various parishes before finally becoming part of the parish of Ardlethan.

In 1906 Father Mullins asked the Sisters of Mercy, Yass to make a foundation at Barmedman. The foundation Sisters were Catherine Dawes, Joseph Campbell, Gabriel Meagher, Agatha Farreth and Assisium Fingleton.

By 1908 there were sixty-three children enrolled at the school. As well as the usual primary school subjects, the Sisters offered lessons in music, painting, verse speaking and typing. Among the names shown in the Sisters' meticulous account books are J. Anderson, J. Lawrence, H. & T. O'Keefe and A. & W. Lehane. Donations were entered from Miss Marshall, Mr. Fingleton and others and a bequest from the Hon. John Meagher. The accounts for the year 1911 show receipts totalling £131.0.2 and expenditure of £121.19.4.

The last entry of the Sisters of Mercy was on 31 December 1921, signed by Dr. Gallagher. After this the Sisters of St. Joseph took the school and convent into their care.

Bethungra

Father Butler from Tumut was appointed Parish Priest of Cootamundra in 1881. At Bethungra, in his parish, Mass was celebrated every six weeks in what is now the CWA Hall. In 1899 the first church was opened and the parishioners moved towards setting up a Catholic school staffed first by lay teachers who taught in the church.

In 1912 the foundation stone of St Joseph's Convent was laid and the building completed in 1914 when the first three Sisters of Mercy arrived from Goulburn. They were Sisters Peter, Borromeo and Ignatius who were assisted by two lay teachers, a music teacher and a young girl who helped in the convent. The chapel, used by students daily for prayers, is remembered as having had a great effect on many lives.

In 1940 during World War II, Bethungra's population soared because of the construction of strategic railway lines but by 1946 with the project's completion the population seemed to disappear overnight. The convent school's numbers diminished and only two Sisters were available to teach. The Rules at that time required a community of three or more Sisters so the convent could be used only by day. Consequently the Sisters travelled daily by train from Cootamundra. The long day from 7.00am to 7.30pm was very taxing and the convent and school closed at the end of 1946. Trains and school buses could now convey school children to larger centres.

An amusing story was told of a man, looking like a tramp, who came one day to the convent. Asked if he wanted work or food, he replied that he would like to see Sister. It happened to be Father Buongiorno, dressed in old clothes for fishing and swimming!



Binda

In 1924 the parishioners of Binda called a meeting to discuss the possibility of building a convent and Catholic school. Daunted by the financial responsibility, the people hesitated. One man, impatient at this hesitation said "It would take a snow storm to make you decide!" A few minutes later snow flakes fell and covered the ground. Immediately three men each promised £50 and it was agreed that Our Lady of the Snow would be Patroness of school and convent. Following commencement of work on the building, a heavy fall of snow covered the ground which seemed to confirm that Our Lady indeed wished to be Patroness.

The convent was opened in 1924 and blessed by Bishop Barry. Present at the ceremony along with the clergy were Mother Brigid, parishioners of the Crookwell community and the pioneers of the Binda community, Sister Barbara Goode the Superior, Sister Julien and Sister Agatha Sheekey.

By the end of the first year a small boarding school accommodated the boarders. The numbers varied over the years, sometimes reaching eighteen. Day pupils paid fees of sixpence per week, the boarders ten shillings and music cost two and sixpence a lesson. Before the school was built, seniors had classes in the church and juniors in the sacristy. Mr. A. McIntosh of "Yarraroo" gave the land on which a two-roomed school was built.



The end-of-year school concert always evoked great response and another exciting social event was the October Catholic Ball. The people of Binda were always welcoming, generous and caring which was greatly appreciated by the Sisters who besides teaching also had a great love for visiting the sick, aged and needy.

Binda school numbers increased during the war years but the advent of a school bus service to Crookwell brought a decrease in numbers and the Binda school and convent closed in 1958 after thirty-five years of service. Sisters Alacoque Foley and Philomena Suckling were the last resident Sisters.

Boorowa

Early in 1882, Rev. Father Long of Boorowa applied to Goulburn for a community of sisters. In August, accompanied by Mother Ligouri Mooney, Leader of the congregation, the Sisters departed Goulburn for their new home. Mother Augustine Moloy, Superior of the first Boorowa community, accompanied by Evangelist Ryan, Paul Pate, Baptiste Reirdan and Veronica Sheekey travelled to Galong by train.

After a night at Galong Castle as guests of the Ryan family, the Sisters were conveyed to Boorowa in the Castle carriage. There was one exception to the enthusiastic welcome from the townspeople. A small girl took fright and fled but she would later become Sister Catherine Dwyer of the Mercy Congregation, eventually Superior of the Boorowa convent.

Until the convent was built, the small presbytery was made available to the Sisters. A Catholic school taught by lay teachers had existed since 1858. Thomas Hennessy Corcoran, whose descendants are parishioners today, was the first lay teacher.

Within a fortnight of the Sisters' arrival, pupil numbers had risen from 60 to 87 necessitating the procurement of more desks. Still more desks were required when numbers reached 112 within a few months. As well as the serious subjects of religious education, reading and arithmetic, also taught were painting, drawing, music and singing and most pupils gained a great love of these.

An amusing story is told about the Superior and Sister Ursula White journeying to Goulburn in a phaeton with the Parish Priest. Chatting earnestly in front, the Superior and the Priest remained unaware that Ursula had been

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In 1924 the parishioners of Binda called a meeting to discuss the possibility of building a convent and Catholic school. Daunted by the financial responsibility, the people hesitated. One man, impatient at this hesitation said "It would take a snow storm to make you decide!" A few minutes later snow flakes fell and covered the ground. Immediately three men each promised £50 and it was agreed that Our Lady of the Snow would be Patroness of school and convent. Following commencement of work on the building, a heavy fall of snow covered the ground which seemed to confirm that Our Lady indeed wished to be Patroness.

The convent was opened in 1924 and blessed by Bishop Barry. Present at the ceremony along with the clergy were Mother Brigid, parishioners of the Crookwell community and the pioneers of the Binda community, Sister Barbara Goode the Superior, Sister Julien and Sister Agatha Sheekey.

By the end of the first year a small boarding school accommodated the boarders. The numbers varied over the years, sometimes reaching eighteen. Day pupils paid fees of sixpence per week, the boarders ten shillings and music cost two and sixpence a lesson. Before the school was built, seniors had classes in the church and juniors in the sacristy. Mr. A. McIntosh of "Yarraroo" gave the land on which a two-roomed school was built.



The end-of-year school concert always evoked great response and another exciting social event was the October Catholic Ball. The people of Binda were always welcoming, generous and caring which was greatly appreciated by the Sisters who besides teaching also had a great love for visiting the sick, aged and needy.

Binda school numbers increased during the war years but the advent of a school bus service to Crookwell brought a decrease in numbers and the Binda school and convent closed in 1958 after thirty-five years of service. Sisters Alacoque Foley and Philomena Suckling were the last resident Sisters.

Boorowa

Early in 1882, Rev. Father Long of Boorowa applied to Goulburn for a community of sisters. In August, accompanied by Mother Ligouri Mooney, Leader of the congregation, the Sisters departed Goulburn for their new home. Mother Augustine Moloy, Superior of the first Boorowa community, accompanied by Evangelist Ryan, Paul Pate, Baptiste Reirdan and Veronica Sheekey travelled to Galong by train.

After a night at Galong Castle as guests of the Ryan family, the Sisters were conveyed to Boorowa in the Castle carriage. There was one exception to the enthusiastic welcome from the townspeople. A small girl took fright and fled but she would later become Sister Catherine Dwyer of the Mercy Congregation, eventually Superior of the Boorowa convent.

Until the convent was built, the small presbytery was made available to the Sisters. A Catholic school taught by lay teachers had existed since 1858. Thomas Hennessy Corcoran, whose descendants are parishioners today, was the first lay teacher.

Within a fortnight of the Sisters' arrival, pupil numbers had risen from 60 to 87 necessitating the procurement of more desks. Still more desks were required when numbers reached 112 within a few months. As well as the serious subjects of religious education, reading and arithmetic, also taught were painting, drawing, music and singing and most pupils gained a great love of these.

An amusing story is told about the Superior and Sister Ursula White journeying to Goulburn in a phaeton with the Parish Priest. Chatting earnestly in front, the Superior and the Priest remained unaware that Ursula had been

Braddon

thrown out until they arrived at Galong station. Did they miss the train while driving back to find her?

In 1928 the opening of a secondary department provided students with the opportunity of obtaining the Intermediate Certificate. Sister Cephas taught the class and received great results. The Wyndham Report, implemented in 1961, imposed conditions that brought about the closure of the secondary department in 1962 due to funding and staffing shortages. Visitation of the aged, sick and needy was also of great importance to the Sisters.

In 1984 the people of Boorowa and district, many of whom were descendants of the first welcoming families, enthusiastically celebrated the centenary of the convent with re-enactments, a concert and a gala ball. Among guests were members of the Donovan family whose benefaction included the beautiful chapel, completed in 1897. Catherine Donovan was the first Australian vocation in the Goulburn Congregation.

The Congregation sold the convent in November 1991. Sister Catherine McCormack then began visiting the high school each term to provide education in faith to Catholic children. Sister Josephine followed but due to ill health and lack of replacement, this ministry has ceased.

Some Sisters who resided at Boorowa were Sisters Kevin, Catherine, Berchmans, Regina, Eymard, Helena, Jennifer, Daniel, Augustine, Madeleine, Jane Frances, Cabrini and John.



The Good Samaritan Sisters pioneered the work of Catholic education in Canberra but on 31 January 1955 the Sisters of Mercy came to teach in the ACT. In their first Annual Report the Sisters stated that the Good Samaritan Sisters' hand-over of the school "showed the fine delicacy of their Christian religious charity in the way in which they left a perfectly kept and equipped school..." A Catholic girls high school was planned for the ACT and as it seemed that staff for the school would be selected from various Religious Orders, it was imperative for each Congregation to have established primary schools.

The pioneer sisters for Braddon were Sisters Loyola Cranney, Paul Hennelly, Felician Esler and Fedelma O'Brien, led by Mother Ignatius McGilvray. They lived in a house in Yarralumla lent by the Presentation Sisters and "Biddy", a blue Holden, became their transport, driven by Mother Ignatius, a newly qualified driver.

Canberra's post-war population explosion meant class sizes were larger than those of today and unfamiliar New Australian names made roll-calling hazardous. Sister Paul instructed her third grade children to line up one by one as they came to her, to say their name and point to it on the roll. The line stretched beyond the school grounds, out onto the street, holding up the traffic!

Demographic changes to Canberra's inner north reduced school-age children numbers and St. Patrick's Primary School, Braddon closed on 8 December 1973. The school building became a centre for ethnic community groups and Mass was celebrated by German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Croatian and Vietnamese chaplains.



In 1974 St Pat's was taken over by SWOW (School without walls), catering for students who found it impossible to fit into regulated schools. Today the original building has been modified and renovated to form a pleasant prayerful church where Mass continues to be celebrated. The convent closed in 1999, the Sisters were relocated and the building refurbished to become the Administration Centre for the Goulburn Sisters of Mercy.

Captains Flat

The mining town of Captains Flat acquired its name from a prize bull known as Captain. Residing at Foxlow Station, he enjoyed wandering to a distant flat piece of land which would later become part of the town.

The Sisters went to the Flat in 1949 when the steadily increasing population made a Church School imperative. Sister Loretto Brennan led the first community accompanied by Sisters Cephas Walsh, Scholastica Page, Callista Ryan and Annette Johnston. They journeyed by train to Bungendore where the sisters of St Joseph provided dinner. Father Parker Maloney escorted them the rest of the way and was from the outset their sincere friend and supporter.



The welcome was warm and genuine and the presence of the Sisters had great effect on the parishioners of Captains Flat. Later that year Holy Week ceremonies were held in the town for the first time with the school children providing all the singing.

The Sisters taught primary and secondary subjects to Intermediate level and provided religion lessons and preparation for the Sacraments. Tuition in music, sewing and domestic science was available and visitation to the sick, aged and disadvantaged was dear to the hearts of the Sisters. Sisters resident at the Flat included Macrina, Cyprian, Francis, Boniface, Martin, Angela Mary, Maureen Sykes, Juliana, Patricia Glennan and June Cassidy. Josephine Doyle was a vocation.

By 1956 enrolments at the school had increased to 192 but gradually the mine became exhausted and by 1962 the settlement was virtually a ghost town. The school closed and the Sisters departed. In later years, Sister Margaret Watson, Pastoral Associate at Bungendore ministered to the people.

Cootamundra

In 1881 when the Sacred Heart Parish came into existence in Cootamundra, a Catholic school conducted by lay teachers was already functioning. Father Richard Butler, the new Parish Priest, invited the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn to take charge.

Superior Mary Stanislaus, Sisters Mary Joseph, Aloysius, Agnes, Evangelist and Berchmans, accompanied by Congregation Leader Sister Ligouri Mooney, travelled by train on 26 September 1882. The joyful journey, punctuated by reunions with friends and past pupils at most stations along the way, ended with an enthusiastic welcome at Cootamundra. A banquet had been prepared but Sister Ligouri, adhering strictly to the Rule that forbade participation in public functions, tactfully explained that the situation and the sisters withdrew to a private room. Father Butler offered the presbytery to the Sisters until a convent could be built. From there they lived in the convent which is today's music-room. Then in 1926 they moved to the present convent in Temora Street.

On 2 October 1882 the Sisters opened the school with 75 pupils. Both boys and girls were taught in the church-school and, as well as the basic subjects, classes in music, art, singing and needlework were conducted. In 1974 the Brothers' and Sisters' primary schools amalgamated. Mary Crowe, a Sister of Mercy, became the first Principal.



Both Brothers and Sisters have now withdrawn from the primary school and a lay principal was appointed in 1982.

In 1965 a new building for the Brothers' secondary students but shared by the students of the Sisters' girls school opened. The two secondary schools integrated fully in 1967 and became the Catholic High School Cootamundra, the first co-institutional, co-educational Catholic school in Australia. Students of the school have been very successful throughout the years.

Some of the vocations to our Mercy Congregation are Fabian Weston, Clare Sheedy, Annette Johnston, Aquinas Chalker, Margaret Crowe, Christopher Ryan, Mary Crowe, Ursula White, Alphonsus Renchan, Xavier Chilcott, Ursula Drennan, Edmund Farrell, Frances Fitzpatrick, Perpetua Canty and Monica Hurst.

The Sisters remain in the convent as a Mercy presence. They participate in parish activities, visit the sick and aged and also the school where they provide extra help to children with special needs. One Sister is full-time Parish Assistant and another works with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Cootamundra Mercy Hospital

In 1921, Dean O'Shaughnessy, Parish Priest of Cootamundra, invited a number of Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart from Young to establish a Catholic

hospital in Cootamundra in the spacious presbytery which he vacated for the purpose. The Sisters carried on their devoted work for two years and were succeeded by the Sisters of Charity from Sydney who also ministered for two years. Greater stability for the staffing of the hospital was needed and the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn responded to the call in 1927.

During the early years one Sister Superior was appointed for both school and hospital. Trained nurses were employed in the hospital and in 1927 the five-year nurse trainee course began. The role as a teaching hospital continued until 1977. Sisters and nurses lived in a building where the priests' garages stand today. For some 17 years care of the sick continued in the inadequate environment of the former presbytery and sections of St. Columba's Hall.



The dream of a more suitable building came to reality through the generous bequest of the Donovan family as a memorial to Catherine Donovan, who joined the Goulburn convent in 1860. The Women's & Children's section bore the name St. Catherine's Hospital. Another section was funded by public support and bequests, including a generous donation from Dr. Brennan, and was named Sacred Heart Hospital. In July 1942 twenty-two patients were transferred from Morris Street to the new 68 bed facility on the hill which in 1961 was renamed the Mercy Hospital.

A Community Domiciliary Nursing service was set up in the late 1960s and in 1969, Bethany, a home for aged and infirm Sisters attached to the convent, was completed. In response to the State Government's decision to rationalise health services in Cootamundra, the Mercy Hospital was sold to the NSW Government in 1981.

Apart from some modifications and updating, the main structure of the building met the needs of changing health-care over the years. The training of nurses and the care

given to patients and their families under the guidance and supervision of such compassionate Sisters as the very first Matron, Sister M. Vincent, OBE, gave the Coota Mercy a fine reputation. It was worthy of the mandate of our Foundress, Catherine McCauley to “combine science and religion, knowledge and faith, high purpose and humble service.”

Vocations from nurses who trained at Cootamundra include Kathleen McCarthy, Dominica Sheahan and Vianney Gately

Corowa

The Albury Sisters of Mercy were invited to take over the Catholic school in Corowa in 1887. The school had previously been staffed by lay teachers but as a result of the Public Instruction Act of 1880, parish resources could no longer maintain the wages of the teachers.

The founding Sisters, Sister Mary Camillus – one of Albury’s foundation Sisters – accompanied by Evangelist, Patrick and Angela, travelled by train from Albury to Wahgunyah and thence by carriage to a great welcome at Corowa. Enrolment numbers at the new school were small in proportion to the town population and the Sisters advertised willingness to teach extra subjects of French, art and music. Fees for music lessons have been extremely important in many country foundations in providing funds to support the sisters. School fees ranged from sixpence to one shilling per week.



New school and convent buildings were constructed and secondary education established. The secondary department, as in many other country schools, closed in 1962 due to the demands of the Wyndham Report. This led to the establishment of the Motor Mission which served Corowa and district from 1962-1994, covering what had been the original Missionary District of Corowa named by Bishop Lanigan in 1878.

In the meantime, the Sisters continued teaching Primary School and offering pastoral care in the community. St. Mary’s School has now returned to lay teaching staff, administered from the Catholic Education Office, Wagga Wagga. The presence of Sisters Maureen and Mavis continues the Mercy tradition within the Parish.

Crookwell

Before the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy, Crookwell’s Catholic school was staffed by lay teachers. It is not recorded who the first community members were but Evangelist Ryan, if not the founding Superior, certainly figured in Crookwell’s early history as did Barbara Goode.

Bishop Gallagher blessed and laid the foundation stone to the new convent on 23 February 1902 and in his diary he noted the enthusiasm and generosity of the large congregation and anticipated a successful permanence in the parish.

The Sisters, accompanied by clergy, arrived by train from Goulburn on 13 January 1903 to a group of townspeople who escorted them to St. Mary’s Church where the *Te Deum* was sung and a warm welcome delivered.

Reading, writing, arithmetic and religion were not the only activities of convent education. Music was a strong point for both convent children and those from other schools. It was no five day week! Saturday saw theory classes, instrument lessons and typing and shorthand lessons. The Sisters prepared the children for the Sacraments and travelled to country churches to help the local catechists. In 1962 changes to the syllabus reduced the school to primary level with school buses running to larger centres.

Vocations to our Mercy Congregation were Sisters Jude, Benigna and Kevin, Hugh, Ita and Claver. Some Sisters resident at Crookwell were Anne, Stephanie, Macrina, Maureen, Loretta, Cyril, Madeleine, Rita, Eileen, Benedict, Edward, Margarita, Edmund and Boniface.



On 1 August 1993 a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sisters of Mercy was celebrated in St. Mary's. A large number of Sisters who had formerly been part of the Crookwell community attended, as well as former students and friends. In 1994 a lay principal took over the primary school which continues as part of the Canberra and Goulburn diocesan system. In 1999 Sister Stephanie took up residence in Crookwell and has strengthened the link between the Mercy Sisters and the people of the district.

Dee Why

Records of the Sisters' presence in Dee Why are sketchy. Elderly Sisters recollect an approach from the parish priest to the Goulburn Sisters to come there, and we went in 1923 when Dee Why was still part of the Manly Parish, but with its own newly built church. The Sisters purchased land for a convent, possibly with the intention of having a seaside boarding school, and began teaching in the school, using the church for infants' classes. Sister Edmund Farrell, who was professed in 1924, taught in the school on what must have been her first assignment. She always spoke with great affection about her time in the Dee Why school. Two local women, Sister Mark Ryan and Sister Canisia Richardson, joined the Goulburn Mercy Sisters.

In 1928 Dee Why became a separate parish. The Mercy Sisters were recalled from Dee Why in 1932. The convent was sold in 1934 and the Good Samaritan Sisters took on responsibility for St Kevin's School the same year.

Our own records are silent about the reason for the recall, but oral history recounts circumstances which may have brought discredit on the Sisters, the community and the local parish which prompted the recall. Mother Colombière has erased all mention of Dee Why in her 1963-1969 *The History of Foundations*, as has Eileen Casey in her 1980s *History Newsletters*. However, in Eileen's 2000 book *Held in Our Hearts*, Dee Why is listed.

There are no photographs of the original convent and school. In the early 1950s two fires within a year of each other destroyed the church and school and all records were lost. However, in the words of the present principal of St Kevin's School, Peter Rafferty, "the Catholic character of our school today definitely stands on the shoulders of the giants who came before us – such as the Mercy Sisters."

Deloraine

On 28 January 1895 a band of Sisters of Mercy from Goulburn arrived at Deloraine in Tasmania after a long journey. They had travelled from Sydney to Hobart on the *SS Oonah*, by one train to Western Junction and a second on to Deloraine.

The group was led by Mother Augustine Moloy whose presence was something of a trial for Sisters Teresa Hearn, Gonzaga Russell, Josephine Gwydir and a servant, Margaret Kilmartin. The unfortunate choice of the Superior however was countered by the strength and dedication of Sister Teresa Hearn who is considered to be the true Foundress of the Deloraine congregation.

On their arrival there was a warm welcome from the people of the parish but the "fine house" they had been promised turned out to be an old hotel full of draughts and rats and only one home-made bed "which must have been intended for the saints". While the people of Deloraine were welcoming and willing to share, it was a poor area, and the Catholics were particularly poor.

After a week of preparation the Convent was officially opened and despite the Depression of the 1890s the convent fund prospered. In February 1895 St Joseph's School opened with 32 pupils and by the end of the year enrolments had risen to 100. In March the Sisters were joined by two postulants – Ellen, the sister of Sister Teresa Hearn and Winifred Hearne from Goulburn. Margaret Kilmartin joined the Congregation and became Sister M. Bernard, the first Sister of Mercy to take vows in Tasmania.



Despite the poverty and hard work, or perhaps because of it, many young women joined the Sisters and the Mercy spirit flourished. Burnie was founded in 1900. A separate foundation of Melbourne Mercy Sisters had settled in Latrobe and later, when they were short-staffed, they were joined by two Deloraine Sisters. In 1904 Latrobe became part of the Deloraine foundation.

At this time, Education Acts were passed in several states and the big question of teacher training arose. To meet this challenge the Victorian houses amalgamated in 1908 and the Sisters of the Deloraine foundations joined with them. A Catholic Teachers College was established at Ascot Vale and from then on, all Victorian and Tasmanian women who entered, made their Novitiate and did teacher training in Melbourne. Once professed, the Sisters from Deloraine were free to return to Tasmanian houses.

Deniliquin

At the invitation of Father Carroll and the newly appointed Bishop of Wilcannia, Rt Rev John Dunne, Sisters from the Albury Mercy Convent set out on 1 September 1887 on the long journey to Deniliquin.

Volunteers for this new and remote foundation were Mother M. Bridget, Sisters M. Gertrude, M. Monica, Sister Mary Berchmans – a novice – and a postulant, Mary Anne Daly.

The school, formerly run by lay teachers, reopened on 5 September with 65 pupils and by 24 September the Sisters were advertising high school education for day students and extra tuition in music, German, French, singing, drawing and painting, crystallography, wax flowers, Persian marble and oriental painting. A secondary school was soon established and in 1890 the Sisters sent their first three students for the Junior University examinations from Sydney University.



As well as supervising the schools Mother M. Bridget instructed adults in the faith and set up the Sisters' routine of visiting and caring for the sick and needy and visiting the gaol. The Bishop, visiting in 1888 found 165 children enrolled in the school, though he did chide the Sisters for arranging the school timetable to allow the middle of the day for visitation thus leaving the children unsupervised for a time! A new chapel and a dormitory for boarders were added as student numbers grew.

A number of young women entered the convent and Deniliquin was able to found Wentworth when the call came. Among the vocations were Sister M. John Evangelist and Sister M. Magdalen who both volunteered for Wentworth, Sisters M. Aloysius Collins, Michael Murray, Xavier McHugh, Agnes Welch and Catherine Murphy.

While Deniliquin was always a separate entity, a new foundation from Albury, the Sisters were bound by ties of affection and their Mercy vocation but when Deniliquin became part of the Wilcannia-Forbes Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, most chose to remain.

Finley

In 1910 the sub-division of 72,000 acres of Coree Station and the resumption of Tuppal Station into 117 small farms surrounding Finley town had a profound influence on the Finley district. With the increase in population, the Catholic community considered the establishment of their own school a matter of urgency. The Goulburn Sisters of Mercy were invited to take charge and arrived in Finley three years before the establishment of the Wagga diocese.

The convent opened on Low Sunday April 1915. From Goulburn Bishop Gallagher, Mother Brigid Hartnett and Sister Dorothea had travelled by train, Sisters Evangelist, Genevieve and Monica by car, staying the first night at Cootamundra and the second at Jerilderie. The old convent was demolished and replaced by a new building in 1963.

School was conducted in the church until 1926 when St Joseph's School was opened. An additional classroom was added in 1969 and for a number of years secondary education was provided. Music, typing, sewing and cooking were also taught. In 1966, due to pressure of space, rising costs and new curriculum demands, this section of the school closed. The first lay principal was appointed to the primary school in 1981.



Vocations from Finley to our Mercy Congregation were sisters Catherine and Celine McCormack.

In 1975 a Pastoral Team led by Sister Rosarii O'Connor based its headquarters at Finley. Members consisted of Parish Priests of Finley, Tocumwal, Jerilderie and Berrigan, the Motor Mission Sisters, Sisters in charge of Primary Schools in the area and lay representatives from each town. The Team aimed to minister to all ages in the community. Each town's members devoted themselves specifically to their own environment, conscious of the importance of being "Good News" to the people they served.

In 2009 the convent building was leased to Yallambee, a non-government organisation, funded by the State Government Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to provide community participation programs for people with intellectual disability. It is an exciting and innovative use of the large parish building which, in many ways, continues the spirit of ministry carried out by the Sisters of Mercy.

Galong

The country around the village of Galong was settled by "Ned" Ryan, a former convict from County Tipperary. His substantial homestead became known as The Castle, not so much for its size as for its hospitality to travellers. His niece, Anastasia Ryan, wanted to help the children of Galong and on Bishop Gallagher's suggestion, she invited the Mercy Sisters of Goulburn to establish a school, promising to also build a church and a convent.

The Sisters arrived in 1911 and it became clear that the number of village children was not large enough to support the number of Sisters. Bishop Gallagher urged them to start a boarding school for junior boys and a two-storey building adjoining the convent was erected. It soon proved too small and Miss Ryan generously contributed to the extensions. The school was a haven for small boys and more additions and amenities were added over the years. A block of 183 acres was purchased and used for crops and pasture.



Galong village had not grown at the rate of the school and this coupled with the availability of school buses and the difficulty of providing Sisters for a demanding ministry led to the closure of St Lawrence's College and Convent in 1970.

The complex became a Diocesan retirement village for the aged with three Sisters of Mercy in residence, radiating a happy Mercy spirit. Residents still remain at Galong but new, modern facilities are being constructed in Harden. The Castle became part of the Redemptorist Fathers' Monastery and today the Galong Monastery has become a Retreat House where many of our Sisters make an annual Retreat in a place always dear to their hearts.

Gooloogong

The parish of St Malachy, Gooloogong was formed from Grenfell in 1914. The first parish priest, Rev Thomas Lynch, invited the Goulburn Sisters of Mercy to run the school. Mother Brigid accompanied the Leader, Baptiste Reardon, and community members Elizabeth Gavan, Borromeo Burns and Magdalene Duggan and the convent school opened on 4 March 1917 with 33 children on the roll. Classes were conducted in the old stone church until the new school was built in 1920. Situated on the extreme edge of the Canberra Goulburn Diocese, Gooloogong was eventually transferred to the Bathurst Diocese.

Convent life in a small country town was full of hardships:

We had no electric light but a large lamp was carried from the chapel to the community room. This meant we all had to move at the same time if we wished to enjoy the comfort of the lamp. In our bedrooms we used candles which melted in the hot weather.

A well had been sunk and from it water was pumped by senior boys to a small tank for kitchen use and baths. We discovered that while we were at Mass, a neighbour stole water from the well for the use of his race-horse.

Considerable inconvenience was experienced because our bathroom with chip heater, wash house and toilet were all outside.

A small boarding school for country children opened with accommodation on an enclosed verandah and a large room used for dining, study and recreation. The boarding school, though a great asset to the town and district, closed in 1971 with the introduction of travel by school bus to Cowra.



As well as religious and secular subjects, the Sisters offered music and typing and sport was always very popular. Gooloogong produced Barry Beath who played for St George.

Sisters resident at Gooloogong included Christopher, Macrina, Stephanie, Elizabeth, Anne, Monica, Maureen, Gregory, Mavis, Madeline and Helena.

When one of the Sisters became ill, a replacement was requested. The reply was "We haven't another Sister to give you, but buy an electric polisher". So the replacement nun hung behind the back door!

Gooloogong was a friendly community full of caring, generous people. Today the convent is being used as an up-to-date Prayer House/Retreat Centre.

Goulburn

On 28 October 1859 six Sisters of Mercy came “over the hill”, entering Goulburn escorted by His Grace Archbishop Polding. He welcomed this foundation from Ireland which consisted of Mother Ignatius Murphy, Sisters Mary de Pazzi Dolphin, Ligouri Mooney, Stanislaus Maxwell, de Sales Meyler and Rose Hughes.

They had endured a three month sea journey on the *Saldanha* to Melbourne, followed by paddle steamer to Sydney and on by wagon and coach to Berrima and finally Goulburn. The rugged bush landscape and the start of summer’s heat must have been a huge contrast to the soft mist and green of Ireland. The idea of the Bishop and Priests to invite Religious to Australia was for the Sisters to teach children at school and help spread the faith in the vastness of the unmapped diocese. The sisters went to work immediately.

An Act of Chapter on 10 May 1861 made the decision to take over the boarding school, which had been transferred from Yass by Father McAlroy, into three small cottages in Bourke Street. The Denominational Boys and Girls Schools facing Bourke Street and a school in North Goulburn came under the Sisters’ jurisdiction. This last school was subsequently transferred to the Sisters of St Joseph who came to North Goulburn in 1882.



Providing educational opportunities for those less well-off was central to the spirit of Catherine McAuley and in 1881 an old mill in Clinton Street was refurbished to accommodate a low-fee boarding school (advertised in *The Freeman's Journal* as St Joseph's School of Industry) and St Joseph's Orphanage for girls. In 1905 the orphanage was relocated in a new building on the river at Kenmore. The vacated building then became an orphanage for boys, housing Sister Benignus and three small brothers. The Boys Orphanage moved to St John's, Mundy Street in 1913.

Visitation was also dear to the heart of the Foundress and the *Goulburn News* related in 1860 “The Rev D’Arcy and Sisters of Mercy were in constant attendance” to Ellen Monks awaiting execution. Prison visitation has remained important to the Sisters who visited the gaol each Sunday. Today Sister Loretta Corrigan is fully engaged in this ministry.

The original temporary accommodation in the earth-floored presbytery and stables was superseded, thanks to the help and support of Father McAlroy, by a convent, chapel and boarding school in 1862. The beautiful Gothic chapel was erected in 1892, a replica of the Westport Chapel, with the wood panelling coming from Ireland.

The first postulant, Catherine Donovan from Boorowa, was received in 1860 and numbers grew to the size that allowed for foundations to be made outside the Mother House. Vocations came from Irish emigrant families and relations but the flow of young woman over the years was mainly due to the influence and example of the Sisters in their rural schools and hospitals. The novices were prepared for profession in the convent in Clinton Street but by 1909 a property was secured for a central novitiate – St Michael's Novitiate and Training School. In 1910 the offices of the Congregation Leader and council were moved to St Michael's but as the numbers of young women entering religious life declined, the building became a retreat and conference centre until it was sold in the 1990s to a Sydney buyer who rented some rooms to the Police Academy. Marian Hill Farm was purchased in 1926 and supplied fresh produce to the growing community and boarding school. This property was sold in 1969.

St Brigid's Primary School eventually replaced the original denominational schools and the Christian Brothers School for boys was established in Verner Street. The growth of West Goulburn spurred the building of a combined church/school in 1954. By 1976 the overcrowded school was replaced by a new building and the girls and boys from both primary schools were relocated in Our Lady of Sorrows School, West Goulburn. When West and South Goulburn became one parish the school was renamed Saints Peter and Paul. In 1978 Bob Gay was appointed the first lay principal. The school is now staffed by lay teachers, under the control of the Catholic Education Office, Canberra.

As the years rolled on at OLMC, traditions formed. Young women received a formal education and were given further educational opportunities in music, art, drama,

debating, elocution and literary activities. In 1977 Our Lady of Mercy and St Joseph's combined to form Marian College with a combination staff of Josephites, Mercies and lay teachers. Junior Secondary years 7-10 utilised the south campus, years 11 and 12 were accommodated in the north and teachers commuted between the two. All boarders were eventually accommodated at the North Goulburn site.

In 1985 with decreasing numbers of religious teachers and the high cost of building maintenance, the Sisters of Mercy moved to a house in Fitzroy Street. Most of the convent was refurbished and utilised for teaching staff.

Trinity, a co-educational college, emerged in 1998 combining Marian College and St Patrick's College under the Catholic Education Office Canberra. The future of the boarding school is under review. Boarder numbers are down due to the rural recession. Boarders are at present accommodated at the St Patrick's campus.

Grenfell

The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Grenfell from Goulburn in August 1887. An extract from *The Evening Argus* marked their arrival:

The Goulburn convent of Mercy is well known as a high-class teaching establishment, the nuns, having won a name for the patient zeal manifested in imparting a careful religious training in addition to secular information, to those committed to their charges. Their unostentatious charity towards the poor, sick and needy is everywhere recognised and the Grenfell people have reason to be glad that the teaching Sisters, chosen for their convent are possessed of such accredited ability.

Mother Ignatius Fox, Sister Aloysius, Vincent Buckley (a novice) and an unnamed Lay Sister lived in the convent and taught school in the church. Each Friday afternoon the Sisters, aided by senior pupils, prepared for Sunday Mass. One Friday a little new boy was directed: "Charlie, put those seats over against the wall for the nuns to use." After obeying, Charlie returned and said "Well Sister, I've done that. Now where will I put the seats for the human beings?"

As well as the usual primary and secondary school subjects, the Sisters offered typing and music. In the year of 1909, 33 pupils were prepared for different Colleges of Music, all singularly successful.

In 1977 the Sisters withdrew from the convent, Sister Augustine being the last Principal of the school – Carolle Howlett was appointed the first lay Principal in 1976. Some sisters to have resided at Grenfell were Mother Ignatius, Carmello, Kevin, Maureen Sykes, Anne Marie, Denise, Ursula, Boniface, Anne, Genevieve, Moira and Celine. Bernard Carberry, Genevieve and Raymund were members of the last community residing in Grenfell. They continued visitation, music lessons and imparting education in faith to classes at the school.



Grenfell has given some fine Mercy Sisters to the service of the Lord, among them Sisters Phillip and Evangelista Quigley, Noreen and Pauline Galvin, Kathleen Smith, Clare Flinn, Jenny Crowe and Mother Gabriel Campbell.

Griffith

On Thursday 31 August, 1921, Sisters Dominic Mulquinney, Benedict Tanner, Dorothea Dunleavy, Veronica Coll and Bridget Hilly left Albury by train for the new foundation in Griffith. They travelled to Cootamundra by train, spending the night with the Sisters at the convent, and left next morning by goods train for Griffith, then known as "Bagtown". It was a village of tents with only one thoroughfare, Banna Avenue, now the main street.

Father O'Dea met them with a cavalcade of two cars and the Sisters were conveyed to the church-school for an official welcome. The convent, in fact the presbytery, was

Gundagai

where they lived for 17 years. Father O'Dea meanwhile lived in a galvanised iron shack in the church grounds until the new convent was blessed and opened in 1938.

On Monday 4 September 1921 school opened with an enrolment of 80 children and in December a First Holy Communion day with 10 first communicants was held in the parish for the first time.



The church opened in 1928 and 1932 saw the beginning of the secondary school. In 1950 the Marist Brothers arrived in Griffith and the schools became single sex schools. In 1956 a new infants' school opened and in 1959 a new block was built to accommodate primary and secondary girls. In 1967 the secondary girls transferred to the Hickey Crescent site, to a new school. They also shared some of the facilities of the Brothers' School. Limited co-education began in 1969 in fourth form. Brother Clement Terry was Principal and Sister Moira Cleary was Deputy Principal. In 1970 first to fourth forms became co-educational with Brother Clement as Principal.

When the Marist Brothers withdrew from Griffith at the end of 1991, the sisters moved from their convent in Warranbool Street to the Brothers' monastery in Hickey Crescent. There they lived until the last Sisters of Mercy withdrew from the school in 2006. The convent was renovated and is now the St Patrick's Administration Building. It has been renamed the Catherine McAuley Administration Building.

There were many Mercy vocations from Griffith. They are John Keenan, Kathleen Keenan, Kathleen Cudmore, Barbara Murray, Jean Murray, Teresina Mogliotti, Rita Savage, Eileen Savage, Patricia Johnson, Theresa Foley and Gabrielle Maree Owen.

When Dr Lanigan visited the parish of Gundagai in 1875 he urged the people to start a Catholic school. Lay teachers staffed the school within the church until the Sisters arrived from Goulburn on 23 July 1886. Their Leader was Sister Stanislaus Maxwell, a member of the original band who arrived in Goulburn from Westport in 1859.

At first they lived in a house at 22 Byron Street and on 16 July 1890 their move to the new convent was heralded by an enthusiastic procession. Over 500 people attended a luncheon after the celebration of Mass.

In 1898 the foundation stone was laid of the new school, dedicated to Saint Stanislaus. From 1942 until 1962 a secondary department operated but like other schools in country areas, it became a victim of the Wyndham Report. All the usual subjects were taught at both primary and secondary levels and extra curriculum subjects such as music, painting, commercial cooking and needlework were offered. Sporting fixtures were happy and successful.

By 1964 a shortage of Religious was causing grave concern and Archbishop O'Brien secured the community of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour to help swell the dwindling numbers. The Sisters of Mercy relinquished Gundagai with great regret. The Salvatorian Sisters stayed for only four years and were replaced by the Holy Faith Sisters in 1968. They were recalled by their superiors in 1979 and the school was run by lay teachers. The convent has had a varied history as a rental property, a bed and breakfast and a religious centre.



Gundagai people have always loved and respected the Sisters. Sister Stanislaus Maxwell, affectionately known as “Little Mother Stan”, was gentle, prayerful and dedicated. She died on Christmas Eve 1906 and is buried in the Gundagai cemetery.

During the 1980s Sister Catherine McCormack began a correspondence course for Catholic students attending state high schools. She lived in Braddon and along with Eileen Casey and Josephine Navin, travelled to Gundagai each term to conduct classes.

Sisters resident at Gundagai included Kevin, Gabrielle, Clare, Margarita, Lorna Mary, Colette, Dympna, Berenice, Regina, Fidelis, Majella and Paulinus. Bertha Carberry, Carmel Gardiner, Robyn Elliott, Catherine McMahon and Mavis Hanlon all entered the Goulburn Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy.

Gunning

Father O’Shaughnessy, zealous for the education of Gunning’s Catholic youth, had opened a Catholic primary school within the church of St Francis Xavier. The thirty pupils were taught by lay teachers until the arrival from Yass of Mother M. Teresa Murray, Sisters Magdalen Bourke, Brigid Garry and Patrick Townsell in 1900.



A good brick convent and school had been made ready for occupation and during the following years the parishioners did everything possible to show their appreciation of the education offered by the Sisters, in religion as well as secular and cultural subjects such as music. Some pupils of St Francis Xavier School have distinguished themselves by winning bursaries and other distinctions.

Father Carson, after taking charge of the parish, took in hand the creation of a handsome two-storey brick convent. It opened in 1924 as part of the fine group of Catholic Church buildings located on a prominent site in the town.

The school bus service greatly increased school numbers and a secondary department was added in 1948 but closed in 1953. The Sisters left Gunning on 12 December 1968.

Gunning has given a generous quota of sons and daughters to the service of God. In the Mercy Congregation are Assissium Fingleton, Austin and Monica Grovenor and John O’Brien.

Henty

A foundation from Albury was made at Henty. Xavier Tanner, the community leader accompanied by three other Sisters arrived there on 19 January 1924.

When school opened in the following week, about 80 pupils were enrolled, of whom a good proportion came by train from Yerong Creek and The Rock. The Official Blessing and Opening of the convent and school took place on 15 August 1924. Bishop Dwyer of Wagga was the officiating Prelate and Father Bonner, the parish priest.

For some years the school operated successfully taking students to the Intermediate Certificate. The Sisters offered commercial subjects and music as well as the usual curriculum. Music was of a very high standard during the 1940s with a 62 piece school orchestra. In 1961 due to lack of staff, both convent and school were closed.



Members of the last Mercy community to live at Henty were Damien Loughlin, Berenice Stocks, Francesca Webb, Alonso Gilbert and Dolores O'Brien. Others to have resided at Henty were Benedict, Gabriel, James, Jerome and Claude. Vocations among ex-students to the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation were Jean Butler, Eileen Clancy and Eileen Driscoll.

Howlong

Before the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Howlong on the northern banks of the Murray River, all children, both Catholic and non-Catholic attended school in the church. There was no other school. Mrs Cantwell, the lay teacher, taught religious knowledge as well as secular subjects and on examination, Father O'Riordan found the children very satisfactory in all areas.

In 1927 a group of Sisters of Mercy from Albury arrived to take over the school. They lived in a little cottage in Hovell Street, close to the town, and later St Brigid's primary school was built.

In 1952 at the Silver Jubilee Celebrations to mark the foundation a special feature was the Ordination of Father Joseph Conway, a former pupil of St Brigid's school and Howlong's first priest.



The advent of school buses and shortage of staff led to the closure of both school and convent in 1961. In 1962 the Mercy Motor Mission Service was established and Howlong State School was the last place to be visited by the Motor Mission Sisters.

Some of the Sisters to have taught in Howlong were Josephine, Jerome, Bernard and Felician. They also spent time visiting the sick, the aged, the suffering and those in sorrow.

Jerilderie

When the Goulburn Sisters were asked in 1902 to make a foundation at Jerilderie, it was a small Riverina town – isolated, hot, dry and dusty. Besides being noted for the heat, dust storms, milk souring and meat going off, Jerilderie was famous because of the visit paid by Ned Kelly and his gang. In those days the Goulburn Diocese extended to Albury and embraced much of the Riverina.

Mother Brigid Hartnett, the Superior General, accompanied five Sisters led by Baptist Reardon. The convent had not been built but a small house, Rosary Cottage, was ready for use. Sister Hilary Purcell was the first Principal of the convent school which provided religious and secular education from infants to intermediate standard and also offered music, typing and shorthand.

Undaunted by the climate and stories of bushrangers, the Sisters settled happily into Jerilderie and enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the people of the district. Over the years there was much visitation to the sick and aged in hospital and at home and also to the homes of school children.

In 1909 on the Golden Jubilee of the Goulburn Foundation, Jerilderie's new convent was built and the Sisters remained until the convent closed in 1977. Some of the Sisters resident in Jerilderie were Madeleine, Christopher, Carmel, Monica, Gregory, Patrick, Marie Mahony and Helena. Three local girls who entered the Goulburn Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy are Connie Horgan and sisters Jessie and Elizabeth Mitchell.



Despite the convent's closure, the Sisters have maintained their ties with Jerilderie. Connie Horgan, known in religion as Sister Frances, visited as a Pastoral worker from Finley and later moved to Jerilderie to live with her sister. Here she continued her ministry. Now each year, Christopher and Ursula, who was the last Principal at the school, spend a day there visiting as many people as possible who greatly appreciate their presence.

Junee

At the request of Father Buckley, the Sisters of Mercy came from Yass to Junee in 1888. It was the last foundation for which Paul Fielding shouldered responsibility in the Goulburn Diocese. Mother Paul arrived at Junee with the foundation Sisters and returned to Yass only after the Sisters were well settled in their new home. Stanislaus O'Neill led the first community of Sisters to Junee. She had come from Rochfortbridge in 1875 with the Sisters who made the Yass foundation. The other Sisters were Agnes Hickey, Francis Boland and Josephine Dunne.

The primary school lessons were initially conducted in the church where the school opened in 1889 and the enrolment rose from 47 to 120 by the end of first term. After World War I a secondary department was added to the school and during the 1940s and 50s enrolments rose to 363 pupils with nine Sisters in the community. The Sisters prepared children up to Intermediate Certificate and also offered extra music, theory, typing, shorthand and verse speaking.

At the time of the opening of the new primary school in 1966, the secondary department had closed and a school

bus conveyed secondary students to Wagga. Past pupils speak with gratitude of the zeal and kindness of their teachers and their treks around the town to visit the sick, lonely, sorrowing and suffering.



At the end of 1997 the Sisters left Junee and the people of the parish did not let them depart without a glorious farewell. At the Eucharist of Thanksgiving Father Burgess in his homily paid tribute to the work and dedication of the Sisters over a period of 109 years.

Mercedes

In 1943 the Sisters of Mercy purchased, at a very reasonable price, a neo-gothic stone residence overlooking Lavender Bay with scenic views of the Harbour Bridge. Its situation, close to the Jesuit Church with access to the city by rail, bus or ferry, was an ideal location for Sisters needing to spend time in the city for health, education or business reasons. The house could also accommodate Sisters from other congregations to whom it offered boarding house facilities.

Built in around 1885 by James Thomas Atchison, the house was sold to the Cahill family in 1908 and the large extended family moved in. It became a home of gracious living with bells to summon servants, croquet on the lawn and kind hospitality to visitors. The large crucifix in St Francis Xavier Church Lavender Bay is a memorial to this family.

In the early 1940s the house was made into flats and leased until sold to the Sisters of Mercy who renamed



it “Mercedes” and took up residence in 1944. In 1970 extensive additions were made – a new wing was built to accommodate student Sisters attending Teacher’s College, University or spiritual courses. Further refurbishment took place in 1997.

Mercedes has always been a house of hospitality for local visitors and those from overseas who have enriched our lives. It became too, a home for Sisters whose ministry led them to Sydney. Catherine McAuley’s care for the poor and underprivileged was continued by the Sisters who provided friendship and refreshment for all who asked for help.

In 2006 the property was sold and the Sisters relocated.

Murrungo

The Sacred Heart Convent in the small village of Murrungo was officially opened in 1917 and Sister Bonaventure Macguire was the first community leader. The school consisted of one large room attached to the



convent and there was also a small music room, essential as fees for music lessons were expected to provide much of the Sisters’ income.

In 1929 a new school was opened and the old school-room reincorporated into the convent. As well as the usual primary school subjects, the Sisters taught music, shorthand and typing and a ministry dear to their hearts was visitation of the sick and aged in the little village. The beautiful landscape surrounding convent and school was very picturesque with rolling hills, vivid green lucerne and beautiful trees which provided homes for many birds.

Sadly in 1961 the convent and school closed due to a shortage of sisters and the advent of school bus services to larger towns. On 3 October 1999 the parish community celebrated a reunion Mass to commemorate the 45 year history of the Sisters educating the children of Murrungo. Some of the Sisters who had taught in the school were present and Father Alan Crowe, who grew up in the village, celebrated the Mass which was attended by about 300 people.

Regina, Mercedes, Joseph, Callista, Loretto, Fidelis and Fabian all resided at Murrungo and vocations to the Goulburn Congregation of Mercy were Jane and Teresa Crowe - Sisters Lucy and Callascantius.

Murrumburrah Harden

The first foundation made by the Sisters who had come from Rochfortbridge to Yass was to Murrumburrah in 1882 at the request of Bishop Lanigan. Mother Xavier Leahy, Sisters Berchmans Nally, Catherine and Clara and two novices came to take over the already well-established Catholic school, probably as a result of the withdrawal of state aid from denominational schools by the Henry Parkes instigated Public Instruction Act of 1880.

The Sisters continued teaching both in the church and the school attached to it and the school building project was continued. In 1935 construction of St Anthony’s church allowed the old church to be given over entirely for school use.

Stockinbingal

In 1964 Murrumburrah became the site of the primary section of the Murrumburrah-Harden school while a new infants' school was built at the end of the town. The Harden end of the twin towns developed rapidly and a new church/school, St Columba's, was opened there in 1917. The appointed sisters travelled each day from the Murrumburrah convent. Josepha Kelly, honoured to be the first Sister to drive that journey, earned the respect of all motorists as she demanded right of way at all times.

At the end of 1998, the secondary school at Harden closed and accommodation for students was offered at St Mary's, Young. The last Sister on the staff was Sister Edmund. Parishioners, parents and students gave the Sisters a wonderful send-off in appreciation for their love and dedication, not only in the field of education but also in their wonderful pastoral ministry.

In 1952 the small village of Wallendbeen was transferred from the parish of Young to that of Murrumburrah. For 21 years the Sisters travelled with the Priest each Sunday for Mass, after which they instructed the children in the doctrine of their faith and prepared them for the Sacraments. Their presence and contribution to the liturgies, as well as family visits were of great importance.



In 1982 due to lack of vocations, serious thought was given to options for the future not only for Murrumburrah-Harden but regarding the work of the Sisters at Wallendbeen and the Motor Mission Sisters who had been based there since 1979. Facing the challenges realistically, the Sisters closed the convent at the end of 1983. Both Ellen Yates and Rosarii O'Connor became treasured members of our Mercy congregation from Murrumburrah.

The construction of the Forbes-Stockinbingal railway line in 1912 brought an influx of Catholic families into the area. Dean O'Shaughnessy, Parish Priest of Cootamundra, to which Stockinbingal was attached, hastened the building of the new church complex. A large convent was built for the Sisters of St Joseph. These Sisters were unable to supply the necessary staff and the Sisters of Mercy were invited to come to Stockinbingal. Mother Brigid accompanied the foundation Sisters who were led by Mother Phillip Quigley.



The new building opened on 12 July 1914 with 80 pupils. Enrolment had increased to 156 by the end of the year. In addition to the prescribed curriculum, the convent school provided examination courses from Sydney College of Music in theory and practice and from Sydney Business College in book-keeping, business principles, secretarial work, typing and shorthand. A boarding school for girls was opened in 1928 but regrettably, Stockinbingal shared the fate of many small convents and closed in 1961. The Motor Mission Sisters resided in the convent for some time and then transferred to Cootamundra.

Some of the Sisters resident at Stockinbingal were Carmella, Phillip, Callista, Mercedes, Mark, Macrina, Leonard, Madeleine, Justinian, Alacoque and Gregory. Local girls Laura Morton and Zita Worthington joined the Goulburn Mercy Congregation.

Tocumwal

A Catholic school, taught by lay teachers, had opened within the church at Tocumwal in 1899. At Bishop Gallagher's request a group of Sisters of Mercy arrived from Albury in January 1906. Sisters Teresa, Magdalen, Clare and Juliana had to cross the river by punt where a procession of townspeople met and escorted them to a welcome at the convent. It was called Holy Name Convent, "a modest weatherboard cottage which stood in the church grounds". Bishop Gallagher, who wrote those words, visited again in August when he confirmed 25 boys and 17 girls. He wrote "All very good. The Sisters of Mercy are learning and increasing devotion to duty."

A new convent was opened in 1919, the school expanded and a secondary school was added only to be closed in 1956 when a central Catholic school was established in Finley. The primary school continued, teaching all the usual subjects and preparing the children for the sacraments. The Sisters always made time to visit the sick and aged in hospital and at home. This special care ministry is still carried on today by Sister Janice Dunne.



The Sisters left Tocumwal in 1976 but contact was not completely broken as Sister Mary Esler travelled from Finley each day and remained Principal of the school until 1984 when Anicet Lakomy succeeded her. Another Sister accompanied her and worked as Pastoral Assistant in the parish. Sister Lorraine Cupitt was the last Pastoral worker. When she was withdrawn in 1988, Mavis Hanlon, residing in Finley, continued pastoral work in Tocumwal until the Finley convent closed in March 1998.

Some of the Sisters who resided at Tocumwal were Philomena, Josephine, Christopher, Madeleine, Zita,

Maureen, Leonard and Loretto. Vocations from Tocumwal to Goulburn Congregation of Sisters of Mercy are Sister Aloysius Dunne and Sister Janice Dunne.

Tumut

Catholic education in Tumut was established in 1850 with schools staffed by lay teachers. The removal of state aid to independent schools by the Public Instruction Act of 1880 was one of the reasons the Sisters of Mercy were invited to Tumut. Their presence would eliminate the drain on church funds but their training in faith was a sustaining benefit to the parish.

In 1882 Mother Mary Bernard Grennan, Sisters Augustine Mullally, Stanislaus O'Neill and Clare O'Donnell, a novice, arrived in Tumut from Yass undaunted by the long journey in horse-drawn vehicles over bush tracks and unbridged rivers. A small cottage was their home until the convent, listed now by the National Trust, was built in 1886. Over the years the influence of the Sisters of Mercy and faith-filled family life have nurtured many religious vocations from the Tumut district.

School was conducted first in the original St Mary's Church, built in 1858. It continued use as a school until 1968 when it was superseded by more modern buildings and is now used as a parish hall. Over the years St Michael's Infants' School and St Brigid's School have seen many changes in both buildings and location. A new high school was built in 1968 and a new infants' school in 1978.

A ministry with a difference extended to the indigenous population who had suffered intensely from the Government decision to resettle them from Tumut and Gundagai to Brungle. Sister Celine McCormack became a valued tutor and advisor and in teaching of God's love, she gained the love and trust of the Brungle people. Her work led to further education and employment opportunities becoming available to the indigenous people as well as support from the local Shire and church communities.



This initial support was carried further into such areas as the involvement of Aborigines in the Skill Share program by Sister Maureen Hummerston. Sister Margarita Duffy continued the Mercy involvement with the Brungle community, becoming their advocate, preparing the children for the Sacraments and even now at a distance, as she resides in Yass, supporting the families.

The Sisters withdrew from the school in 1992. Education from kindergarten to year ten in the McAuley School is now under the administration of the Catholic Education Office, Canberra. The Sisters continued a Mercy presence in the community until 2004 when the convent closed and Sister Clare Flinn remained until early 2007.

West Wyalong

"All that glitters is not gold" says the old quotation, but it was the discovery of gold in Wyalong in 1894 that brought a community of Sisters of Mercy from Yass in 1896 to establish a convent school amongst the tents of the miners. Undeterred by harsh climate, water shortages, primitive buildings and the discomfort of long serge habits, the Sisters recognised the faith and needs of the miners who had built themselves a church – a strong wooden frame clad in galvanised iron, known affectionately as the "Tinny".

Mother M. Xavier Leahy, Sisters Mary Catherine, Mechtildis, Raphael and Angela arrived by Cobb & Co. coach from Temora, travelling the last part of the journey

on a bush track. School commenced almost immediately with 100 children in the "Tinny" which functioned as a school throughout the week.

Bishop Gallagher suggested that until transport improved, the Foundation become autonomous. Sisters already in Wyalong were given the choice of remaining there or returning to Yass. Sisters volunteered from Yass and other communities to stabilise the foundation. A novitiate was established as there were already three novices.

Outbreaks of typhoid fever were not uncommon and affected the whole community. In 1900 after spending many hours visiting sick miners in their humble dwellings, Sister Mary Josephine Dunne, the music teacher, beloved by the Sisters and miners alike, was taken by the fever.

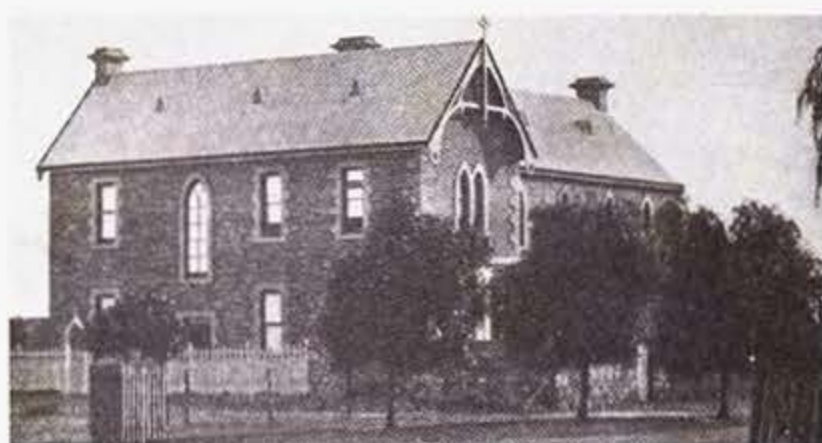


By 1902 with the linking of Wyalong to Temora by rail, the Foundation was re-affiliated with Yass which afforded the Sisters more opportunities. A new presbytery, convent and brick church/school were constructed at the western end of the growing town, away from the goldfields.

The present school, St Mary's War Memorial, which opened in 1959, catered for classes from Kindergarten to Year Ten, but in 2008 the Secondary Department closed due to diminishing numbers. 1996 marked the end of Sisters of Mercy teaching in the school. Margaret Hart and Helen Kennedy still labour in the West in a new venture as part of a Pastoral Mission Team serving the people of Wyalong town and district, the community which has given many vocations to the continuation of works of Mercy in the name of Catherine McAuley.

Wilcannia

In 1887 the Diocese of Wilcannia was formed with Right Reverend Dr Dunne as Bishop. In 1890 he asked Mother Paul Fielding for help and in July of that year, accompanied by Mother M. Gertrude, Sister M. Ignatius Markley and two postulants, Gertrude Grogan and Columba Young, she set off from Yass. Travel was by train to Dubbo where there was an enforced stay as the river steamer's boiler had burst. The group then travelled by train to Bourke, arriving in the dark amidst the worst floods Bourke had ever known. Then there was a wearisome river voyage "in an old tub" to Wilcannia – the journey had taken three weeks.



The Sisters entered immediately into the usual works of Mercy – general education, teaching music, visiting the poor and sick, religious instruction of women, visiting and instruction of prisoners and wherever possible working with Aboriginal people. Mother M. Paul with her universal kindness and courtesy broke down any prejudice in the district. The community flourished, postulants entered and when the development of the White Cliffs opal fields expanded, there were Sisters enough to open a Convent there.

Because Wilcannia was not within the Goulburn Diocese, the work there passed to the Wilcannia-Forbes Mercy Congregation.

Wodonga

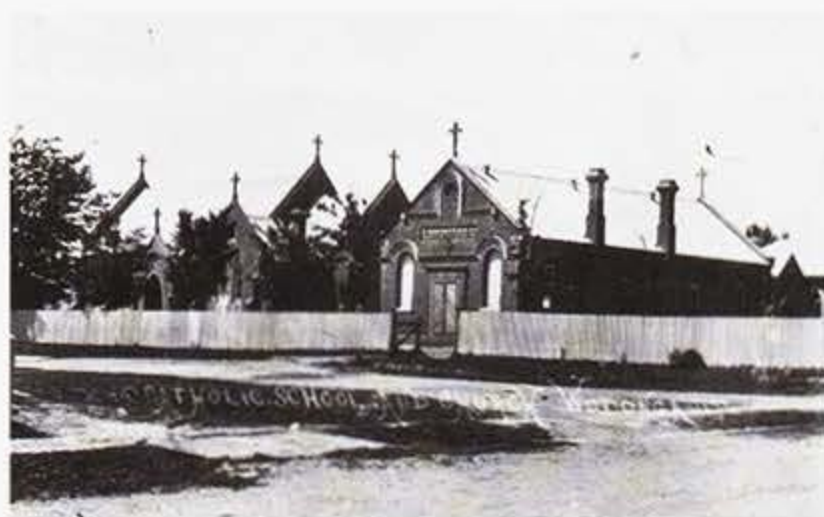
In 1890, soon after Albury's foundation at Deniliquin, came the request to open a house in Wodonga. Four very young sisters – Mother Aloysius Tierney, Sisters Gabriel Comins, Celestine Coyle and postulant Joseph Conlan – made the short but final break from their parent convent.

On arrival they met a chaotic situation because of another rival school but the Sisters were made welcome by kindly Wodonga women who provided meals in the early days. St Augustine's school opened with 50 students in two classrooms.

Despite these difficulties at the outset, several postulants joined the early community and the first reception held in the local church in August 1892 was a public witness to the Sisters' dedication to serve the local community. There were fifteen receptions/professions recorded with many entrants coming from rural NSW as well as surrounding Victorian districts.

Wodonga joined the Melbourne Mercy Congregation, and the Sisters quickly built a solid foundation in education and coped admirably with the 1952 post-war immigration of displaced persons of World War II to the nearby Bonegilla settlement camp.

Ever-increasing numbers of enrolments demanded a second site so St Monica's was established and now the Catholic College continues the Mercy story. The Sisters moved out of direct involvement in 1986 but the responsibility for Catholic Education is present in yet another expansion, Frayne College, Wodonga.



Yass

The Mercy foundation at Yass was made at the request of Bishop Lanigan after the visit of Father Michael McAlroy to Ireland. There was a denominational school in Yass but after the success of the Sisters in Goulburn and Albury, the Bishop saw the need for their presence in Yass. As well, it seemed that State Aid to denominational schools was about to be abolished.

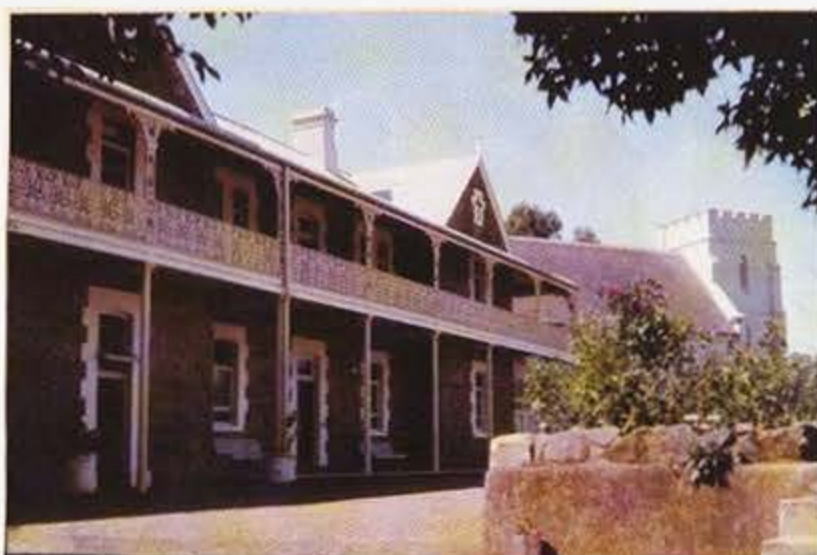
A severe storm drove Dr McAlroy to seek shelter at Rochfortbridge and while there he asked the Sisters for volunteers. In response Mother M. Paul Fielding as Superior with Sisters M. Alacoque McLoughlin, M. Bernard Grennan and four young women – Kate Leahy, (Sister M. Xavier), Ellen O'Neill (Sister M. Stanislaus), Margaret Nally (Sister M. Berchmans) and Anastasia Mullalley (Sister M. Joseph) – arrived in Sydney on 8 December 1875 after a voyage lashed by fearful storms. Dr Lanigan travelled with them by train to Goulburn where they stayed with the Mercy Sisters before setting out for Yass. Their arrival on 29 December was a very joyful occasion for the townsfolk. Mass was followed by a banquet and speeches of welcome. Included was a group of Aboriginal people who welcomed the "sacred ladies".

The ministry to the indigenous people of Yass was to become very special for Mother Paul and the Sisters. In the early years there was a school for Aboriginal children, the first of its kind in Australia. When under government policy the Hollywood mission was set up on the outskirts of Yass, the Sisters gave Sunday School lessons to the children. Many of the Aboriginal children came to Mount Carmel School and the Sisters provided pastoral care to their families. This ministry continues today.

The ministries of the Sisters were varied. In the schools at first they taught primary and secondary girls and junior boys. Later all the boys were included, following on from Mr. Gilchrist who taught the older boys for ten years after the Sisters' arrival. On Sundays the Sisters gave instruction to inmates of the local gaol who worked in chain gangs on the roads. They visited the poor and sick in home and hospital and gave religious instruction to adults. These latter ministries they still carry on today.

The community of Sisters grew with some Sisters like Johanna Markley, Mary Carey and Columba Garry coming from Ireland and local girls asking for admission. Among them were Sarah Grogan and her cousin Minnie and daughters of the Lohane, Carey, Coen and McReynolds families. From the Yass community, branch houses included Murrumburrah, Tumut, Junee, Wilcannia, West Wyalong, Gunning and Barmedman. Girls from outlying areas were able to come as boarders to the Mercy schools at Yass from 1893.

Transformations were a feature of the Yass schools with the original schools amalgamating to become Mount Carmel Primary and Mount Carmel College in the 1950s. The Secondary Section, with strong music and commercial curriculums, catered for rural and Canberra families. The introduction of the Wyndham Scheme in the early 1960s and the expansion of bus routes in country areas and to Canberra, led in the mid 1970s to the decision to cease Years 11 and 12 classes. In 1992 the boarding facility closed and then in 1994 the secondary school was handed over to the Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office by means of the formation of Mount Carmel Central School. In 1998 the Sisters left the large convent building for use by the school and parish and now live across the road from it, next door to St. Augustine's Church. From there they continue ministries in the parish of Yass.



Mount Saint Joseph's Home, Young

Care of the elderly infirm became a pressing issue for Dean Hennessy and the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart engaged in acute medical services at Young's Sacred Heart Hospital. The opportunity to address this concern, particularly for the large number of homeless elderly men, came in 1920 with the sale of a two storey residence on the edge of town. Sectarianism between Catholics and Protestants, common to many country towns, meant business deals were conducted with delicacy. The house was successfully purchased and the Dean, supported by parishioners, quickly converted the building into suitable accommodation for the elderly. The Sisters made the stipulation that the twenty residents of Mount Saint Joseph's were not patients and their occupancy was to be that of a member of the household.

In 1923, after the departure of the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother M Francis Conniff as Superior and Sisters M Paula and M John continued this ministry to the aged on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn. They lived among the residents until a convent was built for them in 1971. A tribute to them came from the State Minister of Health in 1936 who said "you carry on an institution with the atmosphere of a happy home." Mother M Francis on her evening rounds used to administer milk and rum to the gentlemen but limited the nightcap for the ladies to warm milk!



Mount Saint Joseph's proverbially "grew like Topsy" to meet the ever-increasing number of those seeking accommodation. It was for many years the only Nursing Home outside Sydney. By 1965 the 114 beds filled every available corner.

Changes in aged care in the late 1960s and the direction of dynamic Mother M Dorothy and her Board of Management led to many improvements including the building of Hennessy Hall which focused on allied health support and outreach. Hostel-type accommodation became available for our elderly/infirm Sisters and the Bethany Ward was renovated to receive our Cootamundra Sisters after the Government purchase of the Mercy Hospital there.

In 1981 Mount Saint Joseph's Home and the Mercy Hospital came under one Board, took the name of Mercy Care Centre in 1983 and officially amalgamated in 1987. Part of the original home was demolished and three modern units were constructed where care of our senior citizens in a Gospel oriented manner continues even as the Sisters withdraw from active ministry. In 1993 a multi-purpose complex was opened. Known as the Catherine McAuley Centre, it offers excellent facilities including a large theatre, entertainment area, library and chapel.

The Mercy journey continues under the governance of Mercy Health.

Sacred Heart / Mercy Hospital / Mercy Care Centre, Young

Why all the titles for the continuous ministry of healthcare at Young for almost a century? The story is an interesting social history of religious women who have served the parish and community.

A group of courageous Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart from London, responded to Dean Jerome Hennessy's invitation to take up nursing in rural New South Wales. The Sisters commenced their ministry – the first country Catholic hospital in New South Wales – in a house at 4 Campbell Street, Young. Insufficient beds required the Sisters to also nurse in private homes. A purpose-built 36 bed hospital opened in 1910 and the sisters set about establishing a highly regarded standard of healthcare. The Chapel was in what became the Men's Ward until the adjacent imposing neo-gothic building opened in 1913.

St John's Home, Goulburn



The Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart were withdrawn and in 1923 the hospital began its long history under the care of the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn. The original community was Sisters Justinian, Agnes, Hugh (who would give 20 years of service), Pascal, Regis and Rita.

Our co-ministry with the laity, always a hallmark of Mercy, began here with many dedicated nurses, support staff, medical practitioners, para-medical staff and volunteers who became life-long friends. Among these, special memories are held of Mary Carr, MBE who gave 46 years of dedicated care to babies and their parents and even their grandparents.

Sensitivity to the changing needs of the time, a mark of Mercy service, meant sorrow at relinquishing things held dear but enthusiasm in accepting challenges and leading the way in new services – aged assessment and management, community care, palliative care and rehabilitation.

Vocations from nurses who trained at Young include Eileen Driscoll, Marie Duffy, Ellen Higgins, Bernice Keane and Kerry Shoemark

Mercy lives on in new guises never thought possible in our foundation years.

St John's Home for Boys, like St Joseph's Home for Girls, had its origins in the old Clinton Street Mill. It was established in 1906 by Dr. Gallagher as soon as the building had been vacated by the girls when they moved to Kenmore.

Sister Sophia tells the story: "Thus on 31 December 1906, Sister Mary Benignus of the Sisters of Mercy, with an empty house, three little boys (brothers), the Bishop's blessing and the gift of £1 from his exhausted purse, began what many would have deemed an impossible task. To the credit of the Goulburn people, the Bishop and his clergy, the small donation multiplied many times, the empty building rapidly filled with the necessary furniture and so many more little boys that it became necessary to build a new home for them."

Again to the joint credit of the Archbishop, people of Goulburn and the far-sightedness and zeal of Sister Benignus, the boys moved to a new building in Mundy Street in 1913. By 1923 it had expanded to provide adequately for 110 boys. Sister Benignus' love, first for her "orphaned girls" and from 1906 for the boys, is well attested by those who knew her and her work. During her time the St John's Dairy was established where older boys, under supervision, milked the cows and delivered milk to a "regular round of customers".

Sister Benignus longed to build a hostel for working boys, a desire which ironically was achieved only in the year after her death in 1930. Much to the sorrow of Sister Ligouri, Benignus' successor, lack of employment due to the depression, caused the hostel's cessation. Rental received for the building, together with that from other property acquired by Sister Benignus between 1924 and 1930, supported the Boys Home throughout the depression years.

In the post-depression years, a second attempt was made and a cottage-style hostel established with the boys cared for by Sister Ligouri's two aunts. Under Sister Ligouri's direction "with a heart that couldn't say 'no'", St John's had an atmosphere of "one big closely-knit family". The reunions she established were continued by Sister Genevieve, affectionately known until her life's end in 2001 as "Mother Gen".

Prior to the 1950s, the boys received primary education at St John's and secondary at the Christian Brothers' Technical School and later at St Patrick's College. They



received considerable support on the sporting front from the men from Goulburn who trained teams on Saturdays and holidays.

Paralleling the development of St Joseph's Girls Home, the "home on the hill" was closed by 1979 and the boys were cared for by a Sister in cottages where siblings were kept together. Close family-like bonds formed between the Sisters who acted as house-mothers and the children under their care and sibling bonds were also strengthened. The spirit that had made St John's a "home" continued in the cottage homes.

In 1984 St John's Home, Mundy Street was formally closed and the cottages, by then under the direction of the Archdiocesan child welfare agency, Centacare (now CatholicCare), were closed in 1987.

St Joseph's Home, Kenmore

Soon after the Irish Sisters of Mercy arrived in Goulburn, they started caring for orphan girls but little is known of the early history. In 1878 Bishop Lanigan purchased the disused Hayes Mill opposite the Convent for use of the Sisters of Mercy. With support from the local community the building was refurbished, and in March 1881 it was blessed and opened as St Joseph's, including both a girls orphanage and a low-fee girls' boarding school. Although the boarding school ceased operating some time in the

1890s, making more space available for the orphanage, it became clear that a larger and more appropriate building was necessary to provide for the needs of the growing number of children.

In 1905 a public meeting, supported by Bishop Dr Gallagher, unanimously and enthusiastically agreed that a new orphanage should be provided. Land was purchased and on 27 August, "in the presence of a large number of ecclesiastics, many Goulburn well-wishers and representatives from Sydney and various parishes of the diocese", the foundation stone was blessed and laid. On being asked how he would maintain the establishment Dr Gallagher replied, "The providence of God and the generosity of the people ... the people of Goulburn and district had looked upon the old orphanage as a personal concern ... the orphans would never be allowed to suffer for want of food and clothing".

By Christmas Day 1906, more than fifty girls had moved into their new home which was handed over to the Sisters, free of debt. In 1924 the "extensive and much appreciated north wing" was added.

Until 1967 the girls received their primary education from Sisters at the Home and later at local primary schools. Their secondary education was at either St Joseph's College North Goulburn or Our Lady of Mercy College. Children at the orphanage often formed close and warm relationships with "holiday" families, relationships that for some continue today. One girl completed her studies at OLMC and trained at the Mercy Hospital in Cootamundra before becoming a Sister of Mercy. She worked for a number of years in Papua New Guinea before her death at a relatively early age.

Despite Dr Gallagher's hopes, money for "food and clothing" was always scarce even after the introduction of Government funding. One Sister recalls making new clothes while keeping the old pullovers for the girls to wear on cold, wintry nights. An unexpected donation came their way and she was able to buy new, warm blankets. Another time a truck carrying bags of sweets met with an accident on the highway. Thanks to the local police, this harvested an unexpected treat for the girls. When the St John's boys received a larger than usual load of apples from Tumut, the girls had an apple to munch on their Sunday afternoon walk. Times were hard but unexpected kindness was much appreciated by both Sisters and children.



As was the case for all orphanages in the earlier years, almost all children were in care due to the death of one or both parents. From 1960 most children were committed to care because of social or economic situations.

In 1974 the Sisters began the transition to family group homes, first for the girls alone and then by 1976, for boys who had sisters in one or other of the homes. At this time the former orphanage site came under the auspices of the Archdiocese and became known as "The House of Prayer."

St John's Orphanage, Thurgoona

St John's Orphanage for girls at Newtown, later known as Thurgoona, was established by Father John Dunne, parish priest of Albury, with the Albury Sisters of Mercy and formally opened by Bishop Lanigan on 16 April 1882. Mother Ignatius Murphy took Mother Bridget Hilly and another Sister out to the "home on the hill" – the two it seems were its founding Sisters.

From the beginning, the Sisters and the children shared in the tasks of the farm with its orchard, dairy and poultry run as well as in the laundry, sewing room and classrooms. Farm produce provided some of the Orphanage's income but even after government funding began in the 1960s, money was always scarce. Life was hard with no cooling

in summer and little heating in winter. Clothing was provided by charities such as St Vincent de Paul or made by the Sisters. Older girls looked after younger ones. Sleeping accommodation was in dormitories, little children were bathed and others showered in a communal shower-room. It was as one of the children remembered, "a tough life because there was no-one there to cuddle you when you felt bad ... I don't know how the nuns held together ... and I think it hurt them a lot not to be able to give us the things they felt we needed."

St John's came to be revered and supported by the community at large, of whatever denomination. Children came from far and wide – almost the first to be placed in its care were the two young daughters of a chemist on the West Wyalong goldfield who, with his wife, had died of fever.

What in time came to be called "Band Sunday", began as the day on which students of the Sisters' school in Albury brought out gifts of cakes, jams and needlework. In 1893 the Albury Band began their annual visit to the Orphanage. Community groups and individuals contributed in many ways to the support of St John's. A kind donor in Griffith kept the Orphanage supplied with almost all its fruit and vegetables.

Of the many sisters of Mercy who cared for the children at St John's, Sister Gertrude Liddy warrants special mention as one who "gave her life to the orphans". Many would "return to St John's to talk over their problems ... or to show off their offspring." Sister Bernadette Crimmins was also a much-loved sister, named by one tiny child as "Sister Kind". The kindness of so many Sisters is reflected in the number of invitations they receive to attend special occasions in the lives of their "children and grandchildren".

A major impact on the life of the Orphanage came with the arrival from England of children declared orphans as a result of the ravages of World War II. In preparation for their arrival, the St John's girls did their best to have everything spick and span and shining to welcome the newcomers. For the new arrivals however, in a confused and distraught state, this meant nothing and the St John's girls found their reactions hard to understand.

In 1977 the orphanage closed in favour of a cottage structure "St John's Family Care Centre Group Homes" which enabled siblings to be together. The homes were

located in middle class streets to help the children to experience an ordinary family life as closely as possible – like that of their school companions.

The next development took place in 1989 when ten units in Coolock Court, Lavington, were purchased to provide semi-independent living for disabled young women and men from Family Group Homes who were engaged in sheltered employment. Most recently St John's Family Care Centre became Mercy Care Centre with a focus on the needs of adults and children with varying degrees of physical or intellectual disability. Its work in Papua New Guinea in conjunction with Christian Brothers also includes those with mental health issues. The spirit of mercy bequeathed to her Sisters by Catherine McAuley goes on.



Chapter Five

Working Lives

Working Lives

The Religious Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy was founded with very clear responsibilities: the “arduous but meritorious duty of instructing the Poor” – “the most assiduous application to the Education of poor Girls, the visitation of the Sick, and the Protection of Poor Women of Good Character”.

As the Rule makes clear, the practical work of the Sisters was not carried out from a detached spirit of benevolence, but from a commitment to the “example of their Divine Master, Jesus Christ, who has testified on all occasions a tender love for the Poor, and has declared that He would consider as done to Himself whatever should be done unto them”.



Welcoming the Stranger
Drawing by Sister Clare Agnew - 1840

As often happened, the Catholic Church developed numbered lists of the works of mercy which all Catholics were expected to perform in some degree. The works selected were drawn from the Gospel of Saint Matthew and from church tradition. It was to these that the Sisters of Mercy devoted their lives.

A visual record of the working lives of the early Sisters is contained in fifteen drawings created in 1840 by Sister Clare Agnew, a founding member of the Bermondsey community in England. Titled “*The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy*”, they show images of Sisters performing works of mercy – visiting the sick and those in prison, clothing the destitute, teaching children in a schoolroom, providing comfort and advice to women and children, praying for the living and the dead.



Feeding the Hungry
Drawing by Sister Clare Agnew - 1840

Although these images are more than a little romanticised, they provide an invaluable insight into the early work of the Sisters. Their habit is clearly portrayed, as is their “outside” clothing, where cloaks and bonnets completely cover the habit to make the Sisters less conspicuous. There are also interior scenes of classrooms, the laundry, the convent parlour, courtyard, and garden. The Sisters are hard at work, teaching, listening, praying or serving the poor, their habits and sleeves turned up as they stoke the fire or carry trays of food.

As the Congregation grew, the Sisters continued these works of mercy, according to local needs. New foundations usually established or took over schools and in some locations Houses of Mercy were created as refuges for poor women. Visiting prisoners, the sick and those in need formed part of the regular life of each community. Nursing the sick and dying became more important and



Clothing the Destitute
Drawing by Sister Clare Agnew - 1840



Instructing the Ignorant
Drawing by Sister Clare Agnew - 1840

the reputation of the Sisters was enhanced when some of them worked with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea and others in the United States of America during the Civil War.

The Sisters who came to Goulburn, Albury and Yass and the houses founded from them, followed in this tradition. Existing Catholic parish schools were taken over or new schools established, and visitation and care of those in need formed part of the Sisters' routine. Other works varied according to the needs of the local community. Houses of Mercy were not established in this region, although work with individual women in need featured strongly. In Yass and later Tumut, work with indigenous people was important. There were gaols in Goulburn, Albury and Yass, and the Sisters visited the prisoners regularly. In these three main centres education for girls from all sections of society was a priority. Orphanages in Goulburn and Albury followed soon after the houses had been founded. Aged care and hospitals developed a little later.



Mercy Hospital, Albury, the New Theatre - 1957



Voluntary Work at "Vinnies"



Teaching Religious Education in Schools

Schools

The primary reason the Mercy Sisters came to Goulburn in 1859 was to take responsibility for Catholic schooling. On their arrival they took over the existing school for girls and infants, and in 1861 they opened a boarding school.

The first Catholic schools in Australia were staffed by lay people and by 1858, fifteen towns in southern New South Wales including Goulburn, Albury and Yass, had Catholic schools supported by state funding. This system came under increasing stress, so when Archdeacon John McEncroe visited Ireland in 1859 seeking priests and lay teachers, he seized the opportunity for a foundation of Mercy Sisters for Goulburn.

30

Books, Etc. Supplied.

BOARDING SCHOOL		
Convent of Our Lady of Mercy		
ST. PATRICK'S		
Goulburn, N.S.W. 1859		
Sister L. Liguori		
To the CONVENT.		
Books & Stationery for Boarding School	0	3 6
Books & Stationery for Misses of School	0	5 4
Wool & Dress for Misses of School	1	15 2
Wool & Dress for Misses of School	0	4 3
Wool & Dress for Misses of School	0	6 8 1/2
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	5 0
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	10 6
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	1 8
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	3 4
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	5 6
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	6 1
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	6 9
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	12 4
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	7 6
Total		51 5 9 1/2
Books & Stationery for Boarding School	0	3 6
Books & Stationery for Misses of School	0	5 4
Wool & Dress for Misses of School	1	15 2
Wool & Dress for Misses of School	0	4 3
Wool & Dress for Misses of School	0	6 8 1/2
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	5 0
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	10 6
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	1 8
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	3 4
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	5 6
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	6 1
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	6 9
Repairs to Dress of Boarding School	0	12 4
Wool & Dress for Boarding School	0	7 6
Total		51 5 9 1/2

School Account for Clara Reardon

Bishop Lanigan of Goulburn was deeply committed to Catholic schools. He foresaw the need for more religious women and men for the schools, and in 1873 sent Father McAlroy to Ireland where he recruited a group of Presentation Sisters for Wagga and a second group of Mercy Sisters for Yass. When the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880 withdrew funds from denominational schools he signaled his intention of maintaining and expanding Catholic schools, appointed an Inspector of Catholic



Prospectus for OLMC Goulburn 1934

Convent of Mercy
Goulburn

My dear Mrs Reardon
I am enclosing
Clara's ap. for three quarters, as her
Father requested, which you will
please hand him, and say he
need not inconvenience himself
by paying it all at once, as it might
be too much. Clara is very well
and an exceedingly good girl
Hoping you are well also and
with kindest regards to
Mr Reardon
Believe me, my dear Mrs Reardon
Yours sincerely in Y.L.
S. M. Liguori.

12th Nov. /89

Letter to Mrs Reardon from Sister Liguori 1889

schools and established a system for managing diocesan schools, with progressive replacement of lay teachers by Religious. Growth of the Catholic school system has continued to the present time.

Schools established by the Mercy Sisters in the Goulburn Diocese fell into two categories – low fee parish (diocesan) primary schools, and “pension” schools (later known also



Section of Our Lady of Mercy's College, Goulburn



Albury Boarders 1880s

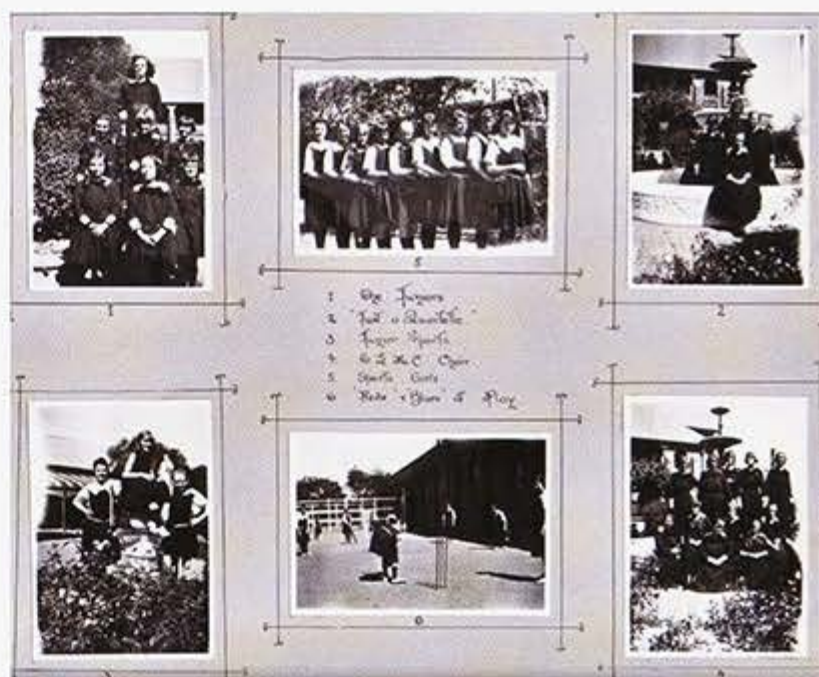
as congregational schools) for boarders and girls from wealthier families in Goulburn, Albury and Yass.

An uncensored letter written by fifteen year old Bridget O'Connor from Murringo, to her brother Tom shortly after starting boarding school at OLMC in Goulburn in 1909 provides a personal insight into boarding school life. She writes: "It is very cold down here, a white frost nearly every morning & we feel it too. Up nearly every morning at half past six, that is rather early for me. I have been here nearly a fortnight now & I do not feel at home yet nor never would if I stayed to the end of time. I'll only stay until Christmas, once I get home I will not be in such a hurry to leave it again. ... We are to have the 'Golden Jubilee' in October & that will be a bit of a break." Life for Bridget improved and by the time she left school in 1912 to go to Sydney University, she had covered herself with academic glory.



Yass Boarders 1938

With their mission to the poor and disadvantaged in mind, in 1881 the Mercy sisters opened St Joseph's School of Industry in Goulburn as a low-fee boarding school, intended to provide for the daughters of farmers who could not afford the fees at OLMC. It was announced in *The Freeman's Journal* as a "middle-class boarding school". A second advertisement gave its fees as £5 a quarter, stating that "the pupils would attend the Nuns' Day School, and do the housekeeping in all its departments". This was in the same building as the Orphanage which also carried the name of Saint Joseph's. It is not known how long the School of Industry continued to operate, though the last recorded mention of it seems to be 1893. Although carrying a similar title, this school should not be confused with the Industrial Schools established in Ireland for the destitute and abandoned.



Goulburn Album 1922

Through much of the twentieth century the Mercy Sisters extended many of their parish schools to include secondary classes. Binda, Stockinbingal and Gooloogong each had its own small boarding school for primary and secondary students who lived further than a day's ride from the town.

Many other Catholic religious orders – among them Sisters of St Joseph, and Good Samaritan, Ursuline, Presentation and Brigidine sisters, as well as men's orders like the Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers and de la Salle Brothers – also established schools within the Diocese of Goulburn (now the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn) and of Wagga Wagga, so that by the mid-twentieth century a complex network of schools staffed by Religious operated.

Convent of Mercy
Goulburn
18/9/09

Dear Peg,

No doubt you know by this that I have come to Goulburn as a boarder. This is Sunday morning and we are all writing letters. Aunt wrote to me last Sunday & said that she had a letter to write to you then so I suppose you know all the news. It is very cold down here a while frost nearly every morning & we feel it too. It is early every morning at half past six that is rather early for me. I have been here nearly a fortnight now & I don't feel at home yet not never would if I stayed to the end of time. I'll only stay until Christmas, once I get home I will not be in such a hurry to leave it again. Do not think by that that I wanted to come here, for it was against my will that I came. We are to have the Golden Jubilee in October & that will be a bit of a break. I have pianos & singing here but have not a proper start at singing yet. I suppose you heard that P. Leahy had to go to the Mountains for a change. When did you hear from Lisa she did not write to me yet. Don't forget to write soon & let me know how you are getting on. There is no more news we are just going to the Cathedral to Mass. With fond love from your affectionate sister, Bridget.

Letter from Bridget O'Connor



A happier Bridget O'Connor

POEM - "The Lamb" (William Blake)

End Class. TIME: 20 minutes.

TEACHER - Sr. M. Calene.

PERK I


AIM. (a) To teach poem "The Lamb"
(b) To give love for good literature.

Step I. Short talk about Author and poem lately learnt.

Step II. Children look at picture and discuss same.

- III. Children listen to poem being read a couple of times.
- IV. Children softly repeat poem while being read.

This was a very successful lesson. The introduction was very effective - arousing interest & capturing attention. Method of treatment well thought out & used. Language was very simple and clear. The 'aids' were well chosen & skilfully employed.



Teaching Mark A.

John C. Thompson, C.M.

11. 10. '44.

Teacher Training Assessment "The Lamb" 1944

Aged Care and Hospitals



Early Days at Sacred Heart Hospital, Young

Nursing the sick was a central work of the Mercy Sisters and one familiar to the Goulburn founders. Some sisters had cared for the sick and dying during the cholera outbreak in Westport in 1854 and Sister de Pazzi Dolphin, in particular, was deeply committed to caring for the sick.

However it was not until 1923 that the Goulburn Mercies started working formally in the areas of health and aged care, first in Young and later in Cootamundra and Albury.



Mercy Hospital Nurse's Badge 1961

In 1911 the first Catholic hospital in country New South Wales opened in Young, staffed by a group of Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart from England. Serious disagreements between Dean Hennessy of Young and the Sister Servants led to their relocation to Cootamundra where they opened a Catholic hospital in the presbytery. To continue the work of the hospital at Young, Bishop Barry asked the Sisters of Mercy to assume responsibility for Mount St Joseph's Old People's Home and the Sacred Heart Hospital in Young, and in January 1923 they took up this work. In 1927 they also took over the Sacred Heart



Cootamundra Mercy Hospital c.1930

Mercy Hospital, Albury

Marianella Nursing Home
Mercy Hospital Auxiliary



Annual Reports and Financial Statements

1987-88

Mercy Hospital Albury Annual Report 1987-1988

Hospital in Cootamundra from the Sisters of Charity who had run it after the Sister Servants withdrew from Australia.

In Albury the Mercy Hospital was opened by the Sisters in 1945 in small rented premises. As funding became available a large new hospital, the "new" Mercy Hospital, was built, opening in 1957. A nursing home, later known as Marianella, and more recently as Mercy Place, followed in 1963.

In all the hospitals there was a Nurses Training School. Young women undergoing General Nurse Training were provided with residential accommodation in the hospitals. On completing their training, many chose to work alongside the Mercy Sisters in the hospitals and nursing homes in Young, Cootmundra and Albury.



Sacrament of the Sick

Tray used for the Sacrament of the Sick at the Mercy Hospital Albury

In all the hospitals and nursing homes care was given for the soul as well as for the body. The Nursing Sisters called the priest to attend to the sick and dying, and kept prayerful vigil at the bedside of the very ill.

Orphanages

Care for neglected children has always been a central activity for Mercy Sisters. Exactly when they started caring for orphan girls in Goulburn is unclear although it can be safely assumed that it was not long after their arrival. The obituary for Sister Ignatius Murphy who founded both Goulburn and Albury communities speaks of her “most passionate affection for [the] helpless little inmates” of the Orphanage she had established in Newtown (near Albury). Her interest in the orphans of Goulburn must have predated her care for the orphans of Albury, but it was not until 1881 that an official orphanage was opened in Goulburn.



The Girls at St John's Home, Albury in 1916

In 1878 Bishop Lanigan purchased Hayes Mill opposite the convent in Goulburn for conversion to an Orphanage and School of Industry. In March 1881 he blessed and opened St Joseph's Industrial School and Orphanage. The converted Mill soon proved inadequate and in 1905 Bishop Gallagher bought land at Kenmore and a purpose built orphanage, St Joseph's, opened in 1906. St John's Orphanage for boys opened in the vacated building, moving to a permanent home on Mundy Street hill in 1913.

Another orphanage for girls was opened in Albury in 1882 at Newtown, later Thurgoona. The Sisters took responsibility for the existing parish school and opened St John's Girls' Orphanage, under the care of Sister Bridget Hilly and another Sister.

The obituary for Sister Ignatius reads:

For the last eight months of her life she was unable to speak, and communicated her thoughts to others in writing on a slate. Though almost overpowered by the weakness of approaching death, on last Monday night [Sister Ignatius] wrote the words: - "Will you take care of the orphans?" and then handed the slate to me. In reply I said to her, "You must always be regarded as the foundress of this institution. Your feast occurs in the month of July, and in all human probability you will be called to your reward before the end of the month. Now, to perpetuate your memory, I promise that an annual appeal will be made to the catholic people in the month of July for the support of the orphan children whom you have always loved so passionately." She seemed to be quite happy after having obtained the assurance that her precious little charges would not be forgotten.

KNOWLMAN
Bros.
DIRECT IMPORTERS,
DRAPERS,
and CLOTHIERS.

"The Corner," Bulgin Street,
Goulburn, Dec 23rd 1904

Received from His Lordship
Bishop Gallagher the sum of
Twenty hundred & twenty nine
pounds 10/- for Kenmore land
on behalf of Mrs. H. Knowlman
H. Knowlman



Receipt for the Kenmore Land for St Joseph's 1904

Indigenous Australians

The Sisters who came to Yass and Goulburn expected that they would work with the local indigenous people. This appears not to have been the case at Goulburn, but in Yass they were greeted on their arrival in 1875 by Lucy Hamilton, a senior Aboriginal woman. In response they visited the indigenous people in their homes and began to teach the children. Although early official records of the relationship with the indigenous people are almost non-existent, it features strongly in the Sisters' traditions. The Sisters' recollections have been used as sources for local historians, both indigenous and white, striving to build a picture of the life of the Aboriginal people of Yass in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Goulburn Mercy Congregational Archives hold a brief and lively but undated (perhaps from the 1970s) account by Sister M Alacoque McAuliffe headed *Yass – the Story of the Aborigines* as well as a succinct but anonymous account headed *Aborigines in Yass* (1988).

Originally the Sisters included the indigenous children in their school but a NSW Government directive of the early 1880s banned Aboriginal children from attending schools for the children of the European population. Dean O'Keefe opened a separate school for Aboriginal children in the grounds of the convent-school where they were taught by Sister Xavier Leahy, one of the Yass pioneer sisters. Sister Alacoque's account says the school was where the "present laundry stands".

In the 1930s the Aboriginal reserve "Hollywood Mission" was established on the outskirts of Yass. Since the Public Instruction Act in 1880 which had made school attendance

compulsory, the Aborigines Protection Board had been encouraging Aboriginal attendance at local schools. Increasing numbers of indigenous children enrolled in government schools which unfortunately brought about a corresponding increase in protests by white parents over their children associating with children from the "blacks' camps". A system of separate Aboriginal Schools developed, including one in Yass at Hollywood.

For many years the Sisters visited Hollywood, providing instruction, preparing people for the Sacraments, and making many enduring friendships. Agnes Shea, a noted senior Aboriginal Yass woman, recalls "The nuns would come every Sunday with the priest for mass at Hollywood. After the priest left, the nuns would stay on and visit the various families, and ask them if they had any problems and generally talk to them." She adds a wonderful account of herself and other girls earning some money by working for the Sisters (she mentions Sister Loretto) during the school holidays "singing hymns and scrubbin' like mad for our shilling a day. And then at the end of the day we got food packaged for us from the convent kitchen" (from *Wiradjuri Places*, 1995).

When the school at Hollywood closed, some of the families sent their children to the Catholic schools in Yass. The reserve itself closed in the 1950s, but the relationship, particularly between some of the indigenous women and the Sisters, was maintained. Among the Sisters remembered for their work with the indigenous people in Yass are Sisters Cecilia McGirr, Loretto Reidy, John O'Brien, Pauline Couch and Alacoque McAuliffe.



Sisters Alacoque and Pauline with Bishop Guilford Young and a group of residents of Hollywood, Yass. Christmas Day 1952

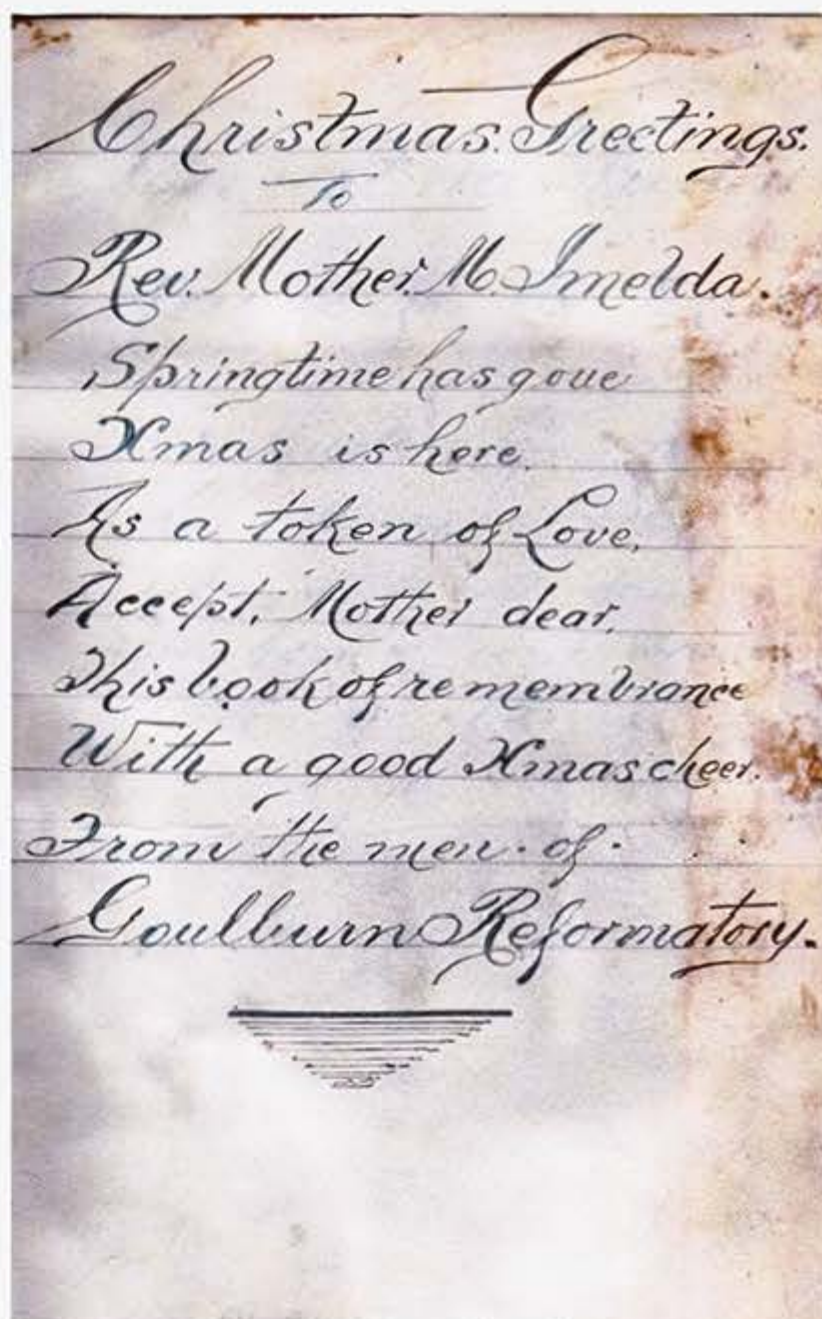
Visiting those in Prison

Prison visitation was a central work of the Sisters of Mercy, and one quickly taken up by the Sisters on their arrival in Australia. There was scope for this work in all three founding houses of the Goulburn Congregation, but because of the nature of the work, records are scanty and largely incidental.

Soon after their arrival in Goulburn the Sisters began visiting the local gaol. The *Goulburn News* said that “the Rev D’Arcy and the Sisters of Mercy were in constant attendance” on Ellen Monks, who was executed in 1860 for the murder of her husband the previous year.

In Yass, local history says that the early work of the Sisters included visiting and praying with convicts working on chain gangs on the local roads. The prison in Albury was located close to the convent, making regular visits less arduous than in Goulburn or Yass.

In all these places individual Sisters were particularly remembered for their regular and compassionate visits to prisoners. There is a rare visible recognition of this in the album presented to Sister Imelda Sullivan one Christmas probably in the 1930s. The dedication records this gift “as a token of love” by “the men of Goulburn Reformatory”.



Book presented to Sister Imelda by the Men of Goulburn Reformatory
Dedication Page

Music and “Special Courses”

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the music that Catholic Sisters brought to often remote locations across Australia, but it is important to acknowledge also the importance of music for the Sisters themselves.

In the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries a sound musical education was considered essential for a lady. Many of the women who became Sisters of Mercy had a strong musical background, and this provided them with a skill they could use to generate much needed additional income for their communities. All they needed was a piano, and country Australia was rich in pianos. In the 1880s the German piano industry expanded dramatically, with Australia becoming its second largest market in the mid 1880s.

After-school and Saturday morning music classes with “Sister” were a notable part of the lives of countless children both Catholic and non-Catholic, and for the Sisters provided not only money but the reward of working with individual children and getting to know their parents. Some of their pupils became notable musicians; others simply acquired some skill in playing and singing, and enjoyment in listening to music.

Music was also an integral part of the religious lives of the Sisters, and they used their musical talents in both convent and parish worship. Some of the earliest newspaper accounts of the activities of the Sisters are of their concerts which were occasions when musical attainment could be exhibited but were also important social and cultural gatherings.

Some of the Goulburn Mercies are recalled as exceptional musicians, composers and music teachers. There was continuity in the musical tradition, as many of the Sisters had themselves been students at one of the Mercy schools, and had received their musical education there. Sometimes this musical education continued after a Sister entered the convent. The archives are rich in handwritten music scores both original and copied, and teaching notes.

Music was not the only extra-curricular subject the Sisters taught – in many places they also taught a range of “commercial” subjects like bookkeeping and typing, and other accomplishments such as painting and fine needlework, but it is for their music that they are best remembered.



Manuscript Album
Handwritten and dated 1914

A School Prospectus for Our Lady of Mercy College Goulburn dating from 1934 lists the school's Commercial offerings, including training in “Book-keeping, Shorthand, Speed Tests, Type Writing and Business Principles” for “students who wish to qualify for clerical positions or Public Service”, citing its “exceptionally successful record for Commercial Examinations, the results of which number hundreds in the four years named”. It then goes on to mention Special Courses:

Special Courses are offered in Art, Music, Art of Speech and Needlework, the last-named including Dress Making. Students are prepared for the various Examinations in the State Conservatorium of Music, the Associated Board and Trinity College, London. An experienced Conductor attends the College weekly for orchestral practice.

A lengthy paragraph then spells out recent successes in musical examinations, up to the highest level.

unconscious case - and before 2500 people. There are plenty of 3-part arrangements, with simple adjustment of Tenor can be easily managed. Pachelbel and those of his period wrote plenty of 4 part songs, 1 Tenor + 3 Sopranos. If we know enough about harmony we can arrange these but we must be very careful, but never interfere with top part, or harmony, if you have to slightly modify lower parts - if you change the harmony you decompose it. Hyphen parts, 4 part - I have heard Alto + Tenor alone, perhaps alright for few hours, but after a while they are singing in 4th - a little too near the style of the time of Huebald, - which would be alright if the lower parts were given, but here the lower part not being given the upper part must be slightly changed.

Arrangement of Choir.

2nd Tenor 1st Tenor 1st Sopr. (left) 2nd Sopr. (middle) 3rd Sopr. Right	2nd Bass 1st Bass Contraltos.
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Left

Right

Conductor facing

Quality is great factor in selecting Sopranos - Test sight reading (though I play over the piece once first) Ear Test - I would say to person who applied to me (having played C) "sing G". (play C. G. G) "sing that". (play Gb) "Sing 5th above that", or 6th or 7th. This shows exactly what they can do, and then I draft them into 1st or 2nd. Ear test - simple Key say from C to C on white note. 1st way, play note.

Lecture Notes. Summer School, Sydney Conservatorium (1918)
Notes written by Sister Aloysius Dunne, music teacher at Corowa and Albury



Our Lady of Mercy College, Goulburn Choir 1968

Chapter Six

Changes



Changes

For a hundred years from the foundation of the Goulburn Mercy Community in 1859, changes were largely ones of growth and expansion. New communities were established, schools were opened and developed and new ministries, particularly in the health area, were added. Large numbers of young women continued to enter the novitiate, re-energising the communities.

The period after the Second World War brought social and economic change and the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) brought even more changes for members of religious congregations in the Catholic Church, including the Sisters of Mercy.

Even before Vatican II there had been two important organisational developments for the Goulburn Congregation, both addressing the challenging issue of unification. The 1907 amalgamation of the houses in Goulburn, Albury and Yass was seen as largely administrative.

In the early 1950s the Mercy Congregations in Australia started to explore ways of unifying while retaining their autonomy and the Goulburn Congregation became a member of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Mercy in 1954.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) brought with it a major re-examination of life and ministry for Religious. The 1965 *Decree on Renewal of Religious Life (Perfectae Caritatis)* was explosive in its impact. For all religious communities it emphasised renewal and a return to the spirit of the original foundation, along with adaptation to the present time. Practical Orders like the Sisters of Mercy were enjoined to “adjust their rules and customs to fit the demands of the apostolate to which they are dedicated”. Individual and communal responsibility, along with recognition of the psychological and personal differences between individuals, were emphasised.



Autonomous Congregations of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia
Copyright Fraynetwork Multimedia 2007

The outcome was change, much of it dramatic, in all areas of religious life. During this period, for a range of reasons, some women chose to leave the Congregation, and the numbers wanting to enter declined.

Over a period of some years the identifiable religious dress was modified, and apart from the Mercy Cross and the ring, finally discarded by most Sisters.

Continuing education and personal and professional development were encouraged and taken up with enthusiasm by most of the Sisters. New ways of living were trialled, and eventually the old Convent buildings were sold or made over to other purposes. By the beginning of the twenty-first century Mercy Sisters were living in small groups or even alone. Housing was modern and frequently located within the local community rather than adjacent to the Church or School.

New roles were adopted by the Sisters, especially in fields of pastoral and welfare work. These moves were made possible by their withdrawal from many of their traditional ministries like classroom teaching and school administration, and more recently from staffing and administering hospitals. Instead of a team of Sisters working together, in most cases there would now be only one Sister in a work area.

In 1981, a further step towards unification of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia came with the formation of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia (ISMA), with seventeen autonomous foundations in Australia, and works extending to Papua New Guinea and Pakistan. The 2004 National Chapter of ISMA issued a call for a reconfiguring of the Institute which would “enhance our capacity for action for mercy and justice locally and globally, particularly among women”.



Mercy Sisters in 2009

Organisation and Structures

For many Sisters of the Goulburn Congregation, identification with their “home” community – Goulburn, Albury or Yass – remained strong long after the 1907 amalgamation, with strong resistance to closer ties between the communities.

At the grass roots, the Congregation’s membership of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Mercy (1954) also had little impact initially, but the new *Constitutions* approved in 1959 signalled important changes. While retaining much of the structure and the wording of the original Rule, it expressed in clear and contemporary terms the “characteristic” works of the Sisters, listing them as:

The education and training of youth in elementary and secondary schools as well as in colleges and academies for girls

The care and visitation of those in spiritual and temporal need and the care of the sick in hospitals

The care of girls, of women, of the aged and of orphans

Work on the Missions.

Much obsolete and inconsistent material has been removed including mention of lay sisters, and the first changes to the habit are heralded: “The Sisters are permitted to wear habits, veils and aprons of white washable materials where, in the opinions of Superiors, circumstances demand it”.

In 1981 the Union was dissolved and the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia was established covering all seventeen Mercy foundations in Australia. The Institute’s *Constitutions* (1987) is a quite different kind of document from earlier ones, reflecting the many changes that followed the Second Vatican Council. It is in three parts, a visionary spiritual section, a practical juridical section – much less prescriptive than earlier versions – and a third section specific to the Goulburn Congregation. Catherine McAuley’s words in the original *Rule* are echoed in the new *Constitutions*: “In their works the sisters aim to relieve misery through their service to the poor, sick and ignorant. Sisters of Mercy therefore become involved in education at all levels, in health care in its many forms, and in furthering the social and spiritual well-being of those in need”.

Establishment of the Associates in Mercy in 1991 provided an opportunity for lay women and men to share in the spirit of the Congregation through prayer, community and ministry.

The tradition of elected leaders remains central to the governance of the Sisters of Mercy, but all elections are now preceded by much consultation and preparatory work. The Goulburn Congregation continues to elect its own Leader at a meeting of Chapter, and at the Institute Chapter is represented by the Congregation Leader and a number of other elected members.



First General Chapter, Australian Union of the Sisters of Mercy, 1954

Education

The cost of maintaining the now extensive Catholic School system, even when the schools were staffed by Religious, became a central concern across all Australian dioceses. The reintroduction of government financial support for denominational schools in the early 1960s, at least in part a result of the Goulburn School Strike, was a crucial event.

Reform of the New South Wales school system from the early 1960s (initially through the Wyndham Scheme), social developments, improved transport, and a decline in the number of Sisters led to other changes. Secondary sections of small schools closed – Boorowa, Grenfell, Gundagai and Crookwell all at the end of 1961.

Government requirements and higher parental expectations also led to creative and fruitful outcomes. In 1967 the Mercy Sisters and de la Salle Brothers in Cootamundra opened the first co-institutional and co-educational Catholic secondary school in Australia, an approach widely emulated elsewhere.

As numbers of Sisters continued to decline, convents in some towns closed. In a few places the schools also closed, but the administration of most schools was transferred to the Catholic Education Offices of Canberra-Goulburn and Wagga Wagga which had been established in the

mid 1960s. The transition from schools staffed completely by Sisters to those with predominantly lay staff gained momentum.

Changes to the remaining secondary schools run by the Sisters came in stages, with Mercy-run schools typically combining with a school run by one of the male religious orders to form a co-educational school which was later transferred to the Diocesan educational authorities. In Goulburn there was a double amalgamation – in 1977 Our Lady of Mercy College combined with St Joseph's College from North Goulburn to form the jointly run Marian College, and in 2000 Marian College combined with St Patrick's College to form Trinity College, a co-educational diocesan school. In 2005 the last of the secondary schools formerly run by the Sisters (the Catholic High School at Griffith) joined the diocesan system as Marian College. 2008 was the last year a Sister of Mercy was engaged as a teacher in a diocesan primary school, but some Sisters are still engaged in other kinds of educational work.

The legacy of the Sisters' work in the schools remains in the tens of thousands of children taught by them, and the system of now lay-led Catholic schools throughout both Dioceses.



Griffith Students 2005

State Aid and the Goulburn School Strike

Securing financial support for Catholic schools, particularly from the State, was a persistent problem in Australia for many years.

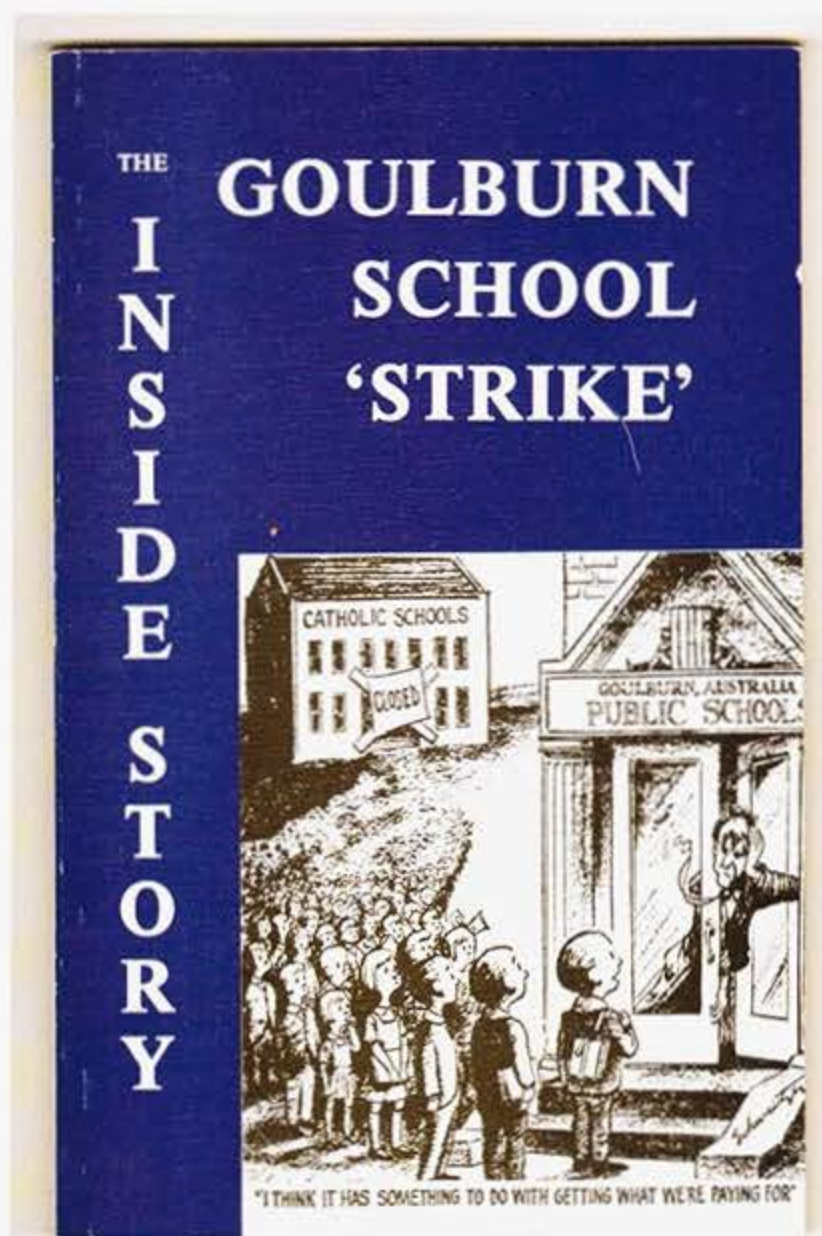
In his welcoming speech to the Sisters of Mercy in Goulburn in November 1859, Archbishop Polding spoke passionately on this topic: "Catholics numbered one third of the population, and ... they were entitled to have their proportional share of money granted for educational purposes: and he would urge on congregations to impress upon their representatives the necessity of obtaining their fair share. They must insist on their rights, and nothing less would satisfy them".

Much early New South Wales legislation related to education, but the Public Schools Act of 1866, which was steered through Parliament by Henry Parkes, for the first time provided some effective control over all education in the State. This new provision met virulent criticism from Catholic authorities who saw the government school system as "squeezing the Catholic faith out of Catholic people". Their response roused a bitter reaction against the continuation of State support for denominational schools, particularly Catholic ones.

The Public Instruction Act introduced into Parliament by Parkes in 1879 came into force on 1 May 1880. Among the provisions of the act was the withdrawal of State aid to denominational schools from the beginning of 1883, and the introduction of compulsory education.

The immediate impact of the passage of the Act was the rapid expansion of the Catholic School system across New South Wales, to provide an alternative, Catholic education for primary school children and on every possible occasion Bishops and parish priests seized the opportunity to call for state aid for Catholic schools.

By 1962 the cost of maintaining the system without state support had reached crisis point. The apparently trivial issue of inadequate toilets at St Brigid's Primary School was the trigger for what became known as the Goulburn School Strike. The Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn, John Cullinane said there was simply no money to make the changes required by New South Wales health inspectors within the time specified. After a period of intense activity, on 9 July 1962 a meeting of parents voted to close Goulburn's Catholic schools and enrol the children in state schools. The following Monday, all of Goulburn's Catholic schools were closed and some 2200 children arrived at the local state schools to enrol. A week later the schools reopened, but the impact of the "Strike" was huge. The following year the Prime Minister, R G Menzies, introduced Federal support for non-government schools and by the end of 1967 funds were also coming from the New South Wales government.



The Inside Story of the Goulburn School Strike
by Bishop J N Cullinane

Child Welfare

Over a period of nearly a hundred years the Sisters cared for thousands of children at the three orphanages, St Joseph's (Girls) in Goulburn, St John's (Girls) in Thurgoona, and St John's (Boys) in Goulburn. Generous parishioners always helped with clothing and feeding the children and welcoming them into their homes for holidays. From 1960 all children in care were paid child endowment and some further government assistance also became available, but conditions were spare for both Sisters and children.

By the 1970s changes in attitudes and social welfare policy meant that care of children in large institutions was no longer acceptable, and the importance of keeping family groups together was recognised. By then, only 4% of the children in the care of the Mercy sisters were actually orphans.

In 1974 the then Provincial, Sister Carmella, as well as the Sisters in charge of the Goulburn homes, Sisters Margaret Brown and Sebastian Hanlon started a process which would end with the closure of both the orphanages, while providing better care for the children. In October a first group moved from St Joseph's to a house in Auburn Street, and a second group followed soon after. Two years later boys from St John's who had sisters in the cottages joined them. By 1979 both Goulburn orphanages were closed.

A review of St John's Girls' Orphanage in Thurgoona in 1974 resulted in the Sisters opening their first Group Home for children in 1976, and by 1978 the transition was completed. Three Family Care Centres were established, each with up to eight boys and girls.

Over the next few years some of the children in the cottages in both towns were reunited with their parents or other family carers, and others moved to foster homes. In 1987 the last of the cottages closed, but the Sisters and many of the children still have close ties.

Health and Aged Care

By 1957 when the new Mercy Hospital opened in Albury, the Sisters were running modern hospitals in Young, Cootamundra and Albury. Changes in health care standards meant that all three hospitals required constant upgrading and development. In 1961 it was agreed to present a more consistent image and the hospitals at Young and Cootamundra both changed their names to Mercy Hospital.

In 1975 the New South Wales Government rationalised health services, and the hospitals began to re-position their services when general nurse education moved from a hospital based service to the new Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology, starting in 1978.

In 1980 major changes to the Goulburn Congregation Mercy hospital system were announced. The Mercy Hospital at Cootamundra would close, to immediately re-open as the Cootamundra Hospital. At Young a regional unit for care of the aged and chronically ill would be established and other hospital services transferred to the Young District Hospital. In Albury the hospital would remain an acute hospital, with an expanded obstetrics unit. These procedures were finalised in 1987. Later again, acute services at Albury were withdrawn, obstetrics services transferred to Wodonga District Hospital, and existing specialist areas strengthened – geriatric assessment, palliative care and the Parents and Babies unit.

Unlike the schools which for many years were staffed exclusively or predominantly by Sisters, the hospitals had from very early in their histories included lay staff as nurses, many of them trained within their own system. However, as with the schools, the number of lay staff increased, and 1998 saw the last Mercy Sisters on the nursing staff of the Congregation's hospitals at Young and Albury.

Care of the aged had become a particular work of the Sisters, starting in Young with Mount St Joseph's Home, extending to Bethany (for aged Sisters) in Cootamundra, and later Marianella Nursing Home, in Albury. All these facilities were upgraded and extended, with special accommodation for aged sisters now at Young. Extensive geriatric care and rehabilitation services were added to the services at the Mercy Care Centre in Young.

In 2007 to ensure continuity of ministry within the Mercy ethos, ownership of the health and aged care facilities was transferred to the Melbourne based Mercy Health. The Sisters' present involvement in Health Care is in chaplaincy, pastoral care and aged and palliative care support.

New Ways of Working

In 1959 it was decided to close the school at Stockinbingal but keep the convent open as the centre of a new ministry. A Motor Mission was established, and Sisters travelled to twenty three state schools in towns such as Young, Jugiong, Koorawatha, and Bribbaree, providing religious education and preparing children to receive the Sacraments. At the end of 1961 the headquarters for the Motor Mission was transferred to Young and Cootamundra, and later again to Murrumburrah. Further south, a second Motor Mission based in Corowa started in 1962, with the Sisters travelling to Urana, Mulwala and Howlong. The Walking Nuns had become Driving Nuns, covering hundreds of kilometres each week, working closely with individuals and small groups. The Motor Missions closed in the late 1980s but had been the harbingers of many new works undertaken by the Sisters.

Work with indigenous people continued particularly at Tumut and with the Brungle Community, and a new ministry to young people and adults with disabilities particularly in the Albury region was established and continues to thrive. Residential supported accommodation for children and adults grew from the existing work of St

John's Family Care Centre, and from this has emerged the Mercy Centre Lavington, which offers a range of professional services to people with a disability. The Centre also attends to people who are not easily supported by other service providers, including those of indigenous background and those who come out of the criminal justice system. Its services extend to Wodonga, Orange, Narrabri, Tamworth, Coff's Harbour and Newcastle. In collaboration with the Christian Brothers programmes are also offered in Wewak, Goroka and Mt Hagen in Papua New Guinea.

Cooperation has become a feature of many of the works of the Mercies, with Sisters working with other agencies or groups alongside lay colleagues. They have worked and continue to work in parishes, hospitals, schools and prisons in a variety of pastoral roles as well as in advocacy and social justice. The range of works has been extensive, constantly evolving as needs have emerged. In a number of towns the work of the Sisters in the broader community has been recognised publicly particularly since the 1980s. Tumut, Cootamundra, Albury, Young, and North Albury have all acknowledged individual sisters for their work.



Motor Mission Howlong - 1962

Changed Dress and Way of Living

The most obvious identifier of a Sister was for many years the religious habit. Derived from the ordinary dress of women in the 1830s, the Mercy habit persisted well into the 20th century, and Sisters regarded it as an essential part of their identity. In the 1950s minor modifications were made, but after the Second Vatican Council changes came quickly. Some time after 1967 the modified habit (short skirt, roll collar and pulled back veil) was accepted for Goulburn. Veils were optional by 1982, and some years later the Goulburn Sisters agreed that “as a sign of our consecration and as a witness to poverty we wear a simple and appropriate dress including our profession ring and the distinctive Mercy Cross. We have the option of wearing the veil”. Some elderly Sisters still prefer to wear the modified habit including the veil.

The new Mercy Cross, adapted from the large ebony and ivory one, was adopted at General Chapter of the Union in 1978 and is now worn as a pin or pendant.

It was not only the dress that had changed, the whole way of living had altered. With the relinquishment of the large convent buildings, communities are now typically small, frequently including one or more older Sisters. Some Sisters live alone. Community life and prayer remain central to their lives, and they keep formal and informal links among themselves and with the other Mercy Congregations.

Beyond the Diocesan Boundaries

An immediate benefit of membership of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Mercy, and later of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy (ISMA) was the opportunity for work beyond the diocesan boundaries, particularly with sisters from other Mercy Congregations.

As early as 1955 the newly appointed Superior of the Union received a request from Wewak in New Guinea, asking as if in a repeat of the events of one hundred years earlier “if it would be possible to send some Sisters”. It was not possible then, but within a few months the first band of Mercy sisters left for Goroka in the New Guinea highlands. Two years later, in 1958, Sister Patrick Mahoney became the first international missionary from the Goulburn Congregation. Others followed later, working in areas of health and education. As local women joined the Mercy Sisters from Australia, responsibility for the community was gradually handed over to them, and in the 1980s the Autonomous Region of Papua New Guinea was formally established, becoming a member of Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia (ISMA).

Another “beyond the diocese” work of ISMA was in the Kimberley in Western Australia. In 1984 Sister Margarita Duffy was appointed to the Mission in Billiluna, working there for three years, followed by five years at Balgo and two at Turkey Creek. On her return she has continued her work with indigenous people at Tumut.

In 1986, Sister Colleen Livermore was one of a group of ISMA Sisters who went to Peshawar in north-western Pakistan to establish a Mercy school, working there for many years. Other Sisters have worked independently of ISMA in South Africa, and the United States.



Sister Margarita in Balgo - c1990



Sister Patrick in New Guinea - c1960



Sister Colleen in Peshawar - 1987

Epilogue

At the Heart



At the Heart

At the heart of each Mercy community is the Chapel, the house of prayer.

In each of the foundation houses beautiful Chapels were built, with stained glass windows brightening the interiors. At prayer, either assembled as a community or individually, Sisters were surrounded by inspiring images.

As was customary, in both Goulburn and Yass the chancel window, fully visible to all, depicts scenes at Calvary, including the figures of Mary and Saint John grieving at the foot of the crucified Christ.

The Albury chancel windows portray Saint Joseph, patron of the boarding school, and Mary, in a very beautiful window, a gift from the School boarders.

Mary is portrayed in several windows in the Chapels, under different titles.

The Irish saints Patrick and Brigid appear in all three locations, particularly appropriately for Goulburn and Albury as these are the patron saints of the convents, though with its transfer to the new Chapel in 1891, the large “Irish saints” window in Goulburn is now obscured in the loft.

People associated with the convents are commemorated in various ways. In Yass, windows depict the saints whose names were taken by the founding Sisters on their profession: Saints Paul, Bernard, Stanislaus, Francis Xavier, Joseph and John Berchmans, as well as the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a reference to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. The chancel window there is dedicated to Dean O’Keefe: “A Tribute of Gratitude to Very Rev Dean O’Keefe from the Sisters”, and in Albury Father Michael McAlroy is commemorated in a window dedicated to him, depicting Michael the Archangel.



Calvary
Original Yass Chapel



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
Goulburn Chapel



St Brigid
Goulburn Chapel



Blessed Virgin Mary
Albury Chapel

Sources and Acknowledgements

Sources and Acknowledgements

Locating and selecting items to include in the Sesquicentenary Exhibition was challenging, and in some cases the information about those chosen was limited.

The Congregational Archives at Braddon, formerly at St Michael's in Goulburn, holds a collection of official records, memorabilia, photographs, memoirs and similar items, but there are many gaps. During her third period as Superioress General, while resident at St Michael's, Sister Colombière McKillop worked on her *History of Foundations in the Goulburn Province*, so it can be assumed that many of the records required were then held at St Michael's or brought there by her, but the extensive work of formalising the archives was largely the work of the first Congregational librarian/archivist Sister Eileen Casey. She located, collected and organised information and objects. After her death in 2004 the work was continued by her successor, Sister Ellen Yates. Without their work it would have been impossible to produce the exhibition.

Primary sources for the earliest period include photocopies of extracts from the Annals of the Westport and Rochfortbridge in Ireland, entries from microfilmed local and Irish newspapers, some correspondence, and the Acts of Chapter and Registers of Professions for each of the three founding houses. The Register of Professions is complete to the present day, but the Acts of Chapter from the period after 1907 when the three houses amalgamated, do not appear to have survived. They recommence many years later in the 1980s. Minutes of the meetings of Council, an advisory group of very senior sisters, survive from the 1920s, but the minutes for the period to 1962 have been culled, perhaps to remove sensitive information. Minutes are complete from 1963 but because of privacy concerns were not consulted for the Sesquicentenary Exhibition.

Any work on the early history of the Catholic Church in Australia relies on information published in *The Freeman's Journal* which published articles from contributors and republished accounts from other newspapers in Australia and Ireland.

There is also a series of in-house histories of the Congregation, written by Sisters Gabriel Campbell, Colombière McKillop and Eileen Casey. Sister Gabriel Campbell was an important historian of the Congregation, identified as the author of two published short histories

and a further publication that includes some historical entries. In 1909 to mark the fiftieth year of the arrival of the Sisters in Goulburn, a commemorative booklet titled *Golden Links* was published. It includes the first known summary history of the Goulburn Congregation written by Gabriel. In it she drew on official sources, personal recollections and undoubtedly in-house tradition, covering the period to 1907. There is a short separate article on the Amalgamation with Albury and Yass. In 1931 as part of the worldwide centenary celebrations of the foundation of the Sisters of Mercy, Gabriel wrote a lengthy article – *Goulburn Foundation of the Sisters of Mercy* – for publication in the Goulburn Catholic newspaper *Our Cathedral Chimes*. This was separately published as a small booklet: *Brief History of the Goulburn Foundation of the Sisters of Mercy, 1859-1931*. The third publication with which she is associated is *Diamond Jubilee of the Sisters of Mercy and of Our Lady of Mercy's College Goulburn, 1859-1934*. This includes some historical information, particularly about the orphanages in Goulburn and hospitals and aged care facilities in Young and Cootamundra. For some of the early history of the Congregation, these three publications provide almost the only information in existence, but with a certain bias towards Goulburn. Some information about Albury and its work is included but there is little of Yass.

Between 1963 and 1969 Sister Colombière McKillop assiduously compiled and updated the historical information, producing a four-part typescript history, *The History of Foundations in the Goulburn Province*. Unlike the previous historical accounts she covers appropriately the work of the Albury and Yass foundations. The fourth part was “researched by M. M. Colombière but only written in part by her ... it was completed by Sr. Eileen Casey from M. M. Colombière's notes”.

In 1987, as ministries in the Congregation changed, Sister Eileen Casey produced the first of a series of photocopied *Newsletters – Our History* for the Sisters, covering the history of the Congregation from 1859 to 1868. Eileen had been asked to undertake this task by the then Provincial, Sister Germaine McCann, and produced six further newsletters, each covering a set period, with the final one covering events to 1987. The *Newsletters* are not historical narratives; rather they are sourcebooks, containing selected extracts from primary records, with most of the narrative text taken from the accounts by Gabriel and Colombière. Photographs are included as well as some personal accounts.

In the archives there are also many short typescript histories written for particular occasions, all drawing very heavily on the work of Gabriel and Colombière. There are also several personal narratives, some known to have been sought by Eileen.

In 2000 Eileen produced *Held in Our Hearts: a Story in History of the Sisters of Mercy of the Goulburn Congregation*. This is written in story form, developing and expanding Colombière's work and Eileen's own *Newsletters*, extending the period covered to about 1998, including more biographical information, and attempting to correct some errors that had crept into the narrative.

Planting the Celtic Cross: Foundations of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, by Rev Brian Maher, historian of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn is an essential source of background information as well as providing very sound contextualised accounts of the work of the Sisters. Father Maher also provided Ellen with information about aspects of parishes in the Archdiocese.

Other publications valuable for understanding the work of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia include Catherine Kovesi Killerby's biography of Ursula Frayne, Madeleine Sophie McGrath's account of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and Mary Ryan's history of the Sisters of Mercy Wilcannia-Forbes.

Background information on Catherine McAuley and the early history of the Sisters of Mercy is available in a range of publications. Notable recent works include those by Mary C Sullivan who has produced a number of scholarly publications including a collected edition of Catherine McAuley's letters, and a collection of early histories of the Congregation. She also provided helpful information on the term "Walking Nuns".

Brother Ronald Fogarty's book on the early years of Catholic education in Australia provided additional important information.

Many local communities have written and published histories of their school or convent to mark special occasions. Some are brief, a few (particularly *Mount Carmel Centenary*) are substantial. Even brief accounts provided information or a perspective not readily available elsewhere and on occasion opened doors to other information.

Other valuable resources in the Archives are a number of collections of photographs and scrapbooks compiled for particular occasions or place, though there are few photographs until the mid 1960s.

The Archivists of the Western and Northern Provinces of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Ireland, provided copies of the Annals of Westport and Rochfortbridge. Sister Denise Coen, Archivist of the Sisters of Mercy Adelaide Congregation, sent a facsimile of one of Catherine McAuley's letters. Thanks to Mercy International Association for permission to reproduce the drawings of Sister Clare Agnew; and to Fraynetwork Multimedia for permission to reproduce maps used in the exhibition and catalogue.

The National Gallery of Australia gave kind and generous help in mounting and conservation matters and the loan of display furniture. Thanks in particular to Mark Bayly, Shulan Birch, Scott Franks, Fiona Kemp, Patrice Riboust, James Ward and Andrea Wise for sound advice and patient, practical help.

Others who provided advice and assistance for the exhibition are Margaret Dent, National Library of Australia; Sisters Karen Muir and Barbara Fogarty, Sisters of St Joseph, North Goulburn; and Gerard Fitzpatrick.

We are grateful to Rosanna Horn for her sensitive design work on the pull-up banners and timeline, and to James Grounds for his work on the exhibition catalogue.

Exhibition Checklist

Exhibition Checklist

Some items are reproduced in the exhibition as design features only, on pull-up banners. These are included in the checklist and are indicated by an asterisk (*). Where original items were not available to display, some photocopies and transcripts have been included. In the checklist they are identified as copies, but have been given the date of the original item. Book titles are in italics, as are other works with their own titles.

INTRODUCTORY

Houses Founded by the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation (2009)

36 coloured vinyl banners, each including the name of a town or city. Designed and produced by SignageOne, Goulburn.

Houses Founded by the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation (2009)

Coloured map. Design: Rosanna Horn Design.

Sisters at Cootamundra * (1968)

Black and white photograph.

Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation (2009)

Coloured timeline. Design: Rosanna Horn Design.

Text: Frances Fitzpatrick rsm.

Walking Nun (2009)

Clinical teaching model from Mercy Hospital, Albury, dressed in habit of Sisters of Mercy circa 1960. Dress, guimp and footwear reconstructions. Other items original.

World Distribution of the Sisters of Mercy * (2007)

Coloured digital map. Copyright Fraynetwork Multimedia 2007.

1. CATHERINE McAULEY (1778-1841) AND THE SISTERS OF MERCY

CATHERINE McAULEY

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy (mid twentieth century)

Framed reproduction of painting by Madame Wanda RSCJ.

Catherine McAuley in 1829 (between 1841 and 1880)

Typed extract from *A Memoir of the Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland* [the *Dublin Manuscript*], by Sister Clare Augustine Moore (1808-1880).

Act of Profession of Catherine McAuley (1831)

Typed copy of text of Catherine McAuley's Act of Profession. Original at St George's Hill Presentation Convent Dublin.

Letter to Sister de Chantal McCann (between March 1835 and 1841)

Facsimile of letter written by Catherine McAuley from Baggot Street, Dublin. Original held by Sisters of Mercy in Adelaide.

Mother Mary Catherine McAuley (1938)

By Eily MacAdam. Dublin, The Anthonian Press.

Maxims and Counsels of our Beloved Foundress, Mother Mary Catherine McAuley, Gathered from her Life, Letters, Sayings and the Annals of the Order (1900)

Cork, printed by Guy & Co.

Thoughts from the Spiritual Conferences of Mother M. Catherine McAuley... arranged for Every Day in the Year by the Sisters of Mercy Carysfort Park, Blackrock, Do. Dublin (1946)

Dublin, printed by M.H. Gill and Son.

Our Lady of Mercy (twentieth century)

Framed coloured picture of Our Lady of Mercy taken from fresco in San Pudenziana, Rome.

THE RULE

In the Beginning (1967)

1967 facsimile of the *Rule and Constitutions* written by Catherine McAuley in 1833 and corrected by Archbishop Murray of Dublin. Dublin, Sisters of Mercy.

Of the Object of the Congregation (1990s)

Reproduction of the first page of an illuminated copy of the *Rule and Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy*, by Sister Clare Augustine Moore (1808-1880). Dublin, Mercy International Centre.

Rule and Constitutions of the Religious, Sisters of Mercy, Confirmed by Our Holy Father Gregory 16th, 1841 (after 1842)

Handwritten copy of the *Rule and Constitutions*, inscribed in the text with the name of Sister Paula Cullen.

Rule and Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of Our Blessed Lady of Mercy Confirmed by our Holy Father Pope Gregory Pope Gregory XVI A.D. 1841 (1875?)

Handwritten copy of Chapters 1 – 22 of the *Rule and Constitutions*.

The Rule & Constitutions of the Religious called Sisters of Mercy in Italian & English (1863)

Dublin, printed by James Duffy.

APPLYING THE RULE

A Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy, Amplified by Quotations, Instructions etc, Part 3 (1888)

London, printed by Saint Anne's Press.

The Customs and Minor Regulations of the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy in the Parent House, Baggot-Street, and its Branch Houses (1869)

Dublin, printed by J.M. O'Toole and Son.

Rosary with Original Mercy Cross (1940)

Large wooden rosary, with ebony & ivory cross.

Diagram of a Sister with Components of Habit Identified (2009)

Black and white illustration on paper.

Prayers to be Said While Putting on the Religious Dress (1950)

Plaque containing the text of the prayers to be said while dressing. Formerly hanging in the bedroom of a Sister.

Conscience Beads (1960s)

Handmade aid to prayer, to be pinned to habit – plastic beads on string, with medal.

Pocket Watch (1967)

Pocket watch inscribed with +166 on back.

Twelve Particular Examens (20th century)

Compiled by Rev. M.J. Watson, S.J. Melbourne, printed by J. Roy Stevens.

WALKING NUNS

Sister Jude visiting a Person in Need (1980s)

Black and white photograph.

Logo of the Sesquicentenary Celebrations of the Goulburn Congregation (2009)

Colour copy of logo of the Sesquicentenary celebrations. Design: James Grounds.

2. GOULBURN, ALBURY, YASS

GOULBURN

Annals of Mount Saint Mary Convent Westport (1859)

Photocopy of extract from the *Annals* for December 15 1859 recording the receipt in Westport of news of the arrival of the Sisters in Goulburn.

Ciborium (1859)

Silver ciborium brought to Goulburn in 1859.

Inscription: Presented by the Vv Revd Dean Burke, PP Westport, Co. Mayo, Ireland to the Sisters of Mercy as a mark of his affection on their leaving his parish for Australia July 1859. Hoping they will pray for his soul.

Sisters of Mercy (1859)

Photocopy of article from *The Freeman's Journal* for November 2 1859, describing the Sisters' arrival in Goulburn.

Father McAlroy in the Original Chapel in Goulburn (1862?)

Sepia photomontage depicting Father McAlroy, Chapel interior and marble plaque.

The Goulburn Convent, School and Cathedral (1928)

Untitled oil painting signed Wallace 1928.

Saint Patrick's Convent of Mercy Goulburn * (1970s)

Coloured photograph.

ALBURY

Acts of Chapter Convent of Our Lady of Mercy Saint Bridget's, Albury, N.S.W. Australia (1868-1907)

Book with brass lock and key, containing handwritten records of Albury Chapter from 28 July 1868 to 14 October 1907.

***Arrival of the Catholic Bishops of Goulburn and Bathurst* (1868)**

Photocopy of article from *The Freeman's Journal* for 1 August 1868 reporting the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Albury.

***Register of Professions Convent of Mercy St Bridget's, Albury N.S.W.* (1868-1994)**

Book with brass lock, containing handwritten individual entries for women who joined the Albury community between 1868 and 1979.

***R. C. Convent, Albury, N.S.W.* *** (1909)

Postcard with coloured image of Albury Convent, with note on the back dated 30/9/09.

Albury Convent Jubilee (1918)

Black and white photograph identified as by J.W.Hunter, Albury, taken outside Albury Convent on the 50th anniversary of the arrival in Albury.

YASS

Annals of the Convent of Mercy Rochfortbridge (1876)

Photocopy of extract from the *Annals* – handwritten entry for 1 January 1876 recording receipt of news of the arrival of the Sisters in Yass.

Yass (1876)

Photocopy of article from *The Freeman's Journal* for 8 January 1876 reporting the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Yass.

The Yass Founders, Sisters Paul Fielding, Bernard Grennan and Alacoque McLaughlin (1875?)

Black and white photomontage apparently assembled from photographs of the three Sisters held at Rochfortbridge Convent of Mercy.

Illuminated Address given to Mother Alacoque on her Golden Jubilee (1919)

Handwritten address with a coloured illustration, recording the gratitude of parishioners, friends and ex-pupils of Yass Convent.

Life Story of a Valiant Woman (1925)

By Sister Gertrude Grogan. Biography of Sister Paul Fielding. Printed in Sydney, Westmead Boys Home.

***Convent of Mercy, Yass* *** (undated)

Postcard with black and white illustration of convent apparently from the early twentieth century. Identified as by Howard & Taylor.

AMALGAMATION

Amalgamation of the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Goulburn. Report of Conference ... First Council Meeting ... Supplement to Rule and Constitutions, First General Chapter (1908)

Goulburn, printed by James Locke.

Brigid Hartnett, First Superior General of the Amalgamated Houses of the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Goulburn (before 1924)

Sepia photograph.

3. LIFE AS A SISTER OF MERCY

MAINTAINING THE MERCY WAY

Acts of Chapter of the Community of Saint Patrick's Convent of Our Lady of Mercy Goulburn New South Wales (1859-1907)

Book with brass lock containing handwritten records of Goulburn Chapter from May 23 1860 to 14 June 1907.

Chapters held at Mount Carmel Convent of Our Lady of Mercy Yass from the Year 1875 (1875-1906)

Leather bound book containing handwritten records of Yass Chapter from 29 December 1875 to 3 March 1906.

The Customs and Minor Regulations of the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy (1931)

Revised edition for Goulburn Congregation. Sydney, printed by James J. Lee.

Rules for Branch Houses of Religious Sisters in the Diocese of Goulburn (undated)

Leaflet. Goulburn, printed by W.R. Riley & Co.

BECOMING A SISTER

Register of Professions in the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy St Patricks Goulburn Established 27th October 1859 (1859-2008)

Book containing handwritten individual entries for women who joined the Goulburn community between 1860 and 1945.

Yass Register of Professions (1876-1970)

Book containing handwritten individual entries for women who joined the Yass community between 1876 and 1892 (includes entries for the pioneer Sisters from Ireland).

Bishop Gallagher's Notebook (1909-1915)

Exercise book containing handwritten speeches and letters by Bishop Gallagher. Displayed: text of speech commenting on the opening of St Michael's Novitiate (1909).

***Ceremonial for the Reception and Profession of the Religious Sisters of Mercy* (1869)**

Includes ownership stamp of Convent of Our Lady of Mercy St Bridget's Albury. Dublin, James Duffy.

Housework at St Michael's Novitiate early 1960s (1960s)

Black and white photograph taken on the verandah of St Michael's.

Undertaking of a Postulant (1924)

Pro-forma document signed by Sister Edmund Farrell on entering the Sisters of Mercy in Goulburn as a postulant in 1924.

Act of Profession – Madeleine Lawrence * (1927)

Formal record of vows taken at the time of final profession as a Sister of Mercy. Handwritten and illuminated on single sheet.

Act of Profession – Ursula Drennan * (1956)

Formal record of vows taken at the time of final profession as a Sister of Mercy. Handwritten and illuminated on single sheet.

Act of Profession – Kerry Shoemark * (1969)

Formal record of vows taken at the time of final profession as a Sister of Mercy. Handwritten and illuminated on single sheet.

LIVING THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Pair of Silver Candelabra (1860s?)

From the original Chapel in Goulburn.

***Missale Romanum* (1924?)**

Missal given to Sisters from Howlong by the Sisters at Thurgoona (1927). Rome? *Alfred Mame et Filiorum*.

Goulburn Community (1973-1975)

Black and white photograph depicting almost all the Goulburn Sisters, taken in front of the Convent of Mercy Goulburn (1973). In an album covering the years 1973-1975 (Goulburn community).

***Daily and Occasional Community Prayers of the Sisters of Mercy of the Australian Union* (1960s?)**

Canberra, printed by Canberra Publishing Co.

Spiritual Library of a Sister of Mercy (various dates)

35 books, a portion of the spiritual library of Sister Ellen Yates who died in 2008.

Act of Renewal – Benedict Tanner * (undated)

Act of renewal of vows of Sister Benedict Tanner. Handwritten and illuminated on single sheet.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

Account Book: Convent of Mercy Albury (1877-1898)

Large account book with handwritten records of income and expenditure for Albury Convent and boarding school. Annual summaries signed off by Superior, Bursar and Parish Priest.

Account Book: Convent of Mercy Barmedman (1907-1920)

Account book with handwritten records of income and expenditure for the Barmedman Convent. Initial (1907) and final (1920) summaries (and some others) signed off by Bishop John Gallagher.

GETTING ON WITH THE CLERGY

Letter from Bishop Gallagher to Mother Stanislaus O'Neill (1906)

Letter (28 February 1906) written on the reverse of a letter to Bishop Gallagher from W? Gardiner, Manager of the Commercial Bank Goulburn to the Bishop. Photocopy of Gardiner's letter also displayed.

GENEROUS BENEFACTORS

***The Belconnen Chapel: Tobin Brothers Canberra Funerals* (2009?)**

Booklet describing the reconstructed Chapel of the Convent of Mercy Boorowa, now a funeral chapel in Canberra. Canberra, Tobin Brothers.

Sterling Silver and Ivory Trowel (1910)

Inscription: Presented to the Right Rev: J. Gallagher DD Bishop of Goulburn by A. Ryan on the occasion of his blessing and laying the Memorial Stone of the Galong Convent and School. J. Sharkey Rector. May 5th 1910.

Letter from Bishop Gallagher to Miss Anastasia Ryan Galong (1913)

Letter requesting payment for construction of the boys' boarding school at Galong.

FOOD FOR THE HOUSEHOLD

Sister Margaret Herrmann (1970s?)

Black and white photograph of Margaret Herrmann (1912-2005) in the Mercy Hospital kitchen, Cootamundra.

Sister Margaret Herrmann's Cookbook (undated)

Exercise book including Margaret's handwritten recipes and household hints with some items from magazines and newspapers glued in. Produced over many years.

Sister Zita (1982)

Newspaper cutting. Article on the work of Sister Zita by Michael Duffy, pictures by Cathy Tremain in *Border Morning Mail* 15 May 1982. Albury, Border Morning Mail.

Apron and Sleeves (2009)

Blue and white check cotton apron and sleeves similar to those formerly worn by the Sisters for manual work. Reconstruction.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays (1960s)

Typed rules for Sisters on holiday (on two pages) probably from the 1960s.

Holidays at Cronulla in the 1950s (1950s) and **Holidays in the 1990s** (1990s)

Two black and white photographs taken on the steps and lawn at *The Retreat* Cronulla.

ALWAYS OCCUPIED

"Useful Work": Crochet and Tatting (various dates)

Group of crochet doily, tatting book, tatting shuttle, thread and work, 2 medals.

Flower Show Certificates (1996 and 1997)

Two certificates awarded to St Michael's at Goulburn Annual Rose Show (for 1996 and 1997), 1996 with ribbon attached.

Golden Links in the Golden Chain of Happy Memories (1935)

Cloth covered book containing handwritten and illustrated copies of original verse by Sister Teresa Hooley (1969-1954). Calligraphy and decorations by her former pupil Marie Harris. Some verses added later in a different hand.

Original Verse by Sister Francis O'Grady (1960s)

Small hand-sewn booklet containing humorous verse and line drawings by Sister Frances O'Grady (1933-1990).

BEING INVISIBLE

Consecration of Children of Mary Goulburn Convent Chapel (1910)

Black and white photograph of ceremony in the Chapel, with Sisters nearly invisible at the sides.

"Family Photographs" (2009)

Two digital albums each with rolling display of mostly scanned photographs of Sisters in many locations and from many periods.

PRACTICAL LIFE

The Priest's Parlour (2009)

Reconstruction of setting for the Priest's Parlour from a Convent, including table, embroidered tea cloth, silver tea service, and fine china place setting.

A Convent Refectory (2009)

Reconstruction of a table setting for the Refectory in a Convent, including table with drawers, wooden stools and crockery and cutlery with Convent identifications.

Travelling Light (2009)

A tin trunk and two suitcases formerly used by Sisters when moving from one community to another.

4. "HURRA FOR FOUNDATIONS"

A Journey Around the Cities, Towns and Villages Where the Sisters Have Lived (2009)

Digital display of photographs and text of 42 Convents, Hospitals and Orphanages of the Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation. Running time: 35 minutes

5. WORKING LIVES

THE WORKS OF MERCY

I Was a Stranger and You Took Me In, For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me to Eat, I Was in Need and You Clothed Me * (1994)

Three cards illustrating the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy. Based on illustrated cards produced by Sister Clare Agnew in 1840 in Bermondsey, UK. Dublin, Mercy International Associates.

Teaching Religious Education in Schools * (1980s)

Colour photograph.

Voluntary Work at “Vinnies” * (2009)

Colour photograph.

Mercy Hospital, Albury, the New Theatre * (1957)

Black and white photograph.

SCHOOLS

Prospectus: Our Lady of Mercy College Goulburn (1934)

Includes black and white photographs and a fold-out page providing a panoramic view of the College exterior (displayed). Sydney, New South Wales Printing Company.

Day Book Our Lady of Mercy College Goulburn Boarders (1925-1931)

Book of financial records for individual boarders at OLMC between 1925 and 1931.

Letter to Mrs Reardon with Boarding School Account (1889)

Letter from Sister Ligouri to Mrs Reardon with accompanying boarding school account for OLMC, both dated 12 November 1889.

Letter from Bridget O'Connor to her Brother (1909)

Letter from a homesick new boarder at OLMC Goulburn to her brother.

Bridget O'Connor (1918?)

Black and white photograph of Bridget O'Connor in academic dress.

Our Lady of Mercy College Goulburn Album (1922)

Page from a photograph album belonging to Father Hugh Leonard, curate at Goulburn in 1922. 6 small black and white photographs on page, clearly labelled.

Rules of Saint Joseph's Ladies' College Albury (various dates)

In a cover, three sets of rules: *Rules of St Joseph's Ladies' Col Boarding School 1915* – handwritten; *Rules of St Joseph's Ladies' College* – small printed booklet (undated); handwritten rule regarding use of telephone by the Young Ladies, written on headed paper (undated).

Albury Boarders (1880s)

Black and white photograph depicting schoolgirls in the Albury Convent garden.

Yass Fundraising (1905-1909)

Exercise book recording money received as donations, through Art Unions and through Bazaars for the Parish School, Convent of Mercy Yass.

Yass Boarders (1938)

Black and white photograph taken outside Mount Carmel College Yass. Names of students handwritten on the back.

Our Lady of Mercy Schools Albury: St Joseph's, St Brigid's, St Anne's (1963)

Fundraising booklet. Albury, W.J. Cryer and Co.

St Joseph's College Olive Street Albury (1968)

Centenary appeal booklet. Albury, Specialty Press.

Teacher Training Assessment (1944)

Report by Dr John Thompson C.M. on a poetry lesson taught by Sr Celine McCormack. Typed lesson plan, handwritten comments, black and white photograph added.

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Sisters of Mercy at Hollywood Mission Yass (1952)

Scanned black and white photograph of Sisters Alacoque McAuliffe and Pauline Couch with Bishop Guilford Young and a group of Aboriginal residents of Hollywood Mission Yass, after Mass on Christmas Day 1952. Original missing.

HOSPITALS

“Early Days”, Sacred Heart Hospital Young (1911-1943)

Scrapbook containing newspaper cuttings relating to Sacred Heart Hospital from 1924-1943. Black and white photograph of 1911 (entitled *Official Opening Sacred Heart Hospital*) included on first page (displayed).

Cootamundra Mercy Hospital (c. 1930)

Black and white photograph, embossed Matte Studios Cootamundra.

Mercy Hospital Nurse’s Badge (1961)

Enamel badge with the word MERCY embossed.

***Mercy Hospital Albury, Marianella Nursing Home, Mercy Hospital Auxiliary, Annual Reports and Financial Statements 1987-88* (1988)**

Annual Report. Albury, printed Border Mail Wodonga.

Pastoral Care Information Leaflets (1993-2006)

4 leaflets. Information on pastoral care available at Mercy Hospital Albury, Marianella Nursing Home and Palliative Care Albury.

Sacrament of the Sick (undated)

Silver tray, two small silver candlesticks, crucifix, silver cup, brass pyx, brass container for oils, bottle of Holy Water, stole, book *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, rosary, all used for administration of the Sacrament of the Sick at Mercy Hospital Albury.

ORPHANAGES

Receipt for Kenmore Land for St Joseph’s Orphanage (1904)

Handwritten receipt for £499 for land purchased by Bishop Gallagher from Knowlman Bros for land to build St Joseph’s Orphanage at Goulburn.

***St. Joseph’s New Orphanage, Kenmore, Goulburn* (1906 or 1907)**

Commemorative booklet (rebound) with accounts of the laying of the foundation stone (1905) and the blessing and opening of the Orphanage (1906). Goulburn.

St John’s Home Thurgoona (1916)

Black and white photograph of girls outside St John’s in Newtown (Thurgoona).

Presentation Card to Sister Genevieve from the Boys of St John’s Orphanage Goulburn (1968)

Page one of four of a large handwritten card presented to Sister Genevieve Cummins, August 15 1968.

VISITING THOSE IN PRISON

Art Album Presented to Sister Imelda (1930s)

Album with pasted in black and white reproductions of works of art, inscribed with “Christmas Greetings” to “Rev. Mother Imelda” from the “Men of Goulburn Reformatory”.

MUSIC

City of Wagga Eisteddfod Adjudicator’s Report Primary Schools Choir (1941)

Handwritten report on the performance of the choir of St Joseph’s Finley, choir directed by Sister Helen Shortal.

Manuscript Album (1941)

Cloth covered album inscribed +67 and dated 1941 containing handwritten musical scores with words of 171 hymns.

Lecture Notes from a Music Summer School (1918)

Exercise book inscribed Convent of Mercy, Corowa. Detailed notes written by Sister Aloysius Dunne, music teacher at Albury and Corowa, at a Music Summer School.

Violin (undated)

Violin lent by Xavier High School, Albury.

OLMC Choir, 1968 (1968)

Cover of long-playing record of choral music by Our Lady of Mercy College Choir 1968. Choir director: Sister Carmel Gardiner, pianist Sister Kath Costain, organist Joan Barnes. Goulburn, produced by Brian Baxter.

6. CHANGES

ORGANISATION & STRUCTURES

First General Chapter Australian Union of the Sisters of Mercy (1954)

Black and white photograph, taken in the gardens of the Papal Nunciature, North Sydney.

Constitutions of the Congregation of the Australian Union of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (1960)
Revised *Constitutions* for the Union, approved November 1959. Canberra, Sisters of Mercy, General Motherhouse.

Constitutions and Directory, Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia (1988?)
Revised *Constitutions* for ISMA, approved September 1987. Sydney?, ISMA.

Associates in Mercy (2009)
Coloured photograph taken in Goulburn.

Autonomous Congregations of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia * (2007)
Coloured digital map. Copyright Fraynetwork Multimedia 2007.

Mercy Sisters in 2009 * (2009)
Coloured photograph taken at Congregational Assembly Young, July 2009.

EDUCATION

Goulburn School "Strike": the Inside Story (after 1986)
By Bishop J.N. Cullinane. Originally published as six articles in *The Australasian Catholic Record* (1984-1986). Canberra, Catholic Education Office.

Students in the Grounds of Marian College Griffith (2006)
Coloured photograph.

Marian Catholic College Principal's Report 2002-2006 (2006)
Principal's 2006 Report for Marian Catholic College Griffith. Griffith, the College.

CHILD WELFARE

Children Give Love to Nun: Sister Brown's Years of Caring (1988)
Newspaper cutting. Article on the work of Sister Margaret Brown at St Joseph's Kenmore and in the later cottages in Goulburn. Dated 22 February 1988. Goulburn, Goulburn Post.

Thanksgiving Service (1988)
Newspaper cutting. Article announcing a thanksgiving service to be held for the work of the Sisters of Mercy at the Goulburn orphanages and cottages. Dated 2 Dec 1988 in *Good Morning* section of *Goulburn Post*. Goulburn, Goulburn Post.

HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Blessing of Marianella Nursing Home (2003)
Leaflet for the blessing and opening of Marianella Nursing Home, Albury, 24 September 2003. Albury.

Transitions (2007)
Three issues of newsletter *Transitions*, produced for staff at Goulburn Sisters of Mercy health institutions at the time of their transfer to Mercy Health. Richmond, Victoria, Mercy Health and Aged Care.

NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Mercy Pastoral Team Finley (1976)
Scrapbook: Photographs and cuttings recording activities of the Mercy community based at Finley, 1976.

2001 Centenary Medal: Sister Celine McCormack (2001)
Coloured photograph and set of Centenary medals (three medals).

Sister Mary Celine is Citizen of the Year (1990)
Newspaper cutting. Article on the award of Tumut Citizen of the Year to Sister Celine.

CHANGED DRESS AND WAY OF LIVING

The Changing Mercy Habit (1980s?)
Twelve dolls dressed in different versions of the Mercy habit. Dolls dressed by E. Bruce.

Our Community of 1988 in Action (1988)
Photograph album including captions. A record in photographs of the Yass Community for 1988.

BEYOND THE DIOCESAN BOUNDARIES

Sister Patrick Mahoney in Papua New Guinea (c.1960)
Black and white photograph.

Sister Colleen Livermore in Peshawar Pakistan

(1987)

Coloured photograph.

Sister Margarita Duffy in Balgo Western

Australia (c. 1990)

Album of coloured photographs. Two photographs displayed.

EPILOGUE. AT THE HEART

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart * (between 1862 and 1891)

Detail from stained glass window in Goulburn Convent Chapel.

Saint Brigid * (between 1862 and 1891)

Detail from stained glass window in Goulburn Convent Chapel.

Calvary * (undated)

Detail from stained glass window in original Yass Convent Chapel.

Blessed Virgin Mary * (after 1878)

Detail from stained glass window in Albury Convent Chapel.

BROWSING COLLECTION

Visitors to the exhibition were invited to inspect and browse a large collection of open-access items, including:

- A selection of books by and about Catherine McAuley
- Copies of entries from the *Westport Annals* and the *Rochfortbridge Annals*
- Copies of articles from newspapers relating to the early days of the Goulburn Mercy Congregation
- Scrapbooks including photographs and newspaper cuttings of the Goulburn Mercy Congregation and the Goulburn "Strike"
- Historical accounts of the Goulburn Congregation written by Sisters of Mercy
- Publications relating to the Goulburn Mercy Sisters, including histories of schools or convents
- Copies of selected *Minutes* of meetings of the Congregational Council, 1922-1962
- Spiritual Library of Sister Ellen Yates.

Select Bibliography

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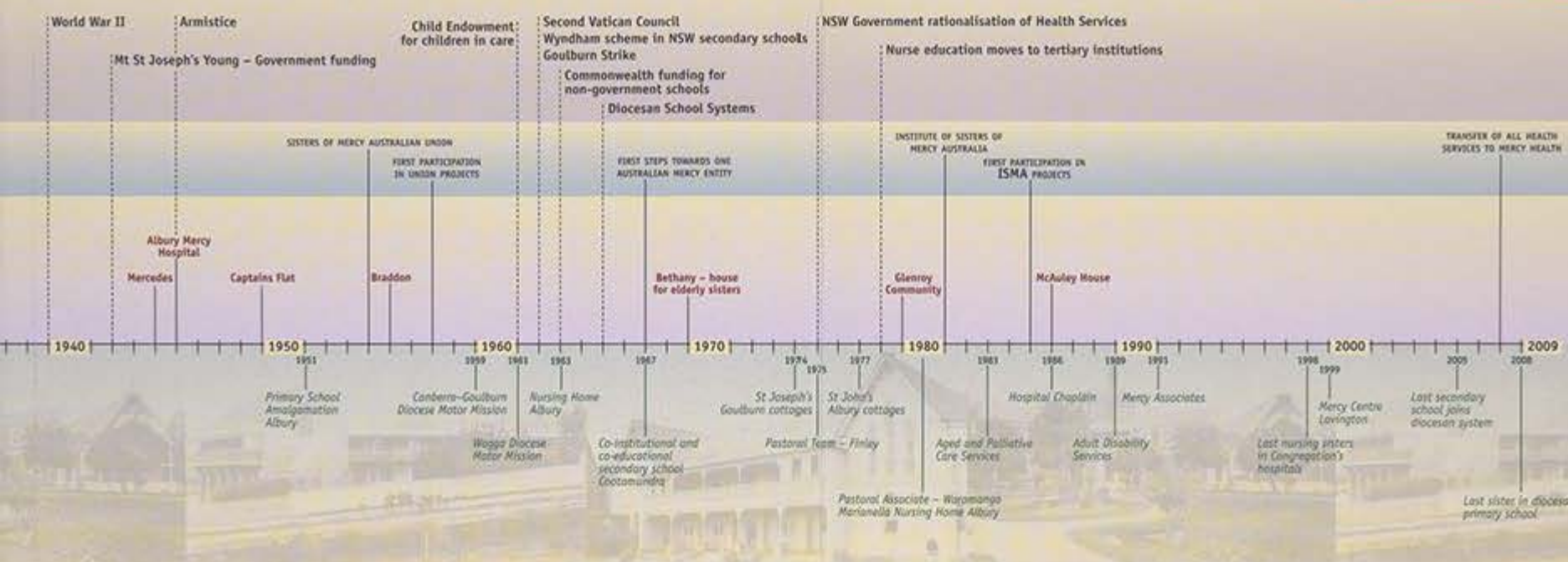
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SISTERS OF MERCY GOULBURN CONGREGATION



1942 - 1962

Increasing population, specialization in health, education and welfare, and better national communication and travel networks make new demands. Schools prepare for the NSW Wyndham Scheme which from 1962 will extend junior secondary schooling from three to four years. Some schools consolidate, or expand their capacity; increasingly in collaboration with lay teachers and staff; others close their secondary component. The Sisters leave Binda, closing the primary school. Branch houses open in Captains Flat and Braddon when the Braddon school is transferred from the Good Samaritan Sisters. Mercy Sisters are part of the inter-congregational staff at Braddon Catholic Girls High School. St Anne's Primary School North Albury opens. From 1960, the Sisters, now equipped with cars, run Motor Missions: education in faith for children in the state schools in towns which never had, or no longer have, a Catholic school.

At Young, Mount St Joseph's Home receives government funds from 1942. In 1945 a third Mercy hospital is established, in Albury, and the new hospital opens in 1957. The house at Mercedes North Sydney opens.

In 1954 the Australian Union of the Sisters of Mercy comes into being, and the Goulburn Congregation becomes one of the eight member Congregations. In 1957 the first of four Goulburn Sisters to join the Union missions leaves for Papua New Guinea.

In 1962, the substandard toilets at St Brigid's School Goulburn precipitate the Goulburn schools strike, which brings about Commonwealth Government funding for non-government schools in Australia.

1962 - 1980

The Second Vatican Council brings a re-examination of life and ministry. Changes are made to accommodation, to daily organization and to religious dress so as to better express communal and individual responsibilities. Sisters undertake formation in theology, scripture and spirituality, as well as professional updating. Some women choose to leave the Congregation and the numbers of those wanting to join decline.

Traditional congregational works are now in conjunction with Catholic laity and Diocesan Organisations, and in time pass to their stewardship.

Welfare ministry changes are made from institutional to cottage accommodation and care, and in Goulburn come under the auspices of Centacare.

In education, the NSW Wyndham Scheme and Commonwealth grants enable developments, and in Cootamundra the Sisters of Mercy and De La Salle Brothers collaborate in a school amalgamation which results in the first co-institutional and co-educational Catholic secondary school in Australia. In both the Canberra-Goulburn and Wagga Dioceses, the bishops set up Catholic Education Offices to oversee Catholic primary schools, and progressively our primary schools come under this umbrella.

The Sisters open an aged care facility in Albury, and another is built at the Cootamundra Mercy Hospital for the care of aged and frail Sisters. Health services are reviewed in light of government requirements, and the hospitals begin to reposition their services when general nurse education passes from Mercy Training Schools to tertiary institutions. A lay CEO is appointed at Young Mercy Hospital.

As sisters are free to become involved in pastoral work, ministry continues and expands to the families in the parishes.

1981 - 2009

In 1981, the Goulburn Congregation becomes one of the seventeen member Congregations of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia, and by 1985 Goulburn sisters are taking part in ISMA Initiatives: in Papua New Guinea, Billiluna Mission and Derby in Western Australia and in Peshawar, Pakistan. Sisters serve as office bearers for ISMA. New ways of connecting others to the life and mission of the Sisters are explored through groups of Mercy Associates: partnerships in prayer, collegial ministry and friendship with the Sisters.

In health care, the Cootamundra Hospital is sold to the NSW Government to be used as the acute hospital. The choice is made to use Young and Albury for a range of non-acute services, including aged care, rehabilitation and palliative care, and they become centres of excellence in these fields. In 2007, to enable continued Mercy health care in the diocese, all health services enter Mercy Health Inc, which is sponsored by the Mercy Melbourne Congregation.

In education, the Sisters' involvement with the Catholic primary schools evolves as pastoral presence. Redevelopments in the secondary schools, in some cases by collaborating with the Sisters of St Joseph and Christian Brothers, prepare them for handover to diocesan systems.

The Albury Coolock Court residences are available from 1989 to young adults, some with disabilities, who were previously accommodated in cottages. In 1999 Mercy Centre Lavington, catering for people with a range of disabilities, and conducted in conjunction with other agencies, begins.

The sisters continue ministries in education, health, welfare and pastoral work alongside lay colleagues, as needs arise in local and wider communities.

GUNNING
JERRILDERIE
CAPTAINS FLAT
TODCUMWALL
CROOKWELL
BARMEDMAN
HENTY
GUNDAGAI
GALONG
DENILIQUIN
GRIFFITH
GOOLGONG
YOUNG
GOULBURN
BINDA
COOTAMUNDRA
SYDNEY
HOWLONG

WYALONG
BETHUNGRA
MURRUMBURRAH
WILCANNIA
MURRINGO
YASS
BOOROWA
TUMUT
ALBURY
GRENFELL
BRADDON
JUNEE
DEERWHY
COROWA
STOCKINBINGAL
FINLEY
DELFORAIN
WODONGA