

WELCOME TO THE UNVEILING
AND
BLESSING RITUAL
OF
THE CATHERINE MCAULEY SCULPTURE



“COME SIT AWHILE - CATHERINE IN THE GARDEN”

BY GAEL O'LEARY

12 DECEMBER, 2022
CATHEDRAL OF ST MICHAEL AND ST JOHN
BATHURST

SCULPTURE OF VENERABLE CATHERINE MCAULEY,
FOUNDRRESS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY

“COME SIT AWHILE – CATHERINE IN THE GARDEN”

BY SCULPTOR GAEL O’LEARY.
COMMISSIONED BY THE

INSTITUTE OF SISTERS OF MERCY OF AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
THIS SCULPTURE AND IMAGES OF ST MARY’S COLLEGE ON THE CLOISTER WALL
WERE GIFTED TO THE DIOCESE OF BATHURST
COMMEMORATING THE WORKS OF MERCY CARRIED OUT

BY THE SISTERS OF MERCY
ACROSS THE DIOCESE SINCE 1866.

DEDICATED AND BLESSED ON 12 DECEMBER 2022
BY

+ MICHAEL MCKENNA
BISHOP OF BATHURST

BLESSING RITUAL

Welcome and acknowledgement of Country: Sr Patricia Powell RSM

On this day in 1831, Catherine McAuley, Mary Ann Doyle, and Mary Elizabeth Harley professed their vows as Sisters of Mercy, in Dublin, Ireland, thus establishing a new Religious Order in the Church. Seven Sisters came from Charleville Ireland in 1866 with Bishop Mathew Quinn to engage in works of mercy in the Bathurst Diocese. Grateful for their generosity and inspired by their example, as we bless this sculpture of Catherine McAuley, we pray for the Church, her participation in God's mission of mercy, and the work of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Unveiling and Presentation of Sculpture to the Diocese:

Sr Eveline Crotty RSM

Institute Leader

Assisted by Young Members of the Gathering

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Bishop: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Leader: Come sit a while with Catherine and let her words touch our hearts:

"Mercy – the principal path pointed out by Jesus Christ to those who are desirous of following Him, has in all ages of the Church excited the faithful in a particular manner to instruct and comfort the sick and dying poor, as in them they regarded the person of our divine Master..."

"The tender Mercy of God has given us one another."

"The poor need help today, not next week."

"It is better to relieve a hundred imposters, if there be any such, than to suffer one really distressed person to be sent away empty."

"No work of charity can be more productive of good to society than the careful instruction of women."

"If all are bound to love and honour the Holy Mother of God, how much more we, who are her own chosen children, bearing her name and that of her sweetest attribute – Mercy."

"We have one solid comfort amidst this little tripping about. Our hearts can always be in the same place, centred in God, for whom alone we go forward or stay back."

"We should be like the compass that goes round its cycle without stirring from the centre...Our centre is God, from whom all our actions spring as from their source and no exterior action should separate us from God."

"Will you tell the Sisters to get a good cup of tea...when I am gone and to comfort one another."

OPENING PRAYER

Bishop: Let us pray...

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

READING FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

Fr Carl MacKander

Matthew 25: 25-40

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, escorted by all the Angels, then He will take His seat on His throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before Him and He will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand: 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me.' Then the virtuous will say to Him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the King will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to me.'" The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

HOMILY: Bishop Michael

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Bishop: Let us pray as the Body of Christ to the Father, in the Holy Spirit.

Leader:

For over 100 years, the Sisters of Mercy ministered on this site through the work of education and care of girls. And from this site, mercy ministries developed and spread throughout the central west and beyond. May this memorial wall and the sculpture of Venerable Catherine McAuley remind us of our call as Christians to be the Mercy of God in our world. We pray:

~ **God of Mercy, hear our prayer.**

May those called to leadership within the Church and the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy serve the common good with courage and compassion, we pray:

For those most vulnerable to oppression or neglect, especially women and children, we pray:

For all who seek a kind word, a gentle, compassionate look or the patient hearing of their sorrows, we pray:

For the poor, the sick, and those in need of knowledge and wisdom, we pray:

For those who lack safe shelter and food, we pray:

For our Sisters, Associates, partners in ministry, friends and benefactors throughout the world, that on this day we may experience our unity in Mercy, we pray:

For all those we serve through the spiritual and corporal Works of Mercy, we pray:

For the interconnected community of life on Earth, our Common Home, may we learn to live sustainably with respect and compassion for all life forms and life support systems, we pray:

For the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Associates and all inspired by Catherine McAuley, who have died; may they enjoy God's merciful love and eternal glory, we pray:

Bishop: Let us bring all our prayers together in the words Our Saviour gave us.

All: Our Father...

PRAYER OF BLESSING and CONCLUDING PRAYER

Bishop: *Bishop Michael will bless the sculpture and pray the final prayer.*

All: Amen.

Catherine McAuley's Prayer of Offering (Suscipe) (Spoken)

All: My God, I am yours for all eternity.
Teach me to cast my whole self
into the arms of your Providence
with the most lively, unlimited confidence
in your compassionate, tender pity.
Grant, O most merciful Redeemer,
that whatever you ordain or permit
may always be acceptable to me.
Take from my heart all painful anxiety;
suffer nothing to afflict me but sin,
nothing to delight me,
but the hope of coming to the possession of
You my God, in your own everlasting kingdom.
Amen.

We invite you to join us for the Celebration of the Eucharist
in the Cathedral now,
followed by light refreshments
either in this courtyard or in the Parish Centre (weather pending)
at about 6.20pm.

WHO WAS CATHERINE MCAULEY

Catherine McAuley was the Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy – the community of Religious women who lived and worked on this Cathedral site for over a century. The painted wall on the south-facing side of the Cathedral is where the Convent Cloister joined the Sisters' Chapel in the Cathedral.

Catherine was an Irish woman who lived in nineteenth-century Dublin, where most Irish Catholics existed in destitute poverty, lacking both education and opportunity, in a society that actively discriminated against them on the basis of their Irish identity and Catholic religion. Catherine's father had been a master builder, so her family was relatively comfortable until after his death in 1783, when the family's fortunes declined.

Catherine inherited her father's deep love for the Catholic faith and his generosity towards the poor. At the age of twenty, she went to live with a wealthy, older couple, William and Catherine Callaghan and became their companion and the household manager of their estate, Coolock House. She began catechetical instructions with the household servants, who shared stories with her of the threats faced by young women working in other establishments. She gave practical assistance to the poor in the village of Coolock, and taught the Catholic faith as well as basic literacy skills to Catholic children in the hedgerow schools. She taught needlework to young women and opened a small shop to sell their wares. She adopted and reared nine children: five of her orphaned nieces and nephews and four of her deceased cousin's small children.

William Callaghan supported Catherine's works of Mercy, and on his death in 1822 he left his entire fortune to her. This enabled her to expand her Mercy outreach. She built a large house on Baggot Street, in an affluent part of Dublin. Her clear intention was to bring the rich into daily contact with the poor in the hope that they would be moved to assist them and join her in her efforts. She had to deal with opposition from both family and the Church. But her trust in Divine Providence was unwavering. Catherine was almost fifty when the House of Mercy opened on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 24 September 1827.

It had never been Catherine's plan to become a Religious herself, much less to found a Religious Order. Many volunteers were attracted by Catherine's spirit and inspired by her works. Among them, a core group of twelve women moved into Baggot Street permanently, devoting themselves to the works of the House of Mercy and living a community life. The question of their status

gradually became serious, and Archbishop Murray of Dublin and several others among Catherine's friends and advisors encouraged Catherine to consider establishing a Religious Order to guarantee the stability and continuity of their work. After careful discernment, Catherine agreed to this proposal on the condition that her Sisters would not be bound by the Church Laws of cloister and enclosure, which characterized Religious Life for women at that time. Her concern was that their freedom to work among the poor and vulnerable on their own terms would be hampered by such restrictions. Hence, on 12 December, 1831, at the age of fifty-two, Catherine and two younger companions professed their Vows as the first Sisters of Mercy. They became known as the "Walking Nuns", and the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy defined the apostolate of the new Religious Order named "The Sisters of Mercy."

Catherine died just ten years later, but not before she had seen the founding of eight Convents of Mercy throughout Ireland and two in England and the planning of a foundation in Newfoundland. The Order continued to spread rapidly in the English speaking world. One of the Irish foundations, Charleville, sent the first seven Sisters of Mercy to Bathurst in 1866 at the request of the first Bishop of Bathurst, Most Rev. Matthew Quinn. And from here, the Sisters established Mercy foundations all up the Western line as far as Bourke. They helped set up the Catholic School system across Central and Western NSW, cared for orphaned and abandoned children, and visited hospitals, prisons and people in their own homes. Over time they also became involved in health and aged care and the delivery of other social services.

At the instigation of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, the Sisters of Mercy undertook a program of adaptation and renewal which resulted in a broadening of Mercy works to respond to new social challenges both locally and globally. In 2011 the Bathurst Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy joined other Mercy Congregations in Australia and Papua New Guinea to form the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. Their Works of Mercy are supported and continued by lay groups and colleagues such as Mercy Associates, Mercy Ministry Companions, Mercy Partners, and Mercy Works Inc. Mercy International, based at the original House of Mercy in Baggot Street, Dublin, links Sisters of Mercy worldwide.

Catherine McAuley continues to inspire both men and women to respond to situations of injustice and poverty with the Gospel values of compassion and mercy.



*Come Sit Awhile - Catherine in the Garden
(Habited Catherine McAuley in Garden)
Bronze life-size sculpture
Actual size: c. H. 135 x W. 80 x D. 70 cm
Sculptor: Gael O'Leary ©2022*

This sculpture is not just a memorial but an invitation from Catherine to take her legacy of Mercy into every walk of life.

Find out more about Venerable Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy and their Works of Mercy:

Websites:

The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea:

www.institute.mercy.org.au

Mercy International:

www.mercyworld.org

Mercy Works:

www.mercyworks.org.au

Mercy Associates:

www.institute.mercy.org.au/become-involved/become-a-mercy-associate/

MEET THE SCULPTOR - GAEL O'LEARY

Gael O'Leary's extensive artistic career began as a teacher and as a painter and printmaker. Since discovering her calling and talent in sculpture, her work over the past three decades has been predominantly in bronze and includes many large commissioned works, some up to five metres.

These works are installed in various localities in New Zealand, Australia and the USA. They are in schools, churches, hospitals and public spaces and reflect themes of spirituality and social justice so dear to her heart. She believes that, as an artist in the Christian tradition, the challenge for her is to make these themes relevant to today.



Gael has worked with many churches, schools, hospitals, religious communities and other public institutions to create stunning works in bronze. Larger than life size monuments, religious figures, high-relief sculpture, figurative as well as abstract work are among Gael's repertoire and she is able to work with clients to create a sculpture specific to their needs.

Born and educated in New Zealand, Gael came to Australia in 1994 to attend the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne University, completing a Master of Fine Arts (Sculpture). Subsequently she was commissioned to create a Centennial Bronze, two five metre wall reliefs, for Mt Lilydale Mercy College, Melbourne. Commissions throughout Australia, New Zealand and the USA snowballed after that. In 1996 Gael was Co- Director of the Mercy Art and Creativity Centre, Black Rock Melbourne. From 2005 until mid- 2009 Gael managed the Bayside Sculpture in Highett, Melbourne, a ministry of Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. In July 2009 Gael acquired the business in her own right and renamed the centre

Bayside Sculpture. <https://www.baysidesculpture.com.au/>

"Come Sit Awhile - Catherine in the Garden" is Gael's last large sculpture. We are so very grateful for her gift to us through the commissioning by the Institute of Sisters of Mercy to the Bathurst Diocese of this stunning artwork.

"Come Sit Awhile - Catherine in the Garden" is based on Gael's initial sculpture *"Come Sit Awhile (Catherine McAuley sitting on park bench)"*, commissioned by the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea and located in their Institute Centre garden in Stanmore Sydney. Gael has recast this sculpture several times, as well as one that sits in the garden at Mercy International Centre in Baggot Street, Dublin; there are several copies in Australian Mercy schools and hospitals.



"Come Sit Awhile (Catherine McAuley sitting on park bench)"
Situated in the grounds of the Institute Centre in Stanmore, Sydney.

For our sculpture here in Bathurst, Gael has reworked this original piece according to our request for the sculpture to reflect the historical context of the Sisters of Mercy's presence on this site from 1966 to 1976.

The Catholic Diocese of Bathurst



The Institute of the
Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea