

WELCOME: 160th Anniversary Mass to celebrate the arrival of Sister of Mercy in Geelong –3rd December,2019

On behalf of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, I am honoured to welcome you today to this hallowed place. It is a great day of rejoicing for Sisters of Mercy, staff, students, alumni, generous friends and from different eras of the story of Sacred Heart College.

We come because we have experienced at this place aspects of the Mercy of God made possible because of the courage, dedication and passion of the first Sisters of Mercy to set foot in Geelong. They were Mother Xavier Maguire, Sister Gabriel Sherlock, Sister Margaret Mulally, Sister Regis Manley, Sister Rose Lynch and Sister Aloysius Ryan.

These Sisters answered God's call to leave their land, coming from Dublin, Ireland where Catherine McAuley, the first Sister of Mercy, had established such a great legacy of ministering to the poor, sick and uneducated.

One hundred and sixty years ago today they arrived in Geelong, living for a while at Saint Augustine's Catholic Orphanage and then settling in this very place, a farm with a variety of out buildings.

Since those first six Mercy women arrived, the doors of Mercy have always been open in Geelong. These women brought to this part of the world a spirit of mercy that became the pathway that has brought us to this day. That pathway is marked by many stories of courage, wisdom, inclusion, generosity and fidelity hospitality – these are not just values of those first six women, but of all who have followed in their footsteps – sisters and women and men of Mercy. It is indeed a story to celebrate, in Geelong. Sacred Heart College stands proud in the Mercy tradition, as do the seventeen Parish Primary schools and Saint Ignatius College which was originally Saint Agnes school all flowing from the Mercy foundation.

McKillop Family Services carries on the ministry of family and child care that originated in the Mercy Orphanage that commenced on these grounds and Mercy Health ministers in aged care, at Mercy Place Rice Village and Mercy Health and Home Care.

We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. We are inspired by them and their commitment to bring the mercy of God to the people of their day.

We, all of us together, continue to bring the Mercy of God to the people of our day.

Thank you and blessings in Mercy.