



# Marian House

For 2000 years, **Mary of Nazareth**, the Mother of Jesus, has provided a wonderful and powerful model of discipleship for all Christians around the world. The four Gospel writers describe the various moments of **Mary's** life: as a young girl, the pregnant woman who visits her cousin, the rejoicing and maternal Madonna who holds her young Son close to her, the anxious mother when her Son was apparently lost in the Temple, the widow who outlived Joseph her husband, the grieving mother at her Son's crucifixion, and, finally, the Mother of the Church.

Many religious orders in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions have taken their name from **Mary** or used one of **Mary's** titles to inspire their ministry proclaiming the love and forgiveness of God to be found in Jesus. This is exactly what Catherine McAuley did in 1831 when she founded the order of sisters who began our College. As a young girl, Catherine McAuley was especially drawn to **Mary** as the 'Mother of Mercy'. Thus her companion sisters were called The Sisters of Mercy and our College bears that name – Mercy College.

There are many representations of this extra-ordinary woman of faith within the College: paintings and sculptures can be seen in various classrooms and corridors and in the Chapel. A beautiful portrayal of **Mary** sits outside the Frank West wing. This sculpture depicts **Mary** as Madonna (she nurses the child Jesus on her lap) and the Mother of Mercy – she is seated upon a chest from which she distributes the very Mercy of God.

Throughout her life, **Mary** of Nazareth was a woman totally open to what God willed for her. She was a woman of spirit and song; in Luke's story about Jesus' life and ministry, **Mary** sings a canticle praising the workings of God in her life and her people. She was indeed a woman who had the courage to love in every circumstance of her life, be it joyful or sad, because of her total openness to God's will: "let it be done to me".

## **COURAGE**

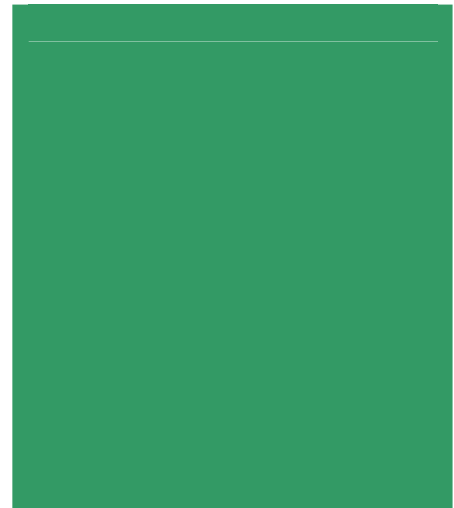
Few people get the opportunity and privilege to have an impact; **Mary** of Nazareth was one of these. We gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which we really stop to look doubt and fear in the face. We must do the thing which we think we cannot do. Our ordinary life can evoke more extraordinary courage than combat or adventure because of the chances and inevitabilities of life – grief, illness, disappointment, pain, struggle, poverty, loss, terror, heartache: all of them common features of the human condition – demand kinds of courage and bravery that make climbing up Mount Everest seem an easier alternative. *Be not afraid!*

## **BLUE**

For the past 800 years **Mary** has been portrayed dressed in blue, partly because the tinct (azure) employed in making blue coloured stained-glass was the most expensive and beautiful of all colours but also because blue was the colour of the heavens and **Mary** was prayed to as the Queen of Heaven. In art blue is used also to symbolise hope, loyalty, serenity and eternity. Blue is one of the key colours in our College uniform and crest pointing to our Marian history and spirituality. In precious stones blue is represented by the sapphire.



# Frayne House



Sister Ursula **Frayne** was a friend of Catherine McAuley who founded the Sisters of Mercy as a Catholic Religious Order in Dublin in 1831 and was deeply inspired by Catherine’s spirit and values. In 1846, Ursula was chosen to lead the small group of pioneer Sisters of Mercy accompanying Bishop Brady from Dublin to the Swan River Colony in Western Australia.

On January 9<sup>th</sup> 1846 having landed in Fremantle after a voyage of 113 days on the barque ‘Elizabeth’, the seven Sisters sailed up the Swan River to Perth. “*We stood in the wilds of Australia in the mid-summer night and we could truly say of it that we had nowhere to lay our heads*”, wrote to Ursula **Frayne** when they found no arrangements had been made for a place to live. Such a situation did not sway Sister Ursula **Frayne** from her commitment to lead the Mercy mission in Australia.

The Sisters made packing cases into desks and bricks and planks into seats and were ready to open the first school on February 2 1846. This school became the first secondary school for girls in Australia. At the same site the sisters founded the first welfare home for Aborigine girls in Perth. Eventually, Ursula Frayne, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Melbourne, established the first Mercy school in Victoria, The Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy.

Ursula **Frayne** was a gifted educator. She travelled 55,000 miles, and brought Catholic education to Australia. She worked to better the situation of Aborigines, of immigrant Irish orphan girls, of the poor, the uneducated and the needy. The legacy of Ursula **Frayne** is through the ministries of Mercy. It is to encourage women and men to be resourceful and merciful, to be committed followers of Christ in the world. Young, vital and committed to the development of a better Australia, Ursula Frayne is an ideal example for all young Australians today.

## COMMITMENT

The quality of commitment has been described as “the acceptance of a continuing obligation to pursue some goal or policy of action”. Jesus said to his disciples, “once your hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). There are some commitments that need a lifetime to be fulfilled. The commitment of baptism, which is simply the special Christian expression of general commitment to become a genuine human person along our faith journey; to be a loyal and reliable friend, in season and out of season; to be a good husband or wife, father or mother, to make a success of marriage and family; to be devoted to a vocation, whether it be as a religious or a nurse, journalist, teacher or sales assistant; these all need a lifetime, and even at the end of a lifetime there is much more to be done.

*Commitment creates reality.*

## GREEN

Ursula **Frayne** was Irish and green has been the colour traditionally associated with the Irish people and their culture. Green is the liturgical colour the Church uses to denote ‘Ordinary Time’ in the Church year. Green is a symbol of hope and life, and a reminder of the mission of the Church in the world. In Church decoration green is used to convey God’s bounty, joy and the resurrection. In art green is used to depict faith, gladness, immortality, life, youth and abundance. In precious stones green is represented by the emerald.



# O'Hea House

In 1853, a young Irish Augustinian priest from Cork arrived in Melbourne and was given charge by Archbishop Goold of the Coburg mission. Father Charles **O'Hea** (later Dean O'Hea) is credited with having the name of the district changed from Pentridge (the local gaol) to that of Coburg. When *The Young Queen Hotel* was put up for sale, Father **O'Hea** purchased it along with local land adjoining Merri Creek.

Father **O'Hea** was known as a dedicated and effective priest. His perseverance through fifty years service to the Catholic Community in Coburg saw rapid growth in parish life and in a building programme involving the church of Saint Paul's and the primary school then situated on Sydney Road which would serve the Catholic population of the area. His tireless and persistent ministry and high standing in the community was recognised by the local municipal council when it named one of the roads near Saint Paul's Church **O'Hea** Street in honour of the local priest.

While Father O'Hea established Saint Paul's parish school, he asked the Sisters of Mercy to take charge of the school in 1897. The sisters attended Mass at the neighbouring church. Father **O'Hea** died in 1903 and left his residence and extensive lands in the Coburg area to the Sisters of Mercy in Geelong, with the express wish that a Mercy Convent be established in the district. Father **O'Hea**'s generosity enabled nine Sisters of Mercy to journey from Geelong in October 1903 and establish the first Mercy Convent in Coburg in what was Father **O'Hea**'s residence. It is as a result of his bequest that Mercy College sits on the land it has today; initially this land extended across Convent Court at the rear of the College down to the Merri Creek. Much of that land, however, was sold in the early 1960's to provide funds for erecting the Year 7-10 Building.

## PERSEVERANCE

The quality associated with O'Hea House is that of perseverance. Courage and hope both depend on that crucial virtue: perseverance, the ability to keep going in adverse circumstances – cheerfully if possible! Arguably most of us could do most of what we desire if we found the right way to approach it. Nothing in our world can take place without persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. John Ruskin, a 19<sup>th</sup> century art and literary critic said, it is not what we get but what we become by our endeavours that makes them worthwhile. Perseverance is failing nine times and succeeding the tenth. *If you first don't succeed, try again.*

## GOLD

Gold is the most beautiful and desirable of all precious metals. Gold is one of the colours used in the Mercy College crest displaying the brilliance of the sun and, by extension, the light of Christ in our lives which shows us the direction to take in our life journey. Gold vestments are sometimes worn by the priest on occasions of great joy and celebration, namely the high feasts of Christmas, Easter and Epiphany and also at Baptisms and sometimes weddings. In Church art and decoration gold is used to convey divinity or heaven. Golden amber is a much sought after resin used in jewellery.



# Thecla House

Sister Mary **Thecla** Day was the founding Principal of Mercy College and served as Principal from 1965 to 1967. She was a woman of vision and initiative as she set out to establish the new College in Sydney Road Coburg for girls. The initial vision was to set up Mercy College as a secondary school which focussed exclusively on the domestic sciences, but Sister Thecla Day desired to offer the girls a more academic curriculum, which would prepare them for the changing future which saw women entering business, politics, and professional life.

Her initiatives in the style of curriculum the College offered were fundamental in forming the style of education Mercy College has become known for in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the first annual report to the College Board, Sister Mary **Thecla** Day's pleasure and joy associated with the beginning of Mercy College is evident. In her report she wrote that the stimulation of ambition and encouraging excellence in academic study were important strategies in girls' education.

As a Sister of Mercy and educator, Sister Mary **Thecla** Day worked tirelessly with the local Catholic parishes and families to build, literally from the ground, our current Year 7-10 block of classrooms. She wrote about the great joy and pride she felt when Mercy College students moved from their temporary accommodation in local parish schools to the Year 7-10 Block on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1966. These classrooms were officially opened by the then Archbishop of Melbourne, Cardinal James Knox on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1967, the feast day of Our Lady of Mercy.

As a planner and leader Sister Mary **Thecla** Day interviewed and appointed the first lay teachers and accepted the first draft of girls. The initiatives encouraged in Sister Mary **Thecla** Day's two years as founding Principal have guided the ethos and culture of our College to the Catholic school Mercy College it is today.

## INITIATIVE

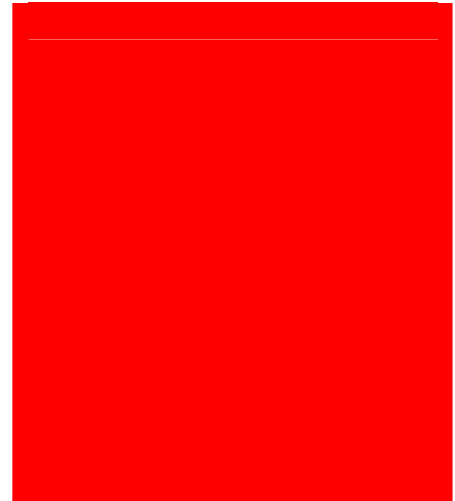
The characteristic of initiative is such a positive and refreshing quality within a person. So often people can be merely reactive and defensive. Initiative has been described as 'enterprise': readiness to embark on bold new ventures. Initiative is power or ability to begin or to follow through energetically with a plan or task; enterprise and determination. Whatever you do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it. *Seize the day.*

## PURPLE

Purple is one of the liturgical colours the Church uses to denote the seasons of waiting and preparation in Church year, namely Lent prepares us for the joy of Easter and Advent prepares us for the coming of Jesus at Christmastide. In art and Church decoration purple is used to convey justice and royalty. In precious stones purple is represented by the amethyst.



# Kane House



Father Paul **Kane** has served as Parish Priest of St. Matthew's Parish since 1982 and during that time has been a staunch supporter of Mercy College. Highlights of the twenty plus years of ministry in his parish are obvious in the building of the new church of St. Matthew's and his encouragement of a vibrant parish life. He has reached out to and encouraged the growth of the Chaldean Catholic community in his parish. When Mercy College was established as a regional College in 1965, local parishes contributed vital funds to erect a classroom block and facilities so the new College could begin. These were the days before State Aid to Catholic schools was government policy. St. Matthew's parish has always been a very important and cherished 'feeder parish' to Mercy College. Many students from St. Matthew's Primary School from 1965 to the present day have chosen Mercy College for their secondary education.

Father **Kane** is a man of deep humanity, gentleness and empathy. His humanity is characterised by his interest in sport, music and the arts; all this is driven by his love of people and God. When Father **Kane** speaks with our students they have noted his gentleness, his total attention and that he is genuinely concerned and interested in their lives. During the time of his association with the College he has spent a great deal of time with its staff and students and has taken an active interest in all aspects of College life.

Father **Kane** has been a valued leader and source of wisdom in the life of Mercy College. In practical ways Father **Kane** shows this as president of the 'Canonical Administrators' who administer the College and as Chair of the College Board which advises the Principal. Father **Kane** has been a regular pastoral and priestly presence in the College. Each year Father **Kane** presides at our Thursday lunchtime Eucharists and has often celebrated our yearly Masses of Commencement and Thanksgiving. Father **Kane** was the catalyst behind Parish Day when local priests visit the College and meet with the students. Father **Kane** has visited a number of Religious Education lessons. The College has benefited immeasurably from Father **Kane's** service, gentleness and wise presence.

## **EMPATHY**

Empathy, or the ability to identify with and feel another person's concerns, is the foundation of Christian and human action. This characteristic is what sensitises people to different points of view and increases their awareness of others' ideas and opinions. Empathy is the emotion that alerts a person to another person's situation and stirs them to action. Empathy is what moves us to be tolerant and compassionate, to understand the needs of others, to care enough to help those who are hurt or troubled.

If we truly have and cultivate empathy in our hearts, goodness and compassion will result. Empathy is the virtue of radically feeling with and being with others, feeling and being with others in ways that naturally lead to the care, the nurture and support. Empathy is the practical virtue in our everyday living. *Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned.*

## **RED**

Red is one of the liturgical colours used to denote the Pentecost and Feast Days of the Martyrs; it represents fire and the coming of the Holy Spirit. In art and Church decoration red is used to convey martyrdom for the faith, charity, divine love, fortitude and magnanimity. In precious stones red is represented by the ruby.