

SCHOOLS CELEBRATE 150 YEARS OF THE PRESENTATION SISTERS IN WAGGA WAGGA

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Presentation Sisters to open schools in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

At the invitation of Bishop Lanigan, five Irish Sisters arrived in Wagga Wagga on 29 May 1874 to take up temporary accommodation in the vacated presbytery in Church St and open their first school in the stables the very next day.

Congregation Leader Sr Margaret Barclay said that during that time, the Sisters' main focus was on teaching.

"The Sisters taught children and adults; however, the Sisters were available to people living in poverty around them to provide whatever support they could offer," Sr Margaret said.

"After two and a half years of teaching and working in the community, Mount Erin Convent was built by the Catholic community, and the Sisters and school relocated to that site."

Today that school is known as Kildare Catholic College, situated in Coleman Street, Wagga Wagga.

Sr Margaret also said between 1874 and 1986, 250 Sisters responded to invitations to go to parishes to provide primary and secondary education.

"From our convent in Wagga Wagga our Sisters went out to Victoria, Hay, Young, Queensland, Western Australia, the ACT, and communities other across the Riverina and Sydney, to provide education in those communities."

On Friday, May 31, staff and students from Presentation Heritage Schools came together to celebrate the sesquicentenary of the Presentation Sisters' arrival in Wagga Wagga to honour 150 years of their dedication, faith, and service to the education communities they founded.

The day began with a beautiful liturgy led by Bishop Mark Edwardss, which included a special performance by Kildare College performing arts students. The performance recounted Nano Nagle's life and the journey of the five founding sisters from Ireland to Wagga Wagga. It was a moving tribute to the countless lives the sisters have touched.

Following the liturgy, those in attendance gathered in front of the Mt Erin chapel for a special tree-planting ceremony. The tree was planted with soil brought by each of the Presentation schools. As it was planted, they were reminded of the deep roots they have established in our community and the new branches that will continue to grow in the future.

Schools in attendance included;

- Kildare Catholic College - Wagga Wagga
- Mater Dei Catholic Primary School - Wagga Wagga
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- Henschke Catholic Primary School - Wagga Wagga
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School - Koorinal
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School - Wagga Wagga
- St Brendan's Catholic Primary School - Ganmain
- St Mary's Primary School - Young
- Hennessy Catholic College - Young