



Sisters of Charity
of Australia

Keep in Touch

KIT
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Inside this month

Welcome to the June 2021 edition of *Keep in Touch*, in which the Congregation continues to shape its future.

We meet the new Congregational Leader, Sr Lauren Dixon, and her four Councillors, Srs Margaret Guy, Adele Cottrell-Dormer, Teresita Marcelo, and Libbey Byrne.

Photographer Tim Bauer is back with a series of portraits of the Sisters, this time the Sisters who were delegates at the 28th General Chapter meeting in March.

And we also look at an innovation at the Heritage Centre, developed especially for school students.

Above, right: *Bright Wings II*
by Mary Southard cs

The Missioning of the Congregational Leader and Councillors

The Feast of the Annunciation, 2021

When Sr Lauren Dixon and Sisters Margaret Guy, Teresita Marcelo, Adele Cottrell-Dormer and Libbey Byrne were missioned as Congregational Leader and Councillors on March 25, Sr Lauren addressed those gathered for the Liturgy in St Vincent's Chapel, Potts Point:



Thank you to (former Leader) Clare (Nolan) and her Council for choosing this day to mission us on behalf of the Congregation and the Church.

My thoughts have emerged around this feast day and our Direction Statement, which was confirmed at the Chapter but worked on by all who were able to participate in the online sessions of the RSC Portal.

Today's feast is one of my favourites in the Church calendar. We learn much about the courage and generosity of Mary in her response to God's unexpected invitation.

Her *fiat*, her "yes," immersed her more fully in trust into the God of love and into our humanity, being for us an inspiration and soul mate in our life's journey.

When she uttered her "yes," the first of many, she could not know how life with its ups and downs would unfold. The same is true for each of us today as we say yes to our God. We await God, we trust God, and we respond to our God.

Continued on page 2 →

The Missioning of the Congregational Leader and Councillors

From page 1

Fifty years ago today, I entered the Novitiate at Wahroonga, a significant yes moment for me. Today I stand before you with the Councillors making a public yes in response to the invitation from God and the Congregation to this ministry of Leadership and service.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word" (Luke 1:38), are words which I pray daily and know they will continue to nourish and guide me and indeed all of us, as we navigate together our emerging future in these challenging times in our Church and in our world.

I would like to acknowledge all who have nudged, supported, challenged, and loved me during those 50 years. Guess what, I need it more than ever now! My sincere thanks!



Clockwise from above, left: Former Leader Sr Clare Nolan with incoming Congregational Leader, Sr Laureen Dixon
Sr Laureen Dixon with her nephew and niece

The new Congregational Leader and Council. From left: Councillors, Srs Libbey Byrne and Tess Marcelo, Congregational Leader, Sr Laureen Dixon, and Councillors, Srs Adele Cottrell-Dormer and Margaret Guy

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The Chapter has given us this Direction Statement:

As Sisters of Charity, seeking God in all things, we commit to a culture of encounter and collaboration.

The Councillors and I have not had a lot of time to ponder how

we might, together with every Sister, begin to make this statement dynamic and embracing in our day to day lives. How this Statement might become flesh within us, our colleagues, companions, those whom we meet informally and those poor and marginalised whom we generously serve with love and compassion, is the challenge for our Congregation.

Hand in hand with the Direction Statement, we have been given a clear set of areas which invite us to unfold, enhance, and expand our understanding of our way of life,

our role as women within the Church and to hold precious our relationship with our common home.

Our practice of contemplative dialogue will be invaluable in taking the first step and the second step and however many more we need. I would encourage you to ponder the Chapter image (on Page 1) from time to time, God's world and all its people, held under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is totally inclusive.

I am heartened by these words of Martin Luther King junior: Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.



Liturgy during which CL&C are commissioned.

Please go to this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcARljy-PEo>



The Sisters at the General Chapter, 2021 with facilitator Karon Donnellon rsm (seated front row, left) and next to her Rachel McLouglin ibvm and Anne Keim rsm

Sisters might recall that we had very animated discussions on the portal about the term Culture of Encounter and collaboration. We will continue to attend to these words from Pope Francis.

Let me tell you about one day last week, which might give some clarity. I was on the train on my way to have a meeting with Clare. In my section of the carriage, we were all socially distant and wearing our masks.

Diagonally opposite me was a young woman who had her eyes down and was intent on the screen of her phone as many of us seem to do nowadays.

As I looked over at her I wondered what it was that had her engrossed. After a couple of moments, she moved slightly and then she made the sign of the cross and closed her phone.

That same morning but a little later, I was in a lift and a young woman came in and breathed out a heavy sigh as she looked at her device.

I asked: "Is everything alright?" She said: "It's my mother, she wants me to read a prayer for my grandmother who has died." This was an unsolicited encounter. We exchanged a few sentences, then I expressed my sympathy and wished her well as she exited the lift.

I had to reflect on each of these encounters. These young women came into my life. Each was an experience of a culture of encounter, one in silence, the other in a brief conversation.

Neither knew me or that I was a Sister of Charity. That silent young woman was taking the opportunity to have her own culture of encounter with her God, seeking nourishment and deepening her relationship. I prayed for that woman many times since that train trip.

The one whose grandmother had died presented a moment of empathic sharing in one of life's difficult moments, a time of loss which we all experience.

Why am I sharing this story? I think because it highlighted for me that culture of encounter is something we do on a daily basis. We may as we work on this together find that there are other ways in which the culture of encounter can influence our lives.

Is this not what happened to Mary when Gabriel came into her life?

Mary had her encounter which led to her collaborating or co-labouring with her God and all those with whom she shared her life, her Son's life and gave glory to God. Her example is a guide and an inspiration for us.

The Councillors and I have not had much of an opportunity to spend time together since the conclusion of the Chapter, but we will be meeting soon and I would ask for your prayers of support to continue during those days.

Each of us realises that we have been called by God and each is prepared to be as generous and responsive as she can be. We will be continue to engage with you, as we take this first step.

We know that Mary Aikenhead's vision and courage will continue to inspire us and God's Holy Spirit will continue to guide us.

Thank you to the former CL&C – Srs Clare, Cate O'Brien, Margaret Beirne and Suzette Clark – for your most generous and loving service and vision.

Special thanks to all involved in the preparation of this ritual this morning.

Finally, the Councillors join with me in thanking each of you for being with us today. May you be abundantly blessed today and always.

[Laureen Dixon rsc](#)

[All photos by Tim Bauer](#)

Meet the new Congregational Leader and Council group

Sr Laureen Dixon:

The Congregation welcomes a new Leader

Sr Laureen was educated by the Sisters of Charity at St Thomas' Lewisham and Bethlehem College Ashfield and went on to gain her teaching qualifications at the Catholic Teachers College North Sydney prior to joining the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in 1971. She taught and was principal in a number of schools in Sydney and Melbourne.

In 1978, Sr Laureen attended the National Pastoral Institute to further her studies in Religious Education. She later gained a Masters of Pastoral Studies from Loyola University in Chicago and a Masters of Theology from the Sydney College of Divinity.

Her special interest is Pastoral Theology. She has been engaged in adult education, community development and counselling and was Parish Coordinator at Our Lady of the Rosary Kensington (NSW) from 1999-2001.

From 2002-2014, Sr Laureen was a member of the Congregational Council and responsible for areas of ministry including: Aged Care, Mission Overseas, Parish Associates, Primary Education, Property, Professional Standards and Justice issues.

During this period, Laureen was engaged in the preparation of the Petition to be sent to Rome for the establishment of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.



Sr Laureen Dixon, Congregational Leader



In recent years, Sr Laureen has been a Director on the Board of the Sisters of Charity Foundation Ltd, St Vincent's College Ltd, on the Congregation's Advisory Finance Committee and most recently a director of Sisters of Charity Community Care Ltd, and a member of the Heritage Centre Development Committee.

Beyond the Congregation she was a Trustee for Catholic Healthcare Ltd and Chair of the Board of St Clare's College Waverley. She was an Executive Member and then President of the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes NSW.

Sr Laureen was elected Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity of Australia at the General Chapter in March, 2021.



Sr Adele Cottrell-Dormer

Sr Adele Cottrell-Dormer:

A life of faith in action

For Sr Adele, one of the four new Councillors of the Sisters of Charity of Australia, her life as a Sister mixed pastoral care with postings in dangerous, war- and civil war-ravaged spots around the world.

As a child, Sr Adele's initial thoughts about her future revolved around becoming a religious Sister. It was not an idea generally accepted, so she learned to keep her own counsel about that. There was also a growing consciousness that she wanted to go to remote and mysterious places, and to make a real difference in the world.

So, she took the first step: When she left school, she went to St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, and began her nursing career, which included completing her midwifery qualification and mothercraft.



Sr Libbey Byrne

By 1971, she soon got her chance to see what might be possible when she was invited by her cousin, a Society of the Divine Word missionary, to come on holiday to Papua-New Guinea. She soon went back, as a lay missionary with PALMS, and spent four years in the East Sepik district.

Sr Adele worked with mothers and their infants in particular. "I delivered live babies in a place where there had been high infant mortality" she said. "We prevented mothers from developing TB, and we ran early intervention programs in maternal health."

She was in the Sepik from the ages of 23 to 27 before she returned to Sydney. She went back to St Vincent's, assigned to the general medical ward, and accident and emergency, and working with Sr Annette O'Connor RSC.



Sr Margaret Guy

"She was very good to work for, said Sr Adele. "I learned a lot from her during that time."

By the time she was in her late 20s, however, the call to religious life was undeniable. Sr Adele's impulse at this time was to join a missionary order, but the missionary orders in Australia were not what she was looking for. So she went on retreat to the Sisters of Charity novitiate and found her answer.



Sr Teresita Marcelo

Telling her family was not without its challenges. "There was a bit of resistance," she said with a degree of understatement.

But she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity of Australia in 1982 at the age of 29 and was professed in 1984.

At this stage, Sr Adele joined the nursing staff of St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, where she began ministering in general surgical wards and the x-ray department.

On her return to Sydney, she began her ministry in palliative care, seeing patients at home as a community nurse.

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The new CL&C was introduced to the Sisters via Zoom during the Chapter. The interviewer is Sr Karon Donnellon rsm.

You can find it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yspVh_Slu1M

Meet the new Congregational Leader and Council group

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Sr Adele Cottrell-Dormer

At that time, she said, the volunteers with the newly set up Ankali Project taught the hospice nursing staff how they cared for these most vulnerable and, at that time, marginalised patients with HIV/AIDS.

Sr Adele moved further down the path of bereavement counselling and went to Brisbane to join the team at Mt Olivet at Kangaroo Pt, then a hospice established by the Sisters of Charity for the sick and dying, particularly for those who were poor.

By August, 1994, Sr Adele was off to one of the places which had spoken to her when she was a child – Africa. With Sr Leone Wittmack, she went into east Africa in the aftermath of the brutal tribal war between the Hutu and the Tutsi groups. An estimated 500,000 to one million people had died in the hostilities between April and mid-July.

They worked with CARE Australia first at Goma on the Zaire/Rwandan border, in a centre for unaccompanied children.

The Sisters then went to Butare in Rwanda to set up a similar camp there to return children to their families and villages.

“People came to us when they heard we were there and what we were doing,” said Sr Adele. “My job was to source food and firewood for the camp, but I had to stay hidden when we went to the markets because if the sellers could see their goods were being bought by foreigners, the prices skyrocketed.”

“We also had to report the deaths of children. We had to bury children and we couldn’t even give many of them the dignity of a name on their graves.”

She was in the Goma camp for one month and in Rwanda for two months and came back to Australia traumatised by what she had experienced.

But in 1996, she was back in Rwanda again, as part of CARE Australia’s mission to deal with an expected influx of survivors streaming across the border back into the country. It was done in such an organised fashion that the medical team found something else to do.

They were deployed into the countryside to assess the damage to the local health centres, write reports, and then refer to other NGOs tasked with fixing the problems.

In 1999, Sr Adele was in Macedonia, again with CARE Australia, where she worked in a refugee camp for Albanians wanting to return to Kosovo.

“It felt the camp held some 57,000 displaced and emotionally shattered people.

“My role in the camp was to provide for the needs of women with babies and young children, supplying them with nappies, soap, clothing, milk, baby formula and food...”

The return to Kosovo soon became a race against the seasons – the land of their family villages had to be cleared of land mines before the refugees could return, and the refugees had to go before winter set in because there were no winter tents for them.

On her return to Sydney, Sr Adele was assigned as a prison chaplain at the Silverwater remand centre. It was three years which she found very challenging.

From 2002 to 2009, her next role began: Six years at the Luddenham-Warragamba parish as a pastoral associate. “I really enjoyed that – there was parish visiting, and I did a lot of funerals, as well.”

She spent some time in 2009 in Outreach (now Open Support) at St Vincent’s in Sydney. 2010 saw her join St Brigid’s Parish in Dubbo as a pastoral associate for some years.

Time for a sabbatical? Sr Adele went to Tantur Ecumenical Institute for a six week program in the Holy Land.

Most recently, she has been ministering at St Vincent’s Private Hospital, Sydney in pastoral care, but in March, 2021 she was elected a Councillor of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.

Sr Libbey Byrne:

A passionate life

Sr Libbey Byrne is one of the Congregation's four new Councillors, elected by the 28th General Chapter in March, 2021.

She is no stranger to leadership of the Congregation, having been a member of Council previously from 2008 to 2014. She knows, however, that each time in leadership is different with its own challenges, surprises, and joys.

Sr Libbey's previous ministry was in Myall Coast Catholic parish in Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. During that time, she was a member of the Congregation's Formation for Mission team and also had the role of Director of Initial Formation while Sr Amanda Nguyen was preparing final profession.

Both the parish ministry and formation ministry fit into her long-term ministry of faith formation, including Sisters of Charity Companions, Sydney.

As she told Tracey Edstein, the then editor of the Diocesan publication, *Aurora*: "I've got this passion for helping people make sense of faith and life and link the two together.... Often, the people in the pews are the ones who miss out.... to reach everybody, you need to be in the parish and the wider community."

While Sr Libbey was talking about her role as parish leader at Myall Coast Catholic Parish (encompassing St Brigid's, Bulahdelah; Our Lady of the Rosary, Karuah and St Stephen's, Tea Gardens), it reflected the core of her expression as a Sister of Charity.

"While her home was at Tea Gardens, Libbey had pastoral



Sr Libbey Byrne

responsibility for the communities that gather around each of the three churches, often participating in clergy gatherings along with other lay leaders. It's nothing for Libbey to clock up 1000 kilometres in a week." *Aurora* reported.

During her time in the parish, there were challenges. "It was a priest-less parish, and my title was parish leader," said Sr Libbey.

She wrote the Lenten resources for the parish and facilitated conversations and movie nights. She was also chair of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese adult faith formation council. "That was a bit by default," she said. The other chair stepped down.... But it is my thing – formation in parishes. Formation is my passion."

Sr Libbey is a member of a community of Sisters which includes Sisters living in Concord West, Centennial Park, and Paddington.

One of the younger members of the Congregation, she became a Sister of Charity after she had finished her teaching qualification. "Previously, others had gone into the novitiate around 17 or 18.

I was 26, so my own experience was very different from that of other, older Sisters, and even of Sisters who are around my age.

"For instance, when I joined, the Sisters were not in the traditional habit. When I was professed, I was given a veil and meant to wear it on formal occasions. I am not sure I wore it much.

"At the next Chapter, the habit was completely out, replaced by the crucifix and the ring as signs of our religious consecration."

Sr Libbey was professed 39 years ago – but it wasn't necessarily a lifepath she was determined to have from an early age.

Taught by the Josephites at St Gabriel's Bexley, then the Sisters of Charity at St Mary's Star of the Sea, Hurstville, and Bethlehem College, in Ashfield, she did have an early, idle thought that "it might be nice to be one."

That thought was quickly followed by "no, no, no, not me, Lord.' I was having too good a time." But eventually she did understand her call, and entered. No one was more surprised than Sr Libbey when she got to her Silver Jubilee of profession.

You might put her longevity in ministry down to her passion – for the past 25 years she has worked on faith formation both within and outside the Congregation.

"Sr Linda Ferrington and I were on the ICVFT (Intra-Congregation Vocational Formation Team) with our founding Congregation in 2009, and 2011-12, we were involved in that ministry in Nigeria, the US, and Scotland."

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Meet the new Congregational Leader and Council group

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And Sr Libbey has been enabled to pursue that passion. She was away at Boston College, completing her masters in pastoral ministry and spirituality for nearly two years from 2000. On her return, she lived on her own and ministered in and around Sydney. For the past five years, she ministered in Tea Gardens.

"I used to be a raging extrovert; but I have become more of an introvert. I love the quiet and the solitude. As people age, they become more idiosyncratic and a little niggly so it's good for me to have my own space, even if it can be a bit lonely at times."

It's worth it, though. One of her parishioners told *Aurora*:

.....
"Sr Libbey is not only committed in ministering pastoral care in a kind and caring manner but also demonstrates a passion to provide opportunities which help encourage continued faith development. No doubt working within three parish communities can be at times a heavy workload but Sr Libbey does this with dedication."

She says, "You're an enabler, not the be all and end all. You need to be empowering of other people."

"As we face the next six years of leadership, I hope that we continue to be a prophetic witness in our evolving Church and world," she said.

Sr Margaret Guy:

Her continuing ministry

"I need foodbank." "I would like to have English lessons." "I am going to be homeless." "Can you help me get a job?" "I need help with this form."

These were the typical needs expressed by people seeking asylum who come to the Jesuit Refugee Service, writes Sr Margaret Guy rsc. This is her story:

"Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. Begun by Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ, JRS has been supporting refugees and people seeking asylum globally since 1980.

"In Australia, JRS provides casework support, financial assistance, temporary accommodation, legal support (through RACS), foodbank, English classes and other social support activities through the Arrupe project.

"Parramatta was my place of ministry – my role being Arrupe Place Volunteer Coordinator, collaborating with the other Volunteer Coordinator at the main office.

"I coordinated the recruitment, training, supervision and support of volunteers. This included responding to enquiries regarding volunteering, organising the volunteer induction, and ongoing training and volunteer events. I tried to keep in touch with all the volunteers at Parramatta, responding to their skills, needs and availability re the monthly roster. As a team member, I shared in many of the roles offering hospitality and accompaniment to our clients.

"At Parramatta, caseworkers work tirelessly to respond to the typical needs expressed above, listening to people's stories, making referrals and giving small amounts of financial assistance. However, we would not be able to do the work that we do without many committed volunteers who work alongside our Director, Manager and staff.

"Volunteers offer invaluable assistance: Providing hospitality and reception at our two drop-in spaces in Parramatta, providing accompaniment support through home visits, cooking meals for house meetings at our men's shelter in Kings Cross, teaching English, assisting with the playgroup and English program for mums and bubs, organising men's nights and excursions, shopping for and distributing foodbank, helping with resume writing, job searching and contributing to other social programs."

To become a volunteer with JRS, use this link -- <https://aus.jrs.net/en/volunteer-with-jrs-australia/>

This story first appeared on the Diocese of Broken Bay website and is reprinted with thanks.

Sr Margaret Guy's continuing story

"After 5 and a half years ministering on the staff as Volunteer Coordinator with Jesuit Refugee Service, I continued during the COVID year to support them with Foodbank. All Saints Parish and School at Liverpool supported me in this with much-needed donations of food for the asylum seekers and refugees who were not given government help.

During 2020, I worked on a committee with Sisters Annette

Cunliffe and Jan O'Grady to devise a training program for Safeguarding for Children and Vulnerable Adults. This was delivered by Zoom to our Sisters and Staff. Our fourth vow of Service of the Poor has been very much expressed through my ministry with Sisters of Charity Outreach and Jesuit Refugee Service in the past.

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In June 2021, I was elected at our Chapter as a Councillor. This is a very different ministry, but I believe it is where the Spirit is calling me now.

Our Chapter direction statement includes a response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor which Pope Francis has asked of us.



Sr Margaret Guy assists Fr Gaetan Pereira SJ at Mass

Sr Teresita Marcelo:

Every day, a call to respond

Sr Tess, who until March was ministering at St Columba's College, Essendon, in Victoria is now a Councillor of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.

The events, experiences, even "miracles" that happened to me during my ministry at St Columba's College community are reflected in the introduction to Voices from the Heart by the former Principal, April Honeyman.

"Prayer is a powerful means of expressing our faith.... The charism of the Sisters of Charity is based on Ignatian spirituality. It gives us a story to enter (daily); a language to

speak; a way to pray; and a face of God to see" wherever we may be. One of the teachers gave me a poster which I have placed in front of my desk, and the words from Mother Teresa surely help me when life gets complicated:

.....
"Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you ... and always trust in God's ways ... it may not be your chosen way"



Sr Teresita Marcelo

I thank God every day for our RSC motto:
"The love of Christ urges us."

Portraits of the Sisters

Once again, the Sydney-based photographer Tim Bauer worked with the Sisters who attended the Sexennial Chapter of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.

Armed with his camera, some lights, and a portable grey backdrop, Tim again captured the spirit of the Congregation.



Sr Laureen Dixon



Sr Adele Cottrell-Dormer



Sr Libbey Byrne



Sr Margaret Guy



Sr Teresita Marcelo



Sr Clare Nolan



Sr Linda Ferrington



Sr Margaret Beirne



Sr Leone Wittmack



Sr Jeannie Johnston



Sr Margaret Fitzgerald

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Portraits of the Sisters

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Sr Amanda Nguyen



Sr Maria Wheeler



Sr Maryanne Confoy



Sr Pauline Staunton



Sr Virginia Mahony



Sr Genevieve Walsh



Sr Anne Taylor



Sr Anne Mayberry



Sr Annette Cunliffe



Sr Cate O'Brien



Sr Christine Henry



Sr Colleen Jackson

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Portraits of the Sisters

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Sr Elizabeth Dodds



Sr Gaye Reynolds



Sr Helga Neidhart



Sr Jan O'Grady



Sr Colleen Mills

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You will find these images on the Photo Galleries page of the Sisters of Charity of Australia's website. You can use this link to go straight there -- <https://www.sistersofcharity.org.au/news-and-events/photo-galleries/>

If you scroll down the page, you will find many more of Tim Bauer's images, taken during the 28th General Chapter of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.

Experience-based learning in the Heritage Centre



As the new year dawned, the opportunity to reopen the Heritage Centre to small on-site groups became reality. Sr Anne Taylor expressed interest in scheduling Year 7 students from St Vincent’s College to visit the exhibition – as we had done with the same year group in pre-COVID 2020.

Following on from their foundational learning of the history of the Sisters, we discussed how we might engage students in a deeper consideration of relevant themes. We were operating without our usual volunteer base and Allison O’Sullivan was already developing resources supportive of a largely self-guided, inquiry-based program; in response we developed and delivered, the *Object Discovery Tour*.

Museum educators advocate the benefits of experiential, object-centric learning, whereby students are engaged in active rather than passive activities. This type of interaction allows students to construct meaning, initiating deeper inquiry via their own observations, questions, and emotional responses.

Learning in a Museum is a unique experience, providing opportunity to investigate cultural and artistic ingenuity by means of historically significant objects and in the context of broader shared histories and social movements.

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The Object Discovery Tour focuses on deeper engagement with the Sisters of Charity exhibition, by means of several carefully selected artefacts, ephemera, and photographs, each representative of broader themes and considerations.



Clockwise from above, left:
A blazer pocket from St Vincent’s College. Class Captain is stitched at the base of the crest and school motto. The *Object Discovery Tour* incorporates a range of historical objects from schools founded by the Sisters of Charity.

The 2021 Education Programs booklet featuring a shot of the Mary Aikenhead bust. In the background is the Five sisters (2014). Hazel Mary Cope. Courtesy of the Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia. Hazel Mary Cope’s work is a favourite of students who participated in the Object Study Tour and hangs in the greeting area of the Centre.

Fragments from Mary Aikenhead’s coffin are currently on display in the temporary showcase in the Centre. The fragments garnered discussion in relation to relics and the significance of provenance in verifying historical artefacts.

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Experience-based learning in the Heritage Centre

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Students worked through a series of questions to pique their curiosity and teachers and Heritage Centre staff were on hand to answer questions and guide discussions amongst the students.

Some participants preferred to work individually, whilst others adopted

a collaborative approach – sharing ideas and insights with classmates. The response to the new program is overwhelmingly positive.

Below is a snapshot of written commentary provided by year 7 students from St Vincent's College.

'Something interesting I would like to share is how health care and education has evolved in the past years. It was so interesting to look at different things they used before new technology, such as the operating table which was made out of metal instead of a comfy bed.'

'I would definitely recommend this tour to future year sevens because after visiting the Heritage Centre, I feel quite inspired by the great lengths the Sisters of Charity have done to help those in need. Whenever I'm feeling angry or frustrated, I can think about them and go out and live my life guided by their core values.'

'This tour has been so fun and exciting. It was engaging, everything was in perfect sections and all really organised. It was so, so clean and everyone there was really helpful.'

The amount of things they had from the 1800s, to second class relics of Mary Aikenhead, to even how the Sisters are doing today, was immensely interesting. Every new Vinnies girl should know this which is why I would absolutely recommend this exhibit to all up and coming pupils at St Vincent's College!

If I was to say the thing I learned the most about, it would probably be about how much the Sisters really worked with those in need. I would happily go back there and learn so much more, especially how the 1800-1900s were. In conclusion, this tour was just amazing and thoroughly expanded my knowledge for both Religion and History which is now top notch...!'

Above, left:

A donation box from St Vincent's Hospital in Toowoomba. Students are asked to consider how they might raise money for a major work of charity and how they might contribute in terms of labour and knowledge.

They are encouraged to consider an active approach to helping those in need. The object is Courtesy of the Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia



Sisters of Charity
of Australia

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