

Message Stick

To all members of the Catholic Education family



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

Reflection from Pope Francis

Let us not waste time and freedom on trivial things, pastimes that leave us empty inside. Life offers us each day the precious pearl of encounter with God and others.

Please remember in your prayers recently deceased members of our wider Catholic Education Family.

Gladys Jenkins, mother of Rhonda Bennett, St John's Catholic Primary School, Walkerston

Congratulations to:

Shalom College, Bundaberg teacher **Rebecca Jenner** who has been selected as the Commonwealth Youth Games Australian triathlon coach.

Friday 4 August 2023

Good morning everyone

I was delighted to attend the 8:00am Parish Mass on Thursday at St Joseph's Cathedral to celebrate the arrival in Rockhampton of the Sisters of Mercy on 4 August 1873, 150 years ago today. On that day, seven Sisters of Mercy disembarked from the 'Lady Bowen' after sailing up the coast from Brisbane and thus began an incredible mission of outreach to the communities of Central Queensland including the foundation of many of our Catholic schools. Sincere thanks to all who joined us for Mass to give praise and thanks to God for the blessing of these remarkable women. My thanks also to those who assisted at the Morning Tea that followed the Mass. We were blessed to have 30 Sisters attend the Mass and the Morning Tea.

Rockhampton in 1873 would have provided many challenges for these seven courageous women as they settled into life in a place with a very different climate and culture to the Ireland that many of them had left behind as they answered God's call to minister in the far away land of Australia. This excerpt from an [article](#) by Sr Joanne Molloy rsm in the Sisters' publication *Mercy World*, captures beautifully those early days of the Sisters in Rockhampton:

Faithful to the mission entrusted to them, the early Sisters frequently lived in harsh conditions and endured great hardships, but they were continually motivated by the spirit of Catherine McAuley. Catherine had utmost faith in the Providence of God and these Sisters followed her example, frequently relying on the goodness and generosity of local people who are now part of our Mercy story. We celebrate this occasion with great joy and gratitude and take the time to honour the four hundred women who vowed their life to God within the former Rockhampton Congregation, now part of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG).

All of us in Catholic Education today owe the Sisters of Mercy a tremendous debt of gratitude for all they have contributed over the past 150 years. On behalf of us all, I congratulate them on this significant 150 year milestone and extend my heartfelt thanks to all the Sisters and wish them God's abundant blessings.

Currently, 17 of our teachers from across the Diocese are on Pilgrimage in Lisbon, participating in World Youth Day (1-6 August), together with Pope Francis, Bishop Michael and over 400 000 youth pilgrims from all over the world. It has been wonderful to hear stories from our pilgrims as they journey through this uplifting and joy-filled experience which we hope will be a life-changing event for all. We pray that our diocesan pilgrims will enjoy and be inspired by this very special World Youth Day celebration and return home safely to their families and communities.

Next Tuesday (8 August) we celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Australia's beloved first saint whose passionate advocacy for educating underprivileged children and children in rural and remote areas led to the foundation of a significant number of schools in our diocese. On her feast day, we remember and honour her legacy and the extraordinary impact Saint Mary had on Catholic Education throughout Australia. Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop – pray for us.

God bless,

Leesa

Where's Leesa: Monday 7 August, Office; Tuesday 8 August, St Patrick's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary Schools, Bundaberg; Wednesday 9 August, Shalom College and St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bundaberg; Thursday 10 and Friday 11 August, Office.

6 to 13 August National Vocations Awareness Week.

DIOCESAN VOCATIONS PRAYER

Lord, you are the good shepherd who calls us by name and asks us to follow you.

May the Holy Spirit kindle the hearts of those who you are calling to the priesthood and consecrated life.

Give them courage to respond to their vocation to serve your Church.

May all of us seek to know you better, to faithfully follow your call to holiness, and proclaim the gospel to the world.



Wednesday 15 August is the Feast of the Assumption and is a Holy Day of Obligation. In 1950, Pope Pius XII declared the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary which the Church celebrates every year on August 15. Please check with local Parishes for Mass times.

Pictured below at the 150 Years Sisters of Mercy Mass and Morning tea are from left: Students from The Cathedral College and St Mary's Catholic Primary School, North Rockhampton with Sr Denise Hinton, Sr Berneice Loch and Leesa Jeffcoat cutting the cake; students from St Mary's Catholic Primary School, North Rockhampton with Sr Anne Slattery and Sr Desma Clarke and the Sisters with far left, Leesa Jeffcoat and far right Rob Alexander and Claire Stitt, The Cathedral College.



Photos from our World Youth Day Pilgrims



Students at **Marist College, Emerald** participated in the filming of the College's new promotional video this week.



St Brigid's Catholic Kindergarten, Emerald staff and Kindy kids were involved in filming this week for the Catholic Kindergarten video.



Pictured left: **Principals from some of our Mackay Schools** at the Careers Expo in front of the CEDR stall with Jessica and Rhianna from CEDR.

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National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence

Official **BULLYING NO WAY!** school

Date Claimer:

Providing safe and inclusive learning environments to prevent bullying. Friday 18 August marks the 2023 [National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence](#), Australia's key school bullying prevention initiative.

This year's theme, *Growing Connections*, promotes the importance of student connectedness and sense of belonging, helping students feel accepted, respected, included and supported. [Free resources](#) are available for schools to assist them build a proactive approach to bullying prevention and education.

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