

HOLY CROSS COLLEGE WOOLLAHRA 1908-2001:  
A MICRO-STUDY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE ARCHDIOCESE  
OF SYDNEY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Submitted by

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## **STATEMENT OF SOURCES**

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date : 4 August 2008

## **DEDICATION**

To my three children, for their loving support

Brett

Jeannine

Damon

## ABSTRACT

Holy Cross College, Woollahra, was established in the newly formed parish of Holy Cross by Cardinal Moran and the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1908 as a select high school for middle class Catholic girls in the northern section of the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. Moran made it clear, and it was obvious that the sisters agreed, that the primary purpose of the College was the imparting of the Catholic Faith integrated with a suitable middle class education equal to, but preferably excelling, that provided by the secular state schools. This thesis is informed by two questions: Why did Holy Cross College close in 2001? Did the College achieve the objectives of the founding pioneers of the school, including Cardinal Moran?

This strongly contextualised thesis demonstrates that for almost a century Holy Cross College was a microcosm of a complex world, one which was influenced by many factors, at local, state, federal and international levels. These factors, in the early days, included the rapid response of Catholic educators to Peter Board's 'New Syllabus', the first wave women's movement; and the dubious rationalising argument of Cardinal Moran to extract aid for Catholic schools from the state, which remains an ongoing problem for Catholic education in Australia.

While the College in the 1920s was enjoying a growing reputation for highly successful music and academic tuition, it was challenged, through to the 1950s, by such factors as: Pope Pius XI's call to Catholic Action as interpreted for the Archdiocese of Sydney by Archbishop Kelly; participation in the various public displays of Catholic faith; the rigours of the Great Depression; and the dangers of being in an especially vulnerable location during World War Two.

The community of the College which inhabited this complex 'mini' world was strongly bonded by common goals and values for the first fifty years of the school's existence. This was a community which aspired to the fullest possible development of the spiritual, intellectual, cultural and physical attributes of girls through a Catholic education inspired by the Mercy Vision, but always constrained by the reality of finances, staffing, physical resources, and imposed authority.

The somewhat idyllic existence of the College with its relatively small numbers and homely atmosphere was disrupted in the 1960s when Holy Cross was selected by the Sydney

archdiocesan educational authorities to be a regional school. This study reveals the increasing complexity of the various levels at which authority was exerted over Holy Cross College as a regional school. Regionalisation was a central element in the Sydney Archdiocese's wide ranging plan to cope with the enormous strains on the Catholic educational system caused by such post-war challenges as the influx of Catholic migrants and the implementation of the Wyndham comprehensive secondary education scheme. There followed the success of the state aid campaigns and the challenges of Vatican II Council, movements which impacted upon the personal and communal lives of the women religious who staffed the College, as well as their students. Also impacting upon the College was the cultural revolution and the second wave women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Throughout this study the geographical setting of the school in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and the region's socio-economic characteristics are explored and emerge as significant factors in both the creation and maintenance of a unique school culture and the decline of Holy Cross College in the 1990s. Finally this decline is mapped in terms of the erosion of the College's unique identity, which was forged by religious, cultural, geographical, political and pedagogical forces, and eroded by a complex of factors including demography, centralised authority, class, and international economic downturns. It is concluded that the founding sisters and Moran would have mixed and nuanced responses to the question: Did the College achieve the objectives of the founding pioneers?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis owes its existence to many people.

I would like firstly to acknowledge the influence of my father, Frank Garaty, who was born 100 years ago this year. His interest in his family history, and therefore local history, made me aware of my Irish Catholic heritage and stimulated in me a lifelong curiosity in the lives of 'ordinary' people, and a desire to write public history.

Without the continual encouragement of my three children, especially that of daughter (and new mother), Jeannine, I would not have persevered. Their combined technical expertise was of immeasurable value, and freely given, as well as a sympathetic ear at all times of the day or night. The four grandchildren born while this thesis was written have proved to be a reinvigorating and joyful addition to my life, which threatened at times to shrink to a desk, computer and overloaded shelves of collected material.

This study was jointly funded by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy and the Australian Catholic University and I thank both for the initial confidence they exhibited in awarding me the Holy Cross College Woollahra 1908-2001 Memorial Scholarship and their on-going support. The professional but sympathetic support of Dr Boonseng Leelarthae-pin of Research Services has been given unstintingly and I thank him.

This thesis is heavily contextualised and the expert and friendly support of three archivists is thankfully acknowledged: Sr Veronica Earls of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy Archives; Ms Pauline Garland of the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives; and Ms Maree Lourey of the Catholic Education Office (Sydney) Archives. My progress was highly dependent on their cooperation. I would also like to thank the staff of the Mount St Mary campus library; they have given friendly and dependable support.

My principal supervisor, Dr Sophie McGrath RSM, has been consistent in her interest and generous in sharing her expertise. She has taught me the language of historians and I thank her for that, as well as her patience. I also thank Dr Rosa MacGinley, Professor Robert Gascoigne and Professor Peter Bastian for their well-informed and helpful advice. I also owe thanks to Dr Lesley Hughes for her encouragement, advice and friendship in the initial stages of this project and to Jeanette Sims for her ongoing friendship and stimulating company on many a Historic Houses Trust bus trip.

This thesis has been eagerly awaited by so many members of the Holy Cross College community and I thank collectively all ex-staff and ex-students who have been so generous with their time, especially those participating in interviews. Their enthusiasm was infectious and their obvious love for Holy Cross and their sense of loss with its closure was a continual inspiration. A special thanks is owed to Sr Cecily Gaudry and Christine Campbell who did so much to collect memories and produce the wonderful *Celebration of Our Education*, which has been indispensable to this study and to Sr Barbara McDonough, the last principal of Holy Cross College who has been most generous in her practical contributions to this project.

## ABBREVIATIONS

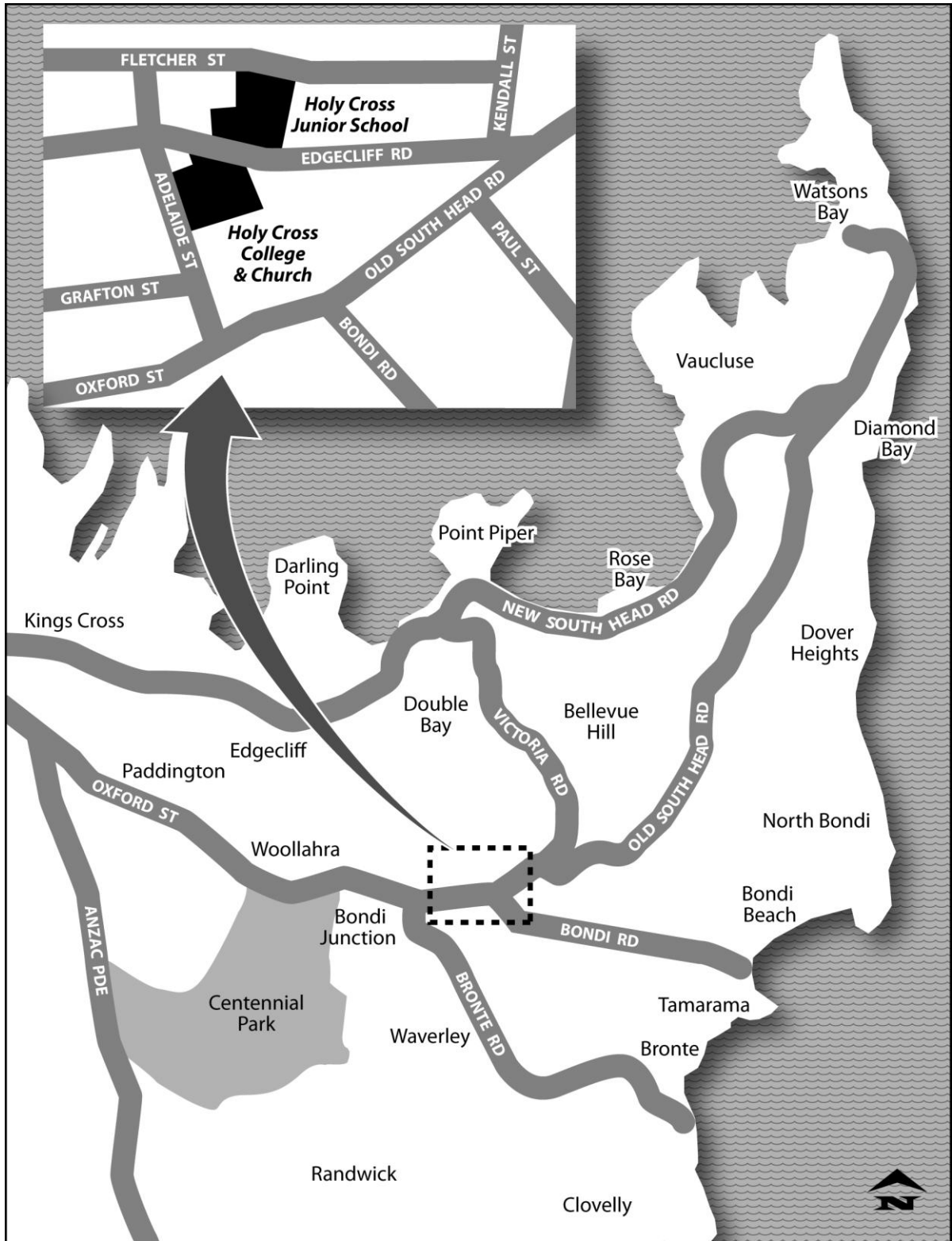
ACD	<i>Australasian Catholic Directory</i>
AHC	Australian Holy Catholic Guild benefit Society
ALP	Australia Labor Party
AMED	Australian Music Examinations Board
APC	Australian Parents Council
BSSS	Board of Secondary School Studies
CBFC	Catholic Building and Finance Commission
CEA	Catholic Education Association
CEB	Catholic Education Board
<i>Celebration</i>	<i>Holy Cross College Woollahra 1908-2001: Celebration of our Education</i>
CEO	Catholic Education Office
CEOSA	Catholic Education Office Sydney, Archives
cfc	Christian Brother
<i>CFJ</i>	<i>Catholic Freeman's Journal</i>
CNEC	Catholic National Education Conference
<i>CP</i>	<i>Catholic Press</i>
CSSA	Catholic School Secondary School Association
CTC	Catholic Teachers College
CUSA	Catholic United Services Association
CW	Catholic Weekly
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
ESL	English as a second language
FFPOS	Full fee-paying overseas students
FJ	Freeman's Journal
fms	Marist Brother
Fr	Father
Hibernians	Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IC	Intermediate Certificate
LC	Leaving Certificate
LGA	Local Government Area
M.	Mary
Mgr	Monsignor
MSC	Missionary of the Sacred Heart



n.d	no date
n.p.	no pagination
NCEC	National Catholic Education Commission
NES	National Emergency Service
OB	Order of Saint Benedict
OP	Order of Preachers (Dominican)
P and F	Parents and Friends Association
PA	Parramatta Archives of the Sisters of Mercy
QC	Qualifying Certificate
RSJ	Religious Sister of Saint Joseph
RSM	Religious Sister of Mercy
SAA	Sydney Archdiocesan Archives
SACS	Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board
SC	School Certificate
SJ	Jesuit
Sr	Sister
YCS	Young Christian Students Movement
YCW	Young Christian Workers

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Intermediate Certificate and Leaving Certificate Results 1921	87
Table 2: Eucharistic Prayer Crusade; results for June 1927	106
Table 3: Total enrolments at selected Sydney Catholic secondary girls' schools	115
Table 4: Holy Cross College Woollahra-receipts of college fees and music fees	116
Table 5: Full time and part time teachers in primary and secondary schools of the Sydney Archdiocese in 1975	222
Table 6: Stipends for religious in the Archdiocese of Sydney, 1967	223
Table 7: Teachers in NSW Catholic Schools: 1965-1997	262
Table 8: Changes in 5 to 19 year old population 1976-1996	266



The Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, showing location of Holy Cross College

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>		<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>		<b>v</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>		<b>vii</b>
<b>List of tables</b>		<b>ix</b>
<b>Map</b>		<b>x</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
	Genre of school histories	
	Education of Catholic Girls	
	Trends in twentieth century educational discourse	
	Religious education	
	Educating the middle class	
	The Wyndham Scheme and state aid	
	Primary sources	
	Oral history – strengths and weaknesses	
	Importance of space	
	Challenges to the contemporary historian	
	Status of the researcher in relation to the research subject	
	Methodology	
	Contribution of this thesis	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>THE PREHISTORY OF HOLY CROSS COLLEGE</b>	<b>26</b>
	Moran’s Mercy connections	
	The establishment of the Parramatta foundation	
	The Mercy vision	
	Early branch houses in the Sydney archdiocese	
	Early European history of the Eastern Suburbs	
	Early Catholic churches in the Eastern Suburbs	
	Growth factors in the Eastern Suburbs	
	The parish of Holy Cross Bondi Junction – the first decades	
	Holy Cross Convent of Mercy	
	Trends in education and the genesis of the ‘New Syllabus’	

Competing with secular state schools  
 The Catholic response to the ‘New Syllabus’  
 Teaching religious knowledge  
 Teacher training  
 Educational issues raised at the Australasian Catholic Congresses  
 of 1900 and 1904

**Chapter 3 THE FOUNDATION YEARS 1909-1924 64**

The Holy Cross foundation community  
 The early pupils of Holy Cross High School (College)  
 The significance of convent high schools  
 Convent schools and class structure  
 The Church’s attitude to the ‘proper sphere’ of women  
 Education issues of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress 1909  
 The first Catholic Educational Conference, 1911  
 Early building extensions at Holy Cross  
 Departmental registration  
 Prospects for growth  
 Focus Years 1921-22

**Chapter 4 HOLY CROSS COLLEGE BUILDS AN IDENTITY 1925-1938 90**

Developments in the Eastern Suburbs  
 Growing enrolments and curriculum at Holy Cross College in the 1920s  
 Developing an unique identity  
 Progress in the Catholic education system in the 1920s  
 Lifestyle of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, 1920s and 1930s  
 Death of the congregational pioneer leader – 1927  
 Catholic Action in the 1920s  
 The International Eucharistic Congress – Sydney 1928  
 Criticism of the Intermediate Certificate  
 Silver jubilee of Holy Cross Parish, Bondi Junction – 1931  
 Centenary of the Sisters of Mercy – December 1931  
 Effects of the Great Depression  
 Building additions at Holy Cross in the mid 1930s  
 Parish life at Holy Cross – 1937

**Chapter 5 THE WAR YEARS AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION 121**

Catholicity in action  
 The Catholic Evidence Guild in Catholic schools

The Ladies of the Grail  
 Sodalities  
 Religious education  
 A new church of the Holy Cross  
 Monsignor Collender's sacerdotal golden jubilee  
 War comes uncomfortably close  
 Catholic educators respond to proposed reforms  
 Holy Cross College in the 1940s  
 A year of celebrations – 1948  
 Post-war stresses on Catholic education  
 Beginnings of state aid  
 Communism: the greatest scourge  
 Catholic Adult Education  
 The status of lay teachers in Catholic schools  
 Focus Years 1946-48

**Chapter 6**

**DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE SPACE RACE: CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE 1951- 1962**

**161**

'An uncharacteristic decade for the century'  
 The Commonwealth jubilee celebrations of 1951  
 'Massive demonstrations of faith'  
 'The Laity in the Crisis of the Modern World'  
 The schooling of girls in the 1950s  
 Responses to Catholic school staffing challenges in the 1950s  
 A survey of secondary schooling in NSW is instituted  
 Progress in the education system of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney  
 The primary school at Holy Cross College is phased out  
 Focus Year – 1958  
 The Wyndham Scheme  
 Curriculum reform in the 1960s  
 Holy Cross College in the early 1960s  
 School culture

**Chapter 7**

**THE CONCERTED RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES 1963-76**

**194**

The fight for state aid  
 Holy Cross College becomes a systemic school  
 Advantages of joining the CEO system  
 Regionalisation is formalised in 1964  
 Establishment of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission

Parish quotas  
 Uniformity rules  
 Focus Year – 1964  
 Dissenting opinions about the future of Catholic education  
 A significant extension to Holy Cross College  
 A senior school at Paul Street  
 Changing attitudes to lay teachers in Catholic schools  
 Allowances to religious teachers  
 State Aid becomes a major election issue in 1972  
 The Australian Schools Commission  
 Role of CEO  
 The reality of rationalisation of Catholic education in Sydney  
 Attempts to create an Eastern Suburbs regional senior college in the mid-1970s  
 Never the twain shall meet  
 The Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965  
 Rome directs a renewal of religious life  
 The 1974 feasibility study

## Chapter 8

### **INNOVATION AND DECLINE AT HOLY CROSS IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

239

The Paul Street campus  
 The Edgecliff Road campus  
 Religious education in the 1970s  
 Marian College, Bondi Junction comes close to reality  
 Enrolments do matter  
 Educating for change  
 Pastoral care at Holy Cross  
 The College is one entity again  
 Amalgamation is effected  
 A British Secretary of State visits Holy Cross College  
 The Year 11 diploma course  
 Music and creative arts  
 Overseas students  
 Major changes to religious education in the mid-1980s  
 Spirituality and religious education in the 1990s  
 Innovation in curriculum  
 Demographic changes  
 Into an uncertain future  
 Closure becomes inevitable  
 Farewell to Holy Cross College

<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>MUSIC AT HOLY CROSS COLLEGE</b>	<b>276</b>
	Early music teachers at Parramatta	
	A music examination framework is established in NSW	
	Holy Cross music results in the 1920s and 1930s	
	Early music teachers at Holy Cross	
	Winning the AMEB shield	
	Boy students and male mentors at the Parramatta Mercy music centres	
	Music at the service of the liturgy and the wider community	
	Music at Holy Cross in the 1940s and 1950s	
	The decline of music from the 1960s	
<b>Chapter 10</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>305</b>
	Educating the middle class	
	The paradox of religious educators of young women	
	Crisis in Catholic education	
	Inherent and ongoing challenges of Catholic education	
	Loss of autonomy and identity	
	Responding to the questions	
	Sense of community	
	A love of learning	
	Music	
	Upward mobility of the Catholic community	
	Relationship with the parish	
	In conclusion	
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>323</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Human Research Ethics Committee approval form	<b>346</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Information letter to participants	<b>347</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Consent form for participants	<b>349</b>



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It was recognised that writing a history of Holy Cross College, Woollahra, from its foundation to its closure, would not be a simple task. The College's history stands within the history of Australian education and, within this, the sub-field of the history of Catholic schools, and within the latter, the history of Catholic girls' secondary schools. In addition, a history of Holy Cross College, Woollahra, as a micro-study within this last named sub-field is highly contextualized by such important histories as Australian state and federal politics, international Church history, Australian Church history, religious life particularly in relation to women, and women's history. The College was placed in a complex dynamic situation influenced by many factors at the local, state, federal and international levels.

To Marwick, history's great value to society 'lies in the fact that in limiting itself to clearly defined, manageable questions, it can offer clear and well-substantiated answers'.<sup>1</sup> No doubt a more modest statement of outcome would be more realistic, such as 'as clear and well-substantiated answers as possible at this time', but the idea of limiting the area of research to permit in-depth work to be done is a helpful method of approach. Those 'clearly defined, manageable questions' were made possible in this thesis by treating this research project as a micro-study of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney in the twentieth century. The overriding question was: Why did Holy Cross College close in 2001? Another question of great interest to Catholic educators is: Did the College achieve the objectives of the founding pioneers including Cardinal Moran?

#### **The genre of school histories**

It has been only since the 1970s that school histories have been analysed and critiqued as a genre. Genres of history can be defined as 'different conventions of discourse through which speakers tell history and listeners understand them'.<sup>2</sup> In 1977, Marjorie Theobald, herself the writer of a well-received school history, lamented that 'school histories have long been a blight upon the landscape of historical research' and quite rightly jibes, 'most

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History: knowledge, evidence, language*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating our Pasts: the social construction of oral history*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, p. 2.

[celebratory histories] have little interest beyond their nostalgic appeal to ex-students'.<sup>3</sup> The genre of school histories began to legitimise itself as reputable history, when schools mostly affluent and independent, commissioned professional historians to write their histories.

Because of the establishment of State funded and universal education (in 1872 in Victoria and in 1880 in New South Wales), and the consequent burgeoning of schools staffed by Catholic religious or funded by Protestant churches, there were many secondary schools reaching their centenary in the latter half of the 1980s and into the 1990s. This resulted in the publication of a large number of school histories between 1985 and 2000. The foci of these varied considerably. Few set out to document a contextual history analysing the impacts on and the impacts by the institution.<sup>4</sup> Generally they were school histories where the 'historian' is basically an editor of individual recollections designed for an ensured market.<sup>5</sup>

This type of 'nostalgic' school history is at the beginning of a continuum which William F. Connell clearly mapped out for the use of any who wish to intelligently analyse and critique this genre.<sup>6</sup> Connell identified four categories of what he has termed 'celebratory' histories of education: nostalgic, expository, analytical and interpretive, but he acknowledged that the categories are not discrete but rather overlapping. He noted that the writers of 'celebratory nostalgic' histories tend to be ex-pupils or teachers and they do not produce 'good histories'.<sup>7</sup> Yet, there is no inherent reason why such an insider cannot write an analytical or interpretive celebratory history. Marjorie Theobald and Christine Trimmingham Jack, both insiders, produced eminently successful school histories. Theobald was a teacher at Ruyton Girls' School, Kew, and Trimmingham Jack

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<sup>3</sup> Marjorie Theobald, 'Problems in Writing School Histories', *History of Education Review*, vol. 6, no. 1, autumn 1977, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Two contextual school histories written by professional historian Susan Emilson are notable examples: Susan Emilson, *Dancing St. Dom's Plot: a history of Santa Sabina and Santa Maria del Monte, Strathfield*, Santa Sabina College, Sydney, 1994; Susan Emilson, *The Lily and the Lion: a history of Abbotsleigh*, Richard Smart Publishing, Sydney, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Two examples are: Caroline Fairfax Simpson, Annette Fielding-Jones and Betty Winn, *Ascham Remembered 1886-1986*, The Fine Arts Press, Sydney, 1986; Barbara Croft, *St. Catherine's School 1856-1996*, Bookpress, Sydney, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> William F. Connell, 'Research and Writing in the History of Education', in J.P. Keeves, *Australian Education: review of recent research*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1987, pp. 29 – 65.

<sup>7</sup> Connell, 'Research and Writing in the History of Education', p. 39.

had been a student at Kerever Park, Burradoo.<sup>8</sup> It is not their insider position which is the limiting factor; rather, it is the degree of control held by the commissioning body and its vision of the commissioned work.

Theobald's *Ruyton Remembers* used a style that is traditional for a celebratory school history but in its analytical tone it was ahead of its time.<sup>9</sup> She noted major shifts in curriculum or the school's structure and accounted for them by reference to the educational, social, political and economic factors which had shaped the school over one hundred years.

One book which broke new ground in the 1980s was *Learning to Lead: a history of girls' and boys' corporate secondary schools in Australia*. In its introduction Geoffrey Sherington noted that it is not 'good form for an old pupil, or anyone else, to bring into question' the image which the corporate schools of Australia have projected, and he offers this as an explanation of the lack of critical individual histories.<sup>10</sup> *Learning to Lead* is a useful reference book for those writing in this field, in that it analyses the major formative influences in the evolution of the corporate school system.

According to Connell, the 'best' kind of school history is the interpretive celebratory, that written by the professional historian, such as that which Susan Emilson produced for the centenary of Abbotsleigh.<sup>11</sup> According to Emilson, the commissioning body, Abbotsleigh's History Committee, indicated they wanted 'an honest, forthright history [that was] scholarly and analytical'.<sup>12</sup> The intentions of those commissioning the school history are undoubtedly a defining factor in setting the tone of the finished product. Tonkin notes that a genre signals that a certain kind of interpretation is called for and provides a 'horizon of expectation to a knowledgeable audience'.<sup>13</sup> If this 'knowledgeable audience' is a body representative of an educational institution with a

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<sup>8</sup> See Marjorie Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers 1878-1978*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1978 and Christine Trimmingham Jack, *Growing Good Catholic Girls: education and convent life in Australia*, Melbourne University Press (hereafter MUP), Melbourne, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Connell noted 'the book is a well-organised and lucid analysis'. See Connell, 'Research and Writing in the History of Education', p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Sherington, R. C. Peterson and Ian Brice, *Learning to Lead: a history of girls' and boys' corporate secondary schools in Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987, p. vi.

<sup>11</sup> Emilson, *The Lily and the Lion*. Emilson was an 'outsider' commissioned to write the history, the school's fifth.

<sup>12</sup> Emilson, *The Lily and the Lion*, p. x.

<sup>13</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating our Pasts* p. 2.

strong appreciation of that institution's contribution to advances in education, the more likely the resulting history will be analytical and/or interpretive in scope. Greg Denning has commented on the Jesuits' sense of being located in a grand tradition which produces a well developed historical consciousness in the school and which informed his commissioned history of Xavier College.<sup>14</sup>

In her 1982 centenary history of the Methodist Ladies College, Kew, Ailsa Zainuddin broke new ground in admitting the multiplicity of experiences which mean 'totally different perceptions of every single event and the multi-faceted life of the school makes it inevitable that each girl's experience of it varies'. She lamented 'it is impossible to do justice to all the individual lives which have contributed to and been part of the corporate history of the school'.<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly this is a major and generally insurmountable difficulty in producing a celebratory analytical or interpretive school history. Denning freely admitted that 'there is no way of capturing in a single portrait the experiences, through a hundred years of ten thousand boys and five hundred masters'.<sup>16</sup>

A more recent commentator on the deficiencies of the genre of school histories is Christine Trimingham Jack. She has asserted that 'traditional' school histories in which the 'lived experience of school life has been used rather than actively studied' are concerned with the public face of the school rather than the 'diverse experience of individuals'. She writes of the value of histories based on memories and structured to break down the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' worlds. In such histories we feel 'let in' and can join the participants in looking back at their early lives.<sup>17</sup> Trimingham Jack, however, had the luxury of writing the history of a school of less than fifty students.

### **Education of Catholic girls**

Margaret Ann Franklin has remarked on the number of historians who have lamented the paucity of research in the field of the history of women's education in Australia in

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<sup>14</sup> Greg Denning, *Xavier: a centenary portrait*, Old Xaverians' Association, Melbourne, 1978, p.158.

<sup>15</sup> Ailsa Thomson Zainuddin, *They Dreamt of a School: a centenary history of Methodist Ladies' College, Kew 1882-1982*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1982, p. xxii and p.xiv.

<sup>16</sup> Denning, *Xavier*, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Christine Trimingham Jack, 'School history: reconstructing the lived experience', *History of Education Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1997, p. 42 and p. 52.

general, and the education of girls in particular.<sup>18</sup> Helen Jones has written: ‘It can be seen from the variety of institutions that Catholic girls’ education is both a large and complex subject and one that merits a separate study’ within that wider field.<sup>19</sup> Sophie McGrath has stated: ‘It is of importance to Catholic educators that they be aware of the rich tradition in the education of girls to which they are the legitimate heirs.’<sup>20</sup> While excellent research on the education of girls in South Australian schools, including Catholic secondary schools, has been published in the last fifteen years,<sup>21</sup> little has been written on the secondary education of Catholic girls in New South Wales (hereafter NSW). It is only relatively recently that the achievements of religious women as teachers have been researched by historians and this thesis is one that addresses that vacuum in scholarship, within the context of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney.<sup>22</sup>

By 1940 the total membership of female religious orders in Australia was nearly 11,000.<sup>23</sup> Research on their contribution to Australian society, as well as the Catholic Church, has been patchy and insubstantial. Some earlier works in the field of the history of education attempted to fill this lacuna. Brother (hereafter Br) Ronald Fogarty in his survey of Catholic Education in Australia, from 1806-1950, wrote separate chapters on girls’ schools and their curriculum, but attempted very little analysis of the contribution of female religious teachers.<sup>24</sup> Sabine Willis, the editor of an early feminist history, *Women: Faith and Fetes; Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia*, hoped to stimulate others to research the often unrecognized and unacknowledged contributions

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<sup>18</sup> Margaret Ann Franklin, (ed.) *The Force of the Feminine: women, men and the Church*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Stephanie Burley, ‘Entrenched or Emancipated? Responses to Catholic Girls’ Secondary Schooling, South Australia 1880-1930’, *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, no. 26, 1998, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> Sophie McGrath, ‘A Neglected Richness: significant strands in the Catholic tradition of the education of girls’, *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 68, no.2, 1991, p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Burley, ‘Entrenched or Emancipated?’ gives an excellent survey of these, as well as identifying much research that remains to be done.

<sup>22</sup> See Stephanie Burley, ‘An Overview of the Historiography of Women Religious in Australia’, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 26, 2005, pp. 43-60 for an excellent survey of these histories.

<sup>23</sup> M.R. MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope: institutes of women religious in Australia*, Crossing Press for Australian Catholic University National Research Centre for the Study of Women’s History, Theology and Spirituality, Sydney, 2002, p. 355.

<sup>24</sup> Ronald Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia, 1806-1950*, MUP, Melbourne, 1959.

made by women in churches of all denominations.<sup>25</sup> In her account of women's education in NSW, Nolene Kyle included an inadequately researched chapter on Catholic girls' secondary schooling.<sup>26</sup>

South Australian, Stephanie Burley, is one historian who is seriously working to redress the omission of female religious from educational or women's histories. She states that '...nuns have a history that is linked not only to the Church, but also to the larger context of women's work and culture, which has only recently begun to be assessed in terms of women's history'.<sup>27</sup> As Burley has pointed out, one of the reasons for their omission is that convent archives traditionally have been closed, particularly to outsiders.<sup>28</sup> Convent archives are becoming more accessible as congregations train their own archivists to service the needs of the professional non-religious historians now being commissioned to write school and congregational histories, as well as an increasing number of family historians with connections to religious congregations.

This surge of historical research into the contribution of female religious was initiated by members of religious orders themselves taking on the task of writing their histories. O'Farrell has given a critical overview of this phenomenon, labelling it 'the policies of insider trading'.<sup>29</sup> The congregational histories written by Rosa MacGinley, Sophie McGrath, and Margaret Walsh are leading examples of these 'insider' histories.<sup>30</sup> An indispensable reference in the field of the history of religious orders of women in

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<sup>25</sup> Sabine Willis (ed.) *Women, Faith and Fetes: essays in the history of women and the Church*, Dove communications in association with the Australian Council of Churches (NSW), Commission on the Status of Women, Melbourne, 1977. Burley has commented that this book 'attempted to provide a much-needed start to the task of discovering, not only the history of women and the Church in Australia, but also the influence of the Church and its teaching on women in Australian society'; Stephanie Burley, 'The Silent Sisterhood(s): Catholic nuns, their public work and influence for social change in Australia, in particular South Australia 1880-1930', in Joy Damousi and Katherine Ellinghaus (eds) *Citizenship, Women and Social Justice: international historical perspectives*, History Department of the University of Melbourne and the Australian Network for Research in Women's History, Melbourne, 1999, p. 277.

<sup>26</sup> Nolene Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny: the education of women in New South Wales*, New South Wales University Press, (hereafter UNSWP) Kensington, 1986.

<sup>27</sup> Burley, 'The Silent Sisterhood(s)', p. 275.

<sup>28</sup> Burley, 'The Silent Sisterhood(s)', p. 275.

<sup>29</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, 'The Writing of Australian Catholic History, 1980-1990', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 68, no. 2, 1991, p. 137. See also Patrick O'Farrell, 'The Writing of History', *Manna*, no. 3, 1960, pp. 49-60.

<sup>30</sup> M. R. MacGinley, *A Place of Springs: Queensland Presentation Sisters 1900-1960*, Congregation of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Brisbane, 1977; M R MacGinley, *Roads to Sion: Presentation Sisters in Australia, 1866-1980*, Congregation of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Brisbane, 1983; Sophie McGrath, *These Women?: women religious in the history of Australia – the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta 1888-1988*, UNSWP, Sydney, 1989; M. Walsh, *The Good Sams: Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1857-1969*, John Garrett Publishing, Melbourne, 2001.

Australia is MacGinley's *A Dynamic of Hope*, which places the congregations within the wider Church context and the long tradition of vowed women religious in the Church.

Of relevance to any discussion of the historiography of Catholic education is the published work of feminist historians who have made significant inroads on incorporating research on the place of women religious as a significant group in Australian history and the place religion played in the raising of self-consciousness in women. Sally Kennedy, Katherine Massam, Hilary Carey, Janet West and Anne O'Brien, are among those who have made significant contributions in this regard.<sup>31</sup>

A central paradox which needs to be addressed by writers of histories of women in education is how an education system in which women were usually educated in settings which sought to 'slot them into predetermined female roles' could, at the same time, provide a freeing experience as women were encouraged and enabled to 'free their own intellects and pursue their own paths'.<sup>32</sup> Burley asks: 'Did these schools unwittingly play a part in the initial challenge to the patriarchal structure of society, or did they reinforce the status quo?'<sup>33</sup> Fay Gale ponders how it was that sisters in a convent leading a very cloistered life 'could so prepare girls for an exacting outside world'?<sup>34</sup>

As examples of the paradox, Burley cites well-known convent educated activists, Germaine Greer, Susan Ryan, Ann Summers, noting that they 'entered the public world of work and stayed there, frequently challenging accepted notions of womanly behaviour'.<sup>35</sup> In agreement, Edmund Campion has made a somewhat sweeping claim that anyone who was educated in a Catholic school 'had a chance of seeing beyond the

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<sup>31</sup> Sally Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism: Catholic women's struggles for self-expression*, Studies in the Christian Movement, no. 9, St. Patrick's College, Sydney, 1985; Katharine Massam, *Sacred Threads: Catholic spirituality in Australia 1922-1962*, UNSWP, Sydney, 1996; Hilary Carey, *Believing in Australia: a cultural history of religions*, Allen and Unwin, 1996; Janet West, *Daughters of Freedom: A history of women in the Australian Church*, Albatross Books, Sydney, 1997; Anne O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: women and religion in Australia*, Sydney, UNSWP, 2005. See also Roger C. Thompson, 'Women and the Significance of Religion in Australian History', *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 108, April 1997, pp.118-125 and Anne O'Brien, 'Sins of Omission? Women in the history of Australian Religion and Religion in the history of Australian Women. A reply to Roger Thompson,' *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 108, April 1997, pp. 126-133

<sup>32</sup> Trimmingham Jack, 'School History', p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> Burley, 'Entrenched or Emancipated?', p. 69.

<sup>34</sup> Fay Gale, (ed.) *Making Space: women and education at St Aloysius College 1880-2000*, St Aloysius College in association with the Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2000, p. xi.

<sup>35</sup> Burley, 'Entrenched or Emancipated?', p. 90

conventions of suburban society'.<sup>36</sup> Anne McLay has noted 'the convent schools were paradoxically conservers of the status quo and seedbeds of the women's movement'.<sup>37</sup>

Trimingham Jack points out that the 'claimed outcomes [of convent education] – particularly that students were free to make their own choices – [are not] documented through any specific research'.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless she has concluded that research into the impact of convent education on Catholic women 'has the potential for liberation'.<sup>39</sup> Alison Mackinnon, in writing of Adelaide's first state secondary girl's school, the Advanced School for Girls (opened in 1879), concluded that interviewees saw their overall school experience as 'having reflected and reinforced women's separate position in society'.<sup>40</sup> This researcher was mindful of the key question Burley has asked of religious sisters: 'Were the contradictions and paradoxes within their own lives apparent to them and to their students?'.<sup>41</sup> It has been clear that Burley's question can only be answered by extensive research, including the collection of oral histories, of both religious and their former students. Memoirs and oral accounts of the older generations of Holy Cross College alumni have shown how closely linked was their home life with school and Church. The young women, who were students in the 1920s - 1940s, inhabited a world quite small in geographical area and strictly circumscribed by the expectations of their family and teachers. This thesis has explored how young Catholic women took full advantage of the opening up of their milieu post World War Two. Janet West has asserted that Catholic educators 'more than their Protestant counterparts ... adapted to changing roles for women into the workforce after 1970'.<sup>42</sup> and this thesis contains many examples of the willingness of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to adapt to and facilitate these changing roles for women.

Anna Barbaro has noted that convent high schools or select schools provided an enriched

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<sup>36</sup> Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics: the contribution of Catholics to the development of Australian society*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1987, p. 156. He added 'like Germaine Greer'.

<sup>37</sup> Anne McLay, 'Women on the Move – A Triple Spiral of Mercy. Sisters of Mercy: Ireland to Argentina 1856-1880 to South Australia 1880', Institute of Religious Studies, Religious History Conference Papers, June, 1996, Strathfield, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> Trimingham Jack, 'School History', p. 49.

<sup>39</sup> Trimingham Jack, *Growing Good Catholic Girls*, p. 116.

<sup>40</sup> Alison Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder: origins and outcomes of girl's secondary schooling in South Australia*, Queensland University Press, Brisbane, 1984, p. 175.

<sup>41</sup> Stephanie Burley, 'Paradoxes in the Lives of Religious Female Teachers, South Australia 1880-1925', History of Women Religious Conference Papers, Institute of Religious Studies, June 1994, Strathfield, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> West, *Daughters of Freedom*, p. 342.



curriculum that extended beyond basic elementary schooling.<sup>43</sup> She has pointed out that many religious sisters in Australia shared the feminist vision of counter-reformation women, promoting academic success in girl's education and 'designed their curriculum to not confine women's options to marriage'.<sup>44</sup> This did have a price though, as has been noted by Burley, in that many female students undertook a double load, 'acquiring male knowledge and skills, whilst at the same time seeking to prove to their parents and society that they could also excel in the traditional female accomplishments'.<sup>45</sup> The broadening of convent curricula had become quite apparent by the end of the nineteenth century in Australia, as the convent high schools responded to the introduction of academic subjects examined by the university.<sup>46</sup>

Lesley Johnson in *The Modern Girl: girlhood and growing up* has focused on social definitions of girlhood and growing up in the 1950s and early 1960s in Australia. This was a period in which the processes of growing up for young people, and young girls in particular, were undergoing major transformation.<sup>47</sup> Johnson's work is highly relevant to Catholic girls' schools as will be seen in the case of Holy Cross College.

### **Trends in twentieth century educational discourse**

The education of adolescents has been subject to passing trends and beliefs that have waxed and waned over the twentieth century. McGrath has noted that 'domestic work was given a prominent place in the Loreto curriculum', this being seen as a most important formative agent for happy homes and in 1909, leading feminist activist Annie Golding called for the raising of domestic studies to tertiary status.<sup>48</sup> Domestic science schools for girls were established in New South Wales but assumed an inferior status in the high school system. In Australia in the early twentieth century, Neo-Herbartian pedagogy was influential and its adherents asserted that education had a moral purpose

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<sup>43</sup> Anna Barbaro, 'Recovering the Origins of Convent Education in Australia', *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 24, 2003, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> Barbaro, 'Recovering the Origins of Convent Education', p. 55.

<sup>45</sup> Burley, 'Entrenched or Emancipated?', p. 76. Burley sees this as a fine illustration of 'double conformity', a concept developed by S. Delamont. See S. Delamont, *Knowledgeable Women: structuralism and the reproduction of elites*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1989.

<sup>46</sup> Subsequent factors influencing convent curricula were: the Bursary Endowment Act of 1912, which provided means tested bursaries for students in all schools; the 1916 Public Instruction Amendment Act, which made registration of private schools compulsory.

<sup>47</sup> Lesley Johnson, *The Modern Girl: girlhood and growing up*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, p. vi.

<sup>48</sup> McGrath, 'A Neglected Richness', pp. 202-204. Annie Golding, speaking for the Women's Progressive Association, advocated the establishment of a Chair of Domestic Science at the University of Sydney. See Annie Golding, 'The Industrial and Social Condition of Women in the Australian Commonwealth', *Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress*, St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, 1909, p. 291.

and consequently there was concern (overly so) with character building.<sup>49</sup> In *Xavier*, Denning commented on the coldness of the College environment, both temperature wise and in terms of human contact and understanding, in the name of character building.<sup>50</sup>

The major concerns of Catholic educationists in the early twentieth century can be perused in the proceedings of the three (1900, 1904 and 1909) Australasian Catholic Congresses<sup>51</sup> and the 1911 Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales.<sup>52</sup> The Catholic Education Association held an annual conference for teachers in Sydney from 1922. Some conference proceedings are available to the researcher and each year the *Catholic Press* newspaper summarised the main discussions and papers.<sup>53</sup> Such proceedings place the Catholic educationists of this period, especially the women religious, within the wider educational discourse.

In *Making Space*, Margaret O'Toole and Paul Sharkey discuss what constitutes 'vision' and noted: 'It takes a discerning eye to recognize the unfolding of a vision in daily life. Even more difficult is the task of glimpsing vision moments in the records that survive from the past.'<sup>54</sup> It is indeed a challenge to glimpse a group's vision in the everyday, often humdrum interactions and the concrete structures within which they take place. Religious school staff members traditionally were circumscribed in their freedom to make decisions about the direction of their ministry in education (although this changed after Vatican II) but it must be recognised that the religious administrators of convent schools often were reacting, in their decision-making concerning staff and curricula, to the 'reality of historical context and cultural norms'.<sup>55</sup>

## Religious education

Thomas O'Donoghue's *Upholding the Faith*, although limited to a survey over forty

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<sup>49</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.73.

<sup>50</sup> Denning, *Xavier*, p. 34. He wrote 'no boy felt the warmth of a fire in the first ten years of the school. Its coldness and bareness was etched into the memories of boys fifty years later'.

<sup>51</sup> *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney 1900, *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress*, St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, 1904; *Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress*, St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, 1909.

<sup>52</sup> Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales, 17-20 January 1911, *Statement, Resolutions and Proceedings*, William Brooks, Sydney, 1911, Mitchell Library (hereafter ML).

<sup>53</sup> Catholic Education Association, *Teachers' Conference and Report*, 1927 and 1928, ML.

<sup>54</sup> Margaret O'Toole and Paul Sharkey, 'The Spirit that Nurtures the Mercy Vision', in Gale (ed.), *Making Space*, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> O'Toole and Sharkey, 'The Spirit that Nurtures the Mercy Vision', p. 26.

years, is an excellent examination of the centrality of religion in Catholic schools.<sup>56</sup> O'Donoghue, to his credit, explores to some extent the vexed question of what precisely constitutes a Catholic ethos. John Luttrell acknowledges that there is a challenge for Catholic schools to maintain an ethos or spirit which makes them Catholic and agrees with Charles Burford who has said of Catholic schools: 'unless Christ lives in our curriculum there is no justification for our existence'.<sup>57</sup>

Central to the maintenance of a Catholic identity in Catholic schools has been the training of Catholic school teachers, yet little has been written on the development of Catholic teacher training in NSW. Luttrell in *Worth the Struggle* has outlined the slow development of a centralised system which evolved from the teacher training colleges operated by religious orders.<sup>58</sup> Congregational historians, MacGinley, McGrath and Walsh provide useful details of teaching training for female Religious. Jim D'Orsa has written an excellent account of the establishment of the Catholic Teachers College, North Sydney.<sup>59</sup>

### **Educating the middle class**

Connell has asserted that 'questions of educational purpose, organisation, and curriculum are intimately connected to the school's social setting'.<sup>60</sup> While Burley has acknowledged the importance of attitudes within the family as crucial to a child's development, she maintains that the institution of the school has had a particular role in the formation of the middle class, writing that 'the school often epitomized or legitimized values'.<sup>61</sup> Janet McCalman in her incomparable study, *Journeyings*, has detailed the experience of growing up middle class in Melbourne (specifically in Kew, a suburb with many similarities to Woollahra) in the period 1920 – 1990.<sup>62</sup> In following a generation through those years, she started with the school experience as a formative ground for what

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas A. O' Donoghue, *Upholding the Faith: the process of education in Catholic schools in Australia, 1922-1965*, Peter Lang, New York, 2001.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Burford, address to the South Australian Catholic Secondary Schools Conference, Adelaide, 25 July, 1994, cited in John Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle: Sydney Catholic schools 1820-1995*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 1996, p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, pp. 35-38.

<sup>59</sup> Jim D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey: servant of education, facilitator of change*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 1999, pp. 41-46. See also Brian Croke, *Archbishop James Carroll and Australian Education*, The 1997 Victor J. Couch Lecture, Australian Catholic University, North Sydney, 1997, for a history of the establishment of the Australian Catholic University.

<sup>60</sup> William F. Connell, 'Research and Writing in the History of Education', p. 36.

<sup>61</sup> Burley, 'Entrenched or Emancipated?', p. 70.

<sup>62</sup> Janet McCalman, *Journeyings: the biography of a middle-class generation 1920-1990*, MUP, Melbourne, 1995.

is to come. Her evocative portrait of a whole generation that attended one of the many independent and single-sex schools in Kew, has given us the best insight, so far, into the role of family, schooling, Church and societal, economic and political changes in a middle class locality, similar to that in which Holy Cross was located.<sup>63</sup> No comparable study has been done on a middle class suburban area of Sydney with a similar concentration of private schools as in Kew, Melbourne.

### **The Wyndham Scheme and state aid**

This study has shown that the implementation of the Wyndham Scheme in 1962 was the catalyst for a process of rationalisation of resources in the Catholic education system of the Sydney archdiocese and the laicisation of Catholic schools. Its key reforms, first discussed in the 1940s, still shape secondary education today, yet little has been written by historians of education on the effects of the Wyndham Scheme on Catholic schools in NSW. D’Orsa gives a very useful Catholic perspective on the Wyndham committee and the subsequent changes in the Catholic education system in Sydney following the implementation of the committee’s recommendations.<sup>64</sup> Jill Duffield has written an excellent account of the background to the appointment of the Wyndham committee and the immediate reactions to its findings.<sup>65</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s the very public issue of state aid was examined by historians of Catholic education. The most detailed sources are Michael Hogan’s *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*, which focuses on the background of the so-called Goulburn Strike and its outcomes,<sup>66</sup> and Don Smart’s *Federal Aid to Australian Schools*, which gives a non-partisan, broad account.<sup>67</sup> Joshua Puls gives a good account of the crucial role of the Goulburn parents in the pivotal events there in July 1962.<sup>68</sup> A parent’s

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<sup>63</sup> Both Spearritt and Roe have used census results to prove that, in the Eastern Suburbs, family income and housing standards were well above average for three quarters of the twentieth century. See Peter Spearritt, *Sydney’s Century: a history*, UNSWP, Sydney, 2000 and Jill Roe (ed.) *Twentieth Century Sydney: studies in urban and social history*, Hale and Iremonger in association with the Sydney History Group, 1980.

<sup>64</sup> D’Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, pp. 47-54. Monsignor Slowey was the sole representative of the Catholic Church on the committee.

<sup>65</sup> Jill Duffield, ‘The making of the Wyndham Scheme in New South Wales’, *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1990, pp. 29-42. See also Craig Campbell and Geoffrey Sherington, *The Comprehensive Public High School: historical perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2006, pp. 48-61.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid: A study of a pressure group campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory 1950-1972*, Catholic Theological Faculty, Sydney, 1978.

<sup>67</sup> Don Smart, *Federal Aid to Australian Schools*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1978.

<sup>68</sup> Joshua Puls, ‘The Goulburn Lockout’, *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 81, no. 2, April 2004, pp. 169-183.

perspective is given by Kathleen Woolfe.<sup>69</sup> Luttrell's interviews of leading participants (on all sides) in the fight for state aid are most enlightening.<sup>70</sup> For an impartial account of the opposition parties (the Australian Labor Party and the Democratic Labor Party) and the state aid question see the recent book by University of Sydney historians of education, Campbell and Sherington.<sup>71</sup>

### **Primary sources**

This thesis attempts to incorporate private memory and public memory, despite the fact that the access to, and interpretation of both of these, by their very nature, are highly selective. It is comparatively easy for the historian to focus on the known and measurable achievements of the school, those which are collectively termed public memory, because these have been recorded, paraded and eulogised and sometimes have been archived for future reference. At Holy Cross College, public occasions and publications were used to achieve four significant outcomes: to praise the overtly successful and acknowledge individual effort; to inform parents; to gain favourable publicity to attract pupils; and to cultivate a school culture. The Holy Cross Convent Chronicles, Catholic newspapers and the College's school magazines, first published in the 1940s, were all useful to this researcher in developing a detailed picture of momentous issues and events which impacted on the College community at various levels: local, national and international.

Private memory in written form was more abundant than expected since, on receiving news about the closure of Holy Cross College, the College archivist extended to ex-students an invitation to submit their memories and/or memories of their mother's time at the school. These were published by the College in a 175 page collection, entitled *Holy Cross College, Woollahra, 1908-2001: Celebration of Our Education*. These written memories and photographs have been of immeasurable value to this researcher. Also of value have been a number of collections of verbal and photographic memories which have been produced by an individual cohort, such as the 1967 HSC class which included

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<sup>69</sup> Kathleen A. Woolfe, *Freedom of Choice in Education*, The Australian Catholic Truth Society Record, no. 1389, 10 August 1962.

<sup>70</sup> John Luttrell, 'Regaining State Aid: Interviews relating to the campaign for State Aid for non-government schools, 1960-80', Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2001-2003, unpublished, Catholic Education Office Sydney Archives (hereafter CEOSA). See also John Luttrell, 'The State Aid Revolution', interviews with Kim E. Beazley, 1917-2007 and Malcolm Fraser, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 23, 2002, pp. 23-43.

<sup>71</sup> Campbell and Sherington, *The Comprehensive Public High School*, pp. 61-66.

in their thirtieth anniversary celebrations the production of such a collection. Oral history has also contributed to the private memory research pool as is explained later.

At the school level, all accessible records, apart from statutory regulated enrolment and examination results, are highly selective in their scope. Research for this thesis has been curtailed by the randomness with which possible sources have been archived. Such archiving depended on the historical sense of those in leadership positions in the school and in the congregation. The closure of the school has also posed a problem, as the remaining material warranting archiving was distributed among the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta Congregational Archives, the Catholic Education Office of Sydney Archives and the local history collection at Waverley Municipal Library, the latter being subsequently moved to Woollahra Municipal Library.

Utilisation by this researcher of archived documents has been perforce selective, availability being constrained by the perceived need by the archivists for sensitivity, corporate privacy and even the foresight of someone prepared to set aside and conserve documentation, knowing that it could be of value to a historian in the future. The personal papers of Archbishop James Carroll, a key player in the history of Holy Cross College, will be quarantined until 2045. This is very regrettable since he was highly significant at both the local parish level and in his official capacity on various education committees at the diocesan and the national levels, as well as his unofficial 'behind the scenes' sphere of influence within church and political circles.

Copyright and privacy legislation means any research on the decision-making processes of the Sydney Catholic Education Office cannot adequately cover the last thirty years. Information available to the researcher in this area was confined to public announcements. Fortunately the archived minutes of the Catholic Education Board and the Catholic Finance and Building Commission are available and have been most informative, as have been the letters of Cardinal Moran, Archbishop Kelly and Cardinal Gilroy. The Education files at the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives have yielded fascinating insights into the thoughts of individuals, such as the early diocesan inspectors, who contributed to the formation of a Catholic education system in New South Wales. It is frustrating to the diligent researcher that privacy considerations restrict access to congregational, clerical, even parish files held in diocesan archives.

### **Oral history – Strengths and weaknesses**

Oral history was used initially by historians to record the memoirs of notables, given in an interview situation. Only later in the 1970s did historians using this technique begin to realise its potential to record the impressions of ordinary people, whose experiences of the past had been deemed to be irrelevant and had gone unrecorded. Oral history is always a personal account, an eyewitness to events of the past and the quality of that account depends on a number of variables, including the interviewee's capacity to remember, their observational skills, their closeness to an event and their linguistic skills. Paula Hamilton has stated: 'Good oral history depends on the subject's ability to tell a story and the interviewer's ability in shaping it'.<sup>72</sup>

Former members of the school community have private memories of themselves and others, who had shared experiences with them. The historian's skills can help people re-discover these private memories. For this researcher, oral history was at times the only method of understanding the actual reality, the 'lived experience' of the education that was going on in the school. The unreliability of oral testimony is acknowledged. John Murphy has stated that oral testimony is 'an act of persuasion, narrative, interpretation and, above all, memory. This means recognising that memory is a cultural and historical artefact.'<sup>73</sup>

Interviewees, in being asked to recall their experiences will have their memories formed by the interviewee's own position, whether as an active participant, as an 'insider' member of a group or, excluded 'on the outer' and therefore an observer. This then means oral and written memories of students and staff in this thesis have been skewed towards the favourable, the positive, as those with negative memories, those 'on the outer' are not so forthcoming. That is particularly so with regard to the collected memories published as *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1908-2001: celebration of our education* (hereafter *Celebration*).<sup>74</sup>

Pamphilon in her in-depth study of how women, who were growing up in the 1930s and

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<sup>72</sup> Paula Hamilton, 'Oral History' in G. Davison, J. Hirst and S. Macintyre, (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 482.

<sup>73</sup> John Murphy, 'The Voice of Memory: History, autobiography and oral memory', *Historical Studies*, vol.22, no.87, 1986, p.173.

<sup>74</sup> Holy Cross College Woollahra, *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1908-2001: celebration of our education*, 2001

1940s, wove the story of their childhood schooling into their own life-stories has concluded that:

The women's personal narratives of childhood challenged the simple division of schools as sites of production, families as reproduction. The women often explained family and school in infraction and in doing so revealed family, school and community as a complex relationship. They spoke of themselves as active mediators between home and school [...] the life-stories revealed that the school/nexus was a crucial site for the learning of a gendered world.<sup>75</sup>

This is a field of research where much more work needs to be done and one where Pamphilon has shown narratives to be an effective method. Narratives (the oral histories of individuals) are a form of qualitative research methodology,<sup>76</sup> which facilitates the call by feminist historians to give all the voices in a shared experience a chance to be heard, in this case, the various voices which shared in the experience of Holy Cross College, Woollahra. There has been much discussion about the positive and negative aspects of narratives. It is recognised that narratives are just one source of information and problems with their use arises if oral accounts are the only source used. Personal accounts need to be grounded; they need to be contextualized. In this thesis the shared experience which centred on the school, has been contextualised through written sources found in journals, letters, chronicles, school annuals, school reports, staff and parent newsletters and newspapers. Photographs are also a useful supplement, particularly if they can be interpreted by those who were the subject of the photograph.

The writer of this thesis agrees with Barbara Finkelstein's observation that 'the integration of learners and learning into education history is no easy task. Children themselves leave few written records for us to study.'<sup>77</sup> But it is true, as Paul Thompson has written, that oral history 'can break down barriers between teachers and students, between generations, between educational institutions and the world outside'.<sup>78</sup> Also,

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<sup>75</sup> Barbara Pamphilon, 'Telling Tales out of School: the weaving of school stories into life stories', *History of Education Review*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2003, p. 47.

<sup>76</sup> Norman Denzin describes a narrative as a story of a sequence of events that has significance for the narrator and her audience. See Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson, *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: complementary research strategies*, Sage, London, 1996, p. 54.

<sup>77</sup> Barbara Finkelstein, 'Education Historians as Mythmakers', *Review of Research in Education*, vol. 18, 1992, p. 287.

<sup>78</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: oral history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, p. 2.



McCalman has rightly argued that oral history has ‘humanised history and brought it to wider audiences’.<sup>79</sup> This researcher saw herself as a mediator of different conversations between different sections of the school community while, at the same time, giving attention to relevant documents.

Marwick’s assertion that ‘as memory is to the individual, so history is to the community or society’, has relevance to this thesis, as the community of Holy Cross ex-students have amply demonstrated their conviction that their history be recorded. Oral history gives an opportunity to those who were not in control, who were the takers not the makers of instructions, to present their perspective. Trimingham Jack warns that ‘by maintaining a focus on the public face of the school, school histories tend to remain histories which reflect the aspirations of schools rather than the diverse experience of individuals, experiences which may challenge the conclusions such histories draw’ and this researcher sought to avoid this.<sup>80</sup> Lather’s poststructuralist view of research as ‘an enactment of power relations [where] the focus is on the development of a mutual, dialogic production of a multi-voice, multi-centred discourse’ gives the collector of oral accounts a platform of legitimacy.<sup>81</sup> In the context of this thesis, the researcher was mindful of the value of the contribution of the many voices.

Oral history also can allow the historian to identify myths in relation to the school. Focus group discussions can be particularly effective in this regard. Myths once uncovered can then be challenged by primary and secondary sources. Marwick contends that ‘myths believed by one generation and passed on to the next also become part [...] of the past’.<sup>82</sup> At the same time myths are a significant contributor to a school’s culture.

The interview provides for the narrator the opportunity to tell her story on her own terms, but the degree of control the narrator has is lost once the interview session is finished and control passes to the interviewer. The taped narration must be processed, by transcription or logging, and quite possibly edited. Ownership becomes clouded and it is typical for the speaker to be consulted (if this happens at all) only once the editing process is

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<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Hamilton, ‘Oral History’, p. 482.

<sup>80</sup> Trimingham Jack, ‘School History’, p. 42.

<sup>81</sup> Patti Lather, *Getting Smart: feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*, Routledge, New York, 1991, p. 105.

<sup>82</sup> Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, p. 24.

completed.<sup>83</sup> This intervention is unavoidable if the taped interview is to be useful for future research.<sup>84</sup> Trimingham Jack maintains the main challenge is to preserve the integrity of the experience for the individual while at the same time deconstructing the experience.<sup>85</sup> According to Robertson, the creation of a written version of an oral history is essential to enable one to keep track of what was said and to make the interview accessible to other researchers.<sup>86</sup> While it is acknowledged that a full transcript is the most subjective treatment of an oral account, the time consuming nature of the full transcript was a major constraint for the writer of this thesis. Detailed summaries or timed interview logs, the alternatives to a full transcript of an interview, were used.

Another obvious weakness of oral history comes from the subjectivity of the method, the problem of selective memory and later overlays to events in the past. The interviewer can choose whom to interview and what questions are to be asked. The interviewee chooses what to divulge and what to conceal. Oral history 'inevitably suffers from the narrowness of personal meaning'.<sup>87</sup> Previously this researcher has acknowledged that those who are willing participants in oral history recording are most probably those who are likely to support rather than contradict the established view of an event, a person, an institution. The interviewer's subjectivity must also be recognised and this researcher agrees with labour historian John Shields that 'what is required of the oral historian at both the interview stage and in subsequent analysis of oral evidence is critical empathy with the interviewee and his/her life experience'.<sup>88</sup>

An attempt was made to interview students and staff across generations, the oldest interviewee being a centenarian. Two focus groups were interviewed, with the number in the group limited to five or six. These proved to be quite successful in triggering memories and were enjoyed greatly by the participants who had a pre-existing bond of friendship and mutual respect among them.

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<sup>83</sup> Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds), *Women's Words: the feminist practice of oral history*, Routledge, New York, 1991, p. 2 and p.5.

<sup>84</sup> Beth Robertson, *Oral History Handbook*, Oral History Association of Australia (South Australian Branch) Adelaide, 1996, p. 48.

<sup>85</sup> Trimingham Jack, 'School History', p.48.

<sup>86</sup> Robertson, *Oral History Handbook*, p. 48.

<sup>87</sup> Hamilton, 'Oral History', p.482.

<sup>88</sup> John Shields (ed), *All Our Labours: Oral histories of working life in twentieth century Sydney*, NSWUP, Sydney, 1992, p.8.

Recording the ‘lived experience’ of the school community for this history was constrained by time, and accessibility was made more difficult, for instance, by ex-students of older generations casting off their maiden family name, apart from having moved interstate or overseas. But it is generally acknowledged that women are good networkers and, in spite of the school being closed in 2001, class groups have continued to meet regularly, major anniversaries have been celebrated and class reunion books of memories have been produced.

### **The importance of space**

This researcher was mindful that the College was itself a complex ‘mini’ world made up of many different spaces: the classrooms, the school precinct, the convent, the playground, the parish church, the parish hall. These are the areas in which everyday dramas were played out, and as such, these spaces are triggers for memories of sights, sounds, smells, conversations, of moments of exclusion and inclusion, of elation and of disappointment, of joy and of sadness. As Dening noted so succinctly: ‘A school is its sights and sounds and smells, its regularities and its rituals.’<sup>89</sup> The fact that the College precinct is no longer accessible to ex-students and others who belonged to the school community, places more importance on the contribution of tangible memories such as photographs and narratives which can act as triggers of memory.

### **Challenges to the contemporary historian**

As is well known, the field of history has faced many challenges from postmodernism since the 1970s. It is recognised that postmodernism has stimulated historians to a greater awareness of the nature and importance of their discipline. Many individual historians are more aware of the scientific, literary, art, and craft dimensions of their work and this researcher acknowledges the need to adhere to the best in traditional historical methodology which aims to respect the integrity of sources.

Pomophobia (the fear of postmodernism) is now in evidence world-wide. The language used by its opponents is negative and fearful and the profession of history has been seen to be in crisis. In the words of Keith Windschuttle ‘if historians allow themselves to be prodded all the way to this theoretical abyss, they will be rendering themselves and their

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<sup>89</sup> Dening, *Xavier*, p. 15.

disciples extinct'.<sup>90</sup> Postmodernism is a divisive issue. Southgate explains that the division within the discipline of history was and is part of a far wider intellectual upheaval evident in the closing decades of the twentieth century. This centred on the nature of truth itself, which is not new since this debate has been ongoing since ancient times. This debate is essentially about whether truth is an absolute, 'fixed once and for all and independent of any observer' or is relative, 'with its meaning, like that of everything else, dependent upon perceptions of individuals at different times and places'.<sup>91</sup>

The ensuing debates have centred on such crucial matters as the interpretation of documentary evidence and can historians tell it simply 'how it is'? To the pure postmodernist, absolute knowledge (truth) does not exist. Keith Jenkins has argued that all history is fiction: there are no facts, only interpretations arising from a particular discourse (position).<sup>92</sup> Richard Evans has stated emphatically that 'there is a very real difference between what somebody writes and the account someone else gives it'.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless postmodernists want to argue that all texts are essentially the same and there are no real differences between primary and secondary sources.

Stuart Macintyre, a respected Australian historian, has noted: 'It is the historian who enjoys the advantage of hindsight to select particular events and arrange them into a coherent pattern. The facts do not exist prior to the interpretation that establishes their significance' adding that 'historical research involves a continuous dialogue between the two'.<sup>94</sup> Both Windschuttle and Marwick are of the firm opinion that history is an autonomous discipline with its own specialised methodology, and should resist the use of the approaches favoured by the social sciences. For Marwick the very strength of history lies in its intensive specialisation.<sup>95</sup> When Australian historian Patrick O'Farrell wrote scathingly of the 'virtuous notion that everything and everybody is of historical interest has an ideological base in the cult of the common man of the ordinary person, the

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<sup>90</sup> Windschuttle has claimed that postmodernism constitutes a 'lethal process [that is] well underway'; quoted in Beverley Southgate, *History, What and Why?: ancient, modern and postmodern perspectives*, Routledge, London, 2001, p. 149.

<sup>91</sup> Southgate, *History, What and Why?*, p. xii.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in Trimmingham Jack, 'School History', p. 42.

<sup>93</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History*, Granta Books, London, 1997, p. 114.

<sup>94</sup> Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars*, MUP, Melbourne, 2004, p. 29.

<sup>95</sup> Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, p. 6.

worker’,<sup>96</sup> he was making a legitimate plea to safeguard the rigor of document- based history.

Feminist history has a political edge to it, seeking to improve the situation of women and hence society as distinct from women’s history which seeks to add women into traditional investigation, to make them visible. Feminist historians acknowledge that women are frequently absent from the historical documents traditionally used by historians and welcome oral history as a major means by which the voices of women can be heard. Windschuttle is critical of this but his limitation of evidence to written documents, the public records which present the public face of an institution, does not allow for the discovery of the ‘lived experience’ which is facilitated by oral history.<sup>97</sup>

Keith Jenkins, with a post-structuralist perspective, has argued that ‘history is a “shifting discourse” in which there are no facts, only interpretations which are epistemologically, methodologically, ideologically and practically positioned’.<sup>98</sup> Richard Evans argues that just because we can’t always get at the truth that does not mean that the truth doesn’t exist apart from the ideology of the individual. Southgate, in common with all postmodernists, asserts that it is impossible to write any history without taking a standpoint, and this is legitimate as long as ‘we remain aware of, and openly acknowledge, the basis upon which we are constructing [our own histories]’.<sup>99</sup> According to Southgate, feminists, in insisting on the relevance of women’s roles in past societies, have shown that ‘historians fail to see what does not suit them and conversely find what they are looking for’. Furthermore he claims that feminists have had their most profound impact on historiography by ‘their insistence on the impossibility of *any* value-free account of history’.<sup>100</sup>

There is credibility in journalist Catherine Keenan’s observation that ‘while the postmodern argument is generally thought to be on the wane, it has already substantially altered the way we do history’.<sup>101</sup> Richard Evans similarly comments concerning post-

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<sup>96</sup> Patrick O’Farrell, ‘Oral History: Facts and Fiction’, *Quadrant*, November 1979, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> Finkelstein, ‘Education Historians as Mythmakers’. This writer pleads for historians to ‘analyse education as something experienced as well as planned – as reflections of interactions between teachers and learners in all kinds of settings’, p. 288.

<sup>98</sup> Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, Routledge, London, 1991, p. 26.

<sup>99</sup> Southgate, *History, What And Why?*, p. 10. This has particular relevance to institutional history where the insider’s position needs to be admitted.

<sup>100</sup> Southgate, *History, What And Why?*, pp.102-103, original emphasis.

<sup>101</sup> Catherine Keenan, ‘In the Right Corner’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Aug. 17-18, 2002, pp. 4-5.

modernism that its emergence ‘has forced historians to interrogate their own methods and procedures as never before’, and to question their own integrity.<sup>102</sup>

More recently, Rob Foot has alluded to the battle zone that professional history now is, asserting postmodernism ‘threw down the gauntlet ... to established ways of seeing’, of assuming the integrity of the historian.<sup>103</sup> It is a paradox of the postmodern position that the denial of objective truth is part of a search for better, more accurate ways of representing the past. It is now generally recognised by historians that they take their own ideological and cultural positions to the writing of history. Historians cannot claim to be detached. The post-structuralist view that there is a multiplicity of histories (interpretations of the past), just as there is a multiplicity of discourses, has gained acceptance among a broad cross-section of the profession. This thesis is a history of Holy Cross College, not the history.

Barcan refers to postmodernism as the umbrella term for a multiplicity of critical theories, as well as concepts such as structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, semiotics and numerous others. He adds: ‘Contextualism and interpretation are other ideological blossoms.’<sup>104</sup> Now the suffix ‘ism’ denotes action or practice, principles, doctrine, etc. which need not necessarily be derogatory, but Barcan dismisses ‘contextualism’ as an ‘ideological blossom’. This researcher sees it as essential to scholarly history and the best historians have always been conscious of the necessity of contextualising their work. Inga Clendinnen explains: ‘It is true that historians are cruelly limited. We can’t do conversations; we can’t usually do monologues. But what we can do is become increasingly knowledgeable about the contexts in which particular actions took place.’<sup>105</sup> This perception has informed this history of Holy Cross College, Woollahra.

Few would argue with Foot’s assertion that ‘whether we like it or not, history – the derivation of meaning and significance from the past’s bare chronological record – has

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<sup>102</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, p. 114.

<sup>103</sup> Rob Foot, ‘Perils of the Postmodern Pathway’, *Quadrant*, September, 2004, p. 28. He goes on to assert that historians in particular never really picked up this gauntlet thrown down by Foucault, Baudrillard, Barthes and Eco, p. 30.

<sup>104</sup> Alan Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality: education and society in Australia since 1949*, UNSWP, Sydney, 1993, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>105</sup> Inga Clendinnen, ‘The History Question: who owns the past?’, *Quarterly Essay*, issue 23, 2006, p. 27.

the present as its starting point'.<sup>106</sup> Southgate's final question is: What is the point of history? He asserts that it is empowerment; ability to both affect and effect the future. He states emphatically that 'to be of any benefit, historical study must result in some effect upon the future; it must facilitate, enable, and direct the course of future change.'<sup>107</sup> This conflicts with Marwick's view that the job of historians is to understand the past (or parts of it), not change the future.<sup>108</sup> History, with the advantage of hindsight, can make unique observations and thus help inform predictions. Southgate's assertion that 'to be of any benefit, historical study must result in some effect on the future; it must facilitate, enable, and direct the course of future change',<sup>109</sup> has been inspirational to this researcher, who hopes that her work will make some contribution to the present educational discourse in general, and Catholic educational discourse in particular.

### **Status of the researcher in relation to the research subject**

It is recognised that the researcher, who belongs to the group being researched, has the advantage of a lived experience of their culture as background to interpreting primary resource material, conducting oral history interviews, and so on. On the other hand, it can mean that the researcher, identifying with the group as an insider, may repress unflattering information in order to present the group in the best light, may be afraid of the group's reaction to the recording of unpalatable truths (it could affect her ongoing life with the group), and, as an insider, she may take for granted things which an outsider would see with fresh eyes and help uncover helpful knowledge and insights. Judith Allen has commented 'if presentism can be a danger in any history writing, its risk is heightened when the topic is currently and openly part of the historian's life ... when it is not a topic remote and esoteric'.<sup>110</sup>

The researcher and writer of this thesis has an insider relationship with the group being researched. Her insider's position has been both an asset and a liability in the writing of an authentic history of this school. As an insider, educated by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy and a staff member of both the senior and the middle schools of Holy Cross

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<sup>106</sup> Foot, 'Perils of the Postmodern Pathway', p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Southgate, *History, What And Why?*, p. 141.

<sup>108</sup> Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> Southgate, *History, What And Why?*, p. 141.

<sup>110</sup> Judith A. Allen, *Rose Scott: vision and revision in feminism*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 13.

College in the 1970s, she had empathy with interviewees and a lived knowledge of the school's culture. She could speak the language of the group. As an insider, this allowed her to formulate questions and interpret answers and hopefully put participants at ease. As McGrath has noted, the major disadvantage of the insider's perspective is the temptation to suppress that which is unsavoury and uncomfortable.<sup>111</sup> As has been mentioned previously, the intention of those commissioning the history is crucial to the ultimate tone of the work. In this case the commission requested was for a truly scholarly piece of work.

As a teacher, the researcher could understand the challenges and stresses of that profession. As one educated wholly within the Catholic school system she could relate to the voices of the former students. As one who was taught by and later worked alongside Sisters of Mercy, some of them her former teachers, she could readily understand the religious culture of the school. At the same time it is now 30 years since she was associated with Holy Cross College, Woollahra. Significantly, she had not been associated with the re-union of the two secondary campuses, nor with the forced closure of the school in 2001. In addition, her experience in State and private denominational schools has given her a wide perspective in relation to both independent and systemic Catholic schools.

### **Methodology**

Given the broad scope of this research, a chronological structure has been adopted since it facilitated a narrative treatment of the material which promoted clarity. There was one exception, the inclusion of a thematic chapter to recount the history of music at Holy Cross College over the near century. This was necessary since music played an exceptionally important part in the history of the College until the 1970s. In most chapters, a focus year was chosen to provide a more intimate picture of the life of the College community, highlighting a variety of events and was chosen on the basis of the availability of material bearing on events of special significance. This technique accentuated the microcosm of the school, its operations at the 'coal-face' level, where the dictates of higher authorities were implemented. As the research proceeded, it was found that, given the hierarchical nature of the administration of Catholic education in New South Wales, the immediate overriding context of the history of Holy Cross College was

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<sup>111</sup> McGrath, *These Women?* p. xii.



the archdiocese of Sydney. At the same time, in the thesis, the College is placed firmly within its own geographical sphere of influence, the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, an area with a strongly developed sense of identity.

### **Contribution of this thesis**

As a strongly contextualised history, this thesis aims principally to make a contribution to the history of Catholic education in particular and Australian education in general, while highlighting the education of Catholic girls in particular and women in general.

Contemporary research in the field of Catholic education tends to focus on classroom dynamics, innovative leadership and pedagogy and is quantitative in nature. Little has been written from the perspective of the history of Catholic secondary education. It is hoped that the strong contextual narrative methodology of this thesis will inspire further research into the broader picture of Catholic education in Australia, to find in the past the 'lived experience' of Catholic students, parents, teachers, that takes us far beyond the official, clerical public face of the Church and has the possibility of informing future policies and practices. It is also hoped that this thesis will make a contribution to the history of the education of women in Australia.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PREHISTORY OF HOLY CROSS COLLEGE WOOLLAHRA

**‘... a helping hand to the little children of St Patrick’s at the Antipodes’.** (Archbishop Moran’s letter to Reverend Mother at Callan, March, 1884.)

The *Freeman’s Journal* on 24 March 1877 reported on the funeral procession of Archbishop John Bede Polding OSB, leader of the Archdiocese of Sydney since 1842. Following a five mile route through Sydney the procession exhibited a display of Catholic pride unique at this time. Some 15,000 walkers and 276 carriages participated, indicating that the Catholic Church was a ‘church on the march’.<sup>1</sup> Within a few years it would develop into an aggressively and fiercely determined institution, as its right to educate its young members came under threat, and the army of true believers would be asked to donate generously from their often meagre resources to build and maintain Catholic schools staffed by a tide of mainly Irish nuns.

Archbishop Roger Vaughan OSB, the successor to Polding, along with the other Australian bishops, was hostile to the New South Wales (NSW) government’s planned secularisation of education. In their 1879 Joint Pastoral Letter, the Archbishop and Bishops of NSW objected in the strongest possible terms to the use of Catholic funds – of taxes paid out of Catholic pockets – for ‘establishing a system of education , which [Catholics] firmly believe is calculated to sap the foundations of Christianity’. The Joint Pastoral declared that education without Christianity may be called instruction, but could not be dignified with the name ‘education’ and schools based on secularist education are ‘seed plots of future immorality, infidelity, and lawlessness.’<sup>2</sup>

Sir Henry Parkes’ NSW Public Instruction Act repealed the NSW 1866 Public Schools Act and the Public Instruction Act came into operation on 1 May 1880. As a result, all government stipends paid to teachers in denominational schools in NSW would cease on 31

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<sup>1</sup> Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia: a social history*, vol.1, Collins Dove, Melbourne, 1992, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Catholic Education: [Joint] Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop and Bishops exercising Jurisdiction in New South Wales, (Joint Pastoral)*, Edward F. Flanagan, Sydney, 1879, p. 4 and pp. 6-9. This was the beginning of a 100 year campaign for justice for Catholic taxpayers which is ongoing.

December 1882. Employment of teachers in church-run schools would henceforth be the responsibility of the churches themselves.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the financial burden thus imposed, Vaughan was intent on establishing a completely independent Catholic education system.

The concern with building Catholic schools, which necessitated continuous money raising, had a most beneficial side effect, as parishioners gathered together for social activities such as bazaars, soirees, concerts, picnics, euchre evenings, dances and balls. It helped foster a strong sense of a shared Catholic culture. Archbishop Vaughan's speech to the people of Balmain on 9 November 1879 is a good example of the expectation of and encouragement by the clergy for continued financial support for the Church by generous Catholics:

[You] have given me the consciousness that the very poorest of our people possess that true Catholic spirit which shows itself in great and noble works. You [...] descended from a race that has ever loved faith better than life, and which possesses an innate generosity which is [...] especial to the Irish character.<sup>4</sup>

On 19 April, 1883, Archbishop Vaughan sailed for the United States. After travelling across the North American continent he arrived in England where he died in his sleep at the age of forty-nine years. The way was now open to the appointment of an Irish archbishop to Sydney. An end to the (English) Benedictine hold on the Sydney Archdiocese had been desired by the Irish bishops since 1851, a desire expressed clearly when Archdeacon McEncroe petitioned the Pope to provide Irish priests to Australia, 'as 95 out of every 100 Catholics in all these colonies are Irish or of Irish descent'.<sup>5</sup>

The new prelate of Sydney, Patrick Francis Moran, had been an interested observer of Australasian events since the 1850s, having been the Roman advisor to Archdeacon

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<sup>3</sup> See Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran, *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia: from authentic sources*, Oceanic Publishing, Sydney, 1895, pp. 870-872, for the background and the immediate reaction of the Australian bishops to Parkes' Act.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 1, p. 167.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick O'Farrell (ed.), with the assistance of Deirdre O'Farrell, *Documents in Australian Catholic History*, vol.1: 1788-1884, Geoffrey Chapman, Melbourne, 1969, pp. 88-89.

McEncroe.<sup>6</sup> Moran arrived in Sydney on 8 September 1884 to a tumultuous welcome, with many steamers on the harbour and an estimated 100,000 lining the route to St Mary's Cathedral. His first public speech as he landed on Australian soil began with: 'Becoming today an Australian among Australians.'<sup>7</sup> A few months later, on 1 May, he was summoned to Rome and on 27 July 1885 became Australia's first cardinal.<sup>8</sup> Before he returned to Sydney, he was appointed apostolic delegate to preside over the November 1885 Plenary Council of Australasia.

### **Moran's Mercy connections**

In 1872, as the newly appointed Bishop of Ossary, Moran had called upon the Reverend Mother of the Convent of Mercy, Athy, to assist him by establishing a Mercy Convent in Callan (Kilkenny).<sup>9</sup> At Callan, where 'schism was rife', the former parish priest was suspended but, with the support of many of the parishioners, was still holding the parish church, then under interdict.<sup>10</sup> The mission of the sisters in winning back the people was highly successful and the Sisters of Mercy became firmly established in Callan.

The stage was set for a significant impetus to be given to the expansion of the Irish women as overseas missionaries with the establishment of St Brigid's Missionary School in Callan. Mother M. Michael Maher, the leader of the Callan pioneers and a relative of Moran, had had a life-long desire to work for the foreign missions.<sup>11</sup> As a result she conceived the idea of a missionary school in 1881.<sup>12</sup> With the support of Moran, this training school was

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<sup>6</sup> A. E. Cahill, 'Moran, Patrick Francis Munro, James (1830-1911)', *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 10, 1871-1939, MUP, Melbourne, 1986, p. 578 and Philip Ayres, *Prince of the Church: Patrick Francis Moran 1830-1911*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2007, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> These words were the beginning of the homily Moran gave at the official Mass of welcome at St Mary's Cathedral on the day of his arrival in Sydney. See Ayres, *Prince of the Church*, p. 128.

<sup>8</sup> Moran went to Rome expecting to be offered the See of Dublin, formerly occupied by his uncle, Cardinal Cullen.

<sup>9</sup> Moran's uncle, Cardinal Cullen, had arranged for Moran to be appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Ossary in 1871 and in August 1872 Moran automatically succeeded to the position of Bishop of Ossary.

<sup>10</sup> 'An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney', Cardinal Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 1872-1911, handwritten copies with added commentary by Mother M. Alphonsus Shelley (1911-1912), n.p., U1735, Sydney Archdiocesan Archives (hereafter SAA). This contains extracts of Moran's letters to the Callan community and accounts of Moran's activities by the Presentation Nuns, Kilkenny.

<sup>11</sup> 'An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney', U1735, SAA. Mother M. Michael Maher was the foundress and superior of Callan (Kilkenny) Convent of Mercy until 1888 and was Dr Moran's cousin.

<sup>12</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 14.

set up in 1884 in the old convent at Callan. In November 1883, Moran had suggested to Mother M. Michael that it be called St Brigid's Missionary Convent for the Australian Mission, but she resisted having it confined to Australia. Her dream since 1881 was to have the graduates of the missionary school available for all overseas missions.<sup>13</sup> The girls attending the school were to be aspirants to religious life. At the end of their studies at St Brigid's the graduates would then begin their postulanship in the country where they had agreed to serve. Despite Mother M. Michael's protests, Mother M. Berchmans Cummins, a niece of Moran, commented that 'the planting of this little missionary seed seemed to portend the fruitfulness of Dr. Moran's zeal for Catholic education throughout Australasia'.<sup>14</sup>

The first group to graduate from St Brigid's Missionary School accompanied Cardinal Moran on his return to Australia from Rome in 1885, going to the Sisters of Mercy novitiate at Singleton.<sup>15</sup> By 1912, nearly 600 recruits had been sent from St Brigid's Missionary College throughout the English-speaking world.<sup>16</sup> Certainly without such assistance Moran would not have been able to further Vaughan's programme of Catholic education for a rapidly increasing Catholic population in Australia.

The Callan sisters were keen to send a contingent from their own community to support Moran in his Australian mission. On 28 March 1884 Moran wrote to Callan:

Sydney is indeed a vast field for spiritual labour and we must pray that the workman may not spoil the work. I daresay I may have to appeal at some future time to the zeal of some of the devoted Sisters to come out and give a helping hand to the little children of St. Patrick's at the Antipodes.<sup>17</sup>

Moran selected Parramatta for the Callan foundation in Australia and revealed his enthusiasm

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<sup>13</sup> Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 27 November 1883, 'Letters of Cardinal Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan', copies of correspondence between Moran and the Callan Community, Parramatta Sisters of Mercy Archives (hereafter PA).

<sup>14</sup> 'An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney', n.p., U1735, SAA.

<sup>15</sup> MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p. 231.

<sup>16</sup> Comment made by Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly, a foundation sister of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, in 'An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney', n.p., U1735, SAA.

<sup>17</sup> Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 28 March 1884, 'An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney', n.p., U1735, SAA.

and perhaps some anxiety of the task confronting him when, from Rome, he wrote to the Callan community: ‘I would like to hear at as early a date as possible your decision regarding Sydney and the numerous battalions whom we require there.’<sup>18</sup> By July 1888, he had had his answer and wrote from the Irish College, Rome, that he was ‘much obliged to so many excellent Sisters for volunteering to come to Sydney’. In this letter to Callan, he describes Parramatta as a ‘most healthy district ... famed for its orange groves which are some of the finest in Australia’.<sup>19</sup>

### **The establishment of the Parramatta foundation**

The nine foundation sisters for Parramatta arrived at Sydney via the steamship *Cuzco* on 29 November 1888. On the journey they were accompanied by Cardinal Moran and his secretary Dr Dennis O’Haran. Mother M. Clare (Catherine) Dunphy was the mother superior and Sr M. Alphonsus (Brigid) Shelly her deputy. Apart from Mother M. Clare who was forty years old, the sisters were in their thirties or twenties, the youngest just twenty-five years.<sup>20</sup> From the shipboard journal of Sr M. Alphonsus it is clear that these pioneer women braved a challenging voyage with good humour.<sup>21</sup>

After passing through the Suez Canal, the *Cuzco* steamed into the Arabian Gulf and the diarist noted that because the heat was too great for sleep ‘the sisters were on deck at 4.30 a.m. and looking at the “false cross” until Dr. O’Haran came to point out the true Southern Cross’. He handed out to each of them crucifixes blessed by the Holy Father as a memorial of their first sighting of the Southern Cross, ‘which [Dr O’Haran said] is so significantly set over the Southern Hemisphere where all who come to do missionary work must look for the Cross and make it reign over all’.<sup>22</sup> The *Cuzco* arrived at the Sydney Harbour Heads to be

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<sup>18</sup> Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 16 June 1888, ‘An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney’, n.p., U1735, SAA.

<sup>19</sup> Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 3 July 1888, ‘An Ossary Plant and its Branches in Sydney’, n.p., U1735, SAA.

<sup>20</sup> The other seven sisters were: Sisters M. Columba Woodlock, M. Alacoque Kavangh, M. Teresa Wall, M. Agnes Kavangh, M. de Sales Shelly, M. Joseph O’Callaghan and a lay sister, Brigid Darby.

<sup>21</sup> Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly, ‘Diary of the Journey to Australia on the ‘Cuzco’ of the Pioneer Band of Parramatta Sisters of Mercy (under Mother M. Clare), 9 October – 29 November, 1888’, PA. This diary is also available as a copy made by Sr Isobel Donnelly and entitled ‘The First Six Years, 1888-1894’, unpublished manuscript, PA.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Diary of the Journey to Australia’, entry for 31 October 1888. Was this devotion to the ‘sanctifying influence’ of the (Holy) Cross which Sr M. Alphonsus Shelley writes of, the inspiration for the naming of Holy Cross Parish, Bondi, where the Parramatta Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy would be asked to establish a school in 1907?

met by a flotilla of about thirty boats. At this point the Cardinal left the ship to board a launch filled with diocesan clergy; on shore bands played and banners flew. After the *Cuzco* berthed, the Sisters of Mercy were taken ashore to the convent of the Sisters of Charity at St Vincent's, Potts Point.<sup>23</sup>

Preparations began immediately to settle the sisters in Parramatta. An inspection by Mother M. Clare Dunphy and Sr M. Columba Woodlock of their Parramatta premises revealed them to be empty of furniture except for some statues, desks and benches in the school and one iron bedstead in the convent. After a few difficult days of preparation, St Patrick's Parramatta parochial school was opened on 10 December with fifty-five children, and in the new school year, the sisters opened their select school, St Mary's High School, on 7 January 1889, with seven pupils.<sup>24</sup> The latter would eventually become known as Our Lady of Mercy College and be somewhat of an arch-rival to the later established Holy Cross College, Woollahra.

### **The Mercy vision**

Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, was born at Stormanstown House, Dublin on 29 September 1778 to a Catholic couple who lived in very comfortable circumstances. Her father James, a builder, died in 1783 and when twenty, Catherine was orphaned by the death of her mother, Elinor. Eventually she went to live with the Callaghans, devout Quakers with a distant family connection, who adopted her. Although there had been a predominant Protestant influence in Catherine's life since the death of her father, she was strongly drawn to the Catholic faith.<sup>25</sup> In 1822, at the age of forty-four years, she inherited the Callaghan fortune using it to 'make a reality of her vision of service to the poor'.<sup>26</sup> This vision had developed over many years of attending to the needs of the disadvantaged in her neighbourhood. It was a practical vision which entailed the visitation of the sick poor in their homes, the care and education of orphans, the care and education of homeless women of good repute, and the education of girls. The latter she saw as fundamental to the happiness of

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<sup>23</sup> 'Diary of the Journey to Australia', entry for 29 November 1888.

<sup>24</sup> It is recorded in the 'Diary of the Journey to Australia' that Dr O'Haran suggested, on 30 October, en route to Australia, that their convent should be called St Mary's.

<sup>25</sup> It has been noted that Catherine was conversant with a Protestant bible at a time when none of the Catholic laity and no religious congregation of women were free to read scripture in the vernacular.

Sr M. Carmel Bourke, *A Woman Sings of Mercy: Reflections on the life and spirit of Mother Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy*, E. J. Dwyer, Sydney, 1987, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 6.

the family and thus of society.<sup>27</sup> Catherine declared ‘wherever a religious woman presides, peace and good order are generally to be found’.<sup>28</sup>

The year 1829, when the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed, was pivotal for Catherine. This act enabled the renewal of Catholic life and pastoral care in Ireland which Dr Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, was to engineer specifically in Dublin.<sup>29</sup> Catherine was much involved in the realisation of this vision through the building of a House of Mercy in Baggot Street, Dublin and the gathering together there of women volunteers who shared her sense of mission. To ensure the stability of her work, Murray strongly suggested to Catherine that the group become a religious congregation, with herself as the foundress.<sup>30</sup> As a result of the Protestant influence in her life Catherine had a dislike of religious orders but, appreciating the wisdom of Murray’s suggestion, reluctantly acceded to it.<sup>31</sup>

On 8 September 1830, Catherine, Marianne Doyle and Elizabeth Harley went to the Presentation Sisters as novices to begin their training in religious life. On 12 December 1831, they took their vows and they returned that same day to the House of Mercy which Catherine had built with the Callahan fortune.<sup>32</sup> Catherine’s uncloistered ‘walking nuns’ were a response to the pressing problems of an Ireland that had been subjugated and neglected for centuries. The Irish Sisters of Charity, the other uncloistered religious order established by Mary Aikenhead in 1815, was already well known. Their centralised form of government, however, did not appeal to Catherine. She wanted her foundations to be free to respond quickly to local demands and therefore chose as a mode of government one which ‘was akin to that of the ancient monastic system of autonomous foundations’.<sup>33</sup> She believed that ‘those who were living within the local Church were the ones who could best interpret and minister

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<sup>27</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *The Rule and Constitutions of the Religious called Sisters of Mercy*, James Duffy, Dublin, 1870, in Italian and English p.5, PA. This copy is the one sent from Baggot Street to Archbishop Moran and is dated 6 July 1884.

<sup>29</sup> This rescinded the 1731 legislation which had declared Catholic schools illegal in Ireland.

<sup>30</sup> Bourke, *A Woman Sings of Mercy*, p. 19 and Sr Mary C. Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy*, Dublin, 1995, p. 260.

<sup>31</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> The House of Mercy was so named because Catherine and her helpers occupied the building which had been commissioned and paid for by Catherine on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 27 September 1827.

<sup>33</sup> Sr Marie Anselm Gaudry rsm, *Mercy from Generation to Generation*, Australian Catholic Truth Society Publications, No. 1750, Melbourne, 1981, p. 9.



to its local needs'.<sup>34</sup> This ability to adapt to local conditions because of their autonomous form of government and their uncloistered condition made the Sisters of Mercy attractive to bishops and parish clergy.<sup>35</sup>

Mother Mary Catherine McAuley was to have only ten years left to firmly establish the order of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland and in England. Before her death in 1841, she had responded positively to a request for a foundation in Newfoundland and, as request followed request for help to serve the Irish diaspora, the Sisters of Mercy became the world's largest English-speaking congregation of women religious with simple vows.<sup>36</sup> When Cardinal Moran opened the Sisters of Mercy bazaar in Parramatta on 2 November 1895, he complimented the order in his address by saying that of all the sisterhoods of Australia, he did not think there was another that had done more to build up the Christian Commonwealth than that of the Sisters of Mercy.<sup>37</sup>

### **Early branch houses in the Sydney archdiocese**

As indicated, the Parramatta foundation sisters had arrived in the colony of New South Wales in a decade that had seen enormous stresses placed on the Catholic education system there. Their contribution as a missionary teaching order in Sydney was to be immeasurably significant. In their first six years, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy congregation increased from nine to thirty-three members and was looking for opportunities for expansion. This was welcomed by parish priests struggling with debts and increasing school enrolments.<sup>38</sup>

Cardinal Moran had made plans for the Parramatta sisters' first branch house before they had even set sail for Australia. In a letter sent from the Irish College, Rome, dated 3 July 1888, he told the Callan community: 'I have marked out another district for the Sisters in the city of Sydney [St Peter's Parish], Surry Hills, very populous and thoroughly Catholic and Irish.

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<sup>34</sup> Bourke, *A Woman Sings of Mercy*, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> See McGrath, *These Women?*, pp. 9-10, and Gaudry, *Mercy from Generation to Generation*, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> For details of the expansion of the Sisters of Mercy see R.B. Savage, *Catherine McAuley; the first Sister of Mercy*, Gill and Son, Dublin, 1949, pp. 393-405.

<sup>37</sup> At the same time, Moran noted that he did not wish to institute comparisons between individual communities. Copy of Address of 27 September 1890 as reported in the *Freeman's Journal* (hereafter *FJ*), PA.

<sup>38</sup> Donnelly, 'The First Six Years', p. 14.

There are about 400 Catholic children attending school there.’<sup>39</sup> The Sisters of the Good Samaritan who were ‘holding the fort’ in Surry Hills, were relieved in July 1889 by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy.<sup>40</sup> This first branch house had been made possible by the arrival of the first ‘reinforcements’ from Callan, four postulants who were graduates of St Brigid’s Missionary College.<sup>41</sup>

In February 1893, Cardinal Moran wrote to Mother M. Clare Dunphy: ‘I daresay that another school will soon have to be opened in the neighbourhood of Crown Street [Surry Hills] and I suppose the Sisters from Surry Hills would be most convenient for taking it in hand.’<sup>42</sup> He referred to this proposal again in 1894 and 1901, being obviously convinced of a need for a high or select school for girls in the Surry Hills area. At this time ‘high school’ meant a ‘select school’ for the better-off. The society of the British Isles from which most of the Australian colonial settlers and religious came was highly classed. All religious denominations referred to ‘poor schools’ and ‘high schools’ as a matter of fact rather than of conscious discrimination.

The Sisters of Mercy eventually established a select school, St Anne’s High School in Surry Hills in 1902. It survived until 1914, closing because of low numbers, it never having more than seventy students.<sup>43</sup> In its short existence, however, it made a significant contribution to women’s education in Surry Hills. Sr M. Alphonsus (Cecily) Stanley, a St Anne’s ex-student, recalled ‘for several years a group of girls did very credible work at the Junior University Examination’.<sup>44</sup> Twelve members of the Parramatta congregation were ex-students of St Anne’s.

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<sup>39</sup> Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 3 July 1888, copies of correspondence between Moran and the Callan Community, PA.

<sup>40</sup> How 400 children could be taught in such a small space is beyond modern sensibilities to imagine. The building measured 135 ft x 35 ft and a basement and gallery area were also utilised for lessons. See Janice Garaty, *St Peter’s Surry Hills: A History*. vol. 1: *a small seed, a stately tree, 1880-1931*, St Peter’s Parish, Sydney, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.32. There are frequent references to a military style campaign in the correspondence between Cardinal Moran and the Callan and Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. See McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 38.

<sup>42</sup> Cardinal Moran to Parramatta, 14 February 1893, U1735, SAA.

<sup>43</sup> Garaty, *St Peter’s Surry Hills*, pp. 72-75.

<sup>44</sup> Cecily Stanley, ‘Reminiscences of Surry Hills’, Surry Hills file, PA. The closure of St Anne’s High School is a good example of demographic and economic changes impacting on the enrolments of a select school which is located adjacent to parochial schools. The Stanley family are typical of the middle class which moved out of Surry Hills seeking healthier environs in the eastern suburbs.

Expansion of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy continued in the inner city. In June 1895, Cardinal Moran blessed the convent called Mt St Mary's at Forbes Street, Golden Grove (Newtown). St Kieran's Primary School had been established at Golden Grove in 1892 and the select school of Mt St Mary's began at Golden Grove in 1900 with 73 day pupils. In 1903 the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy established St Joseph's Charity School (referred to by the sisters as the 'Poor School') in William Street, Woolloomooloo in 1903 'for the very poor and outcast children receiving their material food and clothing as well as their spiritual training there'. It was staffed by sisters from the Surry Hills convent as an out-school.<sup>45</sup> At the same time there began discussion of the congregation moving east of their established inner city branch houses into what became known generally as the Eastern Suburbs. The present municipalities of Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra have been commonly referred to as the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney for well over 100 years.<sup>46</sup>

### **Early European history of the Eastern Suburbs**

On the south side of the harbour from the Tank Stream out towards South Head lived the Birrabirragal; they were a group of the Eora, the coastal people who spoke the Dharug language. As early as 1790 a lookout had been established on the South Head entrance to Sydney Harbour and the two huts built there became a signal station. Following a ridgeline, the South Head Road (later known as the Old South Head Road) was one of the earliest roads in the colony, and was completed by the military in 1811. An extensive area of scrub-covered sandhills stretched from the South Head Road down to Botany Bay. The sandhills made travel difficult as sand shifted, covering what roads there were. The New South Head Road was built in the 1830s.

City of Sydney historian, Shirley Fitzgerald, has noted that 'clearly, Sydney was no classless society' and that there were tremendous differences in the attributes, both natural and built, between suburbs. Indeed, along the South Head ridge top road there developed large private estates within which the rich professional and business classes could escape the rigors and unpleasantness of the city with its fetid air, crime, and unhealthy lack of sewerage and water

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<sup>45</sup> Its establishment celebrated Cardinal Moran's sacerdotal jubilee. An out-school was one to which the staff daily travelled a distance from their convent residence to perform their duties.

<sup>46</sup> For example, in announcing the creation of Holy Cross Parish in 1906, the term 'Eastern Suburbs' was used; see *FJ*, 24 March 1906, p. 21.

systems. For the price of the (horse) bus fare one could be in Woollahra where the amenities were world class.<sup>47</sup> Woollahra is probably an anglicised version of Wulara or Wullara which meant a camp or meeting ground.<sup>48</sup>

The Municipality of Woollahra, named after Woollahra House, was created in 1860 and by 1891 the NSW census showed that it had a population of 10,023 and 2,044 buildings.<sup>49</sup> Around 1900, large areas in Woollahra towards the city of Sydney were cleared and subdivided. The municipality developed along class lines early, with blue-collar workers living in the western sections adjacent to Paddington. These were mainly wharf labourers and men employed at the tram depot at Waverley (later this would become the bus depot). Woollahra would remain aloof from the inner-city suburban ring which had become blighted by the 1890s. It was not until 1968 that the northern section of Paddington, on the eastern edge of the city, was incorporated into Woollahra Local Government Area (hereafter LGA) after which it would undergo urban renewal.

To the south of Woollahra was the estate built by Barnett Levy, the founder of the Theatre Royal and which gave its name to the Waverley LGA, proclaimed on 13 June 1859.<sup>50</sup> In 1877, it had a total population of 1,377 comprised of 659 males and 718 females, according to *The Australian Almanac*.<sup>51</sup> This imbalance was no doubt related to the employment of females as house servants, and more than likely these females would be Irish and looking for the ministry of the Catholic Church. Waverley at this time was difficult to access, lacking reasonable roads. Public transport was by horse drawn bus. Ruth Park commented that ‘by 1869 the district was but lightly populated with fishermen, market gardeners and country-loving city workers, but was for all that a municipality’.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Shirley Fitzgerald, *Rising Damp: Sydney 1870-1890*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987, p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> Robin Brampton, (ed.), *A Taste of Woollahra: a tasteful anthology of life in Australia's oldest suburb*, Media House, Sydney, 1987, p. 80.

<sup>49</sup> The entrance lodge of Woollahra House, all that remains, is the Rose Bay Police Station. The author Anthony Trollope, visiting from England, described the Woollahra House Estate as a magnificent property, and acknowledged the future desirability of the area when he noted that ‘in England it would be worth half a million of money, and as things go on, it will soon be worth as much in New South Wales.’, cited in Brampton, *A Taste of Woollahra*, p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> Brampton, *A Taste of Woollahra*, p. 80.

<sup>51</sup> John L. Sherriff, *The Australian Almanac 1863-1877*, John L. Sherriff, Sydney, 1877.

<sup>52</sup> Ruth Park, *The Companion Guide to Sydney*, Collins, Sydney, 1973, p. 414.

### **Early Catholic churches in the Eastern Suburbs**

The first Catholic church built east of St Mary's Cathedral was at Darlinghurst in 1850.<sup>53</sup> Known as the Church of the Sacred Heart, it was the only church between South Head and the Georges River to the south of Sydney. In the 1850s, the whole of the area east of Sydney was known as the Waverley District of the Archdiocese of Sydney and its extensive sandhills would be a burden to the Catholic faithful especially those forced to walk rather than ride to Sunday Mass.<sup>54</sup>

The first Waverley church, a small stone building, was erected on Carrington Road and dedicated to St Charles Borromeo, pastor and saint of the early Counter-Reformation period, its foundation stone being laid by Archdeacon McEncroe in 1854. This was followed by St Anthony's Watsons Bay, (originally called Our Lady Star of the Sea) which was erected at the end of the Old South Head Road in 1866. With considerable population expansion associated with the building of the Paddington army barracks and the subdividing of the large estates in the area, two more churches were built in the Waverley district: St Francis's in Paddington, an area with a large Irish population, was opened in 1866; St Joseph's was opened in 1874 at Edgecliff in what was known as the Woollahra Parochial District. In 1879 two members of the Irish Province of Franciscan Fathers arrived to take charge of the three existing parishes in the Waverley District. Later on, a school-church was erected in 1895 in O'Brien Street, Bondi, at the foot of Bellevue Hill. Its foundation stone was laid by Cardinal Moran on October 20 1895 in the presence of approximately 500 people. The Catholics of this area had found the hilly terrain a formidable physical obstacle to attending the existing churches.

### **Growth factors in the Eastern Suburbs**

The gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s had brought European tradesmen with their much sought after building skills to Australian cities. They facilitated and fuelled a rapid expansion in Sydney's population in the 1880s. Between 1881 and 1891 the percentage increase of

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<sup>53</sup> For a comprehensive account of the establishment of this church and other early Eastern Suburbs churches see Father John Hartigan, (John O'Brien) *On Darlinghurst Hill*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1952. See also Mary and Bernard Dowd, 'Catholicity in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney', *Journal of the Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 15, 1993, pp. 24-42.

<sup>54</sup> Mother M. Thecla Kerwick and Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley 'The Church in the Eastern Suburbs with Special Emphasis on Holy Cross', unpublished account, n.p., 1981, PA.

population in the Eastern Sydney suburbs of Paddington, Woollahra, Randwick, and Waverley was 115 per cent compared to growth of only 77 per cent in the East Central grouping of suburbs of Redfern, Darlington, Waterloo, Botany, North Botany and Alexandria.<sup>55</sup>

The opening of the Waverley Cemetery for the benefit of the local residents in 1875 was the catalyst for the extension of the steam tram system along the Bronte Road from what would become known as the Bondi Junction. The steam tramway to Charing Cross, which followed the same route as the horse drawn bus from Elizabeth Street, was opened in 1881, and there was fierce competition by the horse-drawn buses which would be struggling for custom by 1889 as patrons found trams were faster, more comfortable and also cheaper because they could carry far greater loads. By 1884 there were thirty-one miles of tramways in Sydney and steam trams had reached Randwick Racecourse, North Bondi, Coogee, Woollahra and Bronte in the area to the east of the city, yet between 1884 and 1889, the tramways were running at a loss, primarily because the lines had been extended beyond well settled areas with the intention of promoting development. Electrification of Sydney's tramways from 1890 resulted in massive growth of the system as it utilised a relatively cheap, clean and constant source of power. In 1902 the steam tram service converted to electric operation between Bondi Junction and Waverley.<sup>56</sup> This transport infrastructure was vital to the development of the Eastern Suburbs.

The Depression of the 1890s was characterised by drought, a very full property market, high unemployment and bank closures. This time of severe economic downturn had followed a long period of economic prosperity which resulted from the discovery of gold, the subsequent influx of hopeful immigrants in search of an easy fortune, and the urban building boom which was facilitated by an oversupply of artisans. Economic conditions began to improve about 1905 when the drought ended, increased industrialisation reduced unemployment, and a return of optimism combined to revitalise the economy. Between 1901

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<sup>55</sup> T. A. Coghlan, *The Wealth and Progress of NSW*, vol. 7, Sydney, NSW Statistician's Office, 1893, p. 313.

<sup>56</sup> Garry Wotherspoon, (ed.), *Sydney's Transport: studies in urban history*, Hale and Iremonger in association with the Sydney History Group, Sydney, pp. 93-104.

and 1911, 75,000 people were drawn to Sydney<sup>57</sup> and by 1905 more than one third of the population of New South Wales lived in the city of Sydney or its suburbs.<sup>58</sup>

### **The parish of Holy Cross Bondi Junction - the first decades**

By the middle of the first decade of the 1900s, as a result of the increase in population in the Eastern Suburbs, the existing churches could not comfortably accommodate worshippers at Sunday Masses. Cardinal Moran decided to create a new parish out of the existing Franciscan Waverley district. Cardinal Moran in a letter to Monsignor (hereafter Mgr) Michael O’Riordan, Rector of the Irish College, referred to the Franciscans as ‘strong’, having nine priests and with 12,000 Catholics under their jurisdiction in Sydney.<sup>59</sup> All three parishes in the Franciscans’ district would lose ground to the new parochial district of Holy Cross, Bondi Junction planned by Moran.

The proposed expansion of the Parramatta sisters from the inner city to the Eastern Suburbs is indicated in a letter to Cardinal Moran from Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly, dated 28 September 1902:

Father Fitzgerald OFM has asked us to open a branch in that part of Waverley where by your Eminence’s instructions he is building a new Church. We told the Archbishop when he was here on Saturday for the opening of our Bazaar that we believed your Eminence would approve of our accepting the offer. This was in reply to his Grace’s inquiry as to what we thought would be your wish. He said that no-thing would give him more pleasure than to have us go to Waverley if we felt that you would approve; so we have written to Father Fitzgerald that we will prepare to open after Christmas.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Terry Kass, ‘Cheaper than Rent: aspects of the growth of owner-occupation in Sydney 1911-66’ in Max Kelly, (ed.), *Sydney: city of suburbs*, UNSWP in association with the Sydney History Group, Sydney, 1987, p.78.

<sup>58</sup> H. C. L. Anderson (ed.) *Official Year Book of NSW: 1905-1906*, Government Printer, Sydney 1907, p. 211.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Moran to O’Riordan, dated 27 August 1907, cited in Ayres, *Prince of the Church*, p. 257.

<sup>60</sup> Letter dated 28 September 1902, from Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly to Cardinal Moran, Parramatta Sisters of Mercy file, SAA.

In a letter written to the Callan sisters in 1902, while he was staying at the Irish College of Rome, Moran had commented: '[The Sisters of Mercy] hope to open a new branch house after Christmas in a rapidly increasing district near Waverley. I don't know as yet what the name of the place may be.'<sup>61</sup> When he wrote these words, Moran was about to embark at Naples for the homeward journey. In a letter to her 'dear Uncle' Sr M. Berchmans Cummins of the Convent of Mercy in Callan expressed her belief, no doubt based on correspondence from Parramatta, that the branch at Waverley would be opened after Christmas, 1902.<sup>62</sup> This was not to be, for reasons which are apparently complex and remain unsubstantiated.

Difficult relations with the Franciscans and their refusal to build a new church at Bondi Junction, as Moran wished, appear to have led to the creation of the new parochial territory and the appointment of two secular priests who would be completely under the control of the Archdiocesan hierarchy.<sup>63</sup> The letter of appointment from St Mary's Cathedral to Father (hereafter Fr) Peter O'Reilly, as first parish priest of the new parish of Holy Cross, Bondi Junction was dated 15 March 1906. Signed by Cardinal Moran, it instructed him to commence duties as administrator on 25 March, 1906.<sup>64</sup>

It would not be unexpected for Fr Peter O'Reilly to support the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in establishing a school in his new parish since his brother, the Rt Rev. Thomas O'Reilly was the parish priest of Parramatta at this time and Fr Peter O'Reilly himself had been the curate at Parramatta when the sisters arrived there in 1888. It is recorded in the Holy Cross Convent Chronicles that Fr Peter O'Reilly 'conceived a great admiration for the pioneer sisters whose loving acceptance of the severe trials and hardships including a very real poverty, made a powerful impression upon him. His own kindness was a memory with the Parramatta Sisters also.'<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Moran to Reverend Mother at Callan, 1 November 1902, Parramatta Sisters of Mercy file, SAA.

<sup>62</sup> Reverend Mother at Callan to Moran, 11 November 1902, Parramatta Sisters of Mercy file, SAA. Cardinal Moran periodically passed on news of the Parramatta sisters in his letters to the Callan Community. Waverley was the commonly used name for the entire Sydney Province of the Franciscans.

<sup>63</sup> Moran had repeatedly suggested they construct a new church at Bondi Junction but they claimed there was no suitable site, Ayres, *Prince of the Church*, p. 257.

<sup>64</sup> St Mary's Cathedral, Letter of Appointment to Fr Peter O'Reilly, dated 15 March 1906, Holy Cross College Records, PA. See also *FJ*, 24 March 1906, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles 1906-1979', n.p., PA.



At the time of the appointment of Fr O'Reilly to Holy Cross parish, there were only about eighty Catholic families in the whole parochial district of Holy Cross.<sup>66</sup> This was a number hardly capable of supporting a parish, but as stated previously, economic conditions had begun to improve by about 1905, and no doubt Cardinal Moran could foresee the rapid increase in population that would come with the expansion of the eastern suburbs tramways. Indeed, with increased accessibility to the city and the marked deterioration of certain inner city suburbs such as Paddington and Surry Hills,<sup>67</sup> Catholic families had already begun migrating eastwards from the inner city parishes of St Francis (Haymarket), St Peter's (Surry Hills), St Mary's Cathedral and Sacred Heart (Darlinghurst).<sup>68</sup>

The family history of Michael Kerwick typifies this movement away from the congested, polluted and unhealthy inner city suburbs. He was the father of Mother M. Thecla (Marie) Kerwick, one of the first pupils enrolled in the Holy Cross parochial primary school. Mother M. Thecla later became principal of Holy Cross College before her election as congregational leader (then called Reverend Mother) of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta in 1945. Michael Kerwick was a second generation Australian, having been born and raised in the Shoalhaven district. At the time of her birth on 2 December, 1901, Marie's parents were residing in Goulburn Street, Surry Hills. Her father was a commission agent, selling produce at his store in Sussex Street. Her mother, Agnes Tierney, was the daughter of 'one of the earliest and more prosperous shop-owners in Oxford Street, Darlinghurst'.<sup>69</sup> Marie was the first child, and after her sister Ellen (Nell) was born, the family moved to Grosvenor Street, Bondi Junction in 1903. The Kerwick family clearly belonged to the Catholic group that was upwardly socially mobile.<sup>70</sup>

The Stanley family, who had been prominent in the early years of St Peter's Parish, Surry

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<sup>66</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles 1906-1979', n.p., PA.

<sup>67</sup> Shirley Fitzgerald claimed both of these were slums by the 1890s. See Fitzgerald, *Rising Damp*, p. 26 and p. 226.

<sup>68</sup> By 1915, the Catholic population of the entire Parochial District of Bondi Junction was reported to be 2,011 at a time when the civic (citizen) population was 10,000, 1915 Episcopal Visitation Report in Holy Cross Parish file, SAA.

<sup>69</sup> Marie Gaudry, rsm, *A Woman to Remember: Mother Mary Thecla Kerwick RSM, 1901 – 1984*, Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, 2004, p. 5. Most of these details of the Kerwick family have been taken from this publication.

<sup>70</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 140.

Hills, were also typical of the many Catholics of Irish background who had joined in the migration from the inner city to the cleaner, healthier environment of the Eastern Suburbs. Patrick Stanley, a prosperous merchant and four times Mayor of Redfern, was a member of the committee which selected land on Devonshire St, Surry Hills and raised money for the building of the church of St Peter's there in 1880. He resided on Cleveland Street, at *Meath House*, named after his birthplace in Ireland, from which he had fled in 1845, aged 19 years. His shopkeeper son Matthew, with his wife and twelve children, lived nearby.<sup>71</sup> Matthew Stanley moved the family to Wellington Street, Bondi, in mid-1919 and his daughters were enrolled at Holy Cross College; four of his daughters would become members of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy.

In an account largely taken from the Holy Cross Convent Chronicles, we are given a tantalizing hint of the reactions of the parishioners of the Franciscan Fathers at Woollahra, Waverley and Bondi to finding, without consultation, secular priests to minister to their spiritual needs. The affected parishioners made representations to the Cardinal and a petition was presented to him but to no avail.<sup>72</sup> The chronicler comments: 'Naturally, the people did not like the new arrangement, but gradually became reconciled, seeing, not man's doing, but Divinely delegated authority.'<sup>73</sup> Another chronicler related that the decision was one that 'caused some of the people some distress, as they had come to know and love the brown-habited Franciscans. Nevertheless, the wisdom of the change was gradually recognised and the new parish priest [...] found that there was a loyal body of parishioners behind him.'<sup>74</sup>

Fr O'Reilly had his appointment and a curate but no church and no presbytery. He initially boarded at residences at Watsons Bay, at the easternmost extremity of the parish and then rented a house in Paul Street, Bondi Junction, until a presbytery was built in 1913. It is believed that the first Mass on 25 March 1906 in the new parish of Holy Cross was actually celebrated outside the parochial boundaries, in a small hall over Lovett's tobacconist shop in Spring Street. Increasing numbers at Sunday Mass suggest a gradual acceptance by the

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<sup>71</sup> 'Meath House', Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley file, PA.

<sup>72</sup> Dowd and Dowd, 'Catholicity in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney', p. 39.

<sup>73</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles 1906-1979', n.p.

<sup>74</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles 1906-1979', n.p. Philip Ayres in *Prince of the Church*, p. 257, incorrectly states conflict in 1907 between Moran and the Waverley Franciscans, was over the 'new parish' [of] 'Randwick'. This conflict was in fact over the Holy Cross parochial district.

parishioners of their two new priests. The first classes provided in Holy Cross parish were catechism classes for children held after Sunday Mass by two Sisters of Mercy, who travelled from the Surry Hills convent. The educational contribution by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney thus dates from March 1906.<sup>75</sup>

Adelaide Street, a section of a 1901 land subdivision, was the site chosen for the small school-church of Holy Cross. The land had once been the site of the Waverley brewery, erected in 1874 but then dismantled and re-erected at Moore Park.<sup>76</sup> An appealing story told in the convent chronicles relates how a fervent Holy Cross parishioner, Florence Cunningham (later Sr M. Tarcisius), had planted a holy medal in the sand in the [former] brewery yard, ‘so no doubt Our Lady assisted the negotiations which led to the acquisition of the land’.<sup>77</sup>

On 17 February 1907 the foundation stone of Holy Cross Church was blessed and laid. On this occasion, Cardinal Moran is reported as saying he did not ‘know of any part of the suburbs where a more appropriate site could be chosen or a more exquisite view could be obtained than that which presented itself at this particular locality’. A guard of honour was formed by the members of the Woollahra, Waverley and Paddington branches of the Australian Holy Catholic Guild Benefit Society (hereafter AHC) and the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (hereafter Hibernians). As some of these men would have been among those objecting to the loss of their beloved Franciscans, this gesture could be construed as a public acceptance of the arrival of secular priests in the Eastern Suburbs and acceptance of the final authority of the Cardinal.

The Cardinal, while acknowledging the important role the church would play in the everyday lives of the parishioners, told those assembled before him that ‘the whole aim of Holy

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<sup>75</sup> Kerwick and Stanley, ‘The Church in the Eastern Suburbs’. There is uncertainty about the exact location of the first Mass. The ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’ states definitely that they were held in public halls, either one in Harkness Street or in Lovett’s Hall as mentioned above.

<sup>76</sup> The Waverley brewery had been one of a number established in the Paddington and Woollahra areas, where the presence of fresh water springs was a great advantage. The original Waverley Brewery had a supply of permanent fresh spring water that was stored in a large tank cut out of solid rock. The brewery whistle at 9.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. was loud enough for the surrounding residents to set their clocks by them. On the brewery paddocks (really just sandhills) the beer carters’ Clydesdales were spelled.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, n.p., PA.

Church was [...] to spread the spiritual kingdom of God in the hearts of the good and faithful children'. Cardinal Moran was a publicist, who exploited every avenue to inform the Catholic population of the basic grievance of Catholics in relation to their schools, and the achievements of the education system for which they were making tremendous sacrifices to sustain and develop. At the same time his intent was to advertise Catholic triumphs in various areas to the Catholic population and the wider community. He did not fail to do so on this occasion as the *Freeman's Journal* reported.<sup>78</sup>

Until the end of his life Moran worked hard to get state aid for Catholic schools and to keep the basic injustice of the situation before Catholics. As late as 1911, the year of his death, Moran was expressing hostility to Parkes for his promotion of the 1880 NSW Education Act, declaring:

[U]nder this new system, the Catholics have been subjected to manifold hardships and injustice, for it was devised in the same old spirit of hatred of Catholicism and for 30 years it had for one of its aims to undermine and corrupt the Faith of the Catholic children of New South Wales.<sup>79</sup>

This was not mere rhetoric. It is clear from Moran's well documented address on the occasion of the 1911 Catholic Educational Conference, that he had carefully read all Parkes' parliamentary speeches concerning education, as well as all his published works.

The day after the opening of Holy Cross church in May 1907, the Sisters of Mercy began primary classes in the school-church with an initial enrolment of 30 pupils. The first teachers at Holy Cross parochial school were Sr M. Dorothy O'Brien and Sr M. Leonard O'Keefe of the Surry Hills convent. Mother M. Thecla (Marie) Kerwick was fond of recalling that she was the first child to be enrolled. Her younger sister Nell, although she was only four years old, was sent along to swell the numbers. Marie had been booked in to attend Monte Oliveto, the Sisters of Charity select school at Edgecliff, in the Franciscan's Woollahra parish. In spite

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<sup>78</sup> All details of the Holy Cross church foundation stone blessing taken from *FJ*, 21 February, 1907, p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> Catholic Educational Conference of New South Wales, 1911, *Statement, Resolutions, Proceedings*, p. 3.

of the loyalty that Agnes Kerwick felt for the Sisters of Charity, having been a boarder herself at St Vincent's College, Potts Point, she felt her first loyalty was to her parish.<sup>80</sup>

The 1880s had seen the basic religious educational institution of Australian Catholicism, the parochial school, staffed by apostolic religious congregations, become the norm.<sup>81</sup> The school-church had been a pragmatic answer to the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880 and the growing secularisation of Australian society.<sup>82</sup> In 1884, the American Bishops at their Plenary Council in Baltimore had decided that the first thing to build in a new parish was a church, followed by a school. The decision made at the 1885 Australian Bishops' Plenary Council was a reversal of this; it was determined the first building in a new parish should be its school. The historian, Edmund Campion explained: 'Build the school, they ordered their priests, and use it for Sunday Mass until you can build a church. [They] thus codified a decision already taken by the Australian Catholic community.'<sup>83</sup>

As expected then, the small building on Adelaide Street was used as a school during the week and at the weekend the desks were moved to enable the building to function as a church. This process at Holy Cross church was heavy work, seemingly beyond the sisters or their pupils:

The heavy church pews with their iron legs had backs which could be swung into position to serve as schools desks fitted with holes for ink-wells. The moving of these pews and the taking down and erection of the curtain on Friday and Sunday each week was no small task which was carried out regularly by a small group of loyal and self-sacrificing Catholic men.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gaudry, *A Woman to Remember*, p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, p. 279.

<sup>82</sup> As historians of Australia's Catholic history have pointed out, the major focus of parish life was a utilitarian building, which was a school on weekdays and a centre for religious activities on weekends. See Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. 2, pp. 309-310.

<sup>83</sup> Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 56. The appropriate terminology of these modest, multi-purpose structures is 'school-church', reflecting the determination of the 1884 Plenary Council.

<sup>84</sup> Kerwick and Stanley, 'The Church in the Eastern Suburbs'. As Mother M. Thecla Kerwick's own father was one of these men, it is assumed that this account came first hand from the Kerwick family.

The curtain referred to was a heavy green curtain on a brass rod, ‘which was drawn across every morning out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament; on Friday evening [someone] had to remove it and on Sunday night after devotions, put it back into its week-day position’. There were no partitions within this space.<sup>85</sup>

### **Holy Cross Convent of Mercy**

By the beginning of the 1908 school year student attendance at Holy Cross parochial school required five teachers who travelled there by tram and on foot. Two sisters, who resided at the Convent of St Francis de Sales, Surry Hills were joined by three sisters, who travelled from Mt St Mary’s Convent, Golden Grove, Newtown.<sup>86</sup> Clearly a convent at Holy Cross was much needed. In a letter dated 6 December 1907, Mother M. Clare Dunphy, the Reverend Mother at the time, wrote to Moran’s secretary, Mgr O’Haran, about the suitability of a site being considered for the convent:

I rang up J. O’Reilly about purchasing the additional land and as he said the people around Bondi thought the ground insecure for building purposes on account of it being a quarry some time ago. I told Father O’Reilly to let you know that you will ascertain if that is the case though it seems cruel to be giving you so much trouble. There is such a feeling of security when you decide anything.<sup>87</sup>

The sisters at Parramatta appear to have relied heavily on the advice and practical help given by Mgr O’Haran. McGrath has commented that: ‘this great deference to the dominant man in a woman’s world was characteristic of the patriarchal society in which the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta lived’. Despite the first wave women’s movement in Australia at the time, this situation was typical for many women in Australia but was in the case of the sisters, ‘accentuated by Church structures’.<sup>88</sup> Apparently Mgr O’Haran approved the proposed site since, on 12 November 1907, he reported to Moran:

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<sup>85</sup> Kerwick and Stanley, ‘The Church in the Eastern Suburbs’.

<sup>86</sup> When the tram-drivers went on strike in 1907, Mgr O’Haran called at the school to tell the sisters that he had arranged for a cab to be at their disposal for the duration of the strike, ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’.

<sup>87</sup> Parramatta Sisters of Mercy file, 1900-1910, SAA. It would be reasonable to assume the quarry referred to was Ryan’s Quarry which was on the opposite corner to the Waverley brewery site.

<sup>88</sup> Sophie McGrath, History of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta: Background Paper no.2, unpublished, n.d. PA.

The Rev. Mother of the Sisters of Mercy at Parramatta rang up to say they had completed the purchase of 60 feet of frontage adjoining the church ground at Bondi and asked me to meet the Sisters there with a view to advise the best method of building.<sup>89</sup>

The Holy Cross Convent Chronicles attest that the plans were drawn up under the supervision of Mgr O'Haran. The design was in the Romanesque style, an elegant style admirably suiting the dimensions of the block along Edgecliff Road.<sup>90</sup> Directly opposite was the biggest source of employment in the area, Fletcher's Foundry, famous for its iron lace and solid kitchen stoves.<sup>91</sup> Edgecliff Road was aptly named, for it followed the contours along the edge of Cooper Park, (called by locals 'the gully') and was quaintly described in an early writing as 'one of the most delightful breathing spaces around Sydney' and as a 'beautifully wooded area descending to a picturesque mosaic of cultivation – the once familiar Chinese gardens. Beyond the gully was Bellevue Hill.'<sup>92</sup> This view which extended right down to Sydney Harbour would be enjoyed from the Holy Cross convent balcony.

By the time of the building of the Holy Cross convent, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, as a result of their expansion, had already incurred a heavy debt which Moran was doing much to alleviate. In 1907 a loan of £420 to Bondi (Holy Cross) for the purchase of land was recorded in the financial records of St Mary's Convent, Parramatta.<sup>93</sup> Sr M. de Sales Shelley from the Convent of Mercy, Surry Hills, refers to three cheques from the Cardinal: £600, £200, and £250, which he had sent at the opening of Holy Cross Convent. Writing to Moran, she commented: 'The cheque you so kindly sent us for 200 pounds this morning pays all we owe but 270 pounds, this latter sum Our Lady will surely send us in good time.'<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> O'Haran to Moran, 12 November 1907, Correspondence files, SAA.

<sup>90</sup> The architects chosen were Nagle and Nurzey of Elizabeth St Sydney and the builder was Mr Bryer of Erskineville.

<sup>91</sup> This property would be bought in the 1950s by Archbishop Carroll for the site of the new parish primary school of Holy Cross.

<sup>92</sup> Unknown author, 'Holy Cross College: Interesting Facts', n.d. PA.

<sup>93</sup> St Mary's Parramatta, Financial Books/Records, PA.

<sup>94</sup> This strong faith in Our Lady's intervention is evident in correspondence throughout the difficult establishment period of the early foundations.

There are many examples of Moran's generosity to the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in the financial records maintained by each convent community.<sup>95</sup> The sisters had a number of other benefactors, a major one being Dr Beattie of Liverpool. Dr Beattie made substantial loans to the congregation at a rate of interest lower than the bank rate, a fact he did not wish to be publicised.<sup>96</sup> Money was paid back by the sisters from their meagre resources and by various fund raising activities. There is abundant evidence of constant juggling of money by the sisters and the high degree of financial good management required by such ventures. Educational historian, John Luttrell has commented that 'a congregation that built a school on its own land ... would have even greater independence and influence', than those that did not.<sup>97</sup> The very valuable land and buildings of Holy Cross Convent and College were ultimately paid off and became the property of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta.

The new convent at Holy Cross, Bondi Junction (later to be known as Holy Cross, Woollahra) was a handsome two-storey structure built of brick and faced with coloured bricks pointed with black mortar.<sup>98</sup> The 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles' give us an inkling of the arduous journey of the first sisters from Parramatta to the new convent. The sisters began their long journey by a ferryboat from Parramatta to Circular Quay, proceeding from there to Bondi by tram. They found the convent in the middle of extensive sandhills - stretching as far as the eye could see.<sup>99</sup> The view which took in the bushland of Kambala Heights (Bellevue Hill) and Sydney Harbour in the distance would be little compensation for the hard task which confronted them.

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<sup>95</sup> These are now held at the Parramatta congregational archives. A common method he used was to forgive a loan after some years, when the debt is removed from the accounts.

<sup>96</sup> Dr Joseph Aloysius Beattie, Irish born and educated, was the surgeon superintendent at the Liverpool Asylum for infirm and destitute men, 1886-1916. He was a bachelor and left a substantial estate of £24,281, most of which went to Catholic charitable institutions in Dublin. D. I. McDonald, 'Beattie, Joseph Aloysius (1848-1920)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 7, MUP, pp. 233-234.

<sup>97</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, p. 26.

<sup>98</sup> The address of Holy Cross church (parish) was originally Bondi Junction, but in the 1940s it became Bellevue Hill. A 1942 letterhead for Holy Cross presbytery is addressed as Adelaide Street, Woollahra via Bellevue Hill Post Office. In 1906, there was a Woollahra Catholic church; it was St Joseph's, located in the suburb of Edgecliff. These changes in mailing address would be reflected in the full title of Holy Cross College. By the 1930s, the high school was called Holy Cross College Woollahra, while the parish primary school was called Holy Cross School, Bondi Junction, thus differentiating the two in published examination results.

<sup>99</sup> At the blessing and opening of the convent Cardinal Moran would remark: 'What a transformation has taken place - sand hills converted into grassed terraces', 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', n.p.



The convent consisted of a reception room, a schoolroom, refectory, oratory, kitchen and offices on the ground floor and two large dormitories and three bedrooms on the first floor. It was not completed until the end of October, but the sisters took up residence on 4 September 1908. The 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles' describe the great disarray caused by the builders still working on site. Nevertheless they were determined that the convent would be in readiness for the first Mass to be said in their oratory by the Cardinal, on 8 September, the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity. It must be remembered that these women were teaching at the parochial school and then coming 'home' to put things in order, in the space of a few days. They could not get a hot meal because the stove could not be lit. But it was reported that a 'real fairy godmother appeared with all that was necessary for a substantial and dainty meal' on the Saturday, the day before Cardinal Moran's arrival. The picture painted by the Holy Cross convent chronicler is one lacking in comfort, but at the same time lightened by much good humour:

Of furniture there was little, but that made sweeping easier. There were black bundles and bursting sugar bags on the corridor - personal luggage that had arrived per carrier during the week. We did not unpack, for the aforesaid bundles were the only seats we had for a day or two. They served that purpose on the first evening when we turned our thoughts to arrears of prayers and began Vespers and Matins privately in the refectory, each on her unsteady perch.

The arrival of Mother M. Clare Dunphy and Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly from Parramatta meant extra helping hands. They erected a temporary altar and placed a carpet in the chapel and the 'floral decorations of the best sort available provided two yellow sun-flowers and some fish-bone fern'.

The sisters were fortunate that the weather was fine on the day when the first Mass was to be celebrated. The Cardinal and his secretary arrived at 7.00 a.m. and coming to the Edgecliff Road entrance 'made their way with some difficulty across the sandhill and a long trough that lay between them and the Convent'. Planks of wood and some red carpet on top would

provide (it was hoped) a suitable approach for His Eminence.<sup>100</sup> The back gate of the convent was at the top of a sandhill sloping down to the convent building, the same sandhill that had once been the firing range for the Tea Gardens Hotel.

After Mass, Moran, in welcoming the sisters to their new home, showed how closely his personal faith complemented that of the Sisters of Mercy:

The Church, it is true, builds great temples for Our Saviour; but we must remember that the homes He desires and continually asks for are in our hearts and the hearts of the children and the poor whom we instruct. Our chief aim must be to secure those hearts for Him by cultivating devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. By imitating her, Catholic girls will become models and centres of edification to Catholics and non-Catholics.<sup>101</sup>

The following week Holy Cross High School, Bondi Junction, began its long existence with the enrolment of the first two students, Eileen Redmund and Dorothy Grimley; both of them were senior students who had actually already left school. Their parents wished to support the sisters in getting the high school operating before the end of the school year. Their classroom was one room of the convent building furnished with a blackboard, two desks and a sewing machine which served as the teacher's desk during the day. Their teachers were Sr Margaret Mary O'Reilly (niece of the parish priest) and acting principal, who taught all subjects except French and English, these being taught by Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien. By October 1908, there were five students enrolled and Sr M. de Chantal McCrone, who had only been professed in July, had arrived to take charge as the first principal of Holy Cross College.

The formal blessing and opening of Holy Cross Convent of Mercy occurred on 1 November 1908. As usual, the occasion was used to great effect by Cardinal Moran to reiterate and reinforce the righteousness of the stance taken by the cardinal-archbishop and bishops of NSW in their 1879 Joint Pastoral, *Catholic Education*. The school children of Holy Cross

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<sup>100</sup> All details from 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', n.p.

<sup>101</sup> Sr Isobel Donnelly, 'A Century's History: the story of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta 1888-1988', unpublished manuscript, 1989, PA, p. 43.

Parochial School dressed in white and the members of the Irish National Foresters, the AHC Guild and the Hibernian societies formed a guard of honour. The convent chronicler recalled:

The Cardinal said the first thought which came to his mind that afternoon was the fulfilment of the prophecy ‘the desert shall be clothed with bloom’. Remembering the state of the grounds in September he was amazed to find green- turfed and sloping terraces and a gravel path which led from Edgecliff Road to the main entrance. He had clear memories of 8 September, when he battled the sandhills to get to the Convent, situated in what looked like the desolation of a bombsite.<sup>102</sup>

The pragmatic Fr O’Reilly, noticing that rain was threatening decided to start the proceedings with a collection. Nearly £400 was handed in. In addition, the pupils of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy had subscribed £15 15s and £50 had been raised from a Euchre Party. His Eminence gave £20. Fr O’Reilly in his welcome to the Cardinal mentioned there were already more than 150 children in the parish school and the church was already too small to accommodate the rapidly increasing Catholic population. In his address, Cardinal Moran predicted that their district had a great future, made evident by the new streets, new houses and the extension of the tramways.<sup>103</sup>

### **Trends in education and the genesis of the ‘New Syllabus’**

While Moran was aware of population movements in the wider community he was also aware of the educative discourses in Australia and in the wider macrocosm. At the end of the nineteenth century, the state funded system of education in NSW remained essentially the Irish national system, which Governor Bourke in the 1830s had thought was best suited to the Australian situation, but the Public Instruction Act of 1880 had removed the state government subsidies paid previously to those who taught in denominational schools. As indicated, this was a devastating blow to Catholic schools. The act provided for both Protestants and Catholics to receive ordinary secular instruction plus a general religious instruction consisting of selected readings from scripture, which the Catholics objected to,

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<sup>102</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, n.p.

<sup>103</sup> *FJ*, 12 November 1908, p. 23.

plus a special separate religious instruction class given by a pastor.<sup>104</sup> Although by 1901 the former colony was far removed from the relatively unsophisticated and pastoral society it had been for much of the nineteenth century, there had been a general reluctance to tamper with the Public Instruction Act. This was partly because of the conservatism of the educational decision-makers, partly because of the severe economic depression of the 1890s, and partly because the rabid sectarianism of the 1870s was still remembered.

In spite of the provisions of Parkes' 1880 Act, education in NSW was neither free nor compulsory.<sup>105</sup> At the 1901 annual conference of the Public School Teachers' Association, Francis Anderson, professor of philosophy at the University of Sydney, took the opportunity to condemn the failings of the NSW education system. He pointed out that classes were oversized and the curriculum did not meet the demands of a modern industrialised and highly urbanised society. Professor Anderson insisted 'the end of teaching is to produce self-active pupil', a characteristic which was stifled by the mechanical teaching methods of the time with their dependence on rote learning, and discouragement of independent thinking and questioning.<sup>106</sup>

In 1902, the NSW government sent two commissioners, Knibbs and Turner, overseas to investigate all three levels of education. At the same time, Peter Board, an inspector of schools, took leave and conducted his own study tour. All three of these men came into contact with the New Education Movement which was, in spite of its name, then some decades old.<sup>107</sup> A large gathering of inspectors, teachers and departmental officers in January 1904, (and at a second conference in April), discussed and endorsed the recommendations of the two commissioners, Knibbs and Turner; this resulted in the drawing up of the 'New Syllabus', as it became known. The contemporary term for a document setting out methods of teaching and what was to be taught was 'syllabus'. Largely the work

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<sup>104</sup> J. Burnswoods, *Sydney and the Bush: a Pictorial History of Education in NSW*, NSW Department of Education, Sydney, 1980, p. 138. See also Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol.1, pp. 27-31.

<sup>105</sup> State primary schools charged three pence a week. Absenteeism rates were high. Many parents resented having to send the older children who could be usefully employed looking after younger siblings or to supplement the family income. See Burnswoods, *Sydney and the Bush*, p. 134.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in James Franklin, *Corrupting the Youth: a history of philosophy in Australia*, Macleay Press, Sydney, 2003, p. 120.

<sup>107</sup> Burnswoods, *Sydney and the Bush*, p. 139.

of Peter Board, who had been appointed the first NSW Director of Education in 1904, it was designed to implement reforms proposed previously by Professor Anderson. The new syllabus was trialled in NSW state schools in 1904 and formally adopted in 1905. NSW was in line with most Australian states in adopting between 1904 and 1914, a new curriculum which was a 'humanist-realist compromise'.<sup>108</sup> Henceforth there would be much greater emphasis placed on the freedom, initiative and responsibility of both pupils and teachers.

### **Competing with secular state schools**

Anderson's 1901 tirade was not only to launch sweeping changes in the NSW State education system; it would help promote similar responses in the Catholic education system.<sup>109</sup> That Catholic educators in New South Wales, under the direction of Cardinal Moran, were aware of the new trends in education is indicated by the new 'Standards of Efficiency' trialled in 1905 by Fr James Whyte, the Sydney Diocesan Inspector of Schools.<sup>110</sup>

Cardinal Moran had set out to establish a Catholic system which would teach everything the state system taught, and teach it just as well, plus religion. There was, however, an inherent contradiction between Moran's philosophy of education, and his practical implementation of it in relation to the state. Moran held that religion should permeate every activity of the Catholic school, yet he insisted that Catholic schools should be paid by the state for teaching secular subjects. This in practice produced a tension, if not a contradiction, which tends to undermine Australian Catholic education and has not yet been adequately addressed by scholars. How exactly do secular subjects fit into an environment wholly permeated by religion? What is the relationship between the sacred and the secular? Where does the sacred end and the secular begin within the human person, the subject of education?

Unbothered by these philosophical questions, an 1885 *Freeman's Journal* editorial clearly expressed the Catholic laity's expectations of the fledgling Catholic education system:

From an earthly point of view, it is a wrong to the next generation, if our children

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<sup>108</sup> Alan Barcan, 'The Disputed Curriculum', *Quadrant*, June 2005, p. 37.

<sup>109</sup> In fact Anderson's speech was reported to be unlike any previously heard from an invited speaker at the annual education conference.

<sup>110</sup> See Education file, L3827, SAA.

of today are not getting as sound instruction as they would get in non-Catholic Schools. But from a Catholic point of view, it is of paramount importance that they should be given those intellectual weapons which will enable them to hold their own in the midst of a sneering, faithless, godless world. The Church must know that her schools are up to the mark and however great our individual confidence in the schools may be, this knowledge can only be obtained from independent examination.<sup>111</sup>

Two key concerns of Cardinal Moran were for the increase in the number of children in Catholic schools in the archdiocese and that ‘they will hold their own at the examinations’.<sup>112</sup> Examination success became an important marketing asset and the ability to prepare students for the various examinations was emphasised in school advertisements and individual prospectuses.

One of the main ways by which the Sydney Archdiocese controlled the internal organisation of Catholic schools was through the Diocesan Inspector and the prescribed curriculum which he had the responsibility of ensuring was taught adequately.<sup>113</sup> The Sisters of Mercy had undergone regular inspections since the late nineteenth century.<sup>114</sup> Their school at Surry Hills, St Peter’s, topped the diocesan examination results, year after year, and Inspector Fr James Whyte had the highest praise for the teachers there. In 1906, in his report to Cardinal Moran, he wrote of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy: ‘I find no order more satisfying than this to deal with or make suggestions to re [sic] the new methods. I cannot speak too highly of the intelligence and earnestness of these Sisters in regard to any help that can be given them.’<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *FJ*, 7 February 1885, p. 18, original emphasis.

<sup>112</sup> Cardinal Moran to Parramatta, 28 February 1897, Letters of Cardinal Moran, U1735, SAA.

<sup>113</sup> When Archbishop Vaughan imposed a levy on each parish in 1883, to pay for the salary of the first Sydney Archdiocesan Inspector of Schools, Mr John Rogers, there was protest from several parish administrators against this extra imposition. This was at a time when the people were stretched to their limits to pay for school-churches. See Education file L3629, SAA. There was no Archdiocesan Inspector between 1885 and 1890. Archbishop Moran wanted a clerical Inspector of Catholic schools and Rogers lost his position. See Ayres, *Prince of the Church*, p. 130.

<sup>114</sup> John Luttrell, fms, *The Inspector Calls: Catholic School Inspectors in Sydney 1848-1970*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2003, p. 20.

<sup>115</sup> Fr Whyte to Cardinal Moran, 10 October 1906, Education file, L3629, SAA.

### **The Catholic response to the ‘New Syllabus’**

In keeping with the Cardinal’s wish for the Catholic school system to be in no way inferior to the State system, as laid down at the Third Plenary Council of 1905, the Catholic schools were swift to react to the ‘New Syllabus’ which was much influenced by the best aspects of neo-Herbartianism. Diocesan Inspector Whyte, like Peter Board, was appreciative of much in the burgeoning educational philosophies of the time.<sup>116</sup> In an undated set of notes on the 1905 teaching programme, he wrote of taking the opportunity to ‘bring [the programme] more into harmony with mental growth, the present-day views of education and the practical needs of life’.<sup>117</sup>

The teaching orders were consulted on the new Standards of Proficiency and most replies expressed a strong belief that Catholic schools should follow the same curriculum and organisation of classes as the state system.<sup>118</sup> The Standards of Efficiency, based on Peter Board’s ‘New Syllabus’, were introduced in the NSW Catholic school system in 1906. The Catholic education system could not afford to ignore the profound changes that had been implemented in the government system.

Fr James Whyte was most conscientious in carrying out his duties. He was acutely aware of the major deficiencies in the parochial schools and these were clearly spelt out in his reports to the cardinal. From Whyte’s 1905 -1907 reports to Cardinal Moran it is evident that he was aware of the lack of adequate training of teachers and subsequent on-going training in the latest educational philosophy. He had arranged for a course of lectures by state school teachers to the ‘Sisters of all religious orders’, and he pointed out to the Cardinal that ‘the lectures were much appreciated’.<sup>119</sup> He lamented that the teachers showed little interest in educational papers, perhaps not surprising given their punishing hours and onerous tasks. He also drew the attention of the cardinal to a series of articles in the weekly newspaper, the *Catholic Press*, which were ‘further help’ in informing the religious teachers of the ‘New

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<sup>116</sup> For a comprehensive explanation of the neo-Herbartian influence on education, see Alan Barcan, *Two Centuries of Education in New South Wales*, UNSWP, Kensington, 1988, pp. 172-174.

<sup>117</sup> Untitled manuscript, n.d., L3627, SAA. Fr James Whyte was Diocesan Inspector in the years 1899-1908. He was the only inspector for the entire Sydney Archdiocese, which at that time, stretched from the North Shore of Sydney as far south as the Victorian border.

<sup>118</sup> See Education file, L3827, SAA; some of those responding cannot be identified.

<sup>119</sup> Whyte to Moran, 10 October 1906, L3629, SAA.

Education'.<sup>120</sup> Other areas of concern to him were the use of pupil teachers, the lack of suitable textbooks, the indifference to the importance of the infant classes, and the lack of appropriate furniture and teaching aids.<sup>121</sup>

### **Teaching religious knowledge**

Immediately on his return to the colony in November 1885, Moran, as newly appointed cardinal, had convened a Plenary Council of all the archbishops and bishops of Australasia. One of the significant decisions coming from the council, which were to affect the everyday lives of all Catholics in Australia for decades to come, was that any parents who sent their children to a state school without just cause or permission were to be denied absolution in the confessional.<sup>122</sup>

Another outcome of the Plenary Council with long-reaching impact was the adoption of a catechism for use throughout Australia; one which was to remain in use for eighty years.

O'Farrell refers to it as a 'complete map of religious life and knowing it by heart was the means both to avoid danger and to find certainty and security.'<sup>123</sup> Campion has stated that 'a historian who wants to understand Australian Catholics should study the catechism'. The creed was presented in a series of questions and answers. There was no place for debate; the creed was undebatable. It was to be accepted on faith. Campion summed it up as: 'Here was the concrete and steel of doctrine which lay underneath the airy constructions of popular piety.'<sup>124</sup>

Yet this was not the whole story. Certainly Inspector Whyte had commented in 1900 that religion is the 'best [taught] subject on the whole programme'. In the lower classes children answered 'very readily in the words of the Catechism' and those in the third and higher classes 'showed an intelligent grasp of the meaning of the text'. It is clear from many sources that religious teachers gave this subject the highest rank among the many they had to teach

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<sup>120</sup> Whyte to Moran, 6 July 1906, L3629, SAA.

<sup>121</sup> Report on Parochial Schools, 1905, L3629, SAA.

<sup>122</sup> Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 65.

<sup>123</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: a history*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1977, p. 240.

<sup>124</sup> Edmund Campion, *A Place in the City*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic., 1994, p. 123.



and spent the most time on it.<sup>125</sup> Whyte commented however, that the next year he intended to depart more from the words of the catechism in order to ensure that the children ‘have caught not merely the words, but the ideas’. As indicated previously, he was much opposed to rote learning.<sup>126</sup>

### **Teacher training**

Professor Francis Anderson vehemently opposed the pupil-teacher system, which he claimed was a failure, producing in the main poorly educated and inadequately trained teachers.<sup>127</sup> In like fashion, inadequate teacher training had been one of Inspector Whyte’s major criticisms.<sup>128</sup> Cardinal Moran had been acutely aware of the deficiencies in the training of religious teachers and from 1909 had attempted to set up a Catholic university college associated with the University of Sydney, at Kincoppal, the day and weekly boarding school of the Society of the Sacred Heart at Elizabeth Bay. Moran’s intention was to use university lecturers who would be visiting professors. Minutes of the University of Sydney Senate show that the idea was taken seriously by the Senate but Moran’s attempts in this matter had come to nothing by the time of his death in 1911.<sup>129</sup>

The Good Samaritan Sisters, leading educators in the Sydney Archdiocese in the early twentieth century, responded immediately to the demands of the ‘New Education’ and initiated a teacher training college at St Scholastica’s Glebe in 1906. In 1913, the Sisters of St Joseph began their teacher training college at North Sydney. More stringent requirements for teacher training were set up by the NSW government in 1912 when a two-year course in general culture and professional method was established at the Sydney Teachers College, replacing the probationary student system for primary teachers in existence from 1906. From 1918, the University of Sydney provided professional training at the Sydney Teachers

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<sup>125</sup> Anecdotal evidence in interviews conducted by Sophie McGrath in the 1980s supports this, PA.

<sup>126</sup> He did not intend to depart from the catechism words for the infants classes; he was sensitive to the capacities of different ages; ‘1900 Inspector’s Report on Parochial schools’, L3629, SAA.

<sup>127</sup> For a clear account of Anderson’s criticisms and the responses see Burnswoods, *Sydney and the Bush*, p.138.

<sup>128</sup> Whyte to Moran, 6 July 1906, L3629, SAA.

<sup>129</sup> Marie Kennedy, *Wisdom Built Herself a House: A History of Sancta Sophia College, University of Sydney 1926-1996*, Sancta Sophia College, 1997, pp. 32-34. Archbishop Kelly attempted, unsuccessfully to bring about the University of Sydney extension scheme in 1914.

College as a one year post-graduate Diploma of Education. Religious sisters attended these courses for some years until Professor John Anderson's atheistic ideas in the field of philosophy, denounced by Archbishop Kelly, deterred them.<sup>130</sup>

Archbishop Kelly had extremely negative views on the worth of a university education for women, being on record as commenting that sixty percent of higher education was unnecessary for them.<sup>131</sup> Mother M. Gabriel Phelan, Parramatta congregational leader for two periods, in 1915-1921 and 1927-1933, shared the strong anti-intellectualism of Archbishop Kelly. She considered the consistently high examination results in the schools of the Parramatta congregation were indicative of the successful teacher training system in place. In her opinion it was frequently those people who were able to obtain a degree that were in fact poor teachers.<sup>132</sup> It was not until 1954 that the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy sent sisters to the university, though talented students proposing to join the congregation were encouraged by their former teachers to gain a degree beforehand.

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy chose to keep their teacher training 'in-house', though the Melbourne Sisters of Mercy had amalgamated in 1905 with a number of other Mercy foundations to form a Mercy teachers college. Until 1914 the Parramatta novices were in the branch houses for most of their novitiate and both their professional and religious training were largely in-service in nature. A change in practice came in 1914 when Archbishop Kelly directed that all congregations were to keep their novices in their motherhouse for an unbroken period of twelve months. Nevertheless, it was common for the second-year novices from Parramatta to be in the teaching force.<sup>133</sup>

In the early twentieth century, Sr M. Josepha Lynch, non-teaching principal and supervisor of teacher's programs and class teaching at Surry Hills, had introduced an innovative and highly successful method of teacher training of the novice sisters and the pupil teachers employed at St Peter's Parochial School and St Anne's High School. Being non-teaching left her free to

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<sup>130</sup> Kennedy, *Wisdom Built Herself a House*, pp. 31-32. John Anderson was the Challis Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney 1927-1958.

<sup>131</sup> O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 379.

<sup>132</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 134.

<sup>133</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.133.

devote her full attention to the development of the teaching skills of the young sisters in her care.<sup>134</sup> Sr M. Josepha Lynch won high praise from Inspector Whyte for her methods and he held them up as an example to other teaching orders. Sr M. Josepha Lynch's 'chief duty was to go from class to class at stated periods and ascertain for herself how the pupils and their teachers were working.'<sup>135</sup> Yet the in-house, in-service method of teacher training persisted in the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to the 1960s, in spite of it remaining under attack.

### **Issues raised at the Australasian Catholic Congresses of 1900 and 1904**

Alertness to the need for reform of Catholic educational practice was expressed by representatives of leading Catholic select high schools and colleges at the First Australasian Catholic Congress in 1900. By this time the question of womanhood suffrage had been hotly debated in the wider community and within Catholic circles since the 1880s. By 1901, Australian women had been granted the vote at the national level and NSW women were accorded the vote at the State level in 1903. It was against this background that the papers on education and schools were written for the First Australasian Catholic Congress of 1900 and subsequent congresses of 1904 and 1909.

At the First Australasian Catholic Congress of 1900, in the section 'Our Schools', six of the eleven papers were written by women religious. These were teachers from prominent Catholic Colleges whose enrolments were drawn from the middle and upper classes. Leading Catholic religious educators, both women and men, were clearly already making a case for the same changes as Anderson was declaiming and were in effect ahead of Peter Board. For example, the Good Samaritan Sisters in their paper on 'The Australasian Catholic Readers' displayed an understanding of the revived fifty years old educational philosophies of Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel, declaring among other things, that their readers 'teach self-reliance, independence of spirit and inculcate high ideals'.<sup>136</sup>

'Our Girls Schools', a paper presented at the 1900 Congress, was written by Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. The writer was clearly aware of the principles on which Peter Board's New Syllabus would be based four years later.

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<sup>134</sup> Details from Sr M. Aidan Codd, 'Notes on Surry Hills', unpublished manuscript, n.d., PA.

<sup>135</sup> Whyte to Moran, 3 January 1902, file L3629, SAA.

Undoubtedly it shows considerable insight into the educational process. Cardinal Moran showed his confidence in the author's ability when he sent her a note stating: 'I have handed over the paper [...] I have not had time to look over it, but I am sure it will suit very well.'<sup>137</sup> In her opening remarks Sr M. Alphonsus Shelley alluded to the inferior role of women by asking: 'What place for woman's pen in work of such magnitude! Yet, even tiny atoms have their recognised places in magnificent systems.' Surely a note of irony can be detected in her words.

Sr M. Alphonsus insisted that the most pressing need in the new century was for an 'ever-increasing efficiency in our schools for girls'. She saw the aim of education to be the training of individuals to realise their full potential, this being God's plan for them and she argued strongly for a child-centred holistic approach to education, which would produce a well-rounded development of all of the faculties. Though emphasising the importance of the actual teaching environment, highlighted by the 'New Education', Sr M. Alphonsus insisted that adequate school buildings were not the most pressing need for Catholic schools, but more teachers, ones who were 'devoted to their task', felt strongly about their 'supernatural vocation' and were 'buoyant under daily difficulties'. She argued for a public policy of government examination of Catholic schools, the establishment of teachers training colleges run by each teaching order for its own members and for the higher education of girls. She would have been aware that from 1860 the Sisters of Mercy in Baggot Street Dublin had conducted a private teachers training college which included lay women and in 1898 the Sisters of Mercy in Limerick had established Mary Immaculate Teachers Training College, which provided a rich curriculum for religious and lay students.<sup>138</sup> She referred to the need for Catholic technical schools for girls in the post- primary school stage.<sup>139</sup> The idea of technical schools for girls was revolutionary in 1900. In the absence of any clarification, it is assumed Sr M. Alphonsus was referring to domestic science intermediate high schools, as distinct from academically focused select high schools, of which St Mary's High School,

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<sup>136</sup> *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, p. 449.

<sup>137</sup> Moran to Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly, 23 August 1900, letters of Cardinal Moran to Parramatta, U1735, SAA.

<sup>138</sup> Bonnie Brennan, 'History of the Sisters of Mercy of Ireland in terms of the ministry of spirituality', paper presented at the International Mercy Research Conference, November 2007, p.7.

<sup>139</sup> All quotes taken from *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, Section 4, 'Our Schools', paper X1, 'Our Girls' Schools', pp. 479-485.

Parramatta was a good example at that time, and which Holy Cross High School would be in another decade.

At the Second Australasian Catholic Congress of 1904, papers were prepared by two lay women Annie Golding and Miss Macreeedy. Both extolled the need for women to exercise their newly won franchise in an informed and intelligent manner. Miss Macreeedy in her paper, 'The Home Training of Our Girls' noted: 'To fulfil the duties of citizenship with benefit to the state, it is essential that the woman possesses the qualifications of a "home-maker"'. She stressed that 'the profession of home-maker [...] is a very ancient and honourable one' and that women 'by the uplifting of the home, advance the state'. Miss Macreeedy also upheld the need for a 'sound education' for women who have no precedent for political questions, unlike men, and exclaimed 'in ignorance lies the danger of the vote in the hands of the woman'. She saw the need for the education of girls to produce a woman of 'disciplined brain and skilful hands, who will draw into the fireside from the outer world, the good, the true, the beautiful and – the useful'.<sup>140</sup>

Annie Golding in her paper, 'The Evolution of Women and Their Possibilities', charted the progress of women through the centuries and applauded the opening up of higher education and the professions in certain countries. She reminded her audience that Australian women were in a unique position as citizens of the only country in the world with absolute adult suffrage and thus should 'realise their grave responsibilities, and still greater possibilities'. She urged women to use their new powers of influence to instil 'ideals of honour, justice, truth and humanity', all very much in the spirit of the 'New Syllabus'.<sup>141</sup>

Some male participants at the Congresses showed their opposition to woman suffrage. Mr Crowe in his paper entitled 'Socialism' emphatically declared: 'It is a matter of grave doubt whether the extension of the franchise adds to the exaltation of woman, or whether such power is within the compass of her life or duties' and he quoted Cardinal Manning (of Britain) to reinforce his point: 'To put man and woman on an equality is not to elevate

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<sup>140</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress*, Section V111, paper 111, 'The Home Training of Our Girls', pp. 565-571.

<sup>141</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress*, Section V111, paper 11, 'The Evolution of Women and Their Possibilities', pp. 560-564.

woman but to denigrate her.<sup>142</sup> Archbishop Kelly, coadjutor to Cardinal Moran, in commenting on the papers presented in the special Christian Woman Section of the 1904 Congress said that ‘woman’s sphere was her home, where she reigned as the queen and the mistress’.<sup>143</sup>

Arising out of the discussion and in spite of the fact that ‘ladies were in the majority’ in the audience, the following resolution was ‘unanimously’ passed: ‘That woman’s special sphere of duty, and dignity, and security is home, to be guarded against pagan ideas, principles, and practices.’<sup>144</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As has been seen, Moran had very strong links with the Callan Sisters of Mercy, who had supported him through very difficult pastoral circumstances in his early career as Bishop of Ossary. Apart from family ties with some, he was linked to them by a deep faith, piety and missionary zeal. He clearly wanted them to support his mission in Australia and they in turn were enthusiastic in giving this support.

The new century demanded a new education system. The 1904 reforms instigated by Professor Francis Anderson, and carried through by Peter Board as Director of Education, encouraged freedom, initiative and responsibility for both pupils and teachers. The development of a more able and flexible workforce, capable of implementing and utilising technological changes was the hoped for result. The Catholic Church, under the enlightened leadership of Cardinal Moran, was cognisant of the emerging demands of the new nation and Moran gave free rein to Inspector Whyte in his reforms of Catholic education and gave every encouragement to the progressive education of girls.

There was, however, a wide spectrum of responses to women’s suffrage in the Catholic community. The public debate over the granting of female suffrage was part of a much wider discussion of what constituted the ‘proper sphere’ for women. Holy Cross College was established as debates continued concerning what constituted the proper employment of

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<sup>142</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress*, Section V, paper 111, ‘Socialism’, pp. 425-436.

<sup>143</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress*, p. 571.

women prior to marriage and the desirability of their acceptance into such male dominated professions as law, politics and science. The ongoing resolution of the dilemma posed by the first wave women's movement in Australia and the extension of the franchise to women would have profound influence on the direction of girls' education for decades to come.

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<sup>144</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress*, p. 634.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE FOUNDATION YEARS 1909 – 1924

**‘The children were like a little family and as such developed a deep affection for the sisters.’** (‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’)

#### **The Holy Cross foundation community**

The poverty of the early years of the first Holy Cross convent community has been detailed in the Convent Chronicles.<sup>1</sup> The kitchen contained a fuel stove but with fuel rationed there were minor hardships such as no morning tea. Sr M. Dorothy O’Brien from the parochial school came in at noon to prepare a hot meal. In this same kitchen were prepared meals for the priests of the parish on Sundays. Furniture, especially in the sisters’ accommodation, was very sparse. It is recorded that ‘helpers were so few in numbers that team work was essential and all cooperated to the fullest extent, giving unstintingly of their time, talent and energy’.

A vivid picture has been drawn of a small band of women, most very young and inexperienced, led by their superior, Sr M. de Pazzi Dolan, ‘a wise and affectionate guide’. She was judged as particularly worthy of their loyalty and confidence because ‘she carried on some of the finest traditions in the congregation going back to Mother M. Catherine McAuley and taught to her by Mother M. Clare Dunphy. Among these must be named respect for the priesthood and devotion to the work of visitation.’<sup>2</sup> Mother M. Clare Dunphy was seen as a link to Athy and Callan and the very roots of the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin. Holy Cross was the last branch house Mother M. Clare established and according to the convent chronicler, she took a special interest in it, frequently visiting the sick and dying in the parish, ‘not to mention the care of the sick and dying sisters in her community’. The ‘spirit of gentle charity which she taught and lived’ was passed on to the founding community of sisters at Holy Cross.<sup>3</sup>

#### **The early pupils of Holy Cross High School (College)**

The Holy Cross admissions register dates from the beginning of the 1910 school year.

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<sup>1</sup> The convent chronicles are written in journal style giving details of the members of the convent community and major events, by one of the community allotted to the task and usually unidentified. In the early years of Holy Cross convent community the details were very sketchy. The most significant of the three archived Holy Cross convent chronicles is that which was begun in the 1960s; entitled ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, 1906-1979, it refers to previous decades, with the benefit of oral history.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Chronicles of Holy Cross’, n.p.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles, 1906-1979’, p. 13.



The first pupil recorded in the register of admissions of Holy Cross High School (as it was known then) was Winifred Marion Brakenreg (known as Marion). She had been a student at Our Lady of Mercy's College Parramatta but when her family moved to *Kimbolton* at Frenchman's Road, Randwick, she came to Holy Cross High School at the age of fifteen years. The occupation of her father was given as 'gentleman'. She was enrolled in the fourth grade of the high school and was to complete her secondary education in June 1913. Altogether there were fourteen new enrolments by July 1910. Apart from Marion, they were: Gwen Alexander, Edgecliff Road, Woollahra (father worked in Water and Sewerage); Rosie Haig, Edgecliff Road (father, agent); Kathleen and Zita Tarlington, Bishops Avenue, Randwick (father, insurance agent); the three Bergin children, Mary, Ellie, and Joe,<sup>4</sup> Adelaide Parade, Woollahra (father, manufacturer); Isobel Bradley, Adelaide Parade (father, detective); Leta Byrne, Adelaide Parade (mother's name was entered); Phyllis and Ida Ingrave, Grafton Street (father, teacher); Mollie Pope, Imperial Avenue, Bondi (father, gentleman).<sup>5</sup>

From these early enrolments it is seen that many of the earliest students were living locally, within easy walking distance of the school. The register also shows a spectrum of parental occupations and professions, as well as a few of independent means, simply classed as 'gentleman'. Apart from the latter, who could have been from the upper class, the listed occupations of the fathers indicated middle class status with very few exceptions.<sup>6</sup>

The family influence of the Parramatta sisters in drawing pupils to their select schools is exemplified by Kathleen Mary Bridget Trefle, an early Holy Cross student. Born on 13 March 1903 in Temora she was enrolled at the College soon after its establishment. Her father, John Louis Trefle, a farmer and newspaperman from the Temora district, was a cousin of Sr M. de Chantal McCrone. Trefle was a Minister in the first Labor Government in NSW. He had been elected the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Castlereagh district in November 1906, one of only four Catholics in the NSW

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<sup>4</sup> Boys were enrolled in the junior (primary) section of the College; this was a typical feature of the select (high) schools. Holy Cross enrolled boys up to about 1949.

<sup>5</sup> Holy Cross High School Register of Admissions, 1910-1924, PA. The school was officially Holy Cross High School for some decades, until 'College' was substituted for 'High School' in the 1930s. For the purposes of clarity, the school will be referred to as Holy Cross College or the College.

<sup>6</sup> In this thesis, middle class status is considered to encompass those of the professional and business owning classes, those of some education, and a degree of individual responsibility and freedom for initiative in their occupation.

Government, and remained in that seat until his death while in office in January 1915. Following his election he moved his family to Waverley Crescent, Bondi Junction.<sup>7</sup> Kathleen was to become a distinguished student of the College achieving excellent Leaving Certificate results. She was also a notable singer, often accompanied on piano by the gifted early Holy Cross musician, Eileen Barry.

The convent chronicler noted that the ‘important task in the first few years was to gain more pupils [but] the enthusiasm of those already enrolled lightened this task.’ At the same time Mother M. Clare ‘kept a watchful eye on the new College and admonished the Sisters not to encourage new enrolments if this meant drawing away children from existing Catholic schools’.<sup>8</sup> The 100<sup>th</sup> pupil, Irene Harrison of Old South Head Road, Waverley, was enrolled on 31 January 1916 and the College celebrated with a holiday. The College did not advertise in the *Australasian Catholic Directory*, as did many of the leading girls’ colleges, such as Our Lady of Mercy’s College, Parramatta,<sup>9</sup> St Vincent’s College Potts’ Point, St Brigid’s College Randwick, Loreto Convent Normanhurst, and Monte Sant’ Angelo College North Sydney. Most of the schools that did advertise there or in the Catholic newspaper, the *Freeman’s Journal*, were boarding as well as day schools.

### **The significance of convent high schools**

Holy Cross High School, Bondi Junction was established at the end of what Kyle has termed the second of three phases in the secondary education of Catholic girls. This phase, from the 1870s to about 1910, was characterised by the establishment of a relatively large number of Catholic secondary schools for girls. There were only six in the 1870s, and, as Kyle pointed out, thereafter ‘from 1880 a new convent invariably meant the opening of a girl’s high school or boarding college’.<sup>10</sup>

In 1890 there were only three state secondary schools for girls in NSW, although there were state-run superior schools providing some post-primary education. At the same time

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<sup>7</sup> Heather Radi, Peter Spearritt and Elizabeth Hinton, *Biographical Register of the New South Wales Parliament 1901-1970*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979, p. 276. He had been Minister of Agriculture and of Lands and was a relatively young 48 years when he died suddenly. His funeral at St. Mary’s Cathedral was attended by a large number of his political colleagues.

<sup>8</sup> Holy Cross Convent Chronicles, 1906-1979, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> The original name was St Mary’s High School, it was later known as Our Lady of Mercy’s College, and eventually became Our Lady of Mercy College by the early 1940s.

<sup>10</sup> Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny*, p. 73.

there were forty-four Catholic secondary girls' schools.<sup>11</sup> From their arrival in the colony in 1888, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy fostered the education of girls and were totally in tune with the bishops who believed in 'the primacy of women's moral and religious influence' and 'encouraged the education of girls as basic to the welfare of the family and hence society'.<sup>12</sup> This attitude to the education of girls is well illustrated by the delight expressed by Cardinal Moran in 1901 with the results of St Mary's High School, Parramatta when, in a letter to the sisters, he congratulated the children 'who succeeded so well at the University Examinations, especially to the prize winner. They will all have a bright Prize one day in Paradise.'<sup>13</sup>

Superior or select schools (often called high schools) were fee-paying schools, but were not high schools in the modern sense, the term now referring to any secondary school. Rather it meant 'high status' and originally catered for an overtly classed society. They became known as convent high schools or select schools because, as Barbaro points out, 'they made provision for an enriched curriculum that extended beyond basic, elementary schooling'.<sup>14</sup> These schools offered tuition from kindergarten to the highest examination level, whereas the parish primary school offered primary classes and post-primary classes for one or two years, when pupils would have reached the legal school leaving age of fourteen years. A select school was owned by the religious congregation, as distinct from a parochial school which was parish property and therefore the responsibility of the parish priest in terms of the building's construction, furnishing and maintenance and the religious doctrine taught there.

The significance of convent high schools in the history of women in Australia is considerable. Convent high schools constituted practically the only organized system of secondary education for girls in Australia for a span of over fifty years, from the latter part of the nineteenth century until the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> By 1898, there were forty-three Catholic centres of higher education in the Sydney Archdiocese; only nine of these were for boys. Their total enrolment was 2,414 pupils.<sup>16</sup> One of the

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<sup>11</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, pp. 259-260. See also McGrath, *These Women?*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>13</sup> Cardinal Moran to Parramatta, 28 July 1901, U1735, SAA.

<sup>14</sup> Barbaro, 'Recovering the Origins', p. 49. See also MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, p. 348.

<sup>16</sup> ACD, 1899, p. 21.

oldest of these in Sydney was St Vincent's College and Boarding School for Young Ladies, opened by the Sisters of Charity in 1882, on the fringe of the Eastern Suburbs at Potts Point, replacing a high school which they had established in 1871. It offered 'all Branches of a thorough English Education, Latin, French and German Languages, Mathematics, Singing, Drawing, and Theory of Music' and prepared its 'Young Ladies to pass the Matriculation, Senior and Junior University examinations'.<sup>17</sup>

By 1902 the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy had set up three select schools.<sup>18</sup> The fourth select school of the congregation was Holy Cross High School at Bondi Junction. Although established in 1908, the *Australasian Catholic Directory* has the first listing of Holy Cross High School, Bondi Junction in 1909 when the school was very new indeed. It was described as a superior school with three teachers.<sup>19</sup>

### **Convent schools and class structure**

The select school or college, as it would become more generally known, was usually built as a physically separate and self-contained institution but often within a parish complex. At Parramatta and Surry Hills the select school was established across the road from the parish-owned (parochial) primary school; at Bondi Junction a laneway separated Holy Cross College and the parochial primary school. Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley had vivid recollections of the significance of the laneway: 'This was quite a definite [sign of] class distinction. There were primaries on one side and the "colly kids" on the other. There were fights between the boys of both schools.'<sup>20</sup> It was customary to admit boys to the early grades of the primary section of the select school.

The raised social status of the select schools was based on their preparation of students for university entrance examinations, and on their higher fees.<sup>21</sup> The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy did not have to agonise over establishing schools for the more affluent as a clear precedent had been set for them by their founder Catherine McAuley. Many of the

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<sup>17</sup> Advertisement in the *ACD*, 1899, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> These were: Our Lady of Mercy's High School, Parramatta, St Anne's High School, Surry Hills; Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove. Later on in the twentieth century the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy would also establish select schools at Epping and Cronulla.

<sup>19</sup> *ACD*, 1909.

<sup>20</sup> Stanley, 'Trends in Education', n.p.

<sup>21</sup> The fees for the parish school were 6 pence a week compared with one or two shillings a week for the same primary classes at the select school. The higher fees for the College were paid by the term. By 1927 the Holy Cross College uniform would also set students apart from the pupils 'across the road'.

middle-class in Ireland could not afford to send their daughters to the Continent to finish their education. The select schools were advantageous to such parents in that they provided a select education for their daughters within their means, and, from the congregation's perspective, they were a source of funds from which the schools for the less wealthy could be subsidised, and were also a source of vocations to the religious life allowing the sisters' work with the marginalised to continue and expand.<sup>22</sup> Catherine McAuley also saw the benefit of ensuring that the children of the middle class under the sisters' care would grow up with a sense of responsibility for those in need.<sup>23</sup>

Barbaro notes that it was in keeping with the Ursuline pattern dating from the fifteenth century to use the income from select school fees to fund an adjoining elementary school for the less advantaged. The minimal fee charged by the sisters in the parish schools was often waived when parents could not pay.<sup>24</sup> A study of the Holy Cross convent accounts illustrates these points quite clearly. In 1917, fees collected from the high school amounted to £482, compared to £249 collected from the parochial school, yet there were only 100 pupils in the high school and 314 pupils in the parochial school.<sup>25</sup>

In an interview given in the early 1980s, Mother M. Thecla Kerwick commented on the class distinction between the two schools at Holy Cross, pointing out that there was ill feeling especially between the junior parts because there were two existing junior schools offering education from Kindergarten to Year 6.<sup>26</sup> From the admission rolls it can be seen that it was not long before Holy Cross select school drew its student population from a wide area with the majority coming from the well-off suburbs to the south, south-east and the east of Bondi Junction. While conducting select schools could be construed as reinforcing class differences (and it certainly did this), the intention behind it was the redistribution of wealth, using the wealth of the richer section of society to subsidise the education of the poorer.

Woollahra at this time was predominantly a middle-class municipality, as were its neighbouring municipalities, Randwick and Waverley. William F. Connell has asserted

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<sup>22</sup> McGrath, *These Women?* p.53.

<sup>23</sup> Savage, *Catherine McCauley*, p. 269.

<sup>24</sup> Barbaro, 'Recovering the Origins', p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> Statistics from ACD, 1918 and Holy Cross Convent Account Book, PA.

<sup>26</sup> Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, interview by Sr Patricia Donovan, early 1980s, typed transcript, PA.

that ‘questions of educational purpose, organisation, and curriculum are intimately connected to the school’s social setting’.<sup>27</sup> The sisters themselves generally had a middle-class background and certainly were devoted to teaching their young charges the attributes expected of young middle-class ‘ladies’ as wives and mothers-to-be, along with a strong academic education.

A more notable feature of the second phase in girl’s education, as specified by Kyle, was the adaptability and foresight shown by the Catholic women religious in introducing new domestic and commercial subjects into their curriculum. While domestic science had been introduced into State high schools by 1912, commercial subjects (for girls) were not acceptable. In the early years of the twentieth century, employment in commercial areas was seen as a male prerogative, reflecting the notion of the proper sphere for women. However, as an outcome of the mechanisation of the business world, and because women could be paid at considerably lower rates than men, women entered the area of office machine operation and, according to Kingston, before the outbreak of the First World War were well established in the public service in the clerical division as shorthand writers and typists’.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Church’s attitude to the ‘proper sphere’ of women**

According to O’Farrell, family structure as it had developed in Australia by the late nineteenth century was generally marked by sharp gender differentiation in function. Public life and politics, including Church politics, were generally seen as the preserve of men and this view was taken by many women.<sup>29</sup> This attitude stemmed from the perceived ‘grubbiness’ of politics with its rough and tumble unsuitable to women, as well as from the notion that woman should be focused on the important sphere of the home where she reigned supreme. As Bishop Doyle of Lismore explained:

Nature and Divine Providence have cut out a certain sphere for woman from which she cannot depart without serious injury to herself and the race. There is a domesticity which I say a woman is destined for, and any departure from it cannot be beneficent. The true woman is the woman who is trained to care for her

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<sup>27</sup> Connell, ‘Research and Writing in the History of Education’, p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Beverly Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann: women and work in Australia*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 92-94.

<sup>29</sup> O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 258.

home, to be proud of it. By leaving politics severely alone she will be much more true to her country and to God.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, as already indicated, women in the Australian colonies were being allowed into this hitherto male preserve of politics, albeit often with general reluctance. Women in South Australia and Western Australia had been granted the vote in 1894 and 1899 respectively. In April 1901, the Commonwealth Franchise Act established a uniform federal franchise including women. However, the women of New South Wales were still struggling to get a Woman's Suffrage Bill through the Legislative Assembly in 1902.<sup>31</sup>

The *Catholic Press* reported that a deputation of over 100 women representing inner city, suburban and country branches of the Womanhood Suffrage League was presented to the NSW Premier, John See, by MP for Newtown, Robert Hollis, in August 1901. Two of those in the deputation, sisters Annie and Belle Golding, were leading Catholic activists and suffragists working for the improved status of women in industry and the professions. A bill (the Women's Franchise Act) to grant female suffrage to New South Wales residents was finally passed in July 1902. Gaining the vote was just the first stage in a campaign to alter women's political awareness. Voting was not compulsory and the real battle was to get women to place themselves on the electoral rolls. Dr A.L. Kenny, (a notable lay Catholic), saw the intelligent use of the franchise as a golden opportunity for a 'solid Catholic party' to be returned to each colonial Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament.<sup>32</sup> His pleas at the Australasian Catholic Congress of 1900 were to result in the recording of the resolution that 'Catholics should recognise the moral obligation to register and vote at all parliamentary and municipal elections.'<sup>33</sup> Strongly supported by Moran, both the *Catholic Press*, which was pro- women's suffrage, and the *Freeman's Journal*, which had been anti-women's suffrage, urged women to register to vote. Specifically, they saw a strong Catholic vote as a means of promoting justice for Catholics in the educational field.

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<sup>30</sup> Bishop Doyle of Lismore, the *Catholic Press* (hereafter *CP*), 3 May 1902, p. 11. A reply by Rose Scott argued for domestic service to be accorded the status it deserves as 'the professions of all professions.' *CP*, 24 May 1902, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> In November 1900, the third reading of a private member's bill giving women the vote in NSW was rejected in the Upper House. Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia: a gift or a struggle?*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1992, p. 90.

<sup>32</sup> A.L. Kenny, 'On Catholic Registration' in *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, pp. 200-201. He urged all eligible men and women to register to vote.

<sup>33</sup> *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, p. xi.

Although the Catholic community was divided on the issue of women's suffrage, Cardinal Moran had made his stance clear. In 1902 at the height of the public debate on female franchise, a leading woman suffragist, Rose Scott, quoted the reply of Moran given five years before to a canvass by the NSW Women's Suffrage League of the candidates for the 1897 Federation Convention. Moran, as a candidate standing for election to the Convention, replied: 'For many years I have been in favour of extending to women the same privilege as enjoyed by men in the matter of suffrage, or voting at the municipal and parliamentary elections. I consider they have the right.'<sup>34</sup> In 1911, the noted Victorian suffragist, Vida Goldstein referred to this testimony in a letter she wrote to Cardinal Moran asking him for a 'new declaration' about woman's suffrage, which she could take with her on her forthcoming visit to England. She observed that: 'Some time ago you gave a testimony about Woman's Suffrage in this country, which has been used with great effect by the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance.'<sup>35</sup>

In a letter to Cardinal Moran, dated 9 February 1901, Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly asked if he wished the congregation to exercise their right to vote in the local government elections (as property owners they had four votes) and mentions that the Parramatta parish priest, Fr O'Reilly, had expressed his wish for the sisters to vote for a candidate 'who though non-Catholic, is a strong contrast to the bitter bigot who opposes him'.<sup>36</sup> There is evidence that the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy registered to vote after the granting of the right to NSW women in August 1902, no doubt influenced by Moran.<sup>37</sup> The founding pioneer women of Holy Cross College would appear to have been pro-woman suffrage.

### **Education issues of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress 1909**

As indicated, Holy Cross College was established during a time of ferment in Australian educational circles generally and Catholic educational circles in particular. Annie Golding, one of two Catholic lay women who read their papers themselves at the 1909 Congress, gave an impassioned plea for improvements in the status of women in

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<sup>34</sup> *CP*, 24 May 1902, p.26. This positive view of woman suffrage possibly remained a private one until aired by Scott in 1902. For a declaration of Moran's platform for the Federation Convention see *FJ*, 13 February 1897, reprinted in *CW*, 16 February 1997, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> Women's Political Association of Victoria to Cardinal Moran, signed Vida Goldstein (President), 6 February 1911. On it has been noted 'wrote approvingly 13 February 1911'. There is no copy of Moran's reply in the file, Moran Papers 1910-1911, Box U2315, SAA.

<sup>36</sup> Sr M. Alphonsus Shelley to Cardinal Moran, 9 February, 1901, Parramatta Sisters of Mercy file, SAA.

<sup>37</sup> Elector's Right, residential qualification certificates for the Sisters of Mercy Convent community at Surry Hills, in the electoral district of Surry Hills, dated 25 May 1904, in Surry Hills File, PA. Initially voting was not compulsory.



Australia, economically and socially. Speaking as a founding member of the Women's Progressive Association, she advocated the establishment of a chair of domestic science at the University of Sydney, and the establishment of a domestic science college there to train teachers in that discipline. Golding acknowledged the 'powerful influence [female suffrage] has wielded in raising the status of women'.<sup>38</sup>

In the discussion following, it was recorded that a Mrs Dwyer was more intensely interested in women's 'wrongs' rather than their 'rights' and she advised Australian women to keep out of factories. Here was a woman who saw the 'proper sphere' of women to be in their own home rearing 'Australian men and women'.<sup>39</sup> There were clearly a range of opinions within the Catholic community concerning the role of women in society.

Therese Magner, who also read her own paper at the 1909 Congress, proclaimed that what was taught in the schools was of little consequence, the subjects being 'only a means to an end'. From her perspective it was the method of teaching and how the child's faculties were trained which were of most importance, ideas she shared with Peter Board and the New Education Movement. She pleaded for the teaching of religion to be allotted to experienced teachers only and for these teachers to 'know something of [the student's] home life and of the world'. She stressed that the teacher of any subject, but especially of religion, 'must study the child's home environment'. As far as the discipline of girls was concerned, she argued for greater freedom and trust and the need to teach children to 'reason out the consequences'. Miss Magner was showing great sensibility in stating that young women should be treated as such, just as they were in their own home, not as children. Her most original ideas concerned sexism in the unfair treatment of girls. She protested that teachers stated openly they preferred to teach boys, because they were easier to manage, and complained that parishes had established after-school clubs for boys, and girls had smaller playgrounds and little or no active sports available. Miss Magner appeared most progressive in declaring the need for teachers to study

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<sup>38</sup> Annie Golding, 'The Industrial and Social Condition of Women in the Australian Commonwealth', *Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress*, pp. 287-294.

<sup>39</sup> *Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress*, p. 683. The identity of Mrs Dwyer is unknown. It is presumed she was not Mrs Kate Dwyer, the Golding's married sister and a passionate advocate for women's rights.

management and psychology.<sup>40</sup>

The acceptance of domestic science as a serious subject was an idea commonly held by the leading suffragists. In contrast, the Dominican Nuns from Santa Sabina College Strathfield strongly disagreed with Annie Golding's stance on the teaching of domestic science in schools. Designating domestic science as 'housekeeping', they argued that there was no time at school for such studies because of the demands of the examination system, but young women could attend a 'finishing course' which taught the 'elementary principles of book-keeping, general laws of sanitation and hygiene and a taste for needlework'.<sup>41</sup> This obviously catered for the upper middle class and did not take into account the extra expense a family would incur by further tuition, and was impractical therefore for the many girls in Catholic schools who were expected to supplement the family income as soon as possible. Largely due to the efforts of Kate Dwyer, Annie Golding's sister, a degree of Bachelor of Science in Domestic Science was established at the University of Sydney, but it was never a popular degree with undergraduates and only two such degrees were ever conferred.<sup>42</sup> Although facilities for domestic science were provided at Our Lady of Mercy College (hereafter OLMC) Parramatta in the 1940s, it was never taught at Holy Cross College.

Francis Anderson, the Professor of Logic and Mental Philosophy at the University of Sydney had been invited by Cardinal Moran to submit a paper for the 1909 Third Australasian Catholic Congress. Anderson obliged, but Moran deemed it unsuitable, because its focus on reforming the State system and university education was outside the scope of the Congress. Anderson's paper, 'The Organisation of National Education', was published instead in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.<sup>43</sup> However, Moran's invitation to Anderson underlines the breadth of Moran's educational vision.

### **The first Catholic Educational Conference of 1911**

As was his custom, Moran highlighted the achievements of Catholic education at the

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<sup>40</sup> Therese Magner, 'The Training of the Australian Girl', *Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress*, pp. 201-208.

<sup>41</sup> The Dominican Nuns, Strathfield, 'Thoughts on the Education of Girls', *Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress*, pp. 194-200.

<sup>42</sup> Ursula Bygott and K.J. Cable, *Pioneer Woman Graduates of the University of Sydney 1881-1921*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1985, p. 53. Kate Dwyer was appointed to the University Senate by the NSW Labor Government from 1916 to 1924.

<sup>43</sup> Ayres, *Prince of the Church*, pp. 267-268; see also *SMH*, 4 October 1909.

opening of the first Catholic Educational Conference in 1911, which had been called to celebrate thirty years of systemic Catholic education in NSW. In his opening remarks, after pointing out that the enrolment of Catholic children in Catholic schools was more than 48,000 in 1911, he observed: ‘For 30 years the Catholics of New South Wales have constantly, perseveringly, and successfully maintained their Religious schools.’<sup>44</sup>

Moran commented that even Parkes had been forced to acknowledge the success of the Catholic education system, quoting from Parkes’ book, *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*:

The Public School System had had a healthy power in compelling the schools of the Church to keep alive a vigorous rivalry with the schools of the State [...] The cultured ladies of religious sisterhoods and the enthusiasts of religious brotherhoods have been enlisted into the service of the separate schools, and it may be acknowledged with pleasure that in many cases are excellent teachers.<sup>45</sup>

Resolution 13, passed at the conclusion of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress in 1909, had stated that the principals of Catholic high schools and colleges should meet annually.<sup>46</sup> The first Catholic Educational Conference met from 17 January to 20 January 1911 in the chapter hall of St Mary’s Cathedral. Apart from celebrating thirty years of Catholic education as mentioned, its purpose and scope had been outlined by Moran in a paper sent to the participants prior to the conference. According to Moran there was an ‘educational crisis in New South Wales’ and the major concerns of the Catholic Church at that time were:

- Recompense in the form of state aid for the secular teaching they so successfully carried out (not for the teaching of religion)
- The opening of the competition for state bursaries to all pupils of every school
- The establishment of Catholic teacher training institutions

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<sup>44</sup> 1911 Catholic Educational Conference, *Proceedings*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>45</sup> Sir Henry Parkes, *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*, Longmans and Green, London, 1892; Quoted in 1911 Catholic Educational Conference *Proceedings*, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, p. ix.

- Inspection of Catholic schools by state inspectors, hence the need for uniformity of teaching
- Achieving standards in the physical environs of primary schools, also because of state inspections
- The decree of Pope Pius X on the age and preparation of children for First Holy Communion
- The cost and practicalities of introducing manual training in schools
- The availability of free rail passes (awarded to state school pupils) to non-state school pupils, particularly important for country pupils
- Taxation of school premises and playgrounds <sup>47</sup>

The participants at the First Catholic Educational Conference consisted of representatives from each of the orders of teaching religious (a first for the female religious). The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were represented by Mother M. Francis Kearney and Sr M. Josepha Lynch. Mother M. Francis was the congregational leader at the time and, although the conference record shows that sisters of other orders participated in the public discussion, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy apparently were observers rather than active participants on this occasion. As mentioned previously, Sr Josepha Lynch was named by Inspector Whyte as a very innovative and competent educator and Mother M. Francis Kearney was a skilled French teacher who subsequently taught many generations of Parramatta students and was a strong advocate for the registration of St Mary's High School, Parramatta, in 1912, so that it could receive state bursary girls. The 1911 Educational Conference had seemed a promising response to the Congress resolution, but following Moran's death that same year, the resolution was not acted upon again until 1922.

### **Early building extensions at Holy Cross**

Against this wider contextual background the microcosmic humble beginnings of Holy Cross were occurring. One room in the convent with just a blackboard and two desks sufficed until the beginning of 1909. The extra accommodation at this stage consisted of a type of summer house which was erected from one end of the main building near the classroom and at first occupied by the juniors and later Sixth Class when the former were

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<sup>47</sup>1911 Catholic Educational Conference, *Proceedings*, p. 23.

transferred to one of the music rooms. Subsequently the juniors' 'Tiny Town' came into existence on the upper corridor of the convent outside what was then the Community Room. The convent chronicler reported that Sr M. Vincent Sweeney supervised these 'perfectly trained little pupils seated at tiny desks'. When descending the stairs these 'perfect little mites never raised their eyes until they had made their genuflection at the little chapel door before passing through the side door of the Convent to freedom'.<sup>48</sup>

Increasingly the College needed to take over more of the convent to accommodate the increasing enrolments. By 1915 there was a clear need for more classrooms; a purpose built school as well as more accommodation for the sisters were required. The demonstrated need for more accommodation was evident from the healthy increase in the College enrolments in its first decade. In 1909 there were twenty pupils and three teachers; in 1911 there were thirty-six pupils taught by four sisters, and by 1914 the enrolments had climbed to sixty, although the staff had fallen back to three. By 1917 there were 100 pupils and six staff. This compares favourably with the enrolments in the neighbouring Catholic girls' high schools. There were 115 pupils and five teachers at St Clare's, Waverley, and 120 pupils (thirty-five boarders) with fifteen staff at Mount St Brigid, Randwick.<sup>49</sup>

Plans were drawn up to extend the existing building by repeating its design to the east, with a two storey school wing built on the new eastern end at right angles to the main section. The duplication of the original building seems to have been an inspired decision. According to the Convent Chronicles it was Sr M. de Chantal's idea and it produced an elegant symmetrical building of two stories.<sup>50</sup> This new building stretched along the Edgecliff Road frontage, facing the north and taking full advantage of the wonderful views down to the harbour and was completed in time for the 1918 school year. The extension provided a new wing for the College, a chapel, tiled hall and parlours and additional accommodation for the sisters on the upper floor. Over £500 was collected at the blessing of the new building.

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<sup>48</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', n.p.

<sup>49</sup> Statistics from *ACD* 1910, 1912, 1915, 1918.

<sup>50</sup> Sr M. de Chantal McCrone was an accomplished artist and with her sibling, Sr M. Theophile McCrone, was responsible for the original Romanesque design of the Mother M. Clare Memorial Chapel at Parramatta.

This planned expansion had come at a time that was unfavourable for building projects for a number of reasons. World War One was draining the workforce of skilled workers and materials and most significantly there was much discontent amongst workers producing an increasing frequency of strikes. The largest of these was the ‘Great Strike’ of August 1917, which began with workers at the Randwick tramway workshops, and eventually involved 76,000 workers, some fourteen per cent of the NSW workforce. This widespread industrial action affected fuel and food supplies, and public transport was thrown into chaos. The Holy Cross Convent Chronicles allude to ‘many influential opponents’ of the congregation’s scheme to extend the building. Others were sympathetic but the project seemed foolish and badly timed with the shocking news of the Australian casualties on the Western Front; in general, people were fearful of the future. Another reason for opposing such seemingly ostentatious expenditure would have been, no doubt, the pervasiveness of fierce sectarianism during the war years, which had peaked during the conscription debates and referenda of 1916 and 1917. It was reported by the convent chronicler that Sr M. de Pazzi Dolan, superior of the Holy Cross convent community, relied on the ‘providence of God and His protection’ and on the intercession of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart ‘whom the Sisters constantly invoked’. She remained firm and the building became a reality, although severe storms caused lengthy delays.<sup>51</sup>

Emilson has noted that Cardinal Moran emphasised the need for a well-planned convent, since if it looked hastily constructed people would not send their children, but if ‘it conveyed an impression of substance, careful planning and visual delight, then the new institution must surely succeed’.<sup>52</sup> It was expected that the heavy cost to the Parramatta congregation of the extension work at Holy Cross would be reimbursed by the new enrolments from the class of people to whom such things mattered. The Convent of Holy Cross, on a main thoroughfare, highly visible with its height and elevated position was substantial and made an arresting statement about the assured progress of Catholic education.

The school’s facilities certainly improved with the 1917 building extension. The music rooms were particularly amenable to practice and tuition as they were situated away from

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, pp. 23-5. The first statue in the convent chapel was of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and frequently her novena was said in the chapel to ask ‘her intercession in special difficulties and needs’.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Emilson, *Dancing St Dom’s Plot*, p. 20.

the main building. The new auditorium provided a hall for concerts and plays and orchestral and drama practice in line with the current educational philosophy. Only a portion of the new main building, which had doubled in size, was available for College purposes, as the numbers of sisters in the Holy Cross community had increased substantially. While the College enrolments were steadily increasing, the numbers at the parochial school across the laneway had exploded. They had risen from 189 in 1914 to 314 in 1917 and 384 by 1919. These extra pupils required extra teachers, who needed to be accommodated in the convent. The Holy Cross community in 1919, with Sr M. Bernard Trainor as superior, numbered thirteen sisters, six of these taught 116 pupils at the College, leaving possibly seven sisters to teach 384 pupils in the Parochial School. The difference in pupil-teacher ratios between parochial and select school is evident, though this has to be assessed in the light of the greater number of subject classes in the high school and the vigour of the teachers involved. Less robust sisters could cope with the smaller College primary classes, while younger and more vigorous teachers were generally assigned to the parochial school.<sup>53</sup>

During the 1910s and 1920s many of the Catholic girls' colleges, both in Sydney and country areas, emphasised their healthy surrounds. Monte Sant'Angelo College, in a 1928 advertisement, claimed: 'This Establishment is situated on the heights of North Sydney and stands unrivalled for beauty of surroundings and perfect healthiness.' In that same year, St Scholastica's College, Glebe Point, advertised: 'The College occupies one of the healthiest positions in or around Sydney, combining the advantages of country air with a refined city home.'<sup>54</sup> Certainly, the elevated position of Holy Cross College with its glorious views would have been a drawcard, but it could never claim to have extensive grounds and pleasant gardens for recreation, and a tennis court would not be erected until the 1930s. In its favour was the perception that Edgecliff Road, on the ridgeline high above Sydney Harbour and catching the north-easterly sea-breeze, was healthy in its surrounds.

### **Departmental registration**

The College building was completed and ready for use by 1918 and consequently the improved facilities encouraged the sisters to apply for full Leaving Certificate

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<sup>53</sup> Information from interviews conducted by Sophie McGrath in the 1980s, PA.

<sup>54</sup> 1928 *ACD*, p. 374 and p. 377.

Registration. This was granted on 16 July 1918 after a thorough inspection in June by the Government Inspector of Secondary Schools, Mr Elliot.<sup>55</sup> This registration by the Bursary Endowment Board was effective for two years. Registration was necessary for school pupils to compete for state bursaries and as at 31 December 1920, eighty schools in NSW were registered. Registration was conditional upon: the suitability of the school premises; the organisation and equipment of the school; the method and range of instruction; the efficiency of the teaching staff; and the general conduct of the school.<sup>56</sup>

To be registered, Holy Cross College had to display competence in all years up to the Leaving Certificate. In 1916 the University of Sydney had discontinued holding public examinations, with the exception of an annual matriculation examination on the results of which a number of University scholarships and prizes were awarded. The College staff at this time consisted of Sr M. de Chantal McCrone (principal), Sr M. Malachy Boyle, Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien, Sr M. le Merci O'Neill and Sr M. Evangelist Farragher, who was 'on loan' from the parochial school for a few periods of English, prior to the time of registration.

At this time Holy Cross provided examination for the following:

- The Qualifying Certificate, (QC), which indicated the holder had completed the primary course satisfactorily and was fit to enter upon a secondary course. The first QC examinations in NSW were held in December 1911.
- The Intermediate Certificate, (IC), a public examination, which marked the completion of the first stage of the secondary course. The IC examination was first held in NSW in November 1912. In 1918, this IC stage was extended from two years to three years.
- The Leaving Certificate, (LC), a public examination set by the University of Sydney, which was obtainable on graduation from the full secondary schooling course and, if it showed a pass in matriculation subjects, was accepted as indicative of adequate preparation and entrance to the University. From 1918, the secondary course was to be of five years duration. The LC exam was first held in NSW in November 1913.

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<sup>55</sup>1918 Registration Certificate for Holy Cross High School, PA.

<sup>56</sup>H.A. Smith, *The Official Year Book of NSW 1921*, Government Printer, Sydney, 1922, pp. 180-181.



Even before registration there had been some excellent results for the College in the Intermediate Certificate examinations but the Department of Education did not issue certificates to unregistered schools. Mr Elliott on noticing this fact during his inspection, arranged for Intermediate Certificates to be issued to all the successful Holy Cross candidates of 1917, pre-dating the College's registration. The first Holy Cross student to gain the Leaving Certificate was Lyle Jenkins, who sat for the examination in 1916, and then again in 1917, to enable her to matriculate. Lyle went on to the University to gain an Arts degree in 1921; she was the first of many ex-students of Holy Cross College to graduate from the University of Sydney, but there was great rejoicing over the first graduate.

Lyle Jenkins and her sister Renie lived almost opposite the convent and were Protestants. There were never many non-Catholics enrolled at Holy Cross. While such early Catholic secondary girls' schools as All Hallows, Brisbane (established by the Brisbane Sisters of Mercy in 1861 as a boarding and day school) had a very large percentage of Protestant girls among its students,<sup>57</sup> by the time Holy Cross was established, many Protestant denominations had established their own secondary girls' schools, and there was less reason for Protestant girls to attend Catholic convent high schools. In fact, the first non-Catholic girls' school in Australia, St Catherine's Anglican Day and Boarding School, was established in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, at Randwick, in 1856.

On the occasion of Mother M. Thecla's Diamond Jubilee in 1982, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley described Holy Cross College's accommodation of 1923, located in the new wing of 1917, as consisting of: 'Three classrooms built above what was to be known as the Auditorium.' She could recall one classroom overlooking Convent Lane and Holy Cross Primary School which 'accommodated 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Years at the back end, and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years at the front, separated by a large blackboard'.<sup>58</sup> The Fifth and Sixth primary classes were combined in the class-room looking directly onto the playground and the First Year of high school (Year 7) was located in the middle room next door. Classes, especially beyond the Intermediate Certificate, were small. There were five Leaving Certificate candidates in 1923, one of whom was Nell Stanley (Sr M. Gonzaga). It was most likely she who also recalled:

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<sup>57</sup> See Sr Jean-Marie Mahoney, *Dieu et Devoir: the story of All Hallows' School, Brisbane 1861-1981*, Boolarong Publications, 1985, pp. 12-14.

<sup>58</sup> Gaudry, *A Woman to Remember*, p. 21.

The playground was all grass and there was a garden bed running along the base of what became a grassed terrace, steeply banked, which was completely ‘out-of bounds.’ There was no tuck-shop. Fletcher’s Foundry was on the opposite side of Edgecliff Road. The tennis courts on the corner of Edgecliff Road and Adelaide Streets were used by the pupils on Fridays after school. Rounders was played every lunch-time in a very vigorous and competitive manner. Music, elocution, sewing and art were taught on Saturday afternoons (these would incur an extra fee) and ex-students often joined these Saturday classes. Ballet was taught by an ex-student and the Bjelke-Petersen School of Physical Culture would teach “Phys-Ed” as part of the school curriculum.<sup>59</sup>

### **Prospects for growth**

The 1911 census revealed that the Municipality of Woollahra had a population of 16,989 and a total of 3,424 occupied dwellings. It was still an area with appeal to the well-off, having a low population density reflected in large house blocks and good access to the city afforded by an extensive electric tram system. According to Peter Spearritt, ‘for a suburb to be fashionable it had to be free of industry and have large houses, ample land, topographical interest and preferably views as well’.<sup>60</sup> Woollahra LGA undoubtedly met these specifications. The average number of inhabitants in each occupied house in Woollahra LGA was 4.96 in 1911; it had barely changed in 1921 when it was 4.72. These averages compare with the City of Sydney occupancy average of 6.11 in 1911. The adjoining Waverley LGA had a total population of 19,831 with 4,211 occupied dwellings. It had almost the same average occupancy as Woollahra by 1921 and was also an area favoured by the middle class.

Given the select nature of the College, its potential for expansion depended on two main factors, apart from the desire of Catholic parents for a Catholic education for their children: the middle class nature of its catchment area and the continuing good teaching and corresponding successful results so highly valued by the middle class. The continuation of the middle class nature of Woollahra is evident in the high land values of the municipality. The average cost of new dwellings in Woollahra in 1919 was £1,200

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<sup>59</sup> Details taken ‘The Early College’, unpublished account, author unknown, most likely to be Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley, PA.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Spearritt, *Sydney’s Century: a history*, UNSWP, Sydney, 2000, p. 180.

when average annual male earnings were £200; this compares with an average cost of £700 in Randwick. The commonwealth basic wage had become £4 2s per week by 1921 and there was little variation in money values until after World War Two, when rapid inflation associated with the shortage of materials and the influx of migrants would cause wages to skyrocket. Woollahra municipality was unusual in its housing stock, dominated as it was by costly ‘mansion flats’. The area became increasingly identified with the ‘affluent tenant’.<sup>61</sup> There was a building boom in flats in Waverley and Woollahra in the 1920s and 1930s and by 1947, almost sixty per cent of all dwellings in Woollahra LGA were flats. Theoretically, the high density of population together with the high earning of most of the residents would mean an assured growth in student enrolments at Holy Cross College but in reality the ‘mansion flats’ were not suitable for larger families and Holy Cross College’s catchment area (the area from which pupils were drawn) would expand towards the suburbs to its south and the south-east.

The Catholicity of the population was recorded in the regular Episcopal Visitation Reports (hereafter EVR) of the parish priest. In his 1915 EVR, Fr Peter O’Reilly gave the civic population of the whole district as 10,000 with the general Catholic population at 2,011 and the Catholic population of Bondi Junction at 1,717.<sup>62</sup> These figures would impact more on the Holy Cross parochial school than Holy Cross College, as the catchment area for the latter was larger. The older students of the College could use public transport to access the school, whereas the younger pupils more likely walked, unless older family members could accompany the younger children on the tram journey. The College admission rolls show numerous multiple enrolments from individual families. A bank of recollections collected in the last years of the College includes references to older students bringing younger family members or relatives or neighbours to school. The daughter of Ada Egan (a student at Holy Cross College 1917-1926) recalls her mother telling stories of her naughtiness, when being taken to school by senior girl Ethel Cashman (later Sr M. St Jude).<sup>63</sup> Sheelagh Scanlan (1936-1941) recalls ‘we picked up the Liggins girls at Frenchman’s Road in a great flurry as younger siblings were

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<sup>61</sup> Max Kelly. ‘Pleasure and Profit: the Eastern Suburbs come of age 1919-1929’ in Jill Roe (ed.), *Twentieth Century Sydney: studies in urban and social history*, Hale and Iremonger in association with the Sydney History Group, 1980, p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> Episcopal Visitation Report for 1915, Holy Cross Parish file, SAA.

<sup>63</sup> *Holy Cross Woollahra 1908-2001: celebration of our education*, (hereafter *Celebration of Our Education*), p. 17.

shepherded onto the tram.’<sup>64</sup>

The College’s enrolments in 1917 had been only seventy-five but they steadily climbed and by 1934 had risen to 230 pupils in spite of the impact of the Depression. This was a similar size to its nearby rivals.<sup>65</sup> Holy Cross College had to compete for students from its very beginning. Across the lane was the Holy Cross parochial school which included a post-primary section preparing pupils for the IC and which also conducted classes for secretarial work. As indicated previously, there were a number of Catholic girls’ High Schools in the surrounding suburb, two of which, Mount St Brigid, Randwick and St Clare’s, Waverley were in close vicinity to Bondi Junction.

In the adjoining suburb of Waverley, the Poor Clare Sisters had founded St Clare’s College on Carrington Road in 1884. First known as Our Lady’s High School, it had 210 pupils in 1900<sup>66</sup> and was well established by 1908, the year Holy Cross High School began. It was classed as a superior school for day pupils with boys in the infants’ level. St Clare’s College had many similarities to Holy Cross College in terms of size, academic curriculum and accomplishments taught, and it was only a few tram stops distant from Bondi Junction. Trends in enrolment numbers indicate that St Clare’s lost pupils to Holy Cross as it became established. By 1909, the first full year of operation of Holy Cross High School, St Clare’s numbers had dropped to sixty-three and by 1920 were only 110; in 1929 St Clare’s had 161 pupils with seven staff, while Holy Cross had 220 pupils with eight staff. Until the 1960s, St Clare’s would remain a middle-sized school, similar to Holy Cross in size and in not having boarders, with only 252 pupils in 1950.<sup>67</sup>

Also in a nearby suburb was Mount St Brigid High School, conducted by the Sisters of St Brigid at Avoca Street, Randwick. Begun in 1901 by the Brigidine Sisters, this small private school provided secondary schooling for both day pupils and boarders; it also had primary pupils. By 1915 there were 120 pupils, including thirty-five boarders. It advertised to prepare pupils for all examinations by a ‘thorough English education’,

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<sup>64</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 67. Sheelagh travelled from Randwick to Bondi Junction on the tram.

<sup>65</sup> John Luttrell and Marie Lourey, *St Mary’s to St Catherine’s: Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Sydney 1836-2006*, 2nd edition, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2006, p. 52. See Table 3, ch.4, this thesis, p.111 for a comparison of enrolments for a selection of Catholic secondary girls’ colleges, including Holy Cross.

<sup>66</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary’s to St Catherine’s*, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Statistics taken from *ACD* for those years.

which included languages, mathematics, shorthand, type-writing, elocution, music, painting and needlework.<sup>68</sup> Monte Oliveto Convent School, in Albert Street, Woollahra, (Edgecliff), was a superior school conducted by the Sisters of Charity. In 1885, in an advertisement in the *Freeman's Journal* it was stated that 'the Studies [at Monte Oliveto] would be directed with a view to the University Examinations' which had been opened up to female students the year before. It was further stated that 'each quarter the pupils would be subjected to a Searching Examination, the result of which will be forwarded to the parents of the young lady Boarders and day pupils'.<sup>69</sup>

Competition was close. One could well ask the question: Was Holy Cross College needed in this area? Would not the Holy Cross parochial school have sufficed and acted as a feeder school for St Clare's and Monte Oliveto? As shown, the evidence points to Moran's determination to install the Parramatta sisters in the Waverley District early into the new century. As mentioned previously, the relationship of Moran with the Franciscans was strained. No doubt the strong connection of the Poor Clare Sisters with the Franciscans led Moran to pass them over in favour of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy with whom he had a close and tested relationship. Monte Oliveto Convent School was a small adjunct to St Vincent's College, Potts Point and situated in the Edgecliff parish, which was administered by the Franciscans and therefore best avoided by Moran.

### FOCUS YEARS 1921-22

- ❖ In NSW in 1921, 1232 candidates were presented for the Leaving Certificate examination which marked the completion of the secondary school course and, as indicated, was also used to determine matriculation to Sydney University.<sup>70</sup> Some seventy per cent of these candidates passed. Holy Cross High School, Woollahra had two successful candidates: Doreen Green obtained first-class passes (As) in English and geography and second-class passes (Bs) in Latin, French and mathematics II; Mary Stanley obtained As in mathematics II and music and Bs in English, Latin, French and mathematics I. In comparison, Kincoppal Convent High School, Elizabeth Bay and Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney had one successful candidate. The Dominican Convent School, Strathfield, Sacred Heart Convent School, Rose Bay

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<sup>68</sup> Statistics taken from Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. 25 and p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> *FJ*, 3 January 1885, p.11.

- and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington were other select girls' schools who had two successful candidates. Our Lady of Mercy's College, Parramatta had seven and Bethlehem Ladies' College, Ashfield had five.<sup>71</sup> Even though this was the time when the intellectual Cardinal Moran had been replaced by the anti-intellectual Archbishop Kelly, who discouraged university education for girls, women religious educators were clearly encouraging the higher education of women.
- ❖ In 1922, it was recorded in official statistical records that more than eighty per cent of the pupils at private schools were enrolled at Catholic 'establishments', which since 1910 had grown at a faster rate than the population.<sup>72</sup> In that same year, at a conference of teachers from Catholic schools, the Catholic Education Association was formed.<sup>73</sup> It resolved to have an annual conference to facilitate discussion of educational issues. This seems to denote that the Catholic education system, which was described by the *Catholic Press* as 'an asset to the nation', had found a confidence it had not possessed before, despite the rhetoric of Moran and his successor and the Catholic press generally.<sup>74</sup>
  - ❖ For most pupils of Holy Cross College the culmination of their secondary education was the Intermediate Certificate Examination. In the 1921 IC examination, the school achieved creditable results, with six pupils passing. Three of the girls gained an A pass in music and four gained an A pass in shorthand. For its relatively young age, Holy Cross was holding its own with some of the leading Catholic girls' schools in Sydney and the number of successful examinees was on a par with other schools for day pupils, such as Bethlehem Ladies' College (eight), Kincoppal (three), Monte Sant'Angelo (five), St Thomas's Girls' Intermediate High School, Lewisham (five).<sup>75</sup>
  - ❖ The Catholic Federation, which had been established to promote the Catholic cause, published in the *Catholic Press*, an analysis of the 1921 examination results (as shown in Table 1 below) for both the Intermediate Certificate and the Leaving Certificate.

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<sup>70</sup> If candidates failed to qualify for matriculation at the LC, then at the cost of £3 they would be obliged to take all the subjects of the matriculation examination in accordance with the regulations.

<sup>71</sup> *CP*, 2 February, 1922, p. 17. Titles of schools are as given in the results report.

<sup>72</sup> *Official Year Book of NSW 1921*, p. 168.

<sup>73</sup> See *CP*, 1 June 1922, p. 12 and pp. 18-19.

<sup>74</sup> *CP*, 27 April 1922, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> *CP*, 23 February 1922, p. 23.

The writer claimed that ‘in New South Wales today we find a Catholic educational system which is the envy of the members of other denominations’. Using the comparison of the three sectors of the education system as given in the table below, the same writer claims:

If, as we are told, 40 per cent of our Catholic children attend the Catholic schools, these percentages are far above those which should be obtained to show that the secular education imparted in our schools is of as high a standard as that provided by the State schools.<sup>76</sup>

**Table 1: Intermediate Certificate Results, 1921<sup>77</sup>**

Passes	Catholic	State	Private
Metropolitan, Girls	147	309	242
Metropolitan, Boys	185	569	201
Country Candidates	275	860	112
Totals	699	1738	555
Percentage of Total Passes	20.93	59.93	19.14

### **Leaving Certificate Results, 1921**

Passes	Catholic	State	Private
Metropolitan, Girls	47	128	62
Metropolitan, Boys	76	164	134
Country Candidates	52	177	20
Totals	175	468	201
Percentage of Total Passes	20.35	54.5	23.37

<sup>76</sup> CP, 27 April 1922, p. 5. The Catholic Federation was a lobby group for Catholic interests, principally state aid for church schools. For a comprehensive history of the Catholic Federation, see Jeff Kildea, *Tearing the Fabric: sectarianism in Australia 1910-1925*, Citadel Books, 2002.

<sup>77</sup> CP, 27 April 1922, p. 5.

- ❖ The published examination results for the 1922 IC and LC show that Holy Cross College offered a range of subjects which were standard for girls' high schools at that time. Traditional science subjects generally at this time were not on offer for the LC, although there was a strong push for geography to be treated as a science.<sup>78</sup> The LC pupils could study (besides compulsory English) Latin, French, maths I and II, geography and music. Subjects available for IC candidates were English, history, maths I and II, Latin, French, botany, business principles, shorthand and art. New regulations governing university matriculation came into force at the 1922 LC examinations and the March 1923 matriculation examinations. Candidates were now required to obtain a higher standard pass in English and in another language (Latin, Greek, French or German), and the whole examination was to be passed at one sitting.

### **Conclusion**

As has been seen, the early development of Holy Cross College was promoted by its easy access by public transport, the loyalty of Catholic parishioners as well as family and friends of the Sisters of Mercy, the early signs of a capacity for high standards especially in the music and academic fields, the attainment of official registration, and the ongoing provision of adequate school accommodation.

This foundation period in the College's development took place within the ongoing discourse concerning education, both within the Catholic community, led by Moran initially, and the wider community. Accompanying this discourse was the continuing discourse concerning the proper sphere of woman and the importance of raising the profile of domestic education.

Within the microcosm of Holy Cross College there was developing a strong sense of community. Nell Stanley has left a somewhat idyllic description of life as a junior student at Holy Cross College in the 1920s:

Holy Cross from the beginning was a very happy place. The enrolment was very small from Kindergarten to Leaving Certificate. Everyone knew everyone.

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<sup>78</sup> See Professor Griffith Taylor's comments as reported in *CP*, 18 May, 1922, p. 13.



There was no uniform. The garden was very beautiful ... the present concrete area was grassed. We sat all over this grassed area for lunch ... There was no sport as we know it today ... We could learn music, ball-room and ballet-dancing, elocution, art as an extra, fancy-work, typing, singing. In fact, we had a very good, all-round education. The seniors held some sway over the juniors and we mostly respected them. On Boxing Day each year, it was customary for a good proportion of the school to meet for a picnic at Bondi Beach – our parents trusted us to our seniors.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 25.

## CHAPTER 4

### HOLY CROSS COLLEGE BUILDS AN IDENTITY 1925-1938

#### Developments in the Eastern Suburbs

Sydney's unique topography, with its long estuarine harbour with many hundreds of kilometres of shoreline and picturesque embayments, would naturally dictate the cost of housing and land and consequently the distribution of social classes. The three top ranking Sydney municipalities in 1921 were Woollahra, Mosman and Ku-ring-gai.<sup>1</sup> A 1923 guide to the Eastern Suburbs describes it as an area 'thickly populated with the prettiest houses of the middle and comfortable classes'.<sup>2</sup> In 1928 the unimproved capital value of a home site in Woollahra Municipality was £1,142 compared to £111 in the Holroyd Municipality to the south of Parramatta.<sup>3</sup>

The stuccoed terrace of the early inner city suburbs had lost its charm and many people regarded this housing style as low grade. As a result of avaricious building practices in suburbs such as Paddington and Surry Hills, much of the existing housing stock had become shoddy, even a health hazard. By the 1920s both real estate agents and builders were convincing in their claims of the supposed link between paying rent and poverty, crowding, ill-health and social stigma.<sup>4</sup> Home ownership for 'aspirational' newly married couples became the norm in booming Sydney.

Infrastructure added to the natural assets of the Eastern Suburbs in creating a highly desirable location for young families. As early as 1889, Waverley and Woollahra were connected to the Bondi ocean outfall sewer and by 1920 over ninety per cent of properties in these suburbs were sewered.<sup>5</sup> Bondi Beach, destined to become the most famous beach in the nation, would profit from a remarkable property boom in the 1920s and 1930s, providing many pupils for Holy Cross College and the Sisters of Mercy intermediate school, St Anne's, Bondi Beach. At Bondi, the houses were not large but were ample for the raising of a family. A 1928 advertisement advised: 'For quick sale of a beautiful

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<sup>1</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Eastern Suburbs and District Guide*, Australian General Publicity Co., Sydney, 1923, p. 43. See also Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Karskens, 'A Half-World between City and Country: 1920s Concord' in Kelly, *Sydney, City of Suburbs*, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 40.

bungalow right on the Beach where £200,000 is now being spent on improvements [...] easily worth £2,750', but being offered for £2,150.<sup>6</sup> This house had seven rooms and a motor garage, indicating it would appeal to a middle class/professional client. The 'improvements' mentioned were the building of the Bondi Beach esplanade and bathing pavilion.<sup>7</sup> Ironically, as late as 1920, the garbage of Woollahra was being deposited on neighbouring Bellevue Hill, by then developing into a highly desirable suburb.<sup>8</sup>

Yet in spite of the (supposed) link between paying rent and poverty and other social ills, the middle class were also being encouraged to invest in flat dwellings.<sup>9</sup> Many of these would be constructed in the Holy Cross College catchment area, some on the large blocks where gracious mansions once stood along the ridge line of the Old South Head Road, taking advantage of the unsurpassed views and healthy sea breezes.<sup>10</sup> Holy Cross College continued to benefit from the ease of access to Bondi Junction which was developing even more into a major transport hub for trams and buses serving the eastern and south-eastern section of the Eastern Suburbs. By 1932, trams to Bondi ran every seven-eight minutes in peak times with the trip from Bondi to Railway Square taking thirty-six minutes.<sup>11</sup> Because of this, Holy Cross College could draw on a very extensive catchment area. Cardinal Moran had indeed made an excellent choice in locating the Holy Cross Church immediately behind the 'Junction'.<sup>12</sup>

### **Growing enrolments and curriculum at Holy Cross College in the 1920s**

At this time, the vast majority of pupils educated by religious in New South Wales were enrolled in parochial schools. In 1926, some 35,707 out of a total of 41,180 were enrolled in a parish school and only 13 per cent attended secondary schools and colleges.<sup>13</sup> It was not only superior schools that prepared girls for the IC. The parochial school at St Peter's

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<sup>6</sup> *SMH*, 20 July, 1928, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> One million people used the changing sheds at Bondi Beach between 1929 (they were opened in December 1929) and 1933, exhibition notes for 'Bondi: the playground of the Pacific', Historic Houses Trust Exhibition, Museum of Sydney, December 2005 – March 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 24. The local name for Bellevue Hill was Vinegar Hill, presumably because of the odour from the refuse.

<sup>9</sup> M.A. Harris, *Where to Live: ABC guide to Sydney and suburbs*, Marchant and Co., Sydney, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Exhibition notes for 'Bondi: the playground of the Pacific'.

<sup>12</sup> An undated hand drawn map shows the location of Catholic churches in the Eastern Suburbs in relation to tramlines, existing and proposed. It was drawn up at the time of the establishment of Holy Cross Parish in 1906 and is possibly by Cardinal Moran, Waverley Parish file, SAA.

<sup>13</sup> *CP*, 10 February 1927, p. 26.

Surry Hills, staffed by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, had three successful candidates in the 1923 Intermediate Certificate exam.<sup>14</sup> It was clear that parish schools in Australia were not providing mainly for the poor but were educating the majority of young Catholics, most of whom did not aspire to more than a Qualifying Certificate.

Despite its ideal position, over the 1920s, Holy Cross struggled to gain students for the upper levels of the superior school but was not atypical in this regard. In 1923, one Holy Cross student, Cecily McColgan, gained the LC and in 1925, two Holy Cross students, Adela Moses and Helen Stanley (Sr M. Gonzaga), were successful.<sup>15</sup> These two girls had been part of a very small Intermediate class of 1923, when only five pupils gained the Intermediate Certificate: Adela and Helen, Isla Loughlin, Angela Phillips and Mollie Pollack. Helen Stanley, whose name was recorded as Nell in the results of the 1923 IC exam, achieved six As, displaying signs of her future academic brilliance.<sup>16</sup>

For the majority of Holy Cross students, their last school examination was the Intermediate Certificate. It was still rare for a female pupil to sit for the Leaving Certificate thus indicating her potential to proceed to a university course. In 1926, Our Lady of Mercy's College, Parramatta had only three candidates pass the LC; Holy Cross had none,<sup>17</sup> but in the 1926 Intermediate examination, ten pupils of Holy Cross High School, Woollahra, succeeded: Mary Arnott, Molly Corcoran, Kathleen Cullen, Gwendoline Gerrard, Elma Hutchinson, Joyce Lockyer, Kathleen O'Keefe, Genevieve Robinson, Eileen Steenson, and Marie Whealey. Their subjects ranged across English, history, maths 1 and 11, Latin, French, music, shorthand theory, business principles and art.<sup>18</sup>

Genevieve Robinson of Wellington Street, Bondi, enrolled at Holy Cross in 1926, the year she sat the IC exams. When Genevieve, aged ninety years, was interviewed in 2000, she had very clear memories of her teachers: Sr M. Josephine Carmichael (the principal)

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<sup>14</sup> *CP*, 24 January 1924, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> *CP*, 21 January 1924, p. 16, and *CP*, 28 January 1926, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> *CP*, 24 January 1924, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> *CP*, 27 January 1927, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> *CP*, 10 February 1927, pp. 26-27. This is an early reference to the school's location as Woollahra, rather than Bondi Junction, perhaps in order to make it easier to distinguish the parish school from the select school. The parish (parochial) school continued to be named after the parish of Holy Cross, Bondi Junction.

who taught maths and music; Sr M. Enda Codd; Sr. M. Thecla Kerwick; and Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien who taught her music, at which Genevieve excelled.<sup>19</sup> Genevieve's IC results were commendable: A passes in English, maths 1 and 11, and music and B passes in history and French. She would go on to sit the LC exams in 1928 in these same six subjects. Another of Genevieve's classmates who achieved four A passes was Mollie Corcoran, who had been at Holy Cross since 1917 and lived at Grafton Street, Woollahra; her father's occupation was given as clerk. Gwendoline Gerrard lived at Westbourne Street, Stanmore and had enrolled in February 1924. It is possible she had obtained a scholarship from the sisters to attend Holy Cross.

That Holy Cross students came from an increasingly wide range of locations in the Eastern Suburbs, is well illustrated by the members of the 1926 IC class who came from the suburbs of Bondi Junction, Woollahra, Randwick, Vaucluse, Rose Bay and Daceyville. Their parents tended to have middle class occupations, with public service positions predominant.<sup>20</sup> One of the 1926 class, Mary Arnott, lived at Daceyville, dubbed the 'garden suburb'. It had been designed by John Sulman, commissioned by the Labor government and built in the Randwick municipality by the housing board to provide accommodation for working class owner-occupiers. Mary lived quite close to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington, and Mt St Brigid, Randwick yet travelled a considerable distance to Holy Cross.

Only three candidates from the 1926 IC class at Holy Cross went on to sit the 1928 LC exam; Genevieve Robinson, Gwen Gerrard and Mary Arnott, and all three girls gained a good pass, winning a scholarship to the Sydney Teacher Training College.<sup>21</sup> Such a scholarship was tenable for two years and paid an allowance of £50 per annum if living at home or £80 if boarding. It also paid a textbook allowance. None of the three won a university Public Exhibition valued between £100 and £300. Only 200 of these were awarded and since 2,050 candidates had sat for the 1928 LC an extremely good pass was required. The exhibitions were awarded strictly on merit and were not means tested. We know from Genevieve's recollections that Gwen and Mary went on to the University of Sydney and she herself went on to business college, though her LC result was the best

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<sup>19</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> All information obtained from the Holy Cross College admission rolls, 1910-1941, PA.

<sup>21</sup> *CP*, 28 February 1929, p. 16.

of the three, with A passes in maths 1 and 11 and music and B passes in English, French and modern history.<sup>22</sup>

Geography was not taught at this time at Holy Cross, neither was any science-based subject. Most of the Catholic girls' colleges did not offer science; if they did it was botany. At the same time there were many Catholic boys' colleges similarly restricted; lack of properly equipped (and expensive) science laboratories and properly trained teachers were the most likely reasons. Examination of 1926 LC results shows that botany was generally taught at large and well established Catholic girls' colleges such as the Dominican Convent School, Santa Sabina, Strathfield, the Good Samaritan Convent School, Marrickville and Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney.

An analysis of the 1926 Intermediate Certificate results of Catholic schools also shows a marked correlation between science subjects offered and the teaching order, as well as the 'class' and sex of their pupils. At this stage, no Christian Brothers high school offered a science subject; neither did any of the three secondary schools run by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. The Jesuits offered both physics and chemistry at their two Sydney colleges, as did the Marist Brothers at Hunters Hill and Randwick. At the Marist Brothers High School at Darlinghurst only chemistry was offered.<sup>23</sup> Obviously science was largely considered a male field and the expense involved could best be borne by the richer class.

The sister school to Holy Cross, Our Lady of Mercy's College, Parramatta, advertised itself as offering 'all branches of a thorough English education: Latin, the Modern Languages, Mathematics, Singing, Elocution, Physical Culture, Freehand and Geometrical Drawing, Painting, Music, Art, Needlework, Dressmaking, Millinery'. It also provided 'special facilities' for those who desired to follow a commercial course in Shorthand, Typewriting and Bookkeeping.<sup>24</sup> The Holy Cross College curriculum was similar and it offered an additional one year commercial grounding for those students who had completed the Intermediate Certificate stage. Typical of the students choosing this path was Kathleen Walker, who had enrolled at Holy Cross in February 1923, and as a

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<sup>22</sup> CP, 31 January 1929, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> CP, 20 January 1927, pp. 22-23 and 27 January 1927, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> 1928 ACD, p. 368.

pupil in the commercial class in 1927, won a prize of £2 5s for her score in Pitman's shorthand.<sup>25</sup>

Holy Cross College steadily increased its enrolments, as it gained a reputation for academic and music results, and was beginning to make its mark as an educational institution of note in the 1920s. Its total enrolment for 1927 of 190 had increased to 220 students by 1929 and in the same period the staff had increased from six to eight. Though Holy Cross College was still small relative to the parochial school across the lane with its 519 children in 1929, the former maintained its superior social position. The neighbouring superior school, St Clare's Waverley, with 161 students in 1929, was obviously suffering from the proximity of Holy Cross College Woollahra.<sup>26</sup> Though written in the 1940s, the mentality behind the movement from St Clare's to Holy Cross is indicated in a letter to the Mother Abbess of St Clare's explaining the transfer of Maureen O'Rourke to Holy Cross:

Holy Cross is my Alma Mater and I have been actively associated with the Ex-students Union ever since I left school. Naturally I have a very strong attachment to the school, also a great esteem for the nuns, some of whom were my own classmates and I feel I would love my little girls to be with them.<sup>27</sup>

### **Developing a unique identity**

With the broadening of the catchment area for the College, it appears that there was a perceived need to 'label' the students who were using public transport to reach the school and the issue of school uniform came to the fore. Certainly this was a time when the wider educational community were recognising school spirit and cohesion as important aspects of school operations. It was increasingly perceived that uniformity in dress would promote desired values. In 1927, Holy Cross College acquired its first uniform consisting of a navy skirt, white blouse and navy tie. The boys in the College junior school wore navy pants and tie and white shirt.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *CP*, 10 February 1927, pp. 26-27.

<sup>26</sup> Statistics for 1927 in 1928 *ACD* and for 1929 in 1930 *ACD*.

<sup>27</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 23. The letter, written by Millie O'Rourke, nee Hart, is still in the family's possession. She was one of three sisters who attended Holy Cross College.

<sup>28</sup> There were still some boys in the junior classes.

The school colours were now dark blue and white and these were the colours used in the decorations for a 1928 ex-students' dance. A 1928 article in the *Freeman's Journal* reports in great detail a dance held by Holy Cross, Bondi Junction, ex-students at the *Casino*, Bondi.<sup>29</sup> The office bearers of the association were listed as: Miss Kathleen Trefle, president; Mesdames P. Clifford and H. Dixon, vice-presidents; Fr O'Reilly, Fr Kennedy and Mr T. Kerwick, treasurers. It is significant that all the treasurers were male; two were priests of the parish and the third on the parish council. This would appear to reflect the popular notion that business matters were to be handled by men and women belonged in the 'private' sphere of the home. It is not clear when the association had its inauguration. In contradiction to the 1928 report, the Holy Cross convent chronicler gave 1932 as the year. Perhaps a constitution was not drawn up until 1932. According to the convent chronicler, the silver jubilee of the ex-students' association was held in 1957, which supports 1932 as the foundation date.

### **Progress in the Catholic education system in the 1920s**

At first it seemed that Moran's death in 1911 had put a stop to many, if not most, of the reforms of the Catholic education system that he had been planning and the concrete initiatives already taken to support Catholic educators. But all was not lost and the Sydney Archdiocese (in reality the Archdiocesan Inspector of Schools) organised Saturday morning lectures at the Chapter Hall of St Mary's Cathedral which were reported in 1923 as being 'well attended' and 'very helpful'.<sup>30</sup> The Catholic Education Association (hereafter CEA) formed in 1922, organised quarterly meetings to which all Catholic teachers were invited, and an annual Catholic Teachers' Conference held in the school vacation at the end of term one. The annual conferences were a great success, both in terms of numbers attending, and the on-going ripples of educational reform, which were well publicised in the *Catholic Press*.<sup>31</sup> Most importantly the CEA was providing a forum for the presentation and debate of the latest educational theories and practices. Country teachers were encouraged to travel to Sydney for the annual conference and their train ticket was subsidised by the government, provided they supplied their full, family name as well as their religious name. An examination of the proposed agenda for the

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<sup>29</sup> *FJ*, 9 August 1928, p. 40. Apart from it being an interesting window on the fashions of the day, it has a comprehensive listing of ex-students and active members of Holy Cross parish, many of whom were the parent(s) of present and past students of Holy Cross College.

<sup>30</sup> 1923 Annual Report of the Archdiocesan Inspector of Schools, *CP*, 7 February 1924, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> The *Catholic Press* devoted an entire page to educational matters, and encouraged correspondence.



1923 Catholic Teachers' Conference indicates that the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were planning to present a paper on: 'The purpose of the teacher is to train the pupil to be more and more independent of the teacher.' Other significant proposed papers were: 'The Use and Abuse of Examinations' by the Sisters of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Kincoppal, and 'Against the Examination System' by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Kensington.<sup>32</sup> While men dominated the educational scene at the higher administrative level, Miss Constance Le Plastrier, a highly competent educator and devout Catholic convert, was an ongoing important influence and a member of the organising committee of the CEA by 1927, when she was joined on the organising committee of the CEA annual conference by Sr M. Dunstan Wilson of St Vincent's College, Potts Point.<sup>33</sup>

At the 1928 CEA Teachers' Conference, Sr M. Camillus Lilly of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta presented the comprehensive paper, 'Planning and Presenting Lessons of Various Types'. That same year she became the second woman religious on the CEA organising committee.<sup>34</sup> Her paper displayed a good grasp of contemporary theories of child development and learning, as well as giving clear examples of specific lesson plans. In her paper, Sr M. Camillus astutely commented that: 'The best teachers never reach the point where preparation for the day's work is unnecessary. A plan is as necessary to a teacher as to a builder, a general or an engineer.'<sup>35</sup>

As a response to developments in education in the wider community, the Australian bishops mandated for a full year of professional training for members of religious congregations involved in education. It became a reality for the Sisters of Mercy,

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<sup>32</sup> Meeting agenda May 1923, Archbishop Kelly, Personal and Administrative Papers, 1915-22, T1628, SAA.

<sup>33</sup> Constance Le Plastrier was appointed a senior mistress at Redlands College, Cremorne in 1904. A noted botanist, she was the first woman elected as President of the Field Naturalists' Society. She wrote for the *Australian Messenger of the Sacred Heart* and tracts for the Australian Catholic Truth Society. For over 20 years she wrote the 'Education Notes' in the *Catholic Press*. She was secretary of the Teachers Guild of NSW from 1909-1937.

<sup>34</sup> Women who entered religious congregation were usually well educated according to the standard education of women of the time, and Sr M. Dunstan Wilson was exceedingly well educated for a woman of the period. She had an M.A. and Dip.Ed. Sr M. Camillus Lilly had won a bursary from the parochial school at Surry Hills to OLMC Parramatta, where she became Head Boarder. She was a renowned educator and was widely read in religious and educational studies as shown by her published paper in the proceedings of the CEA Teachers Conference. She was in charge of the teacher training of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy novices.

<sup>35</sup> Sr M. Camillus Lilly, Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, 'Planning and Presenting Lessons of Various Types', Catholic Education Association, *Teachers' Conference and Report 1928*, pp. 24-42. The papers given at the CEA Conferences were printed and made available for sale; they were advertised in the *Catholic Press* and sold for about 5 shillings.

Parramatta by the 1930s.<sup>36</sup> Precipitating this departure from previous practice of in-service training was the appointment in 1931 of a Board of Registration by the bishops to supervise the training of religious teachers in NSW. Such supervision promoted the intellectual underpinning of the sisters' studies in religion; the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy like most women religious received limited formal tertiary education in philosophy, scripture and theology.<sup>37</sup>

As early as 1927, there had been, in NSW, discussions to consider the advisability of setting up a scheme for the registration of Catholic training colleges. A meeting held at St Mary's Cathedral on 3 December 1927, and attended by representatives of all the teaching Orders in NSW, decided to set up a committee to draft such a scheme. In his address to those assembled for the 1928 CEA Teachers' Conference, Dr Sheehan (auxiliary bishop in charge of education) presented the draft scheme. It was proposed to appoint a registration board consisting of a chairman (a priest) and two teaching brothers and two teaching sisters. All members of the board were obliged to have a university degree and a Diploma in Education.<sup>38</sup>

Dr Sheehan summarised the advantages of the Registration Board scheme under the headings of uniform efficiency, the protection of Catholic ideals, and improvements in public status. He allayed the fears of some orders that individual training colleges would be dismantled and one common training college set up at Sancta Sophia College at Sydney University. He insisted that strict standards needed to be set for teaching religion. At the same time, he acknowledged that qualifications themselves did not make a good teacher, implying that the best teachers had an inherent ability to relate to and communicate with the young.<sup>39</sup> In a 1928 letter to Archbishop Kelly, the Diocesan Inspector of Schools, Fr T.J. O'Connor, presented statistics to support his request for two full-time secular inspectors. His letter also displayed the ongoing concern to promote a high profile for Catholic education as well as to preserve the still strong connection of Catholic Australia to Ireland. He pointed out that an additional duty of the Diocesan Inspector was the organising of the tableaux and sports etc. for St Patrick's Day, a

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<sup>36</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.133.

<sup>37</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.134.

<sup>38</sup> Catholic Education Association, *Teachers' Conference and Report 1928*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>39</sup> Catholic Educational Association, *Teachers' Conference and Report 1928*, pp. 7-10.

celebration of Catholicity which Moran had instigated.<sup>40</sup>

### **The lifestyle of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in the 1920s and 1930s**

From 1888 until the 1970s the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy virtually followed in full the 1869 *Customs of the Sisters of Mercy, Dublin*. For that long period of time the most striking feature of the lifestyle of the Congregation was 'its resemblance to that of an enclosed monastery'. Bells regulated their life. There was class distinction (between choir and lay sisters) and precedence and customs firmly controlled behaviour, often down to the minutest details. The sisters studied and prepared lessons in the community room.<sup>41</sup> In 1928, the 1869 *Customs and Rules* of the Sisters of Mercy were revised to allow modifications in the sisters' dress (reflecting changes in Ireland and the realities of the high temperatures of the South-East Australian summer).<sup>42</sup> Also in 1928 on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress, the Parramatta sisters were given their first radio, a major concession, but contact with the secular world remained rigidly prescribed.<sup>43</sup>

Although student numbers were not great at this time, the duties of the teaching sisters were considerable especially as they had responsibility for the cleaning of the school to cut costs. The clergy lent heavily on the assistance of women religious in carrying out their educational responsibilities and this was occasionally acknowledged, publicly. An example is when the Bishop of Armidale, the Right Rev. Dr O'Connor opened the new Narrabri convent in 1927. It was reported he said to those assembled:

The sisters deserve every modern convenience. After finishing teaching they had many other duties to perform. Teaching was a laborious task. Teachers in State

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<sup>40</sup> Fr T. J. O'Connor to Archbishop Kelly, 3 June 1929, T1628, SAA. For a detailed history of the origins of the St Patrick's Day celebrations, see Patrick O'Farrell, 'St Patrick's Day in Australia', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 81, no.1, 1995, pp. 1-16.

<sup>41</sup> Sophie McGrath, , 'The Life Style of the Congregation, 1888 to Contemporary Times', Background Paper no. 5, unpublished manuscript, PA, pp. 16-22.

<sup>42</sup> McGrath, , 'The Life Style of the Congregation, pp. 13-14.

<sup>43</sup> McGrath, Background Paper no. 5, p. 17. Catholic Broadcasting in Sydney began with the broadcasting of the 1928 Congress events and talks on Radio Station 2UE and would lead to the establishment of the Archdiocese's own radio station, 2SM (the call sign was an abbreviation of St Mary's) in 1931. See Bridget Griffen-Foley, 'James Meany (1879-1953) ADB, Supplementary Volume, MUP, Melbourne, 2005, pp. 271-272.

schools had respite from their duties over the week-ends and at night, but not so the Sisters. They had to live according to the rules of their community.<sup>44</sup>

This is a refreshingly honest assessment of the difficulties faced by female teaching religious. The sisters themselves could never publicly voice these and within the congregation there was a general expectation that community responsibilities had to be performed despite burdens of school duties. It is clear however, that the writers of the various convent chronicles shared a profound optimism and good humour in the face of adversity, fuelled by a deep faith and fostered by the example of Catherine McAuley.

### **Death of the congregational pioneer leader – 1927**

In 1901, on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the profession in 1876 of two of the nine pioneer sisters from Callan, Mother M. Clare Dunphy (pioneer leader) and Sr M. Alphonsus Shelly, Cardinal Moran declared: ‘The blessing of God has crowned your efforts with success and has bestowed the richest fruits on you.’<sup>45</sup> The most evident of those fruits was the swelling numbers of the Parramatta congregation and the achievements of those educated by its members. By 1927, there were 150 sisters. The foundations established during Mother M. Clare’s forty-one years in Australia included Surry Hills convent (1889), orphanages at Ryde (1898) and Baulkham Hills (1902), and convents at Golden Grove, Newtown (1899), Bondi Junction (1908), Enmore (1910) Cronulla and Stanmore (1924) and Harris Park (1927).

On the occasion of Mother M. Clare’s golden jubilee, on 24 September 1926, there was a ‘distinguished gathering’, including many of her former pupils, who themselves had ‘entered into their middle age’ and whose own children and even grandchildren were attending now a Mercy school. The Apostolic Blessing of Pope Pius XI had been cabled to Mother M. Clare. On the following Sunday, the ex-pupils of the various schools of the Parramatta congregation, including Holy Cross, presented Mother M. Clare with a cheque for £1,500, to contribute to the building of a convent chapel at Parramatta to memorialise the contribution of this pioneer sister to the Australian Mercy mission.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *CP*, 23 June 1927, p. 33.

<sup>45</sup> Cardinal Moran’s sermon, 24 September 1901, in ‘Memoirs of Mother M. Clare’, PA, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> *CP*, 30 June 1927, p. 2.

Mother M. Clare had an extraordinary devotion to Mary and she was most anxious that the month of May, Mary's month, should be especially marked in the schools. On the first Sunday afternoon in May, she would lead the sisters, wherever she was, on a pilgrimage to each classroom, to see the May decorations around Our Lady's pictures and statues.<sup>47</sup> The special honouring of images of Mary with devotional lamps and flowers was firmly entrenched in all Mercy schools and can be seen as part of Mother M. Clare's lasting legacy; it was incorporated into Holy Cross College tradition, as will be seen.<sup>48</sup>

The Church hierarchy, educators and members of Sydney society expressed their respect for Mother M. Clare Dunphy, the founding pioneer leader of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, in many tributes following her death on 22 June 1927. A *Catholic Press* editorial alluded to her 'true greatness in spiritual things' and went on to note:

Those best capable of judging, who knew her intimately, and who were brought in daily contact with her humility, charity and personal love of the Divine Bridegroom, recognise that Mother Clare reached a degree of sanctity that belongs to but few elected souls.<sup>49</sup>

This editorial writer in the *Catholic Press* believed that 'one of the most difficult problems in life is to measure the influence of great women.' The reader was left in no doubt that Mother M. Clare was a 'great woman', one of the 'highest types' of Irish womanhood. In spite of not seeing the land of her birth for forty-one years, she possessed the steadfast devotion of Irish transplantees to the 'traditions of St Patrick'.<sup>50</sup> Mother M. Clare was also a treasured link not only to the 'old country' but to the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy herself.

Although the *Catholic Press* obituary is unashamedly hagiographical, there is ample evidence that the loving nature and strong, humble faith of Mother M. Clare Dunphy was widely appreciated by her contemporaries, especially the members of the Parramatta Mercy congregation. The words of Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien demonstrate the great love and

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<sup>47</sup> 'Memoirs of Mother M. Clare', p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> Sr M. Teresa McDonnell, a teacher at Holy Cross, 1942-1952 has commented: 'Traditional devotions such as the rosary, May and June devotions were cultivated and encouraged.' See *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 65.

<sup>49</sup> *CP*, 30 June 1927, p. 25.

respect in which she was held by all her charges: ‘To know Mother M. Clare was to love her. She was true to her two most characteristic virtues – charity and humility, which she left as a legacy to the community and practised daily herself.’<sup>51</sup>

### **Catholic Action in the 1920s**

Pope Pius XI, the ‘Catholic Action Pope’, began his reign with the issue in December 1922 of his first encyclical, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, which focused on Catholic Action. The term ‘Catholic Action’ was used by him as a label of his campaign to inspire the laity, under the guidance of the bishops, to become involved in the apostolic work of the church. Previously the term ‘Catholic Action’ had been used generically to mean any action used to defend the interests of the Church and its mission.<sup>52</sup>

To Pope Pius XI, Catholic Action was imperative to deal with the problems of the Church in the social, economic and political fields in the modern, post-World War One world. In his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, on the *Reconstruction and Perfection of the Social Order*, which was published in pamphlet form in Australia in July 1931, Pius XI stated: ‘Undoubtedly the first and immediate apostles of the workingmen must themselves be workingmen.’<sup>53</sup> The earliest exemplar of Catholic Action was the JOCist movement, founded in Belgium in the 1920s; it educated lay people to be missionaries and social reformers in their own secular environments.<sup>54</sup> The Young Christian Workers (hereafter YCW) was its English equivalent.

The Catholic Evidence Guild was the earliest Catholic Action movement established in Australia. Its intention was the ‘grand ambition of converting Australia into the one true fold.’<sup>55</sup> On 16 January 1924, the inaugural meeting of a proposed Catholic Defence League was held at Elizabeth Street Sydney. One of those attending, Br C. Kelly,

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<sup>50</sup> CP, 30 June 1927, p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Chronicles of Holy Cross’, n.p.

<sup>52</sup> Rosemary Goldie, *From a Roman Window: five decades: the world, the Church and the Catholic laity*, Harper Collins Religious, Melbourne, 1998, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 384.

<sup>54</sup> This is an acronym for Juenesse Ouvriere Chretienne, the world-wide Young Christian Workers Movement begun by Joseph Cardijn (later Cardinal Cardijn). See Goldie, *From a Roman Window*, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup> CP, 2 July 1927, p. 27.

proposed that the movement be called the Catholic Evidence Guild.<sup>56</sup> It was intended to draw on priests for speakers' rosters in various public places but in April 1924, Fr Richard Collender, then parish priest of St Peter's, Surry Hills, and later of Holy Cross, who had been attending the meetings as Archbishop Kelly's representative, pointed out the difficulty in securing priests.<sup>57</sup>

O'Farrell claimed that Frank Sheed, a lawyer who had become acquainted with the Catholic Evidence Guild in London, had brought the Guild to Sydney. On returning to Sydney, after a three years involvement with the London Catholic Evidence Guild in 1924, Sheed had set up a speaker's platform at the Sydney Domain and began classes to train speakers.<sup>58</sup> It is questionable, however, whether the Catholic Evidence Guild (for adults) was established in June 1925 by Sheed as claimed by the organisation itself.<sup>59</sup> His name is not mentioned at the early meetings over 1924-1926.<sup>60</sup> The Sydney Catholic Evidence Guild would never approach the scale of the English organisation on which it was modelled. In 1927, an article in the *Catholic Press* refers to the success of the Guild in England with speakers 'in every public park and highway in almost every town and to the 'thousands' of 'conversions to the faith', which 'include some of the intellects of the present decade'.<sup>61</sup>

As indicated, members of the Catholic Evidence Guild manned speaker's 'pitches' at various strategic locations around Sydney. They stood on specially made portable platforms. Speakers were given a short course in theology and hints on how to hold the attention of a crowd, especially one that they could expect to be sceptical if not outright hostile. One pitch was Speaker's Corner at the Domain, a well-known popular forum for

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<sup>56</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, folder 2, minutes of meetings, 1924-1926, inaugural meeting, 16 January 1924, B 1208, SAA. The seconder of the proposal was Br Noon.

<sup>57</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, folder 2, minutes of meetings, 1924-1926, B 1208, SAA. The lack of enthusiasm by volunteer priests in the early days would remain until the 1950s.

<sup>58</sup> O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 373. In 1926, Sheed who had returned to London married Maisie Ward and together they set up a publishing house, Sheed and Ward, which would become the paramount publisher of Catholic books in the English language.

<sup>59</sup> The 1939 Annual report of the Catholic Evidence Guild noted: 'the Sydney Guild was founded on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1925 by Mr. Frank J. Sheed, LL.B. now resident in London', Annual report of the Catholic Evidence Guild, 23 May 1939, folder 3, B 1208, SAA.

<sup>60</sup> Jeff Kildea, in his history of the Catholic Federation states Sheed did not initiate the Catholic Evidence Guild and in fact the Guild was established in 1924, to organise the Catholic Evidence lectures and had evolved from the Catholic Federation's Catholic Speakers Platform which had operated in the Sydney Domain for many years. See Kildea, *Tearing the Fabric*, p. 281.

<sup>61</sup> *CP*, 21 July 1927. It is not known if this article was written by Frank Sheed.

those of strong views; this operated in an ad hoc fashion on Sunday afternoons. Other pitches were manned on Friday nights (late shopping night) at Taylor Square, Darlinghurst (en route to the Sydney Cricket Ground), Newtown railway bridge which was a well frequented transport hub, the Haymarket, where Sydney's fresh produce markets attracted big crowds, and Leichhardt on the corner of Catherine Street and Parramatta Road. Fr Richard Collender, newly appointed parish priest of Holy Cross was thanked by the Guild for his help in setting up a pitch at Bondi Junction in February 1933; this however was forced to close because of Council regulations regarding the obstruction of footpaths. A small number of women undertook training and, having passed a rigorous examination, could take on a pitch.<sup>62</sup>

Another aspect of Catholic Evidence was public lectures to educate Catholics about the basic tenants of their faith. Fr Collender was involved in the organising of the first lecture series for 1924. The syllabus of the 1925 winter series of lectures to be held in the Australia Hall in the city consisted of: the Mass; the Blessed Virgin; the Church, the Family and the State; Miracles; Eternal Punishment; and Evolution.<sup>63</sup> In 1927 a lecture series was given at the Australian Hall to which every Catholic attending was entreated to 'take with him at least one non-Catholic friend'.<sup>64</sup>

In the decade before the outbreak of World War Two, the term 'propaganda' was in common use by the Catholic Church. It did not yet bear the taint of Goebbels and his German Ministry for Propaganda. The Annual Report of the Catholic (Evidence Guild) Speakers for 1935 stated:

The Church is essentially propagandist; she is the only propagandist body in the world. And in so far as the laity possess the spirit of the Church they will also be propagandists. Our Lord, speaking through St Peter, makes ability to expose and defend the faith an obligation for all Catholics. (1 Peter 3-15).<sup>65</sup>

Propaganda was seen as a force for good – to enlighten a Godless world. It was the duty

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<sup>62</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, 1933 annual report, folder 2, B1208, SAA.

<sup>63</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, 15 June 1924, folder 2, B1208, SAA ,

<sup>64</sup> *CP*, 2 July 1927, p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, folder 3, B1208, SAA.



of every Catholic to take positive action to spread the Catholic faith. Members of the Catholic Women's League were reminded that 'the Catholic laity were just as much "Catholic" in their own sphere as the Pope himself, and had their part to play in the spreading of the Faith'.<sup>66</sup> This mentality was a significant element in the typical Catholic parish which formed an influential part of the background of most Holy Cross students and was promoted by Fr Richard Collender, the parish priest of Holy Cross from 1931. As will be seen, by the 1940s, the methodology of the Catholic Evidence Guild was used in Religious Knowledge classes for senior students at Holy Cross College.

### **The International Eucharistic Congress – Sydney 1928**

On 25 February 1926 Archbishop Kelly announced that Sydney had been chosen as the location of the twenty-ninth International Eucharistic Congress to take place in September 1928. The first meeting concerning the Congress was attended by representatives of practically every Sydney metropolitan parish, as well as the teaching brothers, Catholic societies, and the leading Catholic laymen of the day. This was an all-male gathering. It was made clear right at the beginning of the planning for the Sydney Congress that women were to participate as a separate entity and would not be integrated into the mainstream activities. At a separate meeting of the leading Catholic laywomen of Sydney in February 1926, Mrs John ('Queenie') Barlow, President of the Catholic Women's Association, was appointed head of the women's committee by Archbishop Kelly. The women's main task was to organise the Women's Mass, to take place on the Saturday, the second last day of the Crusade, and to raise a membership 50,000 Crusade supporters, each paying a subscription of one guinea, which entitled them to a Crusade badge.<sup>67</sup>

Catholic schools, including Holy Cross College, were to play a key role in the preparation for the Congress through the Eucharistic Prayer Crusade which was launched in the Archdiocesan schools in July 1927, and soon after was to encompass all of the Australian dioceses. It was described as a 'grand campaign of prayer that the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus may reign'. All schools were sent specimen monthly tally cards; the intention was for the pupils to copy them, the Congress office being unable to afford the expense of

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<sup>66</sup> Catholic Women's Association, the *Catholic Women's Review*, 19 June 1935.

<sup>67</sup> *CP*, 17 February 1927, p. 26. Canvassers, who had been appointed in each parish, seem to have met some resistance on their door knocks because of the distance in time to the actual event. No mention was made of financial difficulties as being a possible cause of disinclination. *CP*, 23 June 1927, p. 21.

supplying cards. Directors of schools were expected to send in the total at the beginning of each month and the sum totals were to be published the following week in the press. The grand final total was to be sent to the Pope after the Congress. Young Crusaders were reminded that their prayers must in no way interfere with their home or school duties and ‘prayers said when one should be studying are not pleasing to God’; praying while performing manual work which did not ‘demand fixed attention’ was allowable. Children were warned that ‘it was not a question of mechanical multiplication of prayers [...] but of intensifying their whole spiritual life.’<sup>68</sup> The totals for the month of June 1927 shown below in Table 2 are indicative of the full range of devotional activities condoned and encouraged by the Hierarchy. It was made clear that the full cooperation of Catholic teachers would be required to keep up the momentum for another 15 months.

**Table 2: Eucharistic Prayer Crusade; results for June 1927**<sup>69</sup>

Masses.....	14, 222	Rosaries.....	25,131
Holy Communions.....	10,170	Prayers.....	353,222
Holy Hours.....	2,655	Aspirations.....	946,357
Visits.....	33,039	Mortifications.....	32,369
Ways of the Cross.....	6,094	Acts of Charity.....	22,040

The pride and expectation of Australian Catholics was voiced admirably by the editor of the *Catholic Press* in mid-1927 when he wrote, ‘this will be the greatest Catholic event in the history of Australia’, adding his fervent hope for the completion of St Mary’s Cathedral, scene of the religious ceremonies.<sup>70</sup> Enthusiasm and fervour were stimulated in a number of ways. Apart from the Prayer Crusade, the relatively new media of radio and film were utilised.<sup>71</sup> Catholic broadcasting in Sydney began with the broadcasting of the Congress events and talks on radio station 2UE.<sup>72</sup> A major forerunner to the Congress was

<sup>68</sup> *CP*, 23 June 1927, p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> *CP*, 11 August 1927, p. 28. These totals represented the efforts of 46 out of about 100 schools.

<sup>70</sup> *CP*, 23 June 1927, p. 14.

<sup>71</sup> Fox Studio’s film of the twenty-eighth International Eucharistic Congress at Chicago in 1926 was shown throughout Australia during 1927. Fr (later Mgr) James Meany had attended the Chicago Congress and was impressed by the ability of radio to reach a far-flung audience.

<sup>72</sup> From 1927 Meany rented air time on Radio 2UE to publicise the Sydney Congress and on Sunday evenings, Dr Leslie Rumble explained Catholic doctrine.

the first public procession of the Blessed Sacrament in Australia at Parramatta on 18 March 1928, organised by Mother M. Gabriel Phelen, congregational leader of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, in which, no doubt, senior present and ex-students of Holy Cross participated.<sup>73</sup> A directive from the Paris-based Permanent Committee of the Eucharistic Congress prevented women from marching in the opening procession of the Sydney Congress.<sup>74</sup>

The University of Sydney's Catholic Women's Association and the University Catholic Association protested against the exclusion of women. The issue was taken up by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and in an article of 21 July 1928, a large banner proclaimed 'Women Excluded'. It was reported Fr Meany, the organising secretary of the Congress said: 'They must be afraid the ladies will spoil their pretty shoes.'<sup>75</sup> The organising meeting had taken place at St John's College and its rector, Fr Maurice O'Reilly in a letter to the same paper, refuted the *Herald's* summation of events and insisted that 'the distance, the time, and the fatigue involved make the procession unsuitable for the sex' and he added that if the Catholic women were allowed to march, a two-hour march would become at least a six hour one. One of the four Congress days was to be 'pre-eminently a women's celebration' and clearly (at least to Fr O'Reilly) they should be content with that.<sup>76</sup>

At the opening ceremony of the Congress, held late in the afternoon of Wednesday 5 September, with 8,000 inside St Mary's Cathedral and 80,000 standing outside, the Papal Legate, Cardinal Cerreti, introduced the theme which was to be reiterated throughout the Congress: the sanctity of the family and the primary responsibility of parents to teach their children the fundamentals of their faith. In his address, Cerreti said: 'It is necessary that Christ reign in the family, in the sanctuary of domestic and civil virtues; the cradle and school of the purist and most venerated traditions of people.'<sup>77</sup> There were only two women in the procession into the Cathedral: Mrs J. Barlow and Mrs F. B. Freehill, both of whom were holders of a Papal honour.<sup>78</sup> There followed special Masses for religious, lay

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<sup>73</sup> *FJ*, 29 March 1928.

<sup>74</sup> Carey, *Truly Feminine, Truly Catholic*, p. 31.

<sup>75</sup> *SMH*, 21 July 1928, p. 15.

<sup>76</sup> *SMH*, 23 July 1928, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> *CP*, 13 September 1928, p. 42.

<sup>78</sup> Mrs 'Queenie' Barlow was the founding President of the Catholic Women's League. She was to become Dame Barlow after the Congress in recognition of her services.

men and finally lay women. The first of these was claimed to be the 'greatest congregation that has been seen in the city of Sydney'.<sup>79</sup> To take advantage of the presence of so many interstate and overseas visitors, a Catholic Women's Conference was organised by the Catholic Women's Association for the 10-11 September 1928.<sup>80</sup>

It was against such a background of high profile public display and propaganda of the Catholic faith that Holy Cross College was developing. In the 1920s, the Catholic Church in Sydney showed a strongly developed sense of identity and confidence, both of which would be exhibited in discussions of the future direction of Catholic education and the accompanying developments in the Catholic education system of the Sydney Archdiocese.

### **Criticism of the Intermediate Certificate**

As mentioned previously, the first Intermediate Certificate (IC) examination in NSW was held in 1912 and the first Leaving Certificate (LC) examination in 1913. These two examinations, administered by a government appointed Board of Examiners, had replaced the Junior and Senior Public Examinations which were set by the University of Sydney from 1867 to 1916. Candidates for the IC had to have a minimum of two years schooling at secondary level; in reality, candidates had three as a rule. Apart from candidates passing in the minimum of four subjects, teachers also had to vouch for their students' attendance and application.

There was much dissatisfaction among non-State schools over the IC examination system. In its 'Education Notes' section, the *Catholic Press* on occasion gave vent to some of these. Early in 1929, it was complaining about the date set for the 1930 IC; it was to be 8 September, not only one of the most important feast days of Our Lady, but also falling in the Spring vacation period of any school following a three term year. The control of the NSW Department of Education was resented and the system was judged as 'too cumbrous'. The writer added: 'It was a scheme which looked wonderful on paper, but which carried in it the seeds of future trouble when the numbers grew so great as to make the examination unsatisfactory and almost unworkable.' If we are to believe the writer, the schools had been content with the old system of two exams set by the University: the

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<sup>79</sup> *CP*, 13 September 1928, p. 44.

<sup>80</sup> *CP*, 20 September 1928, p. 10 and p. 29.

Junior Public held in June and the Senior Public held in November. They had been induced to accept the IC because it would not attract a fee. Ironically it was noted that for a fee, some schools were able to have their students sit the exam within their own school, rather than travel to the university, where at that time the IC and LC exams were held.<sup>81</sup>

The Catholic educators were also very unhappy with the earlier timing of the 1930 IC, because it resulted in a wasted term for which they were charging a fee and left them with a problem of keeping students at school to the end of the year. Also clearly unhappy were several of the leading non-state schools who were mapping out a non-departmental alternative, which would be held at the end of November.<sup>82</sup> The major problem for any school dispensing with the IC would be the possible disadvantage to school leavers applying for public service positions. The Catholic school system could not afford to disadvantage its graduates in the employment market. The major longstanding issue of Catholic educators remained the lack of representation for the non-government schools on the Board of Examiners. This would not be facilitated until 1937.

Most Catholics had no doubt about the efficacy of their education system and, indeed, for the sake of the viability of Catholic Education, no doubts could be tolerated. When the results of the 1927 IC and LC were published, the message was loud and clear to Catholics and non-Catholics alike: ‘Both in the number and quality of the passes, the pupils of Catholic schools compare favourably with the best of the State establishments.’ The writer added that paying for their children’s education meant that parents ‘saw that they obtained value for their money [and] free education, like gratuitous advice, is valued lightly’.<sup>83</sup>

### **Silver jubilee of Holy Cross parish, Bondi Junction – 1931**

The celebration of the first twenty-five years of Holy Cross parish was also a celebration for its founding parish priest. As mentioned previously, Fr Peter O’Reilly had come to a parish on paper only; it had no buildings and initially Fr O’Reilly had encountered much hostility from the parishioners loyal to their former Franciscan pastors. Twenty-five years

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<sup>81</sup> CP, 10 January 1929, p. 18.

<sup>82</sup> John Godfrey and Alex Pouw-Bray, ‘Private School Educators and New South Wales Examination Reform 1930-1957: Confrontation to Cooperation’, *History of Education Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2000, pp. 65-66. This plan does not appear to have been implemented.

<sup>83</sup> CP, 3 February 1927, p. 25.

on, the parish was a much smaller area; four new parishes had been carved out of the original Holy Cross Parochial District.<sup>84</sup>

The celebrations of the silver jubilee of the parish began on Sunday 15 March 1931 with a 7.00 a.m. Mass and a general Communion for the men of the parish followed by a breakfast at Paddington Town Hall. Almost 500 men attended, and although the day was ‘wet, very wet, and quite unsuitable for a gathering’, almost all of those attending were parishioners. As a spiritual preparation, the Redemptorist Fathers had conducted a week long mission for the men.<sup>85</sup> Why was there this focus on the men? Were they seen as less solid in their faith? From the Australasian Congress papers early in the century, it is clear that there was concern for the faith of men.<sup>86</sup> Women were perceived as more naturally religious and catered for by the women religious. The men were addressed by Archbishop Kelly who, like Moran before him, used the opportunity to plead the injustice of the Catholic schools struggling to educate the children without any help from the government, while Catholic parents were saving the state something like £500,000 a year and paying taxes as well. It was reported that Kelly also advised his listeners:

To pay their debts, to live without borrowing, and to avoid taking things on credit, were sound lines of conduct, whether for the individual, the family, or the state. Let all live within their means – in dress, food, and everything – and cut out useless expenditure.<sup>87</sup>

This seems to have been a timely warning as the nation was sliding into the despondency and misery of the Depression. Fr O’Reilly singled out the Society of the St Vincent de Paul as a major factor in the growth of the parish saying they ‘had worked consistently for the relief of distress’. The relatively prosperous suburbs of Woollahra, Bondi Junction, Rose Bay and Waverley were undergoing far-reaching changes in character by the second half of the 1920s. Flats and bungalows were replacing the mansions and renters were replacing homeowners. The Eastern Suburbs was not immune to unemployment.

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<sup>84</sup> ‘Souvenir of the 75th year of Holy Cross Woollahra Parish’, 1981, author unknown, PA, p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> CP, 19 March 1931, p. 19.

<sup>86</sup> See for example: Dr. Gallagher, Bishop of Goulburn, ‘How to Safeguard Catholic Youth’, *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress, Sydney 1900*, p. 334 and A.L. Kenny, ‘Protection of Educated Catholic Youth’, *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress, Sydney, 1900*, p. 343.

<sup>87</sup> CP, 19 March 1931, p. 19.

Fr O'Reilly described Michael Kerwick, the father of Mother M. Thecla as his best friend and greatest helper and consoler. Michael himself, in speaking of the early days of the parish, described the people of the parish as 'poor' a description that contrasts with the stereotypical image of the harbourside suburbs of the Eastern Suburbs. The silver jubilee ended with a chance for the women and children to celebrate in a traditional way with a social evening and concert held in the school-hall.<sup>88</sup>

No one could have known how little time on earth Fr O'Reilly had left when he said: 'While I live I'll spend my time in prayer and your service, and when I can no longer walk among you I will pray God to bless your homes and children, and give you all eternal life.'<sup>89</sup> Suffering a heart attack in his seventieth year, Fr O'Reilly passed away in his presbytery on 16 April 1931, just one month later. Readers of the *Catholic Press* were reminded of the pastor's great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and that to him was attributed the fact that 'in no parish does Catholic life exist with more vigour, as the faithful flock to the altar daily for Communion'. As the hearse left the church, which was too small to accommodate the crowd of mourners, the students of Holy Cross College, in the regalia of Children of Mary and Holy Angels, formed a guard of honour for one of the pioneers of the Church in the Eastern Suburbs.<sup>90</sup>

It is clear that the microcosm of Holy Cross College in its early days, as throughout the rest of the twentieth century, was strongly linked to Holy Cross parish and the parish priest, always a strong supporter of the College and a good friend to the local Mercy community. The Sisters of Mercy were greatly saddened by the passing of Fr Peter O'Reilly. He had two nieces in the Parramatta Congregation: Sr Margaret Mary O'Reilly, the first principal of Holy Cross and Sr M. Patricia O'Reilly. His brother, Monsignor Thomas O'Reilly, who had been the parish priest of Parramatta, had died during the 1919 influenza epidemic.

### **Centenary of the Sisters of Mercy – December 1931**

The celebration of the centenary of the foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland on 12 December 1931 was a time to focus on the achievements of the order in Australia.

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<sup>88</sup> *CP*, 19 March 1931, p. 19.

<sup>89</sup> *CP*, 19 March 1931, p. 19.

<sup>90</sup> *CP*, 23 April 1931, p. 15.

Seasoned organizer of the 1928 International Eucharistic Congress, Monsignor Meany, was appointed to organise the grand occasion. Assisting him was Rev. Mother M. Gabriel Phelan, who had organized the first outdoor procession of the Blessed Sacrament prior to the September 1928 Eucharistic Congress. Emilson has commented: ‘Since the spectacular displays of the 1928 Eucharistic Congress, Santa Sabina, in line with other schools, retained a penchant for religious pageantry and public testimony.’<sup>91</sup> This centenary celebration was an opportunity for the Parramatta congregation of the Sisters of Mercy to publicly celebrate, in a thoroughly contemporary manner, their achievements of forty-three years.

Thus the focus of the celebrations was a public religious procession in which Holy Cross College undoubtedly participated. Participants assembled in Ross Street behind OLMC and moved slowly down Villiers Street and across to Prince Alfred Park, once the site of the public gallows and formerly known as Gallows Green or Gaol Green. The Blessed Sacrament was carried by Archbishop Sheehan, auxiliary to Archbishop Kelly. There were 6,000 in the crowd and 3,000 students and ex-students from thirty schools of the Parramatta Congregation in the procession. Leading the procession were the Children of Mary marching behind the Centenary banner, the Immaculate Conception banner and the Assumption banner. Next came the Aspirants, then the Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament (the older students), and finally the Holy Angels, the younger students, in full regalia behind the banner of the Guardian Angel. The university graduates and undergraduates of Mercy schools along with members of the University Catholic Women’s Association marched behind the banner of Our Lady.

The Parramatta congregation of the Sisters of Mercy numbered some 150 sisters at this time; most of them marched that Sunday afternoon behind the banner of Mother Catherine McAuley. This was essentially a procession of women and girls to celebrate publicly the laudable achievements of the Irish Sisters of Mercy since their arrival in Parramatta, forty-three years to the day, as well as the memory of their beloved foundress, Catherine McAuley. The men present were members of the AHC Guild and Hibernians Society and formed a marching guard of honour. The Catholic men of Parramatta and the city parishes, including members of the St Vincent de Paul formed a standing guard of

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<sup>91</sup> Emilson, *Dancing St Dom’s Plot*, p. 69.



honour. There were a large number of the archdiocesan clergy also in the procession as well as representatives of the four teaching orders of brothers in Sydney: the Christian Brothers, the Marist Brothers, the De la Salle Brothers and the Patrician Brothers.

The organisers were not averse to using the latest technology. Around the park were strung amplifiers to ensure that all would hear the music provided by the choir of 200 drawn from the Mercy schools at Parramatta, Golden Grove, Ryde, Bondi (Holy Cross), Enmore and Stanmore, and accompanied by the Our Lady of Mercy Convent Orchestra and the Westmead Boys' Band. The cameramen of Fox Movietone News captured the 'glorious ensemble of colour'. The procession ended with Benediction at the College gates. Fr Richard Collender, parish priest of Holy Cross, attended as sub-deacon.<sup>92</sup> The *Catholic Press* was fulsome in its praise of the Parramatta congregation:

The standard [of the sisters' schools] has been exceptionally high in religious and secular education, music and the other accomplishments that give the Australian educated Catholic woman her peculiar pride of place. Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, compares more than favourably with any school for girls in the Commonwealth.<sup>93</sup>

### **Effects of the Great Depression**

The education system run by the NSW government was quite adversely affected by the 1930s Depression. School teacher's salaries were cut heavily as were those of all public servants. The number of free places for students at the University of Sydney was cut drastically following a twenty-four per cent cut in the annual State government grant to the university. In 1931, salaried officers and wage earners at the university had voluntarily accepted a ten per cent cut, and there was a further five per cent cut in 1933 and 1934.<sup>94</sup> The schools of the Sydney Catholic Archdiocese were not similarly affected. The immeasurable contribution of the labour of the religious brothers and sisters sustained the Catholic system and the Church gave unstintingly to relief efforts for the economically distressed.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> All details of procession from *CP*, 10 December 1931, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> *CP*, 3 December 1931, p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Kennedy, *Wisdom Built Herself a House*, p. 93.

<sup>95</sup> See D. Gleeson, 'Catholic Charity during the 1930s Great Depression', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 73, no. 1, 1996, pp. 68-80.

Many Catholic schools relied on the services of paid qualified teachers to teach specialist subjects such as elocution and music and many of these could not be retained as income from tuition fees declined. A letter from Archbishop Kelly's secretary, in reply to a New Zealand lay teacher seeking employment, underlined the situation: 'Unfortunately Australia is, as you state, suffering from the universal depression. Many of our schools found it necessary last year to dispense with lay teachers as they were unable to support them.'<sup>96</sup> McGrath has described the sisters' visitation of the needy in their homes and the feeding of those who queued at the back door of the convents, especially in the inner city areas, during the Depression.<sup>97</sup>

By mid-1932, almost 32 per cent of the Australian workforce was unemployed.<sup>98</sup> Yet in 1933, 31.7 per cent of male 'breadwinners' in Woollahra had an income greater than £260 and only five per cent of males were unemployed. These figures can be compared with those for a neighbouring suburb, Paddington, with 13.2 per cent unemployment and only 6 per cent of male 'breadwinners' earning more than 260 pounds.<sup>99</sup> Yet not all Holy Cross students lived in the Municipality of Woollahra; although in its first decades the admission rolls show that the majority did. There would be parents of Holy Cross students experiencing difficulty in paying the fees and providing for books, uniforms and equipment.

An examination of the statistics in Table 3 below shows that in the years when economic decline was greatest, namely, 1929-1932,<sup>100</sup> the two Eastern Suburbs girls' schools for day pupils only, Holy Cross College and St Clare's, Waverley, managed to maintain their enrolments and both show a marked increase in numbers between 1933 and 1935, while Western Suburbs school, Bethlehem College, Ashfield, has a decrease in enrolments. Brigidine College, Randwick and OLMC Parramatta, both had a boarding section at this time and by 1929 their enrolments were affected by the severe downturn in Australia's rural industries, although OLMC compensated by increasing its numbers of day pupils.

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<sup>96</sup> Kelly to Miss Honiss c/- St Mary's Convent, Ponsonby, Auckland, N.Z, 22 June 1932, E1416/1, SAA.

<sup>97</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 83.

<sup>98</sup> [www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/greatdepression/](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/greatdepression/)

<sup>99</sup> Peter Spearritt, 'Sydney at the Census 1911-1976' in Jill Roe, ed., *Twentieth Century Sydney: studies in urban and social history*, Hale and Iremonger with the Sydney History Group, Sydney, 1980. p. 266.

<sup>100</sup> [www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/greatdepression/](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/greatdepression/)

**Table 3: Total enrolments at selected Sydney Catholic secondary girls' schools**<sup>101</sup>

College	year est.	1927	1929	1931	1933	1935	1937
Holy Cross Woollahra	1908	190	220	230	230	262	275
St Clare's Waverley	1884	133	161	161	145	200	200
Brigidine Randwick	1901	250	302	284	282	287	313
Bethlehem Ashfield	1881	243	215	231	225	203	217
OLSH Kensington	1913	120	120	118	123	118	156
OLMC Parramatta	1889	227	203	193	179	208	220

It is quite possible that relatively low fees at Holy Cross were a major factor in maintaining enrolments. An examination of Table 4 below shows that in spite of increasing enrolments, receipts of school fees fluctuated and reached their greatest decline in the years 1933 and 1934, when over thirty per cent of the national workforce was unemployed and many of the families of the College pupils would be struggling. In those same years, the fees from music tuition were at their highest and clearly were vital to the continued survival of the convent community. Holy Cross College was renowned as a music centre in the 1930s, and it could be argued that between 1932 and 1936, it was the leading music centre in the state, as will be discussed in chapter 9. As can be seen in Table 4 below, the receipts from music fees doubled between 1932 and 1934. It is impossible to know whether the sisters lowered college fees generally at Holy Cross College or if they waived school fees for those who could not afford them; perhaps a combination of these occurred. The dramatic increase in college fees receipts, from 1935

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<sup>101</sup> Statistics taken from the Australasian Catholic Directory. The enrolment figures are those supplied by each college to the Sydney archdiocese and were printed in the *ACD*, published in January of the following year. The schools have been given their post World War Two titles in the table to avoid confusion. Some changed their name a number of times. For example, OLMC Parramatta was named St Mary's College in the 1931 *ACD*, and in the 1938 *ACD*, was called Our Lady of Mercy's College.

on, was possibly because of parents' improved financial situation as the economy began recover.

**Table 4: Holy Cross College Woollahra-receipts of college fees and music fees<sup>102</sup>**

year	receipts from college fees	receipts from music fees
1928	£1826.14.6	£420.7.11
1929	£1967.4.1	£396.6.6
1930	£1883.17.0	£335.11.9
1931	£1876.6.9	£234.17.2
1932	£1719.6.2	£215.19.6
1933	£947.2.11	£397.9.3
1934	£952.16.0	£497.12.6
1935	£1299.9.0	£445.9.9
1936	£1590.18.9	£400.5.3
1937	£1714.3.0	£412.0.0
1938	£1683.2.9	£379.2.0
1939	£2191.2.0	£408.15.3

The experience of Holy Cross ex-student, Mrs Mary Jackson (nee Connolly) offers a personal account of the effect of the Depression on one student in the Holy Cross College microcosm. To save on school fees and transport costs, Mary was transferred from Holy Cross College to the Sisters of Mercy (North Sydney congregation) parochial school at Rose Bay for some years in the middle of her schooling. She also remembers the hurt she felt when her mother could not afford to buy a frock for her First Holy Communion. This resulted in Mary making her First Holy Communion, not as part of large group at a special Mass attended by family and friends, but on her own at an ordinary Sunday Mass. She recalled however, being taken back to the convent and being served a boiled egg in a silver eggcup.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Holy Cross Convent Woollahra account book 1908-1956, PA.

<sup>103</sup> Mrs Mary Jackson, interview by the author, 19 May 2005.

### **Building additions to Holy Cross College in the mid-1930s**

The increasing number of pupils in the early 1930s meant the 1918 college and convent building on Edgecliff Road was quite inadequate. The sisters were using as ‘emergency accommodation’ for lessons, a cottage, later to be the site of the tennis court. This was where the infants and the primary students up to Fifth Class were housed.<sup>104</sup> The sisters had been hoping to acquire the property next door, always known as ‘Barlow’s house’, but the protracted negotiations broke down, when Mr Barlow set a price ‘which a valuer considered quite exorbitant’.<sup>105</sup> Without room to expand laterally, the College would have to expand vertically. A third storey would be added to the entire Edgecliff Road structure.

The designer of the 1918 extensions, Sr M. de Chantal McCrone, returned to the Holy Cross staff in 1936 to aid in the planning of the additions. Her design preserved the characteristic Romanesque facade of the building. No one who was there at Woollahra at the time, staff or student, would forget the tremendous upheaval during the building operations. Most of the classes were accommodated in the church, where the altar was screened off during the day. The two examination classes were given special consideration. Fifth Year had a quiet secluded retreat in the hut used by the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Third Year continued their studies in the convent community room. It was reported that every available space was utilised; on each landing of the newly erected stairs at the west end of the building could be found a student hard at work practising their typing. For the sisters there was ‘unimaginable turmoil’ in their living quarters. For weeks there was no ceiling on the second floor and the only protection for the sister’s cells below was a huge tarpaulin covering. Debris and sand had to be shovelled out at the end of each day. Heavy rain soaked through the temporary covering.<sup>106</sup>

The 1936 Intermediate Certificate class was the first to sit for the exam at Holy Cross itself and their results did not indicate that they had suffered any disadvantage for their classrooms’ close proximity to a major construction. The *Catholic Press* reported that they gained ‘thirty-four passes of excellent quality’. The thirty-four successful candidates for the 1936 IC exam were a large number compared with St Clare’s five, Brigidine

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<sup>104</sup> ‘Holy Cross 1908-1958: the story of fifty years’, Holy Cross College Woollahra, golden jubilee issue, 1958, PA, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 96.

<sup>106</sup> All details taken from the ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, pp. 23-37.

Convent School, Randwick's fifteen, and Our Lady of Mercy's College, Rose Bay's eleven.<sup>107</sup> The Fifth Year girls who had been given the quietest location possible during the construction also did well in their LC exam. There were four successful LC candidates in 1936: Joan Boots, Beatrice Cordingley, Iris Searle and Joan White (who obtained two second class Honours passes).<sup>108</sup>

### **Parish life at Holy Cross – 1937**

How central was the parish to the lives of ordinary Australian Catholics in the 1920s and 1930s? A 1933 survey among parish priests indicated that in the Sydney Archdiocese just over half of the Catholic population attended Mass regularly.<sup>109</sup> Many of the students of Holy Cross College did not reside in the Bondi Junction Parish. Some lived in distant suburbs. No doubt some did not go to Sunday Mass regularly. Yet they all attended devotions during the school term in the Holy Cross parish church on Grosvenor Street. They were taken to the church for confession (the Sacrament of Reconciliation) on the Thursday before the first Friday, and attended Mass as a school group every Friday.

The 1937 Episcopal Visitation Report provides a picture of parish life at Holy Cross, Woollahra, at that time. There were 2,850 Catholics in the parish in 1934 and the number had risen slightly to 3,150 in 1937. There were 700 families in 1937, with 480 school age children compared to 500 families in 1928, with 400 of school age.<sup>110</sup> These figures indicate smaller sized families. Of interest is the decrease in the civic population of the Woollahra LGA: from 18,000 in 1928 to 14,000 in 1937. This can be explained by the burgeoning flats in the area, most of one or two bedrooms and not suitable for large sized families.

The report also provided details of a parish mission at Holy Cross given by the Redemptorist Fathers in 1937. It was stated that 600 children, 770 women, and 430 men went to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (then popularly called Confession). Some 5,600 received Holy Communion and there were fifty new members for the Holy Name Society

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<sup>107</sup> *CP*, 4 February 1937, p. 15.

<sup>108</sup> *CP*, 21 January 1937, p. 12.

<sup>109</sup> O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 372.

<sup>110</sup> Woollahra Holy Cross, 1900-1949, parish folder, Box C2735, SAA. With the death of the parish priest (Fr Peter O'Reilly) and the appointment of his replacement (Fr Collender) in 1931, the scheduled 1931 Episcopal visitation was cancelled and set for three years after, but if it occurred in 1934, it has not been archived.

and forty joined the Sacred Heart Society and £49 was collected during the mission. The children's mission was held from 31 March to 3 April with Mass each morning at 9.00 a.m. and instruction at 3.30 p.m. (after their lessons). It was the women's turn from Sunday 4 April to Sunday 11 April. The ladies had Mass available each morning at 6, 7, and 9 a.m., fitting in with their family's needs. Confessions were available each day between 10.00 a.m. and 12.45 p.m. and again from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Evening devotions were at 7.30 p.m., followed by confessions. The men's mission, held from 11 April to 18 April had the same hours. In a pamphlet advertising the coming mission the reader was reminded that:

1. A mission is a time of special grace.
2. A mission is for **ALL** the people of the parish.
3. A mission is meant to make all in the parish better Catholics.
4. This mission may be the last for some in the parish.<sup>111</sup>

This last reminder was a major theme used by the Redemptorists; no one knew when the Angel of Death was to come for them. No one knew if they would be afforded the consolation of a last absolution. Such spirituality kept the passing of this life before the individual person and was much focused on the sacraments as a sign and source of grace needed to cope with life's challenges. It informed the background of many of the Holy Cross students and, no doubt, aspects of the religious education in the College.

### **Conclusion**

The decade of the 1920s began with a booming economy buoyed by historically high commodity prices, and the affluence in the rural areas flowed through to the cities. The Eastern Suburbs of Sydney continued to benefit from an excellent tram service and its natural assets. The rising populations in the catchment area of Holy Cross College, and the school's growing reputation for academic and music success, ensured its continual development. The middle class suburbs, in which Holy Cross students in general resided, were far from immune to the economic malaise which had set in by 1932, but the reputation the College had established in the 1920s was vital to it weathering the economic storm of the 1930s.

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<sup>111</sup> Emphasis as originally published. All details from Woollahra Holy Cross, 1900-1949, parish folder, Box C2735, SAA.

The period between the two world wars was one dominated by struggle and economic hardship, emerging technology and changing social mores. It was a time of mass demonstrations of faith by the Australian Catholic population, a time when Sydney Catholics impressed themselves on the 'other', and Catholic schools urged their students to reap the rewards of the academic, musical and sporting opportunities they had and vie not only with State schools but with one another. As Campion has noted, schools were at the centre of Catholic life in the years between the two world wars, and the religious sisters were valuable pastoral assistants to parish priests through their schools and extra-school help in the parish.<sup>112</sup>

Many of the students of Holy Cross at this time were imbued, through their own parishes in general and Holy Cross parish in particular, with a strong sense of their Catholic identity and the sacramentality of the Catholic tradition. Although not a parish school, Holy Cross College was closely related to the local parish and drew upon its services in the religious education of its students. Various forms of Catholic Action had gained a belated blessing in the Sydney Archdiocese from Archbishop Kelly in the 1930s and, as will be seen, by the end of the decade would begin to be incorporated into the life of the students at Holy Cross College.

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<sup>112</sup> Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 154.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE WAR YEARS AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION 1939 – 1950

#### **Catholicity in action**

Massam has outlined two distinct and quite contrasting approaches to the Divine. In her view, non-secular Catholic spirituality was characterised on one hand by a very personal holiness, which centred on a passive and highly emotive piety. On the other hand there was another much more active and apostolic approach ‘which called for an analytical understanding of this world in order that it might be transformed.’<sup>1</sup> The education of Catholic youth and adults in the 1930s and 1940s would be positively influenced by the more widespread acceptance of this second type of spirituality which had its origins in the Catholic Action Movement initiated, as mentioned previously, by Pope Pius XI in 1928. He had taken as his motto ‘Christ’s place in Christ’s Kingdom’, interpreting it as meaning that the Church and Christianity should be active in, and not insulated from society.<sup>2</sup>

According to O’Farrell, ‘Catholic Action drew little sustenance from Sydney’s resistant soil’.<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Kelly had discouraged any suggestion that Catholic laity might initiate and control apostolic works that reached beyond church and school. In a 1934 Pastoral Letter, however, he decreed that: ‘Social organisations approved by the Church are to be formed for both the young and adults.’ He also emphasised the importance of this apostolic work, stating: ‘Catholic Action is requisite as the ordinary means, on our part, for obtaining the divine graces which give birth and increase and fruitfulness to Religion in our souls.’<sup>4</sup> There was also a practical benefit. According to the Catholic Women’s Association of NSW, Catholic Action was vital simply because ‘the work to be done exceeds the powers of the clergy to do it’. The Association implied Catholic Action ‘recruits’ needed to have an unwavering faith, and their personal holiness was ‘something pre-supposed but essential’.<sup>5</sup>

The 1937 Fourth Plenary Council of the Archbishops and Bishops of Australia, prompted

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<sup>1</sup> Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986, p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Michael Kelly, ‘Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Faithful’, August 1934, quoted in Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> *Catholic Women’s Review*, 20 October 1935, p. 2.

by Dr Mannix, the Archbishop of Melbourne, approved the establishment of a National Secretariat of Catholic Action to be conducted by F.K. Maher and B.A. Santamaria with a committee of bishops to assist them. The decision to set up a national body was a result of lobbying by the leaders of the Campion students movement within Melbourne University.<sup>6</sup> The National Secretariat established the following national organisations:

- Young Christian Workers
- Young Christian Students' Movement
- The National Catholic Girls' Movement
- The National Catholic Rural Movement

Archbishop Kelly did not introduce any of these movements into the Archdiocese of Sydney. In April 1939, he directed that all Catholic Action activities would be 'systematised and unified under the general control of the Diocesan Secretariate'. In the parish, a parochial council was to exercise local control, and definite rules were laid down for the study and practice of Catholic Action in both secondary and primary schools.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Catholic Evidence Guild in Catholic schools**

A few years earlier, at the 1936 Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Action Association, its spiritual director, Rev Dr P. Ryan, reminded his audience that: 'It is the express and oft-repeated wish of the Holy Father that Catholic Action should begin in the schools, and more particularly in the secondary schools.' He emphasised that he was not meaning the 'active exercise' of Catholic Action, but 'initial training which envisages the formation of competent lay apostles' which, if not carried out in the schools, would mean it would be 'too late for the majority when their school days were over'.<sup>8</sup> At this same meeting, Countess de Hemptinne in a paper, 'Elements and Practice of Catholic Action', outlined her ideas regarding Catholic Action and young people. For her, the best age for youth groups was fourteen to thirty years and these initially should be small cells or study circles, beginning under the supervision of a priest or delegated nun or brother but

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<sup>6</sup> O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, pp. 386-387. The Campion Society was established at Melbourne University in 1931 by Catholic lay intellectuals and in 1934 it spread to the University of Sydney. When, in 1936, members of the Campion Society decided to start a radical lay paper, the *Catholic Worker*, they appointed a member of the society, B. A. Santamaria, as its first editor. See Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers: growing up Catholic in Australia*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic., 1982, p. 105.

<sup>7</sup> *CP*, 4 May 1939, p. 18. The Sydney archdiocese adopted a different spelling of 'secretariat'; presumably to distinguish it from the Melbourne based national body.

<sup>8</sup> *CP*, 3 December 1936, p. 19.

afterwards becoming parochial. She maintained that organisations of Catholic Action should originate in the parish and that the only formula possible for the Catholic apostolate is ‘unity of action’, noting that ‘Catholic Action repudiates the individualistic spirit’.<sup>9</sup> Her expressed views of Catholic Action were in full accordance with those of Archbishop Kelly.

Instructions issued by Archbishop Kelly in March 1938 decreed that an Evidence Guild was to be established in the senior classes of every school, as a special work under the control of the parish priest.<sup>10</sup> The Dominican Sisters had taken up the Catholic Evidence Method and developed it for use in the senior school years with Sr M. Anselm O’Brien OP, setting up the first school branch in the senior classes at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield in 1925.<sup>11</sup> In 1939, a booklet written by Sr M. Anselm O’Brien explaining the Catholic Evidence Method was published. In its foreword, Norman Gilroy, the Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney wrote: ‘The general adoption of this Method must of necessity prove to be a powerful means of training enthusiastic, capable and zealous lay apostles, standard-bearers of truth, active enemies of all that is evil and false.’<sup>12</sup> Soon after its publication the Catholic Evidence Method was introduced at Holy Cross College.

The Catholic Evidence Method of teaching religion had as its core a regular simulated Catholic Evidence meeting of the students, once a week or once a fortnight, during which school guild members (about three or four) took turns to present a lecture on a predetermined topic. Following the lecture the presenter fielded questions from the audience, which was role-playing a group of non-Catholics and expected to ask questions and make comments as such. The school guild president, an appointed teacher, or on special occasions a priest, presided over the meeting. Teachers were expected to study the results of their lessons in the Catholic faith by listening to the expositions and answers, at the stimulated meeting, but were reminded that their presence at the meeting should be as

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<sup>9</sup> *CP*, 17 December 1936, p. 13. Christine, Countess de Hemptinne was the International President of the Junior Catholic Women’s League, one of the Catholic Action movements which evolved into the Young Christian Students organisation. The Countess had attended the Adelaide 1936 Australian Catholic Education Congress. See *CP*, 19 November 1936, p.15.

<sup>10</sup> ‘The Lay Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Sydney’, instructions issued by His Grace, the Most Rev. M. Kelly, D.D., Archbishop of Sydney, to the priests of the archdiocese, for organising the lay apostolate in the archdiocese, (for private circulation), 22 March 1938, E0388, SAA.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Emilson, *Dancing St. Dom’s Plot*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>12</sup> Sr M. Anselm O’Brien, *The Catholic Evidence Guild in Secondary Schools*, E.J. Dwyer, 1939. It contained one lesson in apologetics and one in doctrine to show the standard and scope of the lessons given to students in Third, Fourth and Fifth Years.

inconspicuous as possible.<sup>13</sup>

The primary objective of a school Catholic Evidence Guild was ‘to equip the students for the Anti-Christian world in which they must live and to equip them when they leave their school, able and willing to play a role in the lay Apostolate to which the Church was calling them’. Their defence of their religion had to be contemporary, using current events and current objections and prejudices against a doctrine. Sr M. Anselm O’Brien displayed a remarkable awareness of events overseas when she cited as examples: Hitler’s racial theories and his marriage laws, the attempts of English doctors to legalise euthanasia, and Communism’s attack on private property.<sup>14</sup>

Drawing on the methods devised by the Westminster Guild to train their catechists for public speaking in London’s Hyde Park, the School Guildsman (and woman) was required to:

- Speak clearly and plainly using everyday language and examples.
- Show the intrinsic merit of the whole range of Catholic doctrines, their reasonableness, and their basis in Scripture and Tradition.
- Answer objections against them from the standpoint of the Communist, the Heretic, the Agnostic, and the Indifferentist .<sup>15</sup>

The Catholic Evidence Method of religious instruction had been introduced into the senior classes at Holy Cross College by 1940, and the 1941 Annual College Report noted that: ‘The Catholic Evidence Movement has continued to produce its excellent results during the year, the seniors taking turn about to have experience and practice in the clear exposition of the Faith.’<sup>16</sup> In the Episcopal Visitation Reports of 1946, 1949, 1952 and 1955, Monsignor Collender answered ‘yes’ to the question: Are the senior scholars instructed in (a) Catholic Action and (b) Catholic Evidence?’<sup>17</sup>

In 1947, the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action decreed that a person should be a member of only one Catholic Action movement at any one time and resolved that

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<sup>13</sup> O’Brien, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> O’Brien, *The Catholic Evidence Guild*, p. 7 and p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> It was these methods that were brought to Australia by Frank Sheed, when he returned from London in 1924.

<sup>16</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1941, n.p.

<sup>17</sup> Episcopal Visitation Reports, Woollahra 1943-1949, Box 33, D0260, SAA.

students at schools and colleges should join the Young Christian Students Movement (hereafter YCS).<sup>18</sup> In spite of this direction, as a result of Sydney archdiocesan policy, the YCS was not introduced into Holy Cross College until the 1960s. Apart from their training by the Catholic Evidence Guild, the Holy Cross students were introduced to Catholic Action by the Ladies of the Grail in the 1930s.

### **The Ladies of the Grail**

The Ladies of the Grail, a newly emerging Catholic Action group at this time, was to have considerable influence on Holy Cross College. The Grail, as it was commonly known, was ‘in the vanguard of the liturgical reform movement in the Church and had a “back to the good earth” [alternative lifestyle] attitude to life’.<sup>19</sup> Its philosophy was closely linked to the agrarian model of the family as the ‘natural’ basis of social order, popular in much official Catholic thinking at this time. This model was based on the ideal of all family members being engaged in meeting their (simple) needs in a self-contained unit with parents on hand to educate and discipline children. According to Bruce Duncan, this agrarian model ‘shaped Catholic thinking on the role and rights of women in society, the just wage and a preference for hierarchy rather than equality in relations, especially in the workforce, and in society in general.’<sup>20</sup>

The Grail movement began in the Netherlands and, although some of its roots lay in the post-World War One conception of youth organisations as an instrument of change, its main stimulus was a reaction against an inward-turning, largely private practice of religion, providing in contrast an ‘overt, celebratory parade of religious faith’.<sup>21</sup> The emphasis of the Grail was on the training of young women as leaders within Catholic Action movements. The Grail’s founder, Fr Van Ginneken, a Jesuit, was a sociologist brought up in a family of women. When undertaking an extensive tour through Europe, he had witnessed the youth movements which were particularly evident in Germany and the Soviet Union after World War One. He condemned their end but urged the Grail

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Ten Years of Catholic Action: report on the operations of the National Secretariat’, presented to the Episcopal Committee at the tenth meeting of the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action, 21-22 October 1947, p. 2, Gilroy Correspondence – Australian Hierarchy Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action, 1942-1950, F1311, SAA.

<sup>19</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Bruce Duncan, *The Church’s Social Teaching: from Rerum Novarum to 1931*, Collins Dove, Melbourne, 1991, p. 212.

<sup>21</sup> Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. 125.

Movement to adopt their means: 'their aggression, discipline, commitment and methods such as the use of drama, songs and publications'.<sup>22</sup>

In July 1935, Bishop Dwyer of Wagga asked Archbishop Kelly to give his sanction for the establishment of the Ladies of the Grail in Sydney 'as preparatory to the organisation of Catholic young women who have left school finally, into an Australia-wide Catholic girls-movement'.<sup>23</sup> The Dutch based original Grail community was officially called the Congregation of the Women of Nazareth but in England was called the Ladies of the Grail, the name also used in Australia. The Ladies of the Grail had caught the attention of Bishop Dwyer when he attended the 1932 Dublin Eucharistic Congress.<sup>24</sup> Bishop Dwyer later wrote: 'I am sure they will do more to save the girls who leave school than any other organisation.'<sup>25</sup> As Turner pointed out, before the Ladies of the Grail arrived in Australia in 1936, no-one had emphasized the importance of the involvement of women, especially young lay women, in the development of their personal gifts to be used in the mission of the Catholic Church.<sup>26</sup> This freedom to express their faith in a very personal and feminine way was the inspiration which drew young women to the organisation.

According to Kennedy, there was great ignorance of the Grail Movement on the eve of the arrival of the first band of Ladies of the Grail.<sup>27</sup> One significant difficulty was the lack of detailed information in English since all the literature about the Grail was in French or Italian, necessitating translation.<sup>28</sup> Campion has commented that the five women who brought the Grail movement to Australia in 1936, were representatives of a 'lively, self-assured lay Catholicism', and through lectures, meetings and summer schools were welcomed in Sydney, because 'they brought to women the idea that they could work for Christ, as lay apostles and as women'.<sup>29</sup> The Ladies of the Grail participated in the 1936

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<sup>22</sup> Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. 125. There was a determination in the period following World War One to organize youth to political ends, to harness their enthusiasm, their vivacity and most of all their naivety.

<sup>23</sup> Bishop J.W. Dwyer to Archbishop Kelly, 5 July 1935, The Grail Movement 1935-1983, D2733, SAA. Between 1937 and 1945, the most common titles of the Women of Nazareth in Australia were 'Ladies of the Grail' or the all-encompassing 'Grail'. From 1945, the usual titles were 'Grail Nucleus' or 'Nucleus members'. See Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> For Bishop Dwyer's personal account of his 'discovery' see *CFJ*, 1 December 1932.

<sup>25</sup> Bishop J.W. Dwyer to Archbishop Kelly, 3 January 1936, D2733, SAA.

<sup>26</sup> Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, p. 147.

<sup>27</sup> Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> 'Ten Years of Catholic Action', F1311, SAA.

<sup>29</sup> Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 113. Campion noted there were over 1000 active members of the Grail movement by 1939, indicating a rapid acceptance. See Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p.113. The five

Catholic Education Congress in Adelaide and from mid-1937 began to develop their organisation for Catholic girls in Sydney.

In a 1938 letter to Archbishop Gilroy, Dr Eris O' Brien, head of the Sydney Diocesan Secretariate of the Lay Apostolate, referred to a request by the Grail ladies to bring to their Greenwich, North Shore, headquarters all of the Catholic school girls about to leave school. He wrote: 'It is proposed to divide them into groups according to the vocations they will follow and give a special lecture to each group'.<sup>30</sup> Dr Eris O'Brien had, earlier in 1938, noted of the Grail: 'Its activities are to direct a female youth movement generally. It has to "form" youth. Hence, it will concentrate on religious, cultural, ethical and recreational works.'<sup>31</sup>

The Grail offered scholarships and other forms of financial aid to try to include young women from various social and economic backgrounds in their training activities. Their Summer Camps, weeklong residential summer schools, were the most important element in leadership formation. The first Sydney Grail Summer School was held in 1938 at *Loyola*, their property at Greenwich, which had been purchased from the Jesuit Fathers.<sup>32</sup> This Summer School was for senior school students; its theme was 'Women and the Lay Apostolate'.

Rosemary Goldie, a former student of OLMC, Parramatta, and an Arts graduate from the University of Sydney, was among 75 students from 22 dioceses across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania who attended the Grail's second Summer School held in January, 1939. Its theme was 'In Search of a New Type of Woman'. In a vividly written account published in the *Catholic Women's Review*, Rosemary called the new type of young woman 'courageous' and stressed that her work was to build up, 'in a woman's way, a Catholic Australia'; she was to be 'charming, womanly, cultured and deeply Catholic'.<sup>33</sup> In May 1939, the New South Wales Catholic Basketball Association was formed under the patronage of the Grail Nucleus.<sup>34</sup> Holy

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women were Dr. Lydwine Van Kerbergen, Judith Bouwman, Francis van der Schot, Brigid Huizinga, and Patricia Willenberg. Judith Bouwman died in a car crash in 1940.

<sup>30</sup> Rev. Eris O'Brien to Gilroy, 20 November 1938, D2733, SAA.

<sup>31</sup> 'Memorandum re. Co-ordination between the Grail and the Teresians', dated 29 July 1938, D2733, SAA.

<sup>32</sup> It had 27 rooms, two tennis courts and was valued at £12,500.

<sup>33</sup> *Catholic Women's Review*, 14 February 1939, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> D2733, SAA.

Cross College students became enthusiastic participants in the inter-school competition the association organised.<sup>35</sup>

The Grail had an 'On Active Service' camp for Third, Fourth and Fifth Year schoolgirls, at Springwood during the May vacation, 1943. These campers, forty girls in total, came from Holy Cross, Woollahra as well as Monte Sant' Angelo, North Sydney; St Scholastica's, Glebe Point; St Vincent's, Potts Point; St Joseph's, Rozelle; Our Lady of Mercy College, Rose Bay; Loreto, Kirribilli; and Santa Sabina, Strathfield. Activities concentrated on camp life: erecting tents, making gadgets, cooking, rambling and hiking, playing games and singing around the camp fire.<sup>36</sup>

Holy Cross College was introduced to the Grail Movement soon after its arrival in Australia when in 1936 three Ladies of the Grail spoke to the senior girls. According to Kennedy, the Grail leader Judith Bouwman initially concentrated on three Sydney parishes: Woollahra, Randwick and Lewisham. In each of these areas she brought together a small group of young Catholic women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five and organised regular meetings with them. Kennedy stated that Monsignor Collender, by then Holy Cross parish priest for five years, gave support to the Grail Ladies and 'it was from Holy Cross parish that they won their first "Grail Girls" whom they trained to work amongst the youth in the cause of Christ'.<sup>37</sup> The rapid acceptance in the Sydney Archdiocese of the Grail women is indicative of the recognition by the Church hierarchy of their ability to act as role models for young women as future Catholic activists. The rapid growth of the Grail was also a result of the attractiveness of the Grail to intelligent women, who wished to break out of the stereotypical mould of the exclusively family-centric woman, the 'Little Irish Mother' immortalised by the beloved Catholic poet, 'John O'Brien' (Fr Patrick Hartigan) in 1936.<sup>38</sup>

One student of Holy Cross College, Eileen (Joanna) Waite, joined the Grail in 1938 and made her dedication in 1942, becoming a Nucleus member. This involved taking private vows of chastity and obedience. Other ex-students of Holy Cross College to become

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<sup>35</sup> The Holy Cross College 'B' team won the 'President's Cup' at the 1941 Basketball finals organised by this association, *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1941, n.p.

<sup>36</sup> 'Marching Orders', 9 May, 1943, D2733, SAA.

<sup>37</sup> Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. 161.

<sup>38</sup> See Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p.147.



Nucleus members were Beverley (Ruth) Crowe and Margaret (Margot) Harrison. Marie Larkin was also an active Grail member.<sup>39</sup> Certainly there is evidence of many Holy Cross College girls participating in Grail holiday camps up to the 1950s.

From 1940, the Grail offered full-time six-month residential courses called 'The Quest' at *Tay Creggan*, a property in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn. *Tay Creggan* had been set up as a national training house for girls' movements of Catholic Action and was the national headquarters of the National Catholic Girls' Movement. Margaret Harrison wrote a summary of her six-month Quest course for the 1946 Holy Cross College Annual Magazine. She stressed 'it is for us to shape the future not by words but by our example' finishing with the statement: 'the Quest is a school for living, with life itself as the test'.<sup>40</sup> In May 1947, girls from Holy Cross College, Woollahra and other leading Catholic girls' colleges in Sydney, Wagga and Goulburn attended *Tay Creggan* during their school vacation and met with Archbishop Mannix.<sup>41</sup>

By 1940, three married former Grail members, including Holy Cross College ex-student Joanna Waite, set up a regular meeting for married women who wished to retain their links with the Grail and its ethos. This became the Torchbearer's group for young married women, with regular mid-day meetings at the Grail house at Rushcutters Bay.<sup>42</sup> In 1945, a three month course of Marriage Preparation talks for engaged girls was presented at the Grail headquarters. The talks included presentations by a priest, a doctor and a mother and included classes in cooking, dressmaking and interior decorating.<sup>43</sup> Although, by this time, Church leaders generally regarded women as the equal of men intellectually and some encouraged them in 'appropriate' leadership roles, the home was seen as a place requiring her individual and special touch.

### **Sodalities**

Pious societies, called sodalities, designed to nurture the faith of individual Catholics,

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<sup>39</sup> In his 1943 Episcopal Visitation Report Monsignor Collender had referred to fourteen in the Grail Group at Holy Cross and also mentioned that these young women, assisted by the Legion of Mary, look after the Catholic Truth Society Box. In 1946, he reported there were a 'few' Grail members in Holy Cross parish, 'but they meet in the city', Box 33, D0260, SAA.

<sup>40</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> CW, 8 March, 1951, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> CW, 22 March 1951, p. 16.

<sup>43</sup> The Grail correspondence file, D2733, SAA

children and adults, men and women, with prototypes in earlier ages, were especially developed in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to counter the atheism and secularism of the post French Revolution period. At Holy Cross College, the three main sodalities were the Children of Mary (for senior secondary), the Aspirants (junior secondary) and Holy Angels (primary grades).<sup>44</sup>

At the St Patrick's Day Sports on 12 March 1938, the Catholic schoolchildren present signified their acceptance of membership in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Archbishop Kelly had officially declared that centres of the Confraternity be established in all parishes of the Sydney archdiocese; the aim was for every person in the parish to become a member. The names of those students who were in attendance at the St Patrick's Day games were to be supplied to the parish priest for registration and the names of members were to be kept in a special book in the parish archives. All members of the Confraternity were to possess a copy of the general Catechism, study it, teach it to their children and do all they could to introduce it and explain it to lapsed Catholics and 'to those outside the fold'.<sup>45</sup>

From the Episcopal Visitation Reports of Monsignor Collender, it is evident that there were numerous sodalities in the parish and schools including the College. According to ex-student Ailsa Mackinnon, there was a Legion of Mary group in the College into the 1960s.<sup>46</sup> Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey), a College student 1946-1958, was a member of the Holy Cross parish Children of Mary group and recalls attending the Third Sunday of the month (morning ) Mass in full regalia and then returning in the evening for a meeting and evening devotions.<sup>47</sup>

### **Religious education**

As has been noted, from the beginning religion was central to the educational endeavour at Holy Cross College and in this the staff members were supported by the wider Catholic education community. At the opening of the new chapel at the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta, in 1937, Archbishop Kelly declared:

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<sup>44</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, n.p.

<sup>45</sup> Kelly, 'The Lay Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Sydney', p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Sr Ailsa Mackinnon RSM, informal interview by the author, February 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Sandra Donohoe, informal conversation with the author, June 2008.

The best education should be given to every child and it should be complete education. Don't take the salt out of the bread. If you take the salt out of the bread will it be palatable? That is what Parkes did, and that is what they are doing today, when they take religion out of education.<sup>48</sup>

It was reported that the 800 religious teachers who assembled at the opening Mass of the twentieth conference of the Catholic Education Association (CEA) in 1941, were reminded:

In schools, religious instruction must ever remain the primary subject of the curriculum [and] daily we must bring to it the fruits of diligent preparation, a sound knowledge enlivened by a love and zeal for the teachings and commandments of Christ.<sup>49</sup>

The speaker of these words, Fr E. Murphy, the inspector of schools for the Bathurst diocese, added that, although 'success in examinations and a means of livelihood were all-important' for the children in their care, teachers 'must ever preserve within the school the religious atmosphere that is essential to Christian education'.<sup>50</sup> The first lecture given at this CEA conference was on 'Teaching of Devotion to Our Lady' by Br Frederick, the principal of Marist Brothers' High School, Darlinghurst. In it he complained of the lack of a suitable textbook on devotion to the Blessed Virgin. In response Archbishop Gilroy was reported as saying 'Brother Frederick knows exactly what is wanted; he knows why it is wanted. I would suggest that he should give consideration to this subject'.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, the expectation from the Church hierarchy was for teachers of religion themselves to produce the educational materials required.

Certainty, the basic teaching of the Catholic Church was provided by the Green Catechism, a steadfast rock through decades of social and economic change, as Campion has pointed out. He has observed: 'The directness and sureness of the Green Catechism,

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<sup>48</sup> *CP*, 2 December 1937, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Catholic Freeman's Journal* (hereafter *CFJ*), 15 May 1941, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> *CFJ*, 15 May 1941, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> *CFJ*, 15 May 1941, p. 14.

as well as the simplicity of its prose, imparted a special brand of confidence.’<sup>52</sup> A uniform catechism for Australasia had been one of the major outcomes of the 1885 Plenary Council’<sup>53</sup> and it was to be used (with some revisions in 1937) for eighty years. The Green Catechism (so called because of its green cover) was written in a fashion which facilitated learning by rote. This basic text was an adaptation of the catechism issued by the National Council of Ireland in 1875. Cardinal Moran used an 1884 version of the Irish catechism (the so-called Maynooth Catechism) as his model for the Green Catechism, annotating changes. With additional material this would become the Australian text approved by the Plenary Council of Australasia in 1885. It is significant that Moran removed the indulgenced prayers of the Irish Catechism and added the *Salve Regina*, a reflection of his strong devotion to Mary.<sup>54</sup>

The Green Catechism was chosen by ex-student of Holy Cross College, Joyce Buckley (nee Molnar), as her basic source of religious knowledge when she introduced religious instruction classes for Catholic children attending Epping Public School in the mid 1950s. Joyce was instrumental in promoting the setting up of catechist training programmes and as a catechist’s aide was still involved in 1998, at the age of eighty-five, in the apostolate to Catholics in State schools in Epping.<sup>55</sup> It would appear that lessons on Catholic Action at Holy Cross had not been lost on Joyce.

In the Catholic schools the catechism was supplemented by Bible history and Church history texts. The Sydney Archdiocesan Inspector of Schools, Fr J.W. Rogers, had strongly recommended Formby’s or Schuster’s Bible and Church history texts in 1884. The latter was still in use some seventy-five years later.<sup>56</sup> By 1929 the continued requests from teachers for revision of the religion syllabus had been noted and senior school students in upper secondary classes were studying Dr Sheehan’s *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*.

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<sup>52</sup> Edmund Campion, ‘Irish religion in Australia’, *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, no. 1, January 1978, p.10.

<sup>53</sup> Gerard Rummy, ‘The Development of the Concept of Religious Education in Catholic Schools 1872-1972’, *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 9, 1977, p. 305.

<sup>54</sup> Cardinal Moran’s personal collection of catechisms, Box L3630, SAA.

<sup>55</sup> Parish Bulletin of Our Lady Help of Christians, Epping, 5 November 2000.

<sup>56</sup> Rummy, ‘Concept of Religious Education’, p. 304. Ignatius Schuster, *Illustrated Bible History of the Old and New Testaments, for the Use of Catholic Schools*, B. Herder, London, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., 1910, was ubiquitous in Catholic schools. A new edition, revised by Mgr Bill Leonard was issued in 1956 and published by E.J. Dwyer in Sydney. Schuster had died in 1869.

Fogarty has noted that the 1929 encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (The Christian Education of Youth) had become ‘the authoritative statement on Catholic Education, not only in Australia but throughout the world’.<sup>57</sup> It strongly favoured separate education of the sexes:

False also and harmful to Christian education is the so-called method of ‘co-education’. There is not in nature itself, anything to suggest that there can be [...] equality in the training of the two sexes, [which] are destined to complement each other in the family and in society, precisely because of their differences, [and] which therefore ought to be maintained and encouraged during their years of formation.<sup>58</sup>

Although there was an element of truth in this as feminist writers such as Virginia Woolf and Edith Stein were to show in their highlighting of the differences between women and men, many women were feeling stifled in their intellectual development.<sup>59</sup> The Catholic Speakers Annual Report of the Catholic Evidence Guild for 1934 noted that the Guild was co-operating with the University Catholic Women’s Society in securing the Rev. Dr P. Ryan MSC to deliver a series of lectures at the University Philosophy Room on scholastic philosophy.<sup>60</sup> The desire of the educated woman for more intellectually rigorous education was evident.

The teaching of religion in Catholic schools had a number of planned outcomes, among the most important of which was the continuing maintenance and expansion of the Catholic Education System which necessitated the fostering of vocations to the teaching orders. In 1940, Archbishop Gilroy at a meeting of the CSSA expressed his pleasure that ‘with the expansion of Religious Education has come an increase in vocations’,<sup>61</sup> and certainly a number of 1940s students from Holy Cross College joined religious congregations, mainly the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy.

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<sup>57</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. 2, p. 385.

<sup>58</sup> *The Encyclicals of a Century*, Daughters of St Paul, New York, 1942, pp. 95-96.

<sup>59</sup> See Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, Hogarth Press, London, 1978 and Edith Stein, *Woman – The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, vol. 2, translated by Freda Mary Olsen, ICS Publications, Washington, 1986.

<sup>60</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, folder 3, 1936-1939, B1208, SAA.

<sup>61</sup> CSSA, Minutes of the fourth general meeting for 1940, 7 December 1940, E0330, SAA.

### **A new church of the Holy Cross**

The parish of Holy Cross Bondi Junction had been in desperate need for expanded church accommodation virtually since the establishment of the parish in 1906. The existing Holy Cross church, though enlarged in 1913 and 1921, was again by the 1930s, grossly inadequate. Fr Collender, a firm believer in consultation with his parishioners, called a meeting at which there was unanimous agreement to build a completely new church with double the accommodation.<sup>62</sup> Archbishop Kelly made a special visit to Woollahra to inspect the site and advised having the new church front Adelaide Street.<sup>63</sup>

The foundation stone was blessed by Archbishop Gilroy in October 1939 on his first visit to Holy Cross, Woollahra<sup>64</sup> and he commented on the changing demographics of the area, observing that it was a pity the number of flats had increased so greatly in such a beautiful locality. He blamed the municipal councils for this, suggesting that they reduce their rates on private properties and thereby encourage people to build private houses.<sup>65</sup> Gilroy's views on flats reflected those expressed by the Australian bishops in their 1941 Social Justice Statement *Justice Now*. In this document, under the sub-heading of 'Flats – An Abomination', the bishops protested: '[H]ousing plans which would consider masses of flats as suitable homes for workers are an abomination, especially in a country of the size of Australia, where there is no need to restrict the living space of the family.'<sup>66</sup>

Alderman Grimley, the mayor of Woollahra, also speaking at the blessing of the foundation stone, pointed out that the population of his municipality had increased by sixty-six per cent over the past twenty years.<sup>67</sup> The adjoining LGA of Waverley had seen even greater population increases: in 1921 there were 36,797 residents; in 1933, 55,911 residents; and by 1947 there were 74,800 residents. Randwick LGA had gained over

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<sup>62</sup> *CFJ*, 19 October 1939, p. 30.

<sup>63</sup> This necessitated the purchase of two cottages in Adelaide Street and two more in Edgecliff Road. This was an unusual visit by Archbishop Kelly, whose poor health meant he made no public appearances for the two years before his death on 8 March 1940.

<sup>64</sup> Gilroy had been appointed to the Bishopric of Port Augusta, South Australia in December 1934, at the relatively young age of 38 years. On the resignation of Archbishop Sheehan, Gilroy was appointed as coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney with right of succession, on 1 July 1937. He succeeded to the See on 18 March 1940, <http://www.sydney.catholic.org.au/Archdiocese/History/Gilroy.shtml>

<sup>65</sup> *CFJ*, 19 October 1939, p. 30.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Hogan, (ed.), *Justice Now: Social Justice Statements of the Australian Catholic Bishops. First Series, 1940-1946*, Department of Government and Public Administration, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1990, p. 23.

<sup>67</sup> *CFJ*, 19 October 1939, p. 30.

10,000 new residents during the 1930s and the suburb of Randwick was the most populous in Sydney in 1940 with 86,120 residents.<sup>68</sup> By 1947 the population of Woollahra LGA had increased to 45,122.<sup>69</sup> Certainly by this time, many pupils of Holy Cross College did not live in Woollahra LGA itself, as the admissions register of the College showed. As in its earlier days, it was significant to the future growth of the College that it was so well positioned amidst suburbs with burgeoning populations.

War had been declared only one month before the October 1939 foundation stone ceremony for the Holy Cross church. On the evening of Sunday, 3 September 1939, the Australian people heard on their wirelasses the sobering news that ‘Great Britain has declared war’ and ‘as a result, Australia also is at war’. Prime Minister Menzies and Mr Heffron, the Minister for Home Security had appealed to all employers to carry on and this is exactly what Fr Collender did. In what seems to be an astonishingly short time the new church was completed by early June 1940. The parish had a new church, a brick and tile building 115’x 55’ with seating for over 1500 (250 in the choir gallery), designed by Austin McKay, in the style of Modern Romanesque. With an imposing 120 ft tower, the new Holy Cross Church was considered modern with its absence of pillars.<sup>70</sup>

According to Fr Collender, building materials for the new church were acquired at ‘practically pre-war prices because of the foresight of its architect’.<sup>71</sup> The timing of the building of this magnificent church was fortuitous. In December 1940, the Federal Government, under National Security Regulations, announced that any building costing over £5,000 required special consent. By June 1942 this figure had been reduced to a paltry £25, including repairs.<sup>72</sup>

Archbishop Gilroy conducted the blessing and opening of Holy Cross church on 2 June 1940. In his address, Gilroy displayed, publicly and unequivocally, his high regard for Fr

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<sup>68</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney’s Century*, p. 68.

<sup>69</sup> Woollahra LGA had 25,439 residents in 1921. Arthur Emerson, *Historical Dictionary of Sydney*, The Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2001, pp. 457-8.

<sup>70</sup> Austin McKay had designed the ‘new’ St Peter’s Church at Surry Hills in 1918, while Fr Richard Collender was parish priest there and they already knew each other well. McKay was a Holy Cross parishioner.

<sup>71</sup> *CFJ*, 6 June 1940, p. 23. This was an important move; between September 1939 and June 1942 the Australian price index rose by eighteen per cent.

<sup>72</sup> The restrictions on building activity had a more severe effect on the construction industry than the Great Depression. By 1942, building was virtually confined to government works. See Spearritt, *Sydney’s Century*, p. 80.

Collender, referring to him as an ‘inspiring genius’ and telling his large audience that: ‘He has been everything that a priest ought to be, not only since he came to Woollahra, but from the time that he received the Holy Oils in ordination. During his priestly life he has been a model priest.’<sup>73</sup> Although the church had cost £19,600, it was not long before the new church was debt free.<sup>74</sup> The cohesive and highly developed social networks of the parish helped Fr Collender’s fund raising and the sodalities played a pivotal role in these networks.

### **Monsignor Richard Collender’s sacerdotal golden jubilee**

Holy Cross College had been fortunate to have had Fr (later Monsignor) Richard Collender appointed parish priest after Fr Peter O’Reilly. As Archbishop Gilroy had indicated, he was highly regarded in the Sydney Archdiocese. Collender had been a diocesan consulter since 1926 and was made an Archdeacon in 1936. On the death of Mgr T. Phelan in February 1941, Mgr Richard Collender was appointed Vicar General of the Sydney Archdiocese. This was a most responsible role which meant Mgr Collender became the Cardinal’s ‘understudy’ if the Cardinal was absent from Sydney.

Holy Cross parishioners marked the golden jubilee of Collender’s ordination with a concert on Monday evening, 23 June 1941; Archbishop Gilroy had presided at High Mass earlier in the day. In the spirit of the close relationship between Holy Cross College and the parish, the College provided most of the entertainment. The College orchestra played Irish melodies and Gounod’s music from the ballet Faust and the smallest students in their ‘trim Army, Navy, and Air Force uniforms carried out manoeuvres and sang to their Jubilarian his special songs’. Shirley Bowen (nee Patterson), a Holy Cross College student in the 1940s, recalled that her group were in Air Force uniforms and the song ‘wings over the nation, wings over the sea’ had the words changed to ‘wings over the people, wings over the parish’.<sup>75</sup> There was a violin duet of Irish airs by two ‘very tiny children’ and verse-speaking and singing choirs presented a ‘Pageant of the Years (1891-1941)’ of the Monsignor’s life as a priest. This pageant culminated with a ‘moving

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<sup>73</sup> *CFJ*, 6 June 1940, p. 23.

<sup>74</sup> *CFJ*, 6 June 1940, p. 23. A church could not be blessed until all debts were cleared.

<sup>75</sup> Shirley Bowen to Fr Donovan, Rev. J.J. O’Donovan Personal Papers, Box O1104, SAA. Fr Donovan, Monsignor Collender’s nephew arrived in Australia in 1933 and became parish priest of the new parish of Denistone. Like his uncle, he had been born in Modeligo, County Waterford, Ireland. He had hoped to publish a biography of his uncle and in 1974 collected reminiscences of Mgr Collender from his former parishioners of Surry Hills and Woollahra.



address by a senior pupil of the College' and the presentation by two Holy Cross pupils of a wallet of notes and a spiritual bouquet.<sup>76</sup>

It was rare for a priest to achieve fifty years of service. Mgr Collender was a well-known figure riding a bicycle around his parish. In spite of being afflicted by Parkinson's disease, his energy was undiminished. Mrs Shirley Bowen recalled her father saying, 'the Mons.[sic] never walks, he's always half-running.' She herself remembered Mgr Collender as tall, thin, with silver curly hair.<sup>77</sup> Albert Cavanagh wrote of Collender: 'he disliked "holy Joes"; he was ordinary, gentle and approachable and used simple words'.<sup>78</sup> Mgr Collender, who had been born at Modeligo, County Waterford, Ireland, on 6 May 1868, was one of 13 children. Fr Donovan, his nephew, commented that 'all his life he remained a loyal Irishman,' adding that Mgr Collender's father would have given him vivid memories of the (1840s) Great Famine.<sup>79</sup>

The esteem in which Monsignor Collender was held by the Sisters of Mercy at Holy Cross is evident in the words of the Holy Cross Convent chronicler: 'In the schools of Holy Cross he took a profound interest, and he was a very dear friend to the Sisters on account of his paternal kindness and unfailing gentle mildness and courtesy.'<sup>80</sup> As has been noted previously, Mgr Collender was also held in high esteem by Cardinal Gilroy. The 1946 Episcopal Visitation Report for the parish of Woollahra has an addenda page on which, in Gilroy's handwriting is the comment: 'The results achieved here are little less than miraculous' and Gilroy offered his 'cordial congratulations to [his] beloved VG'.<sup>81</sup>

### **War comes uncomfortably close**

Archbishop Gilroy issued a letter to the clergy of the Sydney Archdiocese in which, following a request from the Apostolic Delegate, he decreed Sunday 23 March 1941 as 'a special day of prayer in accordance with the wish of His Majesty the King'. There would be 'Solemn Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament' at St Mary's Cathedral from the conclusion of High Mass until evening devotions at 7.00 p.m., when there would be 'the devotion of the Holy Hour to beg God's guidance in the days to come and to thank Him

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<sup>76</sup> *CFJ*, 26 June 1941, p. 13 and p. 15.

<sup>77</sup> Shirley Bowen to Fr Donovan, Box O1104, SAA.

<sup>78</sup> Albert Cavanagh to Fr Donovan, Box O1104, SAA.

<sup>79</sup> Fr Donovan, Box O1104, SAA.

<sup>80</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 42.

<sup>81</sup> Episcopal Visitation Reports, Woollahra, D0260, SAA.

for blessings already received'. The parish churches were requested to follow suit. It was emphasised that by the participation of churches across the Sydney Archdiocese, and by inference, across the nation, Catholics were to be united in their prayers and thus be a formidable spiritual force.<sup>82</sup>

Hitler's advance into Russia in June 1941 gave Australians a heightened sense of danger. The first blackout tests were held in July 1941.<sup>83</sup> The loss of the light cruiser HMAS *Sydney* with all her crew on 19 November 1941, 150 miles SW off Carnarvon, WA, and the sinking of the crack British warships, HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* in Malayan waters exposed the vulnerability of the mostly uninhabited far north of Australia. With the bombing of the American naval base at Pearl Harbour, on 7 December 1941 coming so soon after, the Australian population was finally put on a war footing and the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 and the bombing of Darwin four days later drove home the reality of the war in the Pacific.

After December 1941, public air raid shelters were constructed and slit trenches appeared in suburban backyards and schools. There had been a suggestion that only State schools were to be provided with air raid shelters. The *Catholic Press* began a campaign and succeeded in getting a guarantee from the new Minister of Education and from the Director of National Emergency Services that Catholic schools would get equal treatment.<sup>84</sup> In an interview, Mr Heffron, the Minister for Home Security had agreed to meet the request from the Catholic schools to provide the timber to strengthen the trenches already dug. He accepted the addresses of six schools in target areas and gave a promise to supply the timber required.<sup>85</sup> Holy Cross College did not have sufficient grounds for air raid trenches.<sup>86</sup>

Although air raid practice, when Holy Cross students were shepherded into the crypt of the Holy Cross church (which was to act as a shelter) became common occurrences,<sup>87</sup> the

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<sup>82</sup> *CFJ*, 20 March 1941, p. 18.

<sup>83</sup> F.K. Crowley (ed.), *A New History of Australia*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1974, p. 462.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Charles Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid: a study of a pressure group campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, 1950-1972*, Catholic Theological Faculty, Sydney, 1978, p. 40.

<sup>85</sup> Minutes of the general meeting of the CSSA, 14 March 1942, E0330, SAA.

<sup>86</sup> Sr Cecily Gaudry recalls an air raid shelter within the grounds of the Marist Brothers' boys' school at Paul Street, Bondi Junction, across the road from her family home, interview by the author, 28 May 2007.

<sup>87</sup> Sr Monica Musgrave, informal conversation with Sophie McGrath, May 2008.

community of Holy Cross College continued with routine annual events in the early stages of the war. The tenth annual re-union of the Holy Cross College ex-students occurred in August 1941. Benediction was given in the (very) new church, and the Sisters of Mercy later served tea in the parish hall; about 170 attended. Later on a concert was presented in the school hall featuring both past and present students. An ex-student of the College, Eunice Gardiner, the winner of the E. M. Woolley Piano Scholarship and a highly successful pianist of international fame was reported to have delighted all with a piano solo.<sup>88</sup> Two weeks previously, the ninth annual ball of Holy Cross College's ex-students' union had been held at the State Assembly Hall with over 200 in attendance. At this ball place cards displayed a spotlight on 'V for Victory'.<sup>89</sup> The proceeds of the ball were donated to the Catholic United Services Auxiliary (CUSA).<sup>90</sup>

Prime Minister John Curtin called a press conference to announce 'a complete mobilisation of all Australian resources, human and material, to ensure the defence of Australia.'<sup>91</sup> All British subjects of both sexes sixteen years and over on 15 March 1942, had to enrol on the new national register. In reality, this enrolment was an application for a personal identity card through a post office.<sup>92</sup> On the home front further measures taken in 1942 were: daylight saving; 'brown-out' which restricted use of lights by night, and the extension of rationing to include tea, sugar, butter, meat and clothing.

Following the introduction of the National Emergency Legislation it was decided by Catholic Church authorities to set up a Catholic National Emergency Services organisation to work in with the government scheme. It was recorded that over 800 priests and religious were trained in National Emergency Services methods and were qualified to instruct others.<sup>93</sup> Holy Cross Sisters of Mercy were included in this, most particularly in the training in first aid. It was announced that the basis of the Catholic organisation was to be the parish and its key provisions were to be:

- The appointment of Catholic men to act as wardens of parish buildings

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<sup>88</sup> *CFJ*, 4 September 1941, p. 27.

<sup>89</sup> *CFJ*, 21 August 1941, p. 27. The prominently displayed school colours were navy, pale blue and white.

<sup>90</sup> *CFJ*, 2 October 1941, p. 15. The Holy Cross College ex-students' ball raised £14 12s 6p for CUSA; CUSA was run by the Catholic Women's Association to provide home comforts, accommodation and spiritual services to members of the armed forces, both at home and overseas.

<sup>91</sup> *SMH*, 18 February 1942.

<sup>92</sup> *SMH*, 9 March 1942.

<sup>93</sup> Address by National Emergency Services officer Mr W. Ross, to the general meeting of the CSSA, 14 March 1942, E0330, SAA.

- Fire fighting precautions
- The drilling of school children in the evacuation of classrooms
- Training in first aid
- Securing protection from bombing

In the early hours of 8 June, 1942, Sydney's Eastern Suburbs came under fire by the Japanese mother- submarine of one of the three midget submarines which had invaded Sydney Harbour a week before.<sup>94</sup> This submarine fired ten shells in a five minute period but only two or three exploded. David Jenkins, who has researched this incident, has asserted that the commander had been ordered to fire on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The bombardment began about 12.05 a.m., an air raid alert was sounded shortly before 12.30 a.m. and the 'all-clear' was sounded at 1.11 a.m. A 'dud' shell tore through a block of flats in Manion Avenue, Rose Bay and one man was injured.<sup>95</sup> One of the shells wrecked a grocery store at the corner of Small and Fletcher Streets only 100 yards from Holy Cross College.<sup>96</sup> Shells also fell in Bondi and Bellevue Hill. Sr Maria Lynch's recollection of Mother M. Thecla standing on the top balcony of Holy Cross to watch these events unfolding and having to be coaxed into retreating inside, gives a vivid image of the night when Holy Cross College was literally in the firing line.<sup>97</sup>

Sydney-siders had previously been complacent when air raid sirens sounded, but now 'frightened residents rushed to their shelters long before the alarm was sounded merely as a precaution'.<sup>98</sup> Property damage aside, the main economic impact of the attack was to depress property values in the beachside and harbour side suburbs.<sup>99</sup> After these events, the 'brown-out' was rigidly enforced on the entire NSW coast for a distance of ten miles inland. This meant that all lights facing the sea must be blacked out and other lights must

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<sup>94</sup> Three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour on the evening of 31 May 1942. One of these was entangled in a boom net and was destroyed by its crew, another was depth charged, and the third fired a torpedo at the cruiser, USS *Chicago*, but missed and hit the HMAS *Kuttabul*, killing nineteen. It escaped and its wreck was discovered off the Northern Beaches of Sydney in November 2006.

<sup>95</sup> Ironically the victim, Mr Hirsch, had emigrated from Germany some five years before to escape the Nazis, *SMH*, 8 June 1942, p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> David Jenkins, *Battle Surface: Japan's Submarine War Against Australia 1942-44*, Random House, 1992. Because of war-time censorship of news, there are conflicting accounts of the location and number of shells. Sr Marie Gaudry remembers walking down Paul Street (where she lived) to inspect a bomb crater, interview by the author, May 2007.

<sup>97</sup> Folder of correspondence to/from Mother M. Thecla, XXIV, 'Community Memories', PA.

<sup>98</sup> *SMH*, 8 June 1942, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 80. Rents were pegged at August 1939 levels, but rental properties remained vacant.

be thoroughly screened.<sup>100</sup>

The shelling of Sydney and Newcastle suburbs led to Sydney's leading private schools drawing up contingency plans to evacuate their students to areas deemed far enough from Sydney to provide safety especially from further shelling and/or aerial bombing. There was certainly much thought given by Church authorities to the religious consequences of mass evacuations. In March 1942 the federal government had announced that evacuation must be from the city to the far suburbs. It was reported that the Minister agreed that 'Catholic homes should be reserved for Catholic evacuees' and the Government would provide transport.<sup>101</sup> At the second general meeting of the Catholic Secondary Schools Association (hereafter CSSA) in July 1942, Sr M. Anselm O'Brien of Sancta Sabina College opened a discussion on the 'effect of war on schools'. She referred to: evacuations which continued through most of the first term; air raid practice; nervous tension of the children; likelihood of military occupation of the premises; and unrest in the families because of the war. In the light of all these, she strongly suggested that special consideration should be given to the examination classes.<sup>102</sup>

Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry RSM, a student at Holy Cross College between 1942 and 1946, remembers the lower school fortified at one end with a sandbagged structure intended to serve as an air-raid shelter. She also remembers the troop ship, the *Queen Mary*, being periodically in view from the top balcony of the school as well as lessons in first aid and emergency kits (with a precious bar of chocolate).<sup>103</sup>

Surprisingly, enrolments at Holy Cross College had increased to 365 by 1943, including twenty-five non-Catholics. There were eleven religious and four secular teachers at Holy Cross College, with six religious and one secular teacher at the primary school. Catechism was taught daily in each of these schools, and a priest gave at least one weekly instruction in each school.<sup>104</sup> The scholastic year began and ended with a religious liturgy. Retreats, given by Fr Burke CSSR, were held for the Children of Mary and the senior girls of Holy

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<sup>100</sup> *SMH*, 9 June 1942, p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> Minutes of the general meeting of the CSSA, 14 March 1942, E0330, SAA.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes of the general meeting of the CSSA, 18 July 1942, E0330, SAA.

<sup>103</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 73 and interview by the author, 24 May 2007.

<sup>104</sup> In 1950, Fr Prendergast gave instructions to the classes each Friday, 1950 *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, p. 5.

Cross College. Confessions were held on the Thursday before the first Friday for the school students. It is clear that at this time sacramental and devotional practices continued to imbue the milieu of Holy Cross College.<sup>105</sup>

### **Catholic educators respond to proposed reforms**

The Board of Secondary School Studies had been established in 1937 with the responsibility for administering examinations, curricula and the syllabuses for secondary education in NSW. In 1939, Br Gerard, the Catholic representative on the Board of Secondary School Studies, had informed the CSSA of changes to the external examination system which were to occur, irrespective of the views of Catholic educators, and which would impact on the future directions of the Catholic education system. In 1940, Archbishop Gilroy told the executive committee of the CSSA that raising the leaving age would stretch the resources of the Catholic school system, adding that this was just one of several 'serious changes which are being contemplated' and 'we, as a body, are not even considered'. Another of his complaints was the 'planned introduction of Vocational Guidance in Public Schools. The spirit of the Government is to ignore us.'<sup>106</sup>

With regard to an external Intermediate Certificate (IC), Br Gerard reported that the University of Sydney professors were not in the least interested in setting papers for this exam nor in their correction. As a result of their lack of interest, from 1942, the NSW Education Department conducted an external IC for the end of the Third Year of high school. At this time it was planned to have a School Leaving Certificate at the end of the Fourth Year and then a Higher School Certificate at the end of the Fifth Year. These planned new exams were part of a reform of the education system that was of serious concern to the Sydney Archdiocesan hierarchy.

The IC was to suffer a loss of relevance, particularly to those pupils who intended to complete a full five-year secondary course. According to Br Gerard those candidates intending to take the new exams would be 'dissuaded from taking the IC.'<sup>107</sup> In an

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<sup>105</sup> There were no less than fifteen sodalities, Catholic Action, and social and cultural groups listed in the 1943 Woollahra EVR, Box 33, D0260, SAA.

<sup>106</sup> Archbishop Gilroy, minutes of the fourth general meeting of the CSSA, 7 December 1940, E0330, SAA. Br Gerard's surname was not supplied.

<sup>107</sup> CSSA, Minutes of the fourth general meeting for 1940, 7 December 1940, E0330, SAA.

outspoken criticism of the new IC exam, it was reported in the 1945 Holy Cross College school magazine that:

There was a marked falling off in the interest in the Intermediate Certificate. The process of equalising the results removed a helpful stimulus to effort. Ability received no recognition and certificates represented varying standards. Perhaps it is too early to pass a judgement on the new system, but we can truly say that we prefer the old.<sup>108</sup>

Catholic educators were determined they would be part of any decision-making process which affected their pupils and were strident in their opposition to the planned changes. It was most likely the financial and man-power restrictions imposed by the war in the Pacific, rather than the complaints of the Catholics, which curtailed the plans for the new exams. These would not be introduced until the Wyndham Scheme was implemented in the 1960s; the last IC was held in 1966.

The Catholic Education Association (hereafter CEA), which had been established in 1922 to facilitate the professional development of teachers in Catholic schools, was still strong in the 1940s. The program of its 1941 annual conference, referred to previously, included a debate, the topic of which was ‘That the Subject, History, as taught in the Primary and Secondary Schools at present should yield place to more useful Subjects.’ On the affirmative team was Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley of Holy Cross College. Her fellow team members were a Marist Brother and a de La Sale Brother.<sup>109</sup> Sr M. Camillus Lilly of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy was one of three speakers to address a symposium at the close of the conference.<sup>110</sup> She had been on the organising committee of the CEA for many years and was widely respected. Clearly religious sisters could participate in professional institutions on an equal basis with their male counterparts, though men always outnumbered women on the organising committees at this time.

Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley, ex-student of Holy Cross as mentioned previously, was the

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<sup>108</sup> Review of the Year 1945’, *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1945, p. 3, writer unidentified; Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley was the College principal at the time and most likely the writer of these comments.

<sup>109</sup> Did she argue that geography, the subject at which she had excelled as a student at the University of Sydney, was a more useful subject than history? Her loyalties would have been divided.

<sup>110</sup> *CFJ*, 15 May 1941, p. 14.

Catholic Schools' representative on the Geography Syllabus Committee at this time. Sr M. Gonzaga (Helen) Stanley had been a University of Sydney exhibitor 1926-1928, and graduated with first place in geography, winning the Caird Scholarship with High Distinction, after which she was appointed a demonstrator in the geography department in 1929. She remained there until joining the Parramatta congregation in 1931. It can be reasonably assumed that she used her close contacts with the geography department at the University of Sydney to organise for Catholic teachers the series of ten lectures given at the Sydney University by Professor Holmes, on ten consecutive Saturday mornings, 'under the auspices of the Catholic Education Association.'<sup>111</sup>

### **Holy Cross College in the 1940s**

Holy Cross College was never to be a large school in terms of student numbers while it was congregationally owned, but it did remain competitive with the neighbouring girls' schools. It was quality rather than quantity that the school strove to maintain. There had been 276 enrolled in 1939, including five boys and enrolments in the College increased by only eighty in the three years between 1940 and 1943.<sup>112</sup> The numbers enrolled at the College over 1943-1945 seem to be the upper limit possible given the existing accommodation. The 1945 annual College report commented that enrolments, which had reached 360, had to be limited as there were very few vacancies.<sup>113</sup> The College was still enrolling boys in its junior section in 1945.

Among the successful Holy Cross examination students of this time was Eileen Ryan who gained third place in geography in the 1940 NSW Leaving Certificate,<sup>114</sup> and sixty years later fondly recalled the 'superb teaching' of her geography teacher, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley.<sup>115</sup> Eileen went on to acquire a B.Sc and a Diploma of Dietetics, though as mentioned previously, she had not had the opportunity to study any science subjects at Holy Cross College.

In 1945 Eileen Ryan wrote a piece for the Holy Cross College School Magazine entitled 'The Place of Women in Science Today', in which she deplored the little recognition that

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<sup>111</sup> *CFJ*, 1 May 1941, p. 15.

<sup>112</sup> Woollahra EVR, 1940 and 1943, D0260, SAA.

<sup>113</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1945, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> *CFJ*, 16 January 1941, p. 15.

<sup>115</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 68.



women had been given for their work in the field of science, pointing out that Madame Marie Curie had broken through the ‘fog’ of lack of recognition at the end of the nineteenth century. She noted that ‘women still have to contend with the old problem of prejudice’ and that in most cases ‘women are paid a lower salary than men and find it more difficult to rise from a routine position’.<sup>116</sup> Eileen went on to outline the two possible paths to a science based career. One was through the university, with a general course in the first year leading to specialisation in the succeeding years, which was the path she had taken, having won a University Exhibition in 1940. The alternative path was to gain a position in a laboratory and then attend a technical college part-time, but Eileen made it quite clear that any students who had not taken subjects such as chemistry, biology or physics would find it very difficult to obtain such a position. She highlighted the rewards to be gained by a young woman who took this ‘hard road’ to building a career in male-dominated fields. It would appear that her article was commissioned for the school magazine as an inducement for the girls of Holy Cross to look beyond traditional careers for women at that time. It was in 1946 that chemistry was offered for the first time at Holy Cross College at the Leaving Certificate level.<sup>117</sup>

By 1944 there were sixteen girls in the Holy Cross LC class. That year Catholics were proudly informed that ‘22 per cent of all Leaving Certificate passes came from Catholic schools’ and that this was a ‘source of legitimate pride not only to students and teachers, but to Catholics in general [ it is] a devastating answer to those who declare that teaching religion interferes with the study of utilitarian subjects’.<sup>118</sup> Class sizes in the 1940s were large. Sr M. Teresa McDonnell who began ten years of teaching at Holy Cross College in 1942, remembers classes in pre-Intermediate grades of forty to fifty pupils, where discipline was strict.<sup>119</sup> Only one of the lay teachers, Miss Marie Gallagher, was a full-time staff member. She taught history and English at the College for seven years, and was a very successful basketball coach. She left in 1945, greatly missed as many of her former students have attested.<sup>120</sup> Sr Monica Musgrave RSM, then a student at Holy Cross

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<sup>116</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1945, p. 17.

<sup>117</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, examination results, p. 44.

<sup>118</sup> *CW* editorial, n.d. quoted in Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 40.

<sup>119</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 64. In retirement in her 90s, she is still in contact with the girls she taught during those years.

<sup>120</sup> Holy Cross College alumnus and internationally renowned novelist, Catherine Gaskin has noted that Miss Gallagher was an excellent English teacher’ who taught her a love of poetry; *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 76.

remembers Miss Gallagher accompanying some senior girls on their occasional Friday night excursion to a city cinema.<sup>121</sup> Miss Gallagher's 'B' team won the Presidents' Cup at the 1941 Basketball Finals of the Catholic Secondary Schools Association causing much joy in the College. In that same year, the senior debating team won the NSW Junior Debating Cup at the City of City Eisteddfod. The elocution teacher, Miss Kinkead was the only other lay teacher apart from visiting physical education instructors.<sup>122</sup>

The LC class of 1946 was to achieve outstanding results, indeed many of this cohort had already, in their Fourth Year, shown themselves to be enterprising, independent and determined. Wanting to produce a school newspaper, they formed a committee. Following elections, Shirley Evisson and Marie Gaudry became the editors, Catherine Gaskin the treasurer, and Patricia O'Connell the social editor. The important practical tasks of collecting, correcting and tabulating the material was given to Fay Littlefair and Patricia Oliver was the distributing manager. Marie Gaudry showed tenacity and initiative in obtaining permission from the National Emergency Service to start up the paper. Permission was required because of the strict rationing of newsprint during the war.<sup>123</sup>

### **A year of celebrations – 1948**

The year 1948 shaped up to be a milestone in Catholic celebratory events. The celebrations of the Centenary of Education in NSW afforded an opportunity for the Catholic Church to examine those characteristics which made Catholic education desirable and unique. These were proclaimed in such banner headlines as 'Proud Education Record: Century of Achievement' and 'The Triumph of Catholic Education'.<sup>124</sup> The State of NSW may have been celebrating 100 years of public education in 1948, but the Church was celebrating 125 years of Catholic schooling.<sup>125</sup>

The 1948 traditional St Patrick's Day festivities at the Sydney Showground featured athletics, physical culture, marching and dancing 'which for orderliness, discipline,

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<sup>121</sup> Sr Monica Musgrave RSM, interview by the author, 13 December 2004.

<sup>122</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1941, n.p.

<sup>123</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author, 24 May 2007.

<sup>124</sup> *CW*, 15 April 1948, p. 1 and p. 16.

<sup>125</sup> *CW*, 18 March 1948, p. 7. The article refers to 'Religious, Cultural Functions to mark 125 Years' effort'. The first Catholic school in the colony of New South Wales was established by a Catholic layman at Parramatta in 1820. It is assumed that, in 1948, there was a different perception of when this school began.

strength of numbers and brilliance of colour surpassed all efforts of previous years'.<sup>126</sup> The highlight of the celebrations was the children's display which had to be postponed a day due to the bad weather. Nearly 20,000 girls from the primary and secondary schools of the archdiocese, 'many of them arrayed in colourful costumes for eurhythmic dancing, the others in impeccable uniforms, cheered themselves hoarse,' as Cardinal Spellman spoke to the crowd. In the uncovered concrete stand, 6,000 girls from secondary schools helped form a giant cross. It was reported that the 1,500 nuns in the Coronation Stand was the largest gathering of nuns at a public function in Sydney's history.<sup>127</sup> Holy Cross College was part of these celebrations. Among the participants there was a strong sense of being part of a wider Catholic community.<sup>128</sup>

These same Catholic school pupils would be back at the Sydney Showground within another six weeks when, on 29 April, the Church participated in the state education centenary celebrations in their own special manner. A special guest at these celebrations was Cardinal Spellman of New York, who was passing through Sydney en route to Melbourne, where he was the guest of honour at the centenary celebrations of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Another special guest was Eamon de Valera, the President of the Republic of Ireland. His heart must have gladdened to the stirring sounds of 'Hail, Glorious St Patrick' and at the sight of the Irish flag unfurled on the stage.

### **Post-war stresses on Catholic Education**

By late 1943 the shock of a threatened Japanese invasion had passed, and Australians began to discuss the problems of post-war reconstruction. The Catholic Church took its role in this reconstruction seriously. A statement called *Pattern for Peace* was prepared by the National Secretariat of Catholic Action in Melbourne, circa 1943, on behalf of the Australian bishops and addressed to the Federal Government. In this statement, educational reconstruction had the lowest priority. Its highest priority was for an increased Australian population, and noting the 'persistent and progressive decline in the Australian birth-rate', it urged government schemes to encourage the immigration of

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<sup>126</sup> CW, 11 March 1948, p. 5.

<sup>127</sup> CW, 6 May 1948, p. 7. It is difficult not to question the educational costs of rehearsal time, lost lesson time and associated costs of costumes, shoes and transport.

<sup>128</sup> Information supplied by Sr Sophie McGrath from interviews conducted in the 1980s.

European rural dwellers.<sup>129</sup> It called for the inclusion of domestic science as a compulsory subject for girls in the curricula of all schools, and noted that an educational system which is Christian in background, atmosphere, and direct instruction, is ‘vital to the preservation of freedom’ in Australia.<sup>130</sup>

*Pattern for Peace* had noted that there was general agreement that a national housing policy would be instituted in the post-war period. It stated that home ownership should be given every encouragement and that new homes were to be of a sufficient size to encourage newly married couples to have large families.<sup>131</sup> Yet by 1949, the shortage of housing in Australia was such that one in five households contained more than one family and this was not by preference; this proportion would only fall to fourteen per cent in 1952 and then to nine per cent in 1956.<sup>132</sup> The shortage of housing created by wartime building restrictions, skills shortage and the lack of availability of materials would be exacerbated by two significant factors, namely, an increase in marriage rates and immigration.

Between 1947 and 1954, the proportion of Catholics among new settlers in Australia was nearly twice that in the general population. Immigration in that period raised the Catholic proportion of the Australia population by 1.3 per cent.<sup>133</sup> The Catholic Church was quick in acknowledging the importance of attracting Catholic migrants of good character and the need to involve Australian Catholics in the process. In 1947, as the first of the displaced persons arrived in Australia, readers of the *Catholic Weekly* were assured that ‘Migrants are Splendid Types’.<sup>134</sup>

In April 1947, the Federal Catholic Migration Committee was formally established and in the following year, the Catholic chaplain who had been sent ‘all the way to Fremantle to travel back to Sydney with the migrants’ on the *Ormond*, reported the ‘Catholics on board

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<sup>129</sup> National Secretariat of Catholic Action, *Pattern for Peace: statement on reconstruction presented to the Federal Government, on behalf of the Catholic community*, Advocate Press, Melbourne, n.d., p. 5 and pp. 16-17.

<sup>130</sup> *Pattern for Peace*, p. 44 and p. 69.

<sup>131</sup> *Pattern for Peace*, p. 12.

<sup>132</sup> John Murphy and Judith Smart, *The Forgotten Fifties: aspects of Australian society and culture in the 1950s*, MUP, 1997, p. 184.

<sup>133</sup> Henry Mayer (ed.), *Catholics and the Free Society: an Australian symposium*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1961, p. 28.

<sup>134</sup> *CW*, 18 December 1947, p. 1. The article refers to 853 displaced persons from the Baltic States, sixty per cent of whom were Catholic, with an average age of twenty-four years.

were fine types'.<sup>135</sup> The ship was carrying 1,050 new settlers and the chaplain sent to meet the ship was Fr W. Nicol of Kyogle, who was appointed the Federal Director of the Catholic Migration Committee in mid-1948. Fr Nicol was to leave soon after for England where 'one of his tasks was to ensure that the very best type of migrant came to Australia'.<sup>136</sup>

Sponsorship of suitable migrants was an important role of the Catholic Immigration Committee. Catholics were asked to actively share in the responsibilities of bringing, welcoming and helping settle the new arrivals especially by offering accommodation. The 1947 Federal Conference of Catholic Women was told that Australians 'should make an earnest endeavor to understand the habits of migrants and respect the knowledge, culture and experience they possess'. Assimilation of migrants was seen as of the utmost priority. One speaker from Queensland saw migrants as fulfilling a need for domestic servants and 'good Catholic homes could be guaranteed for prospective migrants in this field'.<sup>137</sup> The Archdiocese of Sydney set up the Sydney Catholic Committee for New Settlers in 1949 and national chaplains from overseas were appointed to minister to their own people in their own language and Rite.

Immigration added to the impacts of the post-war rise in the birth rate, the so-called baby boom. Classrooms were bursting at the seams and school systems, both state and independent, struggled to cope. Between 1950 and 1970 the school population in Australia doubled, reaching 2.75 million students. Another factor in the increase in secondary school students was the increase in the school retention rate, with increasing numbers staying beyond the minimum school leaving age. Aside from the minimum school leaving age having been raised to fifteen years in 1943, school retention rates reflected the broader changes in the Australian economy which were demanding more technologically sophisticated graduates.

Secondary education was seen as an avenue to new types of occupations, facilitating entrance to white-collar class employment. A salaried middle class required secondary

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<sup>135</sup> CW, 11 March 1948, p. 7. See Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, pp. 185-187, for the establishment of the Catholic migration offices in each capital city.

<sup>136</sup> CW, 3 June 1948, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> CW, 18 December 1947, p. 4.

school education.<sup>138</sup> The proportion of First Year pupils in NSW State schools in 1948 reaching Fifth Year was 9.4 per cent. Of those in the 1950 First Year cohort, some ten per cent reached Fifth Year. The proportion had increased to fifteen per cent for the 1954 First Year cohort and by 1956 it had reached 17.2 per cent.<sup>139</sup> This was reflected in the microcosm of Holy Cross College during this time. Numbers in the Leaving Certificate class were nine in 1945, sixteen in 1946 and twenty by 1948.<sup>140</sup>

### **Beginnings of state aid**

In the twenty-first century, state aid (the commonly used term for government aid), for non-state system schools is taken as granted. Its necessity and its justice have been accepted by all major political parties in Australia. State aid to denominational schools had always been a political issue in Australia but especially so following the Education Acts passed in the various state parliaments in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and which withdrew government payments to teachers in denominational schools.

In 1952, the Commonwealth government accepted a recommendation, originating at a Headmasters' Conference, that expenses incurred in education could be claimed as tax exempt, with an initial limit of £75 per child. This benefit was claimed by a wide cross-section of the community. Later on, money donated to the building funds of independent schools was allowed as a deduction from income and exempted from tax. In 1957, the Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies agreed to a scheme for assistance with interest payments on new school buildings in the ACT at a time when thousands of public servants were being forcibly transferred to the ACT away from the type of educational facilities they would have normally enjoyed. Menzies's view of Australian federalism seems to have been at the heart of much of his opposition to federal aid to schools. On 7 September 1960, in the House of Representatives, he declared:

The essence of this matter is that if the Commonwealth starts to interfere with the educational policies of the States, with the way in which they go about their job in the educational field, that will be a very bad day for Australia.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Alan Barcan sees this emerging salaried middle class as one of the features of the welfare state. See Alan Barcan, *A History of Australian Education*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980, p. 296.

<sup>139</sup> Barcan, *A History of Australian Education*, p. 300.

<sup>140</sup> Details from *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, 1947 and 1949 editions.

<sup>141</sup> Don Smart, *Federal Aid to Australian Schools*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1978, p. 35.

In the post-war reconstruction period of 1945-1952, the teaching religious orders could not cope with the stresses of increasing numbers of pupils and the growing need for science facilities in schools. Also evident was the changing expectations of parents regarding the standards of school buildings, school equipment and the training of the teachers in whose care the future of the children was entrusted. It was inevitable that the long-standing demand by Catholics for tax justice would become more strident.

In 1948, Cardinal Gilroy recommended that all Catholic schools should form Parents and Friends Associations. These were seen as important line of communication between the hierarchy and the school authorities and could be formed into vital lobby groups particularly on the local level with their member of parliament. By 1951 it was reported that there were at least sixty parish based parents and friends associations in the Archdiocese of Sydney.<sup>142</sup> Gilroy had suggested in 1949 that the existing associations come together to form a Federation of Parent and Friends Associations but this Federation, formed in October 1949, was to be 'effectively dissuaded from any independent activity on the matter of state aid'. The first President of the Federation of Parents' and Friends' Associations, Ambrose Roddy, according to Hogan, was 'firmly under the control of Archbishop [James] Carroll'.<sup>143</sup> By 1954, there had emerged a state aid steering committee in Sydney under the supervision of James Carroll, auxiliary bishop to Cardinal Gilroy. This committee became the centre of the NSW campaign of state aid during the 1950s. In the 1950s a proposal to establish a Catholic university in Sydney was considered by the NSW bishops.<sup>144</sup>

### **Communism: the greatest scourge**

Communism had been a preoccupation of the Catholic Church since the Spanish Civil War of 1936, when General Franco was presented as defending Catholicism against the persecutions of atheistic materialism; Massam has noted that the 1917 Fatima apparitions of Mary, in which she was identified as Our Lady of the Rosary and Queen of Peace became the focus of anti-communist devotions.<sup>145</sup> In a passionate speech to 1,400 at one of the principal sessions of the Religion and Life Conference in Newcastle in October

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<sup>142</sup> CW, 29 March 1951, p. 6.

<sup>143</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>144</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 33. Hogan says it was one of their main educational preoccupations in the 1950s.

<sup>145</sup> Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 91.

1947, Fr P.J. Ryan MSC declared that Communism was based on a lie, stating that Communism ‘promised a paradise on earth, yet it had done more than any other tyranny in the past to create a hell on earth’.<sup>146</sup>

The Catholic Church saw its education system as a fundamental bulwark against the spread of Communism in the post-war Western world. The *Catholic Weekly* was confident in proclaiming that: ‘Education on Catholic principles has been responsible for the united, solid and effective opposition of Catholicism to the greatest threat that Western civilization has had to face for many centuries, namely, Communism.’<sup>147</sup> Senior students at Holy Cross College, like those in other Catholic secondary schools, were made aware of the scourge of Communism and the responsibility of Catholic Action to oppose it.

### **Catholic Adult Education**

The introduction of Catholic adult education in Sydney was hailed as ‘a major revolution in local Catholic education’<sup>148</sup> and was an essential adjunct to Catholic Action. One of the pioneers of Catholic adult education in Australia was the Aquinas Academy (Sydney). It had begun operations in March 1945 as a centre for the study of philosophy and theology in the Thomistic tradition and was conducted by the Marist Fathers. As an alternative for the layperson of average ability, the Chesterton Institute for Catholic Adult Education had begun in March 1947, a ‘unique experiment’ which was made possible by the cooperation of the religious orders. Its first series of lectures was considered to be a ‘remarkable achievement’, with a total of 743 enrolments.<sup>149</sup>

The Chesterton Institute conducted courses in suburban centres and in the city. The Franciscan Fathers of Waverley conducted one of these at Holy Cross College each Monday evening in term time. In July 1947, for the cost of £1 10s the course available there was entitled ‘Man and Marriage’, and the individual topics covered were: man and woman; the family - its origin; the family - the cornerstone of society; marriage as a natural contract; marriage as a sacrament; the duties of parents and children; divorce;

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<sup>146</sup> CW, 16 October 1947, p. 7.

<sup>147</sup> CW, 15 April 1948, p. 17.

<sup>148</sup> CW, 22 January 1948, p. 4.

<sup>149</sup> CW, 1 January 1948, p. 4.



family limitation; and education - sex and secular. Every fourth night was discussion night.<sup>150</sup> In 1948, special courses were offered by the Chesterton Institute in the city on industrial relations, economics, public speaking, international affairs, and journalism and writing<sup>151</sup>. Such were the efforts to educate the laity which impinged upon Holy Cross College, both in its religious education curriculum and the use of its resources.

Post-war trends were seen to threaten all Catholic relationships and increase the likelihood of mixed marriages and the 'leakage from the faith' was seen as a major contributor to this likelihood. Increasing leisure hours was seen as a danger to Catholics if not adequately managed. The introduction of the forty hour week in NSW, in 1947, was analysed by the *Catholic Weekly* for the effects it would have on workers. Not surprisingly, the *Catholic Weekly* could see a positive aspect in the additional opportunities the forty hour week gave to improve the exercising of religious faith and participation in Catholic Action, parochial work and membership of benefit societies. Catholics were told of the advantages to be gained from wholesome pursuits such as weaving, spinning, carpentry, pottery-making and gardening. The Grail attracted many girls and young women because of its emphasis on these same simple, wholesome, rural inspired activities. The *Catholic Weekly* pointed out that 'decent song, music, discussion should lie within the compass of all Catholics' and 'moral danger lay in picture-shows, organized sport, commercial radio, race meetings, hotels and the like'.<sup>152</sup>

### **The status of lay teachers in Catholic schools**

Those on the Catholic Education Board in 1940 agreed that lay teachers were 'not desirable' in Catholic Schools and that the teaching orders 'be recommended to do without them as far as possible'.<sup>153</sup> Yet this attitude to lay teachers by the Sydney archdiocesan education system was to undergo a dramatic revision within another two decades. They would cease to be a tolerated intrusion and become a prop, often exploited and marginalised. Their value could be appreciated on the 'shop floor' by those religious by whose side they taught, but those in administrative positions often saw them as just a cost to be met by a system labouring under severe financial constraints.

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<sup>150</sup> CW, 10 July 1947 p. 4.

<sup>151</sup> CW, 19 February 1948, p. 21.

<sup>152</sup> CW, 3 July 1947, p. 4.

<sup>153</sup> Catholic Education Board minutes for 10 July 1940, Reproduction of the Minute Book of the Catholic Education Board, meetings from the inaugural meeting 2 June 1939 to 31 July 1962, Box 2, CEOSA.

The status of lay teachers in Catholic schools was bluntly clarified in the Catholic Education Gazette of 1 April 1940: ‘Non-Catholics should never be put on the staffs of Catholic schools as permanent class teachers. Whenever possible Catholics should be employed in teaching Physical Culture, Music, singing, art, etc.’<sup>154</sup> Yet as early as 1944, a report of the Third Education Conference of Directors and Inspectors of Schools noted: ‘In the past decade the increase in candidates for the teaching orders has not been commensurate with the increase in the Catholic school population.’<sup>155</sup> The closing remarks of Br Ronald Fogarty in his history of Catholic Education were either exceedingly pessimistic or clearly realistic. He lamented that ‘constant pressure from diocesan authorities for more and more schools has strained [religious] staff to the utmost’ and suggested that ‘the religious could gradually withdraw into a smaller number of select schools, leaving the parochial and diocesan schools’.<sup>156</sup>

In an attempt to acknowledge the ‘mission’ of Catholic teachers, there was inaugurated on 4 July 1940, a movement for Catholic lay teachers in NSW; it was established by the Secretariate for Catholic Action. Membership was open to any lay Catholic teacher or ex-teacher or employee of the education department or in private schools in NSW. By 1947 it had sixty members, of which about thirty regularly attended the monthly meetings.<sup>157</sup> Emphasising its Catholic Action origins, it had a spiritual director appointed by the Archbishop of Sydney and its main public event was an annual Communion Breakfast, at which there was an address by the Archbishop.<sup>158</sup> The theme common to these addresses was the ‘noble vocation’ of their profession. These non-religious teachers were told of the ‘serious obligation’ and the ‘privilege’ of their calling and were enjoined to continually strive to ‘keep abreast of the times’, reading everything possible on the subject they were teaching.<sup>159</sup> By 1947 there were five lay teachers on the staff of Holy Cross College: Mesdames Lynagh, Liddell, Hyland, Kelly and Bradley.

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<sup>154</sup> CEO, *Catholic Education Gazette*, vol. VIII, 1 April 1940, J0929, SAA. School principals were reminded that the *Catholic Education Gazette* was for the eyes of Religious staff only.

<sup>155</sup> *Report of the Third National Education Conference of Directors and Inspectors of Schools*, Verity Press, Sydney, 1944, p. 3, cited in Fogarty, *Catholic Education, 1806-1950*, vol. 2, p. 478,

<sup>156</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education, 1806-1950*, vol. 2, p. 478.

<sup>157</sup> See File B0008, SAA.

<sup>158</sup> Dr Wyndham, the NSW Director-General of Education was the guest speaker at the 1966 Communion Breakfast. B0008, SAA.

<sup>159</sup> *CW*, 1 January, 1948, p. 6. In 1950, the members were again reminded of the ‘noble vocation’ of teaching. *CW*, 28 December 1950, p. 6. The Assisian Guild ceased functioning in 1970.

### FOCUS YEARS 1946-48

- ❖ The girls returned to Holy Cross College at the beginning of the 1946 school year to find a new principal, Sr M. Alphonsus Stanley, who also became superior of the Holy Cross convent where there were nineteen sisters in the community.<sup>160</sup> The College was staffed by eight religious and four secular teachers and the enrolment was 360 girls and two boys.<sup>161</sup> Sr M Alphonsus' sibling, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley, had begun her illustrious teaching and administrative career at Holy Cross College in 1934, and during the last three of those, 1943-1945 she had been College principal. The two Stanley sisters exchanged roles and Sr M. Gonzaga replaced Sr M. Alphonsus as principal at Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, where Sr M. Alphonsus had been a most successful principal for thirteen years. Sr M. Alphonsus, a graduate of St Anne's High School Surry Hills, had repeated her last year at OLMC Parramatta in order to matriculate; achieving excellent results she won an exhibition to the University of Sydney where she graduated in 1918 with distinction in English and French. In 1919 she entered the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, returning to the university in 1926 to complete a Diploma in Education as a part-time student. On the retirement of Mother M. Francis Kearney in 1933, she was appointed principal of the largest college of the Parramatta sisters, OLMC Parramatta, a position of considerable responsibility. Sr M. Gonzaga would hold the principalship of OLMC Parramatta even longer than her sister, staying there from 1946 to 1964, when she returned to Paul Street, Bondi Junction, the senior school campus of Holy Cross College, as deputy principal.<sup>162</sup>
  
- ❖ The first post-war Leaving Certificate class of 1946 was composed of sixteen girls, two of whom were to enter religious congregations. Marie Gaudry, dux of Fifth Year, was to take the name Anselm when she entered the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta and after a successful career as teacher, including the principalship of Holy Cross College Middle School, would become the superior-general of the Parramatta congregation. Her fellow student, Joan Fanning would enter the Carmelites.<sup>163</sup> The academic results

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<sup>160</sup> The 1947 ACD recorded Sr M. Ligouri Agnew as the community superior; perhaps that had been the intended appointment at the time of printing, p. 96.

<sup>161</sup> 1946 EVR in Episcopal Visitation Reports, Woollahra, 1943-1949, Box 33, D0260, SAA.

<sup>162</sup> Biographical details from the congregational archives, PA.

<sup>163</sup> Neither entered the convent immediately on leaving school. Both Marie Gaudry and Joan Fanning made their debut at the Holy Cross College ex-students ball the following July. *CW*, 31 July 1947, p. 18.

- of this 1946 group were outstanding. Out of seventeen LC successful candidates, eight girls matriculated. Marie Gaudry and Fay Littlefair were awarded University exhibitions and three others, Margot McInerney, Vilma Burns and Beverley Jones, received scholarships to the Sydney Teachers College.<sup>164</sup> The 1946 Intermediate Certificate class had thirty-nine candidates, the biggest group so far at the College.
- ❖ One member of the 1946 LC cohort had left school at the end of Fourth Year and would not sit for the exam. Catherine Gaskin had finished her schooling prematurely when her first novel, *This Other Eden* was accepted for publication in Sydney by William Collins and she began an illustrious career as an internationally renowned writer of historical fiction, with twenty-one works of historical fiction to her credit.<sup>165</sup> Catherine had started writing *This Other Eden* when she was fifteen and in Fourth Year at Holy Cross. She has described it as ‘a pretty bad book, as you can imagine, very immature’. In spite of that, the book sold 50,000 copies in Australia, and a further 15,000 copies in England.<sup>166</sup> Catherine has described herself as always a feminist and has commented that when her first novel was published ‘no publisher on earth could discriminate against a woman. We were all authors; we all had the same contract.’ She has also described herself as an agnostic, adding she could not belong to an organized religion.<sup>167</sup> What is apparent from the interview is her strong sense of independence and a well defined confidence in her abilities at a relatively young age. Holy Cross College, which Catherine attended from Sixth Class, helped her develop those traits and gave her opportunities to excel. She was one of the best public speakers at the College at the time and for three years she was a member of the College debating group being one of the team coached by Sr M. Gonzaga that won the Junior School Debating trophy in 1943. Catherine had also been a school prefect.<sup>168</sup> One of her teachers in 1946 described her as ‘a voracious and rapid reader and a naturally gifted student; her cultural tastes are scarcely those of the average urban teenager. Shakespeare was her literary passion and she was widely and precociously

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<sup>164</sup> Marie’s results were H1 English, H1 Modern History, H2 Latin, and As in French and General Maths.

<sup>165</sup> Catherine Gaskin was born in Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland on 2 April 1929. The family migrated to Australia when Catherine was three months old.

<sup>166</sup> Giulia Giuffre, *A Writing Life: Interviews with Australian Women Writers*, Sydney, 1990, pp. 197-198. Catherine Gaskin was interviewed by Giuffre at her home on the Isle of Man in October 1986.

<sup>167</sup> Giuffre, *A Writing Life*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>168</sup> Information from *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946; Catherine has said of herself that she lacked the necessary combative spirit for debating, *Celebration of Our Education*, p.76.

read in modern fiction notably Galsworthy, Cronin and Somerset Maugham'.<sup>169</sup>

Catherine said she was 'terribly proud of having been to Holy Cross' and ensured it was listed as her first entry in *Who's Who*.<sup>170</sup>

- ❖ At the 1946 St Patrick's Day Sports, the 150 seniors of Holy Cross College won the Cup in the march past of the Catholic Girls' Colleges; this was a much coveted prize. It was made more special because Monsignor Collender as Vicar General of the Sydney Archdiocese took the salute in place of Cardinal Gilroy who had not returned from Rome. Twenty Catholic schools participated in the events and some 4,000 children were involved, with 1,000 taking part in the physical culture display. The girls presented a display in deportment and ground exercises, performed to Irish tunes. Irish dancing continued the whole day. The sports were held on a Saturday so parents could attend; the crowd was estimated at 10,000. To celebrate the feast day so dear to the hearts of many Australian Catholics, the school children were given a holiday the following Monday (18 March). They were expected to attend the Solemn Mass on Monday morning at St Mary's Cathedral, where crowds gathered after at the Altar of the Irish Saints and the Rosary was recited in Gaelic.<sup>171</sup>
- ❖ In 1946 Monsignor Collender had reported that the senior scholars at the College were instructed in both Catholic Action and Catholic Evidence Method.<sup>172</sup> Marie Gaudry reported in the school magazine that Fr Jones came each week and gave 'interesting lectures' on Social Studies. The girls in the senior class could gain 'insight into the intricacies of life in the modern world', through 'Father's well-reasoned talks' on the natural rights of man, the social structure of a country and the forces of Revolution, Socialism, Communism etc. Fr Jones also covered arbitration, strikes, guilds, regionalism, trade unionism, all topics judged to be of 'great importance in the present day'.<sup>173</sup> Senior students at Holy Cross were being guided in their future responsibilities as active Church members, citizens and ultimately parents. This Catholic Evidence course of instruction by Fr Jones mirrored the post-war Adult Catholic Education courses previously referred to.

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<sup>169</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 22.

<sup>170</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 77.

<sup>171</sup> *CW*, 21 March 1946, p. 6 and p. 21.

<sup>172</sup> 1946 EVR in Episcopal Visitation Reports, Woollahra 1943-1949, Box 33, D0260, SAA.

<sup>173</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 12.

- ❖ Monsignor Collender perceived the special dangers to faith and morals were Communism, flats, picture shows and proximity to Bondi Beach.<sup>174</sup> The spectacular growth of flats in the Bondi, Waverley and Bellevue Hill areas was seen as a problem for the parish for two reasons: the parish priests found it difficult to carry out parish visitations<sup>175</sup> and they were seen as a deterrent to couples beginning a family.<sup>176</sup>
  
- ❖ All the girls in Fourth and Fifth Years at Holy Cross College were enrolled in the internationally organised Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart and each class was responsible for one nominated hour in the day when they would be ‘striving to make reparation ... for the forgetfulness and ingratitude of the majority of mankind.’<sup>177</sup> For all students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy on the 24<sup>th</sup> September was the most special of the feast days of Mary. On that day in 1946 there was a special Mass at 7.30 a.m. followed by a picnic breakfast in the College grounds. There was then free recreation until the girls were assembled in front of the College for the Rosary at 11.00 a.m. when the Children of Mary, the Aspirants and the Holy Angels in their cloaks and veils, followed by the rest of the children in school uniform, moved in procession to the Holy Cross Church, singing hymns in praise of Our Lady. After Benediction and the Act of Consecration, the students were dismissed for the rest of the day which was proclaimed a half-holiday.<sup>178</sup> The convent community had a rare day free of teaching duties and enjoyed their own traditional celebrations.
  
- ❖ The College continued with its tradition of student reunions and on 21 September 1947, nearly 200 ex-students assembled at Edgecliff Road. Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, the congregational leader was present. Benediction was followed by a reunion tea and a concert. Maintaining contact with ex-students was seen as a necessary part of trying to prevent the ‘leakage’ of young people from the Catholic

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<sup>174</sup> 1946 EVR; Episcopal Visitation Reports, Woollahra 1943-1949, Box 33, D0260, SAA. These were the same as those given by Collender in the 1943 EPV.

<sup>175</sup> As a young curate at Holy Cross, Fr John McSweeney was sent out to door-knock in the parish area and described how Jewish residents would identify themselves by hanging a particular emblem of their front door. He found the flat developments very ‘unwelcoming’, informal conversation with the author, 2006.

<sup>176</sup> In the 1955 Holy Cross EVR, Monsignor Collender specified ‘small flats’.

<sup>177</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1947, p. 5.

<sup>178</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 3.

- faith. The Sydney Archdiocese sponsored the Combined Catholic Colleges' Association which represented thirty Catholic girls' colleges. At its general Communion at St Mary's Cathedral in 1951, 600 ex-students attended. A communion breakfast followed at CUSA House. The girls and women present were exhorted by the association's chaplain, Fr J. F. Delany, to be: 'examples of patience, tolerance and refinement' in the home; in the parish, 'reliable and generous co-operators with the pastor'; and in society, 'unaffected, simple, [and] modest'.<sup>179</sup>
- ❖ From the beginning of 1947, 'full facilities' for a business course were available at Holy Cross College. This would accommodate pupils for a year following their IC examinations and train them for a position in 'a government department or with a private firm', with the advantage of affording them an extra year in the 'Catholic atmosphere' of the College.<sup>180</sup> This course proved to be popular and filled an obvious need. It was still the prerogative of a small minority of the Holy Cross students to proceed to a university or teachers college.
  - ❖ A house system had been established at the College by 1948 and it was reported that it had been 'productive of much healthy rivalry' amongst the secondary classes; the three houses were: St Anne's, St Agnes' and St Therese's.<sup>181</sup>

## Conclusion

The decade of the 1940s was dominated by the immediate danger to the nation made apparent by enemy bombing raids on land and at sea, and the social and economic upheaval of war-time restrictions and regulations. This was an age of uncertainty in which religious faith, with its own certainties, would prosper. Throughout this time, Church authorities were alert to state legislation which impinged on the life of the Catholic community, such as war emergency activities and projected changes in the educational field. Church authorities were conscious of being disregarded and ignored and were not slow to protest.

It was also a decade which saw the blossoming of lay apostolic movements, known

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<sup>179</sup> CW, 22 March 1951, p. 8.

<sup>180</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 3

<sup>181</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1948, p. 7.

collectively as Catholic Action, which presented opportunities to young Catholic women to study the fundamental tenets of their faith in relation to the wider society and to be prepared to set out into the world where they would defend and spread their beliefs, not with emotion but by their intellect and their deeds. Holy Cross College embraced the foremost Catholic Action movements of the 1940s, the Catholic Evidence Guild and the Grail, and many of its graduates from this time have displayed by their deeds the strength of their conviction of the ability of their Catholic faith to be a force for good in the world.

The world was opening up for women in the 1940s, especially as men in uniform embarked on ships and trains to serve their country and women stepped in to replace them. In Australia, on the home front, as in the USA, it was the time of 'Rosie the Riveter'. Women became more vocal and confident. Because its message included a strong emphasis on women's independence and potential, the Grail succeeded, in the late 1930s and the 1940s, in attracting young Catholic women seeking a liberated and fulfilling way of participating in the lay apostolate. Leaders in the Church were challenged to understand that the position of women in society had shifted dramatically and their natural sphere was no longer confined to the home.

The founder of the Grail, Fr Van Ginneken SJ, had argued that young Catholic women should 'have room to manoeuvre and to develop their own insights and initiative'.<sup>182</sup> The challenge of the 1950s was to allow this philosophy to be reflected in changes in the education of Catholic girls. While the following decade would see a groundswell of devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, and focus on the family as the very core of society, the extreme conservatism of the early 1950s would be challenged by the beginnings of unprecedented changes within society. The Catholic community in general in Australia, and Holy Cross College in particular, would not be immune to these changes.

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<sup>182</sup> Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. 151.



## CHAPTER 6

### DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE SPACE RACE: CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE 1951 – 1962

**‘We are in danger from moral and intellectual apathy’** (‘Call to Australia’ broadcast, 11 November 1951)

The Australian people, until the middle of the 1950s, retained feelings of insecurity regarding the permanency of peace and consequently their future prosperity. They felt a continuing threat of another war emanating from Communism, and economic stability had also seemed an elusive goal until the second half of the 1950s, a period noted for its economic and political stability. Minimum wages for both men and women generally rose relative to inflation. This economic stability has been described by John Murphy as ‘positively serene’ compared to the previous ten years.<sup>1</sup> It was matched by a period of political stability in which Robert Gordon Menzies won federal elections for the Liberal-Country Party Coalition in December 1955 and then again in November 1958. The December 1961 election was a much closer contest because of a temporary economic slump, but Menzies would survive to win a further three elections for the coalition in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

#### **‘An uncharacteristic decade for the century’**

The post-war housing shortage caused by the government’s war-time control over skilled manpower and materials was starting to ease by the mid-1950s. This change accommodated a steady drop in the average age at first marriage for both men and women, with a corresponding steady rise in the marriage rate. According to Murphy the 1950s were distinguished by: ‘A form of domesticity, based on the suburban, home-owning, nuclear family, which Menzies proved particularly adept at speaking about, as the location of identity and personal meaning.’<sup>3</sup> This situation was similar to the post-war situation in the United States against which the feminist journalist Betty Freidan was to

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<sup>1</sup> John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: private sentiment and political culture in Menzies’ Australia*, UNSWP, Sydney, 2000, p.185.

<sup>2</sup> Yet in every Federal election between 1949 and 1963 the Labor Party (hereafter ALP) gained at least forty-five per cent of the two party preferred vote. The 1955 Labor Party split and the formation of the Democratic Labor Party (hereafter DLP) would ensure the ALP was always a second runner.

<sup>3</sup> Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties*, p. 21.

revolt and describe in detail in her famous, seminal work *The Feminine Mystique*, first published in 1963.<sup>4</sup>

Historian Austin Cooper has commented that the 1950s were ‘an uncharacteristic decade for the century [as] traditional values of family, home, and piety were suddenly back on the agenda between the end of the war and 1960’.<sup>5</sup> These sentiments were reinforced by the Christian Churches. Church attendance was high. Schools would both reflect the conservatism of the times and also benefit from a student population which was generally well disciplined and had a stable home life. This is evident in the account of the Holy Cross College Seniors’ Dance, held in May 1955. The Holy Cross parish hall had been decorated by the Fourth Year girls and a pretty scene, illustrative of this era, was described in the school magazine. Before the function began, the girls came to the convent to allow the sisters to see them in their finery, and to introduce their partners some of whom were provided from a party of twenty boys Br Fields of Waverley College had brought to the dance.<sup>6</sup>

Standing around the piano and having a family ‘singsong’ was a time-honoured method of creating and maintaining family unity which lasted until after the end of World War Two, but in the 1950s, the piano was replaced by the radio as the centre of home entertainment. The family that had gathered around the piano was now gathering around the ‘wireless’ and record player and after 1956, the television set. The brilliantly conceived ‘The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together’ campaign of 1953, imported from the US, attempted to counterbalance these new attractions and distractions. According to Cooper, in the 1950s ‘the churches were vibrant and apparently successful’,<sup>7</sup> yet it seems that the peak in church attendance, when fifty per cent of Catholics regularly attended Mass, had been reached at the very start of the decade of the 1950s.<sup>8</sup>

In living rooms across the nation, families who had gathered around the wireless set to

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<sup>4</sup> Betty Freidan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Austin Cooper, ‘Vatican II – The Context’, *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 80, no. 3, 2003, p. 336.

<sup>6</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Cooper, ‘Vatican II’, p. 337.

<sup>8</sup> Cardinal George Pell, ‘Religion and Culture: Catholic Schools in Australia’, Keynote address to the 2006 National Catholic Education Conference.

hear the evening news on Armistice Day, 11 November 1951, also heard a statement entitled *Call to the People of Australia*, which had been signed by the Australian leaders of the major Christian Churches (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist), the Chief Justices and the Australia Council of Churches. Read by the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission immediately after the 7.00 p.m. news, its timing meant it would have a wide audience. Listeners were informed: ‘We are in danger from moral and intellectual apathy, from the mortal enemies of mankind which will sap the will and darken the understanding and breed evil dissensions’, dangers which demanded ‘a restoration of the moral order from which alone true social order can derive’ and called for ‘a new effort from all Australians to advance moral standards’.<sup>9</sup>

It seems the time was ripe for this concerted reform effort by the most conservative forces in an Australia where there was relative prosperity, employment growth, and the end of shortages were in sight. The *Call to the People of Australia* was remarkable for its display of a spirit of consensus among the main Christian Churches, a far cry from the sectarianism of the past.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Commonwealth jubilee celebrations of 1951**

The Australian Catholic bishops had decided that Catholics would participate fully in the celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia. This was seen as an opportunity to reaffirm the patriotism of Catholics, their notable contribution to the nation’s development, and their inclusiveness in Australian society. The week long Catholic Church celebrations, from Sunday 15 April to Sunday 22 April, were centred on St Mary’s Cathedral and the Sydney Showground.

To reinforce the patriotic theme, it was decreed that an Australian flags ceremony was to be held in all Catholic schools in the Archdioceses of Sydney, Canberra-Goulburn, Bathurst, Maitland and Armidale on Wednesday 18 April. This was to consist of a series of ceremonies: at 10.00 a.m., before Mass in parish churches, jubilee flags presented by the Commonwealth Government were to be blessed; after Mass, there was to be a

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in David Hilliard, ‘Church, Family and Sexuality in Australia in the 1950s’, *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 28, no. 109, 1997, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> See Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: religion in Australian history*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1987, p. 1.

ceremony of the breaking of the flags and the national anthem was to be sung; the children were to salute the flag and an address on the significance of the flag was to follow; finally the children would sing the jubilee anthem and commemorative books and medals presented by the Commonwealth government were to be distributed.<sup>11</sup>

The following day, a solemn jubilee Mass at St Mary's Cathedral was followed by the jubilee march of children from Catholic schools. The march began with the Cardinal laying a wreath on the Cenotaph. The children participated in a salute as they passed Parliament House in Macquarie Street. Murray Ball, who carried the banner for Holy Cross, remembers the event.<sup>12</sup> Another salute was given at the Cathedral. On the Friday, children of the Catholic schools simultaneously participated in a jubilee carnival and sports day at four venues in different parts of Sydney. Holy Cross College Woollahra attended the Sydney Sports Ground.<sup>13</sup>

The week of jubilee celebrations marked the end of the Family Rosary Crusade which had been inaugurated on Sunday 4 March 1951. Under the direction of Mgr James Freeman, the Rosary Crusade had started with 'an army of Crusaders' who canvassed parishioners under the direction of their parish priest, seeking a pledge to recite the Rosary as a family every night. A series of Rosary Rallies were held in regional centres in the Sydney Archdiocese.<sup>14</sup> The climax of the campaign was a 'memorable' Catholic jubilee pageant at the Sydney Showground on the night of Sunday 22 April.<sup>15</sup> The Australian Family Rosary Campaign was modelled on the Family Rosary Campaign in the United States, where its director, Fr Patrick Peyton, had devised the slogan: 'The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together'. It was designed as a world-wide campaign for peace drawing on the Fatima devotions.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The jubilee anthem had been specially written for the Catholic schools' demonstration at the inaugural celebrations of the Commonwealth in 1901. *CW*, 8 February 1951, p. 1 and p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Ex-student Murray Ball, in recalling this march through the city, said she carried the banner for the Holy Cross and was told she had forgotten to give the eyes right at the Cenotaph, *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 95.

<sup>13</sup> *CW*, 8 February 1951, p. 1 and p. 19. The venues were the Sydney Sports Ground, Parramatta Oval, Canterbury Racecourse and Petersham Oval.

<sup>14</sup> *CW*, 2 February 1951, p. 9; and *CW*, 22 February 1951, p. 1. These rallies were held at Concord, the largest parish church in the Sydney Archdiocese, and at churches at Marrickville, North Sydney and Waverley.

<sup>15</sup> *CW*, 8 January 1951, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 97; see also p. 91.

### **‘Massive demonstrations of faith’**

The Australian National Eucharistic Congress of 1953 coincided with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first public celebration in Australia of the Mass.<sup>17</sup> The Papal Legate, the Pope’s representative at the Congress, was Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy, the first Australian-born cardinal. At this time, the future care of parishioners which numbered about 500,000 seemed assured with 440 students training for the priesthood in the eleven ecclesiastical colleges of the archdiocese.<sup>18</sup> The novitiates of the religious congregations were generally flourishing.<sup>19</sup>

The week long celebrations of the Eucharistic Congress involved huge numbers of participants, directly or indirectly. The Congress began on Sunday 12 April with 5,000 inside St Mary’s Cathedral and some 75, 000 outside. At a night rally at the Sydney Showground for the laity, some 9,000 girls from Catholic schools appeared in a tableau representing the Cross with chalice and host superimposed. The Mass for religious was attended by 4000 nuns and brothers.<sup>20</sup>

What was the chief *raison d’être* for all this pomp and ceremony, this very public display of Catholic devotion? The official answer is found in an unequivocal statement in the *Official Souvenir* produced for the 1953 Australian National Eucharistic Congress:

The principal, indeed, the sole reason for the vast demonstration was to honour Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. All other considerations – historical, educational, cultural and social – were of a secondary or incidental character.<sup>21</sup>

Reading the extensive list of events it is impossible not to be sceptical about this statement; evangelisation was obviously an important aspect of the Congress. Sunday 12 April was called ‘Propaganda Day’ and ten floats (in reality utility trucks) each containing

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<sup>17</sup> Midnight low Mass was said in every Sydney parish on Sunday 19 April to commemorate the first public Mass in the colony, celebrated by Fr James Dixon in 1803.

<sup>18</sup> *1953 Australian National Eucharistic Congress Official Souvenir*, Associated Newspapers, Sydney, 1953, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Conferences of the Major Superiors of Australia*, National Statistical Survey of Religious Personnel: Australia, 1976.

<sup>20</sup> *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 45.

two priests and displaying a large crucifix and Congress badge went to prominent points in the city and preached their message over loudspeakers. During the following week the ten chosen sites were ‘manned’ by speakers from the Catholic Evidence Guild between 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. During the Saturday of the Congress, lay members of the Catholic Evidence Guild distributed 10,000 leaflets.<sup>22</sup>

The week’s activities had encompassed all groups within the Catholic community. Lunch hour talks were given each day at the Wallace Theatre at the University of Sydney. A symposium on the Tuesday, arranged by the Legion of Catholic Women, discussed ‘The role of the Catholic woman in Parish, Diocesan, National and International Catholic organizations’. On the Tuesday evening, conventions for leading Catholic organizations were scheduled, involving the Holy Name Society, the Catholic Women’s League, the Manly Union,<sup>23</sup> the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Hibernian Society and Catholic Charities. Religious teachers had a special session at the Trocadero ballroom and there were separate rallies for men and women at the Sydney Showground. Cardinal Gilroy’s overseas participants were entertained on a harbour cruise followed by a luncheon at the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta.

The final Eucharistic procession from St Patrick’s Church Hill past the State Parliament building in Macquarie Street and around Hyde Park to the Cathedral, was ‘the culminating point in one of the greatest and most impressive religious events in the history of Australia, and attracted a great concourse of people’. In all, approximately 750,000 people witnessed the spectacular conclusion to the Congress, with 25,000 men, women and children taking part in the final procession.<sup>24</sup>

The entire organisation of the Congress activities mirrored those of the 1928 National Eucharistic Congress, but there were important differences which were signs of the times. Women were allowed to march in the procession, no longer being judged physically

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<sup>22</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, Annual Report of the Priests Group, 1953, B1208, SAA. The success of the pitches during the Congress encouraged the Guild to open a Friday midday pitch outside Hyde Park in Elizabeth Street, staffed only by priests, as employed laymen were not available during the day.

<sup>23</sup> The Manly Union represented those priests trained at St Patrick’s Seminary, Manly. Formed in 1914, its original aim was to stress the Australian nature of the church. See O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, pp. 358-360.

<sup>24</sup> All details from *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 29 and pp. 69-71.

unable to walk so far or likely to slow down the progress of the procession. An Australian cardinal was the papal legate and the Roman presence was diluted. Cardinal Gracias of Bombay was a striking and dignified presence. For the first time an Orthodox Christian Mass was offered in St Mary's Cathedral by the Armenian Patriarch, Cardinal Agagianian of the Eastern Rite. The Australian Church was displaying an ongoing commitment to the mission fields of Africa, Asia and colonial Pacific Island countries, of which Cardinal Moran would have approved and 'East, West and the Future of Australia' was the topic of a symposium.<sup>25</sup>

Hilliard has commented that the 'massive demonstrations of faith [of the 1950s] were expressions of the religious culture of a predominantly British and urban society'. Sydney's population had grown to more than two million by the late 1950s and next to London it was the largest 'white' city in the British Empire. The 1954 census counted twenty-five per cent of Sydney-siders as Catholic, compared to 22.94 per cent for Australia as a whole. At this time the largest denomination in Sydney was Church of England with 43.88 per cent. In May 1959, some 150,000 people attended the closing rally of the Billy Graham campaign, the biggest Protestant gathering ever held up to that time in Australia and in fact the world.<sup>26</sup>

### **'The Laity in the Crisis of the Modern World'**

There were many opportunities for the translation of 'massive demonstrations of faith' into the individual apostolate of Catholic Action, the importance of which was now being acknowledged at the highest international level. The First World Congress of the Lay Apostolate was held in Rome in October 1951; ex-student of OLMC Parramatta, Rosemary Goldie, on a scholarship at the Sorbonne University, Paris, was coopted into its secretariat. It was a beginning of her illustrious Roman career.<sup>27</sup> Rosemary's unique achievements (including later her participation as one of eight lay women and nine female religious in the final session of Vatican II) were to be well known to generations of

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<sup>25</sup> *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 69.

<sup>26</sup> David Hilliard, 'God in the Suburbs: The Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 97, October 1991, p. 399.

<sup>27</sup> For an autobiographical account of this career see Rosemary Goldie, *From a Roman Window. Five Decades: the world, the church and the Catholic laity*, Harper Collins Religious, Melbourne, 1998. See also Patricia Wilks, *Mercy: from generation to generation*, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, NSW, 1989, p. 66.

students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. To her former teachers (such as Sr M. Alphonsus Stanley) or Mercy sisters who had been at school with her (such as head girl, Sr M. Teresa (Kitty) McDonnell), Rosemary was a role model in numerous ways. The Second World Congress for the Lay Apostolate was held in Rome in October 1957. Its theme was 'The Laity in the Crisis of the Modern World: Responsibilities and Formation'. In 1959, a national Catholic Enquiry Centre, established by the bishops, was opened in Sydney. In its first year, some 5,000 responded to advertisements in the popular press and about half of them enrolled in the six-month course.<sup>28</sup>

The Blue Army was just one of many Catholic Actions groups which exemplified that 'action in the world could be a legitimate expression of spirituality'.<sup>29</sup> On 25 March 1958, the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima was inaugurated in NSW at a public rally at the Australian Hall at which the occasional address was given by Mgr Leonard, Director of the Lay Apostolate. About 700 of the large crowd gathered that night enrolled.<sup>30</sup> As Massam points out, Fatima was 'very closely linked to the anti-communist cause'.<sup>31</sup> The object of the Blue Army, which had been founded in 1946 and by 1958 was established in fifty-seven countries, was to combat the Red Army, specifically by prayer for the maintenance of peace, the conversion of Russia, elimination of the atom bomb and the salvation of the world.<sup>32</sup> The rules of membership were: to say part of the Rosary daily; to wear the brown scapular or medal; to accept the trials of daily work with resignation.

### **The schooling of girls in the 1950s**

Historian of education, Lesley Johnson, when reading the official documents of the 1950s, particularly those concerning the 1957 Wyndham Report on Secondary Education in NSW, noticed that official documents rarely mentioned 'girls' at all. In fact, the official silence about the education of girls in the 1950s was to her an issue of major significance to one involved in writing a history of women's education. Her basic question was how young women (teenage girls) were defined both officially and popularly in the two

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<sup>28</sup> K.S. Inglis, 'The Australian Catholic Community', in Henry Mayer (ed.), *Catholics and the Free Society: An Australian Symposium*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1961, p. 26. Sr M. Pascal Hession of the Parramatta community was an active supporter of the Catholic Enquiry Centre for many years.

<sup>29</sup> Katharine Massam, 'The Blue Army and the Cold War: anti-Communist devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 97, October 1991, p. 420.

<sup>30</sup> CW, 20 March, 1958, p. 6 and 3 April, 1958, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Massam, 'The Blue Army', p. 423.

<sup>32</sup> CW, 3 April, 1958, p. 7.



decades following the end of World War Two. What part did education policy and practice have in this? Clearly surprised at this official silence she became interested in identifying the extent to which girls in schools were or were not organised according to the category of their sex. Certainly from the perspective of the education of girls in Catholic convent high schools at this time, the education of girls was subject to the on-going demands of the public examination system, the accent on science generated by the ‘Space Race’, and the issue of co-education.<sup>33</sup>

A debate over the purpose of girl’s education raged over the 1950s and 1960s as coeducation began to be endorsed by government officials as well as education experts. Numerous state high schools were needed to cater for Sydney’s booming population in these post war decades. The decision to make them dual sex and comprehensive was a cost saving measure. The costs of implementing the Wyndham Scheme in the 1960s, and the need to redistribute scarce resources from the older established inner suburbs of Sydney to the burgeoning western suburbs, would lead to a re-examination of the Church’s traditional attitude which favoured single sex education for adolescents. There followed tentative moves towards experimentation in dual-sex schools in the Sydney CEO system. As will be seen, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were not averse to staffing a dual-sex senior college in the Eastern Suburbs.

Johnson noted that the 1950s saw ‘new and powerful pressures to encourage young women to identify themselves as sexed creatures’.<sup>34</sup> While Johnston does not identify the origins of those pressures, Mgr Collender in his Episcopal Visitation Reports for Holy Cross parish, was constant in his condemnation of movies as sources of threats to morals. The Catholic Church had a powerful antidote to these pressures to portray women as sex objects: devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. The year 1953 was proclaimed the Marian Year, the Year of Mary.

The culture of Holy Cross College reflected the strong sense of piety and loyalty to faith and communal prayer which was typical of this era. The College Legion of Mary

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<sup>33</sup> Lesley Johnson, ‘The schooling of girls in the 1950s: problems with writing a history of “women’s education”’, *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1990, pp. 10-12.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, ‘The schooling of girls in the 1950s’, p. 10.

Praesidium was responsible for lunch-hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel of the Holy Cross Church, which had been specially decorated as a shrine for a new statue of Our Lady of Mercy.<sup>35</sup> On a more obviously practical level, they supervised the distribution of Catholic Truth Society tracts, but their main activity was the visitation of the sick and the aged of the parish.<sup>36</sup> The Grail continued to be active in the school. Valerie Monty wrote an account of a four day Grail camp in the September 1955 holidays attended by ten girls from Fourth and Fifth Years.<sup>37</sup> There they would be inspired by the vision of woman, the Christian leader, rather than woman as sex object. One of the 1954 LC class, Beverley (Ruth) Crowe became a nucleus member of the Grail.

### **Responses to Catholic school staffing challenges in the 1950s**

Alan Barcan has conceded that during the 1950s Catholic education encountered problems as severe as those of the state schools.<sup>38</sup> Between 1946 and 1961, the number of pupils attending Catholic primary schools in NSW increased by eighty-one per cent and sixty or more pupils were common in primary and junior secondary classes in Sydney Catholic schools in the 1950s.<sup>39</sup> The retention rates of Catholic schools were increasing for the same basic reason as in the state schools, namely the raising of the school leaving age, but the high birth-rate among Catholics, and the high proportion of immigrants who were Catholic, added to the pressures on Catholic educators. Between 1945 and 1958 the Catholic population of Australia had increased by 62.5 per cent, growing from 1,237,136 to 2,010,165 and the combined total of women and men religious had increased by only twenty-one per cent in this same period.<sup>40</sup>

In this period the Catholic school system of the Sydney Archdiocese had to absorb an increase of approximately 200,000 pupils but the number should have been closer to 300,000 if calculated in relation to the growth in the Catholic population as a whole. Attendance at Catholic secondary schools had been rising steadily since the 1920s and

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<sup>35</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, n.p. Mgr Collender had received a legacy to be used for a statue and decided it should be a statue of Our Lady of Mercy, which he placed in the side chapel in the parish church, which was used by the Sisters of Mercy.

<sup>36</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, p. 15. Sr Ailsa Mackinnon RSM, a Holy Cross College student in the 1950s and early 60s has verified this in an informal conversation with the author, March 2008.

<sup>37</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, pp. 14-15.

<sup>38</sup> Barcan, *Australian Education*, p. 316.

<sup>39</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>40</sup> CW, 10 July 1958, p. 16. Statistics in the article were from the ACD.

this trend reached its climax in 1958, when seventy-three per cent of Catholic children in NSW were being educated in Catholic schools.<sup>41</sup> By 1950 there were more than 12,000 religious in Australia and five out of every six were engaged in education.<sup>42</sup> The resources of the Catholic education system, both human and physical, were stretched to the limit at this time.

Cardinal Gilroy's Advent Pastoral letter of November 1952 alluded to the unemployment problem which followed on the heels of the inflation created by the Korean War. He requested that all parish priests, who could possibly do so, undertake a building project with the intention of providing employment. Following this pronouncement Catholic school building programmes in Sydney exploded. Financing this expansion was not a serious problem because funds had been accumulating in the 1940s when wartime building restrictions applied and student population numbers had remained steady. Finance was not the main problem in the 1950s, staffing was. Reacting to the accelerating staffing pressures, Cardinal Gilroy inaugurated a two-year (Religious) Vocation Campaign. It was also clear that non-religious teachers were necessary to meet the shortfall in personnel in Catholic schools.

In February 1958, Mother Leone Ryan RSJ, Superior General of the Sisters of St Joseph proposed that lay women students be trained side by side with the religious at St Joseph's Training College, Mount Street, North Sydney. Mother Leone had helped broker an agreement by which all members of Religious congregations would receive formal teacher training before being put in charge of a class, thus ending the 'training on the job' which was still in use by some of the smaller congregations.<sup>43</sup> Mount Street was renamed the Catholic Teachers College (hereafter CTC) to reflect its enlarged role and the first group of forty-two young lay women, recruited straight from school with scholarships, started their primary teaching training at CTC. They agreed not to get married while they were bonded to the Sydney CEO for three years; marriage would mean instant dismissal. The young women were paid a fortnightly allowance of £4 and Mgr Slowey asked parish

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<sup>41</sup> Barcan, *Australian Education*, p. 316.

<sup>42</sup> ACD, 1951, p. 453, cited in Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia*, vol. II, p. 268.

<sup>43</sup> Jim D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey: Servant of Education, Facilitator of Change*, CEO, Sydney, 1999, p. 42.

priests to donate £100 each to finance their training.<sup>44</sup>

The year of 1955 was one rich in religious vocations for ex-students of Holy Cross College, although not all joined the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. Two sisters, Cecily and Vera McColgan, joined the Marist sisters, Cecily, as Sr M. Veronica went to NZ and Vera, as Sr M. Perpetua, went to Fiji. Joan Fanning made her final profession as Sr M. St Elie at the Carmelite Convent, Dulwich Hill. Therese Gaudry, a Commonwealth Scholarship winner from the 1954 LC class entered the Parramatta congregation in June 1955. In total, fourteen ex-students of Holy Cross College were Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1955: at Parramatta were Mother M. Thecla Kerwick,<sup>45</sup> Mother M. Leo Durkan, and Sisters M. Gonzaga Stanley, M. Anselm Gaudry, M. St Thomas Crumlin, M. Teresita Westan and M. Augusta Gaudry. At Cronulla was Sr M. Casimir Callachor. At Epping were Sisters M. St Jude Cashman and M. Mercedes Gaudry. Sr M. Michael Hawke was at Ryde and Sr M. St. James McEneaney was at Golden Grove. At Surry Hills and Stanmore were Sisters M. de Lourdes Maron and M. Bertrand Musgrave respectively.<sup>46</sup> Sisters M. Fabian Sharpe and M. Joseph Power were also Holy Cross ex-students and appear in a photo in the 1958 special jubilee issue of *Holy Cross College Woollahra*.<sup>47</sup>

In 1952, vocation material illustrating the various apostolic works of the congregation, was published by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in a glossy booklet.<sup>48</sup> In 1956, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy organised their first and only recruitment campaign in Ireland; Mother M. Andrew Lynch and Sr M. Aiden Codd were the recruiting agents and went with Cardinal Gilroy's letter of recommendation.<sup>49</sup> The actual results of this recruiting drive must have been very disappointing; just five Irish postulants entered the congregation and only one of these persevered in religious life.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 44. The first group of primary teachers graduated in March 1960; see p. 45 for a list of names.

<sup>45</sup> Mother M. Thecla was one of the first students to enrol at the Holy Cross parish school in 1907 and completed her secondary education on a scholarship at OLMC Parramatta.

<sup>46</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> 'What would it mean if - ', The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, 1952, in private possession.

<sup>49</sup> Gilroy to the Bishops of Ireland, 21 March 1956, PA.

<sup>50</sup> McGrath, Sophie, 'Women Religious in the History of Australia 1888-1950: a case study of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 81, no. 2, December 1995, p. 198.

In her 1957 Chapter Report, Mother M. Andrew Lynch commented: ‘Increased efforts are being made to foster vocations among our pupils.’ A sister was appointed to visit the schools regularly for this purpose, and vocation letters sent out once each term to any girls who ‘show signs of a vocation’. She noted the Rosary is said ‘continuously each day of the Triduum for the Feast of the Presentation in the Convent Chapel by pupils in turn’ and ‘suitable posters are displayed during these days’. At this time the membership of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy congregation was at its peak, with 175 sisters in perpetual vows, nineteen in temporary vows, six novices and six postulants; 206 in total in 1957.<sup>51</sup>

### **A survey of secondary schooling in NSW is instituted**

In 1953, there had been an outcry by teachers against a proposal to reintroduce an external examination at the Intermediate Certificate level. Following that, on 23 July 1953, there was a public announcement that a committee was to be set up to survey secondary schooling in NSW under the chairmanship of Dr Wyndham, with its public hearings scheduled to begin in July 1954. When the first list of the committee members was released in the following December it contained no Catholic representative. Following protests from the Catholic authorities, the NSW Minister of Education, Robert (Bob) Heffron was obliged to accede to demands to rectify this with the result that Fr Slowey, the Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Sydney, was appointed to the committee along with Anglican Bishop Hilliard and Presbyterian Rev. E. Vines.

The ‘diplomatic’ Slowey has been described by Jill Duffield as taking ‘a watching brief’ because of his minimal role on the committee. When Slowey took part in discussions it was on general matters. There was no discussion of the problems or wishes of the Catholic schools and no Catholic teachers or parents were called as witnesses before the hearing.<sup>52</sup> D’Orsa has commented that little is known of Fr Slowey’s work on the committee.<sup>53</sup> Duffield notes that, if it is true that Dr Wyndham felt ‘that the best way to achieve actual change [...] would be to avoid questions of resources’, then it is not surprising that Slowey was ‘nobbled’. There were fifty-seven public hearings before the

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<sup>51</sup> Sophie McGrath, ‘Recruitment in the History of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta from 1911 to Contemporary Times’, unpublished, undated, PA.

<sup>52</sup> Jill Duffield, ‘The Making of the Wyndham Scheme in New South Wales,’ *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1990, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> D’Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 33.

committee. These were held at Sydney, Armidale and Newcastle, the last in September 1955. It would take a further two years before the report was tabled in Parliament and became public, and a further four years before a considerably modified version of its recommendations was enacted in 1961.<sup>54</sup>

### **Progress in the education system of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney**

In 1957, Fr Slowey, as the director of the Catholic Education Office (hereafter CEO) of the Sydney archdiocese, had convinced Cardinal Gilroy to close Sydney's Catholic schools for three days in May so that all teachers could be brought together for an educational conference called 'The Child Today'. It was designed to attract public attention, which it did effectively, with an opening Mass at St Mary's Cathedral and a formal launch at the Sydney Town Hall, which participants attended in academic dress. Over two days, teachers met at venues at Parramatta, Kensington and Glebe. This conference became the first of an annual Catholic Teachers Conference held in the week following the May holidays, these being extended to three weeks for Catholic schools.<sup>55</sup> Out of the 1957 conference developed such organisations as the Catholic Science Teachers Association and the Catholic Music Teachers Association. More than 2,000 teachers attended the Catholic Teachers Conference every year from 1958 until 1974.<sup>56</sup>

The teaching of science had long been a problem for the Catholic schools. In 1940, Monsignor Meany had raised the question of the growing necessity for physics classes in Catholic girls' schools and Diocesan Inspector Fr Thompson was asked to bring the matter before the Education Council for discussion.<sup>57</sup> Fr Thompson reported that the Education Council had decided that it was 'impossible to provide generally for the sake of the few'.<sup>58</sup> This is in stark contrast with a decision taken by the Catholic Education Board

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<sup>54</sup> Duffield, 'Wyndham Scheme', p. 32. The full title is *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Schooling in New South Wales*, but it was commonly referred to as the Wyndham Report after the chairman of the committee, Dr. H. S. Wyndham, the Director-General of Education in NSW. The reorganisation of secondary education which resulted from its recommendations became known as the Wyndham Scheme.

<sup>55</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p.37.

<sup>56</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p.38. For a summary of each conference theme for the years 1957-1965, see p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> CEB Minutes for 26 March 1940, Reproduction of the Minute Book of the Catholic Education Board, Archdiocese of Sydney, from the inaugural meeting 2 June 1939 to 31 July 1962, Box 2, Catholic Education Office Sydney Archives ( hereafter CEOSA).

<sup>58</sup> CEB Minutes for 10 July 1940, Box 2, CEOSA. It is assumed that the Education Council referred to is the central council of the Catholic Education Association; see Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, p. 488.

(hereafter CEB) in 1947 that 'as Home Science was such an important subject for girls it should be encouraged and introduced whenever possible'.<sup>59</sup> It was decided by the CEB that biology could be taken as a subject for the Intermediate Certificate in Catholic schools from the beginning of 1951.<sup>60</sup>

Br James McGlade of the Christian Brothers was asked by Mother M. Andrew to instruct some of the Parramatta Sisters in chemistry and physics; agreeing to do this he travelled to OLMC Parramatta on Friday nights. The three sisters who were given instruction by him were Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley, Sr M. Immaculata Hegarty and Sr M. Teresa McDonnell. He found there was not time to do both subjects so he chose to concentrate on chemistry.<sup>61</sup> The latter two of these sisters taught science at Holy Cross College at different times. Chemistry was being taught at OLMC Parramatta from at least 1943 and at Holy Cross College soon after.<sup>62</sup>

Br James McGlade also had been asked to design a science laboratory for OLMC Parramatta and at the request of Bishop James Carroll, then the parish priest of Holy Cross parish, did the same for Holy Cross College.<sup>63</sup> Physics, chemistry and biology all required laboratory work. In a letter to Cardinal Gilroy, Bishop Carroll gave the estimated cost of equipping the new science facilities as £3,500. He acknowledged the demonstration room and laboratory had been designed by Br McGlade of Strathfield, and emphasised the aim had been to incorporate the best features in the Christian Brothers' schools at Strathfield, Lewisham and Chatswood.<sup>64</sup>

The standard and availability of science teaching in secondary schools was deemed to be of national importance by the second half of the 1950s. The Council of the Australian Academy of Science convened an important confidential conference on the serious shortage of scientific manpower in November 1956 and presented its report to Prime Minister Menzies in September 1957. The report warned that much of the problem began

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<sup>59</sup> CEB Minutes for 16 July 1947, Box 2, CEOSA.

<sup>60</sup> CEB Minutes for 19 July 1950, Box 2, CEOSA.

<sup>61</sup> Br James McGlade, informal conversation with the author, 10 November 2006. He was not sure of the year but thought it was wartime because he could remember Church Street (the main street of Parramatta) being dark.

<sup>62</sup> Sr Sophie McGrath, informal conversation with the author, March 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Br James McGlade, informal conversation with the author, 10 November 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Carroll to Gilroy, 23 September 1959, Holy Cross Woollahra 1951-1972, Parish file, C2735. SAA.

in the secondary schools where, because of the shortage of competent science teachers, few students were inspired to pursue scientific careers.<sup>65</sup> The Soviet Union's successful launching of *Sputnik 1*, the first artificial satellite in space, in October 1957, was further proof that the democracies of the West were falling behind the communist regimes in the development of strategic technologies. The Murray Report on Australian Universities, tabled in November 1957, had a chapter devoted to the 'Special problems of Scientific and Technological Education'. Three of Australia's leading physicists, Professors Harry Messel, Mark Oliphant and Phillip Baxter were among those who were featured in the media with appeals for a national effort to train thousands more scientists and technologists. Holy Cross students of the 1960s and '70s were to carry life-long memories of the 'door-stopper' textbooks generated by Professor Harry Messel.<sup>66</sup>

These national concerns regarding the lack of trained scientists would translate into important changes in the curriculum offered at Holy Cross College, namely the addition of biology to chemistry as science options for the Leaving Certificate. Sandra Donohue (nee Gailey) a Holy Cross College student in the 1958 LC class has commented that:

I was part of the first Biology class to sit for the LC. Mrs. Thom made the change in 1956 so, with her daughter's medical texts, we not only converted from Botany to Biology but two of us sat for Biology Honours.

Sandra described Mrs. Thom as 'an extraordinary teacher – relaxed, succinct and very warm'.<sup>67</sup> Sr Ailsa Mackinnon RSM, a student at Holy Cross College 1958-1962, has commented: 'I didn't know until later that it was unusual in those days for girls to study Chemistry and Physics.'<sup>68</sup>

The teaching of English in schools and a perceived lowering of standards of English language proficiency was also coming under scrutiny at this time. In her 1946 annual report on Holy Cross College, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley had lamented: 'If the leisure time

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<sup>65</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 129.

<sup>67</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 109, p. 109. Sandra can remember the College principal, Sr M. Alphonsus Stanley, phoning her mother to seek permission for her daughter to change from botany to biology, informal conversation with the author, April 2008.

<sup>68</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 117.



left over from outdoor recreation is absorbed wholly by the wireless and the cinema, the standard of English and of general culture amongst our young people must continue to deteriorate.<sup>69</sup> Sr M. Gonzaga's impressions were reflections of the Church's reservations regarding these forms of popular media; their ability to infiltrate Australian youth with American culture was considered quite undesirable.

In 1957, the Committee to Survey Secondary Education in NSW (the Wyndham Committee) reported that 'according to many of our witnesses, written English has suffered rapid deterioration in recent years and now falls below the standard required by university, employer and society in general'.<sup>70</sup> The Wyndham Report had concluded that 'spoken English is so closely allied to written English that ... it should be the special concern of the English teacher. They recommended that English teachers must receive adequate speech training.'<sup>71</sup> At Holy Cross College, all students received elocution tuition by such lay specialist teachers as Miss Doris Patterson and the College was often successful in the verse speaking sections of eisteddfods.<sup>72</sup>

### **The primary school at Holy Cross College is phased out**

On 28 September 1955, the Catholic Education Board had announced that the infants and primary grades of Holy Cross College Woollahra were to be amalgamated gradually with the Holy Cross parochial school. The Mother Superior of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Mother M. Andrew Lynch, asked for a reconsideration of the Board's decision to effectively close down the infants and primary sections of Holy Cross College.<sup>73</sup> The decision was not rescinded and the last sixth grade at Holy Cross College was in 1958. This momentous change for the College was part of a process of rationalisation which began in 1954 in which the 'systemisation' of the schools was viewed as an important

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<sup>69</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales, *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales (under the chairmanship of H.S. Wyndham)*, Government Printer, Sydney, October, 1957, p. 90. The chairman of the Committee, Dr. H. S. Wyndham, was the Director-General of Education in NSW.

<sup>71</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, p. 90.

<sup>72</sup> Ex-student Murray Bull recalls that sometime in the late 1940s the Holy Cross Primary group won the Elocution Eisteddfod at the Sydney Conservatorium. Sr Therese Gaudry was part of this group. *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 95.

<sup>73</sup> Mother M. Andrew Lynch to CEB, 3 November 1955, CEB Minutes for 3 November 1955, Box 2, CEOSA.

long-term goal and was really a ‘trial run’ for the more dramatic restructuring of the 1960s.<sup>74</sup>

The Holy Cross convent chronicler commented on the considerable disadvantages for Holy Cross of this decision to close down the infants and primary sections because other Catholic colleges in the immediate area were permitted to retain their junior departments. It seemed that the school would ‘suffer a permanent set-back’. Six years later it was seen as a ‘blessing’ as numbers in the Holy Cross Junior School, the new name for the parish primary school, had soared.<sup>75</sup>

### FOCUS YEAR – 1958

- ❖ The year 1958 was momentous for the Holy Cross College community in a number of ways: it marked the end of the primary section at the College, a sad occasion, in the same year in which Holy Cross College celebrated its Golden Jubilee and looked back at fifty years of achievements.
- ❖ At the Convent of Mercy Parramatta, on the feast of the Epiphany, three postulants received the religious habit and three novices made their temporary profession, including Holy Cross ex-student Therese Gaudry as Sr M. Augusta.<sup>76</sup>
- ❖ In March 1958, Mgr Collender relinquished his position on the Board of Directors of the Catholic Press Newspaper Company Ltd. He had had this position for thirty-seven years straight. His place was taken by Fr D’Arcy O’Keefe, who had been a curate at Holy Cross. At his farewell, the Chairman of Directors, Bishop Freeman, said ‘no one doubts that Monsignor Collender is one of the greatest priests we have ever had.’<sup>77</sup>
- ❖ The St Patrick’s Day sports, held on the 16 March, were again a great success, with

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<sup>74</sup> D’Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 32. In similar fashion, agreement had been reached with the Poor Clare Sisters to close the primary department of St Clare’s College Waverley, also in 1955.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 41. On 21 August 1960, Cardinal Gilroy blessed and opened a new parochial kindergarten and infants’ school on the former site of Fletcher’s Foundry, opposite the College site.

<sup>76</sup> CW, 23 January 1958, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> CW, 6 March 1958, p. 4.

women's athletics featuring British Empire (Commonwealth) Games and Olympic Games competitors, a hurling match, the Cardinal's Cup (a 100 yards open race for Catholic schoolboys), and athletics for the boys, but not the girls. Mgr Collender was still the President of the St Patrick's Games.

- ❖ The year 1958 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparition at Lourdes of Our Lady to St Bernadette. To celebrate, Holy Cross College held a procession and the Rosary was recited in front of the Grotto on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Some weeks later the Fifth Year students presented a 'Marion Hour' which was broadcast over the public address system to the entire school; hymns, short talks on Mary's life, her feasts, titles, place in art and literature were presented 'with great reverence'.<sup>78</sup> In a 1958 New Year address, Cardinal Gilroy referred to the campaign to 'put Christ back into Christmas'.<sup>79</sup> The first Australian post office Christmas stamp with a religious design had appeared in November 1957. In 1958, television was fast encroaching on family leisure time.
- ❖ In 1958, the College was still a very small school, reflecting the demographic character of the surrounding area, the low retention rate of girls proceeding to the senior years, as well as the high number of other secondary girls' schools competing for students within the Eastern Suburbs.<sup>80</sup> Another factor affecting pupil numbers was the drop in the birth rate in Australia during the war years of 1940 to 1945. Yet Holy Cross College was doing comparatively well. Only thirty-six girls sat for the 1957 IC, but in the 1958 cohort there were sixty-three. There were fifty seniors in the Fourth and Fifth Years and the total enrolment for Holy Cross College for 1958 was 269.<sup>81</sup>
- ❖ Holy Cross College held its Golden Jubilee Ball at the end of the first term in Mark Foy's Empress Ballroom. Nearly 600 attended and witnessed twenty ex-pupils make their debut, being presented to Sir Edward and Lady McTiernan by matron of honour, Mrs Barry Prichard. In the ballroom's foyer, two life sized models displayed the

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<sup>78</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, golden jubilee issue, p. 10.

<sup>79</sup> *CW*, 2 January 1958, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> The senior secondary schools included: St Clare's College, Waverley; Brigidine College, Randwick; Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay; St Vincent's College, Potts Point; OLSH, Kensington; Kincoppal, Elizabeth Bay, as well as a number of upper primary schools offering the Intermediate Certificate.

<sup>81</sup> August 1958 statistical returns for Holy Cross College, file SC 31/7, CEOSA

- original school uniform and the brown and fawn uniform of 1958.<sup>82</sup> By this time the school colours were fawn, red and brown and these were featured in the floral arrangements. Mgr Collender did not attend, but the assistant priests in the Holy Cross parish, Fathers E. Paine and D. Cremin did.
- ❖ The news of the passing of the Right Reverend Monsignor Richard Collender, PP, PA, VG at the age of ninety years on 11 June 1958 was a sad occasion to the people of Holy Cross parish and the College community. He had been parish priest of Holy Cross since 1931 and had spent sixty-seven years in the priesthood, and at his death was the ‘oldest priest by ordination in Australia’.<sup>83</sup> He was mourned by many, especially the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, in the Archdiocese of Sydney, where he had served for so long with much love and wisdom.
  - ❖ Tuesday 15 July 1958 was declared a special day of prayer for teaching vocations in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. This day was the feast day of St John Baptist de la Salle, who had been appointed by the Pope in 1950 as patron to all school teachers, and this feast day had been observed as ‘Vocation Day’ since 1955. The *Catholic Weekly* stated that: ‘Overwhelmingly, Catholics view the brothers and nuns as the humble heroes of the Church and they love and treasure “our educational system” to the point where they would form barricades in the streets to defend it.’ The same writer lamented that: ‘New Australian Catholics [...] have as yet provided but few vocations, but undoubtedly will provide their quota in due course.’<sup>84</sup>
  - ❖ Holy Cross convent and College celebrated their golden jubilee in September 1958 with three main functions: a Pontifical High Mass; an ex-students reunion; and a garden party for parents of present pupils and friends of the Sisters of Mercy. The Pontifical High Mass was offered in Holy Cross Church on 18 September, by Bishop James Carroll, soon to be the new parish priest. Two ex-students of Holy Cross, Fathers J Maron and N Murphy served as deacon and sub-deacon. The choir was made up of the senior girls with some girls from Second Year. Sandra Donohoe (nee

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<sup>82</sup> CW, 8 May 1958, p.24. There was no school uniform in 1908, the first appearing in the 1920s.

<sup>83</sup> Garaty, *St Peter's Surry Hills*, p. 104.

<sup>84</sup> CW, 10 July 1958, p. 16.

- Gailey) was one of the choir and remembers that as Bishop Carroll entered Holy Cross church, the choir saluted him with ‘Ecce Sacerdos Magnus’ (‘Behold the Great Priest’).<sup>85</sup> After the Missa Cantata, the guests were entertained by the College orchestra performing Haydn’s *Toy Symphony* and the *Dance of the Hours* from ‘Giaconda’ and children from Holy Cross Junior School also performed. The singing of ‘Jubilate Deo’ concluded ‘this day of joyous commemoration of God’s goodness to the Sisters and pupils of Holy Cross during the last half-century’.<sup>86</sup>
- ❖ Ex-students from both Holy Cross schools gathered on 28 September in the College grounds. In the parish hall afternoon tea was served and there was entertainment provided by the choir and the orchestra. The ex-students presented the sisters with a film-projector. Benediction and the singing of the hymn *Mother of Mercy*, so loved by anyone taught by the Sisters of Mercy, concluded the afternoon. The garden party was held in the College grounds on 12 October with the guests served afternoon tea by the Third and Fourth Year girls.<sup>87</sup>
  - ❖ Pope Pius XII, the leader of the Catholic Church since 1939, passed away on 9 October 1958. His successor, Blessed John XXIII began the process of ‘ressourcement’ (a return to the sources i.e. Scripture and Tradition) and ‘aggiornamento’ (bringing things up to date), when he announced an Ecumenical Council on 25 January 1959.<sup>88</sup>
  - ❖ Education, for the first time, emerged as a major federal election issue in 1958. In May 1958 the Catholic National Education Conference was held in Canberra and in that same month, the ALP launched the first urgency debate in the Federal Parliament since 1945; it was about the issue of state aid and education. The DLP promised grants for children at private schools. Prime Minister Menzies, responding to criticism from the ALP, asserted his strongly held position, as previously mentioned that the Commonwealth does not have power or responsibility for education in the

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<sup>85</sup> Sandra Donohoe, ‘1958 and Our Golden Years at Holy Cross College’, reminiscences prepared for the fiftieth reunion of the 1956-1958 Holy Cross College cohort, in the author’s possession.

<sup>86</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, golden jubilee issue, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, golden jubilee issue, p. 9.

<sup>88</sup> It is generally held that Vatican II was the twenty-first Ecumenical Council. Only a Pope can summon an Ecumenical Council and it can infallibly define a dogma of faith.

states or by the states. The federal election held on 22 November was won easily by Menzies, with the help of DLP preferences and his platform of ‘kicking the Communist can’.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Wyndham Scheme**

There were three main types of secondary school operating in NSW at this time: state government-run high schools; parish-run Catholic high schools; and independent colleges, some Catholic, some run by Protestant churches, and a few schools totally independent of any church affiliation. It was the Catholic schools (both parochial and independent) that were the least resourced to cope with the implementation of the Wyndham Report.<sup>90</sup>

The main recommendations of the Wyndham committee, appointed in 1953 as previously mentioned, were implemented by means of an Act of the NSW Parliament, passed in late 1961, and to take effect from the beginning of 1962. Fr Slowey (later Mgr), the sole Catholic representative on the Committee, revealed the reason for the delay between the tabling of the report in the federal parliament in October 1957 and its implementation in late 1961, namely, a group of left-wing Catholic ALP members of the NSW Parliament held a majority on the caucus education sub-committee and, knowing that the Catholic school system was in desperate financial straits, delayed the implementation of the report’s recommendations.<sup>91</sup> The Catholic school system was struggling to cope with escalating student numbers, the result of both the post war baby boom and immigration, and having to employ an increasing number of lay teachers. The Wyndham Report had said as little as possible about the actual costs of the proposed scheme of secondary education. Predictably the Catholic Church opposed any extension of secondary schooling because of the expense, and both the NSW State government and parents in general were concerned about the extra expense involved.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The DLP was formed in August 1957 by various state anti-Communist Labor breakaway groups (except Qld). It would remain in existence until 1978, and with five Senators in 1970, the DLP held the balance of power.

<sup>90</sup> Connell puts it less subtly as ‘the Catholic schools were the worst hit’, Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 90.

<sup>91</sup> Mgr J. Slowey, author interview, 1988, in Duffield, ‘Wyndham Scheme’, p. 38.

<sup>92</sup> Duffield, ‘Wyndham Scheme’, p. 29.

The Wyndham Report was to shape secondary education in NSW into the twenty-first century. It added an extra year onto secondary schooling, with Form VI students of 1967 being the first to sit the exams for the new Higher School Certificate.<sup>93</sup> The Wyndham Scheme provided for three levels of tuition (Advanced, Credit and Ordinary) in the first four years in the core subjects with a range of elective subjects being provided at two levels. For students in Forms V and VI, subjects had three levels. These changes, including the introduction of an externally examined School Certificate in 1965, were not forecast to significantly alter the proportion of students who stayed on to complete the two senior years. The expectation was that most students would leave at the end of Year IV and that those who stayed on would be encouraged to spend two years preparing for entry into some form of tertiary institution by specialising in subjects which were relevant to their future studies. The Wyndham Report stated that the recommendation to extend secondary schooling by one year was intended only for the minority of pupils who proposed ‘to proceed to tertiary education directly from school’; this was calculated as no more than about sixteen per cent of any school generation.<sup>94</sup>

W. F. Connell, a leading and respected educational researcher at the University of Sydney at the time, was quite scathing of the Wyndham Committee Report. He described it as ‘unexciting’ and commented that ‘all that was said by the Committee had been said before’. Reform of secondary education in NSW was long overdue. As early as 1934, a similar committee had recommended that secondary education should consist of four years of general education followed by further advanced study for one or two years.<sup>95</sup> Throughout the 1940s the NSW Teachers Federation, the trade union representing State teachers, had agitated for a public inquiry into secondary education.<sup>96</sup>

The enormous growth in the school population of NSW over the 1950s was part of a world-wide phenomenon which affected numbers enrolled in secondary and tertiary institutions in particular and their upward trend was clearly apparent by the end of that

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<sup>93</sup> To indicate a change to a completely new system, the terminology previously used to denote secondary school stages, (First Year to Fifth Year) was altered to Form 1 to Form VI. Later on, the terminology would be altered to Year 7 to Year 12 to denote the continuity of education from K to Year 12. See Burnswoods and Fletcher, *Sydney and the Bush*, p. 233.

<sup>94</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, p. 68.

<sup>95</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 87.

<sup>96</sup> Duffield, ‘Wyndham Scheme’, p. 30.

decade. Between 1956 and 1960 the Australian secondary school population increased by forty-five per cent.<sup>97</sup> This upward trend was to continue through the 1960s. There was a one-third increase in the Australian school population between 1960 and 1970 and more significantly, the school retention rate was altering. Between 1956 and 1964, the proportion of sixteen year olds staying on at school throughout Australia increased from twenty-two per cent to forty per cent and by 1970 it was fifty-one per cent.<sup>98</sup> These trends had a significant impact through the pressures they placed on the Catholic education system in NSW and particularly in the Sydney Archdiocese; they would consequently have a direct impact on Holy Cross College.

Dr Wyndham himself was a firm believer in the worth of comprehensive education and the selective single-sex high school was anathema to him. The traditional opposition to co-education in Catholic secondary schools would remain but be modified as circumstances, in country towns and fast growing outer suburbs of Sydney, called for a maximised use of available resources. For Catholics, the situation was not entirely new. For many years, in country areas, some boys, not being in a position to go to boarding school, had completed their final senior school examinations at the local convent high school.

In 1962, the Jubilee Congress of the Australian New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, held at the University of Sydney, drew up five principal issues regarding education reform:

- catering for the expanded school population
- dealing with the knowledge explosion
- providing for educational differences
- coping with the changing adolescent culture
- communicating a firm system of values<sup>99</sup>

The quality of education and its ease of access were seen to be of national economic importance. The concept of 'human capital' became popular in the 1960s and was

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<sup>97</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 40.

<sup>98</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 80.

<sup>99</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 85.



incorporated into the economics curriculum in secondary schools. It was held up as the most significant factor in the remarkable post-war reconstruction of the Japanese economy; Japan by this time was emerging as a major trading partner of Australia. Students were taught that Japan made up for a lack of land and minerals by creating a highly educated workforce, one motivated by the work ethic which could no longer be described as 'Protestant'.

Great concern was expressed regarding the quality of teachers. In 1963, the Australian College of Education made an extensive survey of teachers in both government and non-government schools and concluded that about one-third of all teachers had not reached matriculation standard and only 19 per cent held a university degree. The proportion who had had no or very little teacher training was a startling twenty-six per cent and only two per cent of teachers had a degree in education. Of even greater significance, less than one-half of all secondary teachers had a university degree; the survey found that 'the average secondary teacher was in fact trained to teach in primary school'.<sup>100</sup> Out of a staff of sixteen full-time teachers at Holy Cross College in 1963, only five had a university degree.<sup>101</sup> This was a reflection of the impediment imposed by university fees and the difficulty of winning a scholarship providing free university education, either a Commonwealth Scholarship or its precursor, the University Exhibition. Of the 200 University Exhibitions available prior to World War Two, only the first 100 were not subject to an income test, therefore it was difficult for many middle class students to qualify for an exhibition. To help remedy this situation, Commonwealth Scholarships were introduced in the early 1950s. Although not income tested, only 3,000 a year in Australia were available initially, to be distributed by the States; by 1961, the number had increased to some 4,000.<sup>102</sup>

### **Curriculum reform in the 1960s**

A federal government study of 1961 had found that only sixty-three per cent of 1961 entrants to Australian universities had passed in their first year. Even more surprising was

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<sup>100</sup> Australian Education Council, *A Statement of Some Needs of Australian Education*, NSW Teachers Federation, Sydney, 1965, cited in Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 84.

<sup>101</sup> Inspection for Registration as a Certified School, duplicate, 1 May 1963, Box SC 31/7, CEOSA.

<sup>102</sup> Eric Bowker, 'The Commonwealth and Education 1901-69', in J. Cleverley and J. Lawrey, (eds), *Australian Education in the Twentieth Century: studies in the development of state education*, Longman, Melbourne, 1972, p. 162.

the finding that eighteen per cent of those awarded Commonwealth Scholarships failed their first year and approximately thirty-three per cent of the students had discontinued their courses.<sup>103</sup> The existing external examination system, on which tertiary scholarships were determined, encouraged rote learning, teaching to the exam and intensive exam practice based on past exam papers. The external examination system didn't encourage independent learning beyond a subject's syllabus. The external examinations were based on the prescribed texts and learning was limited in most subjects to these. At Holy Cross College, the senior students had a small library of reference books available to them, though the better students had the initiative to go to their local library, or the larger city libraries to broaden their reading.<sup>104</sup>

The Wyndham Scheme would have a profound effect on a secondary education system which had not changed since the Leaving Certificate was introduced in 1918 as a matriculation entrance exam for the University of Sydney. It would require well trained specialist teachers and a complete new set of texts. Specialist rooms (science labs, music, art and technology rooms) were required as well as library facilities for all levels and abilities in secondary schools. In the view of the Wyndham Committee, many secondary syllabuses were too detailed and specific.<sup>105</sup> Removal of specifics in a syllabus required teachers to have a broad knowledge of their subject matter, both from pre-service and in-service training.

### **Holy Cross College in the early 1960s**

At the beginning of the 1960s the College was a small private congregational-run school which prided itself on its music and academic results and its strong sense of community, especially its marked Catholic character. There was only one LC class and one school building of three stories containing the convent in the western lower two floors. Sr M. Alacoque Quinn was the principal and since her experience had been mainly in Intermediate schools she was ably assisted by her deputy, Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry, who being much younger, had the advantage of university education and experience of teaching in full secondary schools. Sr Barbara McDonough recalls Sr M. Anselm

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<sup>103</sup> Department of Education and Science, 'The 1961 Study', Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1971, cited in Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 50.

<sup>104</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author,

<sup>105</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, p. 89.

attending to administrative matters.<sup>106</sup> Sr M. Alacoque, however, brought a wealth of experience in dealing with parents and the wider community.

There were only 250 girls enrolled at the College in 1960. The numbers had declined; total enrolment had been 269 in 1958. The LC class was twenty-six and there were only five students in the Fourth Year commercial course, indicating it could be reaching the end of its viability, although the number rose to sixteen the following year. There were three non-Catholics enrolled. There were six religious on the staff and four full-time lay staff.<sup>107</sup> Part-time specialist teachers came to the school: Mr. Edwards taught tennis; the Graham Burrows School provided sport coaching; and Miss Jenny Patterson taught elocution. Parents at this time did not as a rule have much direct contact with the school. There was a Parents and Friends Association (hereafter P & F) and its main money raising venture was the operation of the annual car drive to St Michael's Boys' Home, Baulkham Hills, which was run by the Parramatta Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and supported by its various schools.<sup>108</sup> Ex-student Celeste Short (nee Sharp), 1950-1955, recalled that among her best memories of Holy Cross was 'the bus trip to St Michael's at Baulkham Hills, for the fetes and fun we had in the country (as it was then)'.<sup>109</sup>

The College was run along quite non-consultative lines. When asked about the methods used to make decisions and to communicate with staff, Sr Barbara McDonough described a rudimentary system of handing down instructions. There were no staff meetings. Because talking in the convent was restricted, there was no talking at breakfast except on special occasions such as feast days, and silence applied generally at other times except at specified times of recreation, one in the afternoon, another in the evening and on particular celebratory days according to custom. Sr M. Alacoque's habit was to write notices on boards (in the convent) and 'if you weren't quick enough it got rubbed off before you got to see it; sometimes they referred to the school.'<sup>110</sup> The students were given the daily notices in the morning when they assembled on the playground after a bell was rung. As they had for many decades, some students went up the church-end stairs,

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<sup>106</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>107</sup> Holy Cross College, School Statistical Return for 1960, copy of handwritten document, PA.

<sup>108</sup> At this time, the principal and her assistant were the only staff members to attend meetings of the Holy Cross College P&F. Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>109</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 104.

<sup>110</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

some up the staircase the other end. No student went up the middle stairs because that led to the convent and was strictly ‘out of bounds’ to the students.

There were few lay teachers at Holy Cross College. Mrs Monica Thom was the only non-religious teaching senior classes at the College. She taught modern history and botany/biology. Teaching junior secondary classes were Mrs Lynagh and Mrs Dawson. Mrs Adele Bookalil taught in the primary section. These last three teachers were ex-students of the College and Mrs Thom’s daughter attended the College; thus was the sense of community reinforced.

Basketball was very popular with the girls and there were a number of top performing teams. The 1962 LC group was one of them. Ailsa Mackinnon (later Sr M. Loyola) was on this winning team. Sr Barbara McDonough recalled that the playground space was very limited and, although the girls did practice basketball there at lunchtime, there was not a safety issue because of the small enrolments then. She noted that the basketball teams took great pride in winning for the school.<sup>111</sup>

Sr Barbara McDonough, at the time known as Sr M. Irenaeus, was the first teacher to use the new laboratory when she arrived at the College in 1960. She recalled the ‘huge interest’ in the school by Bishop Carroll (later to be Archbishop), who had succeeded Fr Collender as parish priest, and consequently any facilities wanted by the College were obtained and they were ‘always state of the art’. She noted that the laboratory was built before the Wyndham Scheme made science a core (compulsory) subject for junior secondary years and therefore it was an option of the school to be offering science at this time.<sup>112</sup> Bishop Carroll, as the cardinal’s spokesperson on education, would have been very familiar with the trends in education which were to be reflected in the Wyndham Committee’s Report and so would have realised that science was to become universally available to both sexes in the co-educational, comprehensive high schools favoured by Dr Wyndham. Because of his foresight, Holy Cross College was well equipped to offer the new core science subject from 1962.

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<sup>111</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, informal interview by the author, 14 November 2006.

<sup>112</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

Sr Barbara McDonough has very clear memories of the new science lab at Holy Cross College. She remembers it had pink walls and blond bench tops. At one end was a tiered area where the girls sat in rows facing the demonstration bench and a blackboard; at the other end were six island benches which could accommodate twenty-four students in total and along the sides were cupboards for storage. The science room was located on the top floor, eastern end of the original building.

Sr Barbara McDonough was the sole science teacher at Holy Cross College from 1960 to 1962 (the first of three appointments to the College). A group who had studied combined chemistry/physics for the Intermediate Certificate wished to continue with both subjects for the Leaving Certificate. According to Sr Barbara they were very bright girls and, when they finished the Intermediate, they were determined to study physics for the LC. One of them, Kay Gabriel, wished to study medicine at Sydney University. Sr Barbara had never studied physics herself so Paul Gaudry, medical student and brother of three Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, was asked to teach the girls physics, which he did with considerable success on Saturdays.

With the introduction of core science into the new Years 7-10 curriculum, religious women found themselves facing the prospect of teaching science with virtually no training. Frequently at this time, teachers were expected to be able to teach most subjects; this was true of the religious brothers and sisters and often teachers in public schools. The brothers had some advantage with their private boys' colleges having a long history of teaching specialised science subjects, a situation generally not shared by Catholic girls' schools.<sup>113</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough recounts: '... the brothers knew what they were doing; they had been teaching it for years. It was only the sisters who suddenly had to teach it'. After the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme, the facilities of the laboratory at Holy Cross College were used for regional meetings and in-service sessions organised by the Catholic Science Teachers' Association. These meetings were attended by religious sisters who came from all over Sydney. The Christian Brothers had been instrumental in getting the Association started. Sr Barbara McDonough helped give the demonstrations and was very active in the Association.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See Chapter 4, p. 94.

<sup>114</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

Sr Barbara McDonough had never had formal teacher training in any science subjects and she expressed the strong sense of responsibility she felt at being in charge of senior science when she arrived at Holy Cross College in 1960.<sup>115</sup> As a novice in 1955, she had been trained as a primary teacher. Subsequently, in 1959, the congregational leader decided that Sr Barbara was to start her degree at the University of New England, Armidale, as an external student. Her 'choice' of subjects was made by the congregational leader: a major in Latin and two units of biology. Sr Assumpta (Edith) Angel, who majored in biology, accompanied Sr Barbara on the vacation schools at Armidale and both graduated with distinction in 1964. Sr M. Assumpta was to become well known in educational circles as an excellent teacher of biology at the advanced level, and Holy Cross students specialising in biology for the HSC in the 1960s were to benefit from her special Saturday morning classes at OLMC Parramatta.

The increase in the numbers of sisters in the Parramatta congregation undertaking tertiary and postgraduate education was typical of religious congregations generally at that time. It was a result of rising educational expectations accompanying the 'Space Race' and increased economic growth. There was, too, the growing women's liberation movement which emphasised once again, as in the women's movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the justice of equal opportunities for women, especially in the educational and employment fields. The publication of the Australian Germaine Greer's seminal feminist polemic *The Female Eunich*, in 1970, was imminent.<sup>116</sup>

### **School culture**

What do we mean by school culture? In her doctoral thesis, Sr Carmel Leavey OP uses the terms climate, culture, and tone synonymously.<sup>117</sup> Br Marcellin Flynn held to the idea that school culture provides meaning to the school community and helps shape the lives of those who comprise it, the students, teachers and parents. He identified four dimensions of school culture:

- the core beliefs and values of the school – the school's soul
- the traditions of the school – its history

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<sup>115</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunich*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1970.

<sup>117</sup> Margaret Carmel Leavey, 'Religious Education, School Climate and Achievement: a study of nine Catholic sixth form girls' schools, PhD thesis, ANU, 1972, p. 2.

- the symbols of the school – its models
- the patterns of behaviour of the school – its way of life.<sup>118</sup>

A NSW Department of Education document entitled *Notes on Administration* defines school culture as: ‘The atmosphere, the sum total of relationships and behaviour patterns – the dynamics of all the people involved in a school as they relate to and affect the purposes of the school.’<sup>119</sup>

There is evidence that the school culture of Holy Cross College was undergoing changes in the 1960s but these would prove to be quite subtle compared to the profound changes of the 1970s. In the wider community, live radio programmes, free lending libraries, picture theatres, and youth organisations provided new methods of entertainment for young people who were beginning to participate in the social revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. Teenage girls were demanding greater freedom outside the home and Catholic youth in general were finding a new world beyond the sheltered and protective confines of the Catholic school as more and more gained places at teachers colleges and universities and mixed with graduates of non-Catholic private schools and State high schools. The 1960s was the decade of the Beatles. The Holy Cross College Leaving Certificate class of 1965 spoke of their influence.<sup>120</sup> Generally frowned upon by parents and teachers, they were overt symbols of teen revolt. Ex-student Fran Prior (1964-1967) remembers ‘hair-do’s with long fringes (Beatlemania was upon us)’ and although hemlines were supposed to be around the knees, they were ‘way above’.<sup>121</sup>

In 1964, the Mercy Federation Congregations published a booklet entitled ‘For Your Guidance’, for the use of secondary students in Mercy schools. It was the modern counterpart of guidelines produced by Sr M. Camillus Lilly earlier in the century. Its genteel tone and quaint notions of manners, dress and general demeanour seem to

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<sup>118</sup> Marcellin Flynn, *The Culture of Catholic Schools: a study of Catholic schools 1972-1993*, St Pauls, Sydney, 1993, p.8. This model was a conceptualisation by Flynn of a model derived by Millikan, see Ross Millikan, *A Conceptual Framework for the Development and Maintenance of a Co-ordinated School Culture*, Education Administration and Policy Papers, no.2, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1985.

<sup>119</sup> Cited in Leavey, ‘Religious Education’, p. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Class of LC 1965, focus group interview by the author, 25 November 2006.

<sup>121</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 131.

belong to another planet let alone another decade.<sup>122</sup> Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, in 1964, had expressed her concern about discipline in the schools and ‘suggested that the chapter on courtesy in ‘For Your Guidance’ should be thoroughly studied.’<sup>123</sup> Competing with the emerging pop culture of the 1960s, the sisters were to fight a losing battle. What was becoming evident was a growing lack of mutual understanding between teachers and students. And as McGrath has noted: ‘To the teachers actually dealing with the children the culture gap was apparent.’<sup>124</sup>

In reading ‘For Your Guidance’ it is not difficult to see the gap between the writer and her readers’ perceptions of ‘good manners’. One example is:

Always treat your parents with the greatest respect because they hold God’s place in your regard. Greet them when you meet them for the first time in the morning and when you return home. Rise when they come into the room and see that they are conveniently seated before you sit down again.<sup>125</sup>

While there are enduring values in these directions, their expression was out of touch with the prevailing culture. Students were told that ‘strict silence’ was to be observed in all classrooms and on the stairs at all times or when passing from one class to another.<sup>126</sup> If obeyed to the letter, the pupils of Holy Cross College would have been as silent and compliant as the residents of the convent, a real presence in the school as it shared the same building.

It is uncertain at what stage this document ceased to be used in the school. It would have been some time in the 1960s when the sisters themselves were developing a higher public profile and the opportunity to be more individual in demeanour. Holy Cross ex-student, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley made news when she became the first nun to participate in a forum at the University of New South Wales, sponsored by the Newman Society. She was one

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<sup>122</sup> Our Lady of Mercy Secondary Schools, ‘For Your Guidance’, undated, unpublished document, CEOSA.

<sup>123</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 202.

<sup>124</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 202.

<sup>125</sup> ‘For Your Guidance’, p. 16.

<sup>126</sup> ‘For Your Guidance’, p. 8.



of four speakers in a day of lectures and discussion on 'The Price of a Profession.'<sup>127</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The decade of the 1950s was characterised by conservatism in Australian federal politics and economic management. This conservatism was mirroring that to be found in Australian society, in the home and the churches. Consequently, schools were also highly conservative. Complacency in curriculum and teaching methods survived until the 'Space Race' between the United States and the Soviet Union began in 1957 and major reforms of secondary schooling in NSW, first proposed in the 1930s, were finally implemented in the 1960s. A concerted effort to train scientists led to commonwealth funding for secondary school science facilities, and later on for libraries. State aid for independent schools became a *fait accompli*, eighty years after it had been removed from NSW denominational schools.

In the 1950s, individualism was suspect and mass demonstrations of faith characterised the period. Uniformity of belief and action were required by churches, political parties, social groupings, economic classes, even neighbourhoods. Schools played a crucial role in educating and reinforcing the expectations placed on each member of society by powerful institutions.

The cult of individualism, along with television and commercial marketing which was beginning to fuel the teenage revolt, would be well underway by the mid-1960s, and was clearly evident in the Holy Cross College community. Major changes, which would be apparent in the teaching of religion, and the lives of the sisters themselves, were imminent.

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<sup>127</sup> The forum was held on 24 July 1960, unsourced and undated newspaper cutting, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley file, PA.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE CONCERTED RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES 1963 – 76

**‘Every Catholic child will be given the same educational advantage and opportunities as will be offered in State schools.’** (Bishop James Carroll, *CW*, 22 November 1962)

The early 1960s in Australia were generally affluent, with virtually full employment, apart from a short recession which almost saw the Australian Labor Party unseat the federal conservative government in the 1961 election. The booming economy was fuelled by capital inflow, expansion of both local and export markets, rising productivity in the pastoral and manufacturing sectors, and European migrants, who provided unskilled labour and increased demand for both consumer and collective goods. From 1948 to 1961, real Gross National Product grew at about 4.5 per cent per annum, factory production had almost doubled, rural output had increased by forty per cent and for much of that period there was less than one per cent unemployment.<sup>1</sup>

The 1961 Australian census recorded 10.5 million Australians. At this time some seventy-five per cent of the workforce was male and thirty-eight per cent of women gave ‘home-duties’ as their occupation. Australians were highly urbanised with approximately eighty per cent of the population in urban areas, and with fifty-seven per cent of the workforce in metropolitan areas. Of the total population, twenty-one per cent were full-time school students or tertiary students, reflecting the high proportion of the population under twenty, as well as the rising demand for secondary and tertiary education as mentioned previously.<sup>2</sup>

About fifty per cent of the workforce was working class, performing manual labour, with only about twenty per cent of these being skilled workers. The remainder of the workforce, constituting the middle class in Australia, was largely composed of white collar workers who were ‘status conscious and socially mobile’. There was a small upper class which was similar to the more prosperous section of the middle class. According to Connell, the interest of the middle class ‘ran towards the maximisation of life chances

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<sup>1</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, pp. 15-16.

rather than an improvement of life styles'.<sup>3</sup>

Educational performance played a significant role in improving the life chances of the middle class but family and social background could also contribute.<sup>4</sup> Connell has described the Australia of the 1960s as the 'land of meritocratic opportunity', and noted, the 'general aspiration towards social mobility [was] encouraged by the teaching profession [and] the competitive life of schools'.<sup>5</sup> Socio-economic mobility in the 1960s was relatively easy. Any pupil of Holy Cross College with above average intellect and hard work had the opportunity to win a commonwealth scholarship to university or teachers college; these scholarships were not means tested. It was not until the Labor Party won government in 1972 that university fees were abolished. Those who matriculated were still very small in number in the early 1960s, but the universities were forced to introduce restrictive quotas during the 1960s, as demand for places exceeded supply.

### **The fight for state aid**

Post-war immigration and the increase in the fertility rate were beginning to put an unbearable strain on Catholic schools, more especially in the expanding areas of western Sydney in which most new migrants settled. Holy Cross College was not feeling these pressures because of the relatively high cost of housing in much of the developed parts of the Eastern Suburbs. Bishop Freeman presented his 'State Survey of Catholic Education' (completed in 1959) to the Australian Episcopal Conference in January 1961. In September 1961, the NSW bishops held a special meeting to plan a campaign for state aid and they commissioned Bishop James Carroll to produce an informative pamphlet. This was in line with the decision that the campaign 'was to emphasise public relations and information rather than agitation'.<sup>6</sup> Bishop Carroll's pamphlet, *Independent Schools in a Free Society* was published in July 1962. It was advertised through the *Catholic Weekly* and parish notices as well as being distributed to key persons in public life by the Knights of the Southern Cross.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> The relative importance of these factors emerged in interviews of former students of Holy Cross College. The role of marriage in maintaining and/or improving the 'life chances' of the ex-students has followed predictable patterns. It was quite common for a Holy Cross College ex-student to marry a Waverley College 'boy' up until the 1970s, thus reinforcing the general middle-class nature of Holy Cross College students.

<sup>5</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 56.

Another pamphlet, *Freedom of Choice in Education*, written by Kathleen Woolf (nee Hand), a Holy Cross College ex-student, did not receive such a positive response from the Sydney Archdiocese. Kathleen Woolf had become interested in the state aid issue when living in the USA. As Hogan explains, her pamphlet was published by the Australian Catholic Truth Society in Melbourne, ‘after Carroll had not replied to letters and an imprimatur was delayed’; the *Catholic Weekly* refused to advertise it.<sup>8</sup> It advocated the Canadian style of government aid to church schools; grants were to be given directly to parents as vouchers. This was at odds with the official line of the NSW Catholic hierarchy that all government grants should go to the Catholic Education Offices, which would distribute the pooled money according to need. Bishop James Carroll was given the task of supervising negotiations with the political parties.<sup>9</sup>

The implementation of the Wyndham Scheme coincided with the election campaign for the February 1962 NSW state elections. State aid was one of the election issues but Premier Robin (Bob) Askin refused to even consider the matter.<sup>10</sup> The matter would come to a head with the Goulburn ‘strike’ of July 1962. At a public meeting on 9 July, attended by approximately 700, a motion to close all Catholic schools in Goulburn for the six weeks remaining of the second term, had been passed by 550 to 120 with the support of Dr Eris O’Brien, the Archbishop of Canberra- Goulburn. The six Catholic schools in Goulburn, which had had a collective enrolment of nearly 2,000 children, closed on 13 July. The children were to present themselves at the state schools seeking enrolment and on the following Monday, 640 Catholic children were enrolled at state schools; this was the maximum that could be accommodated.

Editorial comment in the Catholic press was almost hostile to the decision. On 22 July 1962, parents voted to re-open the Catholic schools in Goulburn. Approximately ten per cent of the 640 Catholic children who had enrolled in the state schools in Goulburn did not return to the Catholic schools.<sup>11</sup> The so-called strike has been described by O’Farrell

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<sup>8</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 56. Kathleen Hand had come to Holy Cross College from St Pius School, Enmore (run by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy) on a scholarship. Her family was in fact connected to that of Bishop James Carroll, himself an ‘Enmore boy’. A talented student, Kathleen won a scholarship to Sydney University, becoming actively involved in social concerns. She has remained active in the Australian Parents Council.

<sup>9</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, pp. 69-70.

as an ‘unprecedented demonstration of protest’.<sup>12</sup> It seems to have achieved several outcomes, including the attraction of widespread publicity which began a process of extracting concessions from governments, both federal and state.

O’Farrell has stated that the 1962 Goulburn incident ‘stimulated the growth of Catholic parent organisations to press for state aid’, that is to become politically motivated, rather than merely concerned with fund raising.<sup>13</sup> The first permanent Parents’ and Friends’ Committee at Holy Cross College was formed in 1958 and Don Smart has claimed that Catholic parent groups had emerged in most states by 1960.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that the Goulburn incident stimulated the formation of the Australian Parents Council in 1962. By 1966, it was an umbrella organisation representing the Federation of Catholic Parents’ and Friends’ (NSW), the NSW Association for Educational Freedom and similar Catholic and non-Catholic Associations from Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia. Altogether these organisations represented the overwhelming majority of parents attending non-government schools throughout Australia. A statement issued by the Australian Parents Council Conference on 9 October 1966 displays the union of parents from all non-government schools to achieve common purposes. The statement acknowledged that ‘the Catholic sector has a vital role [and] if either system fail then there is inevitably a failure which must adversely affect all Australian children and could ultimately retard the development of Australia as a nation’. The Council’s policy programme drawn up for the 1966 federal election included the following demands:

- A substantial grant from the Federal Government to overcome the urgent and immediate problems of all schools, government and non-government
- Annual per capita grants to be made to all non-government schools (primary and secondary) to meet teaching costs
- Capital assistance to be given to all non-government schools on a dollar for dollar basis for buildings and equipment
- Annual grants to be made for teacher training (for both government and non-government schools)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 407.

<sup>13</sup> O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 407.

<sup>14</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> The Australian Parents’ Council Statement tabled in the minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission, 12 October 1966, I10781, SAA.

In 1963, means tested direct assistance by the NSW State Government was introduced and at the same time the mood was changing at the federal level. Prime Minister Menzies made a number of significant promises which would be met if the coalition government was returned at the December 1963 election. This resulted in a big swing to the coalition parties at the 30 November (early) election and the promises were implemented. Significantly there was established a commonwealth scholarship scheme to apply to the final two years of secondary schooling, modelled on the commonwealth university scholarship scheme. If the successful candidate was attending an independent school, the scholarship would include an additional sum as a contribution to fees.

A Federal Government scheme to finance science building and facilities for all secondary schools was implemented on 1 July 1964. The funds for this scheme (£5 million) were divided among government schools, Catholic schools and other independent schools, on the basis of their secondary enrolment. This set a precedent for specific purpose federal aid to schools. It was the first major direct federal aid to schools, both state and independent, throughout Australia and represented a dramatic policy reversal for the Menzies government. Menzies' strident opposition to federal aid to schools to some extent had stemmed from the likely financial costs, although the Federal Government was already heavily committed to the financing of tertiary education. Smart insists that at the root of Menzies's opposition was his 'conception of Australian federalism with its balanced division of powers between the Commonwealth and the states'.<sup>16</sup>

At its federal conference in August 1966, the ALP had narrowly voted in favour of direct aid to independent schools. Education emerged as a major issue in the 1966 federal election, and Arthur Calwell, the ALP leader, made lavish electoral promises such as the continuation of all existing benefits to independent schools as well as a contribution of \$22 million towards payment of teachers' salaries. Prime Minister Harold Holt's significant education promises included the doubling of the annual amount available to independent schools for science laboratories. Both Calwell and Holt had promised the establishment of a federal Department of Education and Science.<sup>17</sup> The Holt government was returned with a large margin and the new federal Department of Education and Science was established on 13 December 1966 with Senator John Gorton its first minister.

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<sup>16</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 80.

This necessitated the formation of a corresponding lobby group to represent the Catholic Church at a national level and the Federal Catholic Schools Committee was formed in 1967, with James Carroll, now Archbishop, as chairman; it consisted of one lay and one clerical representative from each state.

Malcolm Fraser, as Minister for Education and Science, outlined his government's proposed 'New Measures in Education' on 14 August 1968. This included \$27 million over three years for a capital programme of library buildings, materials and equipment restricted to secondary schools. Various pressure groups had been campaigning for school library grants for some time. They had seemed to be a logical extension of the science laboratories scheme.

The NSW State Government had introduced per capita grants of \$12 for each primary school student and \$18 for each secondary school student attending a non-government school in 1968. These relatively modest sums were 'sufficient to keep the schools open' and within ten years had increased to \$479 and \$745 respectively.<sup>18</sup> During the federal election campaign in 1969 the Liberal Party introduced a scheme of per capita recurrent grants for independent schools. The Federal Government budget provided for a per-capita grant of \$50 per secondary pupil and \$35 per primary pupil. This was a very significant precedent because it established a degree of permanent Federal Government responsibility for providing non-specific (general) recurrent financial assistance to independent schools.

Bishop Muldoon informed Cardinal Gilroy of the unrest amongst the teaching congregations regarding the pooling of Federal Government per capita grants. He stressed that the Major Superiors:

Must agree and see to it that the said grants to be paid to the schools, must be forwarded to the Commission as and when they are received. If this is not faithfully done by all, then the present system of financing schools must be

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<sup>18</sup> Br Kelvin Canavan, *The Development of the Catholic Education Office and a System of Schools in Sydney since 1965*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2007, p. 4; Marcellin Flynn and Magdalena Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000: a longitudinal study of year 12 students in Catholic schools 1972-1982-1990-1998*, Catholic Education Commission of NSW, 2002, p. 229.

abandoned and another system adopted. In this matter the teaching Congregations must adopt the principle: “all in, or all out”.

He concluded that if they did not accept this principle ‘they must “go it alone”’ with a strict prohibition against any increase in fees.<sup>19</sup>

### **Holy Cross College becomes a systemic school**

Apart from the campaign for state aid, the reorganisation and rationalisation of schools was an important response of the Catholic educational authorities to the 1960s crisis in Catholic schooling. Before the 1960s, most Catholic schools were relatively independent, paying their own salaries and adding to school buildings out of funds they raised themselves. In 1960 there were over 300 schools in the Sydney archdiocese run by many different religious orders. There was a pressing need for a more centralised leadership and a more co-ordinated and co-operative response to change, especially if the campaign for government funding was to succeed, and these funds then to be distributed according to need.<sup>20</sup>

The regionalisation of Catholic secondary schooling was the first tangible evidence of the determination of the archdiocesan educational authorities to ensure the continuity of the Catholic education system in Sydney. This process began with Bishop Carroll announcing ‘radical changes’ to the Catholic education system in a letter read in all Sydney churches on 18 November 1962. Holy Cross College Woollahra was one of the secondary schools listed in the reorganisation plan. He emphasised that ‘no schools will be closed’ and ‘no child presently attending a Catholic school will be displaced and forced to attend a State school’.<sup>21</sup>

The ideal size of a secondary school had been given at 500 to 700 pupils by the majority of the witnesses who had made submissions to the Wyndham Committee; this was based on the ability of a school principal to know his or her pupils personally. The Wyndham Report on Secondary Education had stated that the final year enrolment should be close to 200 to accommodate the necessary range of electives.<sup>22</sup> Secondary schools would only

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<sup>19</sup> Muldoon to Gilroy, 13 August 1969, CBFC Correspondence, I0790, SAA, (original emphasis).

<sup>20</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> CW, 22 November 1962, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, pp. 79-80.



remain viable by increasing their enrolments and the best way of doing that was to become a regional school, drawing on a much larger catchment area comprising several parishes. As the *Catholic Weekly* commented, it was indisputable that the ‘day of small secondary schools has positively ended’.<sup>23</sup>

The Holy Cross convent chronicler records that it was towards the end of 1962 that ‘Holy Cross was nominated as a regional school’ and this decision which was ‘the wisest one possible [...] brought with it a multitude of problems’. Following this announcement, ‘Mother M. Alacoque spent the entire day and a considerable part of the evening going from one parlour to another, enrolling children for 1963’.<sup>24</sup> Holy Cross College was already bursting at the seams in 1962; there were two First Form classes and two Second Form classes. Sr Barbara McDonough recalled: ‘Every square inch was being used’ and there were serious concerns about accommodating an additional two classes the following year.<sup>25</sup> At least the Catholic parents of the Eastern Suburbs had a range of options for the secondary education of their sons and daughters. In the western and southern suburbs of Sydney, where the population was growing fastest, Catholic schools were desperately needed. It was clear to the archdiocesan authorities that the wealthier, longer established parishes would have to contribute and help fund the frenetic building programme of the 1960s, whether they liked it or not.

The official name of the new regional school was the Woollahra Regional Girls’ Secondary School and it was operating by the beginning of the 1963 school year. There is no evidence that the new name, although used in official documents and reports, was ever used by the school community; certainly the school kept calling itself Holy Cross College, Woollahra. In its first year as a regional school there was a great variety of school uniforms mingling and adding colour in the playground. St Anne’s School, Bondi Beach, administered by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, had offered secondary education up to the Intermediate Certificate since 1938. Its secondary section was phased out by the mid-60s and the students were redirected to Holy Cross College as the new regional secondary girls’ school.<sup>26</sup> Many more new students were transferred from Our Lady of Mercy College, Rose Bay, a school run by the North Sydney congregation of the Sisters

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<sup>23</sup> CW, 4 June 1964, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, p. 41.

of Mercy. This school, with much regret, closed its secondary section in 1962.<sup>27</sup> To cope with some extra 200 pupils in 1963, five additional members of staff were appointed to Holy Cross College: Sr M. Aquinas Carroll, Sr M. Barbara Quinn, Sr M. Sophia McGrath, Sr M. Louis Marie Ledlin and Sr M. Emmanuel Campbell. Officially, the parochial primary schools associated with the new regional school were: Bondi, Paddington, Bondi Beach, Rose Bay, Waverley and Woollahra.

Holy Cross College was inspected for registration as a certified school on 1 May 1963; the total enrolment was given as 539, with sixty-one in Fifth Form. The three junior forms each had over 130 pupils.<sup>28</sup> The numbers indicate the need for four classes in each of the junior forms, and two in each of the senior forms, a doubling from the previous year. Along with the 'bigger picture' changes in demographics in the school, was a loss along the street frontage of the Camphor-Laurel trees, notorious for invading drainage systems, and the distinctive Canary Island Palms which flanked the front steps. To this day, generations of ex-students loudly lament this loss to the ambience of the microcosm of their alma mater.<sup>29</sup>

### **Advantages of joining the CEO system**

By agreeing to hand over Holy Cross College to the jurisdiction of the Sydney Catholic Education Office, thus changing it from an independent congregationally administered school to a 'systemic' school, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were transferring the responsibility of paying for more classrooms, specialised accommodation and staff wages to the CEO.<sup>30</sup> These gains involved a certain loss of independence in decision making. Beginning in 1965, the principal of Holy Cross College received directions concerning school fees from the Catholic Building and Finance Commission (hereafter CBFC), the body which also controlled the distribution of government grants. A classification system was developed for lay teachers, based on qualifications, experience and responsibilities. A uniform salary scale (stipend) for religious working in Sydney CEO schools was introduced in 1967 and paid by the CBFC (see Table 6 on page 223).

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<sup>27</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. 139.

<sup>28</sup> Inspection for Registration as a Certified School, 1 May 1963, Box SC 31/7, CEOSA.

<sup>29</sup> See *Celebration of Our Education*, for expressions of such laments.

<sup>30</sup> Any record of this agreement has not been found and it is not clear exactly when the Congregation agreed to the College becoming a regional school within the Sydney Archdiocesan system. A statistical return was sent in to the CEO in 1960. This suggests an agreement was being drawn up or was already in place, Holy Cross College, School Statistical Return, 1960, PA.

There were a number of Sydney secondary schools which were retained by the religious congregations during this regionalisation and rationalisation period. The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy retained their 'flagship', Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta. A report prepared by the Parramatta Congregation for the CBFC had stated that there were six schools offering Forms V to VI in the Eastern Suburbs, to cope with a senior school population equal to the total senior school population of the Western Suburbs. It was suggested that a second school be built at Blacktown. In spite of reporting that Parramatta can take girls from OLMC, Parramatta, St Patrick's (Parramatta parish school) and OLMC Epping only, and 'applications from girls from other schools will be refused', Mother M. Thecla Kerwick agreed that OLMC Parramatta's two senior classes would cater for the wider western area of Sydney.<sup>31</sup> The Parramatta congregation's secondary schools at OLMC Epping, and OLMC Burraneer Bay, became Forms I to IV regional schools. St Clare's College at Waverley, very close in physical distance to Holy Cross College, remained an independent Forms I to VI school, but would struggle with its small enrolment and the demands of the Wyndham Scheme.

#### **Regionalisation is formalised in 1964**

Far-reaching and fundamental changes impacting on the Catholic school system were announced by Cardinal Gilroy in his Pastoral Letter of 31 May 1964. The letter was read in all churches throughout the Sydney Archdiocese and the changes were outlined in a practical fashion which only hinted at the upheavals, sacrifices, dissent and widespread dissatisfaction which would be set in train as a result. Announced were:

- The regionalisation of secondary schools, continuing a process which had begun in 1962
- The building of new regional schools in the outer suburbs of Sydney, to be financed by a quota contribution from each parish of the diocese
- The foreshadowing of a major financial appeal. A quota was to be levied for each parish to go into a central fund
- The establishment of a loan fund<sup>32</sup>

The spending of £3 million over the next two years was already well under way when the cardinal made his announcement. Four new girls' secondary schools had recently been

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<sup>31</sup> Replies of Major Superiors concerning Forms V to VI Schools, CBFC Minutes, 1 September 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>32</sup> CW, 4 June 1964, p. 15.

built at Fairfield, Milperra, Sutherland and Warriewood, with two more at Berala and Chatswood under construction. Plans had been drawn up for eight more secondary schools for girls in the newer western suburbs of Sydney.

In her annual report given at the 1967 Holy Cross College awards presentation, Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry alluded to this time in 1963 when ‘the regional principle was adopted’ and generated ‘feelings of trepidation and uncertainty’. Regionalisation depended on a generous spirit of cooperation between congregations, between parishes and between parents and teachers. Holy Cross parish community was held up as an exemplar and there was public praise for the spirit of cooperation which allowed the construction of a complete new infants and primary school by Holy Cross parish, under the capable leadership of its parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll. With its completion, the rooms formerly used by the parochial school provided much needed additional accommodation for Holy Cross College.<sup>33</sup>

### **Establishment of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission**

As indicated, before 1965 there was no strongly centralised administration of Catholic schools in Sydney. Luttrell explains; ‘Instead, there were independent networks of schools run by different Religious Congregations, loosely linked by Diocesan Inspectors and by adherence to State syllabuses.’<sup>34</sup> By 1964, the diocesan authorities were actively considering bureaucratic reorganisation as one way of cutting expense for both Catholic parents and Catholic schools. With the building programme underway it was clear that centralised control was imperative, in order to rein in expenses and allocate scarce resources in an efficient and equitable manner.

In 1964 the diocesan hierarchy of Sydney appointed a Catholic Education Development Council to advise on what re-organisation was needed.<sup>35</sup> The Catholic Education Office refused a request from the Sydney Federation of Parents’ and Friends’ Associations to notify them of the names of the lay members on the Council. This Council never functioned. It would be replaced by a new organisation called the Catholic Building and Finance Commission, already referred to, whose role was to co-ordinate and control the

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<sup>33</sup> CW, 11 June 1964, p 1.

<sup>34</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, p. 40.

<sup>35</sup> Bishop James Carroll addressed a gathering of eminent Catholics at St Mary’s Cathedral Presbytery on 24 September 1963 and appealed to those present to become members of a Catholic Education Development Council, I0789,SAA.

planning and financing of the building of schools within the Archdiocese of Sydney; its establishment was announced in May 1965 although its first meeting was held on 24 March 1965 at CUSA House.<sup>36</sup> At a meeting of the CBFC, Cardinal Gilroy announced:

It is my intention that all decisions on matters relating to education, which result in financial demands on parishes, and/or in the construction of new buildings, shall be made by the Commission, and recommended to me, so that I may give the required authority.<sup>37</sup>

Chaired by Cardinal Gilroy, the Catholic Building and Finance Commission was composed of the three Auxiliary Bishops, Carroll, Freeman, and Muldoon, six clerics, including Mgr John Slowey, the Director of Catholic Education, and nine laymen, including Mr Geoffrey Davey, who was appointed the Executive Commissioner. It was proposed to call on the expertise of Catholics with strong business or educational backgrounds, such as, Bede Callaghan of the Reserve Bank of Australia, retailer Reuben Scarf and educator Brock Rowe (a good friend of Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley). Initially there was only one woman on the CBFC, Sr M. Christopher of the Good Samaritans, Marrickville, who was appointed to the Education Committee. After Davey had told Cardinal Gilroy of criticisms regarding the lack of women members and Bishop Freeman had noted that 'the addition of some ladies would be a good idea', Miss E. McEwan, the headmistress of Fort Street Girls' High School and Miss Joan Delaney, a Catholic and noted educator in the state system, were appointed to the Education Committee.<sup>38</sup> The inclusiveness of the CBFC and its committees was in notable contrast with the composition of the 1939 Catholic Education Board.<sup>39</sup>

The Commission appointed three committees to oversee education, building and finance. Archbishop James Carroll chaired the Finance Committee, Freeman the Education Committee and Muldoon the Building Committee.<sup>40</sup> As the title of the new commission revealed, its purpose was to strictly control the building of new schools and extensions to existing ones, and to use the limited financial resources of the archdiocese in the most

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<sup>36</sup> CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of CBFC meeting, 26 May 1965, I0789, SAA.

<sup>38</sup> Davey to Gilroy, 31 May 1965, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>39</sup> The original members of the 1939 Catholic Education Board were: Gilroy (Bishop then), Fathers Thompson and Pierse, and Mgr Meaney (the nominee of Archbishop Kelly).

<sup>40</sup> *CW*, 13 May 1965, p. 1.

efficient manner. Carroll referred to ‘combining the efforts of different orders’ with a ‘view to achieving better coordination’ as well as the ‘provision of religious instruction for areas in which Catholic schools cannot take all (or any) Catholic children’. These points, as well as a reference made by Archbishop James Carroll to the possibility of agreement between schools ‘as to specialisation in one department, such as Languages, Science, Mathematics’, gives a tantalising glimpse into a Catholic education system which could have been innovative and resourceful, stretching human and physical assets wisely to accommodate the ever increasing demands for its services. Carroll’s vision was never to be realised. It is significant that his thoughts were expressed in a private letter to Cardinal Gilroy, not as a public statement.<sup>41</sup> Ironically the state education system would introduce such specialised high schools some twenty years on.

In November 1965 the Sydney archdiocese established a Loan Fund and an issue of promissory notes was arranged. Catholics were invited to lend their available savings to the Loan Fund and interest and loan repayments were guaranteed by Cardinal Gilroy. The aim was to raise £1 million initially and ultimately £11 million.<sup>42</sup> The total cost of the capital works required in the Sydney archdiocese from the beginning of 1964 to the end of 1967 was estimated to be £11,500,000. It was also estimated that some £2,500,000 would be received from the Federal Government Science Grants.<sup>43</sup>

### **Parish quotas**

In his 1964 pastoral letter, Cardinal Gilroy had emphasised the need for the Catholics of Sydney to leave behind their traditional parochial loyalties, and even their loyalties to particular teaching congregations, when he said:

These arrangements involve our looking beyond parochial boundaries to the Archdiocese as a whole. We must think and act not as so many parochial communities but as a united people inspired by a common ideal – the ideal of Catholic education for Australian children.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> James Carroll to Gilroy, 9 March 1965, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>42</sup> *SMH*, 15 November 1965. There is no evidence that these ideas were discussed formally by the CBFC.

<sup>43</sup> Davey to Mgr Wallace, 17 June 1966, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in *CW*, 15 July 1965, p. 10.

It was the imposition of parish quotas to finance rationalisation which would prove most contentious. In a May 1964 memorandum from Cardinal Gilroy to the parish priests of the Sydney archdiocese, there is mention of a committee of priests appointed to assess the quota imposed on each parish. Quotas were assessed on the basis of detailed financial reports sent in by each parish. Those parishes with steady Sunday collections and little outstanding debt, perhaps because they had been established many decades, had a large amount imposed and many were forced to take out a bank loan to cover the quota. The quota set for the parish of Holy Cross Woollahra was £10,000 and the total parish debt at 31 December 1963 was £101,000 plus the quota.<sup>45</sup> Gilroy emphasised that:

Pastors should explain to their people that the schools problem is so vast that they must look beyond the boundaries of their own Parishes to the needs of the Archdiocese as a whole.<sup>46</sup>

To raise the £130,000 needed to erect an extension to Holy Cross College, the surrounding parishes, from which the school would draw its students as a designated regional girls' school, had to contribute. Quotas were as follows: Bondi - £25,000; Paddington - £16,000; Dover Heights - £10,000; Edgecliff - £44,000; Rose Bay - £35,000. Randwick parish's quota of £75,000 was to be directed to the second of the Eastern Suburbs regional girls' schools, Brigidine College, Randwick, which had become systemic in 1966.<sup>47</sup> Randwick parish was obliged to take out a Savings Bank Loan of £50,000 at six per cent interest to meet its quota, and it was required to reduce the loan by £10,000 per annum as well as reduce its existing debt. Newtown, a much poorer parish, had a quota of £15,000 which was to go to the Fairfield boys' regional school, but the parish could not manage to raise this amount.<sup>48</sup> The imposition of parish quotas and a strict control over school fees charged by systemic schools, meant the financial burden was to be shared by all Catholic parishioners, irrespective of their parenthood status.

The executive commissioner of the CBFC, Geoffrey Davey, reported in June 1966 that sixty-eight new schools were to be started within the next few months. He wrote: 'Since

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<sup>45</sup> Memorandum from Cardinal Gilroy to the Parish Priests of the Archdiocese of Sydney, 30 May 1964, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>46</sup> Catholic Schools Building Fund Correspondence 1960, 1964, 1965 and CBFC Correspondence 1965-1966, I0789, SAA.

<sup>47</sup> James Carroll (on behalf of Gilroy) to Fr Sexton, parish priest of Dover Heights, 9 September 1965, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>48</sup> CBFC Correspondence, 1965-1966, I0789, SAA.

1964 we have spent £4,800,000 and are to spend a further £4,200,000 by the end of 1967.’ He added: ‘There is no greater apostolic undertaking today in this Archdiocese than our Catholic schools.’<sup>49</sup>

The Lend Lease Corporation was paid £7,500 in June 1965 to prepare a report on ‘Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney’; the report was to be kept strictly confidential. The report had indicated the magnitude of future needs, priorities according to areas and how improved planning and component standardisation could reduce capital and operating costs.<sup>50</sup> It is clear that its recommendations were implemented by a major rationalisation process underway by late 1965.

### **Uniformity rules**

In the process of the ‘systemisation’ of Catholic education in Sydney the CBFC employed economies of scale. ‘Systemic’ schools were those which came under the jurisdiction of the Sydney Catholic Education Office, as distinct from those schools which had remained under the control of a congregation during the rationalisation period of the 1960s and were called ‘non-systemic’. Initially it was suggested that school uniforms be standardised as well as textbooks and that a hiring system for textbooks for the higher grades be investigated.<sup>51</sup> Uniform school buildings would be designed to achieve substantial savings and standardised buildings could be given individuality by the use of different materials.

The CBFC demonstrated a capacity for detailed thinking and after their second meeting issued a ‘Directive on standards for the construction of regional schools in the Sydney Archdiocese of the Catholic Church in Australia’. It set out the (uniform) size of a blackboard as 12 feet x 4feet, the provision of two double socket power outlets per classroom, the number of toilets and the size of general science laboratories (40 feet x 24 feet). The directive specified no classroom was to have a teacher’s dais.<sup>52</sup>

The idea of a common school uniform for Catholic schools was a very contentious issue which had been under discussion for some years. As reported by Mgr Slowey in

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<sup>49</sup> Davey to Mgr Wallace, 17 June 1966, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of the CBFC, 23 March 1965 – 20 December 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>51</sup> CW, 16 July 1964, p. 1 and CW, 23 July 1964, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes of the CBFC, 23 March 1965 – 20 December 1965, I0781, SAA.



September 1961, the suggestion of a standard uniform for parochial schools had generally been accepted by the Provincial Superiors of the teaching sisters, but should also apply to the boys' schools and to the secondary schools.<sup>53</sup> Many parents agreed with the school principals on the value of distinctive uniforms.<sup>54</sup> This discussion bore some fruit in the case of Holy Cross College where, after the primary section of Holy Cross was closed in 1958 and a newly built parochial primary school was opened in 1962 (renamed Holy Cross Junior School), the pupils of both primary parochial school and College wore an identical uniform.<sup>55</sup> A 'Practical Mother' of five children attending three different Catholic schools had an opposing view expressed in a letter to the *Catholic Weekly*: 'If all the children in Sydney Catholic schools are dressed alike, they will stand out too much.'<sup>56</sup> This observation was made at a time of growing sectarianism as the state aid debate began to gain heat.

School fees were to be standardised for all archdiocesan systemic schools and they were to be kept as low as possible.<sup>57</sup> A standard scale of fees for all schools, primary and secondary, in the Sydney archdiocese, which had been established by the archdiocese and for those secondary schools, established by the orders, which were classified as regional schools, commenced in 1966. They were as follows:

**Secondary Schools: per child per term**

Forms I and II	\$26.00
Forms III and IV	\$34.00
Forms V and VI	\$50.00

Fees were to be reduced for more than one child in the family attending any Catholic schools on a sliding scale starting with a ten per cent reduction for two children. The CBFC would issue accounts based on data collected by the schools on enrolment and then issue accounts. Schools would collect the fees and pass them on to the CBFC.<sup>58</sup> This

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<sup>53</sup> CEB Minutes for 26 September 1961, Box 2, CEOS.

<sup>54</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 140.

<sup>55</sup> CW, 20 August 1964, p. 27. This is another example of Holy Cross College being held up as a regional school to be emulated.

<sup>56</sup> CW, letter to the editor, 12 November 1964, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> In a letter to Cardinal Gilroy, a Randwick mother expressed her concerns over the cost of sending her two sons to Catholic schools, when her husband earned £21 a week and she was left with £10 a week to feed and clothe the family. Letter to Cardinal Gilroy dated 3 May 1965, name and address withheld, I0781,SAA.

<sup>58</sup> CBFC agenda and papers for special meeting, 25 January 1966, I0781, SAA.

system would come under criticism for its administrative inefficiency, namely the double handling of monies collected.

### **FOCUS YEAR – 1964**

- ❖ The year after Holy Cross College became a regional secondary girls' school was one notable for adjustments and innovations. There was a desperate need to increase teaching accommodation, and the College was divided for administrative purposes into junior and senior sections. Mother M. St Jude (Ethel) Cashman, ex-student of Holy Cross, was appointed superior of Holy Cross convent community and principal of the College in 1964.
  
- ❖ The Holy Cross Convent Chronicles note that Sr M. Benignus Meehan, assistant principal, looked after the Junior Secondary School which 'formed a fairly self-contained and smoothly functioning world' in their own building, the classrooms vacated by the parochial Primary School. A new school house, 'Coolock' was launched, another sign of increasing enrolments.<sup>59</sup> It would take its place alongside the two well-established school houses of 'Mercedes' and 'McAuley' which had become traditional in Mercy schools.
  
- ❖ Mother M. Andrew Lynch had instituted an annual Festival of Singing for the schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, and in 1964, Holy Cross choirs performed at the fourth festival which was held in Petersham Town Hall. The College participated for the first time in the Combined Mercy Sports at Cumberland Oval, Parramatta, 'on what must have been the coldest, windiest, bleakest day in recorded history'. The College came fourth out of the five participating schools.<sup>60</sup> The Festival of Singing and the Combined Sports are evidence of efforts to develop a sense of Mercy community among the scattered secondary schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy.
  
- ❖ Early in 1964 the Young Christian Students (hereafter YCS) movement was introduced into the College where it was named the Holy Cross Student Apostolate until official archdiocesan recognition was granted for the introduction of this

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<sup>59</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 58. 'Coolock' was named after the home of the Quaker couple (Mr and Mrs Callaghan) which Catherine McAuley inherited.

<sup>60</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 62.

- international movement into Sydney archdiocesan Catholic schools. Fr Yates, a Holy Cross parish curate, was appointed chaplain. Some of the 1965 LC group who were among the first members were Caroline Ryan, Yolande (Yollie) Paino and Pam McLeod. By the end of 1964 it was well established. Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry and Sr M. Sophia (Sophie) McGrath were the first religious assistants.<sup>61</sup> This movement, through its 'See, Judge and Act' method, based on the Gospels, was designed to promote involvement of students in community issues, immediate and beyond the school.
- ❖ The property next to the College, always known as 'Barlow's', was acquired mid-1964; finally the owners had been persuaded to move after many years of failed negotiations. Many generations of Holy Cross pupils had been invited to pray for just this outcome. This little cottage on land less than 20 feet wide, had stood defiantly, surrounded by Holy Cross land. At first it had been intended to use the cottage for temporary classrooms but on closer inspection it was realised it would be preferable to demolish the building and this occurred over the 1964-65 summer school holidays.<sup>62</sup>
  - ❖ Mother M. St Jude sent a letter to the CEO setting out some points for its consideration on the possible advantages of the extension of the regional principle to Fifth and Sixth Forms by the establishment of separate senior schools jointly staffed by the congregations conducting secondary schools in the area. This was a revolutionary proposal at the time. It was inspired by the position of St Clare's College Waverley, which was in an 'extremely hazardous' position because of its small enrolment. In 1964, Holy Cross College had 514 students compared to St Clare's 172 students. Fr Slowey forwarded the letter to the Major Superiors of the teaching congregations in the Archdiocese.<sup>63</sup>
  - ❖ A conference in 1964 of the principals of Holy Cross College Woollahra and St Clare's Waverley resulted in an agreement that a senior school, on a new site and jointly staffed was 'expedient', and Bishop Carroll proposed the Christian Brothers

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<sup>61</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', pp.59-60.

<sup>62</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 62.

<sup>63</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 67.

school site at Paul Street, Bondi Junction, would be suitable.<sup>64</sup> This plan was not realised. In October 1964, Bishop Carroll was reporting to the CEB that:

The only satisfactory solution to the problem at [St Clare's College] Waverley seemed to be to let the school become a co-regional school, offering a curriculum that was complementary to the curriculum at Holy Cross, Woollahra. To equip the school to continue to operate as a small school concentrating on such things as domestic science, commercial work, would require an outlay of about £10,000.

The CEB approved this expenditure.<sup>65</sup> It is significant that Bishop Carroll's report was suggesting that St Clare's would be offering non-academic, vocational subjects, the implication being that Holy Cross College would be a senior school concentrating on academic subjects for university preparation. It has been shown that Carroll was in favour of secondary schools specialising in certain subject areas and certainly St Clare's was well equipped to concentrate on domestic science and commercial subjects as these had been added to its curriculum in 1933.<sup>66</sup> Yet this plan also came to nothing. By late 1965, Mother M. Thecla alluded to crucial factors in the dropping of this plan, when she reported that 'owing to the heavy commitments at Parramatta and, unexpectedly in Woollahra, no contribution can be made to jointly-staffed schools'.<sup>67</sup>

- ❖ It was about this time that principals of the various Parramatta sisters' secondary schools started reading their annual school reports themselves instead of requesting a man to act for them.<sup>68</sup> Since the Holy Cross convent chronicler specifically reported that Mother M. St Jude read the annual report for 1964, this was probably the occasion when the pattern was changed.<sup>69</sup> This is a reflection of the changing attitudes to the roles of working women within society and within the Catholic Church. The College had two speech nights in 1964, another indication of the impact of the increased enrolments. The junior secondary speech night was held in the parish

<sup>64</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 64.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the CEB, report dated 1 October, 1964, J0929, SAA.

<sup>66</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Replies of Major Superiors concerning Form V-V1 Schools, CBFC Minutes, 1 September 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>68</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 177.

<sup>69</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 75.

hall and the senior secondary speech night at the Science Theatre at the University of New South Wales, which had been made available through the influence of Professor Anderson, father of Helen, a Holy Cross pupil. This began a long tradition of having the Holy Cross College end of year formalities at this venue.

### **Dissenting opinions about the future of Catholic education**

The Archdiocese of Sydney was facing enormous financial problems by late 1966. There was a deficit of £3,000,000 in spite of some £950,000 invested in the Diocesan Loan, previously mentioned, and £6,500,000 raised by the parish levies (quotas). The total amount needed to complete the building programme by the end of 1967 was £12,000,000. The chairman of the Building Committee of the CBFC, Bishop Muldoon, alluded to dissenting opinions regarding the sacrifices being asked of parish priests, religious, lay staff, parents and parishioners. He said:

Now, in the face of all these problems, His Eminence the Cardinal has reaffirmed the traditional ideal of Catholic education, namely, the education of all our Catholic children in Catholic schools. There are some who do not agree with this decision.<sup>70</sup>

The Catholic Education Board was just as unequivocal as the Cardinal when it noted in a document entitled ‘Catholic Education: its philosophy, image, functioning and organisation’, that there is no alternative to the Catholic school. This document’s policy statement declared: ‘The Catholic school aims to promote the cohesive development of the whole human personality, the natural being augmented and completed by the supernatural.’<sup>71</sup>

James Carroll (appointed Archbishop in 1965), in a letter to Mgr Wallace, expressed his ‘serious doubts’ about the proposed methods of raising funds to finance the ‘education crisis’. It was his belief that ‘Parish initiative is likely to decline. Any Pastor and any Committee will confirm the view that money can be raised more readily for local or regional purpose [*sic*].’ He added that a publicity campaign to educate ‘our people to an

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<sup>70</sup> Address of Bishop Muldoon broadcast on radio 2SM, Sunday 25 September 1966, CBFC Correspondence file, I0789, SAA, (original emphasis). In spite of the introduction of decimal currency in Australia in February 1966, the CBFC was still using pounds sterling for its figures.

<sup>71</sup> Catholic Education Board, ‘Catholic Education: its philosophy, image, functioning and organisation’, Document 110, J0929, SAA. It is not clear if this document was intended to be widely circulated.

acceptance of finance of schools on the basis of the Diocese as a whole' was possible but would need some time.<sup>72</sup>

Mgr Slowey had reported in 1964 that it was Mother M. Thecla's opinion that the idea of regional schools was most commendable and she had no problems with such schools as OLMC Epping becoming regional schools.<sup>73</sup> In a surprising revelation, Mother M. Thecla wrote to Mgr Slowey concerning OLMC Burraneer: 'The general feeling among the Sisters at Burraneer seems to be that until numbers grow, those wishing to proceed to the Higher School Certificate should attend the local State High School.'<sup>74</sup>

### **A significant extension to Holy Cross College**

The CBFC's 'Programme of Secondary Schools required to be built by end of 1967, commencing 1-1-64' listed 'Woollahra Girls' School'. The new building was to be constructed during 1966 and ready for use in 1967. The plan was for seven classrooms (30 feet x 24 feet), three classrooms (24 feet x 24 feet), two science laboratories of a standard size (40 feet x 24 feet) and preparation rooms, an art/craft room and music room, a shelter shed, toilet block and administrative block. The final building of three floors on a basement was to include an enclosed top floor above these for assembly and other purpose. The project was approved and it was put under the control of the Building Committee.<sup>75</sup> At this time the enrolment at Holy Cross College was approximately 405, with eight religious staff and six lay staff. Altogether there were seventeen sisters at the Holy Cross convent serving the primary and secondary schools as well as teaching music.<sup>76</sup>

The Holy Cross College Annual Report for 1965 referred to the commencement of work on the new building site. It would be some time, however, before the additional accommodation, desperately needed, was available. A number of factors caused considerable delays in the construction: the new building did not conform to the standardised specifications as set out by the CBFC and the specified width of the

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<sup>72</sup> Archbishop James Carroll to Mgr Wallace, 30 November 1966, Minutes of forty-first meeting of the CBFC, 7 December 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>73</sup> Report by Fr Slowey, 10 March 1964, CEB Minutes, Box 2, CEOSA.

<sup>74</sup> Mother Superior of the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy Parramatta to Mgr Slowey, 12 August 1965, Box 5.1, PA.

<sup>75</sup> CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA. Approval for construction had been given by the Finance Committee on 12 August 1965.

<sup>76</sup> EVR, Parish of Woollahra, 1955, D0260, SAA.

veradahs was 6 feet, but the plan showed a width of 7 feet; the cost of the new school buildings was given at \$323,000, including fees and furniture<sup>77</sup>, but this sum exceeded the 'financial allowance' of the project.<sup>78</sup> Two considerations, which caused further delays in the construction, were the congregation's stated need for additional accommodation for the sisters in the main building and the consequent necessity for an additional floor in the new building.<sup>79</sup>

The Holy Cross parish administrator, Fr Baulman, the building's architect, Mr S. Hirst, and the architect in charge of the project, Mr Parkes, were summoned to the next meeting of the Building Committee and the committee's chair, Bishop Muldoon was assured that 'the building would not reach the fifth floor for a few months'.<sup>80</sup> The principal of the school, Sr M. St Jude Cashman, who obviously understood the school situation best, was not included in discussions. However, Fr Baulman, acting on behalf of the parish priest Archbishop Carroll, had excellent relations with the school administration and would strongly espouse the cause of Holy Cross College, but the principal would have been a more appropriate representative. Amended plans for the College additions were approved by the Building Committee of the CBFC on 17 August 1965, with the verandahs at the specified width and connecting doors to the classrooms, and the science preparation room enlarged to meet the requirements of the bureaucrats in Canberra. The estimated cost was £137,946, much lower than the previous costing.<sup>81</sup>

With so much money being spent and in such a visible way, control over building programmes in the schools could have become an issue. It was agreed that payments out of the pooled archdiocesan funds would be made directly to the parish priests.<sup>82</sup> Religious Superiors who had enjoyed considerable freedom within their own domains now found themselves bound by bureaucratic dictates and petty restrictions. For example: the Brigidine Sisters had requested teachers' daises for the new school at Randwick and were even prepared to meet the extra costs themselves. The Building Committee recorded its feelings on the matter and made clear in its response to the Randwick community, that it would brook no rebellious thoughts stating: 'The committee wishes to point out that all

<sup>77</sup> CBFC Works Programme as at 17 October 1967, in papers for CBFC sixty-second meeting, I0781, SAA.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of the forty-second meeting of the CBFC, 21 December 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>79</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee of the CBFC, 11 January 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee of the CBFC, 4 January 1967, I0781, SAA.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee, 12 August 1965, tabled at the meeting of the CBFC, 18 August 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the CBFC meeting, 25 May 1966, I0781, SAA.

schools receiving money from the Archdiocese are expected to conform to the Directive. Ultimately there is only one source of money for Catholic schools.’<sup>83</sup> When Mother M. Thecla asked the CBFC to provide a car to be used for the transport of teachers from the Parramatta convent to the new secondary girls’ school at Westmead, there was agreement, but with the proviso that the original purchase cost would be the only expense for which the CBFC would be responsible.<sup>84</sup>

### **A senior school at Paul Street**

As mentioned previously, Sr M. St Jude Cashman, in 1964, had written to the CEO concerning the establishment of a separate regional senior school but a major decision regarding the senior section of Holy Cross College was not made until the end of 1969. It was delayed by negotiations initiated by the CEO to establish a regional girls’ senior secondary college at Kincoppal, Elizabeth Bay, a property owned by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay. After these negotiations stalled, a request was submitted by Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry to Mgr Slowey, director of the Catholic Education Office, for permission to use the former brothers’ school and monastery at Paul Street, Bondi Junction to accommodate the Fifth and Sixth Forms of Holy Cross College.<sup>85</sup> This request was made with the approval and support of the Holy Cross parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll, the parish administrator, Fr P. Harrington, and with the concurrence of Mother General, Mother M. Thecla Kerwick.<sup>86</sup> The Paul Street school site had originally been developed by the parish for the Marist Brothers, and had been transferred into the hands of the Christian Brothers in 1964 for use as a primary school.

Sr M. Anselm Gaudry’s letter to Mgr Slowey had pointed out that the Parramatta congregation still favoured the principle of a constitutional combined senior school despite the failure to accept the proposal to use Kincoppal for this purpose. Sr M. Anselm expressed the hope a senior school would encourage some form of collaboration and

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<sup>83</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee of the CBFC, 10 May 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>84</sup> Report of the Executive Committee of the CBFC, 1 February 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>85</sup> The property known as *Ben Eden* dates from a land grant to Mr Hartley Jr. After numerous changes in ownership Mr James Campbell built a stone house, in 1863, on the land which he had purchased for £250 the previous year. In 1927, Fr Peter O’Reilly bought the grounds and *Ben Eden House* as a boys’ school site and a residence for the brothers. The school was finally opened on 29 April 1928 as a Marist Brothers’ school for boys. See ‘*Ben Eden – a living legend*’, author unknown, 1980, Woollahra Library Local Studies file for Holy Cross College; also Perumal Murphy Pty Ltd, ‘Waverley Heritage Study’, for Waverley Municipal Council, item 31/5, 0229, 1990, Waverley Municipal Library, Local Studies Centre, Bondi Junction.

<sup>86</sup> ‘*Ben Eden – a living legend*’, p. 4.



cooperation with other Catholic schools in the area and the site at Paul Street conformed to the basic requirement of ‘neutrality’ of site, which had been emphasised in the Kincoppal proposals. The letter made clear that, even if inter-congregational co-operation was not ‘forthcoming’, the sisters would ‘still be appreciative of the opportunity’ to separate the senior and junior forms because of the difficulty of accommodating the full school on the Edgecliff Road site, in spite of the new extensions.<sup>87</sup> Mgr Slowey’s reply expressed his conviction that the separate education of the senior girls ‘could provide special opportunity for enriching their final years [...] especially as a preparation for their future lives and activities’.<sup>88</sup>

Mgr Slowey gave his permission to proceed with the establishment of the senior school of Holy Cross College on the Paul Street site, and in October 1969, Sr M. Anselm Gaudry sent a letter to the parents of the fifth formers who would be the sixth formers of 1970, and the prospective fifth formers of 1970. This letter gave a number of reasons for the proposed Holy Cross Senior School (always to be known as Paul Street).<sup>89</sup> These included the lack of adequate accommodation in existing classrooms at the Edgecliff Road site, and the inadequacy of facilities there for the teaching of art, craft and needlework, especially for Forms I to IV, which would be reduced by the relocation of the senior classes. Of particular concern, and a point which was especially stressed, was the present lack of facilities for private study, discussion and research for senior students. The letter also pointed out the opportunity for the relaxation of minor regulations which would be possible with the separate campus. It was hoped that allowing greater freedom and providing individual study and research facilities would ease the transition from secondary to tertiary education for the senior students.

Another perceived advantage was the opportunity for the fourth formers to assume leadership roles in the junior secondary school (to be known as Holy Cross Middle School) on Edgecliff Road.<sup>90</sup> The response to this letter was ‘extremely favourable’ and this was very encouraging to the sisters. Letters were then sent to the parish priests of the

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<sup>87</sup> Letter from Sr M. Anselm to Mgr Slowey, dated 3 October 1969, Box 78, PA, copy also in file SC 31/7, CEOS.

<sup>88</sup> *Ben Eden* – a living legend, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> The Holy Cross College senior school was always referred to by its geographical location (Paul Street) and this nomenclature shall be used in the text.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Sr M. Anselm Gaudry to parents, dated 21 October 1969, file SC 31/7, CEOS.

surrounding parishes as well as the principals of the other schools in the area.<sup>91</sup> Sr M. Anselm's letter to the parents had taken its tone and content from a CEO document, 'Establishment of Senior Secondary Schools'. Also noted in the letter was the disadvantage that such a move could accentuate the tendency for senior schools towards 'specialisation for matriculation'.<sup>92</sup> The builder carried out the necessary renovations during the Christmas vacation and Paul Street accepted its first students in January 1970.

### **Changing attitudes to lay teachers in Catholic schools**

By late 1955 it was clear that the policy of discouraging the appointment of lay teachers in primary schools would have to be reviewed by the Catholic education authorities. D'Orsa has noted that Cardinal Gilroy, 'while privately supporting the introduction of lay teachers, wished to allay the fears of clergy who questioned whether such a development was financially feasible'.<sup>93</sup> In a 1965 letter to Cardinal Gilroy, Mgr Slowey had noted that 'it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold good staff and to encourage trainees' and there is 'growing concern about the scale of salaries paid to Diocesan lay teachers and other lay teachers'.<sup>94</sup>

The CBFC had been notified that the employment of lay teachers was the 'most serious problem facing the schools in the immediate future'. From 1961 to 1965 the increase in the number of religious was forty-three or 2.5 per cent and the increase in lay teachers was 406 or seventy per cent. The cost of salaries in 1965, at the current rates of payment was estimated to be £705,000 and in 1966, £769,000.<sup>95</sup> Total student numbers in the Sydney Archdiocese had risen by 17,000 in 1967 and there was a shortfall of some 300 teachers. In order to cope with the influx of teachers, the CBFC ran a deficit budget of \$700,000 in 1967.<sup>96</sup> In 1966, the average weekly rate for female lay teachers in the Sydney Archdiocese was \$37.40 while for males it was \$58.60.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Ben Eden* – a living legend, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> CEO, 'Establishment of Senior Secondary Schools', p. 6, SC31/7, CEOS Archives.

<sup>93</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>94</sup> CBFC Correspondence, January to April 1965, file I0789, SAA.

<sup>95</sup> 'Lay Teachers-Salaries and Conditions and Associated Problems', drawn up by G. Davey to be presented to the Finance Committee of the CBFC and submitted to Archbishop Carroll on 30 November 1965, CBFC Correspondence, 1965-1966, file I0789, SAA.

<sup>96</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 64.

<sup>97</sup> Executive Commissioner to the Chairman, Finance Committee, 14 November 1966, CBFC Correspondence, 1965-1966, file I0789, SAA. Equality of pay for female and male lay teachers was implemented in 1976. Rates expressed in Australian decimal currency (introduced in February 1966).

Mgr John Slowey, the Director of Education for the Sydney archdiocese had nothing but praise for lay teachers. He said of them:

It was hard, sometimes bitterly hard, for Lay teachers to be accepted. It took a long time for them to be accepted in the concept of Pius XII as equally dignified co-workers in the apostolate. They were beautiful people, the pioneer trainees of the early years! They were truly sacrificial when salaries were poor (for obvious reasons) and when they were struggling to be accepted as worthy of a place as Catholic teachers, capable as well as prepared to share the dignity and responsibilities of the truly Christian teacher later to be described by Vatican II without the distinction between Religious and Lay.<sup>98</sup>

Cardinal Gilroy had made clear his personal attitude to lay teachers in his address at the third graduation ceremony of the Catholic Teachers' College:

Their presence in this college at all indicates that they consider themselves to be engaged not merely in a career but in an apostolate and future historians will duly note the contribution they made to Church and State during this period of stress.<sup>99</sup>

This idea of teaching as an apostolate had been eloquently expressed by Professor Russell of Sydney University that same year: 'The role of the lay teacher of the young is of an importance that is hard to exaggerate [...] no greater responsibility can be imagined.' Emphasising the need to attract the very best Catholic men and women, he left the reader in no doubt when he added:

Within both the Catholic and State systems of education there is a desperate need for dedicated and competent lay teachers, those who, while not having the call to enter the religious life, yet feel called [to] another form of this apostolate of education.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Quoted in D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 36.

<sup>99</sup> *CW*, 22 March 1962. There were thirty graduates, the decrease from the thirty-nine in the first graduating class in 1960 perhaps reflecting the full employment figures of the early 1960s. In spite of the fact that all the graduates were female, not one representative of the teaching sisters was among the official guests, yet the Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers and De La Salle Brothers were represented.

<sup>100</sup> 'Teaching as a Vocation, Professor G. H. Russell Offers a Challenge to Catholic Youth' in *CW*, 12 July 1962, p. 12.

The increase in lay teachers employed by Catholic schools in the Sydney Archdiocese resulted in some modifications within the Sydney CEO. Miss Irema (Mary) Mahuteau was appointed in 1963 to join its professional staff as supervisor of lay teachers in 1963. From 1963 onwards, the CEO Director sent two copies of his 'Circular to Schools' to principals, one for the religious community and one for the lay teachers, with strict instructions that the former not be made public to non-religious. Presumably this was because the former gave directions about or comments concerning lay teachers.

A personnel department and the payment of lay teachers had been centralised with the CBFC in 1965. The CBFC was fearful of teachers' salaries being taken out of their control and proscribed by an industrial award. When the Lay Teachers Association raised the question of the basic wage adjustments being added to teachers' salaries, the CBFC minutes of 2 August 1967 recorded its stance on the issue:

The Commission should not be obliged to review or increase rates merely as a result of decisions of Industrial Courts. It was made clear that in reviewing salaries for 1968 the Classifications Committee would be circumscribed by the availability of funds.<sup>101</sup>

Any dissatisfaction of lay teachers with their salaries and conditions was kept 'under the covers' as much as possible. Early in the first term of 1967, five teachers at Christian Brothers' Bondi Beach went on strike. They claimed that the principal had promised them salary increments. The matter was investigated and the teachers were paid the increments but it was made clear that all agreements would terminate at the beginning of the next school year on 29 January 1968. If teachers could not accept this, their services would be terminated at that date.<sup>102</sup> The chairman of the Executive Committee of the CBFC, Archbishop James Carroll, requested Br McGlade, Provincial of the Christian Brothers and Br Baptist, Provincial of the De La Salle Brothers, to ensure that any complaints of headmasters or of teachers would not be 'ventilated in the public press' and both Provincials agreed. The *Catholic Weekly* was 'advised' to make no mention of the protests in its 16 February 1967 issue, and was told what to include in 'a simple news item' in the following issue. This item was to stress that the actions were of some

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<sup>101</sup> Minutes of meeting of the CBFC, 2 August 1967, SAA.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes of the forty-sixth meeting of the CBFC, 10781, SAA.

individual teachers and the new scale of teachers' salaries 'was intended to benefit teachers and the System generally'. Archbishop Carroll's view was that the 'immediate objective should be to avoid any expansion of the mood of protest which probably would pass if not given too much prominence'.<sup>103</sup>

In 1968 the lay teachers launched a case in the NSW Industrial Court seeking their own industrial award. On 19 June 1970, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Award was handed down, the first award to cover infants, primary and secondary teachers in non-government schools and early childhood centres.

The 1972 report of the National Catholic Education Commission listed 'certain definable characteristics' which the teaching staff of Catholic schools should possess. These were stated as:

[C]ommitment to the vocation of teaching, dedication to the religious and moral objectives by which Catholic schools are specified, appropriate professional education for teaching in secular subject areas, and in specifically religious areas insofar as this duty is undertaken. These characteristics should be shared, in the measure of their capacity, by all teachers, lay and religious, in Catholic schools.<sup>104</sup>

By 1976, the Catholic Teachers' College at North Sydney was training some 493 women, two-thirds of whom were lay. There were ninety-one lay women at the Good Samaritan Training College at Glebe and 170 lay men were in training at the Catholic College of Education at Strathfield.<sup>105</sup> Bishop Muldoon asserted that a solution to the CEO's financial crisis 'must be found on religious, not secular grounds'. His solution implied that lay teachers would be inspired by religious motives as they replaced Religious teachers, especially in Catholic primary schools, and he wrote:

Teachers within the Catholic System, having the nature and purpose of that system at heart, should be prepared to handle larger classes than those handled

<sup>103</sup> Report of the Executive Committee of the CBFC, 17 February 1967, I0781, SAA.

<sup>104</sup> National Catholic Education Commission, *The Education of Catholic Australians: report of the National Catholic Education Commission*, National Catholic Education Commission, Canberra, 1972, p. 52.

<sup>105</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 75.

by secular professionals in a secular State System. They should be prepared to do extra duties, in line with our Catholic tradition. Otherwise the heart drops out of Catholic education as we have always understood it.<sup>106</sup>

Ken McKinnon has commented that Archbishop James Carroll and Fr Frank Martin (who was appointed to the Schools Commission) ‘saw that maintaining the Catholic character was not a given, but that you had to work for it, and that laicisation of the schools was going to make retention of that character doubly difficult’.<sup>107</sup>

**Table 5: Full Time and Part Time Teachers in primary and secondary schools of the Sydney Archdiocese in 1975**<sup>108</sup>

Brothers	451	Lay Catholics	2,491	Priests	21
Sisters	961	Lay Non-Catholics	1,210		

By 1975 there were a substantial number of non-Catholics teaching in Sydney archdiocesan schools. Fr Barry Collins’ statistical summary in Table 5 above shows their undeniable contribution to Catholic education at this time.

### **Allowances to religious teachers**

While the payment of lay teachers was becoming a major issue in 1965, allowances for religious teachers were also being discussed. A fixed allowance for each religious was set, to be paid out of the Central Fund for Operating Schools into which school fees and the parish quotas were to be paid. The total amount paid in allowances to religious in 1966 was \$1,801,074, and lay teachers’ salaries amounted to \$2,720,260. In late 1966, religious stipends were set at: \$1,508 for secondary school religious sisters; \$1,508 for secondary school religious brothers; \$1,106 for primary school religious sisters and brothers. It is notable that the estimates for lay teacher requirements (in 1967) were based on forty-five to fifty pupils per teacher in primary schools.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Bishop Muldoon to McBride, 31 July 1977, SAA; (Muldoon’s emphasis).

<sup>107</sup> Ken McKinnon in ‘Regaining State Aid: interviews relating to the campaign for state aid for non-government schools, 1960-80’, interviews conducted by John Luttrell for the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2001-2003, unpublished, CEOSA, p. 342.

<sup>108</sup> Fr Barry Collins to Fr P. Ingham, Private Secretary to Cardinal Freeman, 6 May 1975, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOSA.

<sup>109</sup> Executive Commissioner to the Chairman, Finance Committee, 14 November 1966, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

The equality of stipends (as indicated in the November 1966 scale) paid to religious sisters and brothers would not last. The Finance Committee, chaired by Archbishop Carroll, decided not only to set different scales for religious sisters and brothers, but after figures had been supplied by the Marist Brothers, to make a further increase of \$100 for each of the brothers' categories, (see Table 6 below). The brothers were paid more because they argued they had to employ housekeeping staff to perform tasks which, in the convents, the sisters performed. Following this request by the brothers, the principle applied by the Finance Committee was that, if the budget permitted, the extra payment would be made, and payments up to the maximum scale would apply.

**Table 6: Stipends for religious in the Archdiocese of Sydney, 1967<sup>110</sup>**

**(i) Minimum scale to apply in 1967 whether budget revenue realised or not**

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Sisters	\$900	\$1000	\$1100
Brothers	\$1200	\$1300	1400

**(ii) Maximum Scale**

Sisters	\$1500	\$1600	\$1700
Brothers	\$1800	\$1900	\$2000

- (a) convent or monastery supplied by parish but maintained by congregation
- (b) convent or monastery accommodation provided by another parish or institution
- (c) convent or monastery provided by congregation.

The payment of stipends was welcomed by the religious who formerly often relied on fund raising activities to provide for their living costs.

**State aid becomes a major election issue in 1972**

By the 1970s state aid was seen as inevitable. Both parties, Labor and Liberal, had overcome internal differences regarding the granting of aid to non-government schools and the one issue remaining to be settled was the form of aid, whether it was to be based on needs or was to be a per capita payment. This was to become the central issue of the early 1970s.

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<sup>110</sup> Minutes of the forty-third meeting of the CBFC, 4 January 1967, I0781, SAA.

There was severe and nation-wide public concern about the so-called crisis in Australian education and Don Smart has surmised that ‘it was probably reaching its zenith’ in 1972.<sup>111</sup> Archbishop Francis Carroll described 1972 as: ‘The time when there was great lack of confidence in Catholic schools [and] there were debates about whether we should have primary or secondary emphasis – one or the other.’ Under the chairmanship of Archbishop James Carroll, the National Catholic Education Commission met just three times, in 1969, 1970 and 1971, and after that it was put on standby.<sup>112</sup> In 1972 the National Catholic Education Commission produced a report, ‘The Education of Catholic Australians’.<sup>113</sup>

In his 1972 election campaign opening speech, Gough Whitlam effectively exploited the wide-spread and increasingly vocal community concern about educational inequality which was quite evident by the late 1960s. Whitlam stressed that aid should be given on a needs basis, not as a per capita grant, and he declared:

The Labor party believes that the Commonwealth should give most assistance to those schools, primary and secondary, whose pupils need most assistance. The most rapidly growing sector of public spending under a Labor government will be education. Education should be the great instrument for the promotion of equality. Under the Liberals it has become a weapon for perpetuating inequality and promoting privilege.<sup>114</sup>

Prime Minister, William McMahon, on 9 December 1971, announced increased grants for capital expenditure for all schools, and that the per capita grants to independent schools would be increased from \$50 to \$68 for secondary pupils and from \$35 to \$50 for primary pupils. This Federal Government per capita grant for nine dioceses was paid directly to the Sydney CBFC; the cheque was banked and cheques were then sent off to each diocese. This system existed from 1969 to the end of 1972.<sup>115</sup> The NSW State Government per capita grant was paid to the schools and deducted from the students’

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<sup>111</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 102.

<sup>112</sup> Archbishop Francis Carroll in ‘Regaining State Aid’, p. 150.

<sup>113</sup> National Catholic Education Commission, *The Education of Catholic Australians: Report of the National Catholic Education Commission*, National Catholic Education Commission, Canberra, 1972. For a summary of the objectives of Catholic education, see pp. 12-13.

<sup>114</sup> ALP Policy Speech, 13 November 1972, quoted in Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 103.

<sup>115</sup> Bernard McBride in ‘Regaining State Aid’, p. 205.



school fees. The system, in 1972, saw school fees paid directly to the school; after deductions for running expenses and the sisters' stipends, the remainder was sent each month to the CBFC to be used for the lay teachers' fortnightly salary payment.

As mentioned previously, one of the consequences of the re-opening of Goulburn's Catholic schools in 1962 was the formation of one national as well as state-wide lay run organisations of parents and friends. The NSW lay body eventually became the NSW Parents Council in November 1974. The national lay organisation was originally called the Australian Association for Educational Freedom and later it became the Australian Parents Council (hereafter APC). It is a federation of the various state bodies, with its head office in Sydney and is the only parent voice for non-government school parents in Australia. The APC has always argued that there should be a basic entitlement for every student, plus extra funds to meet whatever the special needs of a school's students may be: whether they are students with disabilities or lacking English as a Second Language skills or suffering the disadvantage of geographical isolation. Its main tenant is that parents are the primary educators of their children and the struggle for education justice was a issue between parents and government. The organisation is against systemic funding and has always campaigned for limitations on the bishops' control of the finances.<sup>116</sup>

Archbishop James Carroll's speech at St Augustine's College, Brookvale, during the 1972 election campaign, caused a furore. In it he said the difference in the method of funding (needs basis or per capita basis) was not significant and Catholics could support either of the two major parties in the coming election, as 'both [parties] accept the principle of public support for the voluntary effort of independent schools'.<sup>117</sup> The APC thought that the needs based policy was divisive and therefore dangerous, and its members felt let down by Archbishop Carroll's Brookvale statement.<sup>118</sup> Archbishop Carroll had written that 'differences of opinion as to methods of payment of Government subsidies ought not be aired outside "the family circle" [and] it is absolutely essential that Parent Bodies present a united front'.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Monica Turner in 'Regaining State Aid', p. 141.

<sup>117</sup> CW, 16 November 1972.

<sup>118</sup> Bill Feneley in 'Regaining State Aid', p. 32. Dr Feneley had seven children in local Catholic schools.

<sup>119</sup> Archbishop James Carroll to Mrs M. Turner, 10 August 1971, Box 15, CEOSA.

### **The Australian Schools Commission**

Gough Whitlam had promised to establish an Australian Schools Commission to examine the needs of students in government and non-government primary, secondary and technical schools. Just eleven days after assuming the office of Prime Minister on 12 December 1972, he fulfilled his campaign promise by announcing the terms of reference and the membership of the interim committee of the Schools Commission. Chaired by Professor Peter Karmel, the highly regarded chairman of the Australian Universities Commission, it had its first meeting immediately before Christmas. Its main task was to recommend to the Federal Government the level of federal funding for 1974 for all the schools in Australia. In the interim, the per capita grants were increased, from the beginning of 1973, to \$62 for primary students and \$104 for secondary students. These rates represented 20 per cent of the estimated cost nationally of educating government school students. The 1972 legislation also provided for direct capital grants for general purposes. There existed strong opposition within the ALP to assistance to the better-off non-government schools. Some factions opposed all notions of government aid to non-government schools. The Karmel Committee categorised all independent schools from H to A in descending order of relative need and recommended that funding to category A schools be phased out gradually during 1974-75.

Representing Catholic schools on the Karmel Committee was Fr Frank Martin. He has said he came under 'severe criticism and pressure' from the APC and Parents and Friends Associations in some states (particularly Victoria), as well as from the independent schools, some of the Bishops and some prominent Jesuits, because he had voted for needs based aid. He believed all of the Catholic schools would not survive if a per capita basis for state aid was adopted.<sup>120</sup> The Karmel Committee submitted its report, *Schools in Australia*, to the minister only five months later, on 18 May 1973.<sup>121</sup> In June 1973, the Catholic bishops had criticised the proposal of the Karmel Committee to phase out federal grants for A-C category schools. In late 1973, the Whitlam Government put forward legislation to grant funding according to the Karmel Committee report but the legislation was blocked in the senate. It was passed after a compromise which increased funding to the wealthier schools in categories A, B and C. The Labor government also introduced a Disadvantaged Schools Program which was applied to government and non-government

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<sup>120</sup> Fr Frank Martin in 'Regaining State Aid', pp.192-194.

<sup>121</sup> Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, *Schools in Australia: Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission*, Canberra, 1973.

schools. Sr Norbert (Isabel) Donnelly of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy chaired both the Sydney committee and the NSW committee of the Catholic Disadvantaged School Program.<sup>122</sup>

Professor Ken McKinnon was appointed the chairman of the Schools Commission. In an interview conducted by Br John Luttrell on 18 October 2002, he said:

[Archbishop Carroll] often told me that he didn't want the situation to evolve to where Catholic schools would become so totally dependent on government money that the Catholic element of them was lost. Catholic parents ought to make a contribution for their children, so he wouldn't press the government for such money that would result in the loss of these elements. He was worried over the [...] rapid growth of influence of lay people, who he thought would probably have different ideas.<sup>123</sup>

### **Role of the CEO**

Luttrell has commented that during the 1960s and 1970s the Sydney CEO expanded into a bureaucracy of about sixty staff, but in reality it was a less powerful partner to the CBFC, the body which had complete control over school development and finances.<sup>124</sup> The Commonwealth Science Grants were made through the bishop and it was the CBFC which decided which schools were to get new science facilities. This did not encourage good relations between it and the teaching congregations and this pooled money gave the CEO great leverage over the archdiocesan schools. The decision of the State and Federal Governments to deal with Catholic school authorities rather than individual schools, facilitated the growth of the CEO in Sydney as the pooled funds became the responsibility of the CEO to distribute, mainly in the form of teacher salaries. Br Kelvin Canavan has argued that the CEOs 'filled the vacuum caused by the withdrawal of Religious' from the schools.<sup>125</sup> Other functions of the CEOs were to supervise educational programs, provide inspectors to ensure teaching standards were maintained and the set curriculum to be followed. The first three members of religious orders to be appointed school inspectors in

<sup>122</sup> McGrath, *These Women?* p. 196.

<sup>123</sup> McKinnon in 'Regaining State Aid', p. 342. This could explain why Susan Ryan, when Federal Minister for Education, offered to negotiate for fully funded Catholic schools, as in New Zealand; see ABC Radio National, the Religion Report, 'Australian Catholic Schools: a preferential option for the wealthy?', 15 August 2007.

<sup>124</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, p. 41.

<sup>125</sup> Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 231.

the Sydney Archdiocese were Br M. D. Shanahan cfc, Br Mark May fms and Sr Isobel Donnolly of the Parramatta congregation (the first female school inspector).<sup>126</sup> The microcosm of Holy Cross College was to be served by the CEO for the next fifty years, usually in a supportive role. It needs to be appreciated that though the local principal of the regional school engaged staff, the CEO was the official employer.

### **The reality of rationalisation of Catholic education in Sydney**

As indicated, the corner-stone of the process of the rationalisation of resources in the Archdiocese of Sydney was regionalisation, the creation of large regional secondary schools catering for a number of parochial primary feeder schools. The regionalisation of Catholic senior secondary schools was peculiar to Sydney. In Melbourne, only two of the twenty-eight senior secondary Catholic girls' schools were regional in 1972. In comparison, in Sydney, fourteen of the twenty-four Sixth Form Catholic girls' schools were regional and all twenty-four of the Fourth Form schools were regional.<sup>127</sup> By 1975, about eighty per cent of the Catholic schools in the Sydney Archdiocese had become systemic schools under the jurisdiction of the CEO.<sup>128</sup>

In reality, rationalisation meant uniformity across the board and financial stringencies. It also meant that the salaries paid to lay staff were determined by the classifications committee of the CEO, as were the stipends paid to the religious staff. Principals of Catholic regional schools were allowed \$15 per student for running expenses. School fees were uniform; in 1972 they were \$72 per term. Every August, each regional school had to submit a detailed report of student numbers, subjects taught and a projected requirement of staff numbers for the following year based on student enrolments. This reporting was a burden imposed on already over-worked school principals.

With increasing government financial support to the Catholic sector, came increasing accountability. The Schools Commission wanted every school to have a council to receive the money and be involved in the governance of the school. A 1974 letter to Mgr Slowey from Cardinal Freeman was explicit in its direction regarding the setting up of school boards in Catholic schools. Freeman wrote:

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<sup>126</sup> CW, 27 January 1966, cutting, n.p., PA.

<sup>127</sup> Leavey, 'Religious Education, School Climate and Achievement', p. 29.

<sup>128</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, pp. 40-41.

I refer to the submission on School Boards. In light of recent activity in State Schools, could I ask you to draw up firm recommendations about the establishment of School Boards in the schools of the archdiocese which might be ready for 1975.<sup>129</sup>

The theory was fine but the human reality was complex. No school board was ever established at Holy Cross College. This is not surprising as, according to the Schools Commission chairman, Ken McKinnon, Archbishop Carroll, parish priest of Holy Cross, was against having school councils because they would be an interference with the parish. Furthermore, McKinnon has commented that ‘many times Commissioners talked to parish priests who utterly rejected the idea that expenditure of government money had to be accounted for’.<sup>130</sup>

#### **Attempts to create an Eastern Suburbs regional senior college in the mid-1970s**

As has been seen, Holy Cross senior school was established at Paul St in 1970, but there were on-going discussions concerning the establishment of an Eastern Suburbs regional college. From 1974 to 1976 discussions continued on the rationalisation of the schools already in existence in the region, in which no extra school buildings were planned. The best use had to be made of what physical resources were already there, and teaching staff also were to be utilised to their maximum capacity. The small intimate senior classes which had been a major contributor to the ethos of Catholic secondary education were no longer financially viable by the mid-1970s. Many ideas were put forward for regionalisation in the Eastern Suburbs. One idea seriously discussed was for a two-shift day, with two separate staffs, but the difficulties with late-working married teachers and reduced off-peak transport were noted.<sup>131</sup>

It was evident in the early history of Holy Cross College, that the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney was always seen as a discrete geographical region with well defined boundaries to its north, east and south and containing many of the elite of Sydney’s suburbs. It would be the region’s lack of socio-economic homogeneity in the 1970s, which was a significant stumbling block to the creation of a ‘super’ regional senior Catholic college. The Committee on the Rationalisation of Senior Secondary Education in the Eastern Suburbs,

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<sup>129</sup> Freeman to Slowey, 29 October 1974, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOSA.

<sup>130</sup> Ken McKinnon, in ‘Regaining State Aid’, p. 342 and p. 333.

<sup>131</sup> Minutes of meeting held 25 March 1976 at the Brigidine Convent Randwick, CEOSA.

in its 1976 draft report, recommended that a co-educational senior college with an approximate enrolment of 700 be established at Marcellin College, Randwick, and that all other secondary schools in the region cater for Years 7 to 10 only; it would be administered by a college board. This college would have an extended day, as a compromise on the two-shift day, which would allow the existing buildings at Marcellin to cater for up to 700 students. Of great significance is the comment that Marcellin College site was nominated because the committee recognised ‘the importance of the [proposed] College’s situation in an area enjoying a socio-economic status acceptable to a wide range of parents’.<sup>132</sup> This 1976 plan was one of many never to be realised.

### **Never the twain shall meet**

Alan Barcan has asserted that ‘Catholic schools resisted co-education on ideological grounds’.<sup>133</sup> This was certainly true for many decades. In 1937, mixed schools for adolescent boys and girls were condemned by the Fourth Plenary Council of the Australian bishops, unless special circumstances advised differently (decree 621). As mentioned previously, exemptions were granted for parish schools in rural towns with small populations struggling to be viable (in reality, country convent schools had always taken boys, even in the senior classes, when necessary). There was a slight thawing of the separation of the sexes rule when, in 1944, the Third National Catholic Education Conference recommended that ‘schools should arrange mixed social functions under adequate supervision’, the purpose being to ‘train senior pupils in sensible deportment’.<sup>134</sup>

It was clearly stated in the 1975 Feasibility Study of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy that ‘the Sisters favour separate senior schools for Fifth and Sixth Forms and believe co-education to be desirable at this level’.<sup>135</sup> At the time there had been serious discussions regarding the future of the senior students of Holy Cross College and St Clare’s Waverley and a strong interest in co-educational education had been expressed by some of the religious concerned.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Report of the Committee on the Rationalisation of Senior Secondary Education in the Eastern Suburbs, draft only, 1976, PA.

<sup>133</sup> Alan Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Education Reality: education and society in Australia since 1949*, UNSWP, Sydney, 1993, p. 261.

<sup>134</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, pp. 408-409.

<sup>135</sup> Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, ‘The Feasibility Study’, unpublished manuscript, 1975, Box 69, CEOSA, p. 8.

<sup>136</sup> Minutes of meeting held 19 September 1974 at CEO regarding Form V and VI Catholic education in the Eastern Suburbs, SC31, Box 2, CEOSA.

Meetings continued to be held in the mid-1970s regarding the rationalisation of the Catholic secondary schools in the Eastern Suburbs. The plethora of schools there, both private and regional, must have been a continuing embarrassment to the CEO, given the Archdiocese's struggle to establish schools in Sydney's developing areas and more specifically, to redress the imbalance in the provision of boys' and girls' secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney.<sup>137</sup> In 1976, the Eastern Suburbs secondary principals submitted their individual plans as requested by the CEO. These exhibited a strong consensus that two co-educational Forms V and VI (Years 11 and 12) schools of about 400 students each should be established. St Clare's Waverley was one of the sites suggested.<sup>138</sup>

### **The Second Vatican Council 1962 – 1965**

The Second Vatican Council (hereafter Vatican II) was solemnly opened on 11 October 1962 by Pope John XXIII. From then, until the closing of its fourth and final session on December 1965, most of the Australian bishops were to spend at least three months of the year in Rome at the Council. Many of the Australian bishops had thought that 'the Council would be over in a few months, after adopting a few housekeeping measures'. Indisputably it was a 'momentous event in Church life changing Catholic life in Australia irreversibly'.<sup>139</sup>

The changes instigated would be very slow in reaching the grass-roots level and in the school community at Holy Cross College, would be almost imperceptible, until the 1970s. The first change inaugurated by Vatican II, which Sydney Catholics would notice, was the use of the vernacular in the liturgy of the Mass, announced by Cardinal Gilroy on 18 June 1964. Sydney Catholics were told 'for this historic concession of the Holy See, [they] should be deeply grateful'.<sup>140</sup> At their annual meeting in March 1964, the Australian bishops agreed on the implementation of widespread changes in the language of the Mass, the Divine Office, and the administration of the Sacraments. Cardinal George Pell has noted that the introduction of the celebration of the Sacraments in vernacular languages, rather than Latin was 'something the Council itself never decreed

<sup>137</sup> At the time when the De La Salle Senior College at Cronulla decided to open up enrolments to girls in 1975, it was the only senior secondary Catholic school for girls between Hurstville and Wollongong.

<sup>138</sup> Minutes of meeting held at Brigidine Convent, Randwick, 26 February 1976, SC31, Box 2, CEOS.

<sup>139</sup> Cardinal George Pell, 'From Vatican II to today', address to Catalyst for Renewal's 'Bishop's Forum', 30 May 2003, *AD2000*, vol.16, no.7, August, 2003, p.8; also available at [http://www.ad2000.com.au/articles/2003/aug2003p8\\_1405.html](http://www.ad2000.com.au/articles/2003/aug2003p8_1405.html)

<sup>140</sup> *CW*, 18 June 1964, pp. 1-2.

and which Pope John XXIII did not foresee.’<sup>141</sup> The great majority who had been ‘onlookers rather than participants’ would now be able to ‘make the Mass their own’.<sup>142</sup>

There were a number of unplanned and negative developments attributed to Vatican II: the departure of many priests and religious; the collapse in vocations, the decline in Church attendance; the spread of doctrinal and moral confusion.<sup>143</sup> In reality, the reasons for all of these were complex and among other things, reflected societal change.

Traditionally, lay people did not participate in Vatican Councils, although they could be asked for information and express consent. Vatican II was the first Ecumenical Council to deal specifically with the laity and the first to which lay people were officially invited as auditors (experts).<sup>144</sup> As was noted previously, Rosemary Goldie, who had been working full-time for the international lay movement, became one of the twenty-three women auditors (a first time for women) appointed to the Council. After the closure of the Council she became the first woman to work in the Roman Curia.

### **Rome directs a renewal of religious life**

Vatican II opened on 11 October 1962, just two months before the second general chapter of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy met. This chapter elected Mother M. Thecla Kerwick as superior-general of the congregation; she had been the first Australian-born to lead the congregation when elected in May 1945. Mother M. Thecla was the superior-general during the first six years of radical change in the congregation, namely 1968-1974. Yet reform of religious life had been on the agenda since the late 1940s and the first Conference of Religious Superiors (held in Paris in 1949) and it had been planned to move women religious to renewal and adaptation to the twentieth century, beginning with the habit. Mother M. Thecla later explained that the respect for the traditions of the congregation were so ingrained that ‘it was virtually impossible for [the sisters] to really hear what was being said to them, or, if they did hear, [give] only a notional assent’.<sup>145</sup> Rome directed that each religious institution was to hold a special renewal general chapter according to the norms contained in the 1966 Roman document ‘*Ecclesiae Sanctae*’. Congregations were directed to base their renewal on the gospel and the charism of their

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<sup>141</sup> Pell, ‘From Vatican II to today’.

<sup>142</sup> CW, 18 June 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>143</sup> Pell, ‘From Vatican II to today’.

<sup>144</sup> Goldie, *From a Roman Window*, p. 64.

<sup>145</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 148 and p. 150.



founder, with due regard to the social sciences. The challenge was to adapt to the current culture, while being faithful to the essence of their tradition.<sup>146</sup>

Pope Pius XI, at the 1950 Rome Congress for Religious, had urged an updating of religious dress to suit modern life. The Parramatta congregation would be slow to respond. The Australian Mercy congregations met in December 1952 at North Sydney, and subsequently, in the Parramatta congregation, the stiff white guimp was replaced by a soft black one. By 1957, both the train and the large, wide over-sleeves had gone from the choir sisters' habit. It was not until the 1960s that more major reforms were discussed but by the 1970s, the religious habit had become the most contentious issue of this period; it was the 'most obvious outward sign of the problem that the sisters were having in redefining themselves in relation to the world'.<sup>147</sup> At first, it was generally accepted that there was the need for a uniform habit, but one that was simpler in style and easier to maintain. By the 1980s, the sisters were wearing contemporary fashions which were non-uniform and the choice of the wearer. Each sister was to wear the Mercy Cross as the distinguishing feature.<sup>148</sup>

It was in 1976 that the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace prepared for Social Justice Sunday, on behalf of the Catholic bishops of Australia, the document *Towards a Whole Community – Reflections on the Situation of Australian Women*. This document had obviously been prepared by the Commission in dialogue with a wide range of women in the Catholic community and, among other things, noted the demeaning stereotyping of women in their various roles.<sup>149</sup> Women religious were very much subject to stereotyping which was associated with the habit. Resentment of stereotyping had been a significant factor in the change of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy from a uniform dress.

During this period there was ongoing adaptation in the living style of the sisters to the demands of their teaching and study loads and changing social mores. Apart from changes in the habit there were other adaptations in the Parramatta congregation which were evident to the students at Holy Cross College, such as changes in names. In 1973 the

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<sup>146</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.151.

<sup>147</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.163.

<sup>148</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.164.

<sup>149</sup> The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace for the Catholic Bishops of Australia, Social Justice Sunday, 1976, *Towards a Whole Community: reflections on the situation of Australian women*, E.J. Dwyer, Sydney, 1976, pp. 7-9 and p. 14.

Sisters of Mercy were given the option of returning to their Baptismal names. This was a result of the ‘fuller appreciation that religious commitment was a fulfilment of the original Baptismal commitment of the person’. It was also a very significant gesture which was an outward manifestation of a ‘new-found valuing of the person’.<sup>150</sup>

Sr Marie Gaudry was sent overseas by Mother M. Thecla on an extensive study tour as part of her preparation for the 1974 General Chapter and ‘as a result of this and her personal research, [she] guided the congregation through a sophisticated discernment process’.<sup>151</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry was elected as superior-general at this chapter. She was the first congregational leader to have a tertiary education and from then on all congregational leaders have been women with tertiary qualifications, who have contributed to educational leadership in the wider community, as had individual Parramatta sisters in previous decades.

### **The 1974 feasibility study**

Mother M. Thecla, in a 1971 letter to Monsignor Slowey, had expressed her strongly held view that if the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were to continue to help the Church in the western and northern areas of Sydney, ‘we shall have to rationalise our concept of the Catholic School. The letter refers to ‘age and ill-health [which] are taking their toll’ and to the fact that the congregation cannot keep their schools functioning ‘on traditional lines.’<sup>152</sup> Was Mother M. Thecla inferring that the reforms required urgently by the mid-1970s, had to involve all the stakeholders viz.: the archdiocesan hierarchy, the congregation, the CEO, parish priests, parents, students and the lay staff? Who or what was included by that ‘we’ in the letter?

Mother M. Thecla’s concerns were evident when she wrote to Fr Barry Collins to enquire into the possibility of her sisters withdrawing from the Bondi Beach and Westmead primary schools to free them for ‘appointment to some of the more quickly growing areas’. Fr Collins responded that he had contacted both parish priests concerned and neither was very keen on the idea.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Mother M. Thecla Kerwick to the community, 29 July 1973, PA, quoted in McGrath, ‘Formation of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, 1888 to Contemporary Times’, p. 23, unpublished, undated, PA.

<sup>151</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 171.

<sup>152</sup> Mother M. Thecla to Mgr Slowey, 8 October 1971, Box 24, CEOSA, (author’s emphasis).

<sup>153</sup> Fr Collins to Cardinal Freeman, 4 July 1973, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOS. This letter refers to an undated letter from Mother M. Thecla to Collins. The inference is that the parish priests had strongly held

The 1974 chapter directed that long-term planning of the congregation's apostolate be undertaken after a feasibility study of its position, and 'in close collaboration with the appropriate authorities'. Sr Marie Gaudry, the recently elected congregational leader wasted no time in starting the process. The facts and figures she collated indicated that the congregation was over-extended. A group of sisters with expertise relevant to the project worked with the superior-general to produce the feasibility study.<sup>154</sup> The final document was written by Sr Marie Gaudry.<sup>155</sup>

The problem had been diagnosed; the solution was to determine precisely where and how the reductions would be effected. At the time of the study (March 1975), the congregation had responsibility for three secondary schools of Forms I to IV, and two secondary Forms I to VI schools (OLMC Parramatta and Holy Cross College). Staffing them were over forty sisters, ten of whom were part-time. Total secondary enrolments were 2,986 students (1974 figures). There were sixty-one sisters involved in primary school teaching, fifty-six of whom were full-time; total primary enrolments were 9,106 children (1974 figures).

All members of the congregation had been consulted in the process of the feasibility study through an individual questionnaire, workshops for those in leadership positions, and self-evaluation of schools. The 'tentative' recommendations reflected 'to a considerable extent, the wishes of the Sisters themselves'.<sup>156</sup> It was recommended that of those sisters undertaking tertiary studies some be released to complete their degrees, and those engaged in part-time studies have their work load lightened. It was stressed also that sisters needed released time for religious renewal.

At the time of the release of the feasibility study, parents of all Parramatta Sisters of Mercy students received a letter which referred to the 'inescapable fact [that] the number of religious teachers is diminishing'.<sup>157</sup> The CEO and Cardinal Freeman had already been well informed of the results of the feasibility study. Sr Marie Gaudry had unconditionally

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attitudes in these matters; understandable when seen in the context of the contribution the sisters made to the religious formation of the children of the parish and the historical place of the parochial school as a hub of the parish.

<sup>154</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 215.

<sup>155</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author, 25 May 2007.

<sup>156</sup> 'The Feasibility Study', p.7.

<sup>157</sup> Letter addressed to parents from Sr Marie Gaudry, Superior General, 20 April 1975, Box 69, CEOSA. Simultaneously letters were also sent to bishops, priests and lay teachers.

acknowledged the overriding authority of the CEO, acting on behalf of the Sydney archdiocese, when she wrote: ‘The final responsibility for Catholic Education rests with the Bishops, and our corporate apostolate is mandated by them.’<sup>158</sup>

Two key conclusions of the feasibility study were that ‘the Sisters would not wish to perpetuate a system of one-Sister schools’, but some could continue in this situation for a limited period and ‘the Sisters place greatest value on their contribution to the school in the role of principals, religious educators, religious co-ordinators’.<sup>159</sup>

Reiterating the views of Mother M. Thecla Kerwick in 1971, Sr Marie Gaudry stressed the urgent need for the CEO to draw up an integrated master plan for re-organisation, as the efforts of individual congregations would be wasted without such planning. She was speaking with her full authority as congregational leader when she wrote: ‘I am also deeply concerned that the matter of planning be given highest and immediate priority’.<sup>160</sup> It seems this message did reach those in authority. By May 1975, Mgr Slowey was informing Cardinal Freeman that:

It is important to avoid any suggestion of panic, which could arise if suitable communication is neglected and rumour takes its place. On the other hand morale (and this point has been substantiated by Religious Superiors) can be promoted by the realisation that truly constructive planning has been undertaken.<sup>161</sup>

In an interview in 2007, Sr Marie Gaudry expressed surprise that the feasibility study had begun so soon after she was elected. She added that those in authority at the CEO were pleased with it and it was used as a model for other congregations. She explained that she had tried to be diplomatic, and endeavoured to relate well with those disappointed with the proposed changes, commenting: ‘The parish priests were very unhappy. It was a painful time but it had to be done. It was no use ignoring the problem because it would not improve –only worsen.’<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> ‘The Feasibility Study’, p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> ‘The Feasibility Study’, p. 7.

<sup>160</sup> Sr M. Anselm Gaudry to Mgr Slowey, 25 March 1975, Box 69, CEOSA.

<sup>161</sup> Mgr Slowey to Cardinal Freeman, 16 May 1975. This letter refers to a letter sent to a number of Major Superiors of which there is no copy in the file, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOSA.

<sup>162</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author, 25 May 2007.

## Conclusion

The demand for places in Catholic schools, a product of a rising birth rate and a rising net migration rate, resulted in a 'crisis' in Catholic education in the 1960s, the seriousness of which was exacerbated in NSW by the implementation of the Wyndham Scheme in 1962. It appears that the Catholic schools of the Sydney Archdiocese met this demand reasonably well with a concerted effort by all sections of the Catholic community; no Sydney parish was spared long-term financial sacrifices. For the sake of the survival of the Catholic education system, conformity and uniformity were imposed. Regionalisation meant the gradual erosion of local autonomy. The nexus of parish priest and school principal, supported by a close-knit parish based Catholic community would be weakened in the regional school. The emergence of a large educational bureaucracy under the direction of the Sydney archdiocesan hierarchy would impact on all Catholic schools, congregational or systemic. The 1975 feasibility study undertaken by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy and its outcomes are illustrative of the dilemmas and decisions faced by all teaching orders in the Archdiocese of Sydney at this time.

The Wyndham Scheme would affect the microcosm of Holy Cross College as drastically as it had affected the Archdiocese of Sydney. As a result of recommendations made by the Wyndham Committee, the official government policy was that NSW secondary schools should be comprehensive, with all abilities to be catered for. In the succeeding years, this policy would stretch the staff and resources at Holy Cross College to their limit. Becoming a regional school also meant the catchment area for the school would be larger and student enrolments would increase considerably, necessitating more staff and accommodation. All this would occur while the staff was struggling with the demands of the new curriculum, and an extra year in the middle school and a final secondary year at the end of the sixth year, when most students would be turning eighteen. Parents would also be asked to pay another year's fees, which were necessarily increasing to meet the steadily rising costs of building a Catholic education system with a fast expanding lay teacher component. By 1970 only fifty per cent of the teachers in NSW Catholic schools were members of a religious order and by 1975 this proportion had fallen to thirty-two per cent.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Catholic Education Commission, NSW, table published in Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 227.

Paul Street was the first senior secondary school for girls in the Sydney Archdiocese. At the time of its establishment in 1970, the only school of that type was Benilde High School (for boys) conducted by the De La Salle Brothers at Bankstown. The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy exhibited determination and courage in undertaking this innovation. They had shared the vision of their parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll, a vision which if realised in full, would have seen the Catholic education system take new directions to ensure its continuity and relevance to the communities it served. Moving into the 1980s, Holy Cross College would be faced with many challenges, all of which would test the resolve of the congregation to continue to respond positively to demands made on the expertise of its personnel. Eventually some of these challenges would prove insurmountable.

## CHAPTER 8

### INNOVATION AND DECLINE AT HOLY CROSS IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

**'[The College] opened its arms to all in a true embrace of mercy and compassion – none was excluded.'** (Sr Anne Marie Thompson RSM, *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 159)

#### The Paul Street campus

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there were to be many internal changes within Holy Cross. The first year of the operation of the Paul Street Senior Secondary campus, 1970, was one of excitement and challenges. The Parramatta congregation was still hopeful of forming a combined school at the Paul Street site and discussions were held in 1970 with the sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington regarding this possibility, but the Kensington community was not prepared to commit itself.<sup>1</sup> The much larger enrolment at Paul Street for 1971 eased concerns about the viability of the separate campus for the senior girls. The main problem at Paul Street was staffing. The first half of the 1970s was a time of full employment and the fact that qualified lay teachers were paid less in CEO schools than in the State system, and females were paid much less than their male counterparts in Catholic schools, did not encourage lay female teachers to apply. The senior school had begun with just two full-time religious staff, Sr M. St James (Maureen) McInerney and Sr M. Emmanuel (Wendy) Campbell and a number of lay teachers, most of whom were part-time, and some of whom were shared between the junior secondary school and the senior secondary school. When Sr M. St James McInerney, in June 1971, left for overseas study in the US, staffing was again a problem.

The physical conditions on the Paul Street campus were far from comfortable; the senior school had been set up in a hurry using the existing primary school facilities, basically a block containing four classrooms. The first of the senior school students arrived to find a very ill-equipped learning environment. There were no desks, no library and no science laboratory. Desks and chairs had been ordered and were yet to arrive.<sup>2</sup> On the first day, the girls sat on the classroom dais and on the floor to listen to announcements. Rules and regulations and uniform were discussed and for a time the school trialled having no uniform, although this option was not adopted. As there was not a science laboratory at

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<sup>1</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

Paul Street, the girls in Year 11 had to walk down to the middle school on Edgecliff Road for practical science lessons.

What the girls did have was greater freedom than if they had still been part of a combined secondary school. There does appear to have been a genuine attempt to democratise decision-making and to separate the seniors in more ways than just giving them their own campus. Away from the middle school, the seniors did not have the usual responsibilities to be role models and mentors for the younger students. Wendy Brown, a teacher during this period, commented that it was the most democratic form of working with young people that she had encountered, and she attributed that to Sr M. St James McInerney.<sup>3</sup> Though the school was assembled by a bell and gathered in a classroom, informality was assisted by the fact that, owing to the lack of facilities, the girls had to sit on desks and on the floor at assemblies. Freedom and independence had been stressed as a valued attribute of the separate senior campus yet it would cause conflict, as some of the sisters in the Holy Cross College community were uneasy with the freedom of the students to leave the campus at lunchtime; the Bondi Junction shopping centre was a very tempting attraction and just one block away.<sup>4</sup>

Sr M. Germaine (Pat) Donovan arrived as principal at Paul Street in 1971. Having walked to the Paul Street site in the summer holidays to inspect her new school, she was shocked to see just four classrooms when she peered through the windows. She could readily see that the school 'contained no comforts for teenage girls'. She found that a section of the detached building, *Ben Eden*, the former brothers' monastery, was not accessible to the school and those rooms that were available were small and hard to utilise for most teaching purposes, although they suited the smaller Level 1 classes which could be conducted in a university style tutorial manner. A library and study area for the girls was set up on the top floor of *Ben Eden*. The school's part-time secretary, Julie Winter, was installed initially in what had been a broom cupboard.<sup>5</sup> As her first year at Paul Street progressed towards winter, Sr Pat Donovan recalls seeing the girls sitting wrapped in blankets to ward off the cold and was determined to get heating installed as soon as possible, but it was not until 1973 that the Holy Cross Parents and Friends took on the installation of an oil heating system at Paul Street as their main project. Their Golden Car

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<sup>3</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.



Club raised \$3,000 to cover the cost.<sup>6</sup>

These spartan conditions described by Sr Pat Donovan must have been a great contrast with those she had experienced at OLMC Parramatta, her alma mater, where she had been teaching for the previous seventeen years. She had known Archbishop Carroll when she was a pupil at Enmore parish school and he was Enmore's parish priest and, in spite of the site's difficulties, she had felt positive about her move to Paul Street. She recognised that the 'Doc', as he was affectionately called by the sisters of the Holy Cross community, had a special affinity with the Holy Cross girls, and when interviewed, she recalled his presence at basketball finals cheering on 'his girls'. Paul Street campus was her 'first exposure to 1970s Eastern Suburbs culture' and she found the Holy Cross girls different from the OLMC Parramatta girls. She described them as 'freer, [a] more happy-go-lucky type of student' and 'open and friendly'.<sup>7</sup>

A new block containing a science laboratory on the ground floor and a library above it was completed at Paul Street in 1973; it was built on the tennis court with Federal Government funding of \$37,000.<sup>8</sup> The library was multi-functional, being used for occasions when the school, or at least one half of it, needed to be assembled for Masses and ceremonies to mark the beginning of the school year or special feast days. The four classrooms in a separate block were connected by folding doors which could be pulled back to create a large space for parent-teacher nights or drama productions. The former library in *Ben Eden* became a staff study and common room, with kitchen facilities.

At this time, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley arrived as deputy principal and also took charge of the new library. Sr M. Germaine and Sr M. Gonzaga did much of the manual work at Paul Street with the help of Jack Thompson who lived close by; he cleaned the classrooms at the weekend. It was not until the school was under lay administration that the CEO put funds into the school's on-going cleaning and maintenance.<sup>9</sup>

Paul Street was a self-contained unit and there was little contact between it and the middle school. Apparently this was not what Archbishop Carroll had intended. Sr Barbara McDonough maintains that Archbishop Carroll was really trying to make the separate campuses one school, calling the sections the junior, middle and senior schools, but it was

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<sup>6</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.181.

<sup>7</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

<sup>8</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.158.

<sup>9</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

‘forcing something which didn’t want to happen’.<sup>10</sup> Sr Pat Donovan also emphasised the wish of ‘Doc’ Carroll to have ‘Kinder to Year 12 as a Holy Cross set up’.<sup>11</sup> The staffs of the middle and senior schools met together occasionally for staff seminars, but the Paul Street staff tended to remain aloof. The senior school was self-sufficient and the employment of part-time teachers meant there was no sharing of staff between the senior and middle schools after the first one or two years of its existence. At Paul Street, the staff tended to regard themselves as elite simply because, generally at this time, in the 1970s, it was the best and brightest graduates of the middle school who progressed to the senior school. The emphasis was on academic achievement and this was obtained by a dedicated and well qualified staff. Emma Vandermee, a student at Paul Street during 1984-85, has commented that the senior school was ‘a place where, those who didn’t want to be there had gone, and those who stayed revelled in its relaxed attitude’ and she compared the students at Paul Street, cooperative and anxious to learn, with those ‘tough girls with a grudge in Years 7-10’.<sup>12</sup>

Religious education seems to have been relatively unstructured in the early years of Paul Street. Wendy Brown has commented that it gave a sense of ‘who I am’ to the girls and the school reinforced the sense of their own individuality which the students had brought to the school and which came from their own families. The girls in the 1970s had no fear of expressing their opinions about the world. This was encouraged when they gathered in groups of twelve in the religion period. In Wendy Brown’s memory, the overriding theme was to ‘live with the Church, not to be hampered by the Church’.<sup>13</sup> The magazine style ‘Come Alive’ series was used; Sr Pat Donovan remembers one issue being used over one month. An Anglican priest, Fr James Murray, who joined the staff to teach history, was welcomed by Sr Pat Donovan as someone qualified to teach religion. The senior school had formed a ‘working relationship’ with the Central Synagogue next door. The Synagogue took over Paul Street on Saturdays and used the grounds, and in return the girls were welcomed into the Synagogue where the Jewish religion was explained as an aspect of the senior comparative religion syllabus.<sup>14</sup> Not long before the closure of the Paul Street campus, staff member Mrs Lana Woolf (a Jew) contacted those in charge of the Central Synagogue and requested the use of their hall for school assemblies; they

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<sup>10</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

<sup>12</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p.154.

<sup>13</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

‘graciously agreed’ and formal assemblies were held there on a monthly basis.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Edgecliff Road campus**

As previously mentioned, one of the advantages of a separate senior campus, given by Sr M. Anselm Gaudry in her letter to parents in 1969 was the increased opportunities for the Fourth Formers to develop leadership and a sense of responsibility. Consequently, it was decided that the junior secondary school at Edgecliff Road would have its own school captain and vice-captain. During the 1970 bicentenary celebrations of the landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, the school captains and vice-captains of Holy Cross College, all four of them, were presented to Queen Elizabeth II during her Sydney visit.

By the end of 1970, the junior secondary school had acquired a video-tape recorder and two TV monitors. Christian Brothers College, Waverley, had offered the loan of video tapes and the use of their studio facilities to Holy Cross and, after much research, Holy Cross decided to buy a system which was compatible with that at Waverley College. The Holy Cross Parents and Friends Association raised the \$3,500 for this new technology.

Though not so highly structured as in previous decades, such as the times of the Eucharistic Congresses, the Sydney archdiocesan authorities still organised occasional public displays of the Catholic faith which involved the schools. On 30 November 1970, the girls of Holy Cross were fortunate to see Pope Paul VI pass close by as they lined a section of the Grand Parade, Centennial Park; he was on his way to visit the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for Aged People, Randwick. After this exciting close glimpse, Holy Cross College students attended an open air Mass at Randwick Racecourse.<sup>16</sup>

The principal of Holy Cross Junior Secondary College, Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry, became the first woman appointed as chair of the Catholic Secondary Schools Association, when she began a three year term of office in 1971. The Holy Cross convent chronicler wryly commented that it could be regarded as one of the interesting ‘signs of the times’.<sup>17</sup> Sr M. Anselm Gaudry had two deputies to oversee day to day running of the Edgecliff Road and Paul Street campuses: Sr M. Eugene Dobson and Sr M. Germaine (Pat) Donovan respectively. Mother General, Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, had decided that the Forms I to VI schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy should have two deputy

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<sup>15</sup> *Holy Cross College Yearbook 1988*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 166.

principals<sup>18</sup> Altogether, there were nine religious on the Holy Cross College staff in 1972. As principal of both campuses, Sr M. Anselm Gaudry's responsibility was mainly to coordinate a common policy in such matters as timetabling, staffing, and negotiations with the Catholic Building and Finance Commission and the Commonwealth Government regarding grants for buildings and equipment.<sup>19</sup>

In October 1972, the College was inspected by a panel of Department of Education inspectors and the March 1973 confirmation of the full registration of the school brought relief to all the staff. Sr M. Eugene Dobson assumed the principalship of Holy Cross Junior Secondary (called the middle school) in 1974, with Sr Barbara McDonough as her deputy. Sr Marie Gaudry was still living at the Holy Cross convent, but had been relieved of her duties at Holy Cross College, in order to prepare for the general chapter of the Parramatta congregation scheduled for the end of the year.<sup>20</sup>

Team teaching was a fashionable innovation at this time.<sup>21</sup> Sr Barbara was asked to be part of a three person team directed by Mavourna Collitts, teaching combined religion, English and social science to Year 7 classes. The middle school site was not set up to physically accommodate the full concept of team teaching, which embraced one large open space with groups of students, and teachers moving from one activity to the next. The Holy Cross College version of team teaching was a challenging adaptation. It centred on dividing the class into teams to aid research, problem solving and presentation of findings. The team teaching system was extended into the Year 8 as the girls progressed, and Kay Moehtar joined the team. The school was awarded an Innovations Grant for their core studies curriculum.<sup>22</sup>

### **Religious Education in the 1970s**

At a meeting of the representatives of Conferences of Major Superiors with the executive of the Catholic Education Board of NSW (hereafter CEB) in mid-1968, Mgr Slowey referred to special consideration being given by the CEB to the serious matter of religious instruction and formation of Fifth and Sixth Form students, who were now older and more advanced in their thinking. At the same meeting, Mgr Slowey admitted that religious

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<sup>18</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.125.

<sup>19</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.167.

<sup>20</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>21</sup> The philosophical and pedagogical reasoning for 'open education' is discussed in Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>22</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006. Both Sr Barbara and Ms Collitts had recently completed post graduate studies in Educational Practice at University of New England, Armidale and their views reflected the latest in educational theories.

teachers were quite disturbed about the situation and wanted to be shown the most practical approaches to the religious formation of the senior pupils. He outlined a method of group therapy, which he was putting into action, and which was producing good results. Also at this meeting, Bishop Freeman had ‘emphasised the gravity of the situation’ pointing to the ‘decided failure in attendance at Sacraments’ and to the fact that ‘unbelief was widespread, even concerning doctrines of the faith’. In discussion with teachers he said he was finding that ‘they were experiencing grave difficulties’.<sup>23</sup>

Religious educator Graham Rossiter has noted that during the 1960s, ‘students at the secondary level began to react negatively, unfavourably and strongly about their experiences of religious education, and “irrelevance to life” was one of their main criticisms’.<sup>24</sup> In 1969, a Senior Secondary Committee under the chairmanship of Br Baumgartner cfc had drawn up a tentative plan for Forms V and VI. The theme for Fifth Form was Christ and each section was aimed at ‘Meeting Christ’. Parramatta Sister of Mercy, Sr M. Norbert (Isabel) Donnelly, was appointed to the Religious Knowledge Co-ordinating Committee; she chaired the Infants’ Committee.

Three Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Sr M. St James (Maureen) McInerney, Sr M. St Thomas (Rosemary) Crumlin (both ex-students of Holy Cross College) and Sr M. Ligouri (Pauline) Smith, in 1967, had been invited by Bishop Gleeson of Adelaide to work with others in writing a religious knowledge text for senior classes. The following year, Sr M. St James McInerney was awarded a scholarship to study catechetics at Fordham University in New York, which she was able to take up in mid 1971.<sup>25</sup> The publisher of the commissioned catechetical texts was the Australian Episcopal Education Committee, under the patronage of Archbishop James R. Knox of Melbourne (chairman). The series of booklets and a teacher’s guide, commonly entitled ‘Come Alive’, were received with very mixed reactions by clergy, teachers, parents and students when they appeared in January 1971. Maurice Ryan has asserted the ‘Come Alive’ programme became a ‘major focus of conflict’ and that its experiential, life-centred approach and its presentation of material in a magazine-style format, resulted in a ‘polarisation over religious education in

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<sup>23</sup> Minutes of meeting of representatives of Major Superiors with Executive of the CEB of NSW, 23 July 1968, Doc 55, J0929, SAA.

<sup>24</sup> Br G. M. Rossiter, *Religious Education in Catholic Schools in the 1970s*, paper prepared for Australian Catholic Education Offices, 1985, [http://rel-ed.edu.au/mre/cdrom/re\\_in\\_catholic\\_schools.htm](http://rel-ed.edu.au/mre/cdrom/re_in_catholic_schools.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Sophie McGrath, ‘Professional Education of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, 1911 until Contemporary Times’, unpublished, undated, PA, p.4.

schools', which was evident in public meetings imbued with 'bitterness and confusion'.<sup>26</sup>

Generation X Catholics were born 1960-1975, which places them in high school in 1973-1988. According to Richard Rymarz, they are generally suspicious of ideology and institutional authority and place far more emphasis on the importance of human experience.<sup>27</sup> They had not been greatly affected by the Vatican II Council because their experience of Catholic culture, chiefly influenced by their Catholic schooling, was post-conciliar. This left a generation gap between Generation X and older Catholics such as their parents and their teachers, who retained an experience and identification with the pre-conciliar world with its distinctive and cohesive Catholic culture. These adolescents were brought up in an era when denominational difference seemed to be of little relevance and the descriptor 'Catholic' was used less and less frequently.<sup>28</sup> This was a trend right across the Western world. The First Rite of Reconciliation had all but disappeared. Sodalities, popular and public expressions of piety in previous decades were much less visible and popular. Rymarz has commented that Catholic hegemony was greatly weakened by these changes.<sup>29</sup>

At Holy Cross Junior Secondary School, Sr Barbara McDonough was using a religion programme and teaching resources that she and Sr M. Ligouri (Pauline) Smith had developed at OLMC Parramatta in approximately 1970. This programme was available for use in all the Mercy schools for Years 7-10. Sr Barbara used these programmes for many years, also using *What is the Bible?* as well as other books, not necessarily Catholic ones, one being a Jewish publication, *I am David*.<sup>30</sup> She also used the Bible and has commented she had never studied a Bible when at school herself.<sup>31</sup> At this same time, Sr M. Eugene Dobson recorded that religion classes in Third and Fourth Forms were conducted in the style of discussion groups, with two teachers assigned to each class for these periods.<sup>32</sup> This method of instruction was teacher intensive.

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<sup>26</sup> Maurice Ryan, *Religious Education in Catholic Schools: an introduction for Australian students*, David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne, 2006, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Rymarz, 'Postconciliar Catholics: generation X and religious education', *Journal of Religious Education*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2002, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Hamilton, *What's Been Happening in RE in Australia?*, Dove Communications, Melbourne, pp. 19-20. See also G. Rossiter and M. Crawford, 'Religious Education and Changes in the Church', *Journal of Religious Education*, vol. 41, no. 3, 1992, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Rymarz, 'Postconciliar Catholics', p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Ronald J. Goldman, ed., *What is the Bible?*, Readiness for Religion Series, Rupert Hart-Davis Educational Publications, London, 1966; Anne Holm, *I am David*, translated from the Danish by L.W. Kingsland, Methuen Children's Books, London, 1965.

<sup>31</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Schools Commission questionnaire: non-government schools, October 1974, SC 31/7, CEOSA.

### **Marian College, Bondi Junction comes close to reality**

As mentioned previously, the merger of St Clare's senior classes with Holy Cross College, Woollahra, had first been proposed at the first stage of rationalisation of Sydney schools in 1962, when it was planned for St Clare's College to become a regional Fourth Form school from 1963. This plan did not eventuate and St Clare's received registration as a Sixth Form school.<sup>33</sup> By the second round of rationalisation in 1974, there was considerable anxiety within the CEO about the viability of St Clare's College, Carrington Road, Waverley. Its student population was nowhere near the number needed for a Sixth Form school. Br Simmons of the CEO, reporting to the CBFC on the state of the 'local proposals' to transfer the senior girls from St Clare's to Paul Street, with some St Clare's teachers as well, commented on the obvious disadvantages of the Paul Street site, noting it was 'small and there were no real prospects for spatial expansion'. He added that no problem was expected over school uniforms, and for the initial establishment period, the favoured option was to have joint principals.<sup>34</sup>

By October 1974, an agreement had been reached by the CBFC for the merger of the Fifth and Sixth Forms from Holy Cross College and St Clare's College, Waverley, at the Paul Street site.<sup>35</sup> The original proposal had been for some teachers from St Clare's to come to Paul Street on a part-time basis plus one full-time teacher. At this point, St Clare's had only thirty-five girls enrolled in Forms V and VI for 1975, while Paul Street had 135 girls. Marian College had been suggested as a name for the proposed senior college.<sup>36</sup> The two principals concerned, Sr M. Germaine (Pat) Donovan rsm, and Sr Marie Eustelle (Carmel) O'Sullivan osc, had suggested that the principalship be on a rotation basis, with Sr Marie Eustelle taking on that role in the initial year, and Sr M Germaine becoming her deputy principal with a teaching load of eighteen hours. Sr Pauline Babicci, who represented St Clare's in the official discussions, has explained that St Clare's was enthusiastic about the proposal and both St Clare's and Holy Cross had put enormous effort into preparing for the merger, but there was not wider support in the region. The CEO did not give the final authorisation and the general idea of an Eastern

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<sup>33</sup> Rosa MacGinley, *A Lamp Lit: history of the Poor Clares, Waverley, Australia, 1883-2004*, St Pauls, Strathfield, 2005, p. 125.

<sup>34</sup> Br W.X. Simmons, report from the CEO to the CBFC, 22 August 1974, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

<sup>35</sup> Fr Barry Collins to Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, 15 October 1974, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

<sup>36</sup> This was in a proposal presented to Br Simmons at a meeting on 12 August 1974 at Paul Street, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

Suburbs senior school was finally dropped.<sup>37</sup>

### **Enrolments do matter**

In 1974, Holy Cross College ran at a \$38,189 deficit, in spite of collecting \$75,920 in Commonwealth government grants. Running costs for the College, middle and senior sections combined, had increased from \$147,933 in 1973 to \$213,008 in 1974. Lay teachers' salaries had risen by \$60,440 in one year. While the total enrolment in 1973 was 574, almost the same as for 1972, the enrolments had increased to 628 as at 15 August 1974, with seventy-four in Form V and sixty-five in Form VI. This was the peak for total Holy Cross College enrolments.<sup>38</sup>

According to Sr Pat Donovan, Archbishop Carroll believed that young families would be living in the high rise flats that were being built around Woollahra and Bondi Junction and therefore the future of Holy Cross College was ensured.<sup>39</sup> This was not to be the case. Rising demand for inner city accommodation would push up rents beyond the means of such families. At the same time the national fertility rate was dropping. The 1976 census results show that the proportion of people renting in the suburbs to the south and south-east of Woollahra was comparatively high. In Waverley LGA, 48.8per cent of dwellings were rented and in Woollahra LGA 43.4per cent were rented.<sup>40</sup>

Numbers at Paul Street Senior School were modestly boosted with Asian students in the 1970s, but actual numbers cannot be verified. In October 1974, there were five students at Holy Cross College aged 19 years and over, two in Form V and three in Form VI. It is assumed those girls who were older than the average, were overseas students. In 1974, official school returns recorded that thirty-eight of the girls were 'migrant' and there was one 'aboriginal'.<sup>41</sup> When Sr Pat Donovan was awarded an Australian Federal Government study grant to visit Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, from December 1973 to January 1974, the contacts she made there were instrumental in attracting more applicants from those countries. She has commented that the tendency was to accept these applicants whether they were Catholic or not. She 'actively encouraged' and in fact 'embraced

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<sup>37</sup> Sr Pauline Babicci osc, informal conversation with Sophie McGrath, 30 June 2008. Fr Barry Collins, Acting Director of the CEO at this time, was opposed to the idea, while Mgr Slowey and Archbishop Carroll favoured it.

<sup>38</sup> Holy Cross College Statistical Returns, 1969-79, SC 31/7, CEOS.

<sup>39</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007. He spoke at length to her about this concept.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Spearritt, 'Sydney at the census, 1911-1976' in Jill Roe, ed., *Twentieth Century Sydney: studies in urban and social history*, Hale and Iremonger with the Sydney History Group, Sydney, 1980, p. 271.

<sup>41</sup> School Commission Questionnaire: Non-Government Schools, October 1974, SC 31/7, CEOS.



them'.<sup>42</sup> This is borne out by the 1975 enrolments at Paul Street. At the beginning of August 1975, there were seventy-six girls enrolled in Form V1, with twenty-one English as a Second Language (hereafter ESL) students and ten non-Catholics, and in Form V, seventy-eight were enrolled, with eight ESL students and ten non-Catholics. The Form V intake for 1976 was eighty-eight. These statistics do not specify the number of overseas students but the assumption is that the majority of the ESL students, if not all of them, were holders of a foreign student visa.<sup>43</sup>

The process of rationalisation of Catholic regional schools was ongoing in the Eastern Suburbs region from the mid-70s. In 1978, school principals in the Eastern Suburbs were requested by the CEO to submit their own plan for rationalisation in their region. Estimates of staff requirements sent to the CEO indicate Paul Street approached what was regarded as maximum numbers (given the number of classrooms) in 1979: 106 in Year 11 and ninety-six in Year 12. Given as factors in increasing enrolments at Holy Cross College were:

- The Eastern Suburbs Rail to Bondi Junction
- The state of unemployment and the lack of job opportunities
- The tendency for Higher Education to be seen as a means of coping in a rapidly changing technological society<sup>44</sup>

### **Educating for change**

The 1970s was a period of rapid economic change in Western nations and, as women had many more opportunities for further education and employment opening up, the position of women within the family and within society was also undergoing change. The year 1975 was designated International Women's Year. To prepare for this a Study Commission was announced by the Vatican on 3 May 1973. Of its twenty-five members, twelve were lay women, seven being married and also leaders of Catholic organisations. In 1974, leading feminist Betty Friedan, in an audience with Pope Paul VI urged the Church to 'come to terms with the full personhood of women'. Rosemary Goldie has written that 1975 'had been the occasion for Paul VI to encourage all that was positive in a feminism that pointed to needed changes – of mentality especially – in society and

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<sup>42</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007

<sup>43</sup> File: Rationalisation Eastern Suburbs, 1974-79, SC31/ 2, CEOSA.

<sup>44</sup> File: Rationalisation Eastern Suburbs 1974-79, SC 31/ 2, CEOSA.

within the Church'.<sup>45</sup> To mark International Women's Year, the Australian bishops published *Towards a Whole Community: Reflections on the Situation of Australian Women* for the 1976 Social Justice Sunday, as mentioned previously. That same year, an Australian Government Study Group, which included Jean Martin, Elizabeth Reid and Susan Ryan, submitted a report to the Australian Schools Commission entitled *Girls, School and Society*. The report is essentially concerned with sexism in Australian education, and has a strong focus on the need to encourage girls to have the confidence to develop their talents in all areas, especially in the field of higher education. The Study Committee held that 'education should be about human rather than sex-specific education'.<sup>46</sup> Following the Federal Government's strong stance in 1977, the NSW State Government produced a report on 'Sexism in Education'.<sup>47</sup>

The Catholic Teachers' Conference of the Archdiocese of Sydney held 21-23 May 1973, had as its theme 'Learning for Living'. Sr Germaine (Patricia) Donovan, a participant at this conference was inspired. During the 1975-76 school vacation, Sr Pat Donovan travelled to the USA on a NSW Department of Education grant to study 'The Impacts of Rapid Technological Growth in a First World Country'. The grant's brief was to research the social and economic effects of change and the need to retrain employees to meet changing priorities in the workforce as well as problems of increasing alcoholism and drug addiction. She has recounted that from her time at some of the most prestigious centres of learning in the USA, she learnt that: 'as teachers we are responsible for a lot of the unemployment in education because [...] people were over-educated and couldn't get jobs with their university degrees'. She has commented that one of the significant aspects of the curriculum at Paul Street, during her time there as principal, was to educate both students and staff for change.<sup>48</sup>

The ALP had made affirmative action a major issue in the March 1983 federal election. That same year the NSW Director of Education issued a policy statement entitled 'Towards Non-Sexist Education; policy and guidelines for school: pre-school – year 12'. Senator Susan Ryan was appointed Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the

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<sup>45</sup> Goldie, *From a Roman Window*, pp.233-234.

<sup>46</sup> Committee on Social Change and the Education of Women, Study Group (Australia). *Girls, School and Society: a report by a study group to the Schools Commission*, Schools Commission, ACT, 1975, p. 158.

<sup>47</sup> NSW Department of Education, Sexism in Education Committee, *Report of the Committee on Sexism in Education*, Department of Education in NSW, 1977.

<sup>48</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

Prime Minister in Women's Affairs, thus acknowledging the link between the education of girls and their future economic welfare.<sup>49</sup> The Australian women's movement was obviously having some influence in areas of public policy making.

### **Pastoral care at Holy Cross**

Pastoral care was an important part of the work of the religious on the Paul Street staff in the 1970s. This involved home visitations to the family if a student had any kind of a problem. The religious on the staff took a 'maternal interest' in the Asian girls, and Sr Pat Donovan has noted that 'Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley was marvellous with visitation'.<sup>50</sup> It was clear that the family background of the Holy Cross students generally was changing in the 1970s. Not only was the student population now dominantly working class but no longer were stable families the norm; increasing family dislocation impacted negatively on the children. Sr Ann Maree Thompson had a full-time pastoral care role for all 500 girls at Holy Cross College and ran after-school care programmes for up to forty-five students from 3p.m to 5 p.m.

Sr Barbara McDonough conducted a comparative study of the school culture of four secondary schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in the early 1970s. Her study of the Holy Cross middle school had led her to conclude that 'for a significant proportion of the students, home life is poor or non-existent. About seventy per cent of the mothers are working'. She also noted that the school population covered a 'fairly wide socio-economic spectrum'.<sup>51</sup> These significant changes in the Holy Cross student population, more particularly in their home background, which reflected broader changes in the socio-economic characteristics of the region, was noted by ex-student Caroline (Carli) Ryan (1964-1965) when she returned to Holy Cross as staff member, Sr M. Kristin Ryan in 1973. The Holy Cross convent chronicler records her as commenting on a 'new type of Eastern Suburbs pupil'.<sup>52</sup>

Later a 'half-way house' was established for the Sisters of Mercy ministry to socially disadvantaged students, and Sr Ann Maree Thompson spent her evenings at an out-reach project called Holy Cross House, which had been set up in late 1990 and operated until

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<sup>49</sup> Susan Ryan is the sister of Sr Caroline Ryan rsm, a student of Holy Cross College from 1964-1965 and later a member of the Holy Cross College staff; she was principal of the College 1983-1988.

<sup>50</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Barbara L. McDonough, 'Pupil Control Ideology', M. Ed. Admin. Thesis, University of New England, 1973, pp. 73-74.

<sup>52</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 178.

1996. This was initially for some of the Asian students, who were living without the benefit of parent(s) or family appointed guardian, and was extended, as a result of a growing need, for short and long term accommodation for teenage girls experiencing personal and difficult family situations. While many of the girls were Holy Cross students, some were from other Catholic schools in the area or were referred from the Prince of Wales Adolescent Unit. The College leased a cottage nearby, and Sr Ann Maree acted as ‘house-mother’ for up to seven students, having been given special permission from the Sisters of Mercy Council to live apart from the religious community. As a local newspaper, the *Eastern Herald* reported, the house was used as a ‘meeting place, a refuge and a cooling-off space – whatever the need may be’.<sup>53</sup> By 1995 this ministry had been moved into a five bedroom house rented from the parish; its purpose was stated as accommodating ‘high school students experiencing short and long term crises’.<sup>54</sup> Sr Ann Maree Thompson has noted that Holy Cross House, in offering a safe, consistent and caring environment for girls, was a unique and invaluable resource in the Eastern Suburbs.<sup>55</sup>

### **The College is one entity again**

The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (hereafter SACS) Board, established in 1983, assumed the responsibilities of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission which had been functioning since 1965. In August 1987, the SACS Board took the decision to amalgamate the two campuses of Holy Cross College, to take effect at the beginning of 1989. This decision would colour the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the College in September 1988. The amalgamation was effective from the start of the 1989 school year. The reason for this decision was succinctly and optimistically expressed by Barry Dwyer, Regional Director of Schools in the Sydney Archdiocese:

The 1989 amalgamation of the two campuses on the Edgecliff Road site will mark a significant point in the ongoing story. This amalgamation will give economic viability to the College and do much to ensure its future.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Eastern Herald*, 25 July 1991.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Overview of Proposed Plan of Action supporting the Christian life dimension of Holy Cross College for 1995’, SC 31/3 CEOSA.

<sup>55</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 159.

<sup>56</sup> *Holy Cross College Yearbook 1988*, p. 12.

Underlying the decision were the demographic changes in the Eastern Suburbs and the consequential declining enrolments in the region's Catholic schools. These declining numbers were not confined to the Eastern Suburbs. Across Sydney, the total school-age population had declined by 9.8 per cent or approximately 40,000 persons, between 1976 and 2001.<sup>57</sup> Holy Cross College was following a trend across the Sydney Archdiocese in enrolling an increasing number of non-Catholic children to fill vacancies. According to the traditional policy of the Sydney CEO, no more than ten per cent of the school population were to be non-Catholic. CEO Director, Br Kelvin Canavan, has observed that 'enrolment pressure prior to 1976 had limited the opportunities for non-Catholic children to be accommodated in Catholic schools'. Nationally, non-Catholics in Catholic schools had numbered only 1.3 per cent in 1973, but by 2000 the proportion had increased to 16.4 per cent.<sup>58</sup>

Another factor in the decision to amalgamate the two Holy Cross College campuses would have been the costs of the duplication of resources such as a library, science laboratories, classroom accommodation, equipment, and personnel. At the senior school, from 1970, the principal was a Sister of Mercy, until Mr Terence Sheely was appointed principal in 1982, though a Parramatta Sister of Mercy remained principal of the middle school. A Parramatta Sister of Mercy remained principal of Holy Cross College, from the reunification of the senior and middle schools until the closure of the College in 2001. Suitable school leaders i.e. sisters relatively young and energetic and in good health, with the higher degree educational qualifications now required for the upper level management in Catholic secondary schools, were becoming very few within the congregation, especially as more religious moved out of the formal educational area.

To accommodate the seniors back at Edgecliff Road, major changes had to be made within the existing buildings. The congregation agreed to transfer their former convent in the main school building to the CEO, provided it was used for educational purposes.<sup>59</sup> Archbishop Carroll gave two semi-detached cottages, adjacent to the school and owned by the parish, to the sisters for their convent, and paid for their alteration. The two floors of the original 1908 building, which had been the convent, became the administrative

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<sup>57</sup> Br Kelvin Canavan, 'The Changing Face of Catholic Schools in Australia', Catholic Education Office, Sydney, Bulletin 88, May 2006, p. 5, CEOSA.

<sup>58</sup> Canavan, 'The Changing Face of Catholic Schools', p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

centre of the College, with provision to accommodate the additional staff from Paul Street.

Major modifications turned much of the ground floor of the old convent into the reception and principal's office. The bedroom floor of the old convent was altered to provide staffrooms and amenities for the staff. Sr Barbara McDonough was surprised to see the speed with which the girls claimed as their space the areas which for so long had been most definitely out of bounds to all students, apart from music students who had used the convent parlour.<sup>60</sup> Some renovations were made in the 1967 building. When the development application for all the alterations was submitted to Woollahra Council, approval was given, with a proviso of a maximum enrolment of 540 students at Holy Cross College. In the debate over the development application, Councillor Elaine Cassidy stated she believed the school should be made to acquire further land for open space if they wished to increase enrolments. Speaking on behalf of the College, Councillor Beatrice Gray commented that the principal had indicated an enrolment of 585 students was needed, and added that in the past the school had operated with 680 students.<sup>61</sup> As will be seen, the College would never again approach the high enrolments of the 1960s and the 1970s.

### **Amalgamation is effected**

As was to be expected, the year of the re-amalgamation of the middle and senior schools on the Edgecliff Road site involved the imposition of tremendous pressures on the staff. Many were disgruntled and unhappy. Overseeing all this was Sr Barbara McDonough, who had returned in 1989 as the principal of Holy Cross College. Her deputy (first assistant) was Mrs Lindsay Donnan. Ruth Silva, who had been the acting principal at Paul Street came to the new school but stayed only one year. Mrs Veronica Hickie, who had been assistant principal at Paul Street, became curriculum co-ordinator in 1989. Sr Caroline Ryan, who had come to Holy Cross College as deputy principal in 1982, becoming principal in the following year, farewelled her alma mater at the end of 1988, to undertake further study. During her time at Holy Cross, she had overseen the development of a goal-based curriculum and the introduction of vertically streamed

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<sup>60</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006 and informal conversation between Sr Barbara McDonough and the author, 27 October 2007.

<sup>61</sup> *Weekly Courier*, 29 June 1988, p. 39. It is not clear if this limitation proved to be a disadvantage to Holy Cross College.

homerooms. The *1988 Holy Cross College Yearbook* noted that a significant innovation in her time at the school was the appointment of a full-time Student Counsellor.<sup>62</sup> No doubt there was need for professional counselling.

The 1989 Year 12 group wore the Paul St green uniform, the last time it would make an appearance. Just for that year, there were two uniforms for the two senior forms, with the girls coming into Year 11 wearing a new senior uniform in the brown and red of the Edgecliff Road middle school uniform but with a special brown jacket, collarless with the college crest woven not on a pocket but on to a panel of the blazer; the look was considered very smart. The skirt was the same check pattern as the junior one. It was a link with the junior school but it was the jacket and the blouse which went with it that made the new senior uniform special. Yet it became obvious that the staff did not want the seniors to be differentiated in this manner. They advocated one uniform as a potent symbol of the continuity and unity of the school and eventually the principal was persuaded by their argument. By 1991, everyone in the College had the new jacket and the checked skirt was the same for all though it was gored for the juniors and pleated for the seniors.<sup>63</sup> Such were the issues in the life of the school microcosm which, though appearing trivial to the outsider, were ultimately connected with movements in the wider social, political and religious fields.

### **A British Secretary of State visits Holy Cross College**

Holy Cross College hosted a visit from Kenneth Baker, the British Secretary of State for Education and Science, in May 1989. The visit was history making as the first ever visit by a British Cabinet Minister to a Sydney Catholic school. This made it very exciting for all in the College, and it is quite feasible that the visit was organised by the Holy Cross parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll. He, in his wisdom, would have realised the College would benefit at this time when morale was low. Sr Barbara and her first assistant, Mrs Lindsay Donnan, the Executive Director of the Sydney CEO, Br Kelvin Canavan, the congregational leader of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Sr Pauline Smith, and the Year 12 girls in their now defunct green (Paul Street) uniform greeted their distinguished visitors. Those who accompanied Mr Baker included the British High Commissioner in Canberra, the British Consul-General in Sydney, the President of the British Royal Society and representatives of the Federal Department of Education and

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<sup>62</sup> *1988 Holy Cross College Yearbook*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

Science, and the NSW Department of Employment, Education and Training. There followed an absorbing discussion in which both groups were able to compare their experiences of the British and Australian educational systems. The visitors were shown an audio-visual French class, a junior science lesson, the computer laboratory and the newly renovated library. Each guest 'was presented with a set of documents explaining the philosophy and curriculum of Sydney's Catholic school system and a copy of the *1988 Holy Cross College Yearbook*'.<sup>64</sup>

The school philosophy of Holy Cross College, as expressed on this occasion, is of interest for both the order of priority of goals as given and the inclusive language used. The document stated:

Holy Cross College is firstly a part of the civic structure of society, and as such, its fundamental aim is the integral formation of the students as citizens, through contact with our culture. Therefore, the school aims to provide a good education and develop responsible citizens.

In addition, as a Catholic school, it hopes to complement this with an education in faith, a sense of mission, and the desire to live out a Christian commitment. In so doing, the school endeavours to live as a community of faith, and exhibit the qualities of a Christian community.<sup>65</sup>

Florence Christou, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, was the 1989 Holy Cross College school captain. Sr Barbara McDonough has observed that the College did not feel obliged to have a Catholic girl as the school captain. Rather the preference was for a really Christian person who was attuned to social justice issues, a preference which was reflected in the statement of the school's philosophy above. According to Sr Barbara this was one of the characteristics of Holy Cross College during the 1980s and 1990s and the students had proved to be astute in being able to choose such a person.<sup>66</sup> Antonietta Guerrera, the 1989 vice-captain, was of Italian origin. These two school leaders

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<sup>64</sup> CEO, *About Catholic Schools*, vol. 13, no.1, June/July, 1989, in author's possession. See also CW, 17 May 1989 and CW, 24 May 1989.

<sup>65</sup> Box 28, CEOSA.

<sup>66</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.



epitomised the diverse ethnic mix of the cosmopolitan eastern and inner city suburbs of Sydney.

Post-amalgamation enrolments would not be testing the maximum limit of 540 set by Woollahra Council in 1988. The recombined school in 1989 had 497 students and forty teachers. Maintaining, let alone increasing enrolments, in an area where there was a plentiful supply of secondary girls schools, and a declining school-age population, was going to be an ongoing problem for the College throughout the 1990s.<sup>67</sup> Eighty-five Year 12 students graduated in 1990 and the Year 10 graduating group numbered eighty-one. Ten years previously, as at 6 April 1979, the combined enrolment of the middle and senior schools had been almost 600, with 430 at the middle school and 164 at the senior school.

There may have been ten or so international students enrolled at Holy Cross College in 1990. Sr Barbara recalled it was really by word-of-mouth that young Indonesian women in particular ‘came knocking on the door’ and because the school had room for them, and being mindful of declining numbers, she could not turn them away. Their contribution to the viability of the College was undeniable. By the middle of the 1990s, total enrolments were becoming dangerously low; in February 1996 they were only 374. By November 1996, 100 out of the total student population were overseas students, of these forty-six came from Indonesia, twenty from Hong Kong and seventeen from South Korea.<sup>68</sup> Adding to the demands of re-amalgamation and the special needs of the international students was an unforeseen spike in enrolments the following year.

### **The Year 11 diploma course**

The venerable school of St Patrick’s, Church Hill (at the Rocks) closed in 1990.<sup>69</sup> This was to have a major impact on Holy Cross College. The staff of St Patrick’s Church Hill, about five or six full-timers and some part-timers, was redeployed to Holy Cross College in 1991, along with the students of Year 9 and Year 10 and much equipment, such as typewriters and small computers. Also transferred was the St Patrick’s post-Year 10 diploma course with its specialised teachers. This course, which had a very strong

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<sup>67</sup> Box 28, CEOSA.

<sup>68</sup> Ken Brock, ‘Why Australia?: overseas secondary students in a Sydney Catholic girls’ school’, SC 31/2 CEOSA.

<sup>69</sup> St Patrick’s Church Hill had opened in 1866.

pastoral element, had been developed by St Patrick's Church Hill to suit non-academic girls who needed training in basic skills and personal development to give them a chance of gaining employment.<sup>70</sup> It had been developed in 1985, was unique in the Archdiocese of Sydney, and accepted girls from all over the Sydney area. The diploma course should not to be confused with the St Patrick's Business College, which catered for students of more academic abilities and which was re-established in the empty premises of the former De La Salle Brothers' St Peter's parish boys' school, on Devonshire Street, Surry Hills. Some St Patrick's High School students, no doubt the academically inclined, had chosen to transfer to their sister school, Monte Sant'Angelo at North Sydney, an independent school.

Sr Barbara McDonough remembers well the challenges of coping with the distressed and disgruntled redeployed staff from St Patrick's, Church Hill, in 1991. She recalls that altogether she had eighteen redeployed teachers, including three former deputy principals, from the Holy Cross Senior School and St Patrick's, Church Hill. The redeployed staff were 'heartbroken at their schools going [and] carried their grief with them so that made it really, really hard'.<sup>71</sup>

A paraliturgy to celebrate the opening of the Year 11 diploma course was held at Holy Cross on 25 March 1991. The course was described as an 'alternative' course designed to 'provide students with practical skills relevant to their special circumstances'. Noting that 'some students may have potential that would benefit from further development at school before they seek further education or employment', the course was intended to equip students to undertake a technical or business college education.<sup>72</sup> The diploma girls wore a smart uniform quite different from the rest of the students at Holy Cross College. This was intended to give them a sense of being a little more mature as well as differentiating them from the rest of the school. The uniform was styled like a smart business suit, with a navy skirt and blazer, navy court shoes, blue tinted stockings, red jumper, black briefcase. Stockings were to be worn summer and winter and students were required to keep two spare pairs of stockings in their desk at school in case they laddered their stockings. As the managers of both the macrocosm and microcosm know, 'the devil is in the detail', a fact of which the Catholic Building and Finance Commission had been only too aware!

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<sup>70</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>72</sup> SC 31/2 CEOSA.

Students had to sign a contract to ensure attendance and participation in the course, which ran from 30 January to 25 October in 1991. To reinforce a sense of commitment on the part of the students, there was a \$50 contract fee to be paid on the initial enrolment.

Archbishop Carroll had offered the Holy Cross parish hall to the diploma students and it was fitted out, with the staff accommodated on the stage, and various partitions erected in the body of the hall. It is not known if the parishioners had any say in the consequent loss of their hall. As enrolments dropped at the College, the diploma girls vacated the hall later on, and had most of their lessons in regular classrooms.<sup>73</sup> The diploma consisted of courses in human development (religious education and personal development), communications, practical mathematics, careers, computing, personal presentation and grooming, business practices (typing and office procedures), citizenship, and physical education.<sup>74</sup>

### **Music and the creative arts**

In a 1991 letter to parents of Years 7 and 8 students, Sr Barbara referred to the ‘great musical tradition’ which Holy Cross had always had, ‘due in large part to the work of the sisters who provided lessons for those who wanted to develop their musical talents’. She explained that lessons had been available in piano, violin, cello and voice training, and that there had been a ‘fine school orchestra’ in which ex-students would continue to play alongside current students of the College, sometimes ‘for years after they left school’.<sup>75</sup> The story of this music tradition will be the focus of chapter 9. Sr Barbara’s letter explained that an ex-student had left some money to the Holy Cross convent community, which was to be used for the further education of girls. The sisters had decided to offer scholarships in music to give some girls an opportunity to learn instrumental music privately. The scholarships provided for a half-hour lesson per week for one year. No doubt it was considered that this was sufficient time to judge if the student had sufficient talent to warrant a further investment of money. To further the cultural life of the school, a drama studio was provided in August 1993, due to the generosity of Archbishop Carroll.

### **Overseas Students**

From 1980 onwards, private overseas students were compelled by the Australian

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<sup>73</sup> Holy Cross College (hereafter HCC) staff bulletin, no. 21, 2 August 1993, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>74</sup> SC 31/2 CEOSA.

<sup>75</sup> Letter to parents of Year 7 and 8 girls, 18 August 1991, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

Government to pay an annual overseas student charge as a contribution to the costs of their education. In 1986, the Australian (Labor) Government introduced a category of full-fee paying students (hereafter FFPOS), phasing out partly subsidised private overseas students by the mid-1990s. There is evidence that Holy Cross College was a leading innovator in recognising the ‘market potential’ of full-fee paying foreign students and developing programmes to help them ‘assimilate’ into a Catholic school. A *Catholic Weekly* article, (probably dating from 1991) and headlined: ‘Fee Paying Students: more than an export earner’, referred to eight schools in the Catholic system which had been registered by the Commonwealth Government to enrol FFPOS. Of these schools, Christian Brothers High School, Burwood, had been the first to enrol FFPOS in 1987, and the article noted that both the Christian Brothers College at Burwood and Holy Cross College, Woollahra, had developed expertise in implementing the overseas students’ program.<sup>76</sup>

The number of overseas students at Holy Cross College increased quite dramatically from 1990. At the time of the re-amalgamation in 1989, the enrolments of overseas students were still low, but numbers started to pick up the following year. The College devised a special six months ‘intensive language course’, with Kylie Boulivant in charge, to help the students learn adequate English skills and adjust to Australian culture before joining the Year 11 girls. At this time there was no special government funding and the College charged the overseas students high fees. Eventually the CEO developed a policy about overseas students and in doing so they called upon the expertise of both Sr Barbara McDonough and the principal of Christian Brothers Burwood.<sup>77</sup>

The numbers of overseas students gradually increased with word of mouth being an effective method of advertising the particular advantages Holy Cross College offered to overseas students: a location very close to the Central Business District, with excellent public transport links; world famous beaches close-by; plentiful rental accommodation in the area; documented academic successes. Other, less tangible factors in this growth of interest, was the pastoral concern and practical help available to young girls from foreign countries who quite often had to fend for themselves; some of the overseas students had a

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<sup>76</sup> CW, undated clipping, Box 31/2 CEOSA. Sr Barbara McDonough has recounted that the two schools worked together to develop a program to facilitate the inclusion of the overseas students as well as deal with government bureaucracy.

<sup>77</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

parent or parents residing in Sydney but most did not. Holy Cross College, Woollahra was also advertised in at least one Asian language newspaper, as can be seen in an advertisement in a June 1993 issue of *Variety Weekly*.<sup>78</sup>

The first chapter of the Association of Indonesian Students of Australia to be established in a secondary school was inaugurated at Holy Cross College in August 1994, with a lunch featuring Indonesian food. Sr Barbara, having undertaken some study of the Indonesian language, gave her speech of welcome in Indonesian, in the presence of the Indonesian Vic-Consul General and his wife and the president of the University Indonesian Students Association. Sr Barbara was justifiably proud of her communication skills, but her pride in the Indonesian students under her care was much greater. She commented in the Holy Cross staff bulletin that the leadership potential in the 1994 Year 11 was evident in the overseas students and clearly seen on this particular occasion.<sup>79</sup>

In October 1994, the Holy Cross convent community had marked Archbishop James Carroll's forty years as a bishop of the Sydney Archdiocese with a celebratory afternoon tea but the new school year of 1995 started on an extremely sad note following his sudden death on 14 January. The College opening school Mass commemorated his long and productive life, and his very special relationship with the Sisters of Mercy and the schools in the Holy Cross parish. It is indisputable that the College benefited from his generosity and the special interest he always had in its students and its staff. Over a span of eighty-eight years, Holy Cross Parish had had only three parish priests, each of whom had had a very special place in the Holy Cross College community and had been outstanding in their priestly vocation.

To quote the NSW Catholic Education Commission, of which Archbishop James Carroll was the founding chairman:

For several generations of students and parishioners at Holy Cross the 'Doc' (as he was affectionately known) was a great friend, confidant and counsellor. His wisdom and learning, his engaging smile and shrewd insight, and especially his gracious and humble manner, were acknowledged and admired by all. He was

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<sup>78</sup> Advertisement, *Variety Weekly*, 5 June 1993, clipping, SC 31/2, CEOSA. Next to this was an advertisement for Holy Cross College (for boy's) Ryde.

<sup>79</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no.26, 22 August 1994, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

indeed the Christ-like servant of his people. James left everyone, young and old alike, with the feeling that he was their special friend. And he was.<sup>80</sup>

### **A major change to Religious education in the mid-1980s**

In the decade following the introduction in 1970 of the ‘Come Alive’ programme for seniors, lay teachers assumed proportions in Catholic secondary schools previously unthinkable. Table 7 below illustrates the changing proportions of religious to lay staff. It shows that in 1975 about one-third of teachers in NSW Catholic schools were religious and within ten years this proportion had declined to nine per cent.

**Table 7: Teachers in NSW Catholic Schools: 1965-1997**<sup>81</sup>

Year	religious teachers	lay teachers	% religious teachers
1965	3,654	1,628	69
1970	3,240	3,258	50
1975	2,530	5,343	32
1980	1,809	8,397	18
1985	1,168	11,688	9
1990	707	13,040	5
1995	412	14,311	2.8
1996	354	14,502	2.4
1997	334	14,658	2.3

Religious ceased to be the majority of teachers staffing NSW Catholic schools from 1970, and from the mid-1970s there was a rapid decline in the proportion of lay to religious teachers, as table 7 shows. As just one of the consequences of this, more and more lay teachers had to teach religion. As Rossiter has observed, ‘lay’ spirituality gradually took the place of ‘religious order’ spirituality’ in NSW Catholic schools.<sup>82</sup>

From 1985, a set of guidelines called *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* was used in secondary schools. Launched in November 1984, it comprised a list of topics to be used

<sup>80</sup> Obituary of Archbishop James Carroll, [www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/about/history](http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/about/history)

<sup>81</sup> Catholic Education Commission, NSW, table published in Flynn and Mok, p. 227.

<sup>82</sup> Graham Rossiter, ‘Historical Perspective on the Development of Catholic Religious Education in Australia; Some Implications for the future’ in Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 261.

as a framework for individual schools when writing their own religion education programmes. The *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* document was following the growing practice of school-based curriculum development; the religion programmes were to be prepared specifically for the students by the school community. In his introduction to the program, the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Clancy, admitted: ‘it is no easy task, however, to plan a religious education program that is true to the living tradition of the Church and to the needs of young people exposed to all the pressures of contemporary society’.<sup>83</sup>

The Director of Religious Education for the CEO, Sydney, Fr Barry Collins, wrote in his introduction to the ‘Faithful to God: Faithful to People’ programme:

The school is an educational beacon which enlightens and enlivens the intellect, providing knowledge and skills, and inviting the formation of Christian attitudes to God, to the Church, to families, to the world, and to the people who live in the world.<sup>84</sup>

### **Spirituality and religious education in the 1990s**

According to Sr Leonie Crotty of the CEO, by the early 1990s the secondary schools that were using the *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* guidelines were calling for a ‘more comprehensive curriculum’.<sup>85</sup> In 1992, the CEO employed a team of people to develop the new secondary Religious Education curriculum; this was finally published in 1996. At this same time a program was implemented to accredit teachers of religious education; it would require them to have tertiary qualifications in religious education.

By the mid-1990s, Holy Cross College was exhibiting an innovative spirit with its own religious education program. The Holy Cross College 1995 information kit (for parents) noted that ‘central to the Religious Education of all students is prayer and meditation’. It referred to meditation times being developed in senior religious and general studies classes and added ‘these provide a refreshingly different and highly reflective student experience in prayer’.<sup>86</sup> A meditation group was set up in 1991 and met for thirty to forty-

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<sup>83</sup> Rev. Barry Collins, ed., *Faithful to God: Faithful to People, religious education for secondary schools*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 1984, n.p.

<sup>84</sup> *Faithful to God: Faithful to People*, n.p.

<sup>85</sup> Sr Leonie Crotty, *About Catholic Schools*, June 2007, p. 18.

<sup>86</sup> Holy Cross College information kit, 1995, SC 31/3, CEOSA.

five minutes per week. Techniques originated from a variety of sources including Zen Buddhism, Hinduism and Ignatian and Benedictine Spirituality.<sup>87</sup> This reflected the variety of religious beliefs of the student population at this time. The College chapel was used by religious education classes. Each student year group was rostered for a prayer assembly with Sr Barbara in the chapel one day a week. At these times (usually the morning roll call time) the students would practise special hymns for school liturgies.

In 1992, two Year11 overseas students had expressed a desire to become Catholics and were receiving instruction from Sr Ann Marie Thompson and Kevin Bowdon.<sup>88</sup> Two years later, at the Indonesian Mass in the chapel of the monastery at Kensington, three Holy Cross College students were baptised, confirmed and received First Communion. This was a joyous event at the end of the school year, with Sr Barbara acting as a sponsor in the sacrament of confirmation for one of the students, Elsani Tanoto. At the time, Sr Barbara commented that this event showed that there was a strong element of faith among the overseas students, which could become evident given appropriate circumstances.<sup>89</sup>

The Holy Cross Student Representative Council agreed in 1994 on the need for a new school song, 'which was more in tune with the living out of the gospel values and the College motto (Nihil Sine Deo) in the world of today'. Ray Paxton, brother of a College staff member, was commissioned to write the words and music. This work, in effect a school hymn, was called *Nothing Without God*, and introduced in Term 3, 1997.<sup>90</sup> It was both challenging and inspirational, picking up basic Gospel virtues.

Holy Cross, community of justice,  
 We stand as one, the greatest and the least.  
 Holy Cross, renewing hope and mercy,  
 We are nothing without You, God of Peace.

Holy Cross, community of wisdom,  
 We sing as one and celebrate our youth.

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<sup>87</sup> Holy Cross College, school archive folder for 1991, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

<sup>88</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 5, 2 March 1992, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>89</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 37, 21 November 1994, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>90</sup> 'HCC News', Term 3, 1997, SC 31/3, CEOSA.



Holy Cross, renewing love and freedom,  
 We are nothing without You, God of Truth.

Holy Cross, we gather as God's people  
 To praise the name of Jesus in your sight.  
 Holy Cross, renewed by your reflection,  
 We are nothing without You, Lord of Light.<sup>91</sup>

### **Innovation in curriculum**

Seven Holy Cross College staff members, who were to be involved with Year 7 in 1995, attended a three day in-service course which investigated literacy and language usage. As a result, a Year 7 Learning Centre was established in 1995 to act as a home base for the whole Year 7 group. This was designed to be a positive learning environment equipped with reference books, reading materials (both fiction and non-fiction), audio players, computers, taped listening skill exercises. The 1995 Year 7 group of sixty-two gathered there for roll call and prayer each day and met there regularly three times a week for major input lessons given by one of the core team, with the other two team teachers present.

At other times the girls were divided into basic groups of twenty, smaller than the average for junior secondary classes. The fundamental premise was that students should have the opportunity to proceed at a pace which extended them, and so avoid the stress associated with the traditional lock-step advance through the curriculum, with students either trying to keep-up or being forced to mark-time. The core studies team had a timetabled meeting every Friday for long and short-term planning. The core studies were English, geography, history, personal development and religion. The approach taken was one which placed responsibility on the students for organisation and completion of tasks.<sup>92</sup> The members of the core studies team were Sandra Catanzariti, Brian Crump, co-ordinator of the Human Society in the Environment faculty, and Sr Barbara McDonough, who was revisiting her team teaching experiences of the mid – 1970s.

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<sup>91</sup> Holy Cross College School Hymn, words and music by Ray Paxton, *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 174.

<sup>92</sup> HCC News, June 1995, SC 31/3, CEOSA.

### Demographic changes

During the period 1976-2001, the school-age population (5-19 years) in the Sydney Archdiocese had declined by 9.8 per cent or approximately 40,000 persons. As Table 8 below shows, the Randwick and Waverley LGAs, from which many of the Holy Cross College students came, had experienced declines in their school-age population greater than twenty per cent since 1976, with the greatest decline in the years 1976-1986. Holy Cross Woollahra parish, which covers the suburbs of Bondi Junction, Bellevue Hill and Woollahra, was only a small section of the area from which the College drew its students in the 1990s. The 1991 census showed 10,527 people living in the parish area, of which 2,363 (22.5 per cent) had nominated themselves as Catholic, but only about 580 were regular Mass attendees. The census also indicated that about seventy per cent of the population was made up of professional, executive and retired people, with about sixty-five per cent of Anglo-Celtic racial background.<sup>93</sup> This meant that far fewer children were resident in the LGAs from which Holy Cross College had traditionally drawn its students. In this same period, the Sydney archdiocese was grappling with major growth in school-age population in its south-western corner.

**Table 8: Changes in 5 to 19 year old population 1976-1996**<sup>94</sup>

LGA	1976-2001		1976-1986		1986-1996		1996-2001		2001 % Cath.
	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	
Randwick	-5,629	-23.0	-3,769	-15.6	-1,780	-8.7	-80	-0.4	30.8
Waverley	-2,784	-26.1	-1,254	-11.8	-1,093	-11.6	-437	-5.3	22.2
Woollahra	-1,666	-18.1	-622	-6.8	-1,342	-15.7	298	4.1	19.4
Fairfield	8,262	24.2	5,781	16.9	3,192	8.0	-711	-1.6	35.9
Liverpool	5,694	18.5	-5,789	-18.8	2,344	9.4	9,139	33.4	35.8

Between 1976 and 2001, Table 8 shows the school-age population in Fairfield LGA had increased by approximately twenty-four per cent and in the Liverpool LGA by eighteen per cent. The table shows the wide difference between the numbers of school age

<sup>93</sup> Sydney Archdiocesan Notices, March, 1997, p. 4, SAA. This demographic profile of the parish also includes the very revealing comment: 'Apart from Mass attendance there is a dearth of interested and involved parishioners.'

<sup>94</sup> Catholic Education Office, Sydney, Bulletin 56a, 22 July 2002.

Catholics in Fairfield LGA and in Woollahra LGA, although Randwick LGA had retained approximately the same proportion of Catholicity in the general population that it had displayed throughout the twentieth century. Clearly archdiocesan resources needed to be diverted to these growth areas, and just as the NSW State Government in this period rationalised social capital such as public hospitals and public schools, so the CEO would be forced to do likewise.

Sr Barbara McDonough commented that in the 1990s, the students of Holy Cross College came from all over Sydney, with some travelling quite long distances, this situation being accentuated by the closure of St Patrick's High School in the city. There were two significant outcomes of this broadening of the College's catchment area: the identity of the College as a regional secondary school was distorted and the association of the communities and priests of the local parishes with the school was diminished. An examination of the Year 7 intake for 1992 reveals this anomaly. Out of the twenty-eight girls in Year 6 at Holy Cross Junior School (where students were much more likely to come from nearby suburbs), only sixteen were moving onto Holy Cross College for Year 7. Ten of the girls would be going to private (independent) schools and one to Vaucluse High School. Sr Barbara McDonough reported that the Year 7 numbers were creeping towards sixty and she commented that 'given that many families have connections with the private schools over the years' it seemed to be a 'very good enrolment'.<sup>95</sup>

### **Into an uncertain future**

In July 1995, the Sydney archdiocese implemented a ten-year plan for secondary education in its southern, eastern and inner west regions. For Holy Cross College, the enrolments for 1996 would be crucial to its future. The Year 7 intake for 1996 was only thirty-one, half of the sixty-four it had been the previous year. As will be seen, this very small class was to have a significant impact on a school struggling to survive. There were weeks of intense anxiety for Sr Barbara McDonough before the publication of the ten year plan. The plan disclosed that Holy Cross College was not one of the schools marked for closure, but its period of reprieve was unknown. In a staff bulletin she noted: 'I am aware that a need for our school has been established, even though the Archdiocese has to support us financially to a significant degree.' It is clear from her comments that Holy

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<sup>95</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no.35, 16 November 1992, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

Cross College was not paying its way but effectively being subsidised by the CEO. She added:

It is our task to clarify, for a wider audience than just our region (which basically can see and understand what functions Holy Cross has) the definite character which justifies the sacrifices made by other schools in order to have our school operative.<sup>96</sup>

The continued existence of Holy Cross College was being questioned by the CEO and had to be justified. A special committee, the School Review and Development Committee, was set up to clarify the 'definite character' of Holy Cross College. This consisted of the CEO Director, Br Kelvin Canavan, a CEO consultant, a congregational representative of the Sisters of Mercy, a parent, the assistant principal of Holy Cross, Peter Hughes, and Sr Barbara McDonough. The committee was expected to present a formal report to the higher authorities of Catholic education in the Sydney archdiocese during the first semester of 1996.<sup>97</sup>

The Year 11 intake had fallen to only sixty-eight in 1996 and the 1996 census day, (2 August) showed the total number of students was 394 students. Overseas students (eighty-one) were one in five of the total student population. Early in 1996, the Holy Cross College Parents and Friends Association requested that the school put a regular advertisement in the *Wentworth Courier*, the free Eastern Suburbs paper, for which they would pay.<sup>98</sup> The School Review and Development Committee launched a new brochure containing the vision and plan for the College's future on Holy Cross Celebration Day, 12 September 1996.<sup>99</sup> The patronal feast day of the College was the ancient feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, celebrated in the Church's liturgy on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. The school had much to be proud of at this time. Holy Cross College had four teams in the Netball grand finals held 7 September 1996 at Moore Park. The girls won three finals and the College combined teams won the march past. Ex-student, and College dux, Heidi Kapfenstein had graduated from the University of NSW with first class honours in Science and the University Medal.

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<sup>96</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no.24, 31 July 1995, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>97</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 24, 31 July 1995, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>98</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 3, 12 February 1996, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>99</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 23, 5 August 1996, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

A task force for Holy Cross College met early in term 3, 1996. Initially consisting of Vicki Tanzer (CEO), Sr Margaret Doyle (representing the congregational leader) and Sr Barbara McDonough, its aim was to determine a future enrolment policy for the College. The hope was to give Holy Cross College a special place in the Archdiocese, with the opportunity to draw students from more than its few feeder schools.<sup>100</sup> In spite of these efforts, the situation worsened; the Year 7 intake was only forty-five in 1998. Even more significant than the fall in total enrolments was the fact that by 1997, 119 of the total school population of 390 students (over thirty per cent), were full fee paying overseas students. The growing dependence of the College on full fee paying overseas students is clear from these figures.

The 1997 devaluation of the Indonesian currency, the Rupiah, had a disastrous effect on Holy Cross College, one from which it would not recover. At the beginning of 1998 there already had been seven withdrawals of enrolments of overseas students. Sr Barbara McDonough was concerned about the emotional as well as the financial stress on her overseas students. She knew that the Chinese in Indonesia were resented because of their role in trade and accumulation of wealth, and were now ‘very unsure of their day-to-day safety’. At this time she informed the staff:

The Indonesian Crisis is having significant effects on our school community. Many of the students are constantly anxious about the safety of their families, the majority of whom are Chinese and live in Jakarta.<sup>101</sup>

The overseas students were offered counselling and their welfare was closely monitored. Enrolments of overseas students were significantly lower in 1999. Sr Barbara McDonough recalled that by the enrolment period for 2000 (the second half of 1999), numbers of FFPOS had dropped considerably. She could not accept that the reason was over-charging by Holy Cross College. She knew that some of the other schools accepting overseas students charged much more and that the College was known for being reasonably priced, as well as for providing a good education.<sup>102</sup> Ironically, the College was making news for its academic results. In 1998, the College dux, Teodora Todorava won the NSW Premier’s Award for all round excellence, having reached the merit list in

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<sup>100</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 19, 24 June 1996, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>101</sup> HCC staff bulletin, No.14, 18 May 1998, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>102</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

every subject. She had achieved a University Admissions Index of 99.8, yet had come with her mother from Bulgaria and entered Year 11 as an overseas student, with limited English language skills. In that same cohort, out of the fifty-nine students which sat for the HSC, Holy Cross students were in the top ten per cent of the State of NSW in twenty-two different courses. One of these, Yuliana Budiharjo, gained first place in the State in Indonesian 3unit and received a NSW Premier's Certificate.<sup>103</sup>

### **Closure becomes inevitable**

The low enrolment of overseas students in the 1999 enrolment period coincided with the small Year 7 group of 1996 entering Year 11; approximately forty of this cohort were going into Year 11. When Sr Barbara McDonough filled out the statistical returns, on which the CEO based their plans for the following year, the College was about eighty girls down on the previous year's enrolments, and the CEO regional director, Vicki Tanzer informed Sr Barbara 'the writing was on the wall'. On hearing these words, Sr Barbara's thoughts were centred on the students; they were always her first priority. She has commented that 'logically I could see what they were talking about, but in my heart I couldn't because [...] there was nowhere else for them to go, [that is] the girls that needed real personal attention; we had a lot then'.<sup>104</sup>

The year 2000 was celebrated for a significant anniversary of Catholic education in Australia. It was 180 years since the first Catholic school in Australia was founded, at Parramatta. This had been a tiny one-room school established by lay man John Morley in 1820. On the feast day of St Patrick, 17 March 2000, Catholic students and their teachers, some 93,742 persons, gathered at Stadium Australia to celebrate Catholic education. The theme was 'Jesus Christ – Yesterday, Today, Forever'. Each school was invited to make a banner, and the banner for Holy Cross College measured 5 metres x 1 metres. Peta de Michele, school captain of Holy Cross College and recipient of an Archbishop of Sydney Award, was one of the banner holders. She later wrote: 'I had never been more proud of my school and I wanted everyone to look at the Holy Cross College banner and take note of the design, which I believed epitomised our school and its values.'<sup>105</sup>

The mid-1990s prospectus which Holy Cross College staff had helped design with such

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<sup>103</sup> 'HCC News', March 1999, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>104</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>105</sup> *About Catholic Schools*, term 2, June 2000, Jubilee 2000 special souvenir edition, PA.

dedication and talent was entitled 'The Best Kept Secret in the East'. Ironically it proved so. The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (SACS) Board considered the future of Holy Cross College at its meeting on 22 March 2000 and it was decided that Holy Cross College would not accept students into Year 7 from 2001.<sup>106</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough had already been given the news and recalled trying 'all sorts of gymnastics with the timetable'. She had demonstrated how the school could be kept operating a little longer, but the final decision had been made by the SACS Board. This decision was made known to the school community on 10 April 2000. The announcement of the closure was made at an assembly of the students in the parish hall at which the girls were given a letter to take home to their parents.<sup>107</sup> School captain Peta de Michele expressed so succinctly the effect this announcement must have had on all assembled when she wrote: 'The security and stability offered by Holy Cross was established over a ninety-year period. Yet after ten minutes the safety once known was shattered'.<sup>108</sup>

A letter from the Holy Cross College Parents' Committee was received by the SACS Board on 31 May 2000 and tabled at its meeting the same day. The letter referred to two meetings of parents and students and the fact that 'an overwhelming majority' was opposed to the Board's decision of 22 March and intended to put in place marketing strategies and draw on community support. The Parents' Committee was particularly resentful of the manner in which the decision had been notified to the parents, namely via a letter handed to students to deliver rather than one mailed to parents.<sup>109</sup> The parents also resented the use of the term 'rationalisation' which had been used by the SACS Board in their letter to parents. The Parents' Committee asserted that 'rationalisation' was a 'business term ... commonly applied to commercial entities which have failed to produce monetary results after exhaustive attempts have been made to rectify non-profitability'. Their letter expressed anger that a situation of non-profitability had been allowed to continue at Holy Cross College for some years, without the knowledge of the wider school community. They demanded to be shown the financial statements for the school for the last five years and to be told the students numbers which were 'needed to reverse

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<sup>106</sup> Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board, Bulletin 57, 10 April 2000, CEOSA.

<sup>107</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>108</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra Roll Call 2000* (Yearbook), n.p.

<sup>109</sup> This is the letter addressed to 'Dear Students, Parents and Staff of Holy Cross College, dated 10 April 2000 and signed by Sr Caroline Ryan, the congregational leader of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta. Under the circumstances it would seem vital that the news be made public to all the parties concerned at exactly the same time. See also SACS Board, Bulletin 57b and 57c, SC31/4, CEOSA.

the trend of the past years' as well as the 'short-term financial support with fixed outgoings'. The letter stated that parents and the Woollahra/Waverley community would 'be able to provide some monetary assistance'.<sup>110</sup>

The viability of Holy Cross College through the 1990s had benefited from the additional students resulting from the closure of St Patrick's Church Hill in 1990 and the acceptance of full-fee paying overseas students. Yet the school had really been living on borrowed time through the decade. Enrolments had fallen to 312 in 2000. This comprised 259 girls from local parishes and fifty-three FFPOS, a significant drop from ninety-three FFPOS at Holy Cross College the previous year. Possibly of even more significance to those making the ultimate decision on closure, was the fact that only fifty-nine per cent of students attending the College in 2000 were Catholic.<sup>111</sup> The Parents' Committee themselves stressed the 'truly multi-cultural' nature of the school and its operation in a 'truly Christian spirit'. Their final point was that a 'school such as this ought to be a showcase for what Catholic education and spirit is all about rather than closing it down for reasons of non-profitability'.<sup>112</sup>

It was initially thought Holy Cross College would operate several years longer but this was not to be the case. Parents tended to immediately look somewhere else for a place for their daughter, where they could be confident she would be able to complete her secondary education. The College promised that the 2000 Year 11 girls would complete their HSC in 2001 at the College, and would be fully supported to do so. In 2001, the total enrolment was ninety, with about twenty each in Year 8 and Year 10 and about forty in Year 12. There was no Year 9, and no intake for Years 7 and 11, as had been decided by the SACS Board in June 2000.

Between 1980 and 2001 the Archdiocese of Sydney closed ten secondary schools. Apart from Holy Cross Woollahra, two others were in the immediate area: O'Sullivan Catholic High School, Bondi Beach (a boy's school) and Brigidine College (for girls) Maroubra

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<sup>110</sup> Holy Cross College Edgecliff [*sic*] Parents' Committee to Br Kelvin Canavan, received 31 May 2000, CEOSA.

<sup>111</sup> SAGS Board, 'Holy Cross College, Woollahra', Bulletin 57, 10 April 2000. This bulletin was published the same day the Board's decision not to accept year 7 students in 2001 was made public and contained the signatures of Sr Caroline Ryan, congregational leader of the Sisters of Mercy (Parramatta) and Br Kelvin Canavan fms, Director of Schools, Sydney Archdiocese, SC31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>112</sup> Holy Cross College Edgecliff [*sic*] Parent's Committee to Brother Kelvin Canavan, received 31 May 2000, CEOSA.



Junction, both closed in 1988. Four inner city and inner west schools closed were: Christian Brothers' High School, Balmain (1990); St Patrick's High School, Church Hill (1990); St Thomas' Boys High School, Lewisham (1997); Benedict Community School, Lewisham (1997). Nazareth Senior College at Bankstown and De La Salle College at Kingsgrove were closed in 1999.<sup>113</sup>

The 2001 enrolment statistics were the final blow and Holy Cross College, Woollahra closed at the end of the 2001 school year.<sup>114</sup> A letter from the CEO, signed by its director, Br Kelvin Canavan, was succinct in announcing the end: 'As a regional systemic school, Holy Cross provided a quality education for all who knocked on its door. Significant demographic changes have indeed made this the end of an era.'<sup>115</sup>

It was decided that it was inappropriate for the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to borrow heavily to become a developer of the Edgecliff Road site itself and consequently, tenders were called for the 4000 sq. metre site. A full page colour advertisement appeared in the *Wentworth Courier* on 28 March 2001. The advertisement featured the beautiful views from the top verandah, from which the students and staff had watched, among other things, the closing of the arches of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932, the two 'Queens' sail into Sydney Harbour to collect Australian troops destined for the Middle East, and from where Mother M. Thecla Kerwick had watched the attack of the Japanese midget submarines. Potential uses for the site were listed as: a school; nursing home; hotel; motel; strata title apartments (re-zoning required). The closing date for tenders was 11 May and on 14 May 2001 the winning tender was announced; it was from a consortium headed by Charles Scarf snr, a member of a prominent Eastern Suburbs Catholic family. Its offer of \$8.18m was not the highest bid. The congregation was mindful of the closeness of the school to the parish buildings, as well as the density of the immediate area, and wanted to keep the integrity of the parish complex as far as possible. The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy appraised the tenders on the intended use of the site. Charles Scarf snr had a dream of continuing education with a Christian dimension on the site, a major factor in his tender being the winning bid.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. xiii.

<sup>114</sup> 'Decisions of the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board 1987-200, SACS Board, November 2005, p. 16, CEOSA.

<sup>115</sup> Holy Cross College archives, Box 5.3, letter dated 15 September 2001, PA.

<sup>116</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 'Report to Congregation re Closure of Holy Cross College – 2001', undated and unpublished document, PA.

### **Farewell to Holy Cross College**

The last remaining Years 8 and 10 students left the College on 7 December 2001 after a farewell Mass. Year 12 had had their own farewell Mass in September before beginning the HSC. On 16 September 2001, Holy Cross Day was celebrated with a farewell Mass and reunion for past students, staff and parents and friends, with over 800 ex-students attending. In her 'Words of Welcome' address, Sue Coorey, President of the Holy Cross College Ex-students Association, mentioned the Archbishop James Carroll Scholarship which had been set up after his death in recognition of the unfaltering support and interest the 'Doc' had shown to the College and the Primary School and for which between \$2000 and \$3000 had been raised annually. She expressed a hope that they could continue with their annual reunion and to raise money which the Sisters of Mercy could use in the many areas in which they worked, in Australia, as well as in East Timor, Sudan and Cambodia to name some overseas Mercy missions.<sup>117</sup>

Initially, Waverley Municipal Library, Bondi Junction accepted archival material from the College, including the many photos relating to the College taken over the last ten to fifteen years, and the banner used in the Jubilee 2000 celebration, as well as the banner featuring the closed gates, used at the final Mass.<sup>118</sup> All records of staff and students and financial records prior to 1995 were destroyed in a secure manner. All student and financial records from 1995 were taken to the CEO Sydney Archives, together with paper records of people and events over the years. Some items went to the Congregational Archives at Parramatta. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington and Marist College, Pagewood received furniture and equipment, as did the Good Samaritan College, Hinchinbrook, a developing school which had opened in 1999. School uniforms with the College crest went to East Timor. Christian Brothers, Burwood received junior science equipment. The school honour boards were set up in the side chapel of Holy Cross Church. The shrine of Our Lady of Mercy, donated by Monsignor Collender all those years ago, was taken to *Marymount*, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy Retreat Centre at Castle Hill.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Sue Coorey, Holy Cross College, Woollahra, final Mass, Holy Cross Parish Church, 16 September 2000, in the author's possession. Sue Coorey's mother, Kathleen Trefle-Hidden was the first president of the HCC Ex-student's Association when it was established in 1931.

<sup>118</sup> This collection has subsequently been transferred to Woollahra Local Studies Collection.

<sup>119</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 'Report to Congregation'.

Sr Caroline Ryan, herself an ex-student and former staff member including being middle school principal 1983-1988, must have felt tremendous sadness as she stood to speak at the farewell Mass as the congregational leader of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. Her words are remarkable for their sense of a beginning rather than an ending. She said:

In the Christian tradition, the act of remembering enables us to continue to be charged and changed by the life enhancing experiences of our past. If our own experiences at Holy Cross College, however long ago, have been life-enhancing in relation to our faith in the God of Mercy, our self-understanding, our learning and achievements, our friendships, our growth in awareness of the needs of others, our confidence to engage the future – and so on, then there is a real sense in which their meaning is not diminished by the closure of the school.<sup>120</sup>

Sr Barbara McDonough's words, spoken at the 2000 Awards and Presentation night, seem a fitting ending to the story of this educational institution which had helped form thousands of young minds from 1908-2000, and had been the centre of a school community, which physically represented and spiritually reinforced the values and beliefs of the founding pioneer sisters:

As we look back over the 92 years of our school's existence, we find ourselves asking some questions: How did Holy Cross develop this wonderful spirit? How did it all begin? Who lit the flame that has burned so strongly over the years in the hearts of our students, who have then passed it on to others, as they journeyed through life?<sup>121</sup>

This thesis has been endeavouring to contribute to the answering of these questions.

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<sup>120</sup> Sr Caroline Ryan, Holy Cross College, Woollahra final Mass, Holy Cross Parish Church, 16 September 2000, in the author's possession.

<sup>121</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 2000 Holy Cross College awards and presentation night speech, PA.

## CHAPTER 9

### MUSIC AT HOLY CROSS COLLEGE

**‘Music is an expression of deep-seated instincts in human nature [appealing] to the feelings and emotions but it has its intellectual side also.’** (*Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1943, p. 20)

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy quickly gained a well-earned reputation for excellence in the field of music education, and by the first decade of the twentieth century, Parramatta was designated ‘the home of music in New South Wales’.<sup>1</sup> From the establishment of the congregation in 1888, the sisters were involved in the teaching of music in their schools as well as in the wider community. Fees from instrumental music pupils were to be a main source of income for the Parramatta community and its branch houses as they built up enrolments; they were the most important means of reduction of debt. MacGinley, commenting on the Lismore Convent of the Presentation Sisters, in her history of the Presentation Sisters in Australia has written: ‘as elsewhere in Australian convents, long hours of music teaching provided the staple income’.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Early music teachers at Parramatta**

Holy Cross College drew upon and, increasingly, became part of and contributed significantly to, the strong tradition of music of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. It is not possible to give an account of music at Holy Cross without placing it within this main tradition, including the network of music schools established at Parramatta, Golden Grove, Holy Cross, Ryde, Enmore and Epping.

It is recorded that ‘numbered among the Parramatta pioneer sisters were women of exceptional musical talent and teaching ability in the field of music’. Key music teachers in the early days were: Sr M. Stanislaus White (professed 1892); Sr M. Patrick Mines (professed 1892); Sr M. Cecelia Mackin (professed 1902); and Sr M. Aquin King (professed 1902).<sup>3</sup>

Sr M. Stanislaus (Cis) White was born in Callan, Ireland, and had become the organist at

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> MacGinley, *Roads to Sion*, p. 390.

<sup>3</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 66.

the Augustinian Friary there in her childhood. Entering the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta, in 1890, aged eighteen years, she officiated in the 'Violin Studio', which was located in the main part of Our Lady of Mercy's High School (later to be known as Our Lady of Mercy College).<sup>4</sup> An early congregational chronicler noted that Sr M. Stanislaus was regarded as one of the best teachers of violin in the colony, 'gifted as she was with the keen ear so essential to a teacher of violin'.<sup>5</sup> Early in her violin teaching career, Sr M. Stanislaus had the opportunity to study under the renowned Rivers Allport, a teacher from the Royal Academy of Music in London, when he was visiting Sydney.<sup>6</sup>

One of the best known of the early music teachers was Sr M. Patrick Mines, who had been educated at St Mary's High School, Callan. She taught music in one of the cottages adjacent to the convent-school complex at Parramatta which the sisters had acquired; it became known as 'the Academy'. Sr M. Cecilia Mackin, before entering the order had been the first to win the All-Ireland prize for piano-playing and was also an accomplished harpist. Tragically, she died young, in 1903. The tuition of such women was to inform those women who subsequently served as music teachers at Holy Cross College.

Sr M. Aquin King was among those Sisters of Mercy who established their reputation at Golden Grove, Newtown, before moving on to Holy Cross. As Teresa King, she had entered Parramatta Convent in 1901 aged 15 years, and was professed in 1902. She went on to establish a strong school of violin at Golden Grove, Newtown, which had a parochial school, St Kieran's, and a superior high school, Mount St Mary's. A Golden Grove student of the early 1920s, later a member of the Parramatta congregation, wrote: 'every girl in that school learnt music, either piano or violin; the pupils flocked from near and far so widespread was its fame'.<sup>7</sup> Sr M. Aquin King was remembered for her patience with the children and the fact that she used her senior students to help with the tuition of the younger pupils. It was said she had the ability to get the young musicians to put a great deal of effort into their work.<sup>8</sup>

At the First Australasian Catholic Congress of 1900, the Sisters of Charity proclaimed

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<sup>4</sup> Sophie McGrath, 'Notes on Music', unpublished collection, PA, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Donnelly, 'The First Six Years', p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Sr M. Aidan Codd's notes, PA, cited in McGrath, *These Women?* p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Sr M Immaculata Hegarty to Sr Ellen Conway, 4 October 1984, PA.

<sup>8</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 7. Sr M. Aquin King lived to almost 100 years so there were many, many students grateful for that devotion.

that ‘the advantages to be gained by placing music on the same footing as the other branches of education must be apparent to all’. They argued that it was unsurpassed as a ‘form of innocent recreation’ and induced children to remain at home protected from ‘the temptations which would otherwise assail them when removed from the supervision of their parents’.<sup>9</sup> At the 1911 Catholic Educational Conference the eighth resolution emerging from the debates on secondary education read: ‘That too much time should not be devoted to music and preparation for music examinations, as thereby the general education of the child may suffer.’ This resolution passed despite the emotionally charged assertion of Rev. Mother Stanislaus of the Lismore Presentation Convent that ‘music was elevating and ennobling’; she thought they should aim at a ‘first-class Catholic examining board of their own in Australia’.<sup>10</sup> Her vision would be realised with the establishment of the Australian Music Examinations Board (hereafter AMEB) in 1918. The accent on instrumental music teaching in Catholic schools was clearly a cause of controversy. Many Holy Cross students, especially in the senior years, would have been aware of the tensions that arose, especially around examination time, between class room teachers and instrumental music teachers.

It was recorded by Sr M. Aidan Codd that Mother M. Clare Dunphy was anxious for the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to receive the best tuition available to prepare them for their work as teachers of music, singing and elocution. Madame Sussmilch of Rosebank College and Madame Kavanagh from the Garcia School of Music were early ‘outside’ teachers who tutored the Parramatta sisters. In 1909, Sr M. Agnes Maclean, a renowned Sister of Mercy teacher of singing from New Zealand was invited to spend a year at Parramatta to train the sisters and pupils.<sup>11</sup> This tradition of ongoing tuition continued with, for example, Sr M. Theophane Collins and Sr M. Christina Creede taking cello lessons from Cedric Aston at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music and harp lessons from Gaetano Butta, an accomplished Sydney harpist.<sup>12</sup>

### **A music examination framework is established in NSW**

The NSW State Conservatorium of Music was established by NSW’s first Labor State

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<sup>9</sup> Sisters of Charity, ‘Progress of Music in the Schools’, *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Conference*, pp. 46-448.

<sup>10</sup> Catholic Educational Conference, 1911, *Resolutions and Proceedings*, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 82 and p. 93. Cedric Aston became the conductor of the OLMC Epping orchestra about 1960, McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 80.

Government, led by Premier Holman, in stages between 1912 and 1915, with the Belgian conductor, Henri Verbrugghan as its first director.<sup>13</sup> The 'Con' would set up its own system of local examinations for music practice and theory, but formal public music education in NSW had really begun some twenty years before, when Ethel Charlotte Pedley visited London in 1896 with Emmeline Mary Woolley and had been able to persuade the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music (Trinity College) to extend their system of local examinations to the Australian colonies. Ethel was appointed the Associated Board's sole representative in NSW and the Board sent out its first examiner from London in 1897.<sup>14</sup>

Emmeline Woolley, whose father, the Rev. John Woolley, was the first principal of the University of Sydney and classics professor (1852-1866), spent two years studying the pianoforte in Florence and after five years absence overseas returned to Sydney and taught music; she disliked public appearances. Ethel and Emmeline formed the St Cecelia Choir for female voices in 1884. An Anglican, Emmeline was the organist at St John's Anglican Church, Darlinghurst. She died in 1908, the year Holy Cross College was established.<sup>15</sup> As will be seen, a number of music students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, including Holy Cross College students, were to benefit from the E.M. Woolley scholarship set up in her honour.

There was a hierarchy of music awards. At the lowest level were the local school examinations conducted under the auspices of the NSW State Conservatorium, using exams and examiners provided by the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB). Near the top end of the scale were the examinations conducted by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music of London (under the patronage of the British Monarch). The Associated Board sent its own examiners out from England, who returned to the 'mother country' each year. Prospective candidates were told the 'the scope and standard of the Examinations are similar in regard to musical education to those of the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations in connection with

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<sup>13</sup> For an excellent account of the 'Con's' establishment see Diane Collins, *Sounds From the Stables: The Story of Sydney's Conservatorium*, Allen and Unwin, 2001, pp. 1-21.

<sup>14</sup> M. Norst, 'Pedley, Ethel Charlotte (1859-1898)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 11, MUP, 1988, pp.193-194. Ethel Pedley was the author of the Australian children's classic, *Dot and the Kangaroo*.

<sup>15</sup> Martha Rutledge, 'Woolley, Emmeline Mary Dogherty (1843-1908)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 12, MUP, 1990, p. 572.

general education'.<sup>16</sup> The ultimate prize was a State medal and/or an exhibition to Trinity College, London. Gold and Silver medals were awarded by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, London, to the candidates who obtained the highest and second highest Honours marks in each grade.<sup>17</sup> Only the best students were entered for the more prestigious examinations; this could reflect the examination fees charged by the respective institutions, with the London based examinations bodies being the most expensive.

### **Holy Cross music results in the 1920s and 1930s**

According to the Holy Cross convent chronicler, the first permanent principal of Holy Cross College, Sr M. de Chantal McCrone, used to say that it was music that had made Parramatta known in the beginning and that it was music that was going to make Holy Cross known.<sup>18</sup> An examination of the Holy Cross convent accounts in the early years show just how important music fees were to the community income. The financial statement for 1909, the first full operating year of Holy Cross High School, shows receipts of £58 from high school fees and £62 from music fees. By 1916, the music fees were contributing £142, compared with £302 collected from high school fees.<sup>19</sup> The Holy Cross convent chronicler recorded that 'music was from the very first days an important study at Holy Cross. Many talented girls were enrolled and it was necessary to provide an additional teacher.' In 1911, Sr M. Bernadette Murray arrived to assist the first music teacher, Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien.<sup>20</sup>

Lyle and Renie Jenkins were among the very early music pupils of the Holy Cross music centre. They were sisters who lived almost opposite the convent and were Anglicans, as mentioned previously. In 1916 Lyle Jenkins became the first Holy Cross High School pupil to sit the Leaving Certificate and went on to matriculate in 1917, becoming in 1922, the first Holy Cross High School (College) alumnus to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Sydney. According to the Holy Cross convent chronicler, Renie used to arrive for her music lesson at 8.00 a.m. and announce her presence by performing *Too Much Mustard*, a 'pianoforte arrangement decorated with a hideous coloured picture-

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<sup>16</sup> Advertisement placed in *FJ*, 13 January 1921, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> See *FJ*, 14 December 1922, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Holy Cross Convent Woollahra Account Book 1908-1956, PA.

<sup>20</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 29.



cover and involving much more hideous sounds'. However 'more serious music began as soon as Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien appeared'.<sup>21</sup> No doubt it was the availability of music tuition which made this relatively new school attractive to the Anglican parents of the Jenkins sisters.

The first outstanding music student of Holy Cross was Patricia O'Keefe who, reputedly, was awarded the E.M. Woolley Scholarship in 1920. The E.M. Woolley Scholarship for pianoforte was valued at £75 per annum for three years. This prestigious scholarship was open for competition in NSW to female students under the age of twenty-one years and awarded annually to the top student of piano in the state. To appreciate the worth of the Woolley Scholarship, it may be pointed out that in 1921, three rooms could be furnished with solid oak furniture for that same amount of £75.<sup>22</sup> The following year Patricia gained the coveted Licentiate of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music (L.A.B.); this was the highest music qualification obtainable at that time in Australia at the time and enabled the holder to teach music.<sup>23</sup> Patricia actually completed her studies at Golden Grove, as she had followed Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien from Holy Cross to Golden Grove, when in mid-1921 Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien replaced Sr M. Joseph Tier who came to Holy Cross as convent superior as well as music teacher. Mt St Mary's Convent, Golden Grove was in Forbes Street, near the University of Sydney, next to the tramline from Railway Square, and within walking distance of the Redfern train station. The ease of access by public transport no doubt helped to promote the growth of the Golden Grove music centre.

In the early 1950s Sr M. de Lellis Harrison (Iris) taught piano and violin at Holy Cross College. She had gone to Golden Grove in 1925 to learn the violin and recalled the music staff then consisted of Sr M. Aquin King (violin), Sr M. Canice Mulroney, Sr M. Bernadette Murray, Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien and Sr M. Borromeo Favell (piano). She also remembered there were at least sixty music pupils at that time at Golden Grove and about one-half of them were non-Catholic, many coming from the southern suburbs of

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<sup>21</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Advertisement in *FJ*, 17 November 1921, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Details on Patricia O'Keefe taken from the 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 30. It has not been verified she was awarded the E.M. Woolley Scholarship. It was reported she gained a High Distinction pass in violin as a student of the Sisters of Mercy, Holy Cross Convent, Woollahra in 1920, *FJ*, 20 January 1920, p. 27.

Sydney.<sup>24</sup> Phyllis McDonald was an eminently successful Mt St Mary's Golden Grove student who completed her education there. She was a violinist who was awarded a three year scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, London.<sup>25</sup> Phyllis had won a gold medal in Advanced grade violin as well as the Royal Academy of Music scholarship in 1921.<sup>26</sup> The year before, she had won a gold medal from Trinity College, London for the highest honours marks for Intermediate grade violin.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1920s, convent schools began to realise the valuable publicity to be gained from feature articles and photographs of successful students displayed in the Catholic newspapers, and both country and city schools published details of their music and academic successes. In January 1924, the *Catholic Press* had a large banner headline with the words 'Conservatorium Examinations: Triumph of Catholic Schools'. The article beneath went on to explain that out of the 5,160 candidates, twenty-two won first place in their grade at the recent state-wide examinations of the Conservatorium of Music, and of these twenty-two, fifteen had received their music tuition in Catholic schools. Two of these fifteen were pupils of Holy Cross Convent. These were Kathleen Logue, top student of Grade IV violin and Winnie Walls, top student of Grade V violin.<sup>28</sup> Kathleen Logue had enrolled at Holy Cross High School in February 1923, aged thirteen years. Before enrolling, Kathleen had been an external music pupil of Holy Cross Convent in 1922, when she was awarded honours for Grade V violin.<sup>29</sup> For reasons unknown, Kathleen transferred to Our Lady of Mercy's College, Parramatta, where she sat for the Intermediate Certificate in 1925, and went on to become one of their illustrious musicians. It is possible she was offered a boarding bursary.

Doreen Gilbert, who spent ten years as a music student at Holy Cross, was another talented musician and a contemporary of Kathleen Logue; she was enrolled, aged seven years, on 1 April 1914.<sup>30</sup> After obtaining the Qualifying Certificate, she left school but returned for music lessons from Sr M. Bernadette Murray and Sr M. Helena Phillips. Both

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<sup>24</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p.82.

<sup>25</sup> Her farewell concert at the Conservatorium 'was crowded with a most enthusiastic audience' and she was laden with a 'carload of flowers and many boxes of chocolates' after her first number. The concert had been arranged by Mrs J. Barlow, the President of the Catholic Women's Association. *FJ*, 2 March 1922.

<sup>26</sup> *FJ*, 24 November 1921, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> *FJ*, 23 December 1920, p. 38.

<sup>28</sup> *CP*, 10 January 1924, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> *CP*, 30 November 1922, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Admission rolls for Holy Cross High School, 1910- 1940, PA.

of these had earned reputations as highly successful music teachers at Golden Grove and Enmore before coming to Holy Cross. In October 1924, Doreen Gilbert won the prestigious Trinity College of London Medal for Senior grade piano. Sr M. Helena Phillips (Irene) was an ex-student of OLMC Parramatta and had gained her L.A.B. in violin and piano in 1906, entering the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1917. She taught at Golden Grove and Enmore as well as Holy Cross and her final appointment, in the 1950s, was at Holy Cross College.

As mentioned previously, Sr M. Joseph Tier took Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien's place at Holy Cross. She was an outstanding teacher of piano who had gained notable successes at St Keiran's parish school and then at Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove, before being appointed the superior of Holy Cross convent in June 1921, replacing Sr M. Bernard Trainer, who had been transferred to St Michael's orphanage at Baulkham Hills. A number of Sr M. Joseph's Golden Grove piano and singing students followed her to Holy Cross. Among them were Eileen Barry, Mary Waring, Katie Hayes and the 'renowned singers' Lena and Dorrie (Dot) Cosgrove, Agnes Langborne and Mary Lahiff.<sup>31</sup> Agnes had been awarded a pass in Advanced grade singing as a student at St Keiran's parochial school, Golden Grove in 1920.<sup>32</sup>

The Holy Cross music student with the highest public profile in the mid-1920s, and a music pupil of Sr M. Joseph Tier, was Phyllis Walls. It was said that she played Beethoven's Sonata as a five-year old. Her sister Winifred (Winnie) was an accomplished violinist, but piano was Phyllis's forte. Phyllis, who had been born in Coonamble, had enrolled at Holy Cross High School in October 1918, aged ten years. Winnie, four years younger, enrolled at the same time. In 1924, aged sixteen years, Phyllis Walls won the E.M. Woolley Scholarship which she took up in 1925 at the Royal College of Music, London. Before her departure for London, Phyllis was summoned to play at Government House, Sydney for Lady de Chair, the wife of the NSW State Governor. Phyllis Walls was described as 'extraordinarily gifted' and it was noted that 'her natural, girlish, winsome manner, unspoiled by her genius, and so far from any affectation, will be one of her greatest assets'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 31.

<sup>32</sup> *FJ*, 13 Jan 1921, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> *FJ*, 2 April 1925, p. 19.

A benefit concert for Phyllis, held at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in March 1925, just before she left for London, was a gala occasion, attended by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Ald. P. V. Stokes. In his speech Ald. Stokes noted that he had motored from Queanbeyan (nearly 200 miles) to attend the concert. Attendees at the concert, and readers of the press article reporting it, were left in no doubt as to the role Holy Cross College had played in the success of this gifted young lady. The school colours of Holy Cross (dark blue and white) were featured in the flowers and decorations on the stage and the organising committee, led by Mrs J. L. Trefle with Mrs John Barlow (of the Catholic Women's Association) as treasurer, wore armbands of blue and white. The pupils of Holy Cross played a predominant role in the musical items, both orchestral and choral, and sold the souvenir programmes and baskets of sweets during the interval. Most significantly of all, no one was left wondering who nurtured this wonderful talent as the *Freeman's Journal* recorded that 'keen interest centred around the fact that the little pianiste [*sic*] had been the pupil of Sr Mary Joseph (Tier) of Holy Cross and many were the eulogiums passed upon the teaching'.<sup>34</sup>

The following year, a testimonial cabaret was held at the *Casino* ballroom at Bondi Beach, in aid of Phyllis Walls, who had begun her studies at the Royal College of Music, London, in September 1925 under Professor Herbert Fryer.<sup>35</sup> The president of the organising committee was Miss Cecilia Walsh, the Lady Mayoress, a cousin of the Lord Mayor and a Catholic.<sup>36</sup> Evidently, Phyllis had powerful friends in high places who were determined she would be able to take up and continue her music studies in London. It was reported that she gained a further scholarship to continue her studies at the Royal College of Music London, where she was tutored in both the piano and cello.<sup>37</sup> It is not known if Phyllis returned to Australia. Certainly there is no record that she returned to her alma mater and in that respect she differed remarkably from other talented musicians from Holy Cross who maintained contact with their former teachers, played in the school orchestra, performed as accompanists at school functions, and helped raise money for the sisters.

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<sup>34</sup> *FJ*, 2 April 1925, p. 19. It was highly unusual for a Religious sister to be praised individually in such a public manner as Sr M Joseph Tier was in this article. Mrs Trefle was the mother of one of the first students of Holy Cross College, Kathleen, a foundation member of the Holy Cross College Ex-students union and cousin of Sr M. de Chantal McCrone.

<sup>35</sup> *FJ*, 29 September 1927, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> *FJ*, 9 December 1926, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> *FJ*, 15 February 1928, p. 20.

One of those playing at the Conservatorium benefit concert in 1925 for Phyllis Walls was Eileen Barry (Mrs Taranto), a Holy Cross College ex-student, a State medallist, and a former student of Sr M. Joseph Tier. In 1920, while a student at Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove, Eileen had been awarded a medal for the honours pass she gained in the Intermediate grade piano examinations held by Trinity College, London. In 1922, aged fifteen years, Eileen gained honours for the Intermediate grade piano exam held by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music; in doing so she won the State Medal and the Mr C.J. Kelly Exhibition valued at £10.<sup>38</sup> Eileen's claim that she was the first State silver medallist at Holy Cross College appears to be correct and she would be the first to acknowledge Sr M. Joseph Tier's role in her success.<sup>39</sup> It is a fact that Eileen 'voted with her feet'. She recalled that she had been learning music with Sr M. Joseph Tier at Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove; at the time the family were living in the area. When the family moved to the Bondi area, she was enrolled at Holy Cross High School, Woollahra, on 4 March 1921, but her mother wanted her to continue her music studies with Sr M. Joseph Tier at Golden Grove, which she must have done until Sr M. Joseph Tier was transferred to Holy Cross in June 1921. Eileen Barry appears in the list of 1921 music results for the Sisters of Mercy, Golden Grove.<sup>40</sup> In the course of an interview she recalled that when she found to her great surprise that her beloved teacher had been transferred to Holy Cross College, she stayed at Golden Grove one day only in the new term.<sup>41</sup>

Music was Eileen's 'centre of life'. She had received tuition in piano, violin, cello and singing, finally settling for piano and singing. She did not sit for the Intermediate Certificate, but stayed at Holy Cross until she was about eighteen years old, leaving in 1924.<sup>42</sup> Clearly her family did not consider any academic qualifications necessary for Eileen, who earned an income as a teacher of music until her marriage about ten years after she left school. She kept her connection with the school and Sr M. Joseph Tier, by teaching music at Holy Cross for about twelve months and also performing in a group

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<sup>38</sup> *CP*, 30 November 1922, p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by the author, 28 April 2006. The exhibition money was spent on a violin which Eileen eventually gave to Holy Cross College. Gold and Silver medals were awarded by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of music and the Royal college of Music, London, to the candidates who obtained the highest and second highest Honours marks in each grade, see *FJ*, 14 December 1922, p. 43. Eileen, the oldest (known) ex-student of Holy Cross College, died on 12 July 2008, aged 101 years.

<sup>40</sup> *FJ*, 17 November 1921, p.10.

<sup>41</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by Sr Cecily Gaudry, 17 August, 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by Sr Cecily Gaudry, 17 August, 2000.

called 'The Quavers' which Sr M Joseph Tier had formed to raise money for worthy causes. Two of the other performers in 'The Quavers', were Dot and Lena Cosgrove who learnt music at Holy Cross Convent but did not attend school there. Eileen remembers teaching Eunice Gardiner during that time. One of her strong memories is Sr M. Helena Phillips playing jazz for the school reunion dances.<sup>43</sup>

Another Golden Grove music student who appears to have followed Sr M. Joseph to Holy Cross in 1921 was Eileen's best friend, Mary Waring. Mary was another talented product of the Golden Grove Convent music centre. In 1920 as a student of Mt St Mary's High School, she gained honours from Trinity College in Junior grade piano and in 1921 she gained passes in the Higher Division piano and Rudiments of Music examinations set by the Associated Board.<sup>44</sup> Mary enrolled at Holy Cross High School on 30 January 1922. Her family owned a newsagency at Ashfield, where they lived on Milton Street. Mary had a long journey on train and tram to Bondi Junction and it can be assumed she followed her music teacher, Sr M. Joseph, to Holy Cross. Eileen used to spend weekends with Mary's family, the only outing she seems to have made on her own, apart from travelling into the city on a Saturday morning for art lessons. Eileen lived a comfortable existence within a contained and controlled world, typical of middle class Catholic homes of that time.<sup>45</sup>

In the early decades of Holy Cross College, while music honours were highly valued, many of its music pupils rarely seemed to be in a hurry to accumulate academic honours. Using the Qualifying Certificate (end of primary school) results for the end of 1920 as an example, it was many years later before some of the best music pupils finally completed the Intermediate Certificate, the end of secondary schooling for almost all pupils at that time. Obviously the hours of practice required for success in the music field were given precedence over academic studies. Mary Waring gained the IC in 1924 when she would have been about eighteen years old and Celia Whealey did not sit the IC until 1925. As mentioned previously, Eileen Barry didn't sit for the IC. This is at a time when the IC syllabus could be covered in a minimum of two years, but more likely in three. The careers of these girls would appear to illustrate the transition in the early twentieth

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<sup>43</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by the author, 28 April, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> *FJ*, 24 November 1921, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by the author, 28 April 2006.

century of the education of middle class girls in Australia from an accomplishment focus to an examination focus.

Eunice Gardiner, a contemporary of Eileen Barry at Holy Cross High School, was destined to become the school's best-known and internationally lauded musician. Eunice Gardiner, aged five years, had been enrolled at the College in October 1923. Her mother was a music teacher who had started teaching her daughter at the very young age of three or four years. Sr M. Joseph Tier began her tuition of Eunice when she was about five or six years and moulded her talent for some ten years. Eunice had been a rising star for some years prior to her winning the E.M. Woolley Scholarship. In 1929 she was a State medallist gaining honours in Intermediate grade piano at the Associated Board of the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music examinations, and from the State Conservatorium of Music she won a £10 exhibition for the highest marks in NSW in Grade 1V piano. In October of the same year she had gained Honours and a medal for Preparatory violin.<sup>46</sup> In May 1931 she was a Trinity College of Music, London State Medallist for junior grade piano. From the Associated Board of the London Royal Colleges, she won a silver medal for the second highest Honours marks (149) in Final grade pianoforte and free entry to the Licentiate of the Associated Board.<sup>47</sup> Having gone as far as she could with the piano, Eunice took up the violin in her last year at Holy Cross College and it was her instrument for the practical music exam of the 1934 Leaving Certificate. She regarded Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien as a 'fine violin teacher' but admitted she actually hated the instrument and at the end of her first year in London dropped the violin as her second subject, taking singing instead; she recalled that her singing performance at her examination in London reduced her two examiners to fits of laughter.<sup>48</sup>

At the age of sixteen, in 1934, Eunice Gardiner won the E.M. Woolley Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, London, where she studied for two years under Vivian Langrish. Eunice paid tribute to Sr M. Joseph Tier, who taught her piano 'with love and devotion to her task'. When Sr M. Scholastica interrupted Eunice's Fifth Year Latin term exam to give her the joyous news of her scholarship success, Eunice recalls that she was

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<sup>46</sup> *FJ*, 26 December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> *CP*, 24 December 1931, p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Eunice Gardiner, interview by Sr Cecily Gaudry, 11 December 2000, published in *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

told not to ‘get a swollen head.’<sup>49</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey) remembers the day Eunice was notified concerning her scholarship success. The news went around the school and the classes assembled on the playground; when Eunice appeared on the top walk of the school, Dympna recalled everyone started clapping.<sup>50</sup> Her debut at London’s Wigmore Hall launched her on a distinguished international career as a concert pianist.

Eunice received an extra lesson on Saturdays from Kathleen Fitzgerald, a ‘very gifted pianist’.<sup>51</sup> Kathleen Fitzgerald had been a talented musician at a young age. Her teacher at Golden Grove had been Sr M. Elizabeth Greathead and in 1919, at the age of twelve years, she had won the E.M. Woolley Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, London. She did not accept it, presumably because of her age.<sup>52</sup> Kathleen won a State Bursary to OLMC Parramatta in 1923, obtained her LC in 1927, and eventually gained her Associateship of the NSW State Conservatorium of Music (L. Mus. A).<sup>53</sup> An account of her public recital at the Conservatorium in 1932 describes Kathleen as ‘among Sydney’s most promising pianists’.<sup>54</sup> The strong bonds between music students and their school would be exemplified by the fact that Kathleen Fitzgerald became President of the OLMC Ex-students’ Association and participated in a concert at the College re-union in 1945.<sup>55</sup> It is difficult not to mention that at an even younger age, OLMC Parramatta student Pamela Page, (a non-Catholic) aged eleven years, won a Commonwealth Exhibition to Trinity College, London, and State medals for Junior and Intermediate grade piano in 1946 and has remained close to her alma mater.<sup>56</sup>

In an interview for the 1960-61 Holy Cross College School Magazine, Eunice Gardiner paid Sr M. Joseph Tier fulsome praise:

I don’t feel that I can write about music in this paper without paying tribute to the nun who taught me piano at Holy Cross, with love and devotion to her task,

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<sup>49</sup> Eunice Gardiner, *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1960-1961*, p. 36 and p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey), *Celebration of Our Education*, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

<sup>52</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> Kathleen provided the background music for the silent films screened for the OLMC Parramatta boarders, Wilkes, *Mercy*, p.85.

<sup>54</sup> *CFJ*, 22 December 1932, p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 90.

<sup>56</sup> *Misericordia*, 1946 (OLMC Parramatta School Magazine), n.p. Pamela Page went on to have a dazzling international career as a concert pianist. She performed at the OLMC Parramatta Centenary Concert at the Sydney Opera House, April 1988.



for the greatest part of my childhood. Sister Mary Joseph was a vivid personality of great warmth and kindness. This and her great enthusiasm and interest in me and my music were no small factors in my development. Her meticulous approach to Mozart was, I realise now, that of a purist. How she insisted upon the perfect phrase!

Eunice went on to explain that when, in early 1936, she began her scholarship years at the esteemed Royal Academy of Music, London, she had been given such a good grounding in technique that there was nothing to be unlearned, it only remained to build on the ‘foundation [which] had been well and securely laid’.<sup>57</sup>

Another influential person in the formation of Eunice Gardiner’s illustrious career was Professor Frank Hutchins, who was appointed as a founding staff member of the State Conservatorium of Music in 1916 and was still teaching there when he died in 1965. From the age of eleven, Eunice had played for him once a year around exam time and, as she approached the Licentiate year, she had more frequent lessons with him. Eunice’s father was in the merchant navy and, although the funds to support living expenses in London for three years would have been beyond the family’s own resources, he insisted on Eunice’s mother accompanying their talented seventeen year old daughter to England. Eunice has said it was Frank Hutchins who organised the committee to raise funds to help her go overseas to take up the E.M. Woolley scholarship in 1937. The main fund-raising event was a grand benefit concert held at the Sydney Town Hall.<sup>58</sup>

Eunice Gardiner came back from England with a contract to tour for the Australian Broadcasting Commission and went on to teach at the NSW State Conservatorium as well as becoming a music critic for the *Daily Telegraph*. She has acknowledged that it was music that took her around the world, to many exotic locations and to meet Prime Ministers, Ambassadors, Queen Elizabeth II and many top conductors and musicians.

The first Holy Cross College pupil to take music as a LC subject was Veronica Acton, who gained an ‘A’ pass with a mark of 90% in 1920.<sup>59</sup> Veronica had previously sat for

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<sup>57</sup> *Holy Cross College, Woollahra, 1960-61*, p.36.

<sup>58</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p.36.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 20.

the LC at OLMC Parramatta and had gained a 'B' pass in music.<sup>60</sup> Of the ten successful candidates from Holy Cross High School, Woollahra, for the 1928 IC, eight gained a pass in music, although only two were awarded an 'A' pass.<sup>61</sup> This affirms the high profile of music in the school at this time, although music was not yet accepted as a full subject for the LC.<sup>62</sup> But in 1930, when music was now recognised as a half subject at the LC level, two of the three Holy Cross LC candidates sat the music exam. This was unusual. There were no LC music candidates at St Vincent's College Potts Point, one of the leading girls' schools in Sydney, and only one girl out of twelve candidates at Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney.<sup>63</sup>

In 1929, Holy Cross College, following a practice that OLMC Parramatta had begun some fifteen years before, published, for the first time, an end of year school report in both Catholic newspapers (the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Catholic Press*). The report included a detailed listing of the successes of Holy Cross College, Woollahra students in the examinations conducted by the Associated Board, the State Conservatorium of Music and London's Trinity College of Music. The music results were given in full, before the results in the commercial examinations and the College's own internal examinations.<sup>64</sup> The Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music had sent Mr (later to be Sir) Arthur Benjamin from London to Sydney to conduct its 1929 music examinations and it was triumphantly reported that he had been 'loud in his praise of the high standard reached in both violin and piano' at Holy Cross College where he had conducted the examinations.<sup>65</sup>

### **Early music teachers at Holy Cross**

As mentioned previously, the first music teacher at Holy Cross Convent was Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien, the niece of Fr Michael O'Brien, the parish priest of St Peter's, Surry Hills from 1886-92.<sup>66</sup> Later on, Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien was a renowned and fondly

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<sup>60</sup> *FJ*, 1 January 1920, p. 14. Veronica Acton entered the Convent of Mercy Parramatta and took the name Felicitas.

<sup>61</sup> *CP*, 7 February 1929, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Music became a full subject for the Leaving Certificate in 1943, thanks largely to the efforts of Sr M. Paschal Hession of OLMC, Parramatta, the Catholic Schools' representative on the Board of Studies Music Curriculum Committee.

<sup>63</sup> *CP*, 5 February 1931, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> *FJ*, 26 December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup> *FJ*, 26 December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>66</sup> It was Fr O'Brien who had met the nine foundation Sisters of Mercy on their arrival in Sydney. See Garaty, *St Peter's Parish, Surry Hills*, p. 37.

recalled teacher of violin at Holy Cross for many years over the 1930s. It is assumed that Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien was taught by or influenced by Sr M. Stanislaus White at OLMC Parramatta. Cyril Monk, a violin examiner from the Conservatorium of Music, who had observed the influence of Sr M. Stanislaus White on the teaching practices in the other Convents of Mercy attached to Parramatta, considered that Sr M. Stanislaus had 'founded a distinctive school of violin teaching'.<sup>67</sup> Sr M. St Luke Kofod taught piano and singing at Holy Cross from 1931 to 1933, then going to St Peter's, Surry Hills for the remainder of the 1930s, and then to Golden Grove, Newtown from 1943 to 1956.

Little is known of Sr M. Joseph Tier, the piano teacher who could coax such marvellous results from her students. Born in 1871, the daughter of John and Mary Tier of Moruya, NSW, and christened Teresa, she was twenty-four years old when she entered the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta on 17 June 1894. She was professed on 12 January 1897.<sup>68</sup> It is not known where Sr M. Joseph received her musical education; possibly it was from the Sisters of the Good Samaritan who had many schools in the South Coast area of NSW.<sup>69</sup> We know she taught music at Golden Grove, Newtown, and had earned a reputation for her teaching of piano and singing there. Eileen Barry commented that she never remembered Sr M. Joseph playing the piano herself.<sup>70</sup>

Sr M. Joseph Tier's achievements as a teacher of both singing and piano were not acknowledged by two eminent OLMC Parramatta music teachers, Sr M. Paschal Hession (piano and singing) and Sr M. Aidan Codd (singing) in their biographical details of Sisters of Mercy music teachers.<sup>71</sup> Sr M. Joseph died in 1937 aged sixty-seven years. Her well documented ability to nurture musical talent had been of immeasurable significance in maintaining the Holy Cross community's income during the Depression. The lack of acknowledgement of this teacher, who produced at least three E.M. Woolley Scholarship winners and scores of State medallists, reinforces McGrath's comment that it was not easy for those not educated within the Parramatta musical tradition to be accepted as first

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 67. The comment was part of an obituary of Sr M. Stanislaus White, written by Cyril Monk.

<sup>68</sup> Biographical details supplied by Sr Veronica Earls, Parramatta congregational archivist.

<sup>69</sup> It is assumed she attended the Good Samaritan's school at Moruya.

<sup>70</sup> Eileen Taranto, interview by the author, 28 April 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Sr M. Aidan's recollections of music teachers were quite OLMC-centric. See McGrath, 'Notes on Music', pp. 19-21.

rate teachers by the congregation.<sup>72</sup>

A highly successful music teacher, who appears to have begun her long and illustrious career at Holy Cross was Sr M. Paschal Hession, an ex-student of OLMC Parramatta. Holy Cross ex-student, Dympha Whelan (nee Hickey), recalled she had piano lessons from Sr M. Pascal.<sup>73</sup> Sr M. Paschal took over the music department at OLMC Parramatta as Sr M. Patrick Mines aged and spent almost the whole of her religious life at OLMC Parramatta. Sr M. Paschal was a leader in music education in the State of NSW and was one of the pioneers in school music broadcasts and a member of the Australian Society for Music Education.

Sr M. Paschal Hession was the Catholic schools' representative on the Music Syllabus Committee of the Board of Secondary Schools Studies from at least 1939 to 1969. Her successful lobbying resulted in the promotion of music from a half-subject to a full subject for the Leaving Certificate, effective from 1943; provision was made for an Honours paper in the subject also. This welcome news was announced by Sr M. Paschal Hession at the second General Meeting in 1942 of the Catholic Secondary Schools Association of NSW. In response, Archbishop Norman Gilroy thanked her for 'the good work she has done over a period of years' adding that 'music is now to be regarded as a full subject and this is due, in no small measure to Sister M. Pascal's efforts'. His esteem for this remarkable woman was evident in his next words: 'I would like this recorded in the minutes as expressing the sentiments of us all.'<sup>74</sup>

### **Winning the AMEB Shield**

Beginning in 1932, Holy Cross Convent was to win the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) Shield for four years in succession. The Shield was awarded annually to that music centre (operated by a school, convent or private music teacher) in NSW, with the highest aggregate of marks won by its best eight students at the practical examinations held during the year.

The AMEB Shield was won by students of outstanding ability who were most likely

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<sup>72</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 67. The source of this observation is an interview by McGrath of Sr M. Theophane Collins who first learnt music at St Joseph's North Goulburn and later at the Conservatorium and who taught piano and violin at OLMC Parramatta in 1943-45 and 1952.

<sup>73</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 44.

<sup>74</sup> Catholic Secondary Schools Association of NSW, Minutes of the second General Meeting, 18 July 1942, file E0330, SAA.

to proceed to international success by winning a scholarship or exhibition to the Royal Academy of Music or the Royal College of Music, both in London. The Catholic Church was rightfully proud of the achievements of these young convent pupils and the raising of funds to help them further their studies in London brought together those at the top of Sydney Catholic society. The *Catholic Press* and the *Freeman's Journal*<sup>75</sup> provided the forum to publicise these activities as well as to praise the convent school that had nurtured such talent. Altogether, between 1929 and 1952, the AMEB Shield was awarded twenty-two times, and nineteen of those times it was won by a music centre of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. Holy Cross Woollahra won it six times in that period (one more than Parramatta), Golden Grove five times, Ryde twice, and Enmore once.<sup>76</sup>

The year Vaughan Hanley, a student at Golden Grove won a scholarship to the Conservatorium (1931), was a year in which the results of the AMEB were dominated by Sisters of Mercy music centres in Sydney and in the country towns. For one music centre in particular, Mount St Mary's Golden Grove, 1931 was a golden year. The calibre of students like Vaughan Hanley, Beryl Johnston, Peter Clark, Ethel Broadhurst and Iris Harrison (who would become Sr M. de Lellis Harrison) enabled them to win, with an aggregate of 93.6%, the AMEB Shield, the most coveted of prizes.<sup>77</sup>

The AMEB results for 1931 illustrate well the contribution the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy made to music tuition. Eunice Gardiner of Holy Cross tied for first place in Grade II piano, sharing the £10 exhibition. Marie Hennessey of the Convent of Mercy, Stanmore won the £10 exhibition for Grade III piano. Two Golden Grove students, Beryl Johnston and Ethel Broadhurst won £50 scholarships, tenable at the Conservatorium for their marks in Grade I violin. Grade II violin was topped by Vaughan Hanley, winning him a £10 exhibition. Vaughan also tied for first place in grade III violin with an OLMC Parramatta pupil, Pauline Gates. In Grade IV violin, Peter Clark of Golden Grove tied with two others, one of whom was a pupil of the Convent of Mercy, Ryde.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* became the *Catholic Freeman's Journal* in 1932 and was published until 26 February 1942 when it merged with the *Catholic Press* to form the *Catholic Weekly*, which is still in publication today.

<sup>76</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 68. These statistics are taken from the AMEB Shield which is now permanently held at Parramatta.

<sup>77</sup> *CP*, 7 January 1932, p. 14.

<sup>78</sup> *CP*, 7 January 1932, p. 14.

These were the years when enrolments in private schools were falling as the Great Depression continued to affect all sections of the Australian economy. A comparison of the fees received from College pupils and music pupils illustrates the importance of music fees to the Holy Cross convent community. In 1929 College fees returned £1967 4s 1d and music fees amounted to £396 6s 6d. At the height of the Depression, 1933 and 1934, amounts collected from College fees were almost halved. By 1934, College fees had dropped to £952 16s, but music fees had increased to £497 12s 6d. It wasn't until 1939, that College fees receipts exceeded the 1929 figure; £2191 2s from the College fees and £408 15s 3d from the music pupils.<sup>79</sup> As mentioned previously, beginning in 1932, Holy Cross held the AMEB Shield for four successive years and this quite tangible success was significant in maintaining enrolments at the College over those Depression years. As it has been shown, during the 1930s Depression, enrolments at Holy Cross College actually increased, unlike those of the neighbouring schools and this can be attributed to both the reputation Holy Cross had for music teaching as well as the comparably low fees that the sisters charged, as has been discussed previously.

The 1932 music results for Holy Cross Convent, Woollahra, (as it was labelled in the *Catholic Freeman's Journal*) were outstanding. Olga Curotta won a £6 6s exhibition from Trinity College, London for achieving the 'highest marks in the Commonwealth' in Intermediate grade piano. Her fellow student, Catherine Murphy, was also awarded a similar exhibition worth £25 for her highest marks in Intermediate grade violin. Three girls, Norma Cox, Eunice Gardiner and Katherine Geaney, each won a Trinity College State medal that same year, a golden year for the Holy Cross music centre.<sup>80</sup> Olga Curotta returned to Holy Cross College as a music teacher, as one of her pupils recalled.<sup>81</sup>

The 1936 Holy Cross College report was a triumphant public statement of the continuing success of its music teachers and their very talented pupils. The College had won the coveted AMEB Shield for the fourth successive year. Its top music student, Mary Falvey, had won the State medal for Intermediate grade piano, awarded by Trinity College of Music, London, as well as a £10 exhibition for Grade IV violin.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Holy Cross Convent Woollahra Account Book 1908-1956, PA. See Table 4 on page 116.

<sup>80</sup> *CFJ*, 22 December 1932, p. 33.

<sup>81</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey), *Celebration of Our Education*, p.44.

<sup>82</sup> *CFJ*, 7 January 1937, p. 19.

At this time, Sr M. Joseph Tier introduced the annual Musicales that became a greatly loved tradition at Holy Cross. By 1936, the school was including an account of the Musicales in its annual report published in the Catholic newspapers.<sup>83</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey) described the annual musicale as ‘brilliant music on Saturday afternoon, very formal, mothers came, the orchestra played and there were string quartets’.<sup>84</sup> Eunice Gardiner recalled that this was the only time parents were invited into the College to hear individual musicians and the college orchestra play. Yet Eunice also recalled the Sunday recitals, which she said prepared her so well for public performance.<sup>85</sup> The audience for these, most probably, were fellow music students and members of the convent community.

### **Boy students and male mentors at the Parramatta Mercy music centres**

The select schools of the Sisters of Mercy at Parramatta, Golden Grove and Holy Cross enrolled boys in their infants and primary sections. Often whole families were sent to the one school. Boys who were not students could attend the convent on a Saturday morning or before or after school for music lessons. In the early decades, music tuition was given in a convent parlor where a piano and music stand were kept.<sup>86</sup> As the high schools expanded physically, purpose built practice and lesson rooms were added, although the convent parlor would still be used for ensemble playing. Eunice Gardiner said she enjoyed having her violin lesson in the convent parlour because she could rest the end of the violin on the marble mantelpiece.<sup>87</sup>

Some of the talented boys who had been trained at a Sisters of Mercy music centre retained very strong ties with their former teachers. One of the best known male ex-students was Vaughan Hanley, who began his music education at Golden Grove at the age of five years with Sr M. Aquin King, with whom he retained a life-long friendship. In 1931, aged sixteen years, Vaughan won a £10 exhibition from the NSW State Conservatorium for Grade II violin as well as an exhibition from the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music, London, which entitled the

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<sup>83</sup> *CFJ*, 7 January 1937, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 44.

<sup>85</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

<sup>86</sup> A 1916 photo of a classroom at the NSW State Conservatorium shows that musicians learnt in classrooms resembling middle-class living rooms (not unlike the convent parlour), Collins, *Sounds from the Stables*, p. 231.

<sup>87</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

holder to free entry to their Licentiate examination for violin. The same year he also won a Trinity College of Music, London exhibition worth £6 6s for Intermediate violin.<sup>88</sup> After winning a scholarship to the NSW State Conservatorium of Music (the first of several), and beginning a highly successful career there, he became the leader of the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, a position he held for thirty-seven years. His book, *New Concepts in Violin Teaching: an innovative method for beginners* was dedicated to Sr M. Aquin King, who remained his mentor.

Some of the boy pupils of the Sisters of Mercy would later repay their debt to their music teachers by conducting College orchestras. At the 1936 Holy Cross College Musicale, the Holy Cross College Orchestra was conducted by Leo Smith, an ex-student of the St Pius' Enmore music centre.<sup>89</sup> Sr M. Aidan Codd noted that Leo Smith began his musical studies in violin under Sr M. Lelia Rafferty at Enmore.<sup>90</sup> Leo Smith won a scholarship to the Sydney Conservatorium, studied under Henri Verbrugghan, became a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and travelled with his master. Sr M. Aidan Codd recorded that Leo Smith was always loyal to the Sisters of Mercy and he not only conducted College orchestras, but in later years, willingly orchestrated music for the sisters.<sup>91</sup>

Frank Hutchins, O.B.E., F.R.A.M., pianist, teacher, composer and a non-Catholic, had a friendship with the Parramatta Sisters stretching over a period of more than fifty years. He taught Sr M. Theophane Collins at the Conservatorium before she entered in 1938. As mentioned previously he was a mentor to Eunice Gardiner. He was asked by Sr M. Paschal Hession to write music for the poems 'The Australian Sunrise' and 'The Song of the Cattle Hunters' to be performed at a Music Education Conference of the 1940s. The three part song 'The Australian Sunrise' was dedicated, as he said at its first performance, 'to my friends at OLMC Parramatta'.<sup>92</sup> Holy Cross College girls were to sing 'The Australian Sunrise' on various occasions. He was a chief examiner for the State Conservatorium, and in that capacity had visited OLMC Parramatta just eight days before

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<sup>88</sup> *CP*, 31 December 1931.

<sup>89</sup> *CFJ*, 7 January 1937, p. 19. St Pius' School, Enmore had been taken over by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1909 from the Good Samaritans at the request of Cardinal Moran.

<sup>90</sup> A 1924 article reported Leo Smith was first trained by Sr M. Lelia Rafferty of the Sisters of Mercy, Ryde and had won a State scholarship in 1915, *CP*, 10 January 1924, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 61.

<sup>92</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 76.



his death in a car accident in 1965.<sup>93</sup> Frank Hutchins, a New Zealander, experienced at a very young age the exhilaration of playing for one of the world's greatest pianists, Paderewski, and then, as a scholarship winner, the challenge of travelling alone to London at a very young age to undertake his musical studies. This experience could account to some extent for his mentorship of Eunice Gardiner.<sup>94</sup>

### **Music at the service of the liturgy and the wider community**

The music teachers working in the branch houses were responsible for the liturgy at the parish church, where such big celebratory occasions as Easter and the Forty Hours Devotion would be an extra call on their teaching and creative abilities. They were well trained to perform these tasks, and ensured that students and ex-students would be on hand to assist. It was part of the 'corporate' nature of Catholic worship characteristic of Australian parish life up to the 1960s. Incorporating the talents of ex-students in important liturgical celebrations helped to maintain their links with the College, reinforce the faith in which they had been educated, and enriched the occasion with their hard won skills.

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation's establishment, in December 1938, is a notable example of this liturgical training of their students. A 'Mercy' Pontifical High Mass in early December was celebrated by Archbishop Gilroy. The sisters and the senior girls made up a combined choir to sing a Mass composed by Dom Moreno, a contemporary Spanish Benedictine monk from New Norcia, Western Australia, and a talented composer and musician. With a motet and an impressive 'Ecce Sacerdos Magnus' for the Archbishop's entry especially composed for the occasion, as well as splendidly performed Gregorian chant, the music for this Mass was of the highest standard.<sup>95</sup>

The Our Lady of Mercy Convent Parramatta Orchestra played each year at the St Patrick's Night Concert at the Sydney Town Hall. In fact, this was an orchestra made up of members of the OLMC, Golden Grove and Holy Cross orchestras.<sup>96</sup> It regularly played

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<sup>93</sup> OLMC Parramatta, *Misericordia*, 1963-65, n.p.

<sup>94</sup> For biographical details of Frank Hutchins, see Helen Bainton, 'Hutchens, Francis (Frank) (1892 - 1965)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, Melbourne University Press, 1983, pp. 413-414.

<sup>95</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 78.

<sup>96</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 61.

at social receptions (*conversazione*) of dignitaries programmed during major Catholic Church occasions such as the 1928 International Eucharistic Congress. During the 1948 Sydney celebrations of the centenary of public education, and 125 years of Catholic education, the orchestra played at a *conversazione* at Sydney Town Hall, which featured renowned Irish tenor, Fr Sydney MacEwan.<sup>97</sup>

The Holy Cross chronicler recorded that in the annual music competitions held for St Patrick's Day, Holy Cross had many successes and in the last year the St Patrick's Day music competition was held, Holy Cross gained thirteen first places, after which Monsignor Meaney visited the school to express his satisfaction at the high standard of performance achieved.<sup>98</sup>

### **Music at Holy Cross in the 1940s and 1950s**

The close relationship between the Parramatta Mercy music centres is illustrated by one talented musician, Gwenda Colgan. In 1940, when Gwenda Colgan competed in the Trinity College examinations, she won a State medal for Advanced Intermediate violin. She was then a pupil of Golden Grove, but as a pupil of Holy Cross College, she was a medallist at the May 1941 Trinity College examinations.<sup>99</sup> In 1941 Sr M. Aquin King had been transferred to Holy Cross, and many of her senior students followed her there from Golden Grove.<sup>100</sup>

An examination of the Holy Cross College music results for 1941 reveal an amazing array of talent. Gwenda Colgan had been awarded a medal from Trinity College London for the highest marks in the State of NSW in Senior grade violin in the May session and a £6 exhibition for gaining the highest marks in Australia. Her fellow student Beryl Waterman won the same award in the December 1941 examinations. Another talented Holy Cross student, Jean Wilson, was the winner of a State Conservatorium exhibition of £10 value for Grade 1V violin while Gwenda Colgan was awarded a £5 exhibition from the State Conservatorium.<sup>101</sup> Leo Orr, a junior pupil of Holy Cross College, was a Trinity College State medallist for Junior violin, at the May 1941 examination, and at the end of that year,

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<sup>97</sup> CW, 15 April 1948, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 29.

<sup>99</sup> CFJ, 26 June 1941, p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 12.

<sup>101</sup> CFJ, 19 February 1942.

Leo was to be awarded a merit by Trinity College in Intermediate violin. These Holy Cross results point to the remarkable teaching abilities of Sr M. Aquin King.

A Fourth Year student of Holy Cross, writing for the 1943 school magazine, expressed her views (and by inference those of her teachers) on the merits of music education:

Music is an expression of deep-seated instincts in human nature. Its appeal is no doubt fundamentally to the feelings and emotions but it has its intellectual side also and this is of no small importance to the child. To quote the words of the Polish pianist, Paderewski, 'The intellectual drill which the study of music gives the child is of great educational value'. Music not only stirs the imagination, inspires lofty thoughts, develops our spiritual temperament and increases our capacity for happiness but it also affects the will. Music has banished bodily fatigue and urged man on to almost superhuman feats of bravery and endurance.<sup>102</sup>

Although Holy Cross College had a pool of wonderfully gifted musicians to call on in the 1940s, the College was to broaden its cultural pursuits. The Holy Cross Convent verse-speaking choir under the tutelage of Miss Doris Patterson was the State medallist in 1941. This award from Trinity College London was a prestigious one. Doris Patterson was one of the most successful elocution teachers in Sydney and she was employed by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy for decades. The year 1941 saw Miss Patterson's pupils dominating the competitions.<sup>103</sup>

The 1950s were rich in musical activities which encompassed many in the College community. By 1955, Holy Cross College had both a Senior and a Junior Orchestra. Sr M. Christina Creede (Breda), a Golden Grove music school ex-student, was a music teacher at Holy Cross College from 1950 to 1954, teaching both piano and violin. She was replaced by Sr M. Emilian Croak, a music student of the Sisters of Charity, who remained at Holy Cross until 1965. Through this period, Holy Cross College students continued to win prestigious awards and ex-students were forging careers in music. Cellists Robyn Baldwin and Elizabeth Frewin were each awarded the Trinity College

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<sup>102</sup> *Holy Cross College, Woollahra*, 1943, p. 20. The writer, Maureen Waite, gained Honours in Grade 1 Pianoforte in the Conservatorium exams.

<sup>103</sup> *Holy Cross College, Woollahra*, 1942, n.p.

State medals for its 1957 May and December examination sessions.

In the 1958 AMEB and Trinity College examinations, ninety-six Holy Cross College candidates were successful with forty-one gaining honours and fifty-three credits. Ex-students Shealah Hidden, Nancy Barone and Mary Ingham continued their music studies at the Conservatorium. Mrs A. Ingham, (Mary's mother) conducted the Holy Cross College Orchestra in the 1950s. Shealah had gained a Commonwealth scholarship to study music at University level and Mary was completing her Performer's and Teacher's Diploma (violin), planning to continue her studies in Austria under Wolfgang Sneiderham.

The 1958 golden jubilee year celebrations of the establishment of Holy Cross College featured the combined College orchestra and the award-winning senior choir, conducted by Sr M. Helena Phillips. Ex-student Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey), of the 1958 LC class, has recalled how:

Our pride in the excellent Holy Cross College orchestra, choir and all things musical culminated in an almost unprecedented occurrence when, on marking our choir, the examiners from the Trinity College of Music requested that Sr M. Helena and the choir repeat "All in the April Evening", such was the near perfection of the [senior] choir in this medal winning performance of 1958.<sup>104</sup>

A number of Holy Cross ex-music students taught music in schools or privately. Teaching was always regarded as respectable employment for females. The music teacher who taught in the home could accommodate competing demands for her time; even better she would not face loss of employment when she married. Eileen Barry taught piano in her home until she married. Others, such as Eunice Gardiner and Phyllis McDonald taught at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music. Holy Cross ex-student, Sr M Michael Hawke (Dorothy May), returned to teach music at the College, between 1945 and 1947.

Sr M. Theophane Collins taught music at Holy Cross during 1941-2 but was transferred to OLMC Parramatta. After years spent teaching at the inner city schools of St Peter's, Surry

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<sup>104</sup> Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey), '1958 and Our Golden Years at HCC', reminiscences contributed to a 50<sup>th</sup> reunion collection of memories, June 2008, in the author's possession.

Hills, St Kieran's Golden Grove and St Michael's, Stanmore, she returned to Holy Cross between 1957 and 1961 before going to St Anne's Bondi and then OLMC, Epping.

Another well known music teacher who taught at Holy Cross in this period was Sr M. Helena Phillips (Irene), who was an ex-student of OLMC Parramatta and had gained her L.A.B. in violin and piano in 1906. Her first appointment was at Enmore; she then taught music at Holy Cross and Golden Grove and finally, in the 1950s, returned to Holy Cross.

Sr M. Christina Creede moved from Holy Cross College to OLMC Parramatta in 1955 and remained there as a greatly loved and admired teacher until 1984. She came to Australia from Ireland as a child in 1928 and was taught music by the Presentation Sisters in Queensland. She studied at the State Conservatorium of Music in Sydney, under Phyllis McDonald who had been Sr M. Aquin King's student at Golden Grove, and completed the Diploma of Music and obtained the A. Mus. A. in 1941. She continued her musical studies at Golden Grove under Sr M. Helena Phillips and obtained her L.T.C.L. and L. Mus. A. Breda entered the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1943 and taught music, mainly violin, with Sr M. Bernadette Murray and Sr M. Helena Phillips at Holy Cross. At OLMC Parramatta, she worked to develop a strong and accomplished orchestra and it was said of her that 'her string ex-students understood that they were members of the [College] orchestra until they married'.<sup>105</sup>

### **The decline of music from the 1960s**

The Wyndham Scheme provided for a core of mandatory subjects plus selections from a variety of optional subjects, and extended the secondary stage of education by an extra year to Form V1. Its system, involving an internal assessment dimension for the new Higher School Certificate, which had replaced the Leaving Certificate (based solely on external examinations), placed pressure on teachers and students to perform to the best of their ability throughout the senior year. As a result, the practice of students having their music lessons in school time became much more of a difficulty than before, though, as mentioned previously, this had always been a point of contention between music teachers and teachers of examination classes.

Beginning in the 1960s, fewer sisters were appointed as music teachers.<sup>106</sup> Because of the

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<sup>105</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 82.

<sup>106</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p.88.

centralisation of finances in the Catholic systemic schools and the provision of stipends for sisters teaching in these schools, the congregations of religious no longer relied on the revenue from music lessons to help support their communities. Also, with the influx of migrants from post-war Europe, Catholic parish schools came under enormous pressures to house Catholic school children and maintain reasonable teaching standards in classrooms which were bursting at the seams. This resulted in sisters talented in the field of music being appointed to classroom teaching. From the early 1960s, music teachers were asked to be prepared to take a religion class, and Sr M. Theophane Collins did so for many years at Holy Cross College.<sup>107</sup> Sr M. Theophane was the last dedicated religious music teacher at Holy Cross. She had returned to the College in 1966 and was still teaching music, part-time, in 1979.

Music teachers in the post-1960s era commented that television and the increase in competitive sport for girls militated against the promotion of instrumental music. At colleges like OLMC Parramatta and Holy Cross Woollahra, core and elective music were taught by specialist lay staff. By 1985, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy had only one sister actively engaged in teaching instrumental music.<sup>108</sup> At Holy Cross, at the special request of an ex-student who was now sending her own daughters to the College, ex-student Shealagh Hidden (nee Trefle) was brought in to give individual music lessons.<sup>109</sup>

By the time Sr Barbara McDonough returned to Holy Cross College as its principal in 1989, there were no longer private music lessons being given at the school. The small music rooms were being used for other purposes such as small sized remedial classes. Music was taught as a core (mandatory) subject usually covered in Years 7/8, although there an occasional elective music group in Years 9/10. For some years, Musicals were produced annually with the boys from Waverley College. Soon, however, the main musical performances were restricted to the annual prize-giving function, held at the Coleman Hall at Bondi Junction, which later became the Church in the Marketplace, with the preparation for these being held outside school hours.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 80.

<sup>108</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 88.

<sup>109</sup> Information supplied by Sr Barbara McDonough.

<sup>110</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 'Notes on Music at Holy Cross 1989-2001', unpublished manuscript, in possession of the author.

Fifty years on, micro-chips have made music accessible to young people through small, portable and programmable devices. As Sr Barbara McDonough has noted, the Holy Cross students in the final years of the College were more interested in listening to music through the various media than in playing instrumental music.<sup>111</sup> However, music remains an important part of church liturgies, and still provides within the Church, an outlet for the musically talented. Contact with former music students of Holy Cross College has revealed a pride in their individual and collective past achievements, and that they are passing on their musical interests to their children and grandchildren. In this way the musical heritage of Holy Cross College lives on.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter can be read as an unmitigated litany of triumphs in the field of music in the best or worst tradition, depending on your point of view, of Catholic triumphalism. As can be seen from the documentation, however, these triumphs are a matter of fact.

Collins has noted that as a middle class, sufficiently prosperous and self-confident, emerged in Australian cities in the later nineteenth century, ‘serious music was [...] increasingly identified with enlightenment rather than entertainment’.<sup>112</sup> This was evident in the serious interest in music in the early years of Holy Cross College. Yet, as Collins points out, in the early decades of the twentieth century, musicality was still seen as part of the accomplishments style of education given to young ladies of the middle and upper classes.<sup>113</sup> There was a minor element of this in the early years at Holy Cross. From about the 1930s, the development of the phonograph, cheap records, and radio enabled the growth of a media industry devoted to bringing ‘high culture’ to the masses and opened up employment opportunities to both males and females of musical talent. The orchestras of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and of the major cities, such as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, flourished at this time, and some ex-students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were part of such orchestras.

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were admirably situated to meet this increasing demand for accomplished musicians in Australia. As has been seen, the strong music tradition of

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<sup>111</sup> McDonough, ‘Notes on Music at Holy Cross’.

<sup>112</sup> Collins, *Sounds from the Stables*, p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> Collins, *Sounds from the Stables*, p. 5.

Holy Cross College grew out of the music centre established at Parramatta by the founding pioneer sisters. This initial centre was nurtured by the Parramatta congregational superiors who provided expert tuition for talented members of the congregation. These sisters in turn developed a strong network of music centres, first at Golden Grove, Newtown, and subsequently at Holy Cross, Enmore, Ryde and Epping. A number of ex-students from these music schools entered the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, or remained strong supporters in many ways, from being members of the College orchestra to assisting with teaching and conducting.

The success of these music centres in general, and Holy Cross in particular, was outstanding and made a significant contribution to Australian culture. Along with the emphasis on instrumental mastery at a high level was a strong support of music as a full academic examination subject. Sr M. Paschal Hessian was a key person in this movement. While music was an important source of income for the sisters, it was valued essentially for its spiritually uplifting powers as well as its recreational capacity, and the talents of the music teachers were always at the service of the liturgy of the Church.

As has been seen, changing educational structure, the granting of State Aid, and wider cultural changes led to the demise of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy network of music centres, including Holy Cross College, Woollahra. The piano would be replaced by the radio in the 1940s and 1950s. The family that had gathered around the piano was now gathering around the 'wireless' and record player. Live radio programmes, free lending libraries, picture theatres, and youth organisations provided new methods of entertainment for young people who were beginning to participate in the social revolution of the 1950s and '60s. Television, common in Australian homes by the early 1960s, and the greatly increased opportunities for girls to engage in competitive sport, were major absorbers of recreational time for young people. In the last years of the College, students were more interested in listening to music, than playing an instrument.



## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

#### **Educating the middle class**

Although most religious congregations which came to Australia had a basic commitment to the poor, the importance of the education of the Catholic middle class was clearly widely recognised by many of the congregations by the late nineteenth century. The Patrician Brothers, in their paper on the education of the middle class (then called intermediate education), underlined this situation:

In truth, the middle classes form the fulcrum which has to bear almost the entire pressure of the ups and downs of Society's two extremes. The education then, of this middle class must be a question of vital importance. The poorest have their Public Schools, the richest their Universities. But what have Governments done for that portion of Society which, as it were, forms the central current? <sup>1</sup>

In response to this need, a large number of select or superior (also called high or pension) schools were established in what has been described as the second developmental phase (1860s – 1920s) in the history of Catholic education in Australia.<sup>2</sup> Holy Cross College was established late in this phase; there were already six superior Catholic schools offering secondary education to middle class girls in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs by 1908. As a superior school, Holy Cross College exhibited the distinguishing features of its neighbours, providing education in the Catholic faith, along with schooling in 'lady-like' behaviour, suitable accomplishments and academic education in preparation for public examinations.

Examination success would equip young women to progress to 'respectable' professions and/or eventually to marry a Catholic educated young man, upon whom they would exert a strong influence for good. In addition, they were expected to participate in their local parish and in the wider Catholic community and society in general, as leaders, when and

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<sup>1</sup> The Patrician Brothers, Holy Cross College, Ryde, 'Intermediate Education', paper IX, *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, pp. 469-473.

<sup>2</sup> See Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny*, p. 73 and Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, pp. 311-312.

where appropriate. Joining a religious congregation, to live a life dedicated to the service of God, the Church and the wider community, was an alternative encouraged by the Church and approved of by many Catholic parents.

This thesis has shown that the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, in accordance with their Mercy tradition, were well aware of the importance of the education of the middle class as a source of leadership in the Church, specifically in religious congregations, as well as a source of income for congregation's work of service to the less well-off. It has been seen that they were innovative educators and at times leaders in the educational sphere, outstandingly so in the field of music.

### **The paradox of religious educators of young women**

This thesis, in its survey of a century of Catholic girls' education has explored how Catholic middle class girls, constrained by the mores imposed by Church and society, sought and took advantage of the opening of higher education to women and their gradual infiltration of science, law and medicine, politics and public service. To McGrath, the fact that in 1984 some 75% of the highest female public servants in the commonwealth government were convent educated is an outcome of the education of Catholic girls to a sense of leadership<sup>3</sup> and it can be shown that Holy Cross College graduates have excelled in all areas of academia, education, medicine and nursing, the arts, public service and business. They have grasped the opportunities afforded them by the advances won by the second wave of feminism which directly and indirectly led to fundamental changes in the place of women within as well as in wider society.

Holy Cross ex-students, in their oral and written accounts have reinforced the notion of their religious teachers as role models of strong women who had achieved success in their chosen field. When lay teachers (mostly female and often ex-students of the Sisters of Mercy) had an increasing presence on the College staff from the 1960s, these women, many of whom were married and juggling home and family responsibilities and a career, would also be positive role models to the students. Janet West has observed that 'when the women's movement emerged in the late 1960s, "convent girls" simply applied their

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<sup>3</sup> McGrath, *These Women?* pp. 206-207.

tendency to question to another element in the *status quo*, as their consciousness of gender inequality was raised'.<sup>4</sup>

As has been seen, throughout the twentieth century, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were challenged to educate the congregation's members to meet the ongoing demands for higher education for women, especially in the field of science. From the 1920s, they were participating in education conferences, were appointed as Catholic school representatives on curriculum committees of the Board of Studies, and were active members of professional associations. This pro-active involvement in the development of a Catholic education system, which won respect from state employed educators, belies the image of the sisterhood, confined and restricted by enclosure rules, as the educational historian, Burley has pointed out. The thesis has demonstrated how the Parramatta congregation of the Sisters of Mercy were themselves leading educational reformers and took an active role in the development of the system of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

### **Crisis in Catholic education**

A 'crisis' of Catholic education in the Sydney Archdiocese in the 1960s and 1970s was precipitated by the combined impacts of the influx of European migrants, the post-war increase in the natural rate of population growth and the implementation of the Wyndham comprehensive education scheme. Government policies, both at State and Federal levels, were impacting directly on Catholic schools struggling to meet rapidly increasing enrolments with existing staff and material resources. This crisis affected Holy Cross College in ways which no one could have foreseen at the time. It is only with the advantage of hindsight and the historian's craft, that these impacts have been revealed, though not fully, owing to the limitations of archival access and selective oral memory which have been discussed in Chapter 1.

### **Inherent and on-going challenges of Catholic education**

As Christine Trimmingham Jack has pointed out so well, there was a paradox between the two events which impacted significantly on Catholic education in Australia in the second half of the twentieth century, namely, the granting of state aid, and Vatican II. The paradox lay in the tensions between Church and State, between the sacred and the secular.

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<sup>4</sup> West, *Daughters of Freedom*, p. 342.

The former, state aid, established a dual sector education system in NSW, consisting of state and independent schools sustained by State and Federal Government grants. This strengthened the hold of the state on Catholic schools which previously had been limited mainly to the public examination system. The latter, Vatican II, saw the beginning of processes leading to the ‘crumbling of the divide’ which had existed between the Catholic laity, the clergy and the religious orders, and between Catholicism and other religious denominations.<sup>5</sup> The microcosm of Holy Cross College displayed action and reaction to these processes, which are identifiable from the latter half of the 1960s, and are ongoing today, as Catholic schools generally strive to maintain a special Catholic identity.

Maurice Ryan acknowledged that: ‘Catholic educators have struggled for more than a century to explain how Catholic values and a general religious sentiment are represented in the entire curriculum of Catholic schools.’<sup>6</sup> Yet Cardinal Moran made it sound so easy and logical that the state should pay for the secular education carried on in Catholic schools, while basing his argument for separate Catholic schools on the necessity of religion permeating the whole Catholic school enterprise. For economic reasons, Moran was being pragmatic. Australians in general, and Australian Catholics in particular, being pragmatic and anti-intellectual, have not yet tackled seriously the challenging historical, philosophical, psychological and theological study necessary to understand more fully what is meant by an education system or individual school which claims to be secular or claims to be religious. The widely respected historian of Australian education, Alan Barcan, has pointed out that the Churches, including the Catholic Church, lack a ‘well-educated Christian intelligentsia’ which would be needed for such a task.<sup>7</sup> It is hoped, however, that the challenge will be taken up by the developing Catholic universities as well as the older and more established universities.

### **Loss of autonomy and identity**

Because of the Sisters of Mercy tradition of autonomous government, which grounded them firmly in the local Church, it was a natural development that they, rather than the Sisters of Charity, or the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, or the Poor Clare Sisters, should

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<sup>5</sup> Christine Trimmingham Jack, ‘What’s in a Veil?’, *Change: Transformations in Education*, vol. 4, no.1, May 2001, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Ryan, *Foundations of Religious Education in Catholic Schools*, Thomson Social Science Press, Melbourne, 1997, p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality*, p.317. John Braniff expresses an awareness of the problem in his essay, ‘Charism and the Concept of a Catholic Education’, *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 84, no.1, 2007.

have been requested by the archdiocesan education authorities in the early 1960s, to be the nucleus for the local archdiocesan Catholic girls' regional school in the northern area of the eastern suburbs. This involved amalgamation with Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rose Bay, and other close-by intermediate Catholic girls' schools to form a school, called officially Woollahra Regional Catholic Girls' High School.

As this thesis has shown, the school community of Holy Cross College, Woollahra, had by 1960, a unique identity forged by religious, cultural, geographical, political and pedagogical forces. When Holy Cross College ceased in 1962-63 to be a private school, owned and run by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, the most significant consequence of this change was unremarked at the time and possibly unforeseen. The College began to lose its identity, its uniqueness. The catchment area of the school was quadrupled and the number of girls enrolled doubled. The small, 'homely' atmosphere of the school was lost and the socio-economic background of the students became much broader.

The various levels at which authority was exerted over Holy Cross College became increasingly complex from the 1960s, as the College was absorbed into the Sydney archdiocesan regional school system. In the early stages of regionalisation particularly, uniqueness was not encouraged. In fact it was actually discouraged as a result of financial pressures, which led to the imposition of conformity and uniformity on regional school communities for the sake of the future of Catholic education. The graduated increase of state aid meant an escalating impact of government regulations on the systemic Catholic schools, and in 1965, the decision was taken to pool funding to ensure its judicious use.<sup>8</sup>

Comprehensive education requiring large school populations was imposed by Dr Wyndham on all non-State schools accepting government funding. As such a school from 1963 onwards, Holy Cross College was obliged to accept students from various schools which the CEO closed for economic reasons. The College's identity as a regional secondary school was distorted by the influx of students who lived outside the region and consequently there was a diminished place in the school for the local parishes, their communities and their priests. The ties with the local communities, and with the parishes, became even more tenuous as the College drew on a much wider and diverse area for its students in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, the old family links of girls following their

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<sup>8</sup> Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, pp. 230-231.

mothers, older sisters and cousins to the College were broken as booming property prices, and the replacement of family friendly housing with medium and high density developments, forced young people, and those establishing a family, out of the area. A sense of community cohesiveness within the College, so evident from its beginnings, now became noticeably weaker in the junior secondary (middle) school, a fact lamented, as school and staff newsletters from the 1970s onwards clearly indicate. The middle class 'respectable' and solidly Catholic families of the pre-1960s College became a dwindling proportion of College parents, to be replaced by an increasing proportion of those who were economically, and often socially, struggling, and the number of single parent families markedly increased, reflecting changing family structures in the wider society. Inclusiveness of these groups in their daughter's education, along with their weak or non-involvement with the Catholic faith, was an on-going concern of the College staff.

There were further challenges to the efforts by the College community to build and maintain a cohesive identity, when the senior school at Paul Street, for economic reasons, returned to the middle school site. This upheaval was followed in 1991, by the absorption of the remaining students and staff of St Patrick's High School, Church Hill, when it closed in 1990. The struggle for cohesion was made more challenging by the increasing number of overseas students through the 1980s and 1990s. Using initiative to counteract critical demographic changes in its catchment area, Holy Cross College developed a reputation for being a highly successful school for overseas students, until the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997-8 undermined this position. The resulting sharp decline in enrolments, and a forecast increasing decline in the school-age population of the Eastern Suburbs, resulted in an untenable future for the College. By the twenty-first century, only fifty-nine per cent of the students attending Holy Cross College were Catholic, well below the proportion decreed acceptable by the CEO. It is not known how significant this was as a factor in the official decision to close the College. Throughout this time of decline, the Holy Cross community led by Sr Barbara McDonough, aspired to the fullest possible development of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and cultural attributes of girls through a Catholic education inspired by the Mercy Vision of the education of girls, but as always, constrained by the reality of finances, staffing, physical resources, and imposed authority.

This study has found the eventual decline of Holy Cross College in the 1990s can be

mapped in terms of the loss of its unique identity as a middle-class independent school, a loss forged by a rollercoaster of economic, cultural, demographic, political and pedagogical change. Br Marcellin Flynn has conducted a long-term study on the changing nature of the culture of Catholic schools on behalf of the Sydney CEO and has stated unequivocally that: ‘The most distinctive feature of highly effective schools continues to be their outstanding culture which gives them a special character or spirit.’<sup>9</sup> This history of Holy Cross would support such a perception.

### **Responding to the questions**

At the beginning of this thesis, the following overarching question was posed: Why did Holy Cross College close in 2001? It is now clear that the closure of the College was the result of a complex set of factors:

- The crisis of Catholic education in the Sydney Archdiocese in the 1960s and 1970s, which was precipitated by the combined impacts of the influx of European migrants, the post-war increase in the natural rate of population growth, and the imposition of the Wyndham Scheme of Secondary Education.
- The following rationalisation by the Archdiocese of its educational resources which involved the creation of regional schools.
- The nature of the Sisters of Mercy as an order strongly grounded in the local Church, which led to Holy Cross College being chosen as the Woollahra Catholic Girls’ Regional High School.
- The consequent loss of autonomy by the school administration and the weakening of ties with local parishes.
- The decline in music teaching at the College following the necessity of music teachers moving into the classroom owing to the shortage of classroom teachers, this move being facilitated by the granting of state aid to Catholic schools which removed the reliance of the sisters on music fees as an important source of income.
- The demographic changes in the Eastern Suburbs which led to a decrease in the school age population of the area.
- The fact that there were four well-established independent Catholic girls’ schools in close proximity to Holy Cross, two of which had boarding facilities and had

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<sup>9</sup> Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 160. It is not clear whether this refers to a collective or an individual school culture.

retained the primary section of their schools.

- The further weakening of the middle class, academic nature of the junior secondary section of the College, as it absorbed students from inner city schools closed by the CEO.
- The Asian Economic Crisis of 1997-8 which led to an immediate decrease in the full-fee paying overseas students who had boosted the school's population and economic base sufficiently to keep it open.

The second question posed at the beginning of this thesis was: Did Holy Cross College achieve the objectives of the founding pioneers including Cardinal Moran? As has been seen, the fundamental aspiration of Moran and the founding pioneer sisters was to foster the passing on of the Catholic faith to generations of Holy Cross students.

This history of the College clearly traces the basic concern of the sisters for the religious development of the students in the Catholic tradition of Christianity. Right to the closure of the school, religion classes were given priority in the curriculum and time-table. In this enterprise the Parramatta Sisters were actually involved in the up-dating of catechetical methods which were then implemented in the College. Even in the very closing years when there were many non-Catholics in the student body, religion generally, and liturgy in particular, were highlighted, and at this time, following a request from the College's Student Representative Council, a School Hymn was introduced in 1997. With the title 'Nothing Without God' (Nihil Sine Deo – the College motto), it encapsulated basic Christian religious values which had been presented as ideals to the school community across the decades.

The founding pioneer sisters would generally have not considered it an intrusion into the privacy of their students to enquire after their Sunday Mass attendance, the Mass (the Eucharist) being the sign and source of unity in the Catholic community. Over the decades, however, as religion in Australia moved more into the private sphere,<sup>10</sup> this would have been considered unthinkable by Holy Cross teachers. According to the Christian Research Association, the latest results of the 2006 National Church Life Survey confirm the very low church attendance in the traditional Christian

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<sup>10</sup> See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2007, chapter 12.



denominations, including the Catholic. It comments that: ‘Since the 1960s, younger generations have gone missing.’<sup>11</sup> No doubt this includes a number of Holy Cross ex-students, which would sadden Moran and the founding pioneer sisters.

For the present situation concerning the place of religion in the life of Holy Cross ex-students, apart from public documents, we depend upon allusions to religion in the responses made to the invitation to contribute to the collection of recollections entitled *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1908-2001: celebration of our education* and the brief life summaries contained in booklets produced by the organisers of the thirty year reunion of the 1967 HSC class and the fifty year reunion of the 1957 LC class, as well as interviews carried out in the course of research for this thesis. In the first of these sources, which contains approximately 170 entries which span the near century of the College’s existence, there were thirty explicit references to religion and twenty-four explicit references to associated values.

The following are some examples of references to religion in the responses to the invitation to send in recollections of Holy Cross College following the announcement of the closure of the College:

#### 1920s-1930s

- ‘Religion well in front of us all of the time. Sister [M.] Koska – a great religious leader and strict little lady [...] a song I liked was “This is my Prayer”’.<sup>12</sup>
- The daughters of a student of this period, too ill to respond herself, reported that their mother did pioneering work to set up the Catechist movement in State schools.<sup>13</sup>

#### 1940s

- ‘I look back to those years as the beginning of what have become lifelong emphases. Among them a curiosity about the meaning of life, the Christian God and religion.’<sup>14</sup>
- ‘At Easter, going up to the convent to make-up the basket of petals – for Holy Thursday night – loved Easter’.<sup>15</sup>

#### 1950s

- ‘Being made a Child of Mary[ ...] Easter in the Church, a magic time, scattering of

<sup>11</sup> *Pointers*, Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, vol. 18, no.1, March 2008, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1908-2001: celebration of our education* (hereafter *Celebration*), p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> *Celebration*, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Celebration*, p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> *Celebration*, p. 95.

- rose petals, the incense [and] going to the chapel on special occasions.’<sup>16</sup>
- ‘A major influence on me throughout my life has been my Catholic faith ... The unquestioning time of that faith passed, then came the questioning. Finally has come the renewal of my Christianity, which is now with me and ever deepening.’<sup>17</sup>
  - ‘My loyalties to and love of my “Alma Mater” have never waned. The beautiful nuns, the ethic of dignity and manners as nurtured by example and attitude can never be forgotten. The orchestra, the encouragement and love of music and appreciation of its excellence and its uplifting qualities,[ ...] but above all, the truly Christian ethic and especially the devotion to Our Lady of Mercy.’<sup>18</sup>
  - ‘Friday Benediction – the whole school filing into the church, dressed in full uniform (hats, gloves etc.) and the beautiful Latin hymns.’<sup>19</sup>

### 1960s

- ‘I remember the discussions after school – discussing spiritual issues and the guidance given by the Sisters [..]. very much appreciated.’<sup>20</sup>
- ‘I remember with real affection and gratitude the Sisters who taught us. They did inestimably more than teach. They befriended us, advocated for us, counselled us and disciplined us. Essentially, they liked us, believed in our potential to become self-determining women who would value the Catholic tradition of faith and action and action for social justice.’<sup>21</sup>

### 1970s

- ‘The retreat in Katoomba, 1971[and] Legion of Mary meetings’.<sup>22</sup>
- ‘Notebook for Lenten prayers and sacrifices.’<sup>23</sup>
- ‘Singing at Mass on the first Friday of every month and practising the songs beforehand.’<sup>24</sup>
- ‘Meeting my friend was a highlight [of life at Holy Cross]. We spent all our spare time together at school and home playing guitar and singing. This led to many years of providing music for Saturday Mass at Haymarket.’<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Celebration*, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> *Celebration*, p.106.

<sup>18</sup> *Celebration*, p.109.

<sup>19</sup> *Celebration*, p.111.

<sup>20</sup> *Celebration*, p.121.

<sup>21</sup> *Celebration*, p.124.

<sup>22</sup> *Celebration*, p.141.

<sup>23</sup> *Celebration*, p.143.

<sup>24</sup> *Celebration*, p. 144.

<sup>25</sup> *Celebration*, p.149.

1980s

- ‘I often say that I had an extremely positive school experience – both in terms of education and being part of a Catholic school. In a world where so many are damaged or angry with the Church, I hold no grudge or bitter taste from my experience in a Catholic school. Quite the reverse. I found it an extremely positive and enriching experience. The fact that I am a Visual Arts and Religious education teacher is testimony to this.’<sup>26</sup>
- ‘Mr Hunt’s religion classes listening to meditation music.’<sup>27</sup>

In the brief life accounts (sixty-seven in total) of the 1965 School Certificate and 1967 Higher School Certificate classes at Holy Cross College, there were thirty references to religion. For example:

- ‘Throughout all these years I have kept the faith although at times it has been difficult for me. The turning point in my life was to join a Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group.’<sup>28</sup>
- ‘I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices my parents made to give me a Catholic education and the Mercy spirit lives on in me.’<sup>29</sup>
- ‘My philosophy is to look for the meaning in life’s situations, try to gain some benefits from all experiences and to let go of destructive thoughts. I am happy and grateful to be empowered to be able to both give and receive love.’<sup>30</sup>
- ‘All of us have a bag to pick up, it seems no one escapes sorrow. As I look at my old friends from Holy Cross College I realise what a mentally strong lot we are in times of tragedy and hardship. Faith is important. I guess we must have learnt something all those years ago.’<sup>31</sup>

**Sense of community**

Strongly associated with the aspiration of the pioneers of Holy Cross College for the religious development of the girls was the growth of a sense of community. As has been seen, the chronicler of the early years of the College commented on the growing sense of

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<sup>26</sup> *Celebration*, p. 154.

<sup>27</sup> *Celebration*, p. 165.

<sup>28</sup> Holy Cross College Woollahra, classes of 1965-1967, thirty year reunion, (hereafter Classes of 1965-1967) unpublished collection of contributions by class members, compiled by Christine Young, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 42.

family within the school, facilitated by small numbers. Nell Stanley, a student in this early period, recalled the school picnics at the beach which the girls organised for themselves during the school holidays. A student of the 1950s recollected that on summer Sundays, particularly in the school holidays, a ‘group of Holy Cross friends met for a picnic lunch and lots of swimming’, at the beach.<sup>32</sup> The various printed recollections mentioned above contain numerous references to self-organised gatherings of class mates. This was also evident in the interviews of focus groups and in individual interviews.

It was also noted, as the Holy Cross story moved across the decades, that the highly successful, indeed occasionally internationally famous, ex-students kept contact with the school and their school peers. One such internationally successful ex-student is the novelist Colleen McCullough, who was a student in the 1954 LC class. A fellow student from this class reported in *Celebration of Our Education*: ‘In April 1999 the class of ’54 had a reunion on Norfolk Island with Colleen McCullough to celebrate 45 years since leaving school [...]we spent a wonderful week together and if ever the spirit of Holy Cross was alive and well it was there on Norfolk. The thing we share is a common bond and that is Holy Cross College.’<sup>33</sup>

Because of the relative smallness of the College there were ties of loyalty across classes as well as within classes. In *Celebration of Our Education*, Sandra Gailey (LC 1958) recalled that as the presenter of guest speakers for Friends of the Sydney Opera House she had asked Colleen McCullough to be a guest speaker. She reported: ‘Colleen agreed [...] (She was superb!), signed books at length, and was most generous in giving of her precious time.’ ‘Sandra quoted Colleen as saying: ‘Sandra, I’ll come along – you know “the Holy Cross loyalties.”’<sup>34</sup> Colleen has shared in public, such as on the Andrew Denton *Enough Rope* Show on ABC Television (September 2007), the sadness of her family life and the determination she had to complete her LC year and win a university place against her father’s wishes. The Holy Cross Pioneers would be delighted that the community spirit they encouraged at Holy Cross had lived on so splendidly.

This provision of community support being especially valued when parental support is lacking was articulated in *Celebration of Our Education* by a student of the 1985-1990

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<sup>32</sup> E-mail from Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey) to the author, 2 July 2008.

<sup>33</sup> *Celebration*, p. 96.

<sup>34</sup> *Celebration*, p. 109.

years when the number of students from broken homes had increased considerably. This student commented: '[S]chool felt like home for a lot of us who had problems in our own home and I was sad to leave. I still have the same group of friends that I made when I first started at Holy Cross and we still laugh at things that happened to us there.'<sup>35</sup>

### **A love of learning**

As has been seen, Holy Cross College had a strong academic tradition from the earliest years when very few girls sat for the Leaving Certificate. The pioneering sisters encouraged girls to continue their education and facilitated this by encouraging parents to permit their girls to proceed beyond the Intermediate Certificate and, if necessary, provided financial support in the form of a bursary.<sup>36</sup> There were, too, among these pioneering sisters, as among their successors and the increasing number of lay teachers, enthusiastic teachers with a love for learning, which they aspired to impart to their students.

While a significant minority of girls, who have left written recollections, declared 'sport and boys' to be their main interests at school, an equally significant minority acknowledged a 'love of learning' kindled by their school experience. For example:

- '[I] loved Latin from Mother Thecla and can still help children and grandchildren with Latin homework. Loved history with Sr Malachy and English.'<sup>37</sup>
- '[My] greatest appreciation of Holy Cross College is that it has given me a love of learning.'<sup>38</sup>
- 'Sister Alphonsus (Alfie) was a spell-binding teacher. Her love of literature and poetry was contagious. I have a life-long love affair with books because of her.'<sup>39</sup>
- 'I owe a debt of gratitude to the Sisters of Mercy, both at St Anne's and at Holy Cross, for my formal education and for encouraging me to use my academic talents. I owe a special debt to Mrs Thom at Holy Cross for encouraging me to undertake the Arts-Law course at Sydney University. This was at a time when very few females enrolled in law.'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Celebration*, p. 158.

<sup>36</sup> *Celebration*, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> *Celebration*, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Celebration*, p. 91.

<sup>39</sup> *Celebration*, p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> *Celebration*, p. 106.

- ‘Mathematics lessons – inspiring teacher (Sr M. de Sales). A thread of her continues in me – a love of mathematics.’<sup>41</sup>

### **Music**

As has been seen, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were leaders in the field of music, both instrumental and as an academic subject. They worked tirelessly for the latter. Of the music centres established by the Parramatta sisters, Holy Cross was the most distinguished, in that it won the Australian Music Examinations Board Shield six times, compared to OLMC Parramatta’s five wins, Golden Grove’s five, Ryde’s two and Enmore’s one. Music teachers saw their pupils win awards of international standing. Life-long contacts by the congregation were maintained with leading university academics and music practitioners whose respect the sisters had earned. While this would have pleased the pioneer sisters and Moran, they would have deplored the decline in music after the school was incorporated into the regional archdiocesan school system. However, from the written recollections of ex-students and interviews with them, it is clear that those coming from the period before the 1970s appreciated the strong music tradition of the College, which they had enjoyed, and a number indicated that they were passing on to their children in various ways, their musical heritage from Holy Cross.

### **Upward mobility of the Catholic community**

It was no secret that Cardinal Moran was anxious to promote the upward social mobility of Catholics, not only to improve their economic situation but also to better situate them to contribute to leadership in the Church and the wider community. Holy Cross ex-students have not disappointed him or their pioneer women founders in this respect, as can be seen from the past or present occupation of ex-students as recorded in the sources mentioned above.

Adrienne Bucknole (nee Donato) reported on the 1965 LC class to which she belonged: ‘From that class we have a judge, school principals, teachers, librarians, successful business women, many mums, a couple of grandmothers and a congregational leader!’<sup>42</sup> From the brief life stories of the 1967 HSC class compiled in 1997 it is seen that out of the sixty-six who gave their occupation only four stated their occupation as ‘home duties’;

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<sup>41</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Celebration*, p. 123.

eighteen were teachers – approximately equally divided between Catholic and state schools; twenty-seven were involved in secretarial/clerical/accounting/business work; two were university lecturers; one doctor; a pharmacist (also having done a Law degree); five nurses; one pathologist; one radiographer, one lab technician; two librarians (one also having a law degree); two students.

It is clear too, from other recollections and interviews that there are Holy Cross College ex-students who have held influential positions in the Public Service. Jan Brady (LC1953) received honourable mention in the 2004-5 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Taxation: ‘During a 40 year career with us, Jan Brady became one of our first female assessors and in 1987 our first female Deputy Commissioner. She is widely recognised as being a positive role model for women across the Australian Public Service.’<sup>43</sup> Philippa Hall (1969 LC) in 2001 was the Deputy Director General, NSW Department of Women, working on social policies to improve the position of women in NSW. She explained: ‘I have worked in almost all the NSW based human rights/equal opportunity agencies over the years’. Philippa recalled that she had had her own problems as a teenager and ‘as a sometimes troubled, occasionally distressed, independent and defiant young person, ... was generally treated kindly [at Holy Cross College] and offered a lot of support in [her] intellectual development and in [her] growing up.’<sup>44</sup> In the business world, ex-student Kris Neill, a former senior advisor to the then NSW Premier Bob Carr, is now the Head of the Corporate Communications division at Macquarie Bank and is a board member of the Australian Science Media Centre.<sup>45</sup> Kris has paid tribute to the ‘great teachers who challenged and inspired us to reach our potential’.<sup>46</sup>

### **Relationship with the parish**

As has been seen, a remarkable aspect of the history of Holy Cross College across the twentieth century was its strong, positive relationship with the parish priest of Holy Cross. While curates came and went, there were only three parish priests for almost the whole century: Fr Peter O’Reilly, (1906-1931); Monsignor Richard Collender (1931- 1958); and Archbishop James Carroll, affectionately known as ‘Doc’, (1958-1995). Amy Alger, (Year 11, 1995) commented, following the death of Archbishop Carroll:

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<sup>43</sup> [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

<sup>44</sup> *Celebration*, p. 130.

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.macquarie.com/foundation\\_board.htm](http://www.macquarie.com/foundation_board.htm) and [http://www.aussmc.org./about\\_board.php](http://www.aussmc.org./about_board.php)

<sup>46</sup> *Celebration*, p. 147.

I know that nothing any one can say could ever describe what a loving, caring and generous man he was. I've known Archbishop Carroll for 13 years [...] I used to serve on the altar at Holy Cross with my brothers and I have Archbishop Carroll to thank for that. There will never be anyone like him.<sup>47</sup>

Sr Barbara McDonough, the last principal, observed:

Firstly he gave his time – he was a caring and interested friend with whom the Sisters could discuss their hopes and dreams for their students. He was a very wise man and often had further suggestions to make – to extend the ‘dreams’ beyond the Sisters’ sometimes modest aspirations. Then there was the practical assistance. Financial support was generously given, often from his own personal resources. All this was done very privately. Doc shunned public acclamation, and considered that seeing the benefits enjoyed by the students was all the reward he needed.<sup>48</sup>

As was seen in the course of this thesis, one of the aspirations of the Archbishop was to see a strong Holy Cross College from K-12. He put enormous effort and resources into developing the parish school to become a first class primary school. It received the patronage of the middle class as well as the working class in the area. The Archbishop saw it as a feeder school for the College, but the number of middle class parents choosing to send their girls on to the College after attending the primary school lessened considerably after its regionalisation, as has been shown.

This was a great disappointment to the Archbishop, but the parish primary school continued to flourish and the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy provided a principal for it for 100 years, with Sr Veronica Powell (a Holy Cross College ex-student) being the last, and due to retire in December 2008. The Archbishop would be heartened by the recent news that the first lay principal, who has been appointed by the Sydney Catholic Education Office, is Mrs Vicki Bourne Fallon, a past pupil of both Holy Cross Primary School and Holy Cross College.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Celebration*, p. 175.

<sup>48</sup> *Celebration*, p. 176.

<sup>49</sup> Sr Ailsa Mackinnon to the congregation, 20 June 2008.



### **In conclusion**

It has been seen that this history of Holy Cross College is a micro-study of the development of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney across the twentieth century. It was a time of great challenge and involved enormous self-sacrificing cooperation and generosity, and suffering, and questioning (at times bitter) of the Catholic community. The dominance of the Catholic Building and Finance Committee was eventually successfully challenged by the development of a professional Catholic Education Office (mostly staffed by religious or ex-religious), which was supportive of Holy Cross College in its various crises. It has also been seen how geography and place played a significant part in the history of the school. Brigidine Convent, Randwick, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington, both regionalised independent schools in the Eastern Suburbs, have flourished because they were situated in the southern section of the Eastern Suburbs, with an expanding catchment area, while Holy Cross was in the circumscribed northern section in close proximity to well established independent Catholic girls' high schools.

This thesis has shown that there existed at Holy Cross College a vibrant school culture during the early period of the school's existence and well into the period after regionalisation. It is this researcher's opinion that it is the memory of, and attachment to, this culture which is the glue which will continue to bind together so many former members of the school's community. It is clear that in their wishing to contribute to a history of the school, they are able to continue to reinforce and re-fashion its culture, which is still a living organism as long as they continue to organise re-unions and share their recollections. This thesis was supported by the Holy Cross Memorial Scholarship set up by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. It is through this scholarship that the strong academic tradition of Holy Cross College will live on to contribute to the academic life of Australia. The Holy Cross College Centenary Reunion, September 2008, promises to be a further catalyst to on-going connections between the members of the College ex-students community.

This thesis has traced the development and decline of a unique school culture in the microcosm of Holy Cross College, one firmly based in Catholic values and beliefs. It is hoped that the strong contextual narrative of this thesis will encourage more micro in-depth research within the broader picture of Catholic history in Australia. As indicated

initially, the researcher agrees with Southgate's assertion that 'to be of any benefit, historical study must result in some effect upon the future; it must facilitate, enable, and direct the course of future change'.<sup>50</sup> It is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the ongoing discourse among educators in general, and Catholic educators in particular, in such areas as the education of women, concerning the relationships between the religious and secular in the educational enterprise, a problem our forefathers, both Church (especially Moran) and state bequeathed to us.

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<sup>50</sup> Southgate, *History, What And Why?*, p. 141.

## CHAPTER 6

### DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE SPACE RACE: CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE 1951 – 1962

**‘We are in danger from moral and intellectual apathy’** (‘Call to Australia’ broadcast, 11 November 1951)

The Australian people, until the middle of the 1950s, retained feelings of insecurity regarding the permanency of peace and consequently their future prosperity. They felt a continuing threat of another war emanating from Communism, and economic stability had also seemed an elusive goal until the second half of the 1950s, a period noted for its economic and political stability. Minimum wages for both men and women generally rose relative to inflation. This economic stability has been described by John Murphy as ‘positively serene’ compared to the previous ten years.<sup>1</sup> It was matched by a period of political stability in which Robert Gordon Menzies won federal elections for the Liberal-Country Party Coalition in December 1955 and then again in November 1958. The December 1961 election was a much closer contest because of a temporary economic slump, but Menzies would survive to win a further three elections for the coalition in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

#### **‘An uncharacteristic decade for the century’**

The post-war housing shortage caused by the government’s war-time control over skilled manpower and materials was starting to ease by the mid-1950s. This change accommodated a steady drop in the average age at first marriage for both men and women, with a corresponding steady rise in the marriage rate. According to Murphy the 1950s were distinguished by: ‘A form of domesticity, based on the suburban, home-owning, nuclear family, which Menzies proved particularly adept at speaking about, as the location of identity and personal meaning.’<sup>3</sup> This situation was similar to the post-war situation in the United States against which the feminist journalist Betty Freidan was to

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<sup>1</sup> John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: private sentiment and political culture in Menzies’ Australia*, UNSWP, Sydney, 2000, p.185.

<sup>2</sup> Yet in every Federal election between 1949 and 1963 the Labor Party (hereafter ALP) gained at least forty-five per cent of the two party preferred vote. The 1955 Labor Party split and the formation of the Democratic Labor Party (hereafter DLP) would ensure the ALP was always a second runner.

<sup>3</sup> Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties*, p. 21.

revolt and describe in detail in her famous, seminal work *The Feminine Mystique*, first published in 1963.<sup>4</sup>

Historian Austin Cooper has commented that the 1950s were ‘an uncharacteristic decade for the century [as] traditional values of family, home, and piety were suddenly back on the agenda between the end of the war and 1960’.<sup>5</sup> These sentiments were reinforced by the Christian Churches. Church attendance was high. Schools would both reflect the conservatism of the times and also benefit from a student population which was generally well disciplined and had a stable home life. This is evident in the account of the Holy Cross College Seniors’ Dance, held in May 1955. The Holy Cross parish hall had been decorated by the Fourth Year girls and a pretty scene, illustrative of this era, was described in the school magazine. Before the function began, the girls came to the convent to allow the sisters to see them in their finery, and to introduce their partners some of whom were provided from a party of twenty boys Br Fields of Waverley College had brought to the dance.<sup>6</sup>

Standing around the piano and having a family ‘singsong’ was a time-honoured method of creating and maintaining family unity which lasted until after the end of World War Two, but in the 1950s, the piano was replaced by the radio as the centre of home entertainment. The family that had gathered around the piano was now gathering around the ‘wireless’ and record player and after 1956, the television set. The brilliantly conceived ‘The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together’ campaign of 1953, imported from the US, attempted to counterbalance these new attractions and distractions. According to Cooper, in the 1950s ‘the churches were vibrant and apparently successful’,<sup>7</sup> yet it seems that the peak in church attendance, when fifty per cent of Catholics regularly attended Mass, had been reached at the very start of the decade of the 1950s.<sup>8</sup>

In living rooms across the nation, families who had gathered around the wireless set to

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<sup>4</sup> Betty Freidan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Austin Cooper, ‘Vatican II – The Context’, *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 80, no. 3, 2003, p. 336.

<sup>6</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Cooper, ‘Vatican II’, p. 337.

<sup>8</sup> Cardinal George Pell, ‘Religion and Culture: Catholic Schools in Australia’, Keynote address to the 2006 National Catholic Education Conference.

hear the evening news on Armistice Day, 11 November 1951, also heard a statement entitled *Call to the People of Australia*, which had been signed by the Australian leaders of the major Christian Churches (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist), the Chief Justices and the Australia Council of Churches. Read by the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission immediately after the 7.00 p.m. news, its timing meant it would have a wide audience. Listeners were informed: ‘We are in danger from moral and intellectual apathy, from the mortal enemies of mankind which will sap the will and darken the understanding and breed evil dissensions’, dangers which demanded ‘a restoration of the moral order from which alone true social order can derive’ and called for ‘a new effort from all Australians to advance moral standards’.<sup>9</sup>

It seems the time was ripe for this concerted reform effort by the most conservative forces in an Australia where there was relative prosperity, employment growth, and the end of shortages were in sight. The *Call to the People of Australia* was remarkable for its display of a spirit of consensus among the main Christian Churches, a far cry from the sectarianism of the past.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Commonwealth jubilee celebrations of 1951**

The Australian Catholic bishops had decided that Catholics would participate fully in the celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia. This was seen as an opportunity to reaffirm the patriotism of Catholics, their notable contribution to the nation’s development, and their inclusiveness in Australian society. The week long Catholic Church celebrations, from Sunday 15 April to Sunday 22 April, were centred on St Mary’s Cathedral and the Sydney Showground.

To reinforce the patriotic theme, it was decreed that an Australian flags ceremony was to be held in all Catholic schools in the Archdioceses of Sydney, Canberra-Goulburn, Bathurst, Maitland and Armidale on Wednesday 18 April. This was to consist of a series of ceremonies: at 10.00 a.m., before Mass in parish churches, jubilee flags presented by the Commonwealth Government were to be blessed; after Mass, there was to be a

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in David Hilliard, ‘Church, Family and Sexuality in Australia in the 1950s’, *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 28, no. 109, 1997, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> See Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: religion in Australian history*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1987, p. 1.

ceremony of the breaking of the flags and the national anthem was to be sung; the children were to salute the flag and an address on the significance of the flag was to follow; finally the children would sing the jubilee anthem and commemorative books and medals presented by the Commonwealth government were to be distributed.<sup>11</sup>

The following day, a solemn jubilee Mass at St Mary's Cathedral was followed by the jubilee march of children from Catholic schools. The march began with the Cardinal laying a wreath on the Cenotaph. The children participated in a salute as they passed Parliament House in Macquarie Street. Murray Ball, who carried the banner for Holy Cross, remembers the event.<sup>12</sup> Another salute was given at the Cathedral. On the Friday, children of the Catholic schools simultaneously participated in a jubilee carnival and sports day at four venues in different parts of Sydney. Holy Cross College Woollahra attended the Sydney Sports Ground.<sup>13</sup>

The week of jubilee celebrations marked the end of the Family Rosary Crusade which had been inaugurated on Sunday 4 March 1951. Under the direction of Mgr James Freeman, the Rosary Crusade had started with 'an army of Crusaders' who canvassed parishioners under the direction of their parish priest, seeking a pledge to recite the Rosary as a family every night. A series of Rosary Rallies were held in regional centres in the Sydney Archdiocese.<sup>14</sup> The climax of the campaign was a 'memorable' Catholic jubilee pageant at the Sydney Showground on the night of Sunday 22 April.<sup>15</sup> The Australian Family Rosary Campaign was modelled on the Family Rosary Campaign in the United States, where its director, Fr Patrick Peyton, had devised the slogan: 'The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together'. It was designed as a world-wide campaign for peace drawing on the Fatima devotions.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The jubilee anthem had been specially written for the Catholic schools' demonstration at the inaugural celebrations of the Commonwealth in 1901. *CW*, 8 February 1951, p. 1 and p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Ex-student Murray Ball, in recalling this march through the city, said she carried the banner for the Holy Cross and was told she had forgotten to give the eyes right at the Cenotaph, *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 95.

<sup>13</sup> *CW*, 8 February 1951, p. 1 and p. 19. The venues were the Sydney Sports Ground, Parramatta Oval, Canterbury Racecourse and Petersham Oval.

<sup>14</sup> *CW*, 2 February 1951, p. 9; and *CW*, 22 February 1951, p. 1. These rallies were held at Concord, the largest parish church in the Sydney Archdiocese, and at churches at Marrickville, North Sydney and Waverley.

<sup>15</sup> *CW*, 8 January 1951, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 97; see also p. 91.

### **‘Massive demonstrations of faith’**

The Australian National Eucharistic Congress of 1953 coincided with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first public celebration in Australia of the Mass.<sup>17</sup> The Papal Legate, the Pope’s representative at the Congress, was Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy, the first Australian-born cardinal. At this time, the future care of parishioners which numbered about 500,000 seemed assured with 440 students training for the priesthood in the eleven ecclesiastical colleges of the archdiocese.<sup>18</sup> The novitiates of the religious congregations were generally flourishing.<sup>19</sup>

The week long celebrations of the Eucharistic Congress involved huge numbers of participants, directly or indirectly. The Congress began on Sunday 12 April with 5,000 inside St Mary’s Cathedral and some 75, 000 outside. At a night rally at the Sydney Showground for the laity, some 9,000 girls from Catholic schools appeared in a tableau representing the Cross with chalice and host superimposed. The Mass for religious was attended by 4000 nuns and brothers.<sup>20</sup>

What was the chief *raison d’être* for all this pomp and ceremony, this very public display of Catholic devotion? The official answer is found in an unequivocal statement in the *Official Souvenir* produced for the 1953 Australian National Eucharistic Congress:

The principal, indeed, the sole reason for the vast demonstration was to honour Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. All other considerations – historical, educational, cultural and social – were of a secondary or incidental character.<sup>21</sup>

Reading the extensive list of events it is impossible not to be sceptical about this statement; evangelisation was obviously an important aspect of the Congress. Sunday 12 April was called ‘Propaganda Day’ and ten floats (in reality utility trucks) each containing

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<sup>17</sup> Midnight low Mass was said in every Sydney parish on Sunday 19 April to commemorate the first public Mass in the colony, celebrated by Fr James Dixon in 1803.

<sup>18</sup> *1953 Australian National Eucharistic Congress Official Souvenir*, Associated Newspapers, Sydney, 1953, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Conferences of the Major Superiors of Australia*, National Statistical Survey of Religious Personnel: Australia, 1976.

<sup>20</sup> *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 45.

two priests and displaying a large crucifix and Congress badge went to prominent points in the city and preached their message over loudspeakers. During the following week the ten chosen sites were ‘manned’ by speakers from the Catholic Evidence Guild between 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. During the Saturday of the Congress, lay members of the Catholic Evidence Guild distributed 10,000 leaflets.<sup>22</sup>

The week’s activities had encompassed all groups within the Catholic community. Lunch hour talks were given each day at the Wallace Theatre at the University of Sydney. A symposium on the Tuesday, arranged by the Legion of Catholic Women, discussed ‘The role of the Catholic woman in Parish, Diocesan, National and International Catholic organizations’. On the Tuesday evening, conventions for leading Catholic organizations were scheduled, involving the Holy Name Society, the Catholic Women’s League, the Manly Union,<sup>23</sup> the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Hibernian Society and Catholic Charities. Religious teachers had a special session at the Trocadero ballroom and there were separate rallies for men and women at the Sydney Showground. Cardinal Gilroy’s overseas participants were entertained on a harbour cruise followed by a luncheon at the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta.

The final Eucharistic procession from St Patrick’s Church Hill past the State Parliament building in Macquarie Street and around Hyde Park to the Cathedral, was ‘the culminating point in one of the greatest and most impressive religious events in the history of Australia, and attracted a great concourse of people’. In all, approximately 750,000 people witnessed the spectacular conclusion to the Congress, with 25,000 men, women and children taking part in the final procession.<sup>24</sup>

The entire organisation of the Congress activities mirrored those of the 1928 National Eucharistic Congress, but there were important differences which were signs of the times. Women were allowed to march in the procession, no longer being judged physically

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<sup>22</sup> Catholic Evidence Guild, Annual Report of the Priests Group, 1953, B1208, SAA. The success of the pitches during the Congress encouraged the Guild to open a Friday midday pitch outside Hyde Park in Elizabeth Street, staffed only by priests, as employed laymen were not available during the day.

<sup>23</sup> The Manly Union represented those priests trained at St Patrick’s Seminary, Manly. Formed in 1914, its original aim was to stress the Australian nature of the church. See O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, pp. 358-360.

<sup>24</sup> All details from *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 29 and pp. 69-71.



unable to walk so far or likely to slow down the progress of the procession. An Australian cardinal was the papal legate and the Roman presence was diluted. Cardinal Gracias of Bombay was a striking and dignified presence. For the first time an Orthodox Christian Mass was offered in St Mary's Cathedral by the Armenian Patriarch, Cardinal Agagianian of the Eastern Rite. The Australian Church was displaying an ongoing commitment to the mission fields of Africa, Asia and colonial Pacific Island countries, of which Cardinal Moran would have approved and 'East, West and the Future of Australia' was the topic of a symposium.<sup>25</sup>

Hilliard has commented that the 'massive demonstrations of faith [of the 1950s] were expressions of the religious culture of a predominantly British and urban society'. Sydney's population had grown to more than two million by the late 1950s and next to London it was the largest 'white' city in the British Empire. The 1954 census counted twenty-five per cent of Sydney-siders as Catholic, compared to 22.94 per cent for Australia as a whole. At this time the largest denomination in Sydney was Church of England with 43.88 per cent. In May 1959, some 150,000 people attended the closing rally of the Billy Graham campaign, the biggest Protestant gathering ever held up to that time in Australia and in fact the world.<sup>26</sup>

### **'The Laity in the Crisis of the Modern World'**

There were many opportunities for the translation of 'massive demonstrations of faith' into the individual apostolate of Catholic Action, the importance of which was now being acknowledged at the highest international level. The First World Congress of the Lay Apostolate was held in Rome in October 1951; ex-student of OLMC Parramatta, Rosemary Goldie, on a scholarship at the Sorbonne University, Paris, was coopted into its secretariat. It was a beginning of her illustrious Roman career.<sup>27</sup> Rosemary's unique achievements (including later her participation as one of eight lay women and nine female religious in the final session of Vatican II) were to be well known to generations of

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<sup>25</sup> *1953 Congress Official Souvenir*, p. 69.

<sup>26</sup> David Hilliard, 'God in the Suburbs: The Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 97, October 1991, p. 399.

<sup>27</sup> For an autobiographical account of this career see Rosemary Goldie, *From a Roman Window. Five Decades: the world, the church and the Catholic laity*, Harper Collins Religious, Melbourne, 1998. See also Patricia Wilks, *Mercy: from generation to generation*, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, NSW, 1989, p. 66.

students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. To her former teachers (such as Sr M. Alphonsus Stanley) or Mercy sisters who had been at school with her (such as head girl, Sr M. Teresa (Kitty) McDonnell), Rosemary was a role model in numerous ways. The Second World Congress for the Lay Apostolate was held in Rome in October 1957. Its theme was 'The Laity in the Crisis of the Modern World: Responsibilities and Formation'. In 1959, a national Catholic Enquiry Centre, established by the bishops, was opened in Sydney. In its first year, some 5,000 responded to advertisements in the popular press and about half of them enrolled in the six-month course.<sup>28</sup>

The Blue Army was just one of many Catholic Actions groups which exemplified that 'action in the world could be a legitimate expression of spirituality'.<sup>29</sup> On 25 March 1958, the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima was inaugurated in NSW at a public rally at the Australian Hall at which the occasional address was given by Mgr Leonard, Director of the Lay Apostolate. About 700 of the large crowd gathered that night enrolled.<sup>30</sup> As Massam points out, Fatima was 'very closely linked to the anti-communist cause'.<sup>31</sup> The object of the Blue Army, which had been founded in 1946 and by 1958 was established in fifty-seven countries, was to combat the Red Army, specifically by prayer for the maintenance of peace, the conversion of Russia, elimination of the atom bomb and the salvation of the world.<sup>32</sup> The rules of membership were: to say part of the Rosary daily; to wear the brown scapular or medal; to accept the trials of daily work with resignation.

### **The schooling of girls in the 1950s**

Historian of education, Lesley Johnson, when reading the official documents of the 1950s, particularly those concerning the 1957 Wyndham Report on Secondary Education in NSW, noticed that official documents rarely mentioned 'girls' at all. In fact, the official silence about the education of girls in the 1950s was to her an issue of major significance to one involved in writing a history of women's education. Her basic question was how young women (teenage girls) were defined both officially and popularly in the two

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<sup>28</sup> K.S. Inglis, 'The Australian Catholic Community', in Henry Mayer (ed.), *Catholics and the Free Society: An Australian Symposium*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1961, p. 26. Sr M. Pascal Hession of the Parramatta community was an active supporter of the Catholic Enquiry Centre for many years.

<sup>29</sup> Katharine Massam, 'The Blue Army and the Cold War: anti-Communist devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 97, October 1991, p. 420.

<sup>30</sup> CW, 20 March, 1958, p. 6 and 3 April, 1958, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Massam, 'The Blue Army', p. 423.

<sup>32</sup> CW, 3 April, 1958, p. 7.

decades following the end of World War Two. What part did education policy and practice have in this? Clearly surprised at this official silence she became interested in identifying the extent to which girls in schools were or were not organised according to the category of their sex. Certainly from the perspective of the education of girls in Catholic convent high schools at this time, the education of girls was subject to the on-going demands of the public examination system, the accent on science generated by the ‘Space Race’, and the issue of co-education.<sup>33</sup>

A debate over the purpose of girl’s education raged over the 1950s and 1960s as coeducation began to be endorsed by government officials as well as education experts. Numerous state high schools were needed to cater for Sydney’s booming population in these post war decades. The decision to make them dual sex and comprehensive was a cost saving measure. The costs of implementing the Wyndham Scheme in the 1960s, and the need to redistribute scarce resources from the older established inner suburbs of Sydney to the burgeoning western suburbs, would lead to a re-examination of the Church’s traditional attitude which favoured single sex education for adolescents. There followed tentative moves towards experimentation in dual-sex schools in the Sydney CEO system. As will be seen, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were not averse to staffing a dual-sex senior college in the Eastern Suburbs.

Johnson noted that the 1950s saw ‘new and powerful pressures to encourage young women to identify themselves as sexed creatures’.<sup>34</sup> While Johnston does not identify the origins of those pressures, Mgr Collender in his Episcopal Visitation Reports for Holy Cross parish, was constant in his condemnation of movies as sources of threats to morals. The Catholic Church had a powerful antidote to these pressures to portray women as sex objects: devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. The year 1953 was proclaimed the Marian Year, the Year of Mary.

The culture of Holy Cross College reflected the strong sense of piety and loyalty to faith and communal prayer which was typical of this era. The College Legion of Mary

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<sup>33</sup> Lesley Johnson, ‘The schooling of girls in the 1950s: problems with writing a history of “women’s education”’, *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1990, pp. 10-12.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, ‘The schooling of girls in the 1950s’, p. 10.

Praesidium was responsible for lunch-hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel of the Holy Cross Church, which had been specially decorated as a shrine for a new statue of Our Lady of Mercy.<sup>35</sup> On a more obviously practical level, they supervised the distribution of Catholic Truth Society tracts, but their main activity was the visitation of the sick and the aged of the parish.<sup>36</sup> The Grail continued to be active in the school. Valerie Monty wrote an account of a four day Grail camp in the September 1955 holidays attended by ten girls from Fourth and Fifth Years.<sup>37</sup> There they would be inspired by the vision of woman, the Christian leader, rather than woman as sex object. One of the 1954 LC class, Beverley (Ruth) Crowe became a nucleus member of the Grail.

### **Responses to Catholic school staffing challenges in the 1950s**

Alan Barcan has conceded that during the 1950s Catholic education encountered problems as severe as those of the state schools.<sup>38</sup> Between 1946 and 1961, the number of pupils attending Catholic primary schools in NSW increased by eighty-one per cent and sixty or more pupils were common in primary and junior secondary classes in Sydney Catholic schools in the 1950s.<sup>39</sup> The retention rates of Catholic schools were increasing for the same basic reason as in the state schools, namely the raising of the school leaving age, but the high birth-rate among Catholics, and the high proportion of immigrants who were Catholic, added to the pressures on Catholic educators. Between 1945 and 1958 the Catholic population of Australia had increased by 62.5 per cent, growing from 1,237,136 to 2,010,165 and the combined total of women and men religious had increased by only twenty-one per cent in this same period.<sup>40</sup>

In this period the Catholic school system of the Sydney Archdiocese had to absorb an increase of approximately 200,000 pupils but the number should have been closer to 300,000 if calculated in relation to the growth in the Catholic population as a whole. Attendance at Catholic secondary schools had been rising steadily since the 1920s and

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<sup>35</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, n.p. Mgr Collender had received a legacy to be used for a statue and decided it should be a statue of Our Lady of Mercy, which he placed in the side chapel in the parish church, which was used by the Sisters of Mercy.

<sup>36</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, p. 15. Sr Ailsa Mackinnon RSM, a Holy Cross College student in the 1950s and early 60s has verified this in an informal conversation with the author, March 2008.

<sup>37</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, pp. 14-15.

<sup>38</sup> Barcan, *Australian Education*, p. 316.

<sup>39</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>40</sup> CW, 10 July 1958, p. 16. Statistics in the article were from the ACD.

this trend reached its climax in 1958, when seventy-three per cent of Catholic children in NSW were being educated in Catholic schools.<sup>41</sup> By 1950 there were more than 12,000 religious in Australia and five out of every six were engaged in education.<sup>42</sup> The resources of the Catholic education system, both human and physical, were stretched to the limit at this time.

Cardinal Gilroy's Advent Pastoral letter of November 1952 alluded to the unemployment problem which followed on the heels of the inflation created by the Korean War. He requested that all parish priests, who could possibly do so, undertake a building project with the intention of providing employment. Following this pronouncement Catholic school building programmes in Sydney exploded. Financing this expansion was not a serious problem because funds had been accumulating in the 1940s when wartime building restrictions applied and student population numbers had remained steady. Finance was not the main problem in the 1950s, staffing was. Reacting to the accelerating staffing pressures, Cardinal Gilroy inaugurated a two-year (Religious) Vocation Campaign. It was also clear that non-religious teachers were necessary to meet the shortfall in personnel in Catholic schools.

In February 1958, Mother Leone Ryan RSJ, Superior General of the Sisters of St Joseph proposed that lay women students be trained side by side with the religious at St Joseph's Training College, Mount Street, North Sydney. Mother Leone had helped broker an agreement by which all members of Religious congregations would receive formal teacher training before being put in charge of a class, thus ending the 'training on the job' which was still in use by some of the smaller congregations.<sup>43</sup> Mount Street was renamed the Catholic Teachers College (hereafter CTC) to reflect its enlarged role and the first group of forty-two young lay women, recruited straight from school with scholarships, started their primary teaching training at CTC. They agreed not to get married while they were bonded to the Sydney CEO for three years; marriage would mean instant dismissal. The young women were paid a fortnightly allowance of £4 and Mgr Slowey asked parish

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<sup>41</sup> Barcan, *Australian Education*, p. 316.

<sup>42</sup> ACD, 1951, p. 453, cited in Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia*, vol. II, p. 268.

<sup>43</sup> Jim D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey: Servant of Education, Facilitator of Change*, CEO, Sydney, 1999, p. 42.

priests to donate £100 each to finance their training.<sup>44</sup>

The year of 1955 was one rich in religious vocations for ex-students of Holy Cross College, although not all joined the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. Two sisters, Cecily and Vera McColgan, joined the Marist sisters, Cecily, as Sr M. Veronica went to NZ and Vera, as Sr M. Perpetua, went to Fiji. Joan Fanning made her final profession as Sr M. St Elie at the Carmelite Convent, Dulwich Hill. Therese Gaudry, a Commonwealth Scholarship winner from the 1954 LC class entered the Parramatta congregation in June 1955. In total, fourteen ex-students of Holy Cross College were Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1955: at Parramatta were Mother M. Thecla Kerwick,<sup>45</sup> Mother M. Leo Durkan, and Sisters M. Gonzaga Stanley, M. Anselm Gaudry, M. St Thomas Crumlin, M. Teresita Westan and M. Augusta Gaudry. At Cronulla was Sr M. Casimir Callachor. At Epping were Sisters M. St Jude Cashman and M. Mercedes Gaudry. Sr M. Michael Hawke was at Ryde and Sr M. St. James McEneaney was at Golden Grove. At Surry Hills and Stanmore were Sisters M. de Lourdes Maron and M. Bertrand Musgrave respectively.<sup>46</sup> Sisters M. Fabian Sharpe and M. Joseph Power were also Holy Cross ex-students and appear in a photo in the 1958 special jubilee issue of *Holy Cross College Woollahra*.<sup>47</sup>

In 1952, vocation material illustrating the various apostolic works of the congregation, was published by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in a glossy booklet.<sup>48</sup> In 1956, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy organised their first and only recruitment campaign in Ireland; Mother M. Andrew Lynch and Sr M. Aiden Codd were the recruiting agents and went with Cardinal Gilroy's letter of recommendation.<sup>49</sup> The actual results of this recruiting drive must have been very disappointing; just five Irish postulants entered the congregation and only one of these persevered in religious life.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 44. The first group of primary teachers graduated in March 1960; see p. 45 for a list of names.

<sup>45</sup> Mother M. Thecla was one of the first students to enrol at the Holy Cross parish school in 1907 and completed her secondary education on a scholarship at OLMC Parramatta.

<sup>46</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1955, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> 'What would it mean if - ', The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, 1952, in private possession.

<sup>49</sup> Gilroy to the Bishops of Ireland, 21 March 1956, PA.

<sup>50</sup> McGrath, Sophie, 'Women Religious in the History of Australia 1888-1950: a case study of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 81, no. 2, December 1995, p. 198.

In her 1957 Chapter Report, Mother M. Andrew Lynch commented: ‘Increased efforts are being made to foster vocations among our pupils.’ A sister was appointed to visit the schools regularly for this purpose, and vocation letters sent out once each term to any girls who ‘show signs of a vocation’. She noted the Rosary is said ‘continuously each day of the Triduum for the Feast of the Presentation in the Convent Chapel by pupils in turn’ and ‘suitable posters are displayed during these days’. At this time the membership of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy congregation was at its peak, with 175 sisters in perpetual vows, nineteen in temporary vows, six novices and six postulants; 206 in total in 1957.<sup>51</sup>

### **A survey of secondary schooling in NSW is instituted**

In 1953, there had been an outcry by teachers against a proposal to reintroduce an external examination at the Intermediate Certificate level. Following that, on 23 July 1953, there was a public announcement that a committee was to be set up to survey secondary schooling in NSW under the chairmanship of Dr Wyndham, with its public hearings scheduled to begin in July 1954. When the first list of the committee members was released in the following December it contained no Catholic representative. Following protests from the Catholic authorities, the NSW Minister of Education, Robert (Bob) Heffron was obliged to accede to demands to rectify this with the result that Fr Slowey, the Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Sydney, was appointed to the committee along with Anglican Bishop Hilliard and Presbyterian Rev. E. Vines.

The ‘diplomatic’ Slowey has been described by Jill Duffield as taking ‘a watching brief’ because of his minimal role on the committee. When Slowey took part in discussions it was on general matters. There was no discussion of the problems or wishes of the Catholic schools and no Catholic teachers or parents were called as witnesses before the hearing.<sup>52</sup> D’Orsa has commented that little is known of Fr Slowey’s work on the committee.<sup>53</sup> Duffield notes that, if it is true that Dr Wyndham felt ‘that the best way to achieve actual change [...] would be to avoid questions of resources’, then it is not surprising that Slowey was ‘nobbled’. There were fifty-seven public hearings before the

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<sup>51</sup> Sophie McGrath, ‘Recruitment in the History of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta from 1911 to Contemporary Times’, unpublished, undated, PA.

<sup>52</sup> Jill Duffield, ‘The Making of the Wyndham Scheme in New South Wales,’ *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1990, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> D’Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 33.

committee. These were held at Sydney, Armidale and Newcastle, the last in September 1955. It would take a further two years before the report was tabled in Parliament and became public, and a further four years before a considerably modified version of its recommendations was enacted in 1961.<sup>54</sup>

### **Progress in the education system of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney**

In 1957, Fr Slowey, as the director of the Catholic Education Office (hereafter CEO) of the Sydney archdiocese, had convinced Cardinal Gilroy to close Sydney's Catholic schools for three days in May so that all teachers could be brought together for an educational conference called 'The Child Today'. It was designed to attract public attention, which it did effectively, with an opening Mass at St Mary's Cathedral and a formal launch at the Sydney Town Hall, which participants attended in academic dress. Over two days, teachers met at venues at Parramatta, Kensington and Glebe. This conference became the first of an annual Catholic Teachers Conference held in the week following the May holidays, these being extended to three weeks for Catholic schools.<sup>55</sup> Out of the 1957 conference developed such organisations as the Catholic Science Teachers Association and the Catholic Music Teachers Association. More than 2,000 teachers attended the Catholic Teachers Conference every year from 1958 until 1974.<sup>56</sup>

The teaching of science had long been a problem for the Catholic schools. In 1940, Monsignor Meany had raised the question of the growing necessity for physics classes in Catholic girls' schools and Diocesan Inspector Fr Thompson was asked to bring the matter before the Education Council for discussion.<sup>57</sup> Fr Thompson reported that the Education Council had decided that it was 'impossible to provide generally for the sake of the few'.<sup>58</sup> This is in stark contrast with a decision taken by the Catholic Education Board

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<sup>54</sup> Duffield, 'Wyndham Scheme', p. 32. The full title is *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Schooling in New South Wales*, but it was commonly referred to as the Wyndham Report after the chairman of the committee, Dr. H. S. Wyndham, the Director-General of Education in NSW. The reorganisation of secondary education which resulted from its recommendations became known as the Wyndham Scheme.

<sup>55</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p.37.

<sup>56</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p.38. For a summary of each conference theme for the years 1957-1965, see p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> CEB Minutes for 26 March 1940, Reproduction of the Minute Book of the Catholic Education Board, Archdiocese of Sydney, from the inaugural meeting 2 June 1939 to 31 July 1962, Box 2, Catholic Education Office Sydney Archives ( hereafter CEOSA).

<sup>58</sup> CEB Minutes for 10 July 1940, Box 2, CEOSA. It is assumed that the Education Council referred to is the central council of the Catholic Education Association; see Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, p. 488.



(hereafter CEB) in 1947 that ‘as Home Science was such an important subject for girls it should be encouraged and introduced whenever possible’.<sup>59</sup> It was decided by the CEB that biology could be taken as a subject for the Intermediate Certificate in Catholic schools from the beginning of 1951.<sup>60</sup>

Br James McGlade of the Christian Brothers was asked by Mother M. Andrew to instruct some of the Parramatta Sisters in chemistry and physics; agreeing to do this he travelled to OLMC Parramatta on Friday nights. The three sisters who were given instruction by him were Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley, Sr M. Immaculata Hegarty and Sr M. Teresa McDonnell. He found there was not time to do both subjects so he chose to concentrate on chemistry.<sup>61</sup> The latter two of these sisters taught science at Holy Cross College at different times. Chemistry was being taught at OLMC Parramatta from at least 1943 and at Holy Cross College soon after.<sup>62</sup>

Br James McGlade also had been asked to design a science laboratory for OLMC Parramatta and at the request of Bishop James Carroll, then the parish priest of Holy Cross parish, did the same for Holy Cross College.<sup>63</sup> Physics, chemistry and biology all required laboratory work. In a letter to Cardinal Gilroy, Bishop Carroll gave the estimated cost of equipping the new science facilities as £3,500. He acknowledged the demonstration room and laboratory had been designed by Br McGlade of Strathfield, and emphasised the aim had been to incorporate the best features in the Christian Brothers’ schools at Strathfield, Lewisham and Chatswood.<sup>64</sup>

The standard and availability of science teaching in secondary schools was deemed to be of national importance by the second half of the 1950s. The Council of the Australian Academy of Science convened an important confidential conference on the serious shortage of scientific manpower in November 1956 and presented its report to Prime Minister Menzies in September 1957. The report warned that much of the problem began

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<sup>59</sup> CEB Minutes for 16 July 1947, Box 2, CEOSA.

<sup>60</sup> CEB Minutes for 19 July 1950, Box 2, CEOSA.

<sup>61</sup> Br James McGlade, informal conversation with the author, 10 November 2006. He was not sure of the year but thought it was wartime because he could remember Church Street (the main street of Parramatta) being dark.

<sup>62</sup> Sr Sophie McGrath, informal conversation with the author, March 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Br James McGlade, informal conversation with the author, 10 November 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Carroll to Gilroy, 23 September 1959, Holy Cross Woollahra 1951-1972, Parish file, C2735. SAA.

in the secondary schools where, because of the shortage of competent science teachers, few students were inspired to pursue scientific careers.<sup>65</sup> The Soviet Union's successful launching of *Sputnik 1*, the first artificial satellite in space, in October 1957, was further proof that the democracies of the West were falling behind the communist regimes in the development of strategic technologies. The Murray Report on Australian Universities, tabled in November 1957, had a chapter devoted to the 'Special problems of Scientific and Technological Education'. Three of Australia's leading physicists, Professors Harry Messel, Mark Oliphant and Phillip Baxter were among those who were featured in the media with appeals for a national effort to train thousands more scientists and technologists. Holy Cross students of the 1960s and '70s were to carry life-long memories of the 'door-stopper' textbooks generated by Professor Harry Messel.<sup>66</sup>

These national concerns regarding the lack of trained scientists would translate into important changes in the curriculum offered at Holy Cross College, namely the addition of biology to chemistry as science options for the Leaving Certificate. Sandra Donohue (nee Gailey) a Holy Cross College student in the 1958 LC class has commented that:

I was part of the first Biology class to sit for the LC. Mrs. Thom made the change in 1956 so, with her daughter's medical texts, we not only converted from Botany to Biology but two of us sat for Biology Honours.

Sandra described Mrs. Thom as 'an extraordinary teacher – relaxed, succinct and very warm'.<sup>67</sup> Sr Ailsa Mackinnon RSM, a student at Holy Cross College 1958-1962, has commented: 'I didn't know until later that it was unusual in those days for girls to study Chemistry and Physics.'<sup>68</sup>

The teaching of English in schools and a perceived lowering of standards of English language proficiency was also coming under scrutiny at this time. In her 1946 annual report on Holy Cross College, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley had lamented: 'If the leisure time

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<sup>65</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 129.

<sup>67</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 109, p. 109. Sandra can remember the College principal, Sr M. Alphonsus Stanley, phoning her mother to seek permission for her daughter to change from botany to biology, informal conversation with the author, April 2008.

<sup>68</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 117.

left over from outdoor recreation is absorbed wholly by the wireless and the cinema, the standard of English and of general culture amongst our young people must continue to deteriorate.<sup>69</sup> Sr M. Gonzaga's impressions were reflections of the Church's reservations regarding these forms of popular media; their ability to infiltrate Australian youth with American culture was considered quite undesirable.

In 1957, the Committee to Survey Secondary Education in NSW (the Wyndham Committee) reported that 'according to many of our witnesses, written English has suffered rapid deterioration in recent years and now falls below the standard required by university, employer and society in general'.<sup>70</sup> The Wyndham Report had concluded that 'spoken English is so closely allied to written English that ... it should be the special concern of the English teacher. They recommended that English teachers must receive adequate speech training.'<sup>71</sup> At Holy Cross College, all students received elocution tuition by such lay specialist teachers as Miss Doris Patterson and the College was often successful in the verse speaking sections of eisteddfods.<sup>72</sup>

### **The primary school at Holy Cross College is phased out**

On 28 September 1955, the Catholic Education Board had announced that the infants and primary grades of Holy Cross College Woollahra were to be amalgamated gradually with the Holy Cross parochial school. The Mother Superior of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Mother M. Andrew Lynch, asked for a reconsideration of the Board's decision to effectively close down the infants and primary sections of Holy Cross College.<sup>73</sup> The decision was not rescinded and the last sixth grade at Holy Cross College was in 1958. This momentous change for the College was part of a process of rationalisation which began in 1954 in which the 'systemisation' of the schools was viewed as an important

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<sup>69</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1946, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales, *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales (under the chairmanship of H.S. Wyndham)*, Government Printer, Sydney, October, 1957, p. 90. The chairman of the Committee, Dr. H. S. Wyndham, was the Director-General of Education in NSW.

<sup>71</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, p. 90.

<sup>72</sup> Ex-student Murray Bull recalls that sometime in the late 1940s the Holy Cross Primary group won the Elocution Eisteddfod at the Sydney Conservatorium. Sr Therese Gaudry was part of this group. *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 95.

<sup>73</sup> Mother M. Andrew Lynch to CEB, 3 November 1955, CEB Minutes for 3 November 1955, Box 2, CEOSA.

long-term goal and was really a ‘trial run’ for the more dramatic restructuring of the 1960s.<sup>74</sup>

The Holy Cross convent chronicler commented on the considerable disadvantages for Holy Cross of this decision to close down the infants and primary sections because other Catholic colleges in the immediate area were permitted to retain their junior departments. It seemed that the school would ‘suffer a permanent set-back’. Six years later it was seen as a ‘blessing’ as numbers in the Holy Cross Junior School, the new name for the parish primary school, had soared.<sup>75</sup>

### FOCUS YEAR – 1958

- ❖ The year 1958 was momentous for the Holy Cross College community in a number of ways: it marked the end of the primary section at the College, a sad occasion, in the same year in which Holy Cross College celebrated its Golden Jubilee and looked back at fifty years of achievements.
- ❖ At the Convent of Mercy Parramatta, on the feast of the Epiphany, three postulants received the religious habit and three novices made their temporary profession, including Holy Cross ex-student Therese Gaudry as Sr M. Augusta.<sup>76</sup>
- ❖ In March 1958, Mgr Collender relinquished his position on the Board of Directors of the Catholic Press Newspaper Company Ltd. He had had this position for thirty-seven years straight. His place was taken by Fr D’Arcy O’Keefe, who had been a curate at Holy Cross. At his farewell, the Chairman of Directors, Bishop Freeman, said ‘no one doubts that Monsignor Collender is one of the greatest priests we have ever had.’<sup>77</sup>
- ❖ The St Patrick’s Day sports, held on the 16 March, were again a great success, with

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<sup>74</sup> D’Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 32. In similar fashion, agreement had been reached with the Poor Clare Sisters to close the primary department of St Clare’s College Waverley, also in 1955.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 41. On 21 August 1960, Cardinal Gilroy blessed and opened a new parochial kindergarten and infants’ school on the former site of Fletcher’s Foundry, opposite the College site.

<sup>76</sup> CW, 23 January 1958, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> CW, 6 March 1958, p. 4.

women's athletics featuring British Empire (Commonwealth) Games and Olympic Games competitors, a hurling match, the Cardinal's Cup (a 100 yards open race for Catholic schoolboys), and athletics for the boys, but not the girls. Mgr Collender was still the President of the St Patrick's Games.

- ❖ The year 1958 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparition at Lourdes of Our Lady to St Bernadette. To celebrate, Holy Cross College held a procession and the Rosary was recited in front of the Grotto on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Some weeks later the Fifth Year students presented a 'Marion Hour' which was broadcast over the public address system to the entire school; hymns, short talks on Mary's life, her feasts, titles, place in art and literature were presented 'with great reverence'.<sup>78</sup> In a 1958 New Year address, Cardinal Gilroy referred to the campaign to 'put Christ back into Christmas'.<sup>79</sup> The first Australian post office Christmas stamp with a religious design had appeared in November 1957. In 1958, television was fast encroaching on family leisure time.
- ❖ In 1958, the College was still a very small school, reflecting the demographic character of the surrounding area, the low retention rate of girls proceeding to the senior years, as well as the high number of other secondary girls' schools competing for students within the Eastern Suburbs.<sup>80</sup> Another factor affecting pupil numbers was the drop in the birth rate in Australia during the war years of 1940 to 1945. Yet Holy Cross College was doing comparatively well. Only thirty-six girls sat for the 1957 IC, but in the 1958 cohort there were sixty-three. There were fifty seniors in the Fourth and Fifth Years and the total enrolment for Holy Cross College for 1958 was 269.<sup>81</sup>
- ❖ Holy Cross College held its Golden Jubilee Ball at the end of the first term in Mark Foy's Empress Ballroom. Nearly 600 attended and witnessed twenty ex-pupils make their debut, being presented to Sir Edward and Lady McTiernan by matron of honour, Mrs Barry Prichard. In the ballroom's foyer, two life sized models displayed the

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<sup>78</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, golden jubilee issue, p. 10.

<sup>79</sup> *CW*, 2 January 1958, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> The senior secondary schools included: St Clare's College, Waverley; Brigidine College, Randwick; Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay; St Vincent's College, Potts Point; OLSH, Kensington; Kincoppal, Elizabeth Bay, as well as a number of upper primary schools offering the Intermediate Certificate.

<sup>81</sup> August 1958 statistical returns for Holy Cross College, file SC 31/7, CEOSA

- original school uniform and the brown and fawn uniform of 1958.<sup>82</sup> By this time the school colours were fawn, red and brown and these were featured in the floral arrangements. Mgr Collender did not attend, but the assistant priests in the Holy Cross parish, Fathers E. Paine and D. Cremin did.
- ❖ The news of the passing of the Right Reverend Monsignor Richard Collender, PP, PA, VG at the age of ninety years on 11 June 1958 was a sad occasion to the people of Holy Cross parish and the College community. He had been parish priest of Holy Cross since 1931 and had spent sixty-seven years in the priesthood, and at his death was the ‘oldest priest by ordination in Australia’.<sup>83</sup> He was mourned by many, especially the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, in the Archdiocese of Sydney, where he had served for so long with much love and wisdom.
  - ❖ Tuesday 15 July 1958 was declared a special day of prayer for teaching vocations in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. This day was the feast day of St John Baptist de la Salle, who had been appointed by the Pope in 1950 as patron to all school teachers, and this feast day had been observed as ‘Vocation Day’ since 1955. The *Catholic Weekly* stated that: ‘Overwhelmingly, Catholics view the brothers and nuns as the humble heroes of the Church and they love and treasure “our educational system” to the point where they would form barricades in the streets to defend it.’ The same writer lamented that: ‘New Australian Catholics [...] have as yet provided but few vocations, but undoubtedly will provide their quota in due course.’<sup>84</sup>
  - ❖ Holy Cross convent and College celebrated their golden jubilee in September 1958 with three main functions: a Pontifical High Mass; an ex-students reunion; and a garden party for parents of present pupils and friends of the Sisters of Mercy. The Pontifical High Mass was offered in Holy Cross Church on 18 September, by Bishop James Carroll, soon to be the new parish priest. Two ex-students of Holy Cross, Fathers J Maron and N Murphy served as deacon and sub-deacon. The choir was made up of the senior girls with some girls from Second Year. Sandra Donohoe (nee

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<sup>82</sup> CW, 8 May 1958, p.24. There was no school uniform in 1908, the first appearing in the 1920s.

<sup>83</sup> Garaty, *St Peter's Surry Hills*, p. 104.

<sup>84</sup> CW, 10 July 1958, p. 16.

- Gailey) was one of the choir and remembers that as Bishop Carroll entered Holy Cross church, the choir saluted him with ‘Ecce Sacerdos Magnus’ (‘Behold the Great Priest’).<sup>85</sup> After the Missa Cantata, the guests were entertained by the College orchestra performing Haydn’s *Toy Symphony* and the *Dance of the Hours* from ‘Giaconda’ and children from Holy Cross Junior School also performed. The singing of ‘Jubilate Deo’ concluded ‘this day of joyous commemoration of God’s goodness to the Sisters and pupils of Holy Cross during the last half-century’.<sup>86</sup>
- ❖ Ex-students from both Holy Cross schools gathered on 28 September in the College grounds. In the parish hall afternoon tea was served and there was entertainment provided by the choir and the orchestra. The ex-students presented the sisters with a film-projector. Benediction and the singing of the hymn *Mother of Mercy*, so loved by anyone taught by the Sisters of Mercy, concluded the afternoon. The garden party was held in the College grounds on 12 October with the guests served afternoon tea by the Third and Fourth Year girls.<sup>87</sup>
  - ❖ Pope Pius XII, the leader of the Catholic Church since 1939, passed away on 9 October 1958. His successor, Blessed John XXIII began the process of ‘ressourcement’ (a return to the sources i.e. Scripture and Tradition) and ‘aggiornamento’ (bringing things up to date), when he announced an Ecumenical Council on 25 January 1959.<sup>88</sup>
  - ❖ Education, for the first time, emerged as a major federal election issue in 1958. In May 1958 the Catholic National Education Conference was held in Canberra and in that same month, the ALP launched the first urgency debate in the Federal Parliament since 1945; it was about the issue of state aid and education. The DLP promised grants for children at private schools. Prime Minister Menzies, responding to criticism from the ALP, asserted his strongly held position, as previously mentioned that the Commonwealth does not have power or responsibility for education in the

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<sup>85</sup> Sandra Donohoe, ‘1958 and Our Golden Years at Holy Cross College’, reminiscences prepared for the fiftieth reunion of the 1956-1958 Holy Cross College cohort, in the author’s possession.

<sup>86</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, golden jubilee issue, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1958, golden jubilee issue, p. 9.

<sup>88</sup> It is generally held that Vatican II was the twenty-first Ecumenical Council. Only a Pope can summon an Ecumenical Council and it can infallibly define a dogma of faith.

states or by the states. The federal election held on 22 November was won easily by Menzies, with the help of DLP preferences and his platform of ‘kicking the Communist can’.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Wyndham Scheme**

There were three main types of secondary school operating in NSW at this time: state government-run high schools; parish-run Catholic high schools; and independent colleges, some Catholic, some run by Protestant churches, and a few schools totally independent of any church affiliation. It was the Catholic schools (both parochial and independent) that were the least resourced to cope with the implementation of the Wyndham Report.<sup>90</sup>

The main recommendations of the Wyndham committee, appointed in 1953 as previously mentioned, were implemented by means of an Act of the NSW Parliament, passed in late 1961, and to take effect from the beginning of 1962. Fr Slowey (later Mgr), the sole Catholic representative on the Committee, revealed the reason for the delay between the tabling of the report in the federal parliament in October 1957 and its implementation in late 1961, namely, a group of left-wing Catholic ALP members of the NSW Parliament held a majority on the caucus education sub-committee and, knowing that the Catholic school system was in desperate financial straits, delayed the implementation of the report’s recommendations.<sup>91</sup> The Catholic school system was struggling to cope with escalating student numbers, the result of both the post war baby boom and immigration, and having to employ an increasing number of lay teachers. The Wyndham Report had said as little as possible about the actual costs of the proposed scheme of secondary education. Predictably the Catholic Church opposed any extension of secondary schooling because of the expense, and both the NSW State government and parents in general were concerned about the extra expense involved.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The DLP was formed in August 1957 by various state anti-Communist Labor breakaway groups (except Qld). It would remain in existence until 1978, and with five Senators in 1970, the DLP held the balance of power.

<sup>90</sup> Connell puts it less subtly as ‘the Catholic schools were the worst hit’, Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 90.

<sup>91</sup> Mgr J. Slowey, author interview, 1988, in Duffield, ‘Wyndham Scheme’, p. 38.

<sup>92</sup> Duffield, ‘Wyndham Scheme’, p. 29.



The Wyndham Report was to shape secondary education in NSW into the twenty-first century. It added an extra year onto secondary schooling, with Form VI students of 1967 being the first to sit the exams for the new Higher School Certificate.<sup>93</sup> The Wyndham Scheme provided for three levels of tuition (Advanced, Credit and Ordinary) in the first four years in the core subjects with a range of elective subjects being provided at two levels. For students in Forms V and VI, subjects had three levels. These changes, including the introduction of an externally examined School Certificate in 1965, were not forecast to significantly alter the proportion of students who stayed on to complete the two senior years. The expectation was that most students would leave at the end of Year IV and that those who stayed on would be encouraged to spend two years preparing for entry into some form of tertiary institution by specialising in subjects which were relevant to their future studies. The Wyndham Report stated that the recommendation to extend secondary schooling by one year was intended only for the minority of pupils who proposed ‘to proceed to tertiary education directly from school’; this was calculated as no more than about sixteen per cent of any school generation.<sup>94</sup>

W. F. Connell, a leading and respected educational researcher at the University of Sydney at the time, was quite scathing of the Wyndham Committee Report. He described it as ‘unexciting’ and commented that ‘all that was said by the Committee had been said before’. Reform of secondary education in NSW was long overdue. As early as 1934, a similar committee had recommended that secondary education should consist of four years of general education followed by further advanced study for one or two years.<sup>95</sup> Throughout the 1940s the NSW Teachers Federation, the trade union representing State teachers, had agitated for a public inquiry into secondary education.<sup>96</sup>

The enormous growth in the school population of NSW over the 1950s was part of a world-wide phenomenon which affected numbers enrolled in secondary and tertiary institutions in particular and their upward trend was clearly apparent by the end of that

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<sup>93</sup> To indicate a change to a completely new system, the terminology previously used to denote secondary school stages, (First Year to Fifth Year) was altered to Form 1 to Form VI. Later on, the terminology would be altered to Year 7 to Year 12 to denote the continuity of education from K to Year 12. See Burnswoods and Fletcher, *Sydney and the Bush*, p. 233.

<sup>94</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, p. 68.

<sup>95</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 87.

<sup>96</sup> Duffield, ‘Wyndham Scheme’, p. 30.

decade. Between 1956 and 1960 the Australian secondary school population increased by forty-five per cent.<sup>97</sup> This upward trend was to continue through the 1960s. There was a one-third increase in the Australian school population between 1960 and 1970 and more significantly, the school retention rate was altering. Between 1956 and 1964, the proportion of sixteen year olds staying on at school throughout Australia increased from twenty-two per cent to forty per cent and by 1970 it was fifty-one per cent.<sup>98</sup> These trends had a significant impact through the pressures they placed on the Catholic education system in NSW and particularly in the Sydney Archdiocese; they would consequently have a direct impact on Holy Cross College.

Dr Wyndham himself was a firm believer in the worth of comprehensive education and the selective single-sex high school was anathema to him. The traditional opposition to co-education in Catholic secondary schools would remain but be modified as circumstances, in country towns and fast growing outer suburbs of Sydney, called for a maximised use of available resources. For Catholics, the situation was not entirely new. For many years, in country areas, some boys, not being in a position to go to boarding school, had completed their final senior school examinations at the local convent high school.

In 1962, the Jubilee Congress of the Australian New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, held at the University of Sydney, drew up five principal issues regarding education reform:

- catering for the expanded school population
- dealing with the knowledge explosion
- providing for educational differences
- coping with the changing adolescent culture
- communicating a firm system of values<sup>99</sup>

The quality of education and its ease of access were seen to be of national economic importance. The concept of 'human capital' became popular in the 1960s and was

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<sup>97</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 40.

<sup>98</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 80.

<sup>99</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 85.

incorporated into the economics curriculum in secondary schools. It was held up as the most significant factor in the remarkable post-war reconstruction of the Japanese economy; Japan by this time was emerging as a major trading partner of Australia. Students were taught that Japan made up for a lack of land and minerals by creating a highly educated workforce, one motivated by the work ethic which could no longer be described as 'Protestant'.

Great concern was expressed regarding the quality of teachers. In 1963, the Australian College of Education made an extensive survey of teachers in both government and non-government schools and concluded that about one-third of all teachers had not reached matriculation standard and only 19 per cent held a university degree. The proportion who had had no or very little teacher training was a startling twenty-six per cent and only two per cent of teachers had a degree in education. Of even greater significance, less than one-half of all secondary teachers had a university degree; the survey found that 'the average secondary teacher was in fact trained to teach in primary school'.<sup>100</sup> Out of a staff of sixteen full-time teachers at Holy Cross College in 1963, only five had a university degree.<sup>101</sup> This was a reflection of the impediment imposed by university fees and the difficulty of winning a scholarship providing free university education, either a Commonwealth Scholarship or its precursor, the University Exhibition. Of the 200 University Exhibitions available prior to World War Two, only the first 100 were not subject to an income test, therefore it was difficult for many middle class students to qualify for an exhibition. To help remedy this situation, Commonwealth Scholarships were introduced in the early 1950s. Although not income tested, only 3,000 a year in Australia were available initially, to be distributed by the States; by 1961, the number had increased to some 4,000.<sup>102</sup>

### **Curriculum reform in the 1960s**

A federal government study of 1961 had found that only sixty-three per cent of 1961 entrants to Australian universities had passed in their first year. Even more surprising was

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<sup>100</sup> Australian Education Council, *A Statement of Some Needs of Australian Education*, NSW Teachers Federation, Sydney, 1965, cited in Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 84.

<sup>101</sup> Inspection for Registration as a Certified School, duplicate, 1 May 1963, Box SC 31/7, CEOSA.

<sup>102</sup> Eric Bowker, 'The Commonwealth and Education 1901-69', in J. Cleverley and J. Lawrey, (eds), *Australian Education in the Twentieth Century: studies in the development of state education*, Longman, Melbourne, 1972, p. 162.

the finding that eighteen per cent of those awarded Commonwealth Scholarships failed their first year and approximately thirty-three per cent of the students had discontinued their courses.<sup>103</sup> The existing external examination system, on which tertiary scholarships were determined, encouraged rote learning, teaching to the exam and intensive exam practice based on past exam papers. The external examination system didn't encourage independent learning beyond a subject's syllabus. The external examinations were based on the prescribed texts and learning was limited in most subjects to these. At Holy Cross College, the senior students had a small library of reference books available to them, though the better students had the initiative to go to their local library, or the larger city libraries to broaden their reading.<sup>104</sup>

The Wyndham Scheme would have a profound effect on a secondary education system which had not changed since the Leaving Certificate was introduced in 1918 as a matriculation entrance exam for the University of Sydney. It would require well trained specialist teachers and a complete new set of texts. Specialist rooms (science labs, music, art and technology rooms) were required as well as library facilities for all levels and abilities in secondary schools. In the view of the Wyndham Committee, many secondary syllabuses were too detailed and specific.<sup>105</sup> Removal of specifics in a syllabus required teachers to have a broad knowledge of their subject matter, both from pre-service and in-service training.

### **Holy Cross College in the early 1960s**

At the beginning of the 1960s the College was a small private congregational-run school which prided itself on its music and academic results and its strong sense of community, especially its marked Catholic character. There was only one LC class and one school building of three stories containing the convent in the western lower two floors. Sr M. Alacoque Quinn was the principal and since her experience had been mainly in Intermediate schools she was ably assisted by her deputy, Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry, who being much younger, had the advantage of university education and experience of teaching in full secondary schools. Sr Barbara McDonough recalls Sr M. Anselm

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<sup>103</sup> Department of Education and Science, 'The 1961 Study', Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1971, cited in Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 50.

<sup>104</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author,

<sup>105</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, p. 89.

attending to administrative matters.<sup>106</sup> Sr M. Alacoque, however, brought a wealth of experience in dealing with parents and the wider community.

There were only 250 girls enrolled at the College in 1960. The numbers had declined; total enrolment had been 269 in 1958. The LC class was twenty-six and there were only five students in the Fourth Year commercial course, indicating it could be reaching the end of its viability, although the number rose to sixteen the following year. There were three non-Catholics enrolled. There were six religious on the staff and four full-time lay staff.<sup>107</sup> Part-time specialist teachers came to the school: Mr. Edwards taught tennis; the Graham Burrows School provided sport coaching; and Miss Jenny Patterson taught elocution. Parents at this time did not as a rule have much direct contact with the school. There was a Parents and Friends Association (hereafter P & F) and its main money raising venture was the operation of the annual car drive to St Michael's Boys' Home, Baulkham Hills, which was run by the Parramatta Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and supported by its various schools.<sup>108</sup> Ex-student Celeste Short (nee Sharp), 1950-1955, recalled that among her best memories of Holy Cross was 'the bus trip to St Michael's at Baulkham Hills, for the fetes and fun we had in the country (as it was then)'.<sup>109</sup>

The College was run along quite non-consultative lines. When asked about the methods used to make decisions and to communicate with staff, Sr Barbara McDonough described a rudimentary system of handing down instructions. There were no staff meetings. Because talking in the convent was restricted, there was no talking at breakfast except on special occasions such as feast days, and silence applied generally at other times except at specified times of recreation, one in the afternoon, another in the evening and on particular celebratory days according to custom. Sr M. Alacoque's habit was to write notices on boards (in the convent) and 'if you weren't quick enough it got rubbed off before you got to see it; sometimes they referred to the school.'<sup>110</sup> The students were given the daily notices in the morning when they assembled on the playground after a bell was rung. As they had for many decades, some students went up the church-end stairs,

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<sup>106</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>107</sup> Holy Cross College, School Statistical Return for 1960, copy of handwritten document, PA.

<sup>108</sup> At this time, the principal and her assistant were the only staff members to attend meetings of the Holy Cross College P&F. Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>109</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 104.

<sup>110</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

some up the staircase the other end. No student went up the middle stairs because that led to the convent and was strictly ‘out of bounds’ to the students.

There were few lay teachers at Holy Cross College. Mrs Monica Thom was the only non-religious teaching senior classes at the College. She taught modern history and botany/biology. Teaching junior secondary classes were Mrs Lynagh and Mrs Dawson. Mrs Adele Bookalil taught in the primary section. These last three teachers were ex-students of the College and Mrs Thom’s daughter attended the College; thus was the sense of community reinforced.

Basketball was very popular with the girls and there were a number of top performing teams. The 1962 LC group was one of them. Ailsa Mackinnon (later Sr M. Loyola) was on this winning team. Sr Barbara McDonough recalled that the playground space was very limited and, although the girls did practice basketball there at lunchtime, there was not a safety issue because of the small enrolments then. She noted that the basketball teams took great pride in winning for the school.<sup>111</sup>

Sr Barbara McDonough, at the time known as Sr M. Irenaeus, was the first teacher to use the new laboratory when she arrived at the College in 1960. She recalled the ‘huge interest’ in the school by Bishop Carroll (later to be Archbishop), who had succeeded Fr Collender as parish priest, and consequently any facilities wanted by the College were obtained and they were ‘always state of the art’. She noted that the laboratory was built before the Wyndham Scheme made science a core (compulsory) subject for junior secondary years and therefore it was an option of the school to be offering science at this time.<sup>112</sup> Bishop Carroll, as the cardinal’s spokesperson on education, would have been very familiar with the trends in education which were to be reflected in the Wyndham Committee’s Report and so would have realised that science was to become universally available to both sexes in the co-educational, comprehensive high schools favoured by Dr Wyndham. Because of his foresight, Holy Cross College was well equipped to offer the new core science subject from 1962.

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<sup>111</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, informal interview by the author, 14 November 2006.

<sup>112</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

Sr Barbara McDonough has very clear memories of the new science lab at Holy Cross College. She remembers it had pink walls and blond bench tops. At one end was a tiered area where the girls sat in rows facing the demonstration bench and a blackboard; at the other end were six island benches which could accommodate twenty-four students in total and along the sides were cupboards for storage. The science room was located on the top floor, eastern end of the original building.

Sr Barbara McDonough was the sole science teacher at Holy Cross College from 1960 to 1962 (the first of three appointments to the College). A group who had studied combined chemistry/physics for the Intermediate Certificate wished to continue with both subjects for the Leaving Certificate. According to Sr Barbara they were very bright girls and, when they finished the Intermediate, they were determined to study physics for the LC. One of them, Kay Gabriel, wished to study medicine at Sydney University. Sr Barbara had never studied physics herself so Paul Gaudry, medical student and brother of three Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, was asked to teach the girls physics, which he did with considerable success on Saturdays.

With the introduction of core science into the new Years 7-10 curriculum, religious women found themselves facing the prospect of teaching science with virtually no training. Frequently at this time, teachers were expected to be able to teach most subjects; this was true of the religious brothers and sisters and often teachers in public schools. The brothers had some advantage with their private boys' colleges having a long history of teaching specialised science subjects, a situation generally not shared by Catholic girls' schools.<sup>113</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough recounts: '... the brothers knew what they were doing; they had been teaching it for years. It was only the sisters who suddenly had to teach it'. After the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme, the facilities of the laboratory at Holy Cross College were used for regional meetings and in-service sessions organised by the Catholic Science Teachers' Association. These meetings were attended by religious sisters who came from all over Sydney. The Christian Brothers had been instrumental in getting the Association started. Sr Barbara McDonough helped give the demonstrations and was very active in the Association.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See Chapter 4, p. 94.

<sup>114</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

Sr Barbara McDonough had never had formal teacher training in any science subjects and she expressed the strong sense of responsibility she felt at being in charge of senior science when she arrived at Holy Cross College in 1960.<sup>115</sup> As a novice in 1955, she had been trained as a primary teacher. Subsequently, in 1959, the congregational leader decided that Sr Barbara was to start her degree at the University of New England, Armidale, as an external student. Her ‘choice’ of subjects was made by the congregational leader: a major in Latin and two units of biology. Sr Assumpta (Edith) Angel, who majored in biology, accompanied Sr Barbara on the vacation schools at Armidale and both graduated with distinction in 1964. Sr M. Assumpta was to become well known in educational circles as an excellent teacher of biology at the advanced level, and Holy Cross students specialising in biology for the HSC in the 1960s were to benefit from her special Saturday morning classes at OLMC Parramatta.

The increase in the numbers of sisters in the Parramatta congregation undertaking tertiary and postgraduate education was typical of religious congregations generally at that time. It was a result of rising educational expectations accompanying the ‘Space Race’ and increased economic growth. There was, too, the growing women’s liberation movement which emphasised once again, as in the women’s movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the justice of equal opportunities for women, especially in the educational and employment fields. The publication of the Australian Germaine Greer’s seminal feminist polemic *The Female Eunich*, in 1970, was imminent.<sup>116</sup>

### **School culture**

What do we mean by school culture? In her doctoral thesis, Sr Carmel Leavey OP uses the terms climate, culture, and tone synonymously.<sup>117</sup> Br Marcellin Flynn held to the idea that school culture provides meaning to the school community and helps shape the lives of those who comprise it, the students, teachers and parents. He identified four dimensions of school culture:

- the core beliefs and values of the school – the school’s soul
- the traditions of the school – its history

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<sup>115</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunich*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1970.

<sup>117</sup> Margaret Carmel Leavey, ‘Religious Education, School Climate and Achievement: a study of nine Catholic sixth form girls’ schools, PhD thesis, ANU, 1972, p. 2.



- the symbols of the school – its models
- the patterns of behaviour of the school – its way of life.<sup>118</sup>

A NSW Department of Education document entitled *Notes on Administration* defines school culture as: ‘The atmosphere, the sum total of relationships and behaviour patterns – the dynamics of all the people involved in a school as they relate to and affect the purposes of the school.’<sup>119</sup>

There is evidence that the school culture of Holy Cross College was undergoing changes in the 1960s but these would prove to be quite subtle compared to the profound changes of the 1970s. In the wider community, live radio programmes, free lending libraries, picture theatres, and youth organisations provided new methods of entertainment for young people who were beginning to participate in the social revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. Teenage girls were demanding greater freedom outside the home and Catholic youth in general were finding a new world beyond the sheltered and protective confines of the Catholic school as more and more gained places at teachers colleges and universities and mixed with graduates of non-Catholic private schools and State high schools. The 1960s was the decade of the Beatles. The Holy Cross College Leaving Certificate class of 1965 spoke of their influence.<sup>120</sup> Generally frowned upon by parents and teachers, they were overt symbols of teen revolt. Ex-student Fran Prior (1964-1967) remembers ‘hair-do’s with long fringes (Beatlemania was upon us)’ and although hemlines were supposed to be around the knees, they were ‘way above’.<sup>121</sup>

In 1964, the Mercy Federation Congregations published a booklet entitled ‘For Your Guidance’, for the use of secondary students in Mercy schools. It was the modern counterpart of guidelines produced by Sr M. Camillus Lilly earlier in the century. Its genteel tone and quaint notions of manners, dress and general demeanour seem to

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<sup>118</sup> Marcellin Flynn, *The Culture of Catholic Schools: a study of Catholic schools 1972-1993*, St Pauls, Sydney, 1993, p.8. This model was a conceptualisation by Flynn of a model derived by Millikan, see Ross Millikan, *A Conceptual Framework for the Development and Maintenance of a Co-ordinated School Culture*, Education Administration and Policy Papers, no.2, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1985.

<sup>119</sup> Cited in Leavey, ‘Religious Education’, p. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Class of LC 1965, focus group interview by the author, 25 November 2006.

<sup>121</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 131.

belong to another planet let alone another decade.<sup>122</sup> Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, in 1964, had expressed her concern about discipline in the schools and ‘suggested that the chapter on courtesy in ‘For Your Guidance’ should be thoroughly studied.’<sup>123</sup> Competing with the emerging pop culture of the 1960s, the sisters were to fight a losing battle. What was becoming evident was a growing lack of mutual understanding between teachers and students. And as McGrath has noted: ‘To the teachers actually dealing with the children the culture gap was apparent.’<sup>124</sup>

In reading ‘For Your Guidance’ it is not difficult to see the gap between the writer and her readers’ perceptions of ‘good manners’. One example is:

Always treat your parents with the greatest respect because they hold God’s place in your regard. Greet them when you meet them for the first time in the morning and when you return home. Rise when they come into the room and see that they are conveniently seated before you sit down again.<sup>125</sup>

While there are enduring values in these directions, their expression was out of touch with the prevailing culture. Students were told that ‘strict silence’ was to be observed in all classrooms and on the stairs at all times or when passing from one class to another.<sup>126</sup> If obeyed to the letter, the pupils of Holy Cross College would have been as silent and compliant as the residents of the convent, a real presence in the school as it shared the same building.

It is uncertain at what stage this document ceased to be used in the school. It would have been some time in the 1960s when the sisters themselves were developing a higher public profile and the opportunity to be more individual in demeanour. Holy Cross ex-student, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley made news when she became the first nun to participate in a forum at the University of New South Wales, sponsored by the Newman Society. She was one

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<sup>122</sup> Our Lady of Mercy Secondary Schools, ‘For Your Guidance’, undated, unpublished document, CEOSA.

<sup>123</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 202.

<sup>124</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 202.

<sup>125</sup> ‘For Your Guidance’, p. 16.

<sup>126</sup> ‘For Your Guidance’, p. 8.

of four speakers in a day of lectures and discussion on 'The Price of a Profession.'<sup>127</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The decade of the 1950s was characterised by conservatism in Australian federal politics and economic management. This conservatism was mirroring that to be found in Australian society, in the home and the churches. Consequently, schools were also highly conservative. Complacency in curriculum and teaching methods survived until the 'Space Race' between the United States and the Soviet Union began in 1957 and major reforms of secondary schooling in NSW, first proposed in the 1930s, were finally implemented in the 1960s. A concerted effort to train scientists led to commonwealth funding for secondary school science facilities, and later on for libraries. State aid for independent schools became a *fait accompli*, eighty years after it had been removed from NSW denominational schools.

In the 1950s, individualism was suspect and mass demonstrations of faith characterised the period. Uniformity of belief and action were required by churches, political parties, social groupings, economic classes, even neighbourhoods. Schools played a crucial role in educating and reinforcing the expectations placed on each member of society by powerful institutions.

The cult of individualism, along with television and commercial marketing which was beginning to fuel the teenage revolt, would be well underway by the mid-1960s, and was clearly evident in the Holy Cross College community. Major changes, which would be apparent in the teaching of religion, and the lives of the sisters themselves, were imminent.

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<sup>127</sup> The forum was held on 24 July 1960, unsourced and undated newspaper cutting, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley file, PA.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE CONCERTED RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES 1963 – 76

**‘Every Catholic child will be given the same educational advantage and opportunities as will be offered in State schools.’** (Bishop James Carroll, *CW*, 22 November 1962)

The early 1960s in Australia were generally affluent, with virtually full employment, apart from a short recession which almost saw the Australian Labor Party unseat the federal conservative government in the 1961 election. The booming economy was fuelled by capital inflow, expansion of both local and export markets, rising productivity in the pastoral and manufacturing sectors, and European migrants, who provided unskilled labour and increased demand for both consumer and collective goods. From 1948 to 1961, real Gross National Product grew at about 4.5 per cent per annum, factory production had almost doubled, rural output had increased by forty per cent and for much of that period there was less than one per cent unemployment.<sup>1</sup>

The 1961 Australian census recorded 10.5 million Australians. At this time some seventy-five per cent of the workforce was male and thirty-eight per cent of women gave ‘home-duties’ as their occupation. Australians were highly urbanised with approximately eighty per cent of the population in urban areas, and with fifty-seven per cent of the workforce in metropolitan areas. Of the total population, twenty-one per cent were full-time school students or tertiary students, reflecting the high proportion of the population under twenty, as well as the rising demand for secondary and tertiary education as mentioned previously.<sup>2</sup>

About fifty per cent of the workforce was working class, performing manual labour, with only about twenty per cent of these being skilled workers. The remainder of the workforce, constituting the middle class in Australia, was largely composed of white collar workers who were ‘status conscious and socially mobile’. There was a small upper class which was similar to the more prosperous section of the middle class. According to Connell, the interest of the middle class ‘ran towards the maximisation of life chances

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<sup>1</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, pp. 15-16.

rather than an improvement of life styles'.<sup>3</sup>

Educational performance played a significant role in improving the life chances of the middle class but family and social background could also contribute.<sup>4</sup> Connell has described the Australia of the 1960s as the 'land of meritocratic opportunity', and noted, the 'general aspiration towards social mobility [was] encouraged by the teaching profession [and] the competitive life of schools'.<sup>5</sup> Socio-economic mobility in the 1960s was relatively easy. Any pupil of Holy Cross College with above average intellect and hard work had the opportunity to win a commonwealth scholarship to university or teachers college; these scholarships were not means tested. It was not until the Labor Party won government in 1972 that university fees were abolished. Those who matriculated were still very small in number in the early 1960s, but the universities were forced to introduce restrictive quotas during the 1960s, as demand for places exceeded supply.

### **The fight for state aid**

Post-war immigration and the increase in the fertility rate were beginning to put an unbearable strain on Catholic schools, more especially in the expanding areas of western Sydney in which most new migrants settled. Holy Cross College was not feeling these pressures because of the relatively high cost of housing in much of the developed parts of the Eastern Suburbs. Bishop Freeman presented his 'State Survey of Catholic Education' (completed in 1959) to the Australian Episcopal Conference in January 1961. In September 1961, the NSW bishops held a special meeting to plan a campaign for state aid and they commissioned Bishop James Carroll to produce an informative pamphlet. This was in line with the decision that the campaign 'was to emphasise public relations and information rather than agitation'.<sup>6</sup> Bishop Carroll's pamphlet, *Independent Schools in a Free Society* was published in July 1962. It was advertised through the *Catholic Weekly* and parish notices as well as being distributed to key persons in public life by the Knights of the Southern Cross.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> The relative importance of these factors emerged in interviews of former students of Holy Cross College. The role of marriage in maintaining and/or improving the 'life chances' of the ex-students has followed predictable patterns. It was quite common for a Holy Cross College ex-student to marry a Waverley College 'boy' up until the 1970s, thus reinforcing the general middle-class nature of Holy Cross College students.

<sup>5</sup> Connell, *Reshaping Australian Education*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 56.

Another pamphlet, *Freedom of Choice in Education*, written by Kathleen Woolf (nee Hand), a Holy Cross College ex-student, did not receive such a positive response from the Sydney Archdiocese. Kathleen Woolf had become interested in the state aid issue when living in the USA. As Hogan explains, her pamphlet was published by the Australian Catholic Truth Society in Melbourne, ‘after Carroll had not replied to letters and an imprimatur was delayed’; the *Catholic Weekly* refused to advertise it.<sup>8</sup> It advocated the Canadian style of government aid to church schools; grants were to be given directly to parents as vouchers. This was at odds with the official line of the NSW Catholic hierarchy that all government grants should go to the Catholic Education Offices, which would distribute the pooled money according to need. Bishop James Carroll was given the task of supervising negotiations with the political parties.<sup>9</sup>

The implementation of the Wyndham Scheme coincided with the election campaign for the February 1962 NSW state elections. State aid was one of the election issues but Premier Robin (Bob) Askin refused to even consider the matter.<sup>10</sup> The matter would come to a head with the Goulburn ‘strike’ of July 1962. At a public meeting on 9 July, attended by approximately 700, a motion to close all Catholic schools in Goulburn for the six weeks remaining of the second term, had been passed by 550 to 120 with the support of Dr Eris O’Brien, the Archbishop of Canberra- Goulburn. The six Catholic schools in Goulburn, which had had a collective enrolment of nearly 2,000 children, closed on 13 July. The children were to present themselves at the state schools seeking enrolment and on the following Monday, 640 Catholic children were enrolled at state schools; this was the maximum that could be accommodated.

Editorial comment in the Catholic press was almost hostile to the decision. On 22 July 1962, parents voted to re-open the Catholic schools in Goulburn. Approximately ten per cent of the 640 Catholic children who had enrolled in the state schools in Goulburn did not return to the Catholic schools.<sup>11</sup> The so-called strike has been described by O’Farrell

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<sup>8</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 56. Kathleen Hand had come to Holy Cross College from St Pius School, Enmore (run by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy) on a scholarship. Her family was in fact connected to that of Bishop James Carroll, himself an ‘Enmore boy’. A talented student, Kathleen won a scholarship to Sydney University, becoming actively involved in social concerns. She has remained active in the Australian Parents Council.

<sup>9</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, pp. 69-70.

as an ‘unprecedented demonstration of protest’.<sup>12</sup> It seems to have achieved several outcomes, including the attraction of widespread publicity which began a process of extracting concessions from governments, both federal and state.

O’Farrell has stated that the 1962 Goulburn incident ‘stimulated the growth of Catholic parent organisations to press for state aid’, that is to become politically motivated, rather than merely concerned with fund raising.<sup>13</sup> The first permanent Parents’ and Friends’ Committee at Holy Cross College was formed in 1958 and Don Smart has claimed that Catholic parent groups had emerged in most states by 1960.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that the Goulburn incident stimulated the formation of the Australian Parents Council in 1962. By 1966, it was an umbrella organisation representing the Federation of Catholic Parents’ and Friends’ (NSW), the NSW Association for Educational Freedom and similar Catholic and non-Catholic Associations from Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia. Altogether these organisations represented the overwhelming majority of parents attending non-government schools throughout Australia. A statement issued by the Australian Parents Council Conference on 9 October 1966 displays the union of parents from all non-government schools to achieve common purposes. The statement acknowledged that ‘the Catholic sector has a vital role [and] if either system fail then there is inevitably a failure which must adversely affect all Australian children and could ultimately retard the development of Australia as a nation’. The Council’s policy programme drawn up for the 1966 federal election included the following demands:

- A substantial grant from the Federal Government to overcome the urgent and immediate problems of all schools, government and non-government
- Annual per capita grants to be made to all non-government schools (primary and secondary) to meet teaching costs
- Capital assistance to be given to all non-government schools on a dollar for dollar basis for buildings and equipment
- Annual grants to be made for teacher training (for both government and non-government schools)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 407.

<sup>13</sup> O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 407.

<sup>14</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> The Australian Parents’ Council Statement tabled in the minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission, 12 October 1966, I10781, SAA.

In 1963, means tested direct assistance by the NSW State Government was introduced and at the same time the mood was changing at the federal level. Prime Minister Menzies made a number of significant promises which would be met if the coalition government was returned at the December 1963 election. This resulted in a big swing to the coalition parties at the 30 November (early) election and the promises were implemented. Significantly there was established a commonwealth scholarship scheme to apply to the final two years of secondary schooling, modelled on the commonwealth university scholarship scheme. If the successful candidate was attending an independent school, the scholarship would include an additional sum as a contribution to fees.

A Federal Government scheme to finance science building and facilities for all secondary schools was implemented on 1 July 1964. The funds for this scheme (£5 million) were divided among government schools, Catholic schools and other independent schools, on the basis of their secondary enrolment. This set a precedent for specific purpose federal aid to schools. It was the first major direct federal aid to schools, both state and independent, throughout Australia and represented a dramatic policy reversal for the Menzies government. Menzies' strident opposition to federal aid to schools to some extent had stemmed from the likely financial costs, although the Federal Government was already heavily committed to the financing of tertiary education. Smart insists that at the root of Menzies's opposition was his 'conception of Australian federalism with its balanced division of powers between the Commonwealth and the states'.<sup>16</sup>

At its federal conference in August 1966, the ALP had narrowly voted in favour of direct aid to independent schools. Education emerged as a major issue in the 1966 federal election, and Arthur Calwell, the ALP leader, made lavish electoral promises such as the continuation of all existing benefits to independent schools as well as a contribution of \$22 million towards payment of teachers' salaries. Prime Minister Harold Holt's significant education promises included the doubling of the annual amount available to independent schools for science laboratories. Both Calwell and Holt had promised the establishment of a federal Department of Education and Science.<sup>17</sup> The Holt government was returned with a large margin and the new federal Department of Education and Science was established on 13 December 1966 with Senator John Gorton its first minister.

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<sup>16</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 80.



This necessitated the formation of a corresponding lobby group to represent the Catholic Church at a national level and the Federal Catholic Schools Committee was formed in 1967, with James Carroll, now Archbishop, as chairman; it consisted of one lay and one clerical representative from each state.

Malcolm Fraser, as Minister for Education and Science, outlined his government's proposed 'New Measures in Education' on 14 August 1968. This included \$27 million over three years for a capital programme of library buildings, materials and equipment restricted to secondary schools. Various pressure groups had been campaigning for school library grants for some time. They had seemed to be a logical extension of the science laboratories scheme.

The NSW State Government had introduced per capita grants of \$12 for each primary school student and \$18 for each secondary school student attending a non-government school in 1968. These relatively modest sums were 'sufficient to keep the schools open' and within ten years had increased to \$479 and \$745 respectively.<sup>18</sup> During the federal election campaign in 1969 the Liberal Party introduced a scheme of per capita recurrent grants for independent schools. The Federal Government budget provided for a per-capita grant of \$50 per secondary pupil and \$35 per primary pupil. This was a very significant precedent because it established a degree of permanent Federal Government responsibility for providing non-specific (general) recurrent financial assistance to independent schools.

Bishop Muldoon informed Cardinal Gilroy of the unrest amongst the teaching congregations regarding the pooling of Federal Government per capita grants. He stressed that the Major Superiors:

Must agree and see to it that the said grants to be paid to the schools, must be forwarded to the Commission as and when they are received. If this is not faithfully done by all, then the present system of financing schools must be

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<sup>18</sup> Br Kelvin Canavan, *The Development of the Catholic Education Office and a System of Schools in Sydney since 1965*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2007, p. 4; Marcellin Flynn and Magdalena Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000: a longitudinal study of year 12 students in Catholic schools 1972-1982-1990-1998*, Catholic Education Commission of NSW, 2002, p. 229.

abandoned and another system adopted. In this matter the teaching Congregations must adopt the principle: “all in, or all out”.

He concluded that if they did not accept this principle ‘they must “go it alone”’ with a strict prohibition against any increase in fees.<sup>19</sup>

### **Holy Cross College becomes a systemic school**

Apart from the campaign for state aid, the reorganisation and rationalisation of schools was an important response of the Catholic educational authorities to the 1960s crisis in Catholic schooling. Before the 1960s, most Catholic schools were relatively independent, paying their own salaries and adding to school buildings out of funds they raised themselves. In 1960 there were over 300 schools in the Sydney archdiocese run by many different religious orders. There was a pressing need for a more centralised leadership and a more co-ordinated and co-operative response to change, especially if the campaign for government funding was to succeed, and these funds then to be distributed according to need.<sup>20</sup>

The regionalisation of Catholic secondary schooling was the first tangible evidence of the determination of the archdiocesan educational authorities to ensure the continuity of the Catholic education system in Sydney. This process began with Bishop Carroll announcing ‘radical changes’ to the Catholic education system in a letter read in all Sydney churches on 18 November 1962. Holy Cross College Woollahra was one of the secondary schools listed in the reorganisation plan. He emphasised that ‘no schools will be closed’ and ‘no child presently attending a Catholic school will be displaced and forced to attend a State school’.<sup>21</sup>

The ideal size of a secondary school had been given at 500 to 700 pupils by the majority of the witnesses who had made submissions to the Wyndham Committee; this was based on the ability of a school principal to know his or her pupils personally. The Wyndham Report on Secondary Education had stated that the final year enrolment should be close to 200 to accommodate the necessary range of electives.<sup>22</sup> Secondary schools would only

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<sup>19</sup> Muldoon to Gilroy, 13 August 1969, CBFC Correspondence, I0790, SAA, (original emphasis).

<sup>20</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> CW, 22 November 1962, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, pp. 79-80.

remain viable by increasing their enrolments and the best way of doing that was to become a regional school, drawing on a much larger catchment area comprising several parishes. As the *Catholic Weekly* commented, it was indisputable that the ‘day of small secondary schools has positively ended’.<sup>23</sup>

The Holy Cross convent chronicler records that it was towards the end of 1962 that ‘Holy Cross was nominated as a regional school’ and this decision which was ‘the wisest one possible [...] brought with it a multitude of problems’. Following this announcement, ‘Mother M. Alacoque spent the entire day and a considerable part of the evening going from one parlour to another, enrolling children for 1963’.<sup>24</sup> Holy Cross College was already bursting at the seams in 1962; there were two First Form classes and two Second Form classes. Sr Barbara McDonough recalled: ‘Every square inch was being used’ and there were serious concerns about accommodating an additional two classes the following year.<sup>25</sup> At least the Catholic parents of the Eastern Suburbs had a range of options for the secondary education of their sons and daughters. In the western and southern suburbs of Sydney, where the population was growing fastest, Catholic schools were desperately needed. It was clear to the archdiocesan authorities that the wealthier, longer established parishes would have to contribute and help fund the frenetic building programme of the 1960s, whether they liked it or not.

The official name of the new regional school was the Woollahra Regional Girls’ Secondary School and it was operating by the beginning of the 1963 school year. There is no evidence that the new name, although used in official documents and reports, was ever used by the school community; certainly the school kept calling itself Holy Cross College, Woollahra. In its first year as a regional school there was a great variety of school uniforms mingling and adding colour in the playground. St Anne’s School, Bondi Beach, administered by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, had offered secondary education up to the Intermediate Certificate since 1938. Its secondary section was phased out by the mid-60s and the students were redirected to Holy Cross College as the new regional secondary girls’ school.<sup>26</sup> Many more new students were transferred from Our Lady of Mercy College, Rose Bay, a school run by the North Sydney congregation of the Sisters

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<sup>23</sup> *CW*, 4 June 1964, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, p. 41.

of Mercy. This school, with much regret, closed its secondary section in 1962.<sup>27</sup> To cope with some extra 200 pupils in 1963, five additional members of staff were appointed to Holy Cross College: Sr M. Aquinas Carroll, Sr M. Barbara Quinn, Sr M. Sophia McGrath, Sr M. Louis Marie Ledlin and Sr M. Emmanuel Campbell. Officially, the parochial primary schools associated with the new regional school were: Bondi, Paddington, Bondi Beach, Rose Bay, Waverley and Woollahra.

Holy Cross College was inspected for registration as a certified school on 1 May 1963; the total enrolment was given as 539, with sixty-one in Fifth Form. The three junior forms each had over 130 pupils.<sup>28</sup> The numbers indicate the need for four classes in each of the junior forms, and two in each of the senior forms, a doubling from the previous year. Along with the 'bigger picture' changes in demographics in the school, was a loss along the street frontage of the Camphor-Laurel trees, notorious for invading drainage systems, and the distinctive Canary Island Palms which flanked the front steps. To this day, generations of ex-students loudly lament this loss to the ambience of the microcosm of their alma mater.<sup>29</sup>

### **Advantages of joining the CEO system**

By agreeing to hand over Holy Cross College to the jurisdiction of the Sydney Catholic Education Office, thus changing it from an independent congregationally administered school to a 'systemic' school, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were transferring the responsibility of paying for more classrooms, specialised accommodation and staff wages to the CEO.<sup>30</sup> These gains involved a certain loss of independence in decision making. Beginning in 1965, the principal of Holy Cross College received directions concerning school fees from the Catholic Building and Finance Commission (hereafter CBFC), the body which also controlled the distribution of government grants. A classification system was developed for lay teachers, based on qualifications, experience and responsibilities. A uniform salary scale (stipend) for religious working in Sydney CEO schools was introduced in 1967 and paid by the CBFC (see Table 6 on page 223).

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<sup>27</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. 139.

<sup>28</sup> Inspection for Registration as a Certified School, 1 May 1963, Box SC 31/7, CEOSA.

<sup>29</sup> See *Celebration of Our Education*, for expressions of such laments.

<sup>30</sup> Any record of this agreement has not been found and it is not clear exactly when the Congregation agreed to the College becoming a regional school within the Sydney Archdiocesan system. A statistical return was sent in to the CEO in 1960. This suggests an agreement was being drawn up or was already in place, Holy Cross College, School Statistical Return, 1960, PA.

There were a number of Sydney secondary schools which were retained by the religious congregations during this regionalisation and rationalisation period. The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy retained their 'flagship', Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta. A report prepared by the Parramatta Congregation for the CBFC had stated that there were six schools offering Forms V to VI in the Eastern Suburbs, to cope with a senior school population equal to the total senior school population of the Western Suburbs. It was suggested that a second school be built at Blacktown. In spite of reporting that Parramatta can take girls from OLMC, Parramatta, St Patrick's (Parramatta parish school) and OLMC Epping only, and 'applications from girls from other schools will be refused', Mother M. Thecla Kerwick agreed that OLMC Parramatta's two senior classes would cater for the wider western area of Sydney.<sup>31</sup> The Parramatta congregation's secondary schools at OLMC Epping, and OLMC Burraneer Bay, became Forms I to IV regional schools. St Clare's College at Waverley, very close in physical distance to Holy Cross College, remained an independent Forms I to VI school, but would struggle with its small enrolment and the demands of the Wyndham Scheme.

#### **Regionalisation is formalised in 1964**

Far-reaching and fundamental changes impacting on the Catholic school system were announced by Cardinal Gilroy in his Pastoral Letter of 31 May 1964. The letter was read in all churches throughout the Sydney Archdiocese and the changes were outlined in a practical fashion which only hinted at the upheavals, sacrifices, dissent and widespread dissatisfaction which would be set in train as a result. Announced were:

- The regionalisation of secondary schools, continuing a process which had begun in 1962
- The building of new regional schools in the outer suburbs of Sydney, to be financed by a quota contribution from each parish of the diocese
- The foreshadowing of a major financial appeal. A quota was to be levied for each parish to go into a central fund
- The establishment of a loan fund<sup>32</sup>

The spending of £3 million over the next two years was already well under way when the cardinal made his announcement. Four new girls' secondary schools had recently been

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<sup>31</sup> Replies of Major Superiors concerning Forms V to VI Schools, CBFC Minutes, 1 September 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>32</sup> CW, 4 June 1964, p. 15.

built at Fairfield, Milperra, Sutherland and Warriewood, with two more at Berala and Chatswood under construction. Plans had been drawn up for eight more secondary schools for girls in the newer western suburbs of Sydney.

In her annual report given at the 1967 Holy Cross College awards presentation, Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry alluded to this time in 1963 when ‘the regional principle was adopted’ and generated ‘feelings of trepidation and uncertainty’. Regionalisation depended on a generous spirit of cooperation between congregations, between parishes and between parents and teachers. Holy Cross parish community was held up as an exemplar and there was public praise for the spirit of cooperation which allowed the construction of a complete new infants and primary school by Holy Cross parish, under the capable leadership of its parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll. With its completion, the rooms formerly used by the parochial school provided much needed additional accommodation for Holy Cross College.<sup>33</sup>

### **Establishment of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission**

As indicated, before 1965 there was no strongly centralised administration of Catholic schools in Sydney. Luttrell explains; ‘Instead, there were independent networks of schools run by different Religious Congregations, loosely linked by Diocesan Inspectors and by adherence to State syllabuses.’<sup>34</sup> By 1964, the diocesan authorities were actively considering bureaucratic reorganisation as one way of cutting expense for both Catholic parents and Catholic schools. With the building programme underway it was clear that centralised control was imperative, in order to rein in expenses and allocate scarce resources in an efficient and equitable manner.

In 1964 the diocesan hierarchy of Sydney appointed a Catholic Education Development Council to advise on what re-organisation was needed.<sup>35</sup> The Catholic Education Office refused a request from the Sydney Federation of Parents’ and Friends’ Associations to notify them of the names of the lay members on the Council. This Council never functioned. It would be replaced by a new organisation called the Catholic Building and Finance Commission, already referred to, whose role was to co-ordinate and control the

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<sup>33</sup> CW, 11 June 1964, p 1.

<sup>34</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, p. 40.

<sup>35</sup> Bishop James Carroll addressed a gathering of eminent Catholics at St Mary’s Cathedral Presbytery on 24 September 1963 and appealed to those present to become members of a Catholic Education Development Council, I0789,SAA.

planning and financing of the building of schools within the Archdiocese of Sydney; its establishment was announced in May 1965 although its first meeting was held on 24 March 1965 at CUSA House.<sup>36</sup> At a meeting of the CBFC, Cardinal Gilroy announced:

It is my intention that all decisions on matters relating to education, which result in financial demands on parishes, and/or in the construction of new buildings, shall be made by the Commission, and recommended to me, so that I may give the required authority.<sup>37</sup>

Chaired by Cardinal Gilroy, the Catholic Building and Finance Commission was composed of the three Auxiliary Bishops, Carroll, Freeman, and Muldoon, six clerics, including Mgr John Slowey, the Director of Catholic Education, and nine laymen, including Mr Geoffrey Davey, who was appointed the Executive Commissioner. It was proposed to call on the expertise of Catholics with strong business or educational backgrounds, such as, Bede Callaghan of the Reserve Bank of Australia, retailer Reuben Scarf and educator Brock Rowe (a good friend of Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley). Initially there was only one woman on the CBFC, Sr M. Christopher of the Good Samaritans, Marrickville, who was appointed to the Education Committee. After Davey had told Cardinal Gilroy of criticisms regarding the lack of women members and Bishop Freeman had noted that 'the addition of some ladies would be a good idea', Miss E. McEwan, the headmistress of Fort Street Girls' High School and Miss Joan Delaney, a Catholic and noted educator in the state system, were appointed to the Education Committee.<sup>38</sup> The inclusiveness of the CBFC and its committees was in notable contrast with the composition of the 1939 Catholic Education Board.<sup>39</sup>

The Commission appointed three committees to oversee education, building and finance. Archbishop James Carroll chaired the Finance Committee, Freeman the Education Committee and Muldoon the Building Committee.<sup>40</sup> As the title of the new commission revealed, its purpose was to strictly control the building of new schools and extensions to existing ones, and to use the limited financial resources of the archdiocese in the most

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<sup>36</sup> CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of CBFC meeting, 26 May 1965, I0789, SAA.

<sup>38</sup> Davey to Gilroy, 31 May 1965, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>39</sup> The original members of the 1939 Catholic Education Board were: Gilroy (Bishop then), Fathers Thompson and Pierse, and Mgr Meaney (the nominee of Archbishop Kelly).

<sup>40</sup> *CW*, 13 May 1965, p. 1.

efficient manner. Carroll referred to ‘combining the efforts of different orders’ with a ‘view to achieving better coordination’ as well as the ‘provision of religious instruction for areas in which Catholic schools cannot take all (or any) Catholic children’. These points, as well as a reference made by Archbishop James Carroll to the possibility of agreement between schools ‘as to specialisation in one department, such as Languages, Science, Mathematics’, gives a tantalising glimpse into a Catholic education system which could have been innovative and resourceful, stretching human and physical assets wisely to accommodate the ever increasing demands for its services. Carroll’s vision was never to be realised. It is significant that his thoughts were expressed in a private letter to Cardinal Gilroy, not as a public statement.<sup>41</sup> Ironically the state education system would introduce such specialised high schools some twenty years on.

In November 1965 the Sydney archdiocese established a Loan Fund and an issue of promissory notes was arranged. Catholics were invited to lend their available savings to the Loan Fund and interest and loan repayments were guaranteed by Cardinal Gilroy. The aim was to raise £1 million initially and ultimately £11 million.<sup>42</sup> The total cost of the capital works required in the Sydney archdiocese from the beginning of 1964 to the end of 1967 was estimated to be £11,500,000. It was also estimated that some £2,500,000 would be received from the Federal Government Science Grants.<sup>43</sup>

### **Parish quotas**

In his 1964 pastoral letter, Cardinal Gilroy had emphasised the need for the Catholics of Sydney to leave behind their traditional parochial loyalties, and even their loyalties to particular teaching congregations, when he said:

These arrangements involve our looking beyond parochial boundaries to the Archdiocese as a whole. We must think and act not as so many parochial communities but as a united people inspired by a common ideal – the ideal of Catholic education for Australian children.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> James Carroll to Gilroy, 9 March 1965, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>42</sup> *SMH*, 15 November 1965. There is no evidence that these ideas were discussed formally by the CBFC.

<sup>43</sup> Davey to Mgr Wallace, 17 June 1966, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in *CW*, 15 July 1965, p. 10.



It was the imposition of parish quotas to finance rationalisation which would prove most contentious. In a May 1964 memorandum from Cardinal Gilroy to the parish priests of the Sydney archdiocese, there is mention of a committee of priests appointed to assess the quota imposed on each parish. Quotas were assessed on the basis of detailed financial reports sent in by each parish. Those parishes with steady Sunday collections and little outstanding debt, perhaps because they had been established many decades, had a large amount imposed and many were forced to take out a bank loan to cover the quota. The quota set for the parish of Holy Cross Woollahra was £10,000 and the total parish debt at 31 December 1963 was £101,000 plus the quota.<sup>45</sup> Gilroy emphasised that:

Pastors should explain to their people that the schools problem is so vast that they must look beyond the boundaries of their own Parishes to the needs of the Archdiocese as a whole.<sup>46</sup>

To raise the £130,000 needed to erect an extension to Holy Cross College, the surrounding parishes, from which the school would draw its students as a designated regional girls' school, had to contribute. Quotas were as follows: Bondi - £25,000; Paddington - £16,000; Dover Heights - £10,000; Edgecliff - £44,000; Rose Bay - £35,000. Randwick parish's quota of £75,000 was to be directed to the second of the Eastern Suburbs regional girls' schools, Brigidine College, Randwick, which had become systemic in 1966.<sup>47</sup> Randwick parish was obliged to take out a Savings Bank Loan of £50,000 at six per cent interest to meet its quota, and it was required to reduce the loan by £10,000 per annum as well as reduce its existing debt. Newtown, a much poorer parish, had a quota of £15,000 which was to go to the Fairfield boys' regional school, but the parish could not manage to raise this amount.<sup>48</sup> The imposition of parish quotas and a strict control over school fees charged by systemic schools, meant the financial burden was to be shared by all Catholic parishioners, irrespective of their parenthood status.

The executive commissioner of the CBFC, Geoffrey Davey, reported in June 1966 that sixty-eight new schools were to be started within the next few months. He wrote: 'Since

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<sup>45</sup> Memorandum from Cardinal Gilroy to the Parish Priests of the Archdiocese of Sydney, 30 May 1964, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>46</sup> Catholic Schools Building Fund Correspondence 1960, 1964, 1965 and CBFC Correspondence 1965-1966, I0789, SAA.

<sup>47</sup> James Carroll (on behalf of Gilroy) to Fr Sexton, parish priest of Dover Heights, 9 September 1965, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>48</sup> CBFC Correspondence, 1965-1966, I0789, SAA.

1964 we have spent £4,800,000 and are to spend a further £4,200,000 by the end of 1967.' He added: 'There is no greater apostolic undertaking today in this Archdiocese than our Catholic schools.'<sup>49</sup>

The Lend Lease Corporation was paid £7,500 in June 1965 to prepare a report on 'Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney'; the report was to be kept strictly confidential. The report had indicated the magnitude of future needs, priorities according to areas and how improved planning and component standardisation could reduce capital and operating costs.<sup>50</sup> It is clear that its recommendations were implemented by a major rationalisation process underway by late 1965.

### **Uniformity rules**

In the process of the 'systemisation' of Catholic education in Sydney the CBFC employed economies of scale. 'Systemic' schools were those which came under the jurisdiction of the Sydney Catholic Education Office, as distinct from those schools which had remained under the control of a congregation during the rationalisation period of the 1960s and were called 'non-systemic'. Initially it was suggested that school uniforms be standardised as well as textbooks and that a hiring system for textbooks for the higher grades be investigated.<sup>51</sup> Uniform school buildings would be designed to achieve substantial savings and standardised buildings could be given individuality by the use of different materials.

The CBFC demonstrated a capacity for detailed thinking and after their second meeting issued a 'Directive on standards for the construction of regional schools in the Sydney Archdiocese of the Catholic Church in Australia'. It set out the (uniform) size of a blackboard as 12 feet x 4feet, the provision of two double socket power outlets per classroom, the number of toilets and the size of general science laboratories (40 feet x 24 feet). The directive specified no classroom was to have a teacher's dais.<sup>52</sup>

The idea of a common school uniform for Catholic schools was a very contentious issue which had been under discussion for some years. As reported by Mgr Slowey in

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<sup>49</sup> Davey to Mgr Wallace, 17 June 1966, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of the CBFC, 23 March 1965 – 20 December 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>51</sup> CW, 16 July 1964, p. 1 and CW, 23 July 1964, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes of the CBFC, 23 March 1965 – 20 December 1965, I0781, SAA.

September 1961, the suggestion of a standard uniform for parochial schools had generally been accepted by the Provincial Superiors of the teaching sisters, but should also apply to the boys' schools and to the secondary schools.<sup>53</sup> Many parents agreed with the school principals on the value of distinctive uniforms.<sup>54</sup> This discussion bore some fruit in the case of Holy Cross College where, after the primary section of Holy Cross was closed in 1958 and a newly built parochial primary school was opened in 1962 (renamed Holy Cross Junior School), the pupils of both primary parochial school and College wore an identical uniform.<sup>55</sup> A 'Practical Mother' of five children attending three different Catholic schools had an opposing view expressed in a letter to the *Catholic Weekly*: 'If all the children in Sydney Catholic schools are dressed alike, they will stand out too much.'<sup>56</sup> This observation was made at a time of growing sectarianism as the state aid debate began to gain heat.

School fees were to be standardised for all archdiocesan systemic schools and they were to be kept as low as possible.<sup>57</sup> A standard scale of fees for all schools, primary and secondary, in the Sydney archdiocese, which had been established by the archdiocese and for those secondary schools, established by the orders, which were classified as regional schools, commenced in 1966. They were as follows:

**Secondary Schools: per child per term**

Forms I and II	\$26.00
Forms III and IV	\$34.00
Forms V and VI	\$50.00

Fees were to be reduced for more than one child in the family attending any Catholic schools on a sliding scale starting with a ten per cent reduction for two children. The CBFC would issue accounts based on data collected by the schools on enrolment and then issue accounts. Schools would collect the fees and pass them on to the CBFC.<sup>58</sup> This

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<sup>53</sup> CEB Minutes for 26 September 1961, Box 2, CEOS.

<sup>54</sup> Hogan, *State Aid*, p. 140.

<sup>55</sup> CW, 20 August 1964, p. 27. This is another example of Holy Cross College being held up as a regional school to be emulated.

<sup>56</sup> CW, letter to the editor, 12 November 1964, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> In a letter to Cardinal Gilroy, a Randwick mother expressed her concerns over the cost of sending her two sons to Catholic schools, when her husband earned £21 a week and she was left with £10 a week to feed and clothe the family. Letter to Cardinal Gilroy dated 3 May 1965, name and address withheld, I0781,SAA.

<sup>58</sup> CBFC agenda and papers for special meeting, 25 January 1966, I0781, SAA.

system would come under criticism for its administrative inefficiency, namely the double handling of monies collected.

### **FOCUS YEAR – 1964**

- ❖ The year after Holy Cross College became a regional secondary girls' school was one notable for adjustments and innovations. There was a desperate need to increase teaching accommodation, and the College was divided for administrative purposes into junior and senior sections. Mother M. St Jude (Ethel) Cashman, ex-student of Holy Cross, was appointed superior of Holy Cross convent community and principal of the College in 1964.
- ❖ The Holy Cross Convent Chronicles note that Sr M. Benignus Meehan, assistant principal, looked after the Junior Secondary School which 'formed a fairly self-contained and smoothly functioning world' in their own building, the classrooms vacated by the parochial Primary School. A new school house, 'Coolock' was launched, another sign of increasing enrolments.<sup>59</sup> It would take its place alongside the two well-established school houses of 'Mercedes' and 'McAuley' which had become traditional in Mercy schools.
- ❖ Mother M. Andrew Lynch had instituted an annual Festival of Singing for the schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, and in 1964, Holy Cross choirs performed at the fourth festival which was held in Petersham Town Hall. The College participated for the first time in the Combined Mercy Sports at Cumberland Oval, Parramatta, 'on what must have been the coldest, windiest, bleakest day in recorded history'. The College came fourth out of the five participating schools.<sup>60</sup> The Festival of Singing and the Combined Sports are evidence of efforts to develop a sense of Mercy community among the scattered secondary schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy.
- ❖ Early in 1964 the Young Christian Students (hereafter YCS) movement was introduced into the College where it was named the Holy Cross Student Apostolate until official archdiocesan recognition was granted for the introduction of this

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<sup>59</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 58. 'Coolock' was named after the home of the Quaker couple (Mr and Mrs Callaghan) which Catherine McAuley inherited.

<sup>60</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 62.

- international movement into Sydney archdiocesan Catholic schools. Fr Yates, a Holy Cross parish curate, was appointed chaplain. Some of the 1965 LC group who were among the first members were Caroline Ryan, Yolande (Yollie) Paino and Pam McLeod. By the end of 1964 it was well established. Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry and Sr M. Sophia (Sophie) McGrath were the first religious assistants.<sup>61</sup> This movement, through its 'See, Judge and Act' method, based on the Gospels, was designed to promote involvement of students in community issues, immediate and beyond the school.
- ❖ The property next to the College, always known as 'Barlow's', was acquired mid-1964; finally the owners had been persuaded to move after many years of failed negotiations. Many generations of Holy Cross pupils had been invited to pray for just this outcome. This little cottage on land less than 20 feet wide, had stood defiantly, surrounded by Holy Cross land. At first it had been intended to use the cottage for temporary classrooms but on closer inspection it was realised it would be preferable to demolish the building and this occurred over the 1964-65 summer school holidays.<sup>62</sup>
  - ❖ Mother M. St Jude sent a letter to the CEO setting out some points for its consideration on the possible advantages of the extension of the regional principle to Fifth and Sixth Forms by the establishment of separate senior schools jointly staffed by the congregations conducting secondary schools in the area. This was a revolutionary proposal at the time. It was inspired by the position of St Clare's College Waverley, which was in an 'extremely hazardous' position because of its small enrolment. In 1964, Holy Cross College had 514 students compared to St Clare's 172 students. Fr Slowey forwarded the letter to the Major Superiors of the teaching congregations in the Archdiocese.<sup>63</sup>
  - ❖ A conference in 1964 of the principals of Holy Cross College Woollahra and St Clare's Waverley resulted in an agreement that a senior school, on a new site and jointly staffed was 'expedient', and Bishop Carroll proposed the Christian Brothers

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<sup>61</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', pp.59-60.

<sup>62</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 62.

<sup>63</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 67.

school site at Paul Street, Bondi Junction, would be suitable.<sup>64</sup> This plan was not realised. In October 1964, Bishop Carroll was reporting to the CEB that:

The only satisfactory solution to the problem at [St Clare's College] Waverley seemed to be to let the school become a co-regional school, offering a curriculum that was complementary to the curriculum at Holy Cross, Woollahra. To equip the school to continue to operate as a small school concentrating on such things as domestic science, commercial work, would require an outlay of about £10,000.

The CEB approved this expenditure.<sup>65</sup> It is significant that Bishop Carroll's report was suggesting that St Clare's would be offering non-academic, vocational subjects, the implication being that Holy Cross College would be a senior school concentrating on academic subjects for university preparation. It has been shown that Carroll was in favour of secondary schools specialising in certain subject areas and certainly St Clare's was well equipped to concentrate on domestic science and commercial subjects as these had been added to its curriculum in 1933.<sup>66</sup> Yet this plan also came to nothing. By late 1965, Mother M. Thecla alluded to crucial factors in the dropping of this plan, when she reported that 'owing to the heavy commitments at Parramatta and, unexpectedly in Woollahra, no contribution can be made to jointly-staffed schools'.<sup>67</sup>

- ❖ It was about this time that principals of the various Parramatta sisters' secondary schools started reading their annual school reports themselves instead of requesting a man to act for them.<sup>68</sup> Since the Holy Cross convent chronicler specifically reported that Mother M. St Jude read the annual report for 1964, this was probably the occasion when the pattern was changed.<sup>69</sup> This is a reflection of the changing attitudes to the roles of working women within society and within the Catholic Church. The College had two speech nights in 1964, another indication of the impact of the increased enrolments. The junior secondary speech night was held in the parish

<sup>64</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 64.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the CEB, report dated 1 October, 1964, J0929, SAA.

<sup>66</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Replies of Major Superiors concerning Form V-V1 Schools, CBFC Minutes, 1 September 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>68</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 177.

<sup>69</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 75.

hall and the senior secondary speech night at the Science Theatre at the University of New South Wales, which had been made available through the influence of Professor Anderson, father of Helen, a Holy Cross pupil. This began a long tradition of having the Holy Cross College end of year formalities at this venue.

### **Dissenting opinions about the future of Catholic education**

The Archdiocese of Sydney was facing enormous financial problems by late 1966. There was a deficit of £3,000,000 in spite of some £950,000 invested in the Diocesan Loan, previously mentioned, and £6,500,000 raised by the parish levies (quotas). The total amount needed to complete the building programme by the end of 1967 was £12,000,000. The chairman of the Building Committee of the CBFC, Bishop Muldoon, alluded to dissenting opinions regarding the sacrifices being asked of parish priests, religious, lay staff, parents and parishioners. He said:

Now, in the face of all these problems, His Eminence the Cardinal has reaffirmed the traditional ideal of Catholic education, namely, the education of all our Catholic children in Catholic schools. There are some who do not agree with this decision.<sup>70</sup>

The Catholic Education Board was just as unequivocal as the Cardinal when it noted in a document entitled ‘Catholic Education: its philosophy, image, functioning and organisation’, that there is no alternative to the Catholic school. This document’s policy statement declared: ‘The Catholic school aims to promote the cohesive development of the whole human personality, the natural being augmented and completed by the supernatural.’<sup>71</sup>

James Carroll (appointed Archbishop in 1965), in a letter to Mgr Wallace, expressed his ‘serious doubts’ about the proposed methods of raising funds to finance the ‘education crisis’. It was his belief that ‘Parish initiative is likely to decline. Any Pastor and any Committee will confirm the view that money can be raised more readily for local or regional purpose [*sic*].’ He added that a publicity campaign to educate ‘our people to an

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<sup>70</sup> Address of Bishop Muldoon broadcast on radio 2SM, Sunday 25 September 1966, CBFC Correspondence file, I0789, SAA, (original emphasis). In spite of the introduction of decimal currency in Australia in February 1966, the CBFC was still using pounds sterling for its figures.

<sup>71</sup> Catholic Education Board, ‘Catholic Education: its philosophy, image, functioning and organisation’, Document 110, J0929, SAA. It is not clear if this document was intended to be widely circulated.

acceptance of finance of schools on the basis of the Diocese as a whole' was possible but would need some time.<sup>72</sup>

Mgr Slowey had reported in 1964 that it was Mother M. Thecla's opinion that the idea of regional schools was most commendable and she had no problems with such schools as OLMC Epping becoming regional schools.<sup>73</sup> In a surprising revelation, Mother M. Thecla wrote to Mgr Slowey concerning OLMC Burraneer: 'The general feeling among the Sisters at Burraneer seems to be that until numbers grow, those wishing to proceed to the Higher School Certificate should attend the local State High School.'<sup>74</sup>

### **A significant extension to Holy Cross College**

The CBFC's 'Programme of Secondary Schools required to be built by end of 1967, commencing 1-1-64' listed 'Woollahra Girls' School'. The new building was to be constructed during 1966 and ready for use in 1967. The plan was for seven classrooms (30 feet x 24 feet), three classrooms (24 feet x 24 feet), two science laboratories of a standard size (40 feet x 24 feet) and preparation rooms, an art/craft room and music room, a shelter shed, toilet block and administrative block. The final building of three floors on a basement was to include an enclosed top floor above these for assembly and other purpose. The project was approved and it was put under the control of the Building Committee.<sup>75</sup> At this time the enrolment at Holy Cross College was approximately 405, with eight religious staff and six lay staff. Altogether there were seventeen sisters at the Holy Cross convent serving the primary and secondary schools as well as teaching music.<sup>76</sup>

The Holy Cross College Annual Report for 1965 referred to the commencement of work on the new building site. It would be some time, however, before the additional accommodation, desperately needed, was available. A number of factors caused considerable delays in the construction: the new building did not conform to the standardised specifications as set out by the CBFC and the specified width of the

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<sup>72</sup> Archbishop James Carroll to Mgr Wallace, 30 November 1966, Minutes of forty-first meeting of the CBFC, 7 December 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>73</sup> Report by Fr Slowey, 10 March 1964, CEB Minutes, Box 2, CEOSA.

<sup>74</sup> Mother Superior of the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy Parramatta to Mgr Slowey, 12 August 1965, Box 5.1, PA.

<sup>75</sup> CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA. Approval for construction had been given by the Finance Committee on 12 August 1965.

<sup>76</sup> EVR, Parish of Woollahra, 1955, D0260, SAA.



veradahs was 6 feet, but the plan showed a width of 7 feet; the cost of the new school buildings was given at \$323,000, including fees and furniture<sup>77</sup>, but this sum exceeded the 'financial allowance' of the project.<sup>78</sup> Two considerations, which caused further delays in the construction, were the congregation's stated need for additional accommodation for the sisters in the main building and the consequent necessity for an additional floor in the new building.<sup>79</sup>

The Holy Cross parish administrator, Fr Baulman, the building's architect, Mr S. Hirst, and the architect in charge of the project, Mr Parkes, were summoned to the next meeting of the Building Committee and the committee's chair, Bishop Muldoon was assured that 'the building would not reach the fifth floor for a few months'.<sup>80</sup> The principal of the school, Sr M. St Jude Cashman, who obviously understood the school situation best, was not included in discussions. However, Fr Baulman, acting on behalf of the parish priest Archbishop Carroll, had excellent relations with the school administration and would strongly espouse the cause of Holy Cross College, but the principal would have been a more appropriate representative. Amended plans for the College additions were approved by the Building Committee of the CBFC on 17 August 1965, with the verandahs at the specified width and connecting doors to the classrooms, and the science preparation room enlarged to meet the requirements of the bureaucrats in Canberra. The estimated cost was £137,946, much lower than the previous costing.<sup>81</sup>

With so much money being spent and in such a visible way, control over building programmes in the schools could have become an issue. It was agreed that payments out of the pooled archdiocesan funds would be made directly to the parish priests.<sup>82</sup> Religious Superiors who had enjoyed considerable freedom within their own domains now found themselves bound by bureaucratic dictates and petty restrictions. For example: the Brigidine Sisters had requested teachers' daises for the new school at Randwick and were even prepared to meet the extra costs themselves. The Building Committee recorded its feelings on the matter and made clear in its response to the Randwick community, that it would brook no rebellious thoughts stating: 'The committee wishes to point out that all

<sup>77</sup> CBFC Works Programme as at 17 October 1967, in papers for CBFC sixty-second meeting, I0781, SAA.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of the forty-second meeting of the CBFC, 21 December 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>79</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee of the CBFC, 11 January 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee of the CBFC, 4 January 1967, I0781, SAA.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee, 12 August 1965, tabled at the meeting of the CBFC, 18 August 1965, I0781, SAA.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the CBFC meeting, 25 May 1966, I0781, SAA.

schools receiving money from the Archdiocese are expected to conform to the Directive. Ultimately there is only one source of money for Catholic schools.’<sup>83</sup> When Mother M. Thecla asked the CBFC to provide a car to be used for the transport of teachers from the Parramatta convent to the new secondary girls’ school at Westmead, there was agreement, but with the proviso that the original purchase cost would be the only expense for which the CBFC would be responsible.<sup>84</sup>

### **A senior school at Paul Street**

As mentioned previously, Sr M. St Jude Cashman, in 1964, had written to the CEO concerning the establishment of a separate regional senior school but a major decision regarding the senior section of Holy Cross College was not made until the end of 1969. It was delayed by negotiations initiated by the CEO to establish a regional girls’ senior secondary college at Kincoppal, Elizabeth Bay, a property owned by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay. After these negotiations stalled, a request was submitted by Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry to Mgr Slowey, director of the Catholic Education Office, for permission to use the former brothers’ school and monastery at Paul Street, Bondi Junction to accommodate the Fifth and Sixth Forms of Holy Cross College.<sup>85</sup> This request was made with the approval and support of the Holy Cross parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll, the parish administrator, Fr P. Harrington, and with the concurrence of Mother General, Mother M. Thecla Kerwick.<sup>86</sup> The Paul Street school site had originally been developed by the parish for the Marist Brothers, and had been transferred into the hands of the Christian Brothers in 1964 for use as a primary school.

Sr M. Anselm Gaudry’s letter to Mgr Slowey had pointed out that the Parramatta congregation still favoured the principle of a constitutional combined senior school despite the failure to accept the proposal to use Kincoppal for this purpose. Sr M. Anselm expressed the hope a senior school would encourage some form of collaboration and

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<sup>83</sup> Minutes of the Building Committee of the CBFC, 10 May 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>84</sup> Report of the Executive Committee of the CBFC, 1 February 1966, I0781, SAA.

<sup>85</sup> The property known as *Ben Eden* dates from a land grant to Mr Hartley Jr. After numerous changes in ownership Mr James Campbell built a stone house, in 1863, on the land which he had purchased for £250 the previous year. In 1927, Fr Peter O’Reilly bought the grounds and *Ben Eden House* as a boys’ school site and a residence for the brothers. The school was finally opened on 29 April 1928 as a Marist Brothers’ school for boys. See ‘*Ben Eden – a living legend*’, author unknown, 1980, Woollahra Library Local Studies file for Holy Cross College; also Perumal Murphy Pty Ltd, ‘Waverley Heritage Study’, for Waverley Municipal Council, item 31/5, 0229, 1990, Waverley Municipal Library, Local Studies Centre, Bondi Junction.

<sup>86</sup> ‘*Ben Eden – a living legend*’, p. 4.

cooperation with other Catholic schools in the area and the site at Paul Street conformed to the basic requirement of ‘neutrality’ of site, which had been emphasised in the Kincoppal proposals. The letter made clear that, even if inter-congregational co-operation was not ‘forthcoming’, the sisters would ‘still be appreciative of the opportunity’ to separate the senior and junior forms because of the difficulty of accommodating the full school on the Edgecliff Road site, in spite of the new extensions.<sup>87</sup> Mgr Slowey’s reply expressed his conviction that the separate education of the senior girls ‘could provide special opportunity for enriching their final years [...] especially as a preparation for their future lives and activities’.<sup>88</sup>

Mgr Slowey gave his permission to proceed with the establishment of the senior school of Holy Cross College on the Paul Street site, and in October 1969, Sr M. Anselm Gaudry sent a letter to the parents of the fifth formers who would be the sixth formers of 1970, and the prospective fifth formers of 1970. This letter gave a number of reasons for the proposed Holy Cross Senior School (always to be known as Paul Street).<sup>89</sup> These included the lack of adequate accommodation in existing classrooms at the Edgecliff Road site, and the inadequacy of facilities there for the teaching of art, craft and needlework, especially for Forms I to IV, which would be reduced by the relocation of the senior classes. Of particular concern, and a point which was especially stressed, was the present lack of facilities for private study, discussion and research for senior students. The letter also pointed out the opportunity for the relaxation of minor regulations which would be possible with the separate campus. It was hoped that allowing greater freedom and providing individual study and research facilities would ease the transition from secondary to tertiary education for the senior students.

Another perceived advantage was the opportunity for the fourth formers to assume leadership roles in the junior secondary school (to be known as Holy Cross Middle School) on Edgecliff Road.<sup>90</sup> The response to this letter was ‘extremely favourable’ and this was very encouraging to the sisters. Letters were then sent to the parish priests of the

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<sup>87</sup> Letter from Sr M. Anselm to Mgr Slowey, dated 3 October 1969, Box 78, PA, copy also in file SC 31/7, CEOS.

<sup>88</sup> *Ben Eden* – a living legend, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> The Holy Cross College senior school was always referred to by its geographical location (Paul Street) and this nomenclature shall be used in the text.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Sr M. Anselm Gaudry to parents, dated 21 October 1969, file SC 31/7, CEOS.

surrounding parishes as well as the principals of the other schools in the area.<sup>91</sup> Sr M. Anselm's letter to the parents had taken its tone and content from a CEO document, 'Establishment of Senior Secondary Schools'. Also noted in the letter was the disadvantage that such a move could accentuate the tendency for senior schools towards 'specialisation for matriculation'.<sup>92</sup> The builder carried out the necessary renovations during the Christmas vacation and Paul Street accepted its first students in January 1970.

### **Changing attitudes to lay teachers in Catholic schools**

By late 1955 it was clear that the policy of discouraging the appointment of lay teachers in primary schools would have to be reviewed by the Catholic education authorities. D'Orsa has noted that Cardinal Gilroy, 'while privately supporting the introduction of lay teachers, wished to allay the fears of clergy who questioned whether such a development was financially feasible'.<sup>93</sup> In a 1965 letter to Cardinal Gilroy, Mgr Slowey had noted that 'it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold good staff and to encourage trainees' and there is 'growing concern about the scale of salaries paid to Diocesan lay teachers and other lay teachers'.<sup>94</sup>

The CBFC had been notified that the employment of lay teachers was the 'most serious problem facing the schools in the immediate future'. From 1961 to 1965 the increase in the number of religious was forty-three or 2.5 per cent and the increase in lay teachers was 406 or seventy per cent. The cost of salaries in 1965, at the current rates of payment was estimated to be £705,000 and in 1966, £769,000.<sup>95</sup> Total student numbers in the Sydney Archdiocese had risen by 17,000 in 1967 and there was a shortfall of some 300 teachers. In order to cope with the influx of teachers, the CBFC ran a deficit budget of \$700,000 in 1967.<sup>96</sup> In 1966, the average weekly rate for female lay teachers in the Sydney Archdiocese was \$37.40 while for males it was \$58.60.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Ben Eden* – a living legend, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> CEO, 'Establishment of Senior Secondary Schools', p. 6, SC31/7, CEOS Archives.

<sup>93</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>94</sup> CBFC Correspondence, January to April 1965, file I0789, SAA.

<sup>95</sup> 'Lay Teachers-Salaries and Conditions and Associated Problems', drawn up by G. Davey to be presented to the Finance Committee of the CBFC and submitted to Archbishop Carroll on 30 November 1965, CBFC Correspondence, 1965-1966, file I0789, SAA.

<sup>96</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 64.

<sup>97</sup> Executive Commissioner to the Chairman, Finance Committee, 14 November 1966, CBFC Correspondence, 1965-1966, file I0789, SAA. Equality of pay for female and male lay teachers was implemented in 1976. Rates expressed in Australian decimal currency (introduced in February 1966).

Mgr John Slowey, the Director of Education for the Sydney archdiocese had nothing but praise for lay teachers. He said of them:

It was hard, sometimes bitterly hard, for Lay teachers to be accepted. It took a long time for them to be accepted in the concept of Pius XII as equally dignified co-workers in the apostolate. They were beautiful people, the pioneer trainees of the early years! They were truly sacrificial when salaries were poor (for obvious reasons) and when they were struggling to be accepted as worthy of a place as Catholic teachers, capable as well as prepared to share the dignity and responsibilities of the truly Christian teacher later to be described by Vatican II without the distinction between Religious and Lay.<sup>98</sup>

Cardinal Gilroy had made clear his personal attitude to lay teachers in his address at the third graduation ceremony of the Catholic Teachers' College:

Their presence in this college at all indicates that they consider themselves to be engaged not merely in a career but in an apostolate and future historians will duly note the contribution they made to Church and State during this period of stress.<sup>99</sup>

This idea of teaching as an apostolate had been eloquently expressed by Professor Russell of Sydney University that same year: 'The role of the lay teacher of the young is of an importance that is hard to exaggerate [...] no greater responsibility can be imagined.' Emphasising the need to attract the very best Catholic men and women, he left the reader in no doubt when he added:

Within both the Catholic and State systems of education there is a desperate need for dedicated and competent lay teachers, those who, while not having the call to enter the religious life, yet feel called [to] another form of this apostolate of education.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Quoted in D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 36.

<sup>99</sup> *CW*, 22 March 1962. There were thirty graduates, the decrease from the thirty-nine in the first graduating class in 1960 perhaps reflecting the full employment figures of the early 1960s. In spite of the fact that all the graduates were female, not one representative of the teaching sisters was among the official guests, yet the Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers and De La Salle Brothers were represented.

<sup>100</sup> 'Teaching as a Vocation, Professor G. H. Russell Offers a Challenge to Catholic Youth' in *CW*, 12 July 1962, p. 12.

The increase in lay teachers employed by Catholic schools in the Sydney Archdiocese resulted in some modifications within the Sydney CEO. Miss Irema (Mary) Mahuteau was appointed in 1963 to join its professional staff as supervisor of lay teachers in 1963. From 1963 onwards, the CEO Director sent two copies of his 'Circular to Schools' to principals, one for the religious community and one for the lay teachers, with strict instructions that the former not be made public to non-religious. Presumably this was because the former gave directions about or comments concerning lay teachers.

A personnel department and the payment of lay teachers had been centralised with the CBFC in 1965. The CBFC was fearful of teachers' salaries being taken out of their control and proscribed by an industrial award. When the Lay Teachers Association raised the question of the basic wage adjustments being added to teachers' salaries, the CBFC minutes of 2 August 1967 recorded its stance on the issue:

The Commission should not be obliged to review or increase rates merely as a result of decisions of Industrial Courts. It was made clear that in reviewing salaries for 1968 the Classifications Committee would be circumscribed by the availability of funds.<sup>101</sup>

Any dissatisfaction of lay teachers with their salaries and conditions was kept 'under the covers' as much as possible. Early in the first term of 1967, five teachers at Christian Brothers' Bondi Beach went on strike. They claimed that the principal had promised them salary increments. The matter was investigated and the teachers were paid the increments but it was made clear that all agreements would terminate at the beginning of the next school year on 29 January 1968. If teachers could not accept this, their services would be terminated at that date.<sup>102</sup> The chairman of the Executive Committee of the CBFC, Archbishop James Carroll, requested Br McGlade, Provincial of the Christian Brothers and Br Baptist, Provincial of the De La Salle Brothers, to ensure that any complaints of headmasters or of teachers would not be 'ventilated in the public press' and both Provincials agreed. The *Catholic Weekly* was 'advised' to make no mention of the protests in its 16 February 1967 issue, and was told what to include in 'a simple news item' in the following issue. This item was to stress that the actions were of some

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<sup>101</sup> Minutes of meeting of the CBFC, 2 August 1967, SAA.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes of the forty-sixth meeting of the CBFC, 10781, SAA.

individual teachers and the new scale of teachers' salaries 'was intended to benefit teachers and the System generally'. Archbishop Carroll's view was that the 'immediate objective should be to avoid any expansion of the mood of protest which probably would pass if not given too much prominence'.<sup>103</sup>

In 1968 the lay teachers launched a case in the NSW Industrial Court seeking their own industrial award. On 19 June 1970, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Award was handed down, the first award to cover infants, primary and secondary teachers in non-government schools and early childhood centres.

The 1972 report of the National Catholic Education Commission listed 'certain definable characteristics' which the teaching staff of Catholic schools should possess. These were stated as:

[C]ommitment to the vocation of teaching, dedication to the religious and moral objectives by which Catholic schools are specified, appropriate professional education for teaching in secular subject areas, and in specifically religious areas insofar as this duty is undertaken. These characteristics should be shared, in the measure of their capacity, by all teachers, lay and religious, in Catholic schools.<sup>104</sup>

By 1976, the Catholic Teachers' College at North Sydney was training some 493 women, two-thirds of whom were lay. There were ninety-one lay women at the Good Samaritan Training College at Glebe and 170 lay men were in training at the Catholic College of Education at Strathfield.<sup>105</sup> Bishop Muldoon asserted that a solution to the CEO's financial crisis 'must be found on religious, not secular grounds'. His solution implied that lay teachers would be inspired by religious motives as they replaced Religious teachers, especially in Catholic primary schools, and he wrote:

Teachers within the Catholic System, having the nature and purpose of that system at heart, should be prepared to handle larger classes than those handled

<sup>103</sup> Report of the Executive Committee of the CBFC, 17 February 1967, I0781, SAA.

<sup>104</sup> National Catholic Education Commission, *The Education of Catholic Australians: report of the National Catholic Education Commission*, National Catholic Education Commission, Canberra, 1972, p. 52.

<sup>105</sup> D'Orsa, *Monsignor John Slowey*, p. 75.

by secular professionals in a secular State System. They should be prepared to do extra duties, in line with our Catholic tradition. Otherwise the heart drops out of Catholic education as we have always understood it.<sup>106</sup>

Ken McKinnon has commented that Archbishop James Carroll and Fr Frank Martin (who was appointed to the Schools Commission) ‘saw that maintaining the Catholic character was not a given, but that you had to work for it, and that laicisation of the schools was going to make retention of that character doubly difficult’.<sup>107</sup>

**Table 5: Full Time and Part Time Teachers in primary and secondary schools of the Sydney Archdiocese in 1975**<sup>108</sup>

Brothers	451	Lay Catholics	2,491	Priests	21
Sisters	961	Lay Non-Catholics	1,210		

By 1975 there were a substantial number of non-Catholics teaching in Sydney archdiocesan schools. Fr Barry Collins’ statistical summary in Table 5 above shows their undeniable contribution to Catholic education at this time.

### **Allowances to religious teachers**

While the payment of lay teachers was becoming a major issue in 1965, allowances for religious teachers were also being discussed. A fixed allowance for each religious was set, to be paid out of the Central Fund for Operating Schools into which school fees and the parish quotas were to be paid. The total amount paid in allowances to religious in 1966 was \$1,801,074, and lay teachers’ salaries amounted to \$2,720,260. In late 1966, religious stipends were set at: \$1,508 for secondary school religious sisters; \$1,508 for secondary school religious brothers; \$1,106 for primary school religious sisters and brothers. It is notable that the estimates for lay teacher requirements (in 1967) were based on forty-five to fifty pupils per teacher in primary schools.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Bishop Muldoon to McBride, 31 July 1977, SAA; (Muldoon’s emphasis).

<sup>107</sup> Ken McKinnon in ‘Regaining State Aid: interviews relating to the campaign for state aid for non-government schools, 1960-80’, interviews conducted by John Luttrell for the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 2001-2003, unpublished, CEOSA, p. 342.

<sup>108</sup> Fr Barry Collins to Fr P. Ingham, Private Secretary to Cardinal Freeman, 6 May 1975, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOSA.

<sup>109</sup> Executive Commissioner to the Chairman, Finance Committee, 14 November 1966, CBFC Correspondence, I0789, SAA.



The equality of stipends (as indicated in the November 1966 scale) paid to religious sisters and brothers would not last. The Finance Committee, chaired by Archbishop Carroll, decided not only to set different scales for religious sisters and brothers, but after figures had been supplied by the Marist Brothers, to make a further increase of \$100 for each of the brothers' categories, (see Table 6 below). The brothers were paid more because they argued they had to employ housekeeping staff to perform tasks which, in the convents, the sisters performed. Following this request by the brothers, the principle applied by the Finance Committee was that, if the budget permitted, the extra payment would be made, and payments up to the maximum scale would apply.

**Table 6: Stipends for religious in the Archdiocese of Sydney, 1967<sup>110</sup>**

**(i) Minimum scale to apply in 1967 whether budget revenue realised or not**

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Sisters	\$900	\$1000	\$1100
Brothers	\$1200	\$1300	1400

**(ii) Maximum Scale**

Sisters	\$1500	\$1600	\$1700
Brothers	\$1800	\$1900	\$2000

- (a) convent or monastery supplied by parish but maintained by congregation
- (b) convent or monastery accommodation provided by another parish or institution
- (c) convent or monastery provided by congregation.

The payment of stipends was welcomed by the religious who formerly often relied on fund raising activities to provide for their living costs.

**State aid becomes a major election issue in 1972**

By the 1970s state aid was seen as inevitable. Both parties, Labor and Liberal, had overcome internal differences regarding the granting of aid to non-government schools and the one issue remaining to be settled was the form of aid, whether it was to be based on needs or was to be a per capita payment. This was to become the central issue of the early 1970s.

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<sup>110</sup> Minutes of the forty-third meeting of the CBFC, 4 January 1967, I0781, SAA.

There was severe and nation-wide public concern about the so-called crisis in Australian education and Don Smart has surmised that ‘it was probably reaching its zenith’ in 1972.<sup>111</sup> Archbishop Francis Carroll described 1972 as: ‘The time when there was great lack of confidence in Catholic schools [and] there were debates about whether we should have primary or secondary emphasis – one or the other.’ Under the chairmanship of Archbishop James Carroll, the National Catholic Education Commission met just three times, in 1969, 1970 and 1971, and after that it was put on standby.<sup>112</sup> In 1972 the National Catholic Education Commission produced a report, ‘The Education of Catholic Australians’.<sup>113</sup>

In his 1972 election campaign opening speech, Gough Whitlam effectively exploited the wide-spread and increasingly vocal community concern about educational inequality which was quite evident by the late 1960s. Whitlam stressed that aid should be given on a needs basis, not as a per capita grant, and he declared:

The Labor party believes that the Commonwealth should give most assistance to those schools, primary and secondary, whose pupils need most assistance. The most rapidly growing sector of public spending under a Labor government will be education. Education should be the great instrument for the promotion of equality. Under the Liberals it has become a weapon for perpetuating inequality and promoting privilege.<sup>114</sup>

Prime Minister, William McMahon, on 9 December 1971, announced increased grants for capital expenditure for all schools, and that the per capita grants to independent schools would be increased from \$50 to \$68 for secondary pupils and from \$35 to \$50 for primary pupils. This Federal Government per capita grant for nine dioceses was paid directly to the Sydney CBFC; the cheque was banked and cheques were then sent off to each diocese. This system existed from 1969 to the end of 1972.<sup>115</sup> The NSW State Government per capita grant was paid to the schools and deducted from the students’

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<sup>111</sup> Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 102.

<sup>112</sup> Archbishop Francis Carroll in ‘Regaining State Aid’, p. 150.

<sup>113</sup> National Catholic Education Commission, *The Education of Catholic Australians: Report of the National Catholic Education Commission*, National Catholic Education Commission, Canberra, 1972. For a summary of the objectives of Catholic education, see pp. 12-13.

<sup>114</sup> ALP Policy Speech, 13 November 1972, quoted in Smart, *Federal Aid*, p. 103.

<sup>115</sup> Bernard McBride in ‘Regaining State Aid’, p. 205.

school fees. The system, in 1972, saw school fees paid directly to the school; after deductions for running expenses and the sisters' stipends, the remainder was sent each month to the CBFC to be used for the lay teachers' fortnightly salary payment.

As mentioned previously, one of the consequences of the re-opening of Goulburn's Catholic schools in 1962 was the formation of one national as well as state-wide lay run organisations of parents and friends. The NSW lay body eventually became the NSW Parents Council in November 1974. The national lay organisation was originally called the Australian Association for Educational Freedom and later it became the Australian Parents Council (hereafter APC). It is a federation of the various state bodies, with its head office in Sydney and is the only parent voice for non-government school parents in Australia. The APC has always argued that there should be a basic entitlement for every student, plus extra funds to meet whatever the special needs of a school's students may be: whether they are students with disabilities or lacking English as a Second Language skills or suffering the disadvantage of geographical isolation. Its main tenant is that parents are the primary educators of their children and the struggle for education justice was a issue between parents and government. The organisation is against systemic funding and has always campaigned for limitations on the bishops' control of the finances.<sup>116</sup>

Archbishop James Carroll's speech at St Augustine's College, Brookvale, during the 1972 election campaign, caused a furore. In it he said the difference in the method of funding (needs basis or per capita basis) was not significant and Catholics could support either of the two major parties in the coming election, as 'both [parties] accept the principle of public support for the voluntary effort of independent schools'.<sup>117</sup> The APC thought that the needs based policy was divisive and therefore dangerous, and its members felt let down by Archbishop Carroll's Brookvale statement.<sup>118</sup> Archbishop Carroll had written that 'differences of opinion as to methods of payment of Government subsidies ought not be aired outside "the family circle" [and] it is absolutely essential that Parent Bodies present a united front'.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Monica Turner in 'Regaining State Aid', p. 141.

<sup>117</sup> CW, 16 November 1972.

<sup>118</sup> Bill Feneley in 'Regaining State Aid', p. 32. Dr Feneley had seven children in local Catholic schools.

<sup>119</sup> Archbishop James Carroll to Mrs M. Turner, 10 August 1971, Box 15, CEOSA.

### **The Australian Schools Commission**

Gough Whitlam had promised to establish an Australian Schools Commission to examine the needs of students in government and non-government primary, secondary and technical schools. Just eleven days after assuming the office of Prime Minister on 12 December 1972, he fulfilled his campaign promise by announcing the terms of reference and the membership of the interim committee of the Schools Commission. Chaired by Professor Peter Karmel, the highly regarded chairman of the Australian Universities Commission, it had its first meeting immediately before Christmas. Its main task was to recommend to the Federal Government the level of federal funding for 1974 for all the schools in Australia. In the interim, the per capita grants were increased, from the beginning of 1973, to \$62 for primary students and \$104 for secondary students. These rates represented 20 per cent of the estimated cost nationally of educating government school students. The 1972 legislation also provided for direct capital grants for general purposes. There existed strong opposition within the ALP to assistance to the better-off non-government schools. Some factions opposed all notions of government aid to non-government schools. The Karmel Committee categorised all independent schools from H to A in descending order of relative need and recommended that funding to category A schools be phased out gradually during 1974-75.

Representing Catholic schools on the Karmel Committee was Fr Frank Martin. He has said he came under 'severe criticism and pressure' from the APC and Parents and Friends Associations in some states (particularly Victoria), as well as from the independent schools, some of the Bishops and some prominent Jesuits, because he had voted for needs based aid. He believed all of the Catholic schools would not survive if a per capita basis for state aid was adopted.<sup>120</sup> The Karmel Committee submitted its report, *Schools in Australia*, to the minister only five months later, on 18 May 1973.<sup>121</sup> In June 1973, the Catholic bishops had criticised the proposal of the Karmel Committee to phase out federal grants for A-C category schools. In late 1973, the Whitlam Government put forward legislation to grant funding according to the Karmel Committee report but the legislation was blocked in the senate. It was passed after a compromise which increased funding to the wealthier schools in categories A, B and C. The Labor government also introduced a Disadvantaged Schools Program which was applied to government and non-government

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<sup>120</sup> Fr Frank Martin in 'Regaining State Aid', pp.192-194.

<sup>121</sup> Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, *Schools in Australia: Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission*, Canberra, 1973.

schools. Sr Norbert (Isabel) Donnelly of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy chaired both the Sydney committee and the NSW committee of the Catholic Disadvantaged School Program.<sup>122</sup>

Professor Ken McKinnon was appointed the chairman of the Schools Commission. In an interview conducted by Br John Luttrell on 18 October 2002, he said:

[Archbishop Carroll] often told me that he didn't want the situation to evolve to where Catholic schools would become so totally dependent on government money that the Catholic element of them was lost. Catholic parents ought to make a contribution for their children, so he wouldn't press the government for such money that would result in the loss of these elements. He was worried over the [...] rapid growth of influence of lay people, who he thought would probably have different ideas.<sup>123</sup>

### **Role of the CEO**

Luttrell has commented that during the 1960s and 1970s the Sydney CEO expanded into a bureaucracy of about sixty staff, but in reality it was a less powerful partner to the CBFC, the body which had complete control over school development and finances.<sup>124</sup> The Commonwealth Science Grants were made through the bishop and it was the CBFC which decided which schools were to get new science facilities. This did not encourage good relations between it and the teaching congregations and this pooled money gave the CEO great leverage over the archdiocesan schools. The decision of the State and Federal Governments to deal with Catholic school authorities rather than individual schools, facilitated the growth of the CEO in Sydney as the pooled funds became the responsibility of the CEO to distribute, mainly in the form of teacher salaries. Br Kelvin Canavan has argued that the CEOs 'filled the vacuum caused by the withdrawal of Religious' from the schools.<sup>125</sup> Other functions of the CEOs were to supervise educational programs, provide inspectors to ensure teaching standards were maintained and the set curriculum to be followed. The first three members of religious orders to be appointed school inspectors in

<sup>122</sup> McGrath, *These Women?* p. 196.

<sup>123</sup> McKinnon in 'Regaining State Aid', p. 342. This could explain why Susan Ryan, when Federal Minister for Education, offered to negotiate for fully funded Catholic schools, as in New Zealand; see ABC Radio National, the Religion Report, 'Australian Catholic Schools: a preferential option for the wealthy?', 15 August 2007.

<sup>124</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, p. 41.

<sup>125</sup> Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 231.

the Sydney Archdiocese were Br M. D. Shanahan cfc, Br Mark May fms and Sr Isobel Donnolly of the Parramatta congregation (the first female school inspector).<sup>126</sup> The microcosm of Holy Cross College was to be served by the CEO for the next fifty years, usually in a supportive role. It needs to be appreciated that though the local principal of the regional school engaged staff, the CEO was the official employer.

### **The reality of rationalisation of Catholic education in Sydney**

As indicated, the corner-stone of the process of the rationalisation of resources in the Archdiocese of Sydney was regionalisation, the creation of large regional secondary schools catering for a number of parochial primary feeder schools. The regionalisation of Catholic senior secondary schools was peculiar to Sydney. In Melbourne, only two of the twenty-eight senior secondary Catholic girls' schools were regional in 1972. In comparison, in Sydney, fourteen of the twenty-four Sixth Form Catholic girls' schools were regional and all twenty-four of the Fourth Form schools were regional.<sup>127</sup> By 1975, about eighty per cent of the Catholic schools in the Sydney Archdiocese had become systemic schools under the jurisdiction of the CEO.<sup>128</sup>

In reality, rationalisation meant uniformity across the board and financial stringencies. It also meant that the salaries paid to lay staff were determined by the classifications committee of the CEO, as were the stipends paid to the religious staff. Principals of Catholic regional schools were allowed \$15 per student for running expenses. School fees were uniform; in 1972 they were \$72 per term. Every August, each regional school had to submit a detailed report of student numbers, subjects taught and a projected requirement of staff numbers for the following year based on student enrolments. This reporting was a burden imposed on already over-worked school principals.

With increasing government financial support to the Catholic sector, came increasing accountability. The Schools Commission wanted every school to have a council to receive the money and be involved in the governance of the school. A 1974 letter to Mgr Slowey from Cardinal Freeman was explicit in its direction regarding the setting up of school boards in Catholic schools. Freeman wrote:

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<sup>126</sup> CW, 27 January 1966, cutting, n.p., PA.

<sup>127</sup> Leavey, 'Religious Education, School Climate and Achievement', p. 29.

<sup>128</sup> Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle*, pp. 40-41.

I refer to the submission on School Boards. In light of recent activity in State Schools, could I ask you to draw up firm recommendations about the establishment of School Boards in the schools of the archdiocese which might be ready for 1975.<sup>129</sup>

The theory was fine but the human reality was complex. No school board was ever established at Holy Cross College. This is not surprising as, according to the Schools Commission chairman, Ken McKinnon, Archbishop Carroll, parish priest of Holy Cross, was against having school councils because they would be an interference with the parish. Furthermore, McKinnon has commented that ‘many times Commissioners talked to parish priests who utterly rejected the idea that expenditure of government money had to be accounted for’.<sup>130</sup>

#### **Attempts to create an Eastern Suburbs regional senior college in the mid-1970s**

As has been seen, Holy Cross senior school was established at Paul St in 1970, but there were on-going discussions concerning the establishment of an Eastern Suburbs regional college. From 1974 to 1976 discussions continued on the rationalisation of the schools already in existence in the region, in which no extra school buildings were planned. The best use had to be made of what physical resources were already there, and teaching staff also were to be utilised to their maximum capacity. The small intimate senior classes which had been a major contributor to the ethos of Catholic secondary education were no longer financially viable by the mid-1970s. Many ideas were put forward for regionalisation in the Eastern Suburbs. One idea seriously discussed was for a two-shift day, with two separate staffs, but the difficulties with late-working married teachers and reduced off-peak transport were noted.<sup>131</sup>

It was evident in the early history of Holy Cross College, that the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney was always seen as a discrete geographical region with well defined boundaries to its north, east and south and containing many of the elite of Sydney’s suburbs. It would be the region’s lack of socio-economic homogeneity in the 1970s, which was a significant stumbling block to the creation of a ‘super’ regional senior Catholic college. The Committee on the Rationalisation of Senior Secondary Education in the Eastern Suburbs,

<sup>129</sup> Freeman to Slowey, 29 October 1974, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOSA.

<sup>130</sup> Ken McKinnon, in ‘Regaining State Aid’, p. 342 and p. 333.

<sup>131</sup> Minutes of meeting held 25 March 1976 at the Brigidine Convent Randwick, CEOSA.

in its 1976 draft report, recommended that a co-educational senior college with an approximate enrolment of 700 be established at Marcellin College, Randwick, and that all other secondary schools in the region cater for Years 7 to 10 only; it would be administered by a college board. This college would have an extended day, as a compromise on the two-shift day, which would allow the existing buildings at Marcellin to cater for up to 700 students. Of great significance is the comment that Marcellin College site was nominated because the committee recognised ‘the importance of the [proposed] College’s situation in an area enjoying a socio-economic status acceptable to a wide range of parents’.<sup>132</sup> This 1976 plan was one of many never to be realised.

### **Never the twain shall meet**

Alan Barcan has asserted that ‘Catholic schools resisted co-education on ideological grounds’.<sup>133</sup> This was certainly true for many decades. In 1937, mixed schools for adolescent boys and girls were condemned by the Fourth Plenary Council of the Australian bishops, unless special circumstances advised differently (decree 621). As mentioned previously, exemptions were granted for parish schools in rural towns with small populations struggling to be viable (in reality, country convent schools had always taken boys, even in the senior classes, when necessary). There was a slight thawing of the separation of the sexes rule when, in 1944, the Third National Catholic Education Conference recommended that ‘schools should arrange mixed social functions under adequate supervision’, the purpose being to ‘train senior pupils in sensible deportment’.<sup>134</sup>

It was clearly stated in the 1975 Feasibility Study of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy that ‘the Sisters favour separate senior schools for Fifth and Sixth Forms and believe co-education to be desirable at this level’.<sup>135</sup> At the time there had been serious discussions regarding the future of the senior students of Holy Cross College and St Clare’s Waverley and a strong interest in co-educational education had been expressed by some of the religious concerned.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Report of the Committee on the Rationalisation of Senior Secondary Education in the Eastern Suburbs, draft only, 1976, PA.

<sup>133</sup> Alan Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Education Reality: education and society in Australia since 1949*, UNSWP, Sydney, 1993, p. 261.

<sup>134</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, pp. 408-409.

<sup>135</sup> Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, ‘The Feasibility Study’, unpublished manuscript, 1975, Box 69, CEOSA, p. 8.

<sup>136</sup> Minutes of meeting held 19 September 1974 at CEO regarding Form V and VI Catholic education in the Eastern Suburbs, SC31, Box 2, CEOSA.



Meetings continued to be held in the mid-1970s regarding the rationalisation of the Catholic secondary schools in the Eastern Suburbs. The plethora of schools there, both private and regional, must have been a continuing embarrassment to the CEO, given the Archdiocese's struggle to establish schools in Sydney's developing areas and more specifically, to redress the imbalance in the provision of boys' and girls' secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney.<sup>137</sup> In 1976, the Eastern Suburbs secondary principals submitted their individual plans as requested by the CEO. These exhibited a strong consensus that two co-educational Forms V and VI (Years 11 and 12) schools of about 400 students each should be established. St Clare's Waverley was one of the sites suggested.<sup>138</sup>

### **The Second Vatican Council 1962 – 1965**

The Second Vatican Council (hereafter Vatican II) was solemnly opened on 11 October 1962 by Pope John XXIII. From then, until the closing of its fourth and final session on December 1965, most of the Australian bishops were to spend at least three months of the year in Rome at the Council. Many of the Australian bishops had thought that 'the Council would be over in a few months, after adopting a few housekeeping measures'. Indisputably it was a 'momentous event in Church life changing Catholic life in Australia irreversibly'.<sup>139</sup>

The changes instigated would be very slow in reaching the grass-roots level and in the school community at Holy Cross College, would be almost imperceptible, until the 1970s. The first change inaugurated by Vatican II, which Sydney Catholics would notice, was the use of the vernacular in the liturgy of the Mass, announced by Cardinal Gilroy on 18 June 1964. Sydney Catholics were told 'for this historic concession of the Holy See, [they] should be deeply grateful'.<sup>140</sup> At their annual meeting in March 1964, the Australian bishops agreed on the implementation of widespread changes in the language of the Mass, the Divine Office, and the administration of the Sacraments. Cardinal George Pell has noted that the introduction of the celebration of the Sacraments in vernacular languages, rather than Latin was 'something the Council itself never decreed

<sup>137</sup> At the time when the De La Salle Senior College at Cronulla decided to open up enrolments to girls in 1975, it was the only senior secondary Catholic school for girls between Hurstville and Wollongong.

<sup>138</sup> Minutes of meeting held at Brigidine Convent, Randwick, 26 February 1976, SC31, Box 2, CEOS.

<sup>139</sup> Cardinal George Pell, 'From Vatican II to today', address to Catalyst for Renewal's 'Bishop's Forum', 30 May 2003, *AD2000*, vol.16, no.7, August, 2003, p.8; also available at [http://www.ad2000.com.au/articles/2003/aug2003p8\\_1405.html](http://www.ad2000.com.au/articles/2003/aug2003p8_1405.html)

<sup>140</sup> *CW*, 18 June 1964, pp. 1-2.

and which Pope John XXIII did not foresee.’<sup>141</sup> The great majority who had been ‘onlookers rather than participants’ would now be able to ‘make the Mass their own’.<sup>142</sup>

There were a number of unplanned and negative developments attributed to Vatican II: the departure of many priests and religious; the collapse in vocations, the decline in Church attendance; the spread of doctrinal and moral confusion.<sup>143</sup> In reality, the reasons for all of these were complex and among other things, reflected societal change.

Traditionally, lay people did not participate in Vatican Councils, although they could be asked for information and express consent. Vatican II was the first Ecumenical Council to deal specifically with the laity and the first to which lay people were officially invited as auditors (experts).<sup>144</sup> As was noted previously, Rosemary Goldie, who had been working full-time for the international lay movement, became one of the twenty-three women auditors (a first time for women) appointed to the Council. After the closure of the Council she became the first woman to work in the Roman Curia.

### **Rome directs a renewal of religious life**

Vatican II opened on 11 October 1962, just two months before the second general chapter of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy met. This chapter elected Mother M. Thecla Kerwick as superior-general of the congregation; she had been the first Australian-born to lead the congregation when elected in May 1945. Mother M. Thecla was the superior-general during the first six years of radical change in the congregation, namely 1968-1974. Yet reform of religious life had been on the agenda since the late 1940s and the first Conference of Religious Superiors (held in Paris in 1949) and it had been planned to move women religious to renewal and adaptation to the twentieth century, beginning with the habit. Mother M. Thecla later explained that the respect for the traditions of the congregation were so ingrained that ‘it was virtually impossible for [the sisters] to really hear what was being said to them, or, if they did hear, [give] only a notional assent’.<sup>145</sup> Rome directed that each religious institution was to hold a special renewal general chapter according to the norms contained in the 1966 Roman document ‘*Ecclesiae Sanctae*’. Congregations were directed to base their renewal on the gospel and the charism of their

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<sup>141</sup> Pell, ‘From Vatican II to today’.

<sup>142</sup> *CW*, 18 June 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>143</sup> Pell, ‘From Vatican II to today’.

<sup>144</sup> Goldie, *From a Roman Window*, p. 64.

<sup>145</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 148 and p. 150.

founder, with due regard to the social sciences. The challenge was to adapt to the current culture, while being faithful to the essence of their tradition.<sup>146</sup>

Pope Pius XI, at the 1950 Rome Congress for Religious, had urged an updating of religious dress to suit modern life. The Parramatta congregation would be slow to respond. The Australian Mercy congregations met in December 1952 at North Sydney, and subsequently, in the Parramatta congregation, the stiff white guimp was replaced by a soft black one. By 1957, both the train and the large, wide over-sleeves had gone from the choir sisters' habit. It was not until the 1960s that more major reforms were discussed but by the 1970s, the religious habit had become the most contentious issue of this period; it was the 'most obvious outward sign of the problem that the sisters were having in redefining themselves in relation to the world'.<sup>147</sup> At first, it was generally accepted that there was the need for a uniform habit, but one that was simpler in style and easier to maintain. By the 1980s, the sisters were wearing contemporary fashions which were non-uniform and the choice of the wearer. Each sister was to wear the Mercy Cross as the distinguishing feature.<sup>148</sup>

It was in 1976 that the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace prepared for Social Justice Sunday, on behalf of the Catholic bishops of Australia, the document *Towards a Whole Community – Reflections on the Situation of Australian Women*. This document had obviously been prepared by the Commission in dialogue with a wide range of women in the Catholic community and, among other things, noted the demeaning stereotyping of women in their various roles.<sup>149</sup> Women religious were very much subject to stereotyping which was associated with the habit. Resentment of stereotyping had been a significant factor in the change of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy from a uniform dress.

During this period there was ongoing adaptation in the living style of the sisters to the demands of their teaching and study loads and changing social mores. Apart from changes in the habit there were other adaptations in the Parramatta congregation which were evident to the students at Holy Cross College, such as changes in names. In 1973 the

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<sup>146</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.151.

<sup>147</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.163.

<sup>148</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p.164.

<sup>149</sup> The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace for the Catholic Bishops of Australia, Social Justice Sunday, 1976, *Towards a Whole Community: reflections on the situation of Australian women*, E.J. Dwyer, Sydney, 1976, pp. 7-9 and p. 14.

Sisters of Mercy were given the option of returning to their Baptismal names. This was a result of the ‘fuller appreciation that religious commitment was a fulfilment of the original Baptismal commitment of the person’. It was also a very significant gesture which was an outward manifestation of a ‘new-found valuing of the person’.<sup>150</sup>

Sr Marie Gaudry was sent overseas by Mother M. Thecla on an extensive study tour as part of her preparation for the 1974 General Chapter and ‘as a result of this and her personal research, [she] guided the congregation through a sophisticated discernment process’.<sup>151</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry was elected as superior-general at this chapter. She was the first congregational leader to have a tertiary education and from then on all congregational leaders have been women with tertiary qualifications, who have contributed to educational leadership in the wider community, as had individual Parramatta sisters in previous decades.

### **The 1974 feasibility study**

Mother M. Thecla, in a 1971 letter to Monsignor Slowey, had expressed her strongly held view that if the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were to continue to help the Church in the western and northern areas of Sydney, ‘we shall have to rationalise our concept of the Catholic School. The letter refers to ‘age and ill-health [which] are taking their toll’ and to the fact that the congregation cannot keep their schools functioning ‘on traditional lines.’<sup>152</sup> Was Mother M. Thecla inferring that the reforms required urgently by the mid-1970s, had to involve all the stakeholders viz.: the archdiocesan hierarchy, the congregation, the CEO, parish priests, parents, students and the lay staff? Who or what was included by that ‘we’ in the letter?

Mother M. Thecla’s concerns were evident when she wrote to Fr Barry Collins to enquire into the possibility of her sisters withdrawing from the Bondi Beach and Westmead primary schools to free them for ‘appointment to some of the more quickly growing areas’. Fr Collins responded that he had contacted both parish priests concerned and neither was very keen on the idea.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Mother M. Thecla Kerwick to the community, 29 July 1973, PA, quoted in McGrath, ‘Formation of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, 1888 to Contemporary Times’, p. 23, unpublished, undated, PA.

<sup>151</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 171.

<sup>152</sup> Mother M. Thecla to Mgr Slowey, 8 October 1971, Box 24, CEOSA, (author’s emphasis).

<sup>153</sup> Fr Collins to Cardinal Freeman, 4 July 1973, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOS. This letter refers to an undated letter from Mother M. Thecla to Collins. The inference is that the parish priests had strongly held

The 1974 chapter directed that long-term planning of the congregation's apostolate be undertaken after a feasibility study of its position, and 'in close collaboration with the appropriate authorities'. Sr Marie Gaudry, the recently elected congregational leader wasted no time in starting the process. The facts and figures she collated indicated that the congregation was over-extended. A group of sisters with expertise relevant to the project worked with the superior-general to produce the feasibility study.<sup>154</sup> The final document was written by Sr Marie Gaudry.<sup>155</sup>

The problem had been diagnosed; the solution was to determine precisely where and how the reductions would be effected. At the time of the study (March 1975), the congregation had responsibility for three secondary schools of Forms I to IV, and two secondary Forms I to VI schools (OLMC Parramatta and Holy Cross College). Staffing them were over forty sisters, ten of whom were part-time. Total secondary enrolments were 2,986 students (1974 figures). There were sixty-one sisters involved in primary school teaching, fifty-six of whom were full-time; total primary enrolments were 9,106 children (1974 figures).

All members of the congregation had been consulted in the process of the feasibility study through an individual questionnaire, workshops for those in leadership positions, and self-evaluation of schools. The 'tentative' recommendations reflected 'to a considerable extent, the wishes of the Sisters themselves'.<sup>156</sup> It was recommended that of those sisters undertaking tertiary studies some be released to complete their degrees, and those engaged in part-time studies have their work load lightened. It was stressed also that sisters needed released time for religious renewal.

At the time of the release of the feasibility study, parents of all Parramatta Sisters of Mercy students received a letter which referred to the 'inescapable fact [that] the number of religious teachers is diminishing'.<sup>157</sup> The CEO and Cardinal Freeman had already been well informed of the results of the feasibility study. Sr Marie Gaudry had unconditionally

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attitudes in these matters; understandable when seen in the context of the contribution the sisters made to the religious formation of the children of the parish and the historical place of the parochial school as a hub of the parish.

<sup>154</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 215.

<sup>155</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author, 25 May 2007.

<sup>156</sup> 'The Feasibility Study', p.7.

<sup>157</sup> Letter addressed to parents from Sr Marie Gaudry, Superior General, 20 April 1975, Box 69, CEOSA. Simultaneously letters were also sent to bishops, priests and lay teachers.

acknowledged the overriding authority of the CEO, acting on behalf of the Sydney archdiocese, when she wrote: ‘The final responsibility for Catholic Education rests with the Bishops, and our corporate apostolate is mandated by them.’<sup>158</sup>

Two key conclusions of the feasibility study were that ‘the Sisters would not wish to perpetuate a system of one-Sister schools’, but some could continue in this situation for a limited period and ‘the Sisters place greatest value on their contribution to the school in the role of principals, religious educators, religious co-ordinators’.<sup>159</sup>

Reiterating the views of Mother M. Thecla Kerwick in 1971, Sr Marie Gaudry stressed the urgent need for the CEO to draw up an integrated master plan for re-organisation, as the efforts of individual congregations would be wasted without such planning. She was speaking with her full authority as congregational leader when she wrote: ‘I am also deeply concerned that the matter of planning be given highest and immediate priority’.<sup>160</sup> It seems this message did reach those in authority. By May 1975, Mgr Slowey was informing Cardinal Freeman that:

It is important to avoid any suggestion of panic, which could arise if suitable communication is neglected and rumour takes its place. On the other hand morale (and this point has been substantiated by Religious Superiors) can be promoted by the realisation that truly constructive planning has been undertaken.<sup>161</sup>

In an interview in 2007, Sr Marie Gaudry expressed surprise that the feasibility study had begun so soon after she was elected. She added that those in authority at the CEO were pleased with it and it was used as a model for other congregations. She explained that she had tried to be diplomatic, and endeavoured to relate well with those disappointed with the proposed changes, commenting: ‘The parish priests were very unhappy. It was a painful time but it had to be done. It was no use ignoring the problem because it would not improve –only worsen.’<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> ‘The Feasibility Study’, p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> ‘The Feasibility Study’, p. 7.

<sup>160</sup> Sr M. Anselm Gaudry to Mgr Slowey, 25 March 1975, Box 69, CEOSA.

<sup>161</sup> Mgr Slowey to Cardinal Freeman, 16 May 1975. This letter refers to a letter sent to a number of Major Superiors of which there is no copy in the file, Freeman File, Box 24, CEOSA.

<sup>162</sup> Sr Marie Gaudry, interview by the author, 25 May 2007.

## Conclusion

The demand for places in Catholic schools, a product of a rising birth rate and a rising net migration rate, resulted in a 'crisis' in Catholic education in the 1960s, the seriousness of which was exacerbated in NSW by the implementation of the Wyndham Scheme in 1962. It appears that the Catholic schools of the Sydney Archdiocese met this demand reasonably well with a concerted effort by all sections of the Catholic community; no Sydney parish was spared long-term financial sacrifices. For the sake of the survival of the Catholic education system, conformity and uniformity were imposed. Regionalisation meant the gradual erosion of local autonomy. The nexus of parish priest and school principal, supported by a close-knit parish based Catholic community would be weakened in the regional school. The emergence of a large educational bureaucracy under the direction of the Sydney archdiocesan hierarchy would impact on all Catholic schools, congregational or systemic. The 1975 feasibility study undertaken by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy and its outcomes are illustrative of the dilemmas and decisions faced by all teaching orders in the Archdiocese of Sydney at this time.

The Wyndham Scheme would affect the microcosm of Holy Cross College as drastically as it had affected the Archdiocese of Sydney. As a result of recommendations made by the Wyndham Committee, the official government policy was that NSW secondary schools should be comprehensive, with all abilities to be catered for. In the succeeding years, this policy would stretch the staff and resources at Holy Cross College to their limit. Becoming a regional school also meant the catchment area for the school would be larger and student enrolments would increase considerably, necessitating more staff and accommodation. All this would occur while the staff was struggling with the demands of the new curriculum, and an extra year in the middle school and a final secondary year at the end of the sixth year, when most students would be turning eighteen. Parents would also be asked to pay another year's fees, which were necessarily increasing to meet the steadily rising costs of building a Catholic education system with a fast expanding lay teacher component. By 1970 only fifty per cent of the teachers in NSW Catholic schools were members of a religious order and by 1975 this proportion had fallen to thirty-two per cent.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Catholic Education Commission, NSW, table published in Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 227.

Paul Street was the first senior secondary school for girls in the Sydney Archdiocese. At the time of its establishment in 1970, the only school of that type was Benilde High School (for boys) conducted by the De La Salle Brothers at Bankstown. The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy exhibited determination and courage in undertaking this innovation. They had shared the vision of their parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll, a vision which if realised in full, would have seen the Catholic education system take new directions to ensure its continuity and relevance to the communities it served. Moving into the 1980s, Holy Cross College would be faced with many challenges, all of which would test the resolve of the congregation to continue to respond positively to demands made on the expertise of its personnel. Eventually some of these challenges would prove insurmountable.



## CHAPTER 8

### INNOVATION AND DECLINE AT HOLY CROSS IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

**'[The College] opened its arms to all in a true embrace of mercy and compassion – none was excluded.'** (Sr Anne Marie Thompson RSM, *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 159)

#### **The Paul Street campus**

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there were to be many internal changes within Holy Cross. The first year of the operation of the Paul Street Senior Secondary campus, 1970, was one of excitement and challenges. The Parramatta congregation was still hopeful of forming a combined school at the Paul Street site and discussions were held in 1970 with the sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington regarding this possibility, but the Kensington community was not prepared to commit itself.<sup>1</sup> The much larger enrolment at Paul Street for 1971 eased concerns about the viability of the separate campus for the senior girls. The main problem at Paul Street was staffing. The first half of the 1970s was a time of full employment and the fact that qualified lay teachers were paid less in CEO schools than in the State system, and females were paid much less than their male counterparts in Catholic schools, did not encourage lay female teachers to apply. The senior school had begun with just two full-time religious staff, Sr M. St James (Maureen) McInerney and Sr M. Emmanuel (Wendy) Campbell and a number of lay teachers, most of whom were part-time, and some of whom were shared between the junior secondary school and the senior secondary school. When Sr M. St James McInerney, in June 1971, left for overseas study in the US, staffing was again a problem.

The physical conditions on the Paul Street campus were far from comfortable; the senior school had been set up in a hurry using the existing primary school facilities, basically a block containing four classrooms. The first of the senior school students arrived to find a very ill-equipped learning environment. There were no desks, no library and no science laboratory. Desks and chairs had been ordered and were yet to arrive.<sup>2</sup> On the first day, the girls sat on the classroom dais and on the floor to listen to announcements. Rules and regulations and uniform were discussed and for a time the school trialled having no uniform, although this option was not adopted. As there was not a science laboratory at

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<sup>1</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

Paul Street, the girls in Year 11 had to walk down to the middle school on Edgecliff Road for practical science lessons.

What the girls did have was greater freedom than if they had still been part of a combined secondary school. There does appear to have been a genuine attempt to democratise decision-making and to separate the seniors in more ways than just giving them their own campus. Away from the middle school, the seniors did not have the usual responsibilities to be role models and mentors for the younger students. Wendy Brown, a teacher during this period, commented that it was the most democratic form of working with young people that she had encountered, and she attributed that to Sr M. St James McInerney.<sup>3</sup> Though the school was assembled by a bell and gathered in a classroom, informality was assisted by the fact that, owing to the lack of facilities, the girls had to sit on desks and on the floor at assemblies. Freedom and independence had been stressed as a valued attribute of the separate senior campus yet it would cause conflict, as some of the sisters in the Holy Cross College community were uneasy with the freedom of the students to leave the campus at lunchtime; the Bondi Junction shopping centre was a very tempting attraction and just one block away.<sup>4</sup>

Sr M. Germaine (Pat) Donovan arrived as principal at Paul Street in 1971. Having walked to the Paul Street site in the summer holidays to inspect her new school, she was shocked to see just four classrooms when she peered through the windows. She could readily see that the school 'contained no comforts for teenage girls'. She found that a section of the detached building, *Ben Eden*, the former brothers' monastery, was not accessible to the school and those rooms that were available were small and hard to utilise for most teaching purposes, although they suited the smaller Level 1 classes which could be conducted in a university style tutorial manner. A library and study area for the girls was set up on the top floor of *Ben Eden*. The school's part-time secretary, Julie Winter, was installed initially in what had been a broom cupboard.<sup>5</sup> As her first year at Paul Street progressed towards winter, Sr Pat Donovan recalls seeing the girls sitting wrapped in blankets to ward off the cold and was determined to get heating installed as soon as possible, but it was not until 1973 that the Holy Cross Parents and Friends took on the installation of an oil heating system at Paul Street as their main project. Their Golden Car

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<sup>3</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

Club raised \$3,000 to cover the cost.<sup>6</sup>

These spartan conditions described by Sr Pat Donovan must have been a great contrast with those she had experienced at OLMC Parramatta, her alma mater, where she had been teaching for the previous seventeen years. She had known Archbishop Carroll when she was a pupil at Enmore parish school and he was Enmore's parish priest and, in spite of the site's difficulties, she had felt positive about her move to Paul Street. She recognised that the 'Doc', as he was affectionately called by the sisters of the Holy Cross community, had a special affinity with the Holy Cross girls, and when interviewed, she recalled his presence at basketball finals cheering on 'his girls'. Paul Street campus was her 'first exposure to 1970s Eastern Suburbs culture' and she found the Holy Cross girls different from the OLMC Parramatta girls. She described them as 'freer, [a] more happy-go-lucky type of student' and 'open and friendly'.<sup>7</sup>

A new block containing a science laboratory on the ground floor and a library above it was completed at Paul Street in 1973; it was built on the tennis court with Federal Government funding of \$37,000.<sup>8</sup> The library was multi-functional, being used for occasions when the school, or at least one half of it, needed to be assembled for Masses and ceremonies to mark the beginning of the school year or special feast days. The four classrooms in a separate block were connected by folding doors which could be pulled back to create a large space for parent-teacher nights or drama productions. The former library in *Ben Eden* became a staff study and common room, with kitchen facilities.

At this time, Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley arrived as deputy principal and also took charge of the new library. Sr M. Germaine and Sr M. Gonzaga did much of the manual work at Paul Street with the help of Jack Thompson who lived close by; he cleaned the classrooms at the weekend. It was not until the school was under lay administration that the CEO put funds into the school's on-going cleaning and maintenance.<sup>9</sup>

Paul Street was a self-contained unit and there was little contact between it and the middle school. Apparently this was not what Archbishop Carroll had intended. Sr Barbara McDonough maintains that Archbishop Carroll was really trying to make the separate campuses one school, calling the sections the junior, middle and senior schools, but it was

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<sup>6</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.181.

<sup>7</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

<sup>8</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.158.

<sup>9</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

‘forcing something which didn’t want to happen’.<sup>10</sup> Sr Pat Donovan also emphasised the wish of ‘Doc’ Carroll to have ‘Kinder to Year 12 as a Holy Cross set up’.<sup>11</sup> The staffs of the middle and senior schools met together occasionally for staff seminars, but the Paul Street staff tended to remain aloof. The senior school was self-sufficient and the employment of part-time teachers meant there was no sharing of staff between the senior and middle schools after the first one or two years of its existence. At Paul Street, the staff tended to regard themselves as elite simply because, generally at this time, in the 1970s, it was the best and brightest graduates of the middle school who progressed to the senior school. The emphasis was on academic achievement and this was obtained by a dedicated and well qualified staff. Emma Vandermee, a student at Paul Street during 1984-85, has commented that the senior school was ‘a place where, those who didn’t want to be there had gone, and those who stayed revelled in its relaxed attitude’ and she compared the students at Paul Street, cooperative and anxious to learn, with those ‘tough girls with a grudge in Years 7-10’.<sup>12</sup>

Religious education seems to have been relatively unstructured in the early years of Paul Street. Wendy Brown has commented that it gave a sense of ‘who I am’ to the girls and the school reinforced the sense of their own individuality which the students had brought to the school and which came from their own families. The girls in the 1970s had no fear of expressing their opinions about the world. This was encouraged when they gathered in groups of twelve in the religion period. In Wendy Brown’s memory, the overriding theme was to ‘live with the Church, not to be hampered by the Church’.<sup>13</sup> The magazine style ‘Come Alive’ series was used; Sr Pat Donovan remembers one issue being used over one month. An Anglican priest, Fr James Murray, who joined the staff to teach history, was welcomed by Sr Pat Donovan as someone qualified to teach religion. The senior school had formed a ‘working relationship’ with the Central Synagogue next door. The Synagogue took over Paul Street on Saturdays and used the grounds, and in return the girls were welcomed into the Synagogue where the Jewish religion was explained as an aspect of the senior comparative religion syllabus.<sup>14</sup> Not long before the closure of the Paul Street campus, staff member Mrs Lana Woolf (a Jew) contacted those in charge of the Central Synagogue and requested the use of their hall for school assemblies; they

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<sup>10</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

<sup>12</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p.154.

<sup>13</sup> Wendy Brown (Campbell), interview by the author, 16 June 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

‘graciously agreed’ and formal assemblies were held there on a monthly basis.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Edgecliff Road campus**

As previously mentioned, one of the advantages of a separate senior campus, given by Sr M. Anselm Gaudry in her letter to parents in 1969 was the increased opportunities for the Fourth Formers to develop leadership and a sense of responsibility. Consequently, it was decided that the junior secondary school at Edgecliff Road would have its own school captain and vice-captain. During the 1970 bicentenary celebrations of the landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, the school captains and vice-captains of Holy Cross College, all four of them, were presented to Queen Elizabeth II during her Sydney visit.

By the end of 1970, the junior secondary school had acquired a video-tape recorder and two TV monitors. Christian Brothers College, Waverley, had offered the loan of video tapes and the use of their studio facilities to Holy Cross and, after much research, Holy Cross decided to buy a system which was compatible with that at Waverley College. The Holy Cross Parents and Friends Association raised the \$3,500 for this new technology.

Though not so highly structured as in previous decades, such as the times of the Eucharistic Congresses, the Sydney archdiocesan authorities still organised occasional public displays of the Catholic faith which involved the schools. On 30 November 1970, the girls of Holy Cross were fortunate to see Pope Paul VI pass close by as they lined a section of the Grand Parade, Centennial Park; he was on his way to visit the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for Aged People, Randwick. After this exciting close glimpse, Holy Cross College students attended an open air Mass at Randwick Racecourse.<sup>16</sup>

The principal of Holy Cross Junior Secondary College, Sr M. Anselm (Marie) Gaudry, became the first woman appointed as chair of the Catholic Secondary Schools Association, when she began a three year term of office in 1971. The Holy Cross convent chronicler wryly commented that it could be regarded as one of the interesting ‘signs of the times’.<sup>17</sup> Sr M. Anselm Gaudry had two deputies to oversee day to day running of the Edgecliff Road and Paul Street campuses: Sr M. Eugene Dobson and Sr M. Germaine (Pat) Donovan respectively. Mother General, Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, had decided that the Forms I to VI schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy should have two deputy

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<sup>15</sup> *Holy Cross College Yearbook 1988*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 166.

principals<sup>18</sup> Altogether, there were nine religious on the Holy Cross College staff in 1972. As principal of both campuses, Sr M. Anselm Gaudry's responsibility was mainly to coordinate a common policy in such matters as timetabling, staffing, and negotiations with the Catholic Building and Finance Commission and the Commonwealth Government regarding grants for buildings and equipment.<sup>19</sup>

In October 1972, the College was inspected by a panel of Department of Education inspectors and the March 1973 confirmation of the full registration of the school brought relief to all the staff. Sr M. Eugene Dobson assumed the principalship of Holy Cross Junior Secondary (called the middle school) in 1974, with Sr Barbara McDonough as her deputy. Sr Marie Gaudry was still living at the Holy Cross convent, but had been relieved of her duties at Holy Cross College, in order to prepare for the general chapter of the Parramatta congregation scheduled for the end of the year.<sup>20</sup>

Team teaching was a fashionable innovation at this time.<sup>21</sup> Sr Barbara was asked to be part of a three person team directed by Mavourna Collitts, teaching combined religion, English and social science to Year 7 classes. The middle school site was not set up to physically accommodate the full concept of team teaching, which embraced one large open space with groups of students, and teachers moving from one activity to the next. The Holy Cross College version of team teaching was a challenging adaptation. It centred on dividing the class into teams to aid research, problem solving and presentation of findings. The team teaching system was extended into the Year 8 as the girls progressed, and Kay Moechtar joined the team. The school was awarded an Innovations Grant for their core studies curriculum.<sup>22</sup>

### **Religious Education in the 1970s**

At a meeting of the representatives of Conferences of Major Superiors with the executive of the Catholic Education Board of NSW (hereafter CEB) in mid-1968, Mgr Slowey referred to special consideration being given by the CEB to the serious matter of religious instruction and formation of Fifth and Sixth Form students, who were now older and more advanced in their thinking. At the same meeting, Mgr Slowey admitted that religious

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<sup>18</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.125.

<sup>19</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p.167.

<sup>20</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>21</sup> The philosophical and pedagogical reasoning for 'open education' is discussed in Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>22</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006. Both Sr Barbara and Ms Collitts had recently completed post graduate studies in Educational Practice at University of New England, Armidale and their views reflected the latest in educational theories.

teachers were quite disturbed about the situation and wanted to be shown the most practical approaches to the religious formation of the senior pupils. He outlined a method of group therapy, which he was putting into action, and which was producing good results. Also at this meeting, Bishop Freeman had ‘emphasised the gravity of the situation’ pointing to the ‘decided failure in attendance at Sacraments’ and to the fact that ‘unbelief was widespread, even concerning doctrines of the faith’. In discussion with teachers he said he was finding that ‘they were experiencing grave difficulties’.<sup>23</sup>

Religious educator Graham Rossiter has noted that during the 1960s, ‘students at the secondary level began to react negatively, unfavourably and strongly about their experiences of religious education, and “irrelevance to life” was one of their main criticisms’.<sup>24</sup> In 1969, a Senior Secondary Committee under the chairmanship of Br Baumgartner cfc had drawn up a tentative plan for Forms V and VI. The theme for Fifth Form was Christ and each section was aimed at ‘Meeting Christ’. Parramatta Sister of Mercy, Sr M. Norbert (Isabel) Donnelly, was appointed to the Religious Knowledge Co-ordinating Committee; she chaired the Infants’ Committee.

Three Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Sr M. St James (Maureen) McInerney, Sr M. St Thomas (Rosemary) Crumlin (both ex-students of Holy Cross College) and Sr M. Ligouri (Pauline) Smith, in 1967, had been invited by Bishop Gleeson of Adelaide to work with others in writing a religious knowledge text for senior classes. The following year, Sr M. St James McInerney was awarded a scholarship to study catechetics at Fordham University in New York, which she was able to take up in mid 1971.<sup>25</sup> The publisher of the commissioned catechetical texts was the Australian Episcopal Education Committee, under the patronage of Archbishop James R. Knox of Melbourne (chairman). The series of booklets and a teacher’s guide, commonly entitled ‘Come Alive’, were received with very mixed reactions by clergy, teachers, parents and students when they appeared in January 1971. Maurice Ryan has asserted the ‘Come Alive’ programme became a ‘major focus of conflict’ and that its experiential, life-centred approach and its presentation of material in a magazine-style format, resulted in a ‘polarisation over religious education in

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<sup>23</sup> Minutes of meeting of representatives of Major Superiors with Executive of the CEB of NSW, 23 July 1968, Doc 55, J0929, SAA.

<sup>24</sup> Br G. M. Rossiter, *Religious Education in Catholic Schools in the 1970s*, paper prepared for Australian Catholic Education Offices, 1985, [http://rel-ed.edu.au/mre/cdrom/re\\_in\\_catholic\\_schools.htm](http://rel-ed.edu.au/mre/cdrom/re_in_catholic_schools.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Sophie McGrath, ‘Professional Education of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, 1911 until Contemporary Times’, unpublished, undated, PA, p.4.

schools', which was evident in public meetings imbued with 'bitterness and confusion'.<sup>26</sup>

Generation X Catholics were born 1960-1975, which places them in high school in 1973-1988. According to Richard Rymarz, they are generally suspicious of ideology and institutional authority and place far more emphasis on the importance of human experience.<sup>27</sup> They had not been greatly affected by the Vatican II Council because their experience of Catholic culture, chiefly influenced by their Catholic schooling, was post-conciliar. This left a generation gap between Generation X and older Catholics such as their parents and their teachers, who retained an experience and identification with the pre-conciliar world with its distinctive and cohesive Catholic culture. These adolescents were brought up in an era when denominational difference seemed to be of little relevance and the descriptor 'Catholic' was used less and less frequently.<sup>28</sup> This was a trend right across the Western world. The First Rite of Reconciliation had all but disappeared. Sodalities, popular and public expressions of piety in previous decades were much less visible and popular. Rymarz has commented that Catholic hegemony was greatly weakened by these changes.<sup>29</sup>

At Holy Cross Junior Secondary School, Sr Barbara McDonough was using a religion programme and teaching resources that she and Sr M. Ligouri (Pauline) Smith had developed at OLMC Parramatta in approximately 1970. This programme was available for use in all the Mercy schools for Years 7-10. Sr Barbara used these programmes for many years, also using *What is the Bible?* as well as other books, not necessarily Catholic ones, one being a Jewish publication, *I am David*.<sup>30</sup> She also used the Bible and has commented she had never studied a Bible when at school herself.<sup>31</sup> At this same time, Sr M. Eugene Dobson recorded that religion classes in Third and Fourth Forms were conducted in the style of discussion groups, with two teachers assigned to each class for these periods.<sup>32</sup> This method of instruction was teacher intensive.

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<sup>26</sup> Maurice Ryan, *Religious Education in Catholic Schools: an introduction for Australian students*, David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne, 2006, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Rymarz, 'Postconciliar Catholics: generation X and religious education', *Journal of Religious Education*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2002, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Hamilton, *What's Been Happening in RE in Australia?*, Dove Communications, Melbourne, pp. 19-20. See also G. Rossiter and M. Crawford, 'Religious Education and Changes in the Church', *Journal of Religious Education*, vol. 41, no. 3, 1992, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Rymarz, 'Postconciliar Catholics', p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Ronald J. Goldman, ed., *What is the Bible?*, Readiness for Religion Series, Rupert Hart-Davis Educational Publications, London, 1966; Anne Holm, *I am David*, translated from the Danish by L.W. Kingsland, Methuen Children's Books, London, 1965.

<sup>31</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Schools Commission questionnaire: non-government schools, October 1974, SC 31/7, CEOSA.



### **Marian College, Bondi Junction comes close to reality**

As mentioned previously, the merger of St Clare's senior classes with Holy Cross College, Woollahra, had first been proposed at the first stage of rationalisation of Sydney schools in 1962, when it was planned for St Clare's College to become a regional Fourth Form school from 1963. This plan did not eventuate and St Clare's received registration as a Sixth Form school.<sup>33</sup> By the second round of rationalisation in 1974, there was considerable anxiety within the CEO about the viability of St Clare's College, Carrington Road, Waverley. Its student population was nowhere near the number needed for a Sixth Form school. Br Simmons of the CEO, reporting to the CBFC on the state of the 'local proposals' to transfer the senior girls from St Clare's to Paul Street, with some St Clare's teachers as well, commented on the obvious disadvantages of the Paul Street site, noting it was 'small and there were no real prospects for spatial expansion'. He added that no problem was expected over school uniforms, and for the initial establishment period, the favoured option was to have joint principals.<sup>34</sup>

By October 1974, an agreement had been reached by the CBFC for the merger of the Fifth and Sixth Forms from Holy Cross College and St Clare's College, Waverley, at the Paul Street site.<sup>35</sup> The original proposal had been for some teachers from St Clare's to come to Paul Street on a part-time basis plus one full-time teacher. At this point, St Clare's had only thirty-five girls enrolled in Forms V and VI for 1975, while Paul Street had 135 girls. Marian College had been suggested as a name for the proposed senior college.<sup>36</sup> The two principals concerned, Sr M. Germaine (Pat) Donovan rsm, and Sr Marie Eustelle (Carmel) O'Sullivan osc, had suggested that the principalship be on a rotation basis, with Sr Marie Eustelle taking on that role in the initial year, and Sr M Germaine becoming her deputy principal with a teaching load of eighteen hours. Sr Pauline Babicci, who represented St Clare's in the official discussions, has explained that St Clare's was enthusiastic about the proposal and both St Clare's and Holy Cross had put enormous effort into preparing for the merger, but there was not wider support in the region. The CEO did not give the final authorisation and the general idea of an Eastern

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<sup>33</sup> Rosa MacGinley, *A Lamp Lit: history of the Poor Clares, Waverley, Australia, 1883-2004*, St Pauls, Strathfield, 2005, p. 125.

<sup>34</sup> Br W.X. Simmons, report from the CEO to the CBFC, 22 August 1974, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

<sup>35</sup> Fr Barry Collins to Mother M. Thecla Kerwick, 15 October 1974, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

<sup>36</sup> This was in a proposal presented to Br Simmons at a meeting on 12 August 1974 at Paul Street, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

Suburbs senior school was finally dropped.<sup>37</sup>

### **Enrolments do matter**

In 1974, Holy Cross College ran at a \$38,189 deficit, in spite of collecting \$75,920 in Commonwealth government grants. Running costs for the College, middle and senior sections combined, had increased from \$147,933 in 1973 to \$213,008 in 1974. Lay teachers' salaries had risen by \$60,440 in one year. While the total enrolment in 1973 was 574, almost the same as for 1972, the enrolments had increased to 628 as at 15 August 1974, with seventy-four in Form V and sixty-five in Form VI. This was the peak for total Holy Cross College enrolments.<sup>38</sup>

According to Sr Pat Donovan, Archbishop Carroll believed that young families would be living in the high rise flats that were being built around Woollahra and Bondi Junction and therefore the future of Holy Cross College was ensured.<sup>39</sup> This was not to be the case. Rising demand for inner city accommodation would push up rents beyond the means of such families. At the same time the national fertility rate was dropping. The 1976 census results show that the proportion of people renting in the suburbs to the south and south-east of Woollahra was comparatively high. In Waverley LGA, 48.8per cent of dwellings were rented and in Woollahra LGA 43.4per cent were rented.<sup>40</sup>

Numbers at Paul Street Senior School were modestly boosted with Asian students in the 1970s, but actual numbers cannot be verified. In October 1974, there were five students at Holy Cross College aged 19 years and over, two in Form V and three in Form VI. It is assumed those girls who were older than the average, were overseas students. In 1974, official school returns recorded that thirty-eight of the girls were 'migrant' and there was one 'aboriginal'.<sup>41</sup> When Sr Pat Donovan was awarded an Australian Federal Government study grant to visit Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, from December 1973 to January 1974, the contacts she made there were instrumental in attracting more applicants from those countries. She has commented that the tendency was to accept these applicants whether they were Catholic or not. She 'actively encouraged' and in fact 'embraced

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<sup>37</sup> Sr Pauline Babicci osc, informal conversation with Sophie McGrath, 30 June 2008. Fr Barry Collins, Acting Director of the CEO at this time, was opposed to the idea, while Mgr Slowey and Archbishop Carroll favoured it.

<sup>38</sup> Holy Cross College Statistical Returns, 1969-79, SC 31/7, CEOS.

<sup>39</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007. He spoke at length to her about this concept.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Spearritt, 'Sydney at the census, 1911-1976' in Jill Roe, ed., *Twentieth Century Sydney: studies in urban and social history*, Hale and Iremonger with the Sydney History Group, Sydney, 1980, p. 271.

<sup>41</sup> School Commission Questionnaire: Non-Government Schools, October 1974, SC 31/7, CEOS.

them'.<sup>42</sup> This is borne out by the 1975 enrolments at Paul Street. At the beginning of August 1975, there were seventy-six girls enrolled in Form V1, with twenty-one English as a Second Language (hereafter ESL) students and ten non-Catholics, and in Form V, seventy-eight were enrolled, with eight ESL students and ten non-Catholics. The Form V intake for 1976 was eighty-eight. These statistics do not specify the number of overseas students but the assumption is that the majority of the ESL students, if not all of them, were holders of a foreign student visa.<sup>43</sup>

The process of rationalisation of Catholic regional schools was ongoing in the Eastern Suburbs region from the mid-70s. In 1978, school principals in the Eastern Suburbs were requested by the CEO to submit their own plan for rationalisation in their region. Estimates of staff requirements sent to the CEO indicate Paul Street approached what was regarded as maximum numbers (given the number of classrooms) in 1979: 106 in Year 11 and ninety-six in Year 12. Given as factors in increasing enrolments at Holy Cross College were:

- The Eastern Suburbs Rail to Bondi Junction
- The state of unemployment and the lack of job opportunities
- The tendency for Higher Education to be seen as a means of coping in a rapidly changing technological society<sup>44</sup>

### **Educating for change**

The 1970s was a period of rapid economic change in Western nations and, as women had many more opportunities for further education and employment opening up, the position of women within the family and within society was also undergoing change. The year 1975 was designated International Women's Year. To prepare for this a Study Commission was announced by the Vatican on 3 May 1973. Of its twenty-five members, twelve were lay women, seven being married and also leaders of Catholic organisations. In 1974, leading feminist Betty Friedan, in an audience with Pope Paul VI urged the Church to 'come to terms with the full personhood of women'. Rosemary Goldie has written that 1975 'had been the occasion for Paul VI to encourage all that was positive in a feminism that pointed to needed changes – of mentality especially – in society and

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<sup>42</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007

<sup>43</sup> File: Rationalisation Eastern Suburbs, 1974-79, SC31/ 2, CEOSA.

<sup>44</sup> File: Rationalisation Eastern Suburbs 1974-79, SC 31/ 2, CEOSA.

within the Church'.<sup>45</sup> To mark International Women's Year, the Australian bishops published *Towards a Whole Community: Reflections on the Situation of Australian Women* for the 1976 Social Justice Sunday, as mentioned previously. That same year, an Australian Government Study Group, which included Jean Martin, Elizabeth Reid and Susan Ryan, submitted a report to the Australian Schools Commission entitled *Girls, School and Society*. The report is essentially concerned with sexism in Australian education, and has a strong focus on the need to encourage girls to have the confidence to develop their talents in all areas, especially in the field of higher education. The Study Committee held that 'education should be about human rather than sex-specific education'.<sup>46</sup> Following the Federal Government's strong stance in 1977, the NSW State Government produced a report on 'Sexism in Education'.<sup>47</sup>

The Catholic Teachers' Conference of the Archdiocese of Sydney held 21-23 May 1973, had as its theme 'Learning for Living'. Sr Germaine (Patricia) Donovan, a participant at this conference was inspired. During the 1975-76 school vacation, Sr Pat Donovan travelled to the USA on a NSW Department of Education grant to study 'The Impacts of Rapid Technological Growth in a First World Country'. The grant's brief was to research the social and economic effects of change and the need to retrain employees to meet changing priorities in the workforce as well as problems of increasing alcoholism and drug addiction. She has recounted that from her time at some of the most prestigious centres of learning in the USA, she learnt that: 'as teachers we are responsible for a lot of the unemployment in education because [...] people were over-educated and couldn't get jobs with their university degrees'. She has commented that one of the significant aspects of the curriculum at Paul Street, during her time there as principal, was to educate both students and staff for change.<sup>48</sup>

The ALP had made affirmative action a major issue in the March 1983 federal election. That same year the NSW Director of Education issued a policy statement entitled 'Towards Non-Sexist Education; policy and guidelines for school: pre-school – year 12'. Senator Susan Ryan was appointed Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the

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<sup>45</sup> Goldie, *From a Roman Window*, pp.233-234.

<sup>46</sup> Committee on Social Change and the Education of Women, Study Group (Australia). *Girls, School and Society: a report by a study group to the Schools Commission*, Schools Commission, ACT, 1975, p. 158.

<sup>47</sup> NSW Department of Education, Sexism in Education Committee, *Report of the Committee on Sexism in Education*, Department of Education in NSW, 1977.

<sup>48</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

Prime Minister in Women's Affairs, thus acknowledging the link between the education of girls and their future economic welfare.<sup>49</sup> The Australian women's movement was obviously having some influence in areas of public policy making.

### **Pastoral care at Holy Cross**

Pastoral care was an important part of the work of the religious on the Paul Street staff in the 1970s. This involved home visitations to the family if a student had any kind of a problem. The religious on the staff took a 'maternal interest' in the Asian girls, and Sr Pat Donovan has noted that 'Sr M. Gonzaga Stanley was marvellous with visitation'.<sup>50</sup> It was clear that the family background of the Holy Cross students generally was changing in the 1970s. Not only was the student population now dominantly working class but no longer were stable families the norm; increasing family dislocation impacted negatively on the children. Sr Ann Maree Thompson had a full-time pastoral care role for all 500 girls at Holy Cross College and ran after-school care programmes for up to forty-five students from 3p.m to 5 p.m.

Sr Barbara McDonough conducted a comparative study of the school culture of four secondary schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in the early 1970s. Her study of the Holy Cross middle school had led her to conclude that 'for a significant proportion of the students, home life is poor or non-existent. About seventy per cent of the mothers are working'. She also noted that the school population covered a 'fairly wide socio-economic spectrum'.<sup>51</sup> These significant changes in the Holy Cross student population, more particularly in their home background, which reflected broader changes in the socio-economic characteristics of the region, was noted by ex-student Caroline (Carli) Ryan (1964-1965) when she returned to Holy Cross as staff member, Sr M. Kristin Ryan in 1973. The Holy Cross convent chronicler records her as commenting on a 'new type of Eastern Suburbs pupil'.<sup>52</sup>

Later a 'half-way house' was established for the Sisters of Mercy ministry to socially disadvantaged students, and Sr Ann Maree Thompson spent her evenings at an out-reach project called Holy Cross House, which had been set up in late 1990 and operated until

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<sup>49</sup> Susan Ryan is the sister of Sr Caroline Ryan rsm, a student of Holy Cross College from 1964-1965 and later a member of the Holy Cross College staff; she was principal of the College 1983-1988.

<sup>50</sup> Sr Pat Donovan, interview by the author, 15 January 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Barbara L. McDonough, 'Pupil Control Ideology', M. Ed. Admin. Thesis, University of New England, 1973, pp. 73-74.

<sup>52</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 178.

1996. This was initially for some of the Asian students, who were living without the benefit of parent(s) or family appointed guardian, and was extended, as a result of a growing need, for short and long term accommodation for teenage girls experiencing personal and difficult family situations. While many of the girls were Holy Cross students, some were from other Catholic schools in the area or were referred from the Prince of Wales Adolescent Unit. The College leased a cottage nearby, and Sr Ann Maree acted as ‘house-mother’ for up to seven students, having been given special permission from the Sisters of Mercy Council to live apart from the religious community. As a local newspaper, the *Eastern Herald* reported, the house was used as a ‘meeting place, a refuge and a cooling-off space – whatever the need may be’.<sup>53</sup> By 1995 this ministry had been moved into a five bedroom house rented from the parish; its purpose was stated as accommodating ‘high school students experiencing short and long term crises’.<sup>54</sup> Sr Ann Maree Thompson has noted that Holy Cross House, in offering a safe, consistent and caring environment for girls, was a unique and invaluable resource in the Eastern Suburbs.<sup>55</sup>

### **The College is one entity again**

The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (hereafter SACS) Board, established in 1983, assumed the responsibilities of the Catholic Building and Finance Commission which had been functioning since 1965. In August 1987, the SACS Board took the decision to amalgamate the two campuses of Holy Cross College, to take effect at the beginning of 1989. This decision would colour the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the College in September 1988. The amalgamation was effective from the start of the 1989 school year. The reason for this decision was succinctly and optimistically expressed by Barry Dwyer, Regional Director of Schools in the Sydney Archdiocese:

The 1989 amalgamation of the two campuses on the Edgecliff Road site will mark a significant point in the ongoing story. This amalgamation will give economic viability to the College and do much to ensure its future.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Eastern Herald*, 25 July 1991.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Overview of Proposed Plan of Action supporting the Christian life dimension of Holy Cross College for 1995’, SC 31/3 CEOSA.

<sup>55</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 159.

<sup>56</sup> *Holy Cross College Yearbook 1988*, p. 12.

Underlying the decision were the demographic changes in the Eastern Suburbs and the consequential declining enrolments in the region's Catholic schools. These declining numbers were not confined to the Eastern Suburbs. Across Sydney, the total school-age population had declined by 9.8per cent or approximately 40,000 persons, between 1976 and 2001.<sup>57</sup> Holy Cross College was following a trend across the Sydney Archdiocese in enrolling an increasing number of non-Catholic children to fill vacancies. According to the traditional policy of the Sydney CEO, no more than ten per cent of the school population were to be non-Catholic. CEO Director, Br Kelvin Canavan, has observed that 'enrolment pressure prior to 1976 had limited the opportunities for non-Catholic children to be accommodated in Catholic schools'. Nationally, non-Catholics in Catholic schools had numbered only 1.3per cent in 1973, but by 2000 the proportion had increased to 16.4per cent.<sup>58</sup>

Another factor in the decision to amalgamate the two Holy Cross College campuses would have been the costs of the duplication of resources such as a library, science laboratories, classroom accommodation, equipment, and personnel. At the senior school, from 1970, the principal was a Sister of Mercy, until Mr Terence Sheely was appointed principal in 1982, though a Parramatta Sister of Mercy remained principal of the middle school. A Parramatta Sister of Mercy remained principal of Holy Cross College, from the reunification of the senior and middle schools until the closure of the College in 2001. Suitable school leaders i.e. sisters relatively young and energetic and in good health, with the higher degree educational qualifications now required for the upper level management in Catholic secondary schools, were becoming very few within the congregation, especially as more religious moved out of the formal educational area.

To accommodate the seniors back at Edgecliff Road, major changes had to be made within the existing buildings. The congregation agreed to transfer their former convent in the main school building to the CEO, provided it was used for educational purposes.<sup>59</sup> Archbishop Carroll gave two semi-detached cottages, adjacent to the school and owned by the parish, to the sisters for their convent, and paid for their alteration. The two floors of the original 1908 building, which had been the convent, became the administrative

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<sup>57</sup> Br Kelvin Canavan, 'The Changing Face of Catholic Schools in Australia', Catholic Education Office, Sydney, Bulletin 88, May 2006, p. 5, CEOSA.

<sup>58</sup> Canavan, 'The Changing Face of Catholic Schools', p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006.

centre of the College, with provision to accommodate the additional staff from Paul Street.

Major modifications turned much of the ground floor of the old convent into the reception and principal's office. The bedroom floor of the old convent was altered to provide staffrooms and amenities for the staff. Sr Barbara McDonough was surprised to see the speed with which the girls claimed as their space the areas which for so long had been most definitely out of bounds to all students, apart from music students who had used the convent parlour.<sup>60</sup> Some renovations were made in the 1967 building. When the development application for all the alterations was submitted to Woollahra Council, approval was given, with a proviso of a maximum enrolment of 540 students at Holy Cross College. In the debate over the development application, Councillor Elaine Cassidy stated she believed the school should be made to acquire further land for open space if they wished to increase enrolments. Speaking on behalf of the College, Councillor Beatrice Gray commented that the principal had indicated an enrolment of 585 students was needed, and added that in the past the school had operated with 680 students.<sup>61</sup> As will be seen, the College would never again approach the high enrolments of the 1960s and the 1970s.

### **Amalgamation is effected**

As was to be expected, the year of the re-amalgamation of the middle and senior schools on the Edgecliff Road site involved the imposition of tremendous pressures on the staff. Many were disgruntled and unhappy. Overseeing all this was Sr Barbara McDonough, who had returned in 1989 as the principal of Holy Cross College. Her deputy (first assistant) was Mrs Lindsay Donnan. Ruth Silva, who had been the acting principal at Paul Street came to the new school but stayed only one year. Mrs Veronica Hickie, who had been assistant principal at Paul Street, became curriculum co-ordinator in 1989. Sr Caroline Ryan, who had come to Holy Cross College as deputy principal in 1982, becoming principal in the following year, farewelled her alma mater at the end of 1988, to undertake further study. During her time at Holy Cross, she had overseen the development of a goal-based curriculum and the introduction of vertically streamed

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<sup>60</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 11 December 2006 and informal conversation between Sr Barbara McDonough and the author, 27 October 2007.

<sup>61</sup> *Weekly Courier*, 29 June 1988, p. 39. It is not clear if this limitation proved to be a disadvantage to Holy Cross College.



homerooms. The *1988 Holy Cross College Yearbook* noted that a significant innovation in her time at the school was the appointment of a full-time Student Counsellor.<sup>62</sup> No doubt there was need for professional counselling.

The 1989 Year 12 group wore the Paul St green uniform, the last time it would make an appearance. Just for that year, there were two uniforms for the two senior forms, with the girls coming into Year 11 wearing a new senior uniform in the brown and red of the Edgecliff Road middle school uniform but with a special brown jacket, collarless with the college crest woven not on a pocket but on to a panel of the blazer; the look was considered very smart. The skirt was the same check pattern as the junior one. It was a link with the junior school but it was the jacket and the blouse which went with it that made the new senior uniform special. Yet it became obvious that the staff did not want the seniors to be differentiated in this manner. They advocated one uniform as a potent symbol of the continuity and unity of the school and eventually the principal was persuaded by their argument. By 1991, everyone in the College had the new jacket and the checked skirt was the same for all though it was gored for the juniors and pleated for the seniors.<sup>63</sup> Such were the issues in the life of the school microcosm which, though appearing trivial to the outsider, were ultimately connected with movements in the wider social, political and religious fields.

### **A British Secretary of State visits Holy Cross College**

Holy Cross College hosted a visit from Kenneth Baker, the British Secretary of State for Education and Science, in May 1989. The visit was history making as the first ever visit by a British Cabinet Minister to a Sydney Catholic school. This made it very exciting for all in the College, and it is quite feasible that the visit was organised by the Holy Cross parish priest, Archbishop James Carroll. He, in his wisdom, would have realised the College would benefit at this time when morale was low. Sr Barbara and her first assistant, Mrs Lindsay Donnan, the Executive Director of the Sydney CEO, Br Kelvin Canavan, the congregational leader of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Sr Pauline Smith, and the Year 12 girls in their now defunct green (Paul Street) uniform greeted their distinguished visitors. Those who accompanied Mr Baker included the British High Commissioner in Canberra, the British Consul-General in Sydney, the President of the British Royal Society and representatives of the Federal Department of Education and

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<sup>62</sup> *1988 Holy Cross College Yearbook*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

Science, and the NSW Department of Employment, Education and Training. There followed an absorbing discussion in which both groups were able to compare their experiences of the British and Australian educational systems. The visitors were shown an audio-visual French class, a junior science lesson, the computer laboratory and the newly renovated library. Each guest 'was presented with a set of documents explaining the philosophy and curriculum of Sydney's Catholic school system and a copy of the *1988 Holy Cross College Yearbook*'.<sup>64</sup>

The school philosophy of Holy Cross College, as expressed on this occasion, is of interest for both the order of priority of goals as given and the inclusive language used. The document stated:

Holy Cross College is firstly a part of the civic structure of society, and as such, its fundamental aim is the integral formation of the students as citizens, through contact with our culture. Therefore, the school aims to provide a good education and develop responsible citizens.

In addition, as a Catholic school, it hopes to complement this with an education in faith, a sense of mission, and the desire to live out a Christian commitment. In so doing, the school endeavours to live as a community of faith, and exhibit the qualities of a Christian community.<sup>65</sup>

Florence Christou, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, was the 1989 Holy Cross College school captain. Sr Barbara McDonough has observed that the College did not feel obliged to have a Catholic girl as the school captain. Rather the preference was for a really Christian person who was attuned to social justice issues, a preference which was reflected in the statement of the school's philosophy above. According to Sr Barbara this was one of the characteristics of Holy Cross College during the 1980s and 1990s and the students had proved to be astute in being able to choose such a person.<sup>66</sup> Antonietta Guerrera, the 1989 vice-captain, was of Italian origin. These two school leaders

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<sup>64</sup> CEO, *About Catholic Schools*, vol. 13, no.1, June/July, 1989, in author's possession. See also CW, 17 May 1989 and CW, 24 May 1989.

<sup>65</sup> Box 28, CEOSA.

<sup>66</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

epitomised the diverse ethnic mix of the cosmopolitan eastern and inner city suburbs of Sydney.

Post-amalgamation enrolments would not be testing the maximum limit of 540 set by Woollahra Council in 1988. The recombined school in 1989 had 497 students and forty teachers. Maintaining, let alone increasing enrolments, in an area where there was a plentiful supply of secondary girls schools, and a declining school-age population, was going to be an ongoing problem for the College throughout the 1990s.<sup>67</sup> Eighty-five Year 12 students graduated in 1990 and the Year 10 graduating group numbered eighty-one. Ten years previously, as at 6 April 1979, the combined enrolment of the middle and senior schools had been almost 600, with 430 at the middle school and 164 at the senior school.

There may have been ten or so international students enrolled at Holy Cross College in 1990. Sr Barbara recalled it was really by word-of-mouth that young Indonesian women in particular ‘came knocking on the door’ and because the school had room for them, and being mindful of declining numbers, she could not turn them away. Their contribution to the viability of the College was undeniable. By the middle of the 1990s, total enrolments were becoming dangerously low; in February 1996 they were only 374. By November 1996, 100 out of the total student population were overseas students, of these forty-six came from Indonesia, twenty from Hong Kong and seventeen from South Korea.<sup>68</sup> Adding to the demands of re-amalgamation and the special needs of the international students was an unforeseen spike in enrolments the following year.

### **The Year 11 diploma course**

The venerable school of St Patrick’s, Church Hill (at the Rocks) closed in 1990.<sup>69</sup> This was to have a major impact on Holy Cross College. The staff of St Patrick’s Church Hill, about five or six full-timers and some part-timers, was redeployed to Holy Cross College in 1991, along with the students of Year 9 and Year 10 and much equipment, such as typewriters and small computers. Also transferred was the St Patrick’s post-Year 10 diploma course with its specialised teachers. This course, which had a very strong

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<sup>67</sup> Box 28, CEOSA.

<sup>68</sup> Ken Brock, ‘Why Australia?: overseas secondary students in a Sydney Catholic girls’ school’, SC 31/2 CEOSA.

<sup>69</sup> St Patrick’s Church Hill had opened in 1866.

pastoral element, had been developed by St Patrick's Church Hill to suit non-academic girls who needed training in basic skills and personal development to give them a chance of gaining employment.<sup>70</sup> It had been developed in 1985, was unique in the Archdiocese of Sydney, and accepted girls from all over the Sydney area. The diploma course should not to be confused with the St Patrick's Business College, which catered for students of more academic abilities and which was re-established in the empty premises of the former De La Salle Brothers' St Peter's parish boys' school, on Devonshire Street, Surry Hills. Some St Patrick's High School students, no doubt the academically inclined, had chosen to transfer to their sister school, Monte Sant'Angelo at North Sydney, an independent school.

Sr Barbara McDonough remembers well the challenges of coping with the distressed and disgruntled redeployed staff from St Patrick's, Church Hill, in 1991. She recalls that altogether she had eighteen redeployed teachers, including three former deputy principals, from the Holy Cross Senior School and St Patrick's, Church Hill. The redeployed staff were 'heartbroken at their schools going [and] carried their grief with them so that made it really, really hard'.<sup>71</sup>

A paraliturgy to celebrate the opening of the Year 11 diploma course was held at Holy Cross on 25 March 1991. The course was described as an 'alternative' course designed to 'provide students with practical skills relevant to their special circumstances'. Noting that 'some students may have potential that would benefit from further development at school before they seek further education or employment', the course was intended to equip students to undertake a technical or business college education.<sup>72</sup> The diploma girls wore a smart uniform quite different from the rest of the students at Holy Cross College. This was intended to give them a sense of being a little more mature as well as differentiating them from the rest of the school. The uniform was styled like a smart business suit, with a navy skirt and blazer, navy court shoes, blue tinted stockings, red jumper, black briefcase. Stockings were to be worn summer and winter and students were required to keep two spare pairs of stockings in their desk at school in case they laddered their stockings. As the managers of both the macrocosm and microcosm know, 'the devil is in the detail', a fact of which the Catholic Building and Finance Commission had been only too aware!

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<sup>70</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>72</sup> SC 31/2 CEOSA.

Students had to sign a contract to ensure attendance and participation in the course, which ran from 30 January to 25 October in 1991. To reinforce a sense of commitment on the part of the students, there was a \$50 contract fee to be paid on the initial enrolment.

Archbishop Carroll had offered the Holy Cross parish hall to the diploma students and it was fitted out, with the staff accommodated on the stage, and various partitions erected in the body of the hall. It is not known if the parishioners had any say in the consequent loss of their hall. As enrolments dropped at the College, the diploma girls vacated the hall later on, and had most of their lessons in regular classrooms.<sup>73</sup> The diploma consisted of courses in human development (religious education and personal development), communications, practical mathematics, careers, computing, personal presentation and grooming, business practices (typing and office procedures), citizenship, and physical education.<sup>74</sup>

### **Music and the creative arts**

In a 1991 letter to parents of Years 7 and 8 students, Sr Barbara referred to the ‘great musical tradition’ which Holy Cross had always had, ‘due in large part to the work of the sisters who provided lessons for those who wanted to develop their musical talents’. She explained that lessons had been available in piano, violin, cello and voice training, and that there had been a ‘fine school orchestra’ in which ex-students would continue to play alongside current students of the College, sometimes ‘for years after they left school’.<sup>75</sup> The story of this music tradition will be the focus of chapter 9. Sr Barbara’s letter explained that an ex-student had left some money to the Holy Cross convent community, which was to be used for the further education of girls. The sisters had decided to offer scholarships in music to give some girls an opportunity to learn instrumental music privately. The scholarships provided for a half-hour lesson per week for one year. No doubt it was considered that this was sufficient time to judge if the student had sufficient talent to warrant a further investment of money. To further the cultural life of the school, a drama studio was provided in August 1993, due to the generosity of Archbishop Carroll.

### **Overseas Students**

From 1980 onwards, private overseas students were compelled by the Australian

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<sup>73</sup> Holy Cross College (hereafter HCC) staff bulletin, no. 21, 2 August 1993, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>74</sup> SC 31/2 CEOSA.

<sup>75</sup> Letter to parents of Year 7 and 8 girls, 18 August 1991, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

Government to pay an annual overseas student charge as a contribution to the costs of their education. In 1986, the Australian (Labor) Government introduced a category of full-fee paying students (hereafter FFPOS), phasing out partly subsidised private overseas students by the mid-1990s. There is evidence that Holy Cross College was a leading innovator in recognising the ‘market potential’ of full-fee paying foreign students and developing programmes to help them ‘assimilate’ into a Catholic school. A *Catholic Weekly* article, (probably dating from 1991) and headlined: ‘Fee Paying Students: more than an export earner’, referred to eight schools in the Catholic system which had been registered by the Commonwealth Government to enrol FFPOS. Of these schools, Christian Brothers High School, Burwood, had been the first to enrol FFPOS in 1987, and the article noted that both the Christian Brothers College at Burwood and Holy Cross College, Woollahra, had developed expertise in implementing the overseas students’ program.<sup>76</sup>

The number of overseas students at Holy Cross College increased quite dramatically from 1990. At the time of the re-amalgamation in 1989, the enrolments of overseas students were still low, but numbers started to pick up the following year. The College devised a special six months ‘intensive language course’, with Kylie Boulivant in charge, to help the students learn adequate English skills and adjust to Australian culture before joining the Year 11 girls. At this time there was no special government funding and the College charged the overseas students high fees. Eventually the CEO developed a policy about overseas students and in doing so they called upon the expertise of both Sr Barbara McDonough and the principal of Christian Brothers Burwood.<sup>77</sup>

The numbers of overseas students gradually increased with word of mouth being an effective method of advertising the particular advantages Holy Cross College offered to overseas students: a location very close to the Central Business District, with excellent public transport links; world famous beaches close-by; plentiful rental accommodation in the area; documented academic successes. Other, less tangible factors in this growth of interest, was the pastoral concern and practical help available to young girls from foreign countries who quite often had to fend for themselves; some of the overseas students had a

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<sup>76</sup> CW, undated clipping, Box 31/2 CEOSA. Sr Barbara McDonough has recounted that the two schools worked together to develop a program to facilitate the inclusion of the overseas students as well as deal with government bureaucracy.

<sup>77</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

parent or parents residing in Sydney but most did not. Holy Cross College, Woollahra was also advertised in at least one Asian language newspaper, as can be seen in an advertisement in a June 1993 issue of *Variety Weekly*.<sup>78</sup>

The first chapter of the Association of Indonesian Students of Australia to be established in a secondary school was inaugurated at Holy Cross College in August 1994, with a lunch featuring Indonesian food. Sr Barbara, having undertaken some study of the Indonesian language, gave her speech of welcome in Indonesian, in the presence of the Indonesian Vic-Consul General and his wife and the president of the University Indonesian Students Association. Sr Barbara was justifiably proud of her communication skills, but her pride in the Indonesian students under her care was much greater. She commented in the Holy Cross staff bulletin that the leadership potential in the 1994 Year 11 was evident in the overseas students and clearly seen on this particular occasion.<sup>79</sup>

In October 1994, the Holy Cross convent community had marked Archbishop James Carroll's forty years as a bishop of the Sydney Archdiocese with a celebratory afternoon tea but the new school year of 1995 started on an extremely sad note following his sudden death on 14 January. The College opening school Mass commemorated his long and productive life, and his very special relationship with the Sisters of Mercy and the schools in the Holy Cross parish. It is indisputable that the College benefited from his generosity and the special interest he always had in its students and its staff. Over a span of eighty-eight years, Holy Cross Parish had had only three parish priests, each of whom had had a very special place in the Holy Cross College community and had been outstanding in their priestly vocation.

To quote the NSW Catholic Education Commission, of which Archbishop James Carroll was the founding chairman:

For several generations of students and parishioners at Holy Cross the 'Doc' (as he was affectionately known) was a great friend, confidant and counsellor. His wisdom and learning, his engaging smile and shrewd insight, and especially his gracious and humble manner, were acknowledged and admired by all. He was

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<sup>78</sup> Advertisement, *Variety Weekly*, 5 June 1993, clipping, SC 31/2, CEOSA. Next to this was an advertisement for Holy Cross College (for boy's) Ryde.

<sup>79</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no.26, 22 August 1994, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

indeed the Christ-like servant of his people. James left everyone, young and old alike, with the feeling that he was their special friend. And he was.<sup>80</sup>

### **A major change to Religious education in the mid-1980s**

In the decade following the introduction in 1970 of the ‘Come Alive’ programme for seniors, lay teachers assumed proportions in Catholic secondary schools previously unthinkable. Table 7 below illustrates the changing proportions of religious to lay staff. It shows that in 1975 about one-third of teachers in NSW Catholic schools were religious and within ten years this proportion had declined to nine per cent.

**Table 7: Teachers in NSW Catholic Schools: 1965-1997**<sup>81</sup>

Year	religious teachers	lay teachers	% religious teachers
1965	3,654	1,628	69
1970	3,240	3,258	50
1975	2,530	5,343	32
1980	1,809	8,397	18
1985	1,168	11,688	9
1990	707	13,040	5
1995	412	14,311	2.8
1996	354	14,502	2.4
1997	334	14,658	2.3

Religious ceased to be the majority of teachers staffing NSW Catholic schools from 1970, and from the mid-1970s there was a rapid decline in the proportion of lay to religious teachers, as table 7 shows. As just one of the consequences of this, more and more lay teachers had to teach religion. As Rossiter has observed, ‘lay’ spirituality gradually took the place of ‘religious order’ spirituality’ in NSW Catholic schools.<sup>82</sup>

From 1985, a set of guidelines called *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* was used in secondary schools. Launched in November 1984, it comprised a list of topics to be used

<sup>80</sup> Obituary of Archbishop James Carroll, [www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/about/history](http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/about/history)

<sup>81</sup> Catholic Education Commission, NSW, table published in Flynn and Mok, p. 227.

<sup>82</sup> Graham Rossiter, ‘Historical Perspective on the Development of Catholic Religious Education in Australia; Some Implications for the future’ in Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 261.



as a framework for individual schools when writing their own religion education programmes. The *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* document was following the growing practice of school-based curriculum development; the religion programmes were to be prepared specifically for the students by the school community. In his introduction to the program, the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Clancy, admitted: ‘it is no easy task, however, to plan a religious education program that is true to the living tradition of the Church and to the needs of young people exposed to all the pressures of contemporary society’.<sup>83</sup>

The Director of Religious Education for the CEO, Sydney, Fr Barry Collins, wrote in his introduction to the ‘Faithful to God: Faithful to People’ programme:

The school is an educational beacon which enlightens and enlivens the intellect, providing knowledge and skills, and inviting the formation of Christian attitudes to God, to the Church, to families, to the world, and to the people who live in the world.<sup>84</sup>

### **Spirituality and religious education in the 1990s**

According to Sr Leonie Crotty of the CEO, by the early 1990s the secondary schools that were using the *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* guidelines were calling for a ‘more comprehensive curriculum’.<sup>85</sup> In 1992, the CEO employed a team of people to develop the new secondary Religious Education curriculum; this was finally published in 1996. At this same time a program was implemented to accredit teachers of religious education; it would require them to have tertiary qualifications in religious education.

By the mid-1990s, Holy Cross College was exhibiting an innovative spirit with its own religious education program. The Holy Cross College 1995 information kit (for parents) noted that ‘central to the Religious Education of all students is prayer and meditation’. It referred to meditation times being developed in senior religious and general studies classes and added ‘these provide a refreshingly different and highly reflective student experience in prayer’.<sup>86</sup> A meditation group was set up in 1991 and met for thirty to forty-

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<sup>83</sup> Rev. Barry Collins, ed., *Faithful to God: Faithful to People, religious education for secondary schools*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, 1984, n.p.

<sup>84</sup> *Faithful to God: Faithful to People*, n.p.

<sup>85</sup> Sr Leonie Crotty, *About Catholic Schools*, June 2007, p. 18.

<sup>86</sup> Holy Cross College information kit, 1995, SC 31/3, CEOSA.

five minutes per week. Techniques originated from a variety of sources including Zen Buddhism, Hinduism and Ignatian and Benedictine Spirituality.<sup>87</sup> This reflected the variety of religious beliefs of the student population at this time. The College chapel was used by religious education classes. Each student year group was rostered for a prayer assembly with Sr Barbara in the chapel one day a week. At these times (usually the morning roll call time) the students would practise special hymns for school liturgies.

In 1992, two Year11 overseas students had expressed a desire to become Catholics and were receiving instruction from Sr Ann Marie Thompson and Kevin Bowdon.<sup>88</sup> Two years later, at the Indonesian Mass in the chapel of the monastery at Kensington, three Holy Cross College students were baptised, confirmed and received First Communion. This was a joyous event at the end of the school year, with Sr Barbara acting as a sponsor in the sacrament of confirmation for one of the students, Elsani Tanoto. At the time, Sr Barbara commented that this event showed that there was a strong element of faith among the overseas students, which could become evident given appropriate circumstances.<sup>89</sup>

The Holy Cross Student Representative Council agreed in 1994 on the need for a new school song, 'which was more in tune with the living out of the gospel values and the College motto (Nihil Sine Deo) in the world of today'. Ray Paxton, brother of a College staff member, was commissioned to write the words and music. This work, in effect a school hymn, was called *Nothing Without God*, and introduced in Term 3, 1997.<sup>90</sup> It was both challenging and inspirational, picking up basic Gospel virtues.

Holy Cross, community of justice,  
 We stand as one, the greatest and the least.  
 Holy Cross, renewing hope and mercy,  
 We are nothing without You, God of Peace.

Holy Cross, community of wisdom,  
 We sing as one and celebrate our youth.

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<sup>87</sup> Holy Cross College, school archive folder for 1991, SC 31/2, CEOSA.

<sup>88</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 5, 2 March 1992, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>89</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 37, 21 November 1994, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>90</sup> 'HCC News', Term 3, 1997, SC 31/3, CEOSA.

Holy Cross, renewing love and freedom,  
We are nothing without You, God of Truth.

Holy Cross, we gather as God's people  
To praise the name of Jesus in your sight.  
Holy Cross, renewed by your reflection,  
We are nothing without You, Lord of Light.<sup>91</sup>

### **Innovation in curriculum**

Seven Holy Cross College staff members, who were to be involved with Year 7 in 1995, attended a three day in-service course which investigated literacy and language usage. As a result, a Year 7 Learning Centre was established in 1995 to act as a home base for the whole Year 7 group. This was designed to be a positive learning environment equipped with reference books, reading materials (both fiction and non-fiction), audio players, computers, taped listening skill exercises. The 1995 Year 7 group of sixty-two gathered there for roll call and prayer each day and met there regularly three times a week for major input lessons given by one of the core team, with the other two team teachers present.

At other times the girls were divided into basic groups of twenty, smaller than the average for junior secondary classes. The fundamental premise was that students should have the opportunity to proceed at a pace which extended them, and so avoid the stress associated with the traditional lock-step advance through the curriculum, with students either trying to keep-up or being forced to mark-time. The core studies team had a timetabled meeting every Friday for long and short-term planning. The core studies were English, geography, history, personal development and religion. The approach taken was one which placed responsibility on the students for organisation and completion of tasks.<sup>92</sup> The members of the core studies team were Sandra Catanzariti, Brian Crump, co-ordinator of the Human Society in the Environment faculty, and Sr Barbara McDonough, who was revisiting her team teaching experiences of the mid – 1970s.

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<sup>91</sup> Holy Cross College School Hymn, words and music by Ray Paxton, *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 174.

<sup>92</sup> HCC News, June 1995, SC 31/3, CEOSA.

### Demographic changes

During the period 1976-2001, the school-age population (5-19 years) in the Sydney Archdiocese had declined by 9.8 per cent or approximately 40,000 persons. As Table 8 below shows, the Randwick and Waverley LGAs, from which many of the Holy Cross College students came, had experienced declines in their school-age population greater than twenty per cent since 1976, with the greatest decline in the years 1976-1986. Holy Cross Woollahra parish, which covers the suburbs of Bondi Junction, Bellevue Hill and Woollahra, was only a small section of the area from which the College drew its students in the 1990s. The 1991 census showed 10,527 people living in the parish area, of which 2,363 (22.5 per cent) had nominated themselves as Catholic, but only about 580 were regular Mass attendees. The census also indicated that about seventy per cent of the population was made up of professional, executive and retired people, with about sixty-five per cent of Anglo-Celtic racial background.<sup>93</sup> This meant that far fewer children were resident in the LGAs from which Holy Cross College had traditionally drawn its students. In this same period, the Sydney archdiocese was grappling with major growth in school-age population in its south-western corner.

**Table 8: Changes in 5 to 19 year old population 1976-1996**<sup>94</sup>

LGA	1976-2001		1976-1986		1986-1996		1996-2001		2001 % Cath.
	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	
Randwick	-5,629	-23.0	-3,769	-15.6	-1,780	-8.7	-80	-0.4	30.8
Waverley	-2,784	-26.1	-1,254	-11.8	-1,093	-11.6	-437	-5.3	22.2
Woollahra	-1,666	-18.1	-622	-6.8	-1,342	-15.7	298	4.1	19.4
Fairfield	8,262	24.2	5,781	16.9	3,192	8.0	-711	-1.6	35.9
Liverpool	5,694	18.5	-5,789	-18.8	2,344	9.4	9,139	33.4	35.8

Between 1976 and 2001, Table 8 shows the school-age population in Fairfield LGA had increased by approximately twenty-four per cent and in the Liverpool LGA by eighteen per cent. The table shows the wide difference between the numbers of school age

<sup>93</sup> Sydney Archdiocesan Notices, March, 1997, p. 4, SAA. This demographic profile of the parish also includes the very revealing comment: 'Apart from Mass attendance there is a dearth of interested and involved parishioners.'

<sup>94</sup> Catholic Education Office, Sydney, Bulletin 56a, 22 July 2002.

Catholics in Fairfield LGA and in Woollahra LGA, although Randwick LGA had retained approximately the same proportion of Catholicity in the general population that it had displayed throughout the twentieth century. Clearly archdiocesan resources needed to be diverted to these growth areas, and just as the NSW State Government in this period rationalised social capital such as public hospitals and public schools, so the CEO would be forced to do likewise.

Sr Barbara McDonough commented that in the 1990s, the students of Holy Cross College came from all over Sydney, with some travelling quite long distances, this situation being accentuated by the closure of St Patrick's High School in the city. There were two significant outcomes of this broadening of the College's catchment area: the identity of the College as a regional secondary school was distorted and the association of the communities and priests of the local parishes with the school was diminished. An examination of the Year 7 intake for 1992 reveals this anomaly. Out of the twenty-eight girls in Year 6 at Holy Cross Junior School (where students were much more likely to come from nearby suburbs), only sixteen were moving onto Holy Cross College for Year 7. Ten of the girls would be going to private (independent) schools and one to Vaucluse High School. Sr Barbara McDonough reported that the Year 7 numbers were creeping towards sixty and she commented that 'given that many families have connections with the private schools over the years' it seemed to be a 'very good enrolment'.<sup>95</sup>

### **Into an uncertain future**

In July 1995, the Sydney archdiocese implemented a ten-year plan for secondary education in its southern, eastern and inner west regions. For Holy Cross College, the enrolments for 1996 would be crucial to its future. The Year 7 intake for 1996 was only thirty-one, half of the sixty-four it had been the previous year. As will be seen, this very small class was to have a significant impact on a school struggling to survive. There were weeks of intense anxiety for Sr Barbara McDonough before the publication of the ten year plan. The plan disclosed that Holy Cross College was not one of the schools marked for closure, but its period of reprieve was unknown. In a staff bulletin she noted: 'I am aware that a need for our school has been established, even though the Archdiocese has to support us financially to a significant degree.' It is clear from her comments that Holy

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<sup>95</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no.35, 16 November 1992, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

Cross College was not paying its way but effectively being subsidised by the CEO. She added:

It is our task to clarify, for a wider audience than just our region (which basically can see and understand what functions Holy Cross has) the definite character which justifies the sacrifices made by other schools in order to have our school operative.<sup>96</sup>

The continued existence of Holy Cross College was being questioned by the CEO and had to be justified. A special committee, the School Review and Development Committee, was set up to clarify the 'definite character' of Holy Cross College. This consisted of the CEO Director, Br Kelvin Canavan, a CEO consultant, a congregational representative of the Sisters of Mercy, a parent, the assistant principal of Holy Cross, Peter Hughes, and Sr Barbara McDonough. The committee was expected to present a formal report to the higher authorities of Catholic education in the Sydney archdiocese during the first semester of 1996.<sup>97</sup>

The Year 11 intake had fallen to only sixty-eight in 1996 and the 1996 census day, (2 August) showed the total number of students was 394 students. Overseas students (eighty-one) were one in five of the total student population. Early in 1996, the Holy Cross College Parents and Friends Association requested that the school put a regular advertisement in the *Wentworth Courier*, the free Eastern Suburbs paper, for which they would pay.<sup>98</sup> The School Review and Development Committee launched a new brochure containing the vision and plan for the College's future on Holy Cross Celebration Day, 12 September 1996.<sup>99</sup> The patronal feast day of the College was the ancient feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, celebrated in the Church's liturgy on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. The school had much to be proud of at this time. Holy Cross College had four teams in the Netball grand finals held 7 September 1996 at Moore Park. The girls won three finals and the College combined teams won the march past. Ex-student , and College dux, Heidi Kapfenstein had graduated from the University of NSW with first class honours in Science and the University Medal.

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<sup>96</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no.24, 31 July 1995, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>97</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 24, 31 July 1995, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>98</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 3, 12 February 1996, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>99</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 23, 5 August 1996, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

A task force for Holy Cross College met early in term 3, 1996. Initially consisting of Vicki Tanzer (CEO), Sr Margaret Doyle (representing the congregational leader) and Sr Barbara McDonough, its aim was to determine a future enrolment policy for the College. The hope was to give Holy Cross College a special place in the Archdiocese, with the opportunity to draw students from more than its few feeder schools.<sup>100</sup> In spite of these efforts, the situation worsened; the Year 7 intake was only forty-five in 1998. Even more significant than the fall in total enrolments was the fact that by 1997, 119 of the total school population of 390 students (over thirty per cent), were full fee paying overseas students. The growing dependence of the College on full fee paying overseas students is clear from these figures.

The 1997 devaluation of the Indonesian currency, the Rupiah, had a disastrous effect on Holy Cross College, one from which it would not recover. At the beginning of 1998 there already had been seven withdrawals of enrolments of overseas students. Sr Barbara McDonough was concerned about the emotional as well as the financial stress on her overseas students. She knew that the Chinese in Indonesia were resented because of their role in trade and accumulation of wealth, and were now ‘very unsure of their day-to-day safety’. At this time she informed the staff:

The Indonesian Crisis is having significant effects on our school community. Many of the students are constantly anxious about the safety of their families, the majority of whom are Chinese and live in Jakarta.<sup>101</sup>

The overseas students were offered counselling and their welfare was closely monitored. Enrolments of overseas students were significantly lower in 1999. Sr Barbara McDonough recalled that by the enrolment period for 2000 (the second half of 1999), numbers of FFPOS had dropped considerably. She could not accept that the reason was over-charging by Holy Cross College. She knew that some of the other schools accepting overseas students charged much more and that the College was known for being reasonably priced, as well as for providing a good education.<sup>102</sup> Ironically, the College was making news for its academic results. In 1998, the College dux, Teodora Todorava won the NSW Premier’s Award for all round excellence, having reached the merit list in

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<sup>100</sup> HCC staff bulletin, no. 19, 24 June 1996, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>101</sup> HCC staff bulletin, No.14, 18 May 1998, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>102</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

every subject. She had achieved a University Admissions Index of 99.8, yet had come with her mother from Bulgaria and entered Year 11 as an overseas student, with limited English language skills. In that same cohort, out of the fifty-nine students which sat for the HSC, Holy Cross students were in the top ten per cent of the State of NSW in twenty-two different courses. One of these, Yuliana Budiharjo, gained first place in the State in Indonesian 3unit and received a NSW Premier's Certificate.<sup>103</sup>

### **Closure becomes inevitable**

The low enrolment of overseas students in the 1999 enrolment period coincided with the small Year 7 group of 1996 entering Year 11; approximately forty of this cohort were going into Year 11. When Sr Barbara McDonough filled out the statistical returns, on which the CEO based their plans for the following year, the College was about eighty girls down on the previous year's enrolments, and the CEO regional director, Vicki Tanzer informed Sr Barbara 'the writing was on the wall'. On hearing these words, Sr Barbara's thoughts were centred on the students; they were always her first priority. She has commented that 'logically I could see what they were talking about, but in my heart I couldn't because [...] there was nowhere else for them to go, [that is] the girls that needed real personal attention; we had a lot then'.<sup>104</sup>

The year 2000 was celebrated for a significant anniversary of Catholic education in Australia. It was 180 years since the first Catholic school in Australia was founded, at Parramatta. This had been a tiny one-room school established by lay man John Morley in 1820. On the feast day of St Patrick, 17 March 2000, Catholic students and their teachers, some 93,742 persons, gathered at Stadium Australia to celebrate Catholic education. The theme was 'Jesus Christ – Yesterday, Today, Forever'. Each school was invited to make a banner, and the banner for Holy Cross College measured 5 metres x 1 metres. Peta de Michele, school captain of Holy Cross College and recipient of an Archbishop of Sydney Award, was one of the banner holders. She later wrote: 'I had never been more proud of my school and I wanted everyone to look at the Holy Cross College banner and take note of the design, which I believed epitomised our school and its values.'<sup>105</sup>

The mid-1990s prospectus which Holy Cross College staff had helped design with such

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<sup>103</sup> 'HCC News', March 1999, SC 31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>104</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>105</sup> *About Catholic Schools*, term 2, June 2000, Jubilee 2000 special souvenir edition, PA.



dedication and talent was entitled 'The Best Kept Secret in the East'. Ironically it proved so. The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (SACS) Board considered the future of Holy Cross College at its meeting on 22 March 2000 and it was decided that Holy Cross College would not accept students into Year 7 from 2001.<sup>106</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough had already been given the news and recalled trying 'all sorts of gymnastics with the timetable'. She had demonstrated how the school could be kept operating a little longer, but the final decision had been made by the SACS Board. This decision was made known to the school community on 10 April 2000. The announcement of the closure was made at an assembly of the students in the parish hall at which the girls were given a letter to take home to their parents.<sup>107</sup> School captain Peta de Michele expressed so succinctly the effect this announcement must have had on all assembled when she wrote: 'The security and stability offered by Holy Cross was established over a ninety-year period. Yet after ten minutes the safety once known was shattered'.<sup>108</sup>

A letter from the Holy Cross College Parents' Committee was received by the SACS Board on 31 May 2000 and tabled at its meeting the same day. The letter referred to two meetings of parents and students and the fact that 'an overwhelming majority' was opposed to the Board's decision of 22 March and intended to put in place marketing strategies and draw on community support. The Parents' Committee was particularly resentful of the manner in which the decision had been notified to the parents, namely via a letter handed to students to deliver rather than one mailed to parents.<sup>109</sup> The parents also resented the use of the term 'rationalisation' which had been used by the SACS Board in their letter to parents. The Parents' Committee asserted that 'rationalisation' was a 'business term ... commonly applied to commercial entities which have failed to produce monetary results after exhaustive attempts have been made to rectify non-profitability'. Their letter expressed anger that a situation of non-profitability had been allowed to continue at Holy Cross College for some years, without the knowledge of the wider school community. They demanded to be shown the financial statements for the school for the last five years and to be told the students numbers which were 'needed to reverse

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<sup>106</sup> Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board, Bulletin 57, 10 April 2000, CEOSA.

<sup>107</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, interview by the author, 20 June 2007.

<sup>108</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra Roll Call 2000* (Yearbook), n.p.

<sup>109</sup> This is the letter addressed to 'Dear Students, Parents and Staff of Holy Cross College, dated 10 April 2000 and signed by Sr Caroline Ryan, the congregational leader of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta. Under the circumstances it would seem vital that the news be made public to all the parties concerned at exactly the same time. See also SACS Board, Bulletin 57b and 57c, SC31/4, CEOSA.

the trend of the past years' as well as the 'short-term financial support with fixed outgoings'. The letter stated that parents and the Woollahra/Waverley community would 'be able to provide some monetary assistance'.<sup>110</sup>

The viability of Holy Cross College through the 1990s had benefited from the additional students resulting from the closure of St Patrick's Church Hill in 1990 and the acceptance of full-fee paying overseas students. Yet the school had really been living on borrowed time through the decade. Enrolments had fallen to 312 in 2000. This comprised 259 girls from local parishes and fifty-three FFPOS, a significant drop from ninety-three FFPOS at Holy Cross College the previous year. Possibly of even more significance to those making the ultimate decision on closure, was the fact that only fifty-nine per cent of students attending the College in 2000 were Catholic.<sup>111</sup> The Parents' Committee themselves stressed the 'truly multi-cultural' nature of the school and its operation in a 'truly Christian spirit'. Their final point was that a 'school such as this ought to be a showcase for what Catholic education and spirit is all about rather than closing it down for reasons of non-profitability'.<sup>112</sup>

It was initially thought Holy Cross College would operate several years longer but this was not to be the case. Parents tended to immediately look somewhere else for a place for their daughter, where they could be confident she would be able to complete her secondary education. The College promised that the 2000 Year 11 girls would complete their HSC in 2001 at the College, and would be fully supported to do so. In 2001, the total enrolment was ninety, with about twenty each in Year 8 and Year 10 and about forty in Year 12. There was no Year 9, and no intake for Years 7 and 11, as had been decided by the SACS Board in June 2000.

Between 1980 and 2001 the Archdiocese of Sydney closed ten secondary schools. Apart from Holy Cross Woollahra, two others were in the immediate area: O'Sullivan Catholic High School, Bondi Beach (a boy's school) and Brigidine College (for girls) Maroubra

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<sup>110</sup> Holy Cross College Edgecliff [*sic*] Parents' Committee to Br Kelvin Canavan, received 31 May 2000, CEOSA.

<sup>111</sup> SAGS Board, 'Holy Cross College, Woollahra', Bulletin 57, 10 April 2000. This bulletin was published the same day the Board's decision not to accept year 7 students in 2001 was made public and contained the signatures of Sr Caroline Ryan, congregational leader of the Sisters of Mercy (Parramatta) and Br Kelvin Canavan fms, Director of Schools, Sydney Archdiocese, SC31/4, CEOSA.

<sup>112</sup> Holy Cross College Edgecliff [*sic*] Parent's Committee to Brother Kelvin Canavan, received 31 May 2000, CEOSA.

Junction, both closed in 1988. Four inner city and inner west schools closed were: Christian Brothers' High School, Balmain (1990); St Patrick's High School, Church Hill (1990); St Thomas' Boys High School, Lewisham (1997); Benedict Community School, Lewisham (1997). Nazareth Senior College at Bankstown and De La Salle College at Kingsgrove were closed in 1999.<sup>113</sup>

The 2001 enrolment statistics were the final blow and Holy Cross College, Woollahra closed at the end of the 2001 school year.<sup>114</sup> A letter from the CEO, signed by its director, Br Kelvin Canavan, was succinct in announcing the end: 'As a regional systemic school, Holy Cross provided a quality education for all who knocked on its door. Significant demographic changes have indeed made this the end of an era.'<sup>115</sup>

It was decided that it was inappropriate for the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to borrow heavily to become a developer of the Edgecliff Road site itself and consequently, tenders were called for the 4000 sq. metre site. A full page colour advertisement appeared in the *Wentworth Courier* on 28 March 2001. The advertisement featured the beautiful views from the top verandah, from which the students and staff had watched, among other things, the closing of the arches of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932, the two 'Queens' sail into Sydney Harbour to collect Australian troops destined for the Middle East, and from where Mother M. Thecla Kerwick had watched the attack of the Japanese midget submarines. Potential uses for the site were listed as: a school; nursing home; hotel; motel; strata title apartments (re-zoning required). The closing date for tenders was 11 May and on 14 May 2001 the winning tender was announced; it was from a consortium headed by Charles Scarf snr, a member of a prominent Eastern Suburbs Catholic family. Its offer of \$8.18m was not the highest bid. The congregation was mindful of the closeness of the school to the parish buildings, as well as the density of the immediate area, and wanted to keep the integrity of the parish complex as far as possible. The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy appraised the tenders on the intended use of the site. Charles Scarf snr had a dream of continuing education with a Christian dimension on the site, a major factor in his tender being the winning bid.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Luttrell and Lourey, *St Mary's to St Catherine's*, p. xiii.

<sup>114</sup> 'Decisions of the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board 1987-200, SACS Board, November 2005, p. 16, CEOSA.

<sup>115</sup> Holy Cross College archives, Box 5.3, letter dated 15 September 2001, PA.

<sup>116</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 'Report to Congregation re Closure of Holy Cross College – 2001', undated and unpublished document, PA.

### **Farewell to Holy Cross College**

The last remaining Years 8 and 10 students left the College on 7 December 2001 after a farewell Mass. Year 12 had had their own farewell Mass in September before beginning the HSC. On 16 September 2001, Holy Cross Day was celebrated with a farewell Mass and reunion for past students, staff and parents and friends, with over 800 ex-students attending. In her 'Words of Welcome' address, Sue Coorey, President of the Holy Cross College Ex-students Association, mentioned the Archbishop James Carroll Scholarship which had been set up after his death in recognition of the unfaltering support and interest the 'Doc' had shown to the College and the Primary School and for which between \$2000 and \$3000 had been raised annually. She expressed a hope that they could continue with their annual reunion and to raise money which the Sisters of Mercy could use in the many areas in which they worked, in Australia, as well as in East Timor, Sudan and Cambodia to name some overseas Mercy missions.<sup>117</sup>

Initially, Waverley Municipal Library, Bondi Junction accepted archival material from the College, including the many photos relating to the College taken over the last ten to fifteen years, and the banner used in the Jubilee 2000 celebration, as well as the banner featuring the closed gates, used at the final Mass.<sup>118</sup> All records of staff and students and financial records prior to 1995 were destroyed in a secure manner. All student and financial records from 1995 were taken to the CEO Sydney Archives, together with paper records of people and events over the years. Some items went to the Congregational Archives at Parramatta. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington and Marist College, Pagewood received furniture and equipment, as did the Good Samaritan College, Hinchinbrook, a developing school which had opened in 1999. School uniforms with the College crest went to East Timor. Christian Brothers, Burwood received junior science equipment. The school honour boards were set up in the side chapel of Holy Cross Church. The shrine of Our Lady of Mercy, donated by Monsignor Collender all those years ago, was taken to *Marymount*, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy Retreat Centre at Castle Hill.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Sue Coorey, Holy Cross College, Woollahra, final Mass, Holy Cross Parish Church, 16 September 2000, in the author's possession. Sue Coorey's mother, Kathleen Trefle-Hidden was the first president of the HCC Ex-student's Association when it was established in 1931.

<sup>118</sup> This collection has subsequently been transferred to Woollahra Local Studies Collection.

<sup>119</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 'Report to Congregation'.

Sr Caroline Ryan, herself an ex-student and former staff member including being middle school principal 1983-1988, must have felt tremendous sadness as she stood to speak at the farewell Mass as the congregational leader of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. Her words are remarkable for their sense of a beginning rather than an ending. She said:

In the Christian tradition, the act of remembering enables us to continue to be charged and changed by the life enhancing experiences of our past. If our own experiences at Holy Cross College, however long ago, have been life-enhancing in relation to our faith in the God of Mercy, our self-understanding, our learning and achievements, our friendships, our growth in awareness of the needs of others, our confidence to engage the future – and so on, then there is a real sense in which their meaning is not diminished by the closure of the school.<sup>120</sup>

Sr Barbara McDonough's words, spoken at the 2000 Awards and Presentation night, seem a fitting ending to the story of this educational institution which had helped form thousands of young minds from 1908-2000, and had been the centre of a school community, which physically represented and spiritually reinforced the values and beliefs of the founding pioneer sisters:

As we look back over the 92 years of our school's existence, we find ourselves asking some questions: How did Holy Cross develop this wonderful spirit? How did it all begin? Who lit the flame that has burned so strongly over the years in the hearts of our students, who have then passed it on to others, as they journeyed through life?<sup>121</sup>

This thesis has been endeavouring to contribute to the answering of these questions.

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<sup>120</sup> Sr Caroline Ryan, Holy Cross College, Woollahra final Mass, Holy Cross Parish Church, 16 September 2000, in the author's possession.

<sup>121</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 2000 Holy Cross College awards and presentation night speech, PA.

## CHAPTER 9

### MUSIC AT HOLY CROSS COLLEGE

**‘Music is an expression of deep-seated instincts in human nature [appealing] to the feelings and emotions but it has its intellectual side also.’** (*Holy Cross College Woollahra*, 1943, p. 20)

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy quickly gained a well-earned reputation for excellence in the field of music education, and by the first decade of the twentieth century, Parramatta was designated ‘the home of music in New South Wales’.<sup>1</sup> From the establishment of the congregation in 1888, the sisters were involved in the teaching of music in their schools as well as in the wider community. Fees from instrumental music pupils were to be a main source of income for the Parramatta community and its branch houses as they built up enrolments; they were the most important means of reduction of debt. MacGinley, commenting on the Lismore Convent of the Presentation Sisters, in her history of the Presentation Sisters in Australia has written: ‘as elsewhere in Australian convents, long hours of music teaching provided the staple income’.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Early music teachers at Parramatta**

Holy Cross College drew upon and, increasingly, became part of and contributed significantly to, the strong tradition of music of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. It is not possible to give an account of music at Holy Cross without placing it within this main tradition, including the network of music schools established at Parramatta, Golden Grove, Holy Cross, Ryde, Enmore and Epping.

It is recorded that ‘numbered among the Parramatta pioneer sisters were women of exceptional musical talent and teaching ability in the field of music’. Key music teachers in the early days were: Sr M. Stanislaus White (professed 1892); Sr M. Patrick Mines (professed 1892); Sr M. Cecelia Mackin (professed 1902); and Sr M. Aquin King (professed 1902).<sup>3</sup>

Sr M. Stanislaus (Cis) White was born in Callan, Ireland, and had become the organist at

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> MacGinley, *Roads to Sion*, p. 390.

<sup>3</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 66.

the Augustinian Friary there in her childhood. Entering the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta, in 1890, aged eighteen years, she officiated in the 'Violin Studio', which was located in the main part of Our Lady of Mercy's High School (later to be known as Our Lady of Mercy College).<sup>4</sup> An early congregational chronicler noted that Sr M. Stanislaus was regarded as one of the best teachers of violin in the colony, 'gifted as she was with the keen ear so essential to a teacher of violin'.<sup>5</sup> Early in her violin teaching career, Sr M. Stanislaus had the opportunity to study under the renowned Rivers Allport, a teacher from the Royal Academy of Music in London, when he was visiting Sydney.<sup>6</sup>

One of the best known of the early music teachers was Sr M. Patrick Mines, who had been educated at St Mary's High School, Callan. She taught music in one of the cottages adjacent to the convent-school complex at Parramatta which the sisters had acquired; it became known as 'the Academy'. Sr M. Cecilia Mackin, before entering the order had been the first to win the All-Ireland prize for piano-playing and was also an accomplished harpist. Tragically, she died young, in 1903. The tuition of such women was to inform those women who subsequently served as music teachers at Holy Cross College.

Sr M. Aquin King was among those Sisters of Mercy who established their reputation at Golden Grove, Newtown, before moving on to Holy Cross. As Teresa King, she had entered Parramatta Convent in 1901 aged 15 years, and was professed in 1902. She went on to establish a strong school of violin at Golden Grove, Newtown, which had a parochial school, St Kieran's, and a superior high school, Mount St Mary's. A Golden Grove student of the early 1920s, later a member of the Parramatta congregation, wrote: 'every girl in that school learnt music, either piano or violin; the pupils flocked from near and far so widespread was its fame'.<sup>7</sup> Sr M. Aquin King was remembered for her patience with the children and the fact that she used her senior students to help with the tuition of the younger pupils. It was said she had the ability to get the young musicians to put a great deal of effort into their work.<sup>8</sup>

At the First Australasian Catholic Congress of 1900, the Sisters of Charity proclaimed

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<sup>4</sup> Sophie McGrath, 'Notes on Music', unpublished collection, PA, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Donnelly, 'The First Six Years', p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Sr M. Aidan Codd's notes, PA, cited in McGrath, *These Women?* p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Sr M Immaculata Hegarty to Sr Ellen Conway, 4 October 1984, PA.

<sup>8</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 7. Sr M. Aquin King lived to almost 100 years so there were many, many students grateful for that devotion.

that ‘the advantages to be gained by placing music on the same footing as the other branches of education must be apparent to all’. They argued that it was unsurpassed as a ‘form of innocent recreation’ and induced children to remain at home protected from ‘the temptations which would otherwise assail them when removed from the supervision of their parents’.<sup>9</sup> At the 1911 Catholic Educational Conference the eighth resolution emerging from the debates on secondary education read: ‘That too much time should not be devoted to music and preparation for music examinations, as thereby the general education of the child may suffer.’ This resolution passed despite the emotionally charged assertion of Rev. Mother Stanislaus of the Lismore Presentation Convent that ‘music was elevating and ennobling’; she thought they should aim at a ‘first-class Catholic examining board of their own in Australia’.<sup>10</sup> Her vision would be realised with the establishment of the Australian Music Examinations Board (hereafter AMEB) in 1918. The accent on instrumental music teaching in Catholic schools was clearly a cause of controversy. Many Holy Cross students, especially in the senior years, would have been aware of the tensions that arose, especially around examination time, between class room teachers and instrumental music teachers.

It was recorded by Sr M. Aidan Codd that Mother M. Clare Dunphy was anxious for the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to receive the best tuition available to prepare them for their work as teachers of music, singing and elocution. Madame Sussmilch of Rosebank College and Madame Kavanagh from the Garcia School of Music were early ‘outside’ teachers who tutored the Parramatta sisters. In 1909, Sr M. Agnes Maclean, a renowned Sister of Mercy teacher of singing from New Zealand was invited to spend a year at Parramatta to train the sisters and pupils.<sup>11</sup> This tradition of ongoing tuition continued with, for example, Sr M. Theophane Collins and Sr M. Christina Creede taking cello lessons from Cedric Aston at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music and harp lessons from Gaetano Butta, an accomplished Sydney harpist.<sup>12</sup>

### **A music examination framework is established in NSW**

The NSW State Conservatorium of Music was established by NSW’s first Labor State

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<sup>9</sup> Sisters of Charity, ‘Progress of Music in the Schools’, *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Conference*, pp. 46-448.

<sup>10</sup> Catholic Educational Conference, 1911, *Resolutions and Proceedings*, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 82 and p. 93. Cedric Aston became the conductor of the OLMC Epping orchestra about 1960, McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 80.



Government, led by Premier Holman, in stages between 1912 and 1915, with the Belgian conductor, Henri Verbrugghan as its first director.<sup>13</sup> The 'Con' would set up its own system of local examinations for music practice and theory, but formal public music education in NSW had really begun some twenty years before, when Ethel Charlotte Pedley visited London in 1896 with Emmeline Mary Woolley and had been able to persuade the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music (Trinity College) to extend their system of local examinations to the Australian colonies. Ethel was appointed the Associated Board's sole representative in NSW and the Board sent out its first examiner from London in 1897.<sup>14</sup>

Emmeline Woolley, whose father, the Rev. John Woolley, was the first principal of the University of Sydney and classics professor (1852-1866), spent two years studying the pianoforte in Florence and after five years absence overseas returned to Sydney and taught music; she disliked public appearances. Ethel and Emmeline formed the St Cecelia Choir for female voices in 1884. An Anglican, Emmeline was the organist at St John's Anglican Church, Darlinghurst. She died in 1908, the year Holy Cross College was established.<sup>15</sup> As will be seen, a number of music students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, including Holy Cross College students, were to benefit from the E.M. Woolley scholarship set up in her honour.

There was a hierarchy of music awards. At the lowest level were the local school examinations conducted under the auspices of the NSW State Conservatorium, using exams and examiners provided by the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB). Near the top end of the scale were the examinations conducted by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music of London (under the patronage of the British Monarch). The Associated Board sent its own examiners out from England, who returned to the 'mother country' each year. Prospective candidates were told the 'the scope and standard of the Examinations are similar in regard to musical education to those of the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations in connection with

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<sup>13</sup> For an excellent account of the 'Con's' establishment see Diane Collins, *Sounds From the Stables: The Story of Sydney's Conservatorium*, Allen and Unwin, 2001, pp. 1-21.

<sup>14</sup> M. Norst, 'Pedley, Ethel Charlotte (1859-1898)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 11, MUP, 1988, pp.193-194. Ethel Pedley was the author of the Australian children's classic, *Dot and the Kangaroo*.

<sup>15</sup> Martha Rutledge, 'Woolley, Emmeline Mary Dogherty (1843-1908)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 12, MUP, 1990, p. 572.

general education'.<sup>16</sup> The ultimate prize was a State medal and/or an exhibition to Trinity College, London. Gold and Silver medals were awarded by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, London, to the candidates who obtained the highest and second highest Honours marks in each grade.<sup>17</sup> Only the best students were entered for the more prestigious examinations; this could reflect the examination fees charged by the respective institutions, with the London based examinations bodies being the most expensive.

### **Holy Cross music results in the 1920s and 1930s**

According to the Holy Cross convent chronicler, the first permanent principal of Holy Cross College, Sr M. de Chantal McCrone, used to say that it was music that had made Parramatta known in the beginning and that it was music that was going to make Holy Cross known.<sup>18</sup> An examination of the Holy Cross convent accounts in the early years show just how important music fees were to the community income. The financial statement for 1909, the first full operating year of Holy Cross High School, shows receipts of £58 from high school fees and £62 from music fees. By 1916, the music fees were contributing £142, compared with £302 collected from high school fees.<sup>19</sup> The Holy Cross convent chronicler recorded that 'music was from the very first days an important study at Holy Cross. Many talented girls were enrolled and it was necessary to provide an additional teacher.' In 1911, Sr M. Bernadette Murray arrived to assist the first music teacher, Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien.<sup>20</sup>

Lyle and Renie Jenkins were among the very early music pupils of the Holy Cross music centre. They were sisters who lived almost opposite the convent and were Anglicans, as mentioned previously. In 1916 Lyle Jenkins became the first Holy Cross High School pupil to sit the Leaving Certificate and went on to matriculate in 1917, becoming in 1922, the first Holy Cross High School (College) alumnus to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Sydney. According to the Holy Cross convent chronicler, Renie used to arrive for her music lesson at 8.00 a.m. and announce her presence by performing *Too Much Mustard*, a 'pianoforte arrangement decorated with a hideous coloured picture-

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<sup>16</sup> Advertisement placed in *FJ*, 13 January 1921, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> See *FJ*, 14 December 1922, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Holy Cross Convent Woollahra Account Book 1908-1956, PA.

<sup>20</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 29.

cover and involving much more hideous sounds'. However 'more serious music began as soon as Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien appeared'.<sup>21</sup> No doubt it was the availability of music tuition which made this relatively new school attractive to the Anglican parents of the Jenkins sisters.

The first outstanding music student of Holy Cross was Patricia O'Keefe who, reputedly, was awarded the E.M. Woolley Scholarship in 1920. The E.M. Woolley Scholarship for pianoforte was valued at £75 per annum for three years. This prestigious scholarship was open for competition in NSW to female students under the age of twenty-one years and awarded annually to the top student of piano in the state. To appreciate the worth of the Woolley Scholarship, it may be pointed out that in 1921, three rooms could be furnished with solid oak furniture for that same amount of £75.<sup>22</sup> The following year Patricia gained the coveted Licentiate of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music (L.A.B.); this was the highest music qualification obtainable at that time in Australia at the time and enabled the holder to teach music.<sup>23</sup> Patricia actually completed her studies at Golden Grove, as she had followed Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien from Holy Cross to Golden Grove, when in mid-1921 Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien replaced Sr M. Joseph Tier who came to Holy Cross as convent superior as well as music teacher. Mt St Mary's Convent, Golden Grove was in Forbes Street, near the University of Sydney, next to the tramline from Railway Square, and within walking distance of the Redfern train station. The ease of access by public transport no doubt helped to promote the growth of the Golden Grove music centre.

In the early 1950s Sr M. de Lellis Harrison (Iris) taught piano and violin at Holy Cross College. She had gone to Golden Grove in 1925 to learn the violin and recalled the music staff then consisted of Sr M. Aquin King (violin), Sr M. Canice Mulroney, Sr M. Bernadette Murray, Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien and Sr M. Borromeo Favell (piano). She also remembered there were at least sixty music pupils at that time at Golden Grove and about one-half of them were non-Catholic, many coming from the southern suburbs of

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<sup>21</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Advertisement in *FJ*, 17 November 1921, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Details on Patricia O'Keefe taken from the 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 30. It has not been verified she was awarded the E.M. Woolley Scholarship. It was reported she gained a High Distinction pass in violin as a student of the Sisters of Mercy, Holy Cross Convent, Woollahra in 1920, *FJ*, 20 January 1920, p. 27.

Sydney.<sup>24</sup> Phyllis McDonald was an eminently successful Mt St Mary's Golden Grove student who completed her education there. She was a violinist who was awarded a three year scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, London.<sup>25</sup> Phyllis had won a gold medal in Advanced grade violin as well as the Royal Academy of Music scholarship in 1921.<sup>26</sup> The year before, she had won a gold medal from Trinity College, London for the highest honours marks for Intermediate grade violin.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1920s, convent schools began to realise the valuable publicity to be gained from feature articles and photographs of successful students displayed in the Catholic newspapers, and both country and city schools published details of their music and academic successes. In January 1924, the *Catholic Press* had a large banner headline with the words 'Conservatorium Examinations: Triumph of Catholic Schools'. The article beneath went on to explain that out of the 5,160 candidates, twenty-two won first place in their grade at the recent state-wide examinations of the Conservatorium of Music, and of these twenty-two, fifteen had received their music tuition in Catholic schools. Two of these fifteen were pupils of Holy Cross Convent. These were Kathleen Logue, top student of Grade IV violin and Winnie Walls, top student of Grade V violin.<sup>28</sup> Kathleen Logue had enrolled at Holy Cross High School in February 1923, aged thirteen years. Before enrolling, Kathleen had been an external music pupil of Holy Cross Convent in 1922, when she was awarded honours for Grade V violin.<sup>29</sup> For reasons unknown, Kathleen transferred to Our Lady of Mercy's College, Parramatta, where she sat for the Intermediate Certificate in 1925, and went on to become one of their illustrious musicians. It is possible she was offered a boarding bursary.

Doreen Gilbert, who spent ten years as a music student at Holy Cross, was another talented musician and a contemporary of Kathleen Logue; she was enrolled, aged seven years, on 1 April 1914.<sup>30</sup> After obtaining the Qualifying Certificate, she left school but returned for music lessons from Sr M. Bernadette Murray and Sr M. Helena Phillips. Both

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<sup>24</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p.82.

<sup>25</sup> Her farewell concert at the Conservatorium 'was crowded with a most enthusiastic audience' and she was laden with a 'carload of flowers and many boxes of chocolates' after her first number. The concert had been arranged by Mrs J. Barlow, the President of the Catholic Women's Association. *FJ*, 2 March 1922.

<sup>26</sup> *FJ*, 24 November 1921, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> *FJ*, 23 December 1920, p. 38.

<sup>28</sup> *CP*, 10 January 1924, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> *CP*, 30 November 1922, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Admission rolls for Holy Cross High School, 1910- 1940, PA.

of these had earned reputations as highly successful music teachers at Golden Grove and Enmore before coming to Holy Cross. In October 1924, Doreen Gilbert won the prestigious Trinity College of London Medal for Senior grade piano. Sr M. Helena Phillips (Irene) was an ex-student of OLMC Parramatta and had gained her L.A.B. in violin and piano in 1906, entering the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1917. She taught at Golden Grove and Enmore as well as Holy Cross and her final appointment, in the 1950s, was at Holy Cross College.

As mentioned previously, Sr M. Joseph Tier took Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien's place at Holy Cross. She was an outstanding teacher of piano who had gained notable successes at St Keiran's parish school and then at Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove, before being appointed the superior of Holy Cross convent in June 1921, replacing Sr M. Bernard Trainer, who had been transferred to St Michael's orphanage at Baulkham Hills. A number of Sr M. Joseph's Golden Grove piano and singing students followed her to Holy Cross. Among them were Eileen Barry, Mary Waring, Katie Hayes and the 'renowned singers' Lena and Dorrie (Dot) Cosgrove, Agnes Langborne and Mary Lahiff.<sup>31</sup> Agnes had been awarded a pass in Advanced grade singing as a student at St Keiran's parochial school, Golden Grove in 1920.<sup>32</sup>

The Holy Cross music student with the highest public profile in the mid-1920s, and a music pupil of Sr M. Joseph Tier, was Phyllis Walls. It was said that she played Beethoven's Sonata as a five-year old. Her sister Winifred (Winnie) was an accomplished violinist, but piano was Phyllis's forte. Phyllis, who had been born in Coonamble, had enrolled at Holy Cross High School in October 1918, aged ten years. Winnie, four years younger, enrolled at the same time. In 1924, aged sixteen years, Phyllis Walls won the E.M. Woolley Scholarship which she took up in 1925 at the Royal College of Music, London. Before her departure for London, Phyllis was summoned to play at Government House, Sydney for Lady de Chair, the wife of the NSW State Governor. Phyllis Walls was described as 'extraordinarily gifted' and it was noted that 'her natural, girlish, winsome manner, unspoiled by her genius, and so far from any affectation, will be one of her greatest assets'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 31.

<sup>32</sup> *FJ*, 13 Jan 1921, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> *FJ*, 2 April 1925, p. 19.

A benefit concert for Phyllis, held at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in March 1925, just before she left for London, was a gala occasion, attended by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Ald. P. V. Stokes. In his speech Ald. Stokes noted that he had motored from Queanbeyan (nearly 200 miles) to attend the concert. Attendees at the concert, and readers of the press article reporting it, were left in no doubt as to the role Holy Cross College had played in the success of this gifted young lady. The school colours of Holy Cross (dark blue and white) were featured in the flowers and decorations on the stage and the organising committee, led by Mrs J. L. Trefle with Mrs John Barlow (of the Catholic Women's Association) as treasurer, wore armbands of blue and white. The pupils of Holy Cross played a predominant role in the musical items, both orchestral and choral, and sold the souvenir programmes and baskets of sweets during the interval. Most significantly of all, no one was left wondering who nurtured this wonderful talent as the *Freeman's Journal* recorded that 'keen interest centred around the fact that the little pianiste [*sic*] had been the pupil of Sr Mary Joseph (Tier) of Holy Cross and many were the eulogiums passed upon the teaching'.<sup>34</sup>

The following year, a testimonial cabaret was held at the *Casino* ballroom at Bondi Beach, in aid of Phyllis Walls, who had begun her studies at the Royal College of Music, London, in September 1925 under Professor Herbert Fryer.<sup>35</sup> The president of the organising committee was Miss Cecilia Walsh, the Lady Mayoress, a cousin of the Lord Mayor and a Catholic.<sup>36</sup> Evidently, Phyllis had powerful friends in high places who were determined she would be able to take up and continue her music studies in London. It was reported that she gained a further scholarship to continue her studies at the Royal College of Music London, where she was tutored in both the piano and cello.<sup>37</sup> It is not known if Phyllis returned to Australia. Certainly there is no record that she returned to her alma mater and in that respect she differed remarkably from other talented musicians from Holy Cross who maintained contact with their former teachers, played in the school orchestra, performed as accompanists at school functions, and helped raise money for the sisters.

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<sup>34</sup> *FJ*, 2 April 1925, p. 19. It was highly unusual for a Religious sister to be praised individually in such a public manner as Sr M Joseph Tier was in this article. Mrs Trefle was the mother of one of the first students of Holy Cross College, Kathleen, a foundation member of the Holy Cross College Ex-students union and cousin of Sr M. de Chantal McCrone.

<sup>35</sup> *FJ*, 29 September 1927, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> *FJ*, 9 December 1926, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> *FJ*, 15 February 1928, p. 20.

One of those playing at the Conservatorium benefit concert in 1925 for Phyllis Walls was Eileen Barry (Mrs Taranto), a Holy Cross College ex-student, a State medallist, and a former student of Sr M. Joseph Tier. In 1920, while a student at Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove, Eileen had been awarded a medal for the honours pass she gained in the Intermediate grade piano examinations held by Trinity College, London. In 1922, aged fifteen years, Eileen gained honours for the Intermediate grade piano exam held by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music; in doing so she won the State Medal and the Mr C.J. Kelly Exhibition valued at £10.<sup>38</sup> Eileen's claim that she was the first State silver medallist at Holy Cross College appears to be correct and she would be the first to acknowledge Sr M. Joseph Tier's role in her success.<sup>39</sup> It is a fact that Eileen 'voted with her feet'. She recalled that she had been learning music with Sr M. Joseph Tier at Mt St Mary's High School, Golden Grove; at the time the family were living in the area. When the family moved to the Bondi area, she was enrolled at Holy Cross High School, Woollahra, on 4 March 1921, but her mother wanted her to continue her music studies with Sr M. Joseph Tier at Golden Grove, which she must have done until Sr M. Joseph Tier was transferred to Holy Cross in June 1921. Eileen Barry appears in the list of 1921 music results for the Sisters of Mercy, Golden Grove.<sup>40</sup> In the course of an interview she recalled that when she found to her great surprise that her beloved teacher had been transferred to Holy Cross College, she stayed at Golden Grove one day only in the new term.<sup>41</sup>

Music was Eileen's 'centre of life'. She had received tuition in piano, violin, cello and singing, finally settling for piano and singing. She did not sit for the Intermediate Certificate, but stayed at Holy Cross until she was about eighteen years old, leaving in 1924.<sup>42</sup> Clearly her family did not consider any academic qualifications necessary for Eileen, who earned an income as a teacher of music until her marriage about ten years after she left school. She kept her connection with the school and Sr M. Joseph Tier, by teaching music at Holy Cross for about twelve months and also performing in a group

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<sup>38</sup> *CP*, 30 November 1922, p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by the author, 28 April 2006. The exhibition money was spent on a violin which Eileen eventually gave to Holy Cross College. Gold and Silver medals were awarded by the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of music and the Royal college of Music, London, to the candidates who obtained the highest and second highest Honours marks in each grade, see *FJ*, 14 December 1922, p. 43. Eileen, the oldest (known) ex-student of Holy Cross College, died on 12 July 2008, aged 101 years.

<sup>40</sup> *FJ*, 17 November 1921, p.10.

<sup>41</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by Sr Cecily Gaudry, 17 August, 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by Sr Cecily Gaudry, 17 August, 2000.

called 'The Quavers' which Sr M Joseph Tier had formed to raise money for worthy causes. Two of the other performers in 'The Quavers', were Dot and Lena Cosgrove who learnt music at Holy Cross Convent but did not attend school there. Eileen remembers teaching Eunice Gardiner during that time. One of her strong memories is Sr M. Helena Phillips playing jazz for the school reunion dances.<sup>43</sup>

Another Golden Grove music student who appears to have followed Sr M. Joseph to Holy Cross in 1921 was Eileen's best friend, Mary Waring. Mary was another talented product of the Golden Grove Convent music centre. In 1920 as a student of Mt St Mary's High School, she gained honours from Trinity College in Junior grade piano and in 1921 she gained passes in the Higher Division piano and Rudiments of Music examinations set by the Associated Board.<sup>44</sup> Mary enrolled at Holy Cross High School on 30 January 1922. Her family owned a newsagency at Ashfield, where they lived on Milton Street. Mary had a long journey on train and tram to Bondi Junction and it can be assumed she followed her music teacher, Sr M. Joseph, to Holy Cross. Eileen used to spend weekends with Mary's family, the only outing she seems to have made on her own, apart from travelling into the city on a Saturday morning for art lessons. Eileen lived a comfortable existence within a contained and controlled world, typical of middle class Catholic homes of that time.<sup>45</sup>

In the early decades of Holy Cross College, while music honours were highly valued, many of its music pupils rarely seemed to be in a hurry to accumulate academic honours. Using the Qualifying Certificate (end of primary school) results for the end of 1920 as an example, it was many years later before some of the best music pupils finally completed the Intermediate Certificate, the end of secondary schooling for almost all pupils at that time. Obviously the hours of practice required for success in the music field were given precedence over academic studies. Mary Waring gained the IC in 1924 when she would have been about eighteen years old and Celia Whealey did not sit the IC until 1925. As mentioned previously, Eileen Barry didn't sit for the IC. This is at a time when the IC syllabus could be covered in a minimum of two years, but more likely in three. The careers of these girls would appear to illustrate the transition in the early twentieth

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<sup>43</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by the author, 28 April, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> *FJ*, 24 November 1921, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> Eileen Taranto (nee Barry), interview by the author, 28 April 2006.



century of the education of middle class girls in Australia from an accomplishment focus to an examination focus.

Eunice Gardiner, a contemporary of Eileen Barry at Holy Cross High School, was destined to become the school's best-known and internationally lauded musician. Eunice Gardiner, aged five years, had been enrolled at the College in October 1923. Her mother was a music teacher who had started teaching her daughter at the very young age of three or four years. Sr M. Joseph Tier began her tuition of Eunice when she was about five or six years and moulded her talent for some ten years. Eunice had been a rising star for some years prior to her winning the E.M. Woolley Scholarship. In 1929 she was a State medallist gaining honours in Intermediate grade piano at the Associated Board of the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music examinations, and from the State Conservatorium of Music she won a £10 exhibition for the highest marks in NSW in Grade 1V piano. In October of the same year she had gained Honours and a medal for Preparatory violin.<sup>46</sup> In May 1931 she was a Trinity College of Music, London State Medallist for junior grade piano. From the Associated Board of the London Royal Colleges, she won a silver medal for the second highest Honours marks (149) in Final grade pianoforte and free entry to the Licentiate of the Associated Board.<sup>47</sup> Having gone as far as she could with the piano, Eunice took up the violin in her last year at Holy Cross College and it was her instrument for the practical music exam of the 1934 Leaving Certificate. She regarded Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien as a 'fine violin teacher' but admitted she actually hated the instrument and at the end of her first year in London dropped the violin as her second subject, taking singing instead; she recalled that her singing performance at her examination in London reduced her two examiners to fits of laughter.<sup>48</sup>

At the age of sixteen, in 1934, Eunice Gardiner won the E.M. Woolley Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, London, where she studied for two years under Vivian Langrish. Eunice paid tribute to Sr M. Joseph Tier, who taught her piano 'with love and devotion to her task'. When Sr M. Scholastica interrupted Eunice's Fifth Year Latin term exam to give her the joyous news of her scholarship success, Eunice recalls that she was

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<sup>46</sup> *FJ*, 26 December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> *CP*, 24 December 1931, p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Eunice Gardiner, interview by Sr Cecily Gaudry, 11 December 2000, published in *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

told not to ‘get a swollen head.’<sup>49</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey) remembers the day Eunice was notified concerning her scholarship success. The news went around the school and the classes assembled on the playground; when Eunice appeared on the top walk of the school, Dympna recalled everyone started clapping.<sup>50</sup> Her debut at London’s Wigmore Hall launched her on a distinguished international career as a concert pianist.

Eunice received an extra lesson on Saturdays from Kathleen Fitzgerald, a ‘very gifted pianist’.<sup>51</sup> Kathleen Fitzgerald had been a talented musician at a young age. Her teacher at Golden Grove had been Sr M. Elizabeth Greathead and in 1919, at the age of twelve years, she had won the E.M. Woolley Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, London. She did not accept it, presumably because of her age.<sup>52</sup> Kathleen won a State Bursary to OLMC Parramatta in 1923, obtained her LC in 1927, and eventually gained her Associateship of the NSW State Conservatorium of Music (L. Mus. A).<sup>53</sup> An account of her public recital at the Conservatorium in 1932 describes Kathleen as ‘among Sydney’s most promising pianists’.<sup>54</sup> The strong bonds between music students and their school would be exemplified by the fact that Kathleen Fitzgerald became President of the OLMC Ex-students’ Association and participated in a concert at the College re-union in 1945.<sup>55</sup> It is difficult not to mention that at an even younger age, OLMC Parramatta student Pamela Page, (a non-Catholic) aged eleven years, won a Commonwealth Exhibition to Trinity College, London, and State medals for Junior and Intermediate grade piano in 1946 and has remained close to her alma mater.<sup>56</sup>

In an interview for the 1960-61 Holy Cross College School Magazine, Eunice Gardiner paid Sr M. Joseph Tier fulsome praise:

I don’t feel that I can write about music in this paper without paying tribute to the nun who taught me piano at Holy Cross, with love and devotion to her task,

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<sup>49</sup> Eunice Gardiner, *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1960-1961*, p. 36 and p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey), *Celebration of Our Education*, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

<sup>52</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> Kathleen provided the background music for the silent films screened for the OLMC Parramatta boarders, Wilkes, *Mercy*, p.85.

<sup>54</sup> *CFJ*, 22 December 1932, p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> McGrath, ‘Notes on Music’, p. 90.

<sup>56</sup> *Misericordia*, 1946 (OLMC Parramatta School Magazine), n.p. Pamela Page went on to have a dazzling international career as a concert pianist. She performed at the OLMC Parramatta Centenary Concert at the Sydney Opera House, April 1988.

for the greatest part of my childhood. Sister Mary Joseph was a vivid personality of great warmth and kindness. This and her great enthusiasm and interest in me and my music were no small factors in my development. Her meticulous approach to Mozart was, I realise now, that of a purist. How she insisted upon the perfect phrase!

Eunice went on to explain that when, in early 1936, she began her scholarship years at the esteemed Royal Academy of Music, London, she had been given such a good grounding in technique that there was nothing to be unlearned, it only remained to build on the ‘foundation [which] had been well and securely laid’.<sup>57</sup>

Another influential person in the formation of Eunice Gardiner’s illustrious career was Professor Frank Hutchins, who was appointed as a founding staff member of the State Conservatorium of Music in 1916 and was still teaching there when he died in 1965. From the age of eleven, Eunice had played for him once a year around exam time and, as she approached the Licentiate year, she had more frequent lessons with him. Eunice’s father was in the merchant navy and, although the funds to support living expenses in London for three years would have been beyond the family’s own resources, he insisted on Eunice’s mother accompanying their talented seventeen year old daughter to England. Eunice has said it was Frank Hutchins who organised the committee to raise funds to help her go overseas to take up the E.M. Woolley scholarship in 1937. The main fund-raising event was a grand benefit concert held at the Sydney Town Hall.<sup>58</sup>

Eunice Gardiner came back from England with a contract to tour for the Australian Broadcasting Commission and went on to teach at the NSW State Conservatorium as well as becoming a music critic for the *Daily Telegraph*. She has acknowledged that it was music that took her around the world, to many exotic locations and to meet Prime Ministers, Ambassadors, Queen Elizabeth II and many top conductors and musicians.

The first Holy Cross College pupil to take music as a LC subject was Veronica Acton, who gained an ‘A’ pass with a mark of 90% in 1920.<sup>59</sup> Veronica had previously sat for

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<sup>57</sup> *Holy Cross College, Woollahra, 1960-61*, p.36.

<sup>58</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p.36.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Holy Cross Convent Chronicles’, p. 20.

the LC at OLMC Parramatta and had gained a 'B' pass in music.<sup>60</sup> Of the ten successful candidates from Holy Cross High School, Woollahra, for the 1928 IC, eight gained a pass in music, although only two were awarded an 'A' pass.<sup>61</sup> This affirms the high profile of music in the school at this time, although music was not yet accepted as a full subject for the LC.<sup>62</sup> But in 1930, when music was now recognised as a half subject at the LC level, two of the three Holy Cross LC candidates sat the music exam. This was unusual. There were no LC music candidates at St Vincent's College Potts Point, one of the leading girls' schools in Sydney, and only one girl out of twelve candidates at Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney.<sup>63</sup>

In 1929, Holy Cross College, following a practice that OLMC Parramatta had begun some fifteen years before, published, for the first time, an end of year school report in both Catholic newspapers (the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Catholic Press*). The report included a detailed listing of the successes of Holy Cross College, Woollahra students in the examinations conducted by the Associated Board, the State Conservatorium of Music and London's Trinity College of Music. The music results were given in full, before the results in the commercial examinations and the College's own internal examinations.<sup>64</sup> The Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music had sent Mr (later to be Sir) Arthur Benjamin from London to Sydney to conduct its 1929 music examinations and it was triumphantly reported that he had been 'loud in his praise of the high standard reached in both violin and piano' at Holy Cross College where he had conducted the examinations.<sup>65</sup>

### **Early music teachers at Holy Cross**

As mentioned previously, the first music teacher at Holy Cross Convent was Sr M. Cecilia O'Brien, the niece of Fr Michael O'Brien, the parish priest of St Peter's, Surry Hills from 1886-92.<sup>66</sup> Later on, Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien was a renowned and fondly

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<sup>60</sup> *FJ*, 1 January 1920, p. 14. Veronica Acton entered the Convent of Mercy Parramatta and took the name Felicitas.

<sup>61</sup> *CP*, 7 February 1929, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Music became a full subject for the Leaving Certificate in 1943, thanks largely to the efforts of Sr M. Paschal Hession of OLMC, Parramatta, the Catholic Schools' representative on the Board of Studies Music Curriculum Committee.

<sup>63</sup> *CP*, 5 February 1931, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> *FJ*, 26 December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup> *FJ*, 26 December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>66</sup> It was Fr O'Brien who had met the nine foundation Sisters of Mercy on their arrival in Sydney. See Garaty, *St Peter's Parish, Surry Hills*, p. 37.

recalled teacher of violin at Holy Cross for many years over the 1930s. It is assumed that Sr M. Scholastica O'Brien was taught by or influenced by Sr M. Stanislaus White at OLMC Parramatta. Cyril Monk, a violin examiner from the Conservatorium of Music, who had observed the influence of Sr M. Stanislaus White on the teaching practices in the other Convents of Mercy attached to Parramatta, considered that Sr M. Stanislaus had 'founded a distinctive school of violin teaching'.<sup>67</sup> Sr M. St Luke Kofod taught piano and singing at Holy Cross from 1931 to 1933, then going to St Peter's, Surry Hills for the remainder of the 1930s, and then to Golden Grove, Newtown from 1943 to 1956.

Little is known of Sr M. Joseph Tier, the piano teacher who could coax such marvellous results from her students. Born in 1871, the daughter of John and Mary Tier of Moruya, NSW, and christened Teresa, she was twenty-four years old when she entered the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta on 17 June 1894. She was professed on 12 January 1897.<sup>68</sup> It is not known where Sr M. Joseph received her musical education; possibly it was from the Sisters of the Good Samaritan who had many schools in the South Coast area of NSW.<sup>69</sup> We know she taught music at Golden Grove, Newtown, and had earned a reputation for her teaching of piano and singing there. Eileen Barry commented that she never remembered Sr M. Joseph playing the piano herself.<sup>70</sup>

Sr M. Joseph Tier's achievements as a teacher of both singing and piano were not acknowledged by two eminent OLMC Parramatta music teachers, Sr M. Paschal Hession (piano and singing) and Sr M. Aidan Codd (singing) in their biographical details of Sisters of Mercy music teachers.<sup>71</sup> Sr M. Joseph died in 1937 aged sixty-seven years. Her well documented ability to nurture musical talent had been of immeasurable significance in maintaining the Holy Cross community's income during the Depression. The lack of acknowledgement of this teacher, who produced at least three E.M. Woolley Scholarship winners and scores of State medallists, reinforces McGrath's comment that it was not easy for those not educated within the Parramatta musical tradition to be accepted as first

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 67. The comment was part of an obituary of Sr M. Stanislaus White, written by Cyril Monk.

<sup>68</sup> Biographical details supplied by Sr Veronica Earls, Parramatta congregational archivist.

<sup>69</sup> It is assumed she attended the Good Samaritan's school at Moruya.

<sup>70</sup> Eileen Taranto, interview by the author, 28 April 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Sr M. Aidan's recollections of music teachers were quite OLMC-centric. See McGrath, 'Notes on Music', pp. 19-21.

rate teachers by the congregation.<sup>72</sup>

A highly successful music teacher, who appears to have begun her long and illustrious career at Holy Cross was Sr M. Paschal Hession, an ex-student of OLMC Parramatta. Holy Cross ex-student, Dympha Whelan (nee Hickey), recalled she had piano lessons from Sr M. Pascal.<sup>73</sup> Sr M. Paschal took over the music department at OLMC Parramatta as Sr M. Patrick Mines aged and spent almost the whole of her religious life at OLMC Parramatta. Sr M. Paschal was a leader in music education in the State of NSW and was one of the pioneers in school music broadcasts and a member of the Australian Society for Music Education.

Sr M. Paschal Hession was the Catholic schools' representative on the Music Syllabus Committee of the Board of Secondary Schools Studies from at least 1939 to 1969. Her successful lobbying resulted in the promotion of music from a half-subject to a full subject for the Leaving Certificate, effective from 1943; provision was made for an Honours paper in the subject also. This welcome news was announced by Sr M. Paschal Hession at the second General Meeting in 1942 of the Catholic Secondary Schools Association of NSW. In response, Archbishop Norman Gilroy thanked her for 'the good work she has done over a period of years' adding that 'music is now to be regarded as a full subject and this is due, in no small measure to Sister M. Pascal's efforts'. His esteem for this remarkable woman was evident in his next words: 'I would like this recorded in the minutes as expressing the sentiments of us all.'<sup>74</sup>

### **Winning the AMEB Shield**

Beginning in 1932, Holy Cross Convent was to win the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) Shield for four years in succession. The Shield was awarded annually to that music centre (operated by a school, convent or private music teacher) in NSW, with the highest aggregate of marks won by its best eight students at the practical examinations held during the year.

The AMEB Shield was won by students of outstanding ability who were most likely

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<sup>72</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 67. The source of this observation is an interview by McGrath of Sr M. Theophane Collins who first learnt music at St Joseph's North Goulburn and later at the Conservatorium and who taught piano and violin at OLMC Parramatta in 1943-45 and 1952.

<sup>73</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 44.

<sup>74</sup> Catholic Secondary Schools Association of NSW, Minutes of the second General Meeting, 18 July 1942, file E0330, SAA.

to proceed to international success by winning a scholarship or exhibition to the Royal Academy of Music or the Royal College of Music, both in London. The Catholic Church was rightfully proud of the achievements of these young convent pupils and the raising of funds to help them further their studies in London brought together those at the top of Sydney Catholic society. The *Catholic Press* and the *Freeman's Journal*<sup>75</sup> provided the forum to publicise these activities as well as to praise the convent school that had nurtured such talent. Altogether, between 1929 and 1952, the AMEB Shield was awarded twenty-two times, and nineteen of those times it was won by a music centre of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. Holy Cross Woollahra won it six times in that period (one more than Parramatta), Golden Grove five times, Ryde twice, and Enmore once.<sup>76</sup>

The year Vaughan Hanley, a student at Golden Grove won a scholarship to the Conservatorium (1931), was a year in which the results of the AMEB were dominated by Sisters of Mercy music centres in Sydney and in the country towns. For one music centre in particular, Mount St Mary's Golden Grove, 1931 was a golden year. The calibre of students like Vaughan Hanley, Beryl Johnston, Peter Clark, Ethel Broadhurst and Iris Harrison (who would become Sr M. de Lellis Harrison) enabled them to win, with an aggregate of 93.6%, the AMEB Shield, the most coveted of prizes.<sup>77</sup>

The AMEB results for 1931 illustrate well the contribution the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy made to music tuition. Eunice Gardiner of Holy Cross tied for first place in Grade II piano, sharing the £10 exhibition. Marie Hennessey of the Convent of Mercy, Stanmore won the £10 exhibition for Grade III piano. Two Golden Grove students, Beryl Johnston and Ethel Broadhurst won £50 scholarships, tenable at the Conservatorium for their marks in Grade I violin. Grade II violin was topped by Vaughan Hanley, winning him a £10 exhibition. Vaughan also tied for first place in grade III violin with an OLMC Parramatta pupil, Pauline Gates. In Grade IV violin, Peter Clark of Golden Grove tied with two others, one of whom was a pupil of the Convent of Mercy, Ryde.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* became the *Catholic Freeman's Journal* in 1932 and was published until 26 February 1942 when it merged with the *Catholic Press* to form the *Catholic Weekly*, which is still in publication today.

<sup>76</sup> McGrath, *These Women?*, p. 68. These statistics are taken from the AMEB Shield which is now permanently held at Parramatta.

<sup>77</sup> *CP*, 7 January 1932, p. 14.

<sup>78</sup> *CP*, 7 January 1932, p. 14.

These were the years when enrolments in private schools were falling as the Great Depression continued to affect all sections of the Australian economy. A comparison of the fees received from College pupils and music pupils illustrates the importance of music fees to the Holy Cross convent community. In 1929 College fees returned £1967 4s 1d and music fees amounted to £396 6s 6d. At the height of the Depression, 1933 and 1934, amounts collected from College fees were almost halved. By 1934, College fees had dropped to £952 16s, but music fees had increased to £497 12s 6d. It wasn't until 1939, that College fees receipts exceeded the 1929 figure; £2191 2s from the College fees and £408 15s 3d from the music pupils.<sup>79</sup> As mentioned previously, beginning in 1932, Holy Cross held the AMEB Shield for four successive years and this quite tangible success was significant in maintaining enrolments at the College over those Depression years. As it has been shown, during the 1930s Depression, enrolments at Holy Cross College actually increased, unlike those of the neighbouring schools and this can be attributed to both the reputation Holy Cross had for music teaching as well as the comparably low fees that the sisters charged, as has been discussed previously.

The 1932 music results for Holy Cross Convent, Woollahra, (as it was labelled in the *Catholic Freeman's Journal*) were outstanding. Olga Curotta won a £6 6s exhibition from Trinity College, London for achieving the 'highest marks in the Commonwealth' in Intermediate grade piano. Her fellow student, Catherine Murphy, was also awarded a similar exhibition worth £25 for her highest marks in Intermediate grade violin. Three girls, Norma Cox, Eunice Gardiner and Katherine Geaney, each won a Trinity College State medal that same year, a golden year for the Holy Cross music centre.<sup>80</sup> Olga Curotta returned to Holy Cross College as a music teacher, as one of her pupils recalled.<sup>81</sup>

The 1936 Holy Cross College report was a triumphant public statement of the continuing success of its music teachers and their very talented pupils. The College had won the coveted AMEB Shield for the fourth successive year. Its top music student, Mary Falvey, had won the State medal for Intermediate grade piano, awarded by Trinity College of Music, London, as well as a £10 exhibition for Grade IV violin.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Holy Cross Convent Woollahra Account Book 1908-1956, PA. See Table 4 on page 116.

<sup>80</sup> *CFJ*, 22 December 1932, p. 33.

<sup>81</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey), *Celebration of Our Education*, p.44.

<sup>82</sup> *CFJ*, 7 January 1937, p. 19.



At this time, Sr M. Joseph Tier introduced the annual Musicales that became a greatly loved tradition at Holy Cross. By 1936, the school was including an account of the Musicales in its annual report published in the Catholic newspapers.<sup>83</sup> Dympna Whelan (nee Hickey) described the annual musicale as ‘brilliant music on Saturday afternoon, very formal, mothers came, the orchestra played and there were string quartets’.<sup>84</sup> Eunice Gardiner recalled that this was the only time parents were invited into the College to hear individual musicians and the college orchestra play. Yet Eunice also recalled the Sunday recitals, which she said prepared her so well for public performance.<sup>85</sup> The audience for these, most probably, were fellow music students and members of the convent community.

### **Boy students and male mentors at the Parramatta Mercy music centres**

The select schools of the Sisters of Mercy at Parramatta, Golden Grove and Holy Cross enrolled boys in their infants and primary sections. Often whole families were sent to the one school. Boys who were not students could attend the convent on a Saturday morning or before or after school for music lessons. In the early decades, music tuition was given in a convent parlor where a piano and music stand were kept.<sup>86</sup> As the high schools expanded physically, purpose built practice and lesson rooms were added, although the convent parlor would still be used for ensemble playing. Eunice Gardiner said she enjoyed having her violin lesson in the convent parlour because she could rest the end of the violin on the marble mantelpiece.<sup>87</sup>

Some of the talented boys who had been trained at a Sisters of Mercy music centre retained very strong ties with their former teachers. One of the best known male ex-students was Vaughan Hanley, who began his music education at Golden Grove at the age of five years with Sr M. Aquin King, with whom he retained a life-long friendship. In 1931, aged sixteen years, Vaughan won a £10 exhibition from the NSW State Conservatorium for Grade II violin as well as an exhibition from the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music, London, which entitled the

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<sup>83</sup> *CFJ*, 7 January 1937, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 44.

<sup>85</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

<sup>86</sup> A 1916 photo of a classroom at the NSW State Conservatorium shows that musicians learnt in classrooms resembling middle-class living rooms (not unlike the convent parlour), Collins, *Sounds from the Stables*, p. 231.

<sup>87</sup> *Celebration of Our Education*, p. 36.

holder to free entry to their Licentiate examination for violin. The same year he also won a Trinity College of Music, London exhibition worth £6 6s for Intermediate violin.<sup>88</sup> After winning a scholarship to the NSW State Conservatorium of Music (the first of several), and beginning a highly successful career there, he became the leader of the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, a position he held for thirty-seven years. His book, *New Concepts in Violin Teaching: an innovative method for beginners* was dedicated to Sr M. Aquin King, who remained his mentor.

Some of the boy pupils of the Sisters of Mercy would later repay their debt to their music teachers by conducting College orchestras. At the 1936 Holy Cross College Musicale, the Holy Cross College Orchestra was conducted by Leo Smith, an ex-student of the St Pius' Enmore music centre.<sup>89</sup> Sr M. Aidan Codd noted that Leo Smith began his musical studies in violin under Sr M. Lelia Rafferty at Enmore.<sup>90</sup> Leo Smith won a scholarship to the Sydney Conservatorium, studied under Henri Verbrugghan, became a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and travelled with his master. Sr M. Aidan Codd recorded that Leo Smith was always loyal to the Sisters of Mercy and he not only conducted College orchestras, but in later years, willingly orchestrated music for the sisters.<sup>91</sup>

Frank Hutchins, O.B.E., F.R.A.M., pianist, teacher, composer and a non-Catholic, had a friendship with the Parramatta Sisters stretching over a period of more than fifty years. He taught Sr M. Theophane Collins at the Conservatorium before she entered in 1938. As mentioned previously he was a mentor to Eunice Gardiner. He was asked by Sr M. Paschal Hession to write music for the poems 'The Australian Sunrise' and 'The Song of the Cattle Hunters' to be performed at a Music Education Conference of the 1940s. The three part song 'The Australian Sunrise' was dedicated, as he said at its first performance, 'to my friends at OLMC Parramatta'.<sup>92</sup> Holy Cross College girls were to sing 'The Australian Sunrise' on various occasions. He was a chief examiner for the State Conservatorium, and in that capacity had visited OLMC Parramatta just eight days before

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<sup>88</sup> *CP*, 31 December 1931.

<sup>89</sup> *CFJ*, 7 January 1937, p. 19. St Pius' School, Enmore had been taken over by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1909 from the Good Samaritans at the request of Cardinal Moran.

<sup>90</sup> A 1924 article reported Leo Smith was first trained by Sr M. Lelia Rafferty of the Sisters of Mercy, Ryde and had won a State scholarship in 1915, *CP*, 10 January 1924, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 61.

<sup>92</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 76.

his death in a car accident in 1965.<sup>93</sup> Frank Hutchins, a New Zealander, experienced at a very young age the exhilaration of playing for one of the world's greatest pianists, Paderewski, and then, as a scholarship winner, the challenge of travelling alone to London at a very young age to undertake his musical studies. This experience could account to some extent for his mentorship of Eunice Gardiner.<sup>94</sup>

### **Music at the service of the liturgy and the wider community**

The music teachers working in the branch houses were responsible for the liturgy at the parish church, where such big celebratory occasions as Easter and the Forty Hours Devotion would be an extra call on their teaching and creative abilities. They were well trained to perform these tasks, and ensured that students and ex-students would be on hand to assist. It was part of the 'corporate' nature of Catholic worship characteristic of Australian parish life up to the 1960s. Incorporating the talents of ex-students in important liturgical celebrations helped to maintain their links with the College, reinforce the faith in which they had been educated, and enriched the occasion with their hard won skills.

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation's establishment, in December 1938, is a notable example of this liturgical training of their students. A 'Mercy' Pontifical High Mass in early December was celebrated by Archbishop Gilroy. The sisters and the senior girls made up a combined choir to sing a Mass composed by Dom Moreno, a contemporary Spanish Benedictine monk from New Norcia, Western Australia, and a talented composer and musician. With a motet and an impressive 'Ecce Sacerdos Magnus' for the Archbishop's entry especially composed for the occasion, as well as splendidly performed Gregorian chant, the music for this Mass was of the highest standard.<sup>95</sup>

The Our Lady of Mercy Convent Parramatta Orchestra played each year at the St Patrick's Night Concert at the Sydney Town Hall. In fact, this was an orchestra made up of members of the OLMC, Golden Grove and Holy Cross orchestras.<sup>96</sup> It regularly played

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<sup>93</sup> OLMC Parramatta, *Misericordia*, 1963-65, n.p.

<sup>94</sup> For biographical details of Frank Hutchins, see Helen Bainton, 'Hutchens, Francis (Frank) (1892 - 1965)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, Melbourne University Press, 1983, pp. 413-414.

<sup>95</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 78.

<sup>96</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 61.

at social receptions (*conversazione*) of dignitaries programmed during major Catholic Church occasions such as the 1928 International Eucharistic Congress. During the 1948 Sydney celebrations of the centenary of public education, and 125 years of Catholic education, the orchestra played at a *conversazione* at Sydney Town Hall, which featured renowned Irish tenor, Fr Sydney MacEwan.<sup>97</sup>

The Holy Cross chronicler recorded that in the annual music competitions held for St Patrick's Day, Holy Cross had many successes and in the last year the St Patrick's Day music competition was held, Holy Cross gained thirteen first places, after which Monsignor Meaney visited the school to express his satisfaction at the high standard of performance achieved.<sup>98</sup>

### **Music at Holy Cross in the 1940s and 1950s**

The close relationship between the Parramatta Mercy music centres is illustrated by one talented musician, Gwenda Colgan. In 1940, when Gwenda Colgan competed in the Trinity College examinations, she won a State medal for Advanced Intermediate violin. She was then a pupil of Golden Grove, but as a pupil of Holy Cross College, she was a medallist at the May 1941 Trinity College examinations.<sup>99</sup> In 1941 Sr M. Aquin King had been transferred to Holy Cross, and many of her senior students followed her there from Golden Grove.<sup>100</sup>

An examination of the Holy Cross College music results for 1941 reveal an amazing array of talent. Gwenda Colgan had been awarded a medal from Trinity College London for the highest marks in the State of NSW in Senior grade violin in the May session and a £6 exhibition for gaining the highest marks in Australia. Her fellow student Beryl Waterman won the same award in the December 1941 examinations. Another talented Holy Cross student, Jean Wilson, was the winner of a State Conservatorium exhibition of £10 value for Grade 1V violin while Gwenda Colgan was awarded a £5 exhibition from the State Conservatorium.<sup>101</sup> Leo Orr, a junior pupil of Holy Cross College, was a Trinity College State medallist for Junior violin, at the May 1941 examination, and at the end of that year,

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<sup>97</sup> CW, 15 April 1948, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> 'Holy Cross Convent Chronicles', p. 29.

<sup>99</sup> *CFJ*, 26 June 1941, p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 12.

<sup>101</sup> *CFJ*, 19 February 1942.

Leo was to be awarded a merit by Trinity College in Intermediate violin. These Holy Cross results point to the remarkable teaching abilities of Sr M. Aquin King.

A Fourth Year student of Holy Cross, writing for the 1943 school magazine, expressed her views (and by inference those of her teachers) on the merits of music education:

Music is an expression of deep-seated instincts in human nature. Its appeal is no doubt fundamentally to the feelings and emotions but it has its intellectual side also and this is of no small importance to the child. To quote the words of the Polish pianist, Paderewski, 'The intellectual drill which the study of music gives the child is of great educational value'. Music not only stirs the imagination, inspires lofty thoughts, develops our spiritual temperament and increases our capacity for happiness but it also affects the will. Music has banished bodily fatigue and urged man on to almost superhuman feats of bravery and endurance.<sup>102</sup>

Although Holy Cross College had a pool of wonderfully gifted musicians to call on in the 1940s, the College was to broaden its cultural pursuits. The Holy Cross Convent verse-speaking choir under the tutelage of Miss Doris Patterson was the State medallist in 1941. This award from Trinity College London was a prestigious one. Doris Patterson was one of the most successful elocution teachers in Sydney and she was employed by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy for decades. The year 1941 saw Miss Patterson's pupils dominating the competitions.<sup>103</sup>

The 1950s were rich in musical activities which encompassed many in the College community. By 1955, Holy Cross College had both a Senior and a Junior Orchestra. Sr M. Christina Creede (Breda), a Golden Grove music school ex-student, was a music teacher at Holy Cross College from 1950 to 1954, teaching both piano and violin. She was replaced by Sr M. Emilian Croak, a music student of the Sisters of Charity, who remained at Holy Cross until 1965. Through this period, Holy Cross College students continued to win prestigious awards and ex-students were forging careers in music. Cellists Robyn Baldwin and Elizabeth Frewin were each awarded the Trinity College

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<sup>102</sup> *Holy Cross College, Woollahra*, 1943, p. 20. The writer, Maureen Waite, gained Honours in Grade 1 Pianoforte in the Conservatorium exams.

<sup>103</sup> *Holy Cross College, Woollahra*, 1942, n.p.

State medals for its 1957 May and December examination sessions.

In the 1958 AMEB and Trinity College examinations, ninety-six Holy Cross College candidates were successful with forty-one gaining honours and fifty-three credits. Ex-students Shealah Hidden, Nancy Barone and Mary Ingham continued their music studies at the Conservatorium. Mrs A. Ingham, (Mary's mother) conducted the Holy Cross College Orchestra in the 1950s. Shealah had gained a Commonwealth scholarship to study music at University level and Mary was completing her Performer's and Teacher's Diploma (violin), planning to continue her studies in Austria under Wolfgang Sneiderham.

The 1958 golden jubilee year celebrations of the establishment of Holy Cross College featured the combined College orchestra and the award-winning senior choir, conducted by Sr M. Helena Phillips. Ex-student Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey), of the 1958 LC class, has recalled how:

Our pride in the excellent Holy Cross College orchestra, choir and all things musical culminated in an almost unprecedented occurrence when, on marking our choir, the examiners from the Trinity College of Music requested that Sr M. Helena and the choir repeat "All in the April Evening", such was the near perfection of the [senior] choir in this medal winning performance of 1958.<sup>104</sup>

A number of Holy Cross ex-music students taught music in schools or privately. Teaching was always regarded as respectable employment for females. The music teacher who taught in the home could accommodate competing demands for her time; even better she would not face loss of employment when she married. Eileen Barry taught piano in her home until she married. Others, such as Eunice Gardiner and Phyllis McDonald taught at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music. Holy Cross ex-student, Sr M Michael Hawke (Dorothy May), returned to teach music at the College, between 1945 and 1947.

Sr M. Theophane Collins taught music at Holy Cross during 1941-2 but was transferred to OLMC Parramatta. After years spent teaching at the inner city schools of St Peter's, Surry

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<sup>104</sup> Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey), '1958 and Our Golden Years at HCC', reminiscences contributed to a 50<sup>th</sup> reunion collection of memories, June 2008, in the author's possession.

Hills, St Kieran's Golden Grove and St Michael's, Stanmore, she returned to Holy Cross between 1957 and 1961 before going to St Anne's Bondi and then OLMC, Epping.

Another well known music teacher who taught at Holy Cross in this period was Sr M. Helena Phillips (Irene), who was an ex-student of OLMC Parramatta and had gained her L.A.B. in violin and piano in 1906. Her first appointment was at Enmore; she then taught music at Holy Cross and Golden Grove and finally, in the 1950s, returned to Holy Cross.

Sr M. Christina Creede moved from Holy Cross College to OLMC Parramatta in 1955 and remained there as a greatly loved and admired teacher until 1984. She came to Australia from Ireland as a child in 1928 and was taught music by the Presentation Sisters in Queensland. She studied at the State Conservatorium of Music in Sydney, under Phyllis McDonald who had been Sr M. Aquin King's student at Golden Grove, and completed the Diploma of Music and obtained the A. Mus. A. in 1941. She continued her musical studies at Golden Grove under Sr M. Helena Phillips and obtained her L.T.C.L. and L. Mus. A. Breda entered the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy in 1943 and taught music, mainly violin, with Sr M. Bernadette Murray and Sr M. Helena Phillips at Holy Cross. At OLMC Parramatta, she worked to develop a strong and accomplished orchestra and it was said of her that 'her string ex-students understood that they were members of the [College] orchestra until they married'.<sup>105</sup>

### **The decline of music from the 1960s**

The Wyndham Scheme provided for a core of mandatory subjects plus selections from a variety of optional subjects, and extended the secondary stage of education by an extra year to Form V1. Its system, involving an internal assessment dimension for the new Higher School Certificate, which had replaced the Leaving Certificate (based solely on external examinations), placed pressure on teachers and students to perform to the best of their ability throughout the senior year. As a result, the practice of students having their music lessons in school time became much more of a difficulty than before, though, as mentioned previously, this had always been a point of contention between music teachers and teachers of examination classes.

Beginning in the 1960s, fewer sisters were appointed as music teachers.<sup>106</sup> Because of the

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<sup>105</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 82.

<sup>106</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p.88.

centralisation of finances in the Catholic systemic schools and the provision of stipends for sisters teaching in these schools, the congregations of religious no longer relied on the revenue from music lessons to help support their communities. Also, with the influx of migrants from post-war Europe, Catholic parish schools came under enormous pressures to house Catholic school children and maintain reasonable teaching standards in classrooms which were bursting at the seams. This resulted in sisters talented in the field of music being appointed to classroom teaching. From the early 1960s, music teachers were asked to be prepared to take a religion class, and Sr M. Theophane Collins did so for many years at Holy Cross College.<sup>107</sup> Sr M. Theophane was the last dedicated religious music teacher at Holy Cross. She had returned to the College in 1966 and was still teaching music, part-time, in 1979.

Music teachers in the post-1960s era commented that television and the increase in competitive sport for girls militated against the promotion of instrumental music. At colleges like OLMC Parramatta and Holy Cross Woollahra, core and elective music were taught by specialist lay staff. By 1985, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy had only one sister actively engaged in teaching instrumental music.<sup>108</sup> At Holy Cross, at the special request of an ex-student who was now sending her own daughters to the College, ex-student Shealagh Hidden (nee Trefle) was brought in to give individual music lessons.<sup>109</sup>

By the time Sr Barbara McDonough returned to Holy Cross College as its principal in 1989, there were no longer private music lessons being given at the school. The small music rooms were being used for other purposes such as small sized remedial classes. Music was taught as a core (mandatory) subject usually covered in Years 7/8, although there an occasional elective music group in Years 9/10. For some years, Musicals were produced annually with the boys from Waverley College. Soon, however, the main musical performances were restricted to the annual prize-giving function, held at the Coleman Hall at Bondi Junction, which later became the Church in the Marketplace, with the preparation for these being held outside school hours.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 80.

<sup>108</sup> McGrath, 'Notes on Music', p. 88.

<sup>109</sup> Information supplied by Sr Barbara McDonough.

<sup>110</sup> Sr Barbara McDonough, 'Notes on Music at Holy Cross 1989-2001', unpublished manuscript, in possession of the author.



Fifty years on, micro-chips have made music accessible to young people through small, portable and programmable devices. As Sr Barbara McDonough has noted, the Holy Cross students in the final years of the College were more interested in listening to music through the various media than in playing instrumental music.<sup>111</sup> However, music remains an important part of church liturgies, and still provides within the Church, an outlet for the musically talented. Contact with former music students of Holy Cross College has revealed a pride in their individual and collective past achievements, and that they are passing on their musical interests to their children and grandchildren. In this way the musical heritage of Holy Cross College lives on.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter can be read as an unmitigated litany of triumphs in the field of music in the best or worst tradition, depending on your point of view, of Catholic triumphalism. As can be seen from the documentation, however, these triumphs are a matter of fact.

Collins has noted that as a middle class, sufficiently prosperous and self-confident, emerged in Australian cities in the later nineteenth century, ‘serious music was [...] increasingly identified with enlightenment rather than entertainment’.<sup>112</sup> This was evident in the serious interest in music in the early years of Holy Cross College. Yet, as Collins points out, in the early decades of the twentieth century, musicality was still seen as part of the accomplishments style of education given to young ladies of the middle and upper classes.<sup>113</sup> There was a minor element of this in the early years at Holy Cross. From about the 1930s, the development of the phonograph, cheap records, and radio enabled the growth of a media industry devoted to bringing ‘high culture’ to the masses and opened up employment opportunities to both males and females of musical talent. The orchestras of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and of the major cities, such as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, flourished at this time, and some ex-students of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were part of such orchestras.

The Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were admirably situated to meet this increasing demand for accomplished musicians in Australia. As has been seen, the strong music tradition of

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<sup>111</sup> McDonough, ‘Notes on Music at Holy Cross’.

<sup>112</sup> Collins, *Sounds from the Stables*, p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> Collins, *Sounds from the Stables*, p. 5.

Holy Cross College grew out of the music centre established at Parramatta by the founding pioneer sisters. This initial centre was nurtured by the Parramatta congregational superiors who provided expert tuition for talented members of the congregation. These sisters in turn developed a strong network of music centres, first at Golden Grove, Newtown, and subsequently at Holy Cross, Enmore, Ryde and Epping. A number of ex-students from these music schools entered the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta, or remained strong supporters in many ways, from being members of the College orchestra to assisting with teaching and conducting.

The success of these music centres in general, and Holy Cross in particular, was outstanding and made a significant contribution to Australian culture. Along with the emphasis on instrumental mastery at a high level was a strong support of music as a full academic examination subject. Sr M. Paschal Hessian was a key person in this movement. While music was an important source of income for the sisters, it was valued essentially for its spiritually uplifting powers as well as its recreational capacity, and the talents of the music teachers were always at the service of the liturgy of the Church.

As has been seen, changing educational structure, the granting of State Aid, and wider cultural changes led to the demise of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy network of music centres, including Holy Cross College, Woollahra. The piano would be replaced by the radio in the 1940s and 1950s. The family that had gathered around the piano was now gathering around the 'wireless' and record player. Live radio programmes, free lending libraries, picture theatres, and youth organisations provided new methods of entertainment for young people who were beginning to participate in the social revolution of the 1950s and '60s. Television, common in Australian homes by the early 1960s, and the greatly increased opportunities for girls to engage in competitive sport, were major absorbers of recreational time for young people. In the last years of the College, students were more interested in listening to music, than playing an instrument.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

#### **Educating the middle class**

Although most religious congregations which came to Australia had a basic commitment to the poor, the importance of the education of the Catholic middle class was clearly widely recognised by many of the congregations by the late nineteenth century. The Patrician Brothers, in their paper on the education of the middle class (then called intermediate education), underlined this situation:

In truth, the middle classes form the fulcrum which has to bear almost the entire pressure of the ups and downs of Society's two extremes. The education then, of this middle class must be a question of vital importance. The poorest have their Public Schools, the richest their Universities. But what have Governments done for that portion of Society which, as it were, forms the central current? <sup>1</sup>

In response to this need, a large number of select or superior (also called high or pension) schools were established in what has been described as the second developmental phase (1860s – 1920s) in the history of Catholic education in Australia.<sup>2</sup> Holy Cross College was established late in this phase; there were already six superior Catholic schools offering secondary education to middle class girls in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs by 1908. As a superior school, Holy Cross College exhibited the distinguishing features of its neighbours, providing education in the Catholic faith, along with schooling in 'lady-like' behaviour, suitable accomplishments and academic education in preparation for public examinations.

Examination success would equip young women to progress to 'respectable' professions and/or eventually to marry a Catholic educated young man, upon whom they would exert a strong influence for good. In addition, they were expected to participate in their local parish and in the wider Catholic community and society in general, as leaders, when and

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<sup>1</sup> The Patrician Brothers, Holy Cross College, Ryde, 'Intermediate Education', paper IX, *Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress*, pp. 469-473.

<sup>2</sup> See Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny*, p. 73 and Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, vol. II, pp. 311-312.

where appropriate. Joining a religious congregation, to live a life dedicated to the service of God, the Church and the wider community, was an alternative encouraged by the Church and approved of by many Catholic parents.

This thesis has shown that the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, in accordance with their Mercy tradition, were well aware of the importance of the education of the middle class as a source of leadership in the Church, specifically in religious congregations, as well as a source of income for congregation's work of service to the less well-off. It has been seen that they were innovative educators and at times leaders in the educational sphere, outstandingly so in the field of music.

### **The paradox of religious educators of young women**

This thesis, in its survey of a century of Catholic girls' education has explored how Catholic middle class girls, constrained by the mores imposed by Church and society, sought and took advantage of the opening of higher education to women and their gradual infiltration of science, law and medicine, politics and public service. To McGrath, the fact that in 1984 some 75% of the highest female public servants in the commonwealth government were convent educated is an outcome of the education of Catholic girls to a sense of leadership<sup>3</sup> and it can be shown that Holy Cross College graduates have excelled in all areas of academia, education, medicine and nursing, the arts, public service and business. They have grasped the opportunities afforded them by the advances won by the second wave of feminism which directly and indirectly led to fundamental changes in the place of women within as well as in wider society.

Holy Cross ex-students, in their oral and written accounts have reinforced the notion of their religious teachers as role models of strong women who had achieved success in their chosen field. When lay teachers (mostly female and often ex-students of the Sisters of Mercy) had an increasing presence on the College staff from the 1960s, these women, many of whom were married and juggling home and family responsibilities and a career, would also be positive role models to the students. Janet West has observed that 'when the women's movement emerged in the late 1960s, "convent girls" simply applied their

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<sup>3</sup> McGrath, *These Women?* pp. 206-207.

tendency to question to another element in the *status quo*, as their consciousness of gender inequality was raised'.<sup>4</sup>

As has been seen, throughout the twentieth century, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were challenged to educate the congregation's members to meet the ongoing demands for higher education for women, especially in the field of science. From the 1920s, they were participating in education conferences, were appointed as Catholic school representatives on curriculum committees of the Board of Studies, and were active members of professional associations. This pro-active involvement in the development of a Catholic education system, which won respect from state employed educators, belies the image of the sisterhood, confined and restricted by enclosure rules, as the educational historian, Burley has pointed out. The thesis has demonstrated how the Parramatta congregation of the Sisters of Mercy were themselves leading educational reformers and took an active role in the development of the system of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

### **Crisis in Catholic education**

A 'crisis' of Catholic education in the Sydney Archdiocese in the 1960s and 1970s was precipitated by the combined impacts of the influx of European migrants, the post-war increase in the natural rate of population growth and the implementation of the Wyndham comprehensive education scheme. Government policies, both at State and Federal levels, were impacting directly on Catholic schools struggling to meet rapidly increasing enrolments with existing staff and material resources. This crisis affected Holy Cross College in ways which no one could have foreseen at the time. It is only with the advantage of hindsight and the historian's craft, that these impacts have been revealed, though not fully, owing to the limitations of archival access and selective oral memory which have been discussed in Chapter 1.

### **Inherent and on-going challenges of Catholic education**

As Christine Trimmingham Jack has pointed out so well, there was a paradox between the two events which impacted significantly on Catholic education in Australia in the second half of the twentieth century, namely, the granting of state aid, and Vatican II. The paradox lay in the tensions between Church and State, between the sacred and the secular.

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<sup>4</sup> West, *Daughters of Freedom*, p. 342.

The former, state aid, established a dual sector education system in NSW, consisting of state and independent schools sustained by State and Federal Government grants. This strengthened the hold of the state on Catholic schools which previously had been limited mainly to the public examination system. The latter, Vatican II, saw the beginning of processes leading to the ‘crumbling of the divide’ which had existed between the Catholic laity, the clergy and the religious orders, and between Catholicism and other religious denominations.<sup>5</sup> The microcosm of Holy Cross College displayed action and reaction to these processes, which are identifiable from the latter half of the 1960s, and are ongoing today, as Catholic schools generally strive to maintain a special Catholic identity.

Maurice Ryan acknowledged that: ‘Catholic educators have struggled for more than a century to explain how Catholic values and a general religious sentiment are represented in the entire curriculum of Catholic schools.’<sup>6</sup> Yet Cardinal Moran made it sound so easy and logical that the state should pay for the secular education carried on in Catholic schools, while basing his argument for separate Catholic schools on the necessity of religion permeating the whole Catholic school enterprise. For economic reasons, Moran was being pragmatic. Australians in general, and Australian Catholics in particular, being pragmatic and anti-intellectual, have not yet tackled seriously the challenging historical, philosophical, psychological and theological study necessary to understand more fully what is meant by an education system or individual school which claims to be secular or claims to be religious. The widely respected historian of Australian education, Alan Barcan, has pointed out that the Churches, including the Catholic Church, lack a ‘well-educated Christian intelligentsia’ which would be needed for such a task.<sup>7</sup> It is hoped, however, that the challenge will be taken up by the developing Catholic universities as well as the older and more established universities.

### **Loss of autonomy and identity**

Because of the Sisters of Mercy tradition of autonomous government, which grounded them firmly in the local Church, it was a natural development that they, rather than the Sisters of Charity, or the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, or the Poor Clare Sisters, should

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<sup>5</sup> Christine Trimmingham Jack, ‘What’s in a Veil?’, *Change: Transformations in Education*, vol. 4, no.1, May 2001, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Ryan, *Foundations of Religious Education in Catholic Schools*, Thomson Social Science Press, Melbourne, 1997, p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Barcan, *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality*, p.317. John Braniff expresses an awareness of the problem in his essay, ‘Charism and the Concept of a Catholic Education’, *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 84, no.1, 2007.

have been requested by the archdiocesan education authorities in the early 1960s, to be the nucleus for the local archdiocesan Catholic girls' regional school in the northern area of the eastern suburbs. This involved amalgamation with Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rose Bay, and other close-by intermediate Catholic girls' schools to form a school, called officially Woollahra Regional Catholic Girls' High School.

As this thesis has shown, the school community of Holy Cross College, Woollahra, had by 1960, a unique identity forged by religious, cultural, geographical, political and pedagogical forces. When Holy Cross College ceased in 1962-63 to be a private school, owned and run by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, the most significant consequence of this change was unremarked at the time and possibly unforeseen. The College began to lose its identity, its uniqueness. The catchment area of the school was quadrupled and the number of girls enrolled doubled. The small, 'homely' atmosphere of the school was lost and the socio-economic background of the students became much broader.

The various levels at which authority was exerted over Holy Cross College became increasingly complex from the 1960s, as the College was absorbed into the Sydney archdiocesan regional school system. In the early stages of regionalisation particularly, uniqueness was not encouraged. In fact it was actually discouraged as a result of financial pressures, which led to the imposition of conformity and uniformity on regional school communities for the sake of the future of Catholic education. The graduated increase of state aid meant an escalating impact of government regulations on the systemic Catholic schools, and in 1965, the decision was taken to pool funding to ensure its judicious use.<sup>8</sup>

Comprehensive education requiring large school populations was imposed by Dr Wyndham on all non-State schools accepting government funding. As such a school from 1963 onwards, Holy Cross College was obliged to accept students from various schools which the CEO closed for economic reasons. The College's identity as a regional secondary school was distorted by the influx of students who lived outside the region and consequently there was a diminished place in the school for the local parishes, their communities and their priests. The ties with the local communities, and with the parishes, became even more tenuous as the College drew on a much wider and diverse area for its students in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, the old family links of girls following their

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<sup>8</sup> Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, pp. 230-231.

mothers, older sisters and cousins to the College were broken as booming property prices, and the replacement of family friendly housing with medium and high density developments, forced young people, and those establishing a family, out of the area. A sense of community cohesiveness within the College, so evident from its beginnings, now became noticeably weaker in the junior secondary (middle) school, a fact lamented, as school and staff newsletters from the 1970s onwards clearly indicate. The middle class 'respectable' and solidly Catholic families of the pre-1960s College became a dwindling proportion of College parents, to be replaced by an increasing proportion of those who were economically, and often socially, struggling, and the number of single parent families markedly increased, reflecting changing family structures in the wider society. Inclusiveness of these groups in their daughter's education, along with their weak or non-involvement with the Catholic faith, was an on-going concern of the College staff.

There were further challenges to the efforts by the College community to build and maintain a cohesive identity, when the senior school at Paul Street, for economic reasons, returned to the middle school site. This upheaval was followed in 1991, by the absorption of the remaining students and staff of St Patrick's High School, Church Hill, when it closed in 1990. The struggle for cohesion was made more challenging by the increasing number of overseas students through the 1980s and 1990s. Using initiative to counteract critical demographic changes in its catchment area, Holy Cross College developed a reputation for being a highly successful school for overseas students, until the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997-8 undermined this position. The resulting sharp decline in enrolments, and a forecast increasing decline in the school-age population of the Eastern Suburbs, resulted in an untenable future for the College. By the twenty-first century, only fifty-nine per cent of the students attending Holy Cross College were Catholic, well below the proportion decreed acceptable by the CEO. It is not known how significant this was as a factor in the official decision to close the College. Throughout this time of decline, the Holy Cross community led by Sr Barbara McDonough, aspired to the fullest possible development of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and cultural attributes of girls through a Catholic education inspired by the Mercy Vision of the education of girls, but as always, constrained by the reality of finances, staffing, physical resources, and imposed authority.

This study has found the eventual decline of Holy Cross College in the 1990s can be



mapped in terms of the loss of its unique identity as a middle-class independent school, a loss forged by a rollercoaster of economic, cultural, demographic, political and pedagogical change. Br Marcellin Flynn has conducted a long-term study on the changing nature of the culture of Catholic schools on behalf of the Sydney CEO and has stated unequivocally that: ‘The most distinctive feature of highly effective schools continues to be their outstanding culture which gives them a special character or spirit.’<sup>9</sup> This history of Holy Cross would support such a perception.

### **Responding to the questions**

At the beginning of this thesis, the following overarching question was posed: Why did Holy Cross College close in 2001? It is now clear that the closure of the College was the result of a complex set of factors:

- The crisis of Catholic education in the Sydney Archdiocese in the 1960s and 1970s, which was precipitated by the combined impacts of the influx of European migrants, the post-war increase in the natural rate of population growth, and the imposition of the Wyndham Scheme of Secondary Education.
- The following rationalisation by the Archdiocese of its educational resources which involved the creation of regional schools.
- The nature of the Sisters of Mercy as an order strongly grounded in the local Church, which led to Holy Cross College being chosen as the Woollahra Catholic Girls’ Regional High School.
- The consequent loss of autonomy by the school administration and the weakening of ties with local parishes.
- The decline in music teaching at the College following the necessity of music teachers moving into the classroom owing to the shortage of classroom teachers, this move being facilitated by the granting of state aid to Catholic schools which removed the reliance of the sisters on music fees as an important source of income.
- The demographic changes in the Eastern Suburbs which led to a decrease in the school age population of the area.
- The fact that there were four well-established independent Catholic girls’ schools in close proximity to Holy Cross, two of which had boarding facilities and had

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<sup>9</sup> Flynn and Mok, *Catholic Schools 2000*, p. 160. It is not clear whether this refers to a collective or an individual school culture.

retained the primary section of their schools.

- The further weakening of the middle class, academic nature of the junior secondary section of the College, as it absorbed students from inner city schools closed by the CEO.
- The Asian Economic Crisis of 1997-8 which led to an immediate decrease in the full-fee paying overseas students who had boosted the school's population and economic base sufficiently to keep it open.

The second question posed at the beginning of this thesis was: Did Holy Cross College achieve the objectives of the founding pioneers including Cardinal Moran? As has been seen, the fundamental aspiration of Moran and the founding pioneer sisters was to foster the passing on of the Catholic faith to generations of Holy Cross students.

This history of the College clearly traces the basic concern of the sisters for the religious development of the students in the Catholic tradition of Christianity. Right to the closure of the school, religion classes were given priority in the curriculum and time-table. In this enterprise the Parramatta Sisters were actually involved in the up-dating of catechetical methods which were then implemented in the College. Even in the very closing years when there were many non-Catholics in the student body, religion generally, and liturgy in particular, were highlighted, and at this time, following a request from the College's Student Representative Council, a School Hymn was introduced in 1997. With the title 'Nothing Without God' (Nihil Sine Deo – the College motto), it encapsulated basic Christian religious values which had been presented as ideals to the school community across the decades.

The founding pioneer sisters would generally have not considered it an intrusion into the privacy of their students to enquire after their Sunday Mass attendance, the Mass (the Eucharist) being the sign and source of unity in the Catholic community. Over the decades, however, as religion in Australia moved more into the private sphere,<sup>10</sup> this would have been considered unthinkable by Holy Cross teachers. According to the Christian Research Association, the latest results of the 2006 National Church Life Survey confirm the very low church attendance in the traditional Christian

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<sup>10</sup> See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2007, chapter 12.

denominations, including the Catholic. It comments that: ‘Since the 1960s, younger generations have gone missing.’<sup>11</sup> No doubt this includes a number of Holy Cross ex-students, which would sadden Moran and the founding pioneer sisters.

For the present situation concerning the place of religion in the life of Holy Cross ex-students, apart from public documents, we depend upon allusions to religion in the responses made to the invitation to contribute to the collection of recollections entitled *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1908-2001: celebration of our education* and the brief life summaries contained in booklets produced by the organisers of the thirty year reunion of the 1967 HSC class and the fifty year reunion of the 1957 LC class, as well as interviews carried out in the course of research for this thesis. In the first of these sources, which contains approximately 170 entries which span the near century of the College’s existence, there were thirty explicit references to religion and twenty-four explicit references to associated values.

The following are some examples of references to religion in the responses to the invitation to send in recollections of Holy Cross College following the announcement of the closure of the College:

#### 1920s-1930s

- ‘Religion well in front of us all of the time. Sister [M.] Koska – a great religious leader and strict little lady [...] a song I liked was “This is my Prayer”’.<sup>12</sup>
- The daughters of a student of this period, too ill to respond herself, reported that their mother did pioneering work to set up the Catechist movement in State schools.<sup>13</sup>

#### 1940s

- ‘I look back to those years as the beginning of what have become lifelong emphases. Among them a curiosity about the meaning of life, the Christian God and religion.’<sup>14</sup>
- ‘At Easter, going up to the convent to make-up the basket of petals – for Holy Thursday night – loved Easter’.<sup>15</sup>

#### 1950s

- ‘Being made a Child of Mary[ ...] Easter in the Church, a magic time, scattering of

<sup>11</sup> *Pointers*, Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, vol. 18, no.1, March 2008, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Holy Cross College Woollahra, 1908-2001: celebration of our education* (hereafter *Celebration*), p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> *Celebration*, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Celebration*, p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> *Celebration*, p. 95.

- rose petals, the incense [and] going to the chapel on special occasions.’<sup>16</sup>
- ‘A major influence on me throughout my life has been my Catholic faith ... The unquestioning time of that faith passed, then came the questioning. Finally has come the renewal of my Christianity, which is now with me and ever deepening.’<sup>17</sup>
  - ‘My loyalties to and love of my “Alma Mater” have never waned. The beautiful nuns, the ethic of dignity and manners as nurtured by example and attitude can never be forgotten. The orchestra, the encouragement and love of music and appreciation of its excellence and its uplifting qualities,[ ...] but above all, the truly Christian ethic and especially the devotion to Our Lady of Mercy.’<sup>18</sup>
  - ‘Friday Benediction – the whole school filing into the church, dressed in full uniform (hats, gloves etc.) and the beautiful Latin hymns.’<sup>19</sup>

### 1960s

- ‘I remember the discussions after school – discussing spiritual issues and the guidance given by the Sisters [..]. very much appreciated.’<sup>20</sup>
- ‘I remember with real affection and gratitude the Sisters who taught us. They did inestimably more than teach. They befriended us, advocated for us, counselled us and disciplined us. Essentially, they liked us, believed in our potential to become self-determining women who would value the Catholic tradition of faith and action and action for social justice.’<sup>21</sup>

### 1970s

- ‘The retreat in Katoomba, 1971[and] Legion of Mary meetings’.<sup>22</sup>
- ‘Notebook for Lenten prayers and sacrifices.’<sup>23</sup>
- ‘Singing at Mass on the first Friday of every month and practising the songs beforehand.’<sup>24</sup>
- ‘Meeting my friend was a highlight [of life at Holy Cross]. We spent all our spare time together at school and home playing guitar and singing. This led to many years of providing music for Saturday Mass at Haymarket.’<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Celebration*, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> *Celebration*, p.106.

<sup>18</sup> *Celebration*, p.109.

<sup>19</sup> *Celebration*, p.111.

<sup>20</sup> *Celebration*, p.121.

<sup>21</sup> *Celebration*, p.124.

<sup>22</sup> *Celebration*, p.141.

<sup>23</sup> *Celebration*, p.143.

<sup>24</sup> *Celebration*, p. 144.

<sup>25</sup> *Celebration*, p.149.

1980s

- ‘I often say that I had an extremely positive school experience – both in terms of education and being part of a Catholic school. In a world where so many are damaged or angry with the Church, I hold no grudge or bitter taste from my experience in a Catholic school. Quite the reverse. I found it an extremely positive and enriching experience. The fact that I am a Visual Arts and Religious education teacher is testimony to this.’<sup>26</sup>
- ‘Mr Hunt’s religion classes listening to meditation music.’<sup>27</sup>

In the brief life accounts (sixty-seven in total) of the 1965 School Certificate and 1967 Higher School Certificate classes at Holy Cross College, there were thirty references to religion. For example:

- ‘Throughout all these years I have kept the faith although at times it has been difficult for me. The turning point in my life was to join a Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group.’<sup>28</sup>
- ‘I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices my parents made to give me a Catholic education and the Mercy spirit lives on in me.’<sup>29</sup>
- ‘My philosophy is to look for the meaning in life’s situations, try to gain some benefits from all experiences and to let go of destructive thoughts. I am happy and grateful to be empowered to be able to both give and receive love.’<sup>30</sup>
- ‘All of us have a bag to pick up, it seems no one escapes sorrow. As I look at my old friends from Holy Cross College I realise what a mentally strong lot we are in times of tragedy and hardship. Faith is important. I guess we must have learnt something all those years ago.’<sup>31</sup>

**Sense of community**

Strongly associated with the aspiration of the pioneers of Holy Cross College for the religious development of the girls was the growth of a sense of community. As has been seen, the chronicler of the early years of the College commented on the growing sense of

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<sup>26</sup> *Celebration*, p. 154.

<sup>27</sup> *Celebration*, p. 165.

<sup>28</sup> Holy Cross College Woollahra, classes of 1965-1967, thirty year reunion, (hereafter Classes of 1965-1967) unpublished collection of contributions by class members, compiled by Christine Young, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 42.

family within the school, facilitated by small numbers. Nell Stanley, a student in this early period, recalled the school picnics at the beach which the girls organised for themselves during the school holidays. A student of the 1950s recollected that on summer Sundays, particularly in the school holidays, a ‘group of Holy Cross friends met for a picnic lunch and lots of swimming’, at the beach.<sup>32</sup> The various printed recollections mentioned above contain numerous references to self-organised gatherings of class mates. This was also evident in the interviews of focus groups and in individual interviews.

It was also noted, as the Holy Cross story moved across the decades, that the highly successful, indeed occasionally internationally famous, ex-students kept contact with the school and their school peers. One such internationally successful ex-student is the novelist Colleen McCullough, who was a student in the 1954 LC class. A fellow student from this class reported in *Celebration of Our Education*: ‘In April 1999 the class of ’54 had a reunion on Norfolk Island with Colleen McCullough to celebrate 45 years since leaving school [...]we spent a wonderful week together and if ever the spirit of Holy Cross was alive and well it was there on Norfolk. The thing we share is a common bond and that is Holy Cross College.’<sup>33</sup>

Because of the relative smallness of the College there were ties of loyalty across classes as well as within classes. In *Celebration of Our Education*, Sandra Gailey (LC 1958) recalled that as the presenter of guest speakers for Friends of the Sydney Opera House she had asked Colleen McCullough to be a guest speaker. She reported: ‘Colleen agreed [...] (She was superb!), signed books at length, and was most generous in giving of her precious time.’ ‘Sandra quoted Colleen as saying: ‘Sandra, I’ll come along – you know “the Holy Cross loyalties.”’<sup>34</sup> Colleen has shared in public, such as on the Andrew Denton *Enough Rope* Show on ABC Television (September 2007), the sadness of her family life and the determination she had to complete her LC year and win a university place against her father’s wishes. The Holy Cross Pioneers would be delighted that the community spirit they encouraged at Holy Cross had lived on so splendidly.

This provision of community support being especially valued when parental support is lacking was articulated in *Celebration of Our Education* by a student of the 1985-1990

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<sup>32</sup> E-mail from Sandra Donohoe (nee Gailey) to the author, 2 July 2008.

<sup>33</sup> *Celebration*, p. 96.

<sup>34</sup> *Celebration*, p. 109.

years when the number of students from broken homes had increased considerably. This student commented: '[S]chool felt like home for a lot of us who had problems in our own home and I was sad to leave. I still have the same group of friends that I made when I first started at Holy Cross and we still laugh at things that happened to us there.'<sup>35</sup>

### **A love of learning**

As has been seen, Holy Cross College had a strong academic tradition from the earliest years when very few girls sat for the Leaving Certificate. The pioneering sisters encouraged girls to continue their education and facilitated this by encouraging parents to permit their girls to proceed beyond the Intermediate Certificate and, if necessary, provided financial support in the form of a bursary.<sup>36</sup> There were, too, among these pioneering sisters, as among their successors and the increasing number of lay teachers, enthusiastic teachers with a love for learning, which they aspired to impart to their students.

While a significant minority of girls, who have left written recollections, declared 'sport and boys' to be their main interests at school, an equally significant minority acknowledged a 'love of learning' kindled by their school experience. For example:

- '[I] loved Latin from Mother Thecla and can still help children and grandchildren with Latin homework. Loved history with Sr Malachy and English.'<sup>37</sup>
- '[My] greatest appreciation of Holy Cross College is that it has given me a love of learning.'<sup>38</sup>
- 'Sister Alphonsus (Alfie) was a spell-binding teacher. Her love of literature and poetry was contagious. I have a life-long love affair with books because of her.'<sup>39</sup>
- 'I owe a debt of gratitude to the Sisters of Mercy, both at St Anne's and at Holy Cross, for my formal education and for encouraging me to use my academic talents. I owe a special debt to Mrs Thom at Holy Cross for encouraging me to undertake the Arts-Law course at Sydney University. This was at a time when very few females enrolled in law.'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Celebration*, p. 158.

<sup>36</sup> *Celebration*, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> *Celebration*, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Celebration*, p. 91.

<sup>39</sup> *Celebration*, p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> *Celebration*, p. 106.

- ‘Mathematics lessons – inspiring teacher (Sr M. de Sales). A thread of her continues in me – a love of mathematics.’<sup>41</sup>

### **Music**

As has been seen, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy were leaders in the field of music, both instrumental and as an academic subject. They worked tirelessly for the latter. Of the music centres established by the Parramatta sisters, Holy Cross was the most distinguished, in that it won the Australian Music Examinations Board Shield six times, compared to OLMC Parramatta’s five wins, Golden Grove’s five, Ryde’s two and Enmore’s one. Music teachers saw their pupils win awards of international standing. Life-long contacts by the congregation were maintained with leading university academics and music practitioners whose respect the sisters had earned. While this would have pleased the pioneer sisters and Moran, they would have deplored the decline in music after the school was incorporated into the regional archdiocesan school system. However, from the written recollections of ex-students and interviews with them, it is clear that those coming from the period before the 1970s appreciated the strong music tradition of the College, which they had enjoyed, and a number indicated that they were passing on to their children in various ways, their musical heritage from Holy Cross.

### **Upward mobility of the Catholic community**

It was no secret that Cardinal Moran was anxious to promote the upward social mobility of Catholics, not only to improve their economic situation but also to better situate them to contribute to leadership in the Church and the wider community. Holy Cross ex-students have not disappointed him or their pioneer women founders in this respect, as can be seen from the past or present occupation of ex-students as recorded in the sources mentioned above.

Adrienne Bucknole (nee Donato) reported on the 1965 LC class to which she belonged: ‘From that class we have a judge, school principals, teachers, librarians, successful business women, many mums, a couple of grandmothers and a congregational leader!’<sup>42</sup> From the brief life stories of the 1967 HSC class compiled in 1997 it is seen that out of the sixty-six who gave their occupation only four stated their occupation as ‘home duties’;

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<sup>41</sup> Classes of 1965-1967, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Celebration*, p. 123.



eighteen were teachers – approximately equally divided between Catholic and state schools; twenty-seven were involved in secretarial/clerical/accounting/business work; two were university lecturers; one doctor; a pharmacist (also having done a Law degree); five nurses; one pathologist; one radiographer, one lab technician; two librarians (one also having a law degree); two students.

It is clear too, from other recollections and interviews that there are Holy Cross College ex-students who have held influential positions in the Public Service. Jan Brady (LC1953) received honourable mention in the 2004-5 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Taxation: ‘During a 40 year career with us, Jan Brady became one of our first female assessors and in 1987 our first female Deputy Commissioner. She is widely recognised as being a positive role model for women across the Australian Public Service.’<sup>43</sup> Philippa Hall (1969 LC) in 2001 was the Deputy Director General, NSW Department of Women, working on social policies to improve the position of women in NSW. She explained: ‘I have worked in almost all the NSW based human rights/equal opportunity agencies over the years’. Philippa recalled that she had had her own problems as a teenager and ‘as a sometimes troubled, occasionally distressed, independent and defiant young person, ... was generally treated kindly [at Holy Cross College] and offered a lot of support in [her] intellectual development and in [her] growing up.’<sup>44</sup> In the business world, ex-student Kris Neill, a former senior advisor to the then NSW Premier Bob Carr, is now the Head of the Corporate Communications division at Macquarie Bank and is a board member of the Australian Science Media Centre.<sup>45</sup> Kris has paid tribute to the ‘great teachers who challenged and inspired us to reach our potential’.<sup>46</sup>

### **Relationship with the parish**

As has been seen, a remarkable aspect of the history of Holy Cross College across the twentieth century was its strong, positive relationship with the parish priest of Holy Cross. While curates came and went, there were only three parish priests for almost the whole century: Fr Peter O’Reilly, (1906-1931); Monsignor Richard Collender (1931- 1958); and Archbishop James Carroll, affectionately known as ‘Doc’, (1958-1995). Amy Alger, (Year 11, 1995) commented, following the death of Archbishop Carroll:

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<sup>43</sup> [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

<sup>44</sup> *Celebration*, p. 130.

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.macquarie.com/foundation\\_board.htm](http://www.macquarie.com/foundation_board.htm) and [http://www.aussmc.org./about\\_board.php](http://www.aussmc.org./about_board.php)

<sup>46</sup> *Celebration*, p. 147.

I know that nothing any one can say could ever describe what a loving, caring and generous man he was. I've known Archbishop Carroll for 13 years [...] I used to serve on the altar at Holy Cross with my brothers and I have Archbishop Carroll to thank for that. There will never be anyone like him.<sup>47</sup>

Sr Barbara McDonough, the last principal, observed:

Firstly he gave his time – he was a caring and interested friend with whom the Sisters could discuss their hopes and dreams for their students. He was a very wise man and often had further suggestions to make – to extend the ‘dreams’ beyond the Sisters’ sometimes modest aspirations. Then there was the practical assistance. Financial support was generously given, often from his own personal resources. All this was done very privately. Doc shunned public acclamation, and considered that seeing the benefits enjoyed by the students was all the reward he needed.<sup>48</sup>

As was seen in the course of this thesis, one of the aspirations of the Archbishop was to see a strong Holy Cross College from K-12. He put enormous effort and resources into developing the parish school to become a first class primary school. It received the patronage of the middle class as well as the working class in the area. The Archbishop saw it as a feeder school for the College, but the number of middle class parents choosing to send their girls on to the College after attending the primary school lessened considerably after its regionalisation, as has been shown.

This was a great disappointment to the Archbishop, but the parish primary school continued to flourish and the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy provided a principal for it for 100 years, with Sr Veronica Powell (a Holy Cross College ex-student) being the last, and due to retire in December 2008. The Archbishop would be heartened by the recent news that the first lay principal, who has been appointed by the Sydney Catholic Education Office, is Mrs Vicki Bourne Fallon, a past pupil of both Holy Cross Primary School and Holy Cross College.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Celebration*, p. 175.

<sup>48</sup> *Celebration*, p. 176.

<sup>49</sup> Sr Ailsa Mackinnon to the congregation, 20 June 2008.

### **In conclusion**

It has been seen that this history of Holy Cross College is a micro-study of the development of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Sydney across the twentieth century. It was a time of great challenge and involved enormous self-sacrificing cooperation and generosity, and suffering, and questioning (at times bitter) of the Catholic community. The dominance of the Catholic Building and Finance Committee was eventually successfully challenged by the development of a professional Catholic Education Office (mostly staffed by religious or ex-religious), which was supportive of Holy Cross College in its various crises. It has also been seen how geography and place played a significant part in the history of the school. Brigidine Convent, Randwick, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington, both regionalised independent schools in the Eastern Suburbs, have flourished because they were situated in the southern section of the Eastern Suburbs, with an expanding catchment area, while Holy Cross was in the circumscribed northern section in close proximity to well established independent Catholic girls' high schools.

This thesis has shown that there existed at Holy Cross College a vibrant school culture during the early period of the school's existence and well into the period after regionalisation. It is this researcher's opinion that it is the memory of, and attachment to, this culture which is the glue which will continue to bind together so many former members of the school's community. It is clear that in their wishing to contribute to a history of the school, they are able to continue to reinforce and re-fashion its culture, which is still a living organism as long as they continue to organise re-unions and share their recollections. This thesis was supported by the Holy Cross Memorial Scholarship set up by the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. It is through this scholarship that the strong academic tradition of Holy Cross College will live on to contribute to the academic life of Australia. The Holy Cross College Centenary Reunion, September 2008, promises to be a further catalyst to on-going connections between the members of the College ex-students community.

This thesis has traced the development and decline of a unique school culture in the microcosm of Holy Cross College, one firmly based in Catholic values and beliefs. It is hoped that the strong contextual narrative of this thesis will encourage more micro in-depth research within the broader picture of Catholic history in Australia. As indicated

initially, the researcher agrees with Southgate's assertion that 'to be of any benefit, historical study must result in some effect upon the future; it must facilitate, enable, and direct the course of future change'.<sup>50</sup> It is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the ongoing discourse among educators in general, and Catholic educators in particular, in such areas as the education of women, concerning the relationships between the religious and secular in the educational enterprise, a problem our forefathers, both Church (especially Moran) and state bequeathed to us.

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<sup>50</sup> Southgate, *History, What And Why?*, p. 141.

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- Box: 4.5a       Holy Cross Convent Woollahra/Bondi Junction
- Box: 5           Moran/Callan
- Box: 5.1        Schools, Holy Cross
- Box: 5.3        Holy Cross College Records

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S = ex-student; T = ex-teacher

Eileen Barry (S) 1921-1924

Mary Connolly (S) 1930-1935

Sr Monica Musgrave (S) 1940-1943

Sr Marie Gaudry (S) 1942-46 (T) 1958-1973 (middle school principal 1966-1973)

Sr Cecily Gaudry (S) 1946-1950

Sr Therese Gaudry (S) 1950-1954 (T) 1973-74 (senior school.); 1975-1982 (middle school principal)

Sue Nagy (S) 1946-57

Margaret Geaney (S) 1951-57

Mary Rheinberger (S) 1953-57

Maree Brennan (S) 1953-57

Patricia Pezzutti (S) 1953-55

Yolanda Paino (S) 1954-65

Sr Caroline Ryan (S) 1964-65 (T) 1973; 1981-88 (middle school principal 1983-1988)

Sr Barbara McDonough (T) 1960-62; 1974-76; 1988-2001 (principal 1989-2001)

Vicki Starr (S) 1961-65

Gilda Abrahams (S) 1961-1965

Adrienne Donato (S) 1963-65

Wendy Brown (T) 1963; 1968-1972

Veronica Hickie (T) 1971-1978; 1980-2001.

Sr Pat Donovan (T) 1971-78 (senior school principal)

Brian Matthews (Independent Teachers Association)

Fr John Mc Sweeney (curate at Holy Cross parish)

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## Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

**Principal Investigator/Supervisor:** Dr Sophie McGrath Sydney Campus

**Co-Investigators:**

**Student Researcher:** Ms Janice Garaty Sydney Campus

**Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:**

History of Holy Cross College, Woollahra, NSW, 1908-2001.

**for the period:** June 2004 to July 2007

**Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number:** N2003.04-47

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)* apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
  - security of records
  - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
  - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
  - proposed changes to the protocol
  - unforeseen circumstances or events
  - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: .....

(Research Services Officer, Strathfield Campus)

Date: .....

1/6/2004

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 Strathfield Campus (Mount Saint Mary)  
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## INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT: History of Holy Cross College, Woollahra NSW 1908-2001  
 SUPERVISOR: Dr. Sophie McGrath  
 STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms. Janice Garaty

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in the project to write a history of Holy Cross College Woollahra covering the period from its establishment to its closure. The focus will be on the different elements of the school community within the wider context of Australian social and political history with the accent on the histories of education, culture, Catholic Church and women religious. The project will use reminiscences of former staff, former students and others who were associated with the school community as well as archival material and official documentation.

If you agree to a taped interview, the time required will be about one hour and it will take place at a location convenient to you. All participation is voluntary and it is not anticipated there will be any risks, inconvenience and/or discomforts to you.

The data collected will enable the researcher to produce a history of the school in which there has been significant input by past students, teachers, parents and those who have been in some way part of the wider school community. Subsequently this history will be available to those who have contributed to the data collected initially as a doctoral dissertation and it is hoped, eventually as a published book. Because the school is no longer functioning, a published history is seen as a fitting memorial to this institution. The history will contribute to a body of scholarship which focuses on the histories of the Catholic Church, religious life, women and secondary education, especially education of girls.

You are advised that you are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time up to the date specified on the consent form, without giving a reason.

Results from the study will be summarised and can appear in publications. The researcher may use information collected and used for the purpose of this study to establish a database for future use by the researcher. The information collected will

remain in the Convent of Mercy, Parramatta archives for the use of other researchers in a form that will identify the participants. If you wish to have your name unknown in any archived or published material and if this has been indicated by you on the consent form, then the researcher will ensure confidentiality.

There will be every possible attempt made to provide you with appropriate feedback on the results of this research project. The publication of the history of the school will be publicised as widely as possible and through appropriate channels.

Any questions you may have regarding this project should be directed to either the supervisor or the student researcher. Their contact details are given below.

Supervisor: Dr. Sophie McGrath  
Tel: 02 9704129

Student Researcher: Ms. Janice Garaty  
E-mail: [jrgara001@student.acu.edu.au](mailto:jrgara001@student.acu.edu.au)

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Supervisor or Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee

C/o Research Services  
Australian Catholic University  
Strathfield Campus  
Locked Bag 2002  
STRATHFIELD  
NSW 2135  
Tel: 02 97014159  
Fax: 02 97014350

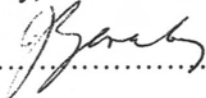
Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If you wish to participate in the study, would you please sign the consent form and return it to

Ms. Janice Garaty  
PO BOX H183  
HURLSTONE PARK  
NSW 2193

The consent form will be signed by both the researcher and the supervisor and a copy will be returned to you for your records.

Thanking you in anticipation,  
Yours truly,

.....  


Janice Garaty



**CONSENT FORM**

TITLE OF PROJECT: History of Holy Cross College, Woollahra 1908-2001

NAMES OF STAFF SUPERVISOR: Dr. Sophie McGrath

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms. Janice Garaty

I ..... (the participant) have read (or, where appropriate, have had read to me) and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time up until 31/11/2006.

**Please tick one of the following:**

**Option 1** I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers. I give my consent to being identified in any subsequent research or publication.

**Option 2** I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR..... DATE.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER..... DATE.....