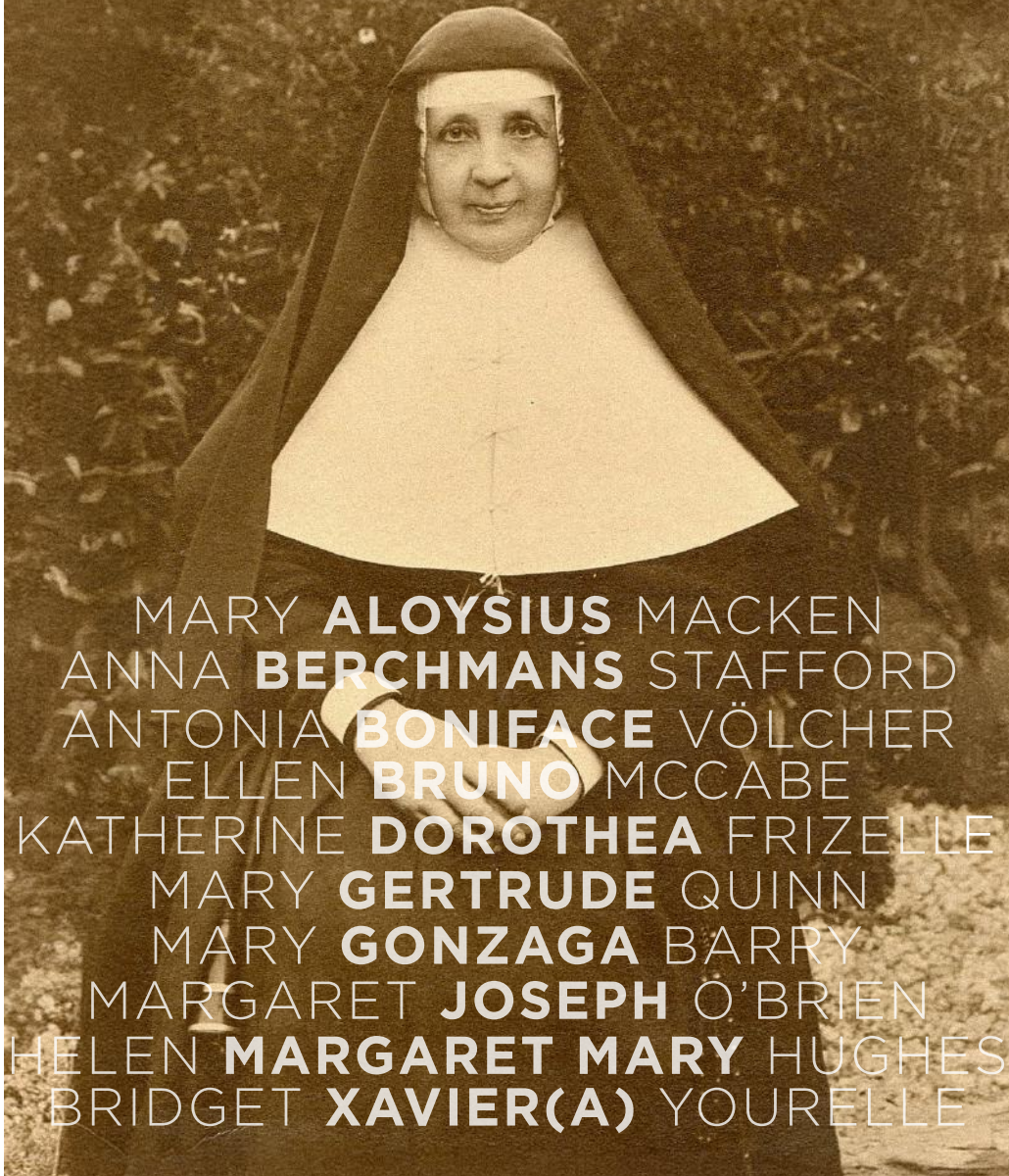


150   
1875 - 2025  
AUSTRALIA & SOUTH EAST ASIA  
**LORETO**  
*Being faithful to grace*



MARY **ALOYSIUS** MACKEN  
ANNA **BERCHMANS** STAFFORD  
ANTONIA **BONIFACE** VÖLCHER  
ELLEN **BRUNO** MCCABE  
KATHERINE **DOROTHEA** FRIZELLE  
MARY **GERTRUDE** QUINN  
MARY **GONZAGA** BARRY  
MARGARET **JOSEPH** O'BRIEN  
HELEN **MARGARET MARY** HUGHES  
BRIDGET **XAVIER(A)** YOURELLE

# Acknowledgements



**School Personnel:** Principals, Directors of Mission, Loreto Schools Advisory Council members, Creative Design, Art & Drama faculty members, Development and Marketing personnel, Archivists, Students, Maintenance staff

**IBVM:** Artists and seamstresses, writers and creators

**Welcome Video:** Chris Franklin: Franklin Image, Genevieve Lacey: Loreto Ballarat, 1990

**Companion Banners:** Gareth Lewis: Graphic Designer  
Karen Fogarty and Isabella Murphy: Province Communications Team  
Robin Scott: Province Archivist  
Bravo Print and Design

**Province Banner:** Nicole Langford: Graphic Designer  
Robin Scott: Province Archivist  
Karen Fogarty & Isabella Murphy: Province Communications Team

**Mannequins:** With thanks to the Abbotsford Convent Trust for permission to recreate the Feminine Fortitude Exhibition of 2022 with special permission and blessing from the artists Trudy Shuringa Kelder and Chitra Mangma

Goodly Row of Pearls artwork on the skirts: Taylor Doherty  
Printing of skirts: Bravo Print and Design  
Construction of the frame and bustle: Ian Hamilton



**Play Serious Business** Brigid Coleridge: Playwright  
Jen Davis: Producer

**Catalogue & Printing:** Gareth Lewis: Graphic Designer  
Loreto Brown Bread Cards, Tea Towels & Aprons:  
Rachael Flynn (LN'85) Red Tractor Designs



# Welcome



In this sesquicentenary year of the founding of the Loreto Province of Australia and South East Asia, we offer you a warm welcome and invite you to explore the creative expressions in this exhibition. They are the continuing legacy of the original vision of Mother Gonzaga Barry *ibvm* and her nine companions.

To a person, these women believed deeply that life was good, that God was their guide and that working with others could bring about exciting, imaginative works to keep the founding vision alive, inspiring future generations. They believed in leaving behind them something on which others could and would build. One hundred and fifty years later, this believing and building continues!

A line from the play written by Veronica Brady *ibvm* for the 1975 centenary year, gives us insight into an aspect of 'build' that is still at the heart of our spirituality today. Commenting on Gonzaga Barry's capacity for imaginative works, the narrator says:

*All great endeavour begins, not building with bricks and mortar, perishable things, but building the mystery of persons, always in the direction of love.*

The creativity and collaboration expressed in this exhibition celebrate the building of persons as a core value, the gift and grace of being faithful to the vision, as well as the beauty of love and connection.

As you move through these spaces hear the affectionate old Mother say to you:

*Your life given you by God is as a canvas on which are painted the portraits and the scenes of everyday life.*

Enjoy these expressions of talent in colour, word, music and poetry; marvel at the creation of so much beauty; feel connected to the stories past and present, while celebrating the peace, joy and gratitude embedded in this living tradition of Loreto in Australia and South East Asia.

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## Original dreamers of this celebratory year.

Debbie Henry, Rommie Masarei,  
Michelle McCarty, Carolyn McSwiney,  
Sandra Perrett, Claire Renkin,  
Robin Scott, Anna Turkington,  
Marina Ugonotti, Carolyn Young.



# 150 Artwork



## Evie Davidson

A proud Dja Dja Wurung woman from the outskirts of Ballarat and currently a Year 10 student at Loreto College Ballarat. In 2023 her group was treated to an inspiring session with Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann from the Northern Territory, and invited to make a small painting.

Evie chose a Eucalyptus branch with blossoms under a night sky. It is this that she then worked on with the guidance of Lua Pellegrini to design the logo for the 2025 celebrations.

## Lua Pellegrini

A proud Wiradjuri woman who grew up on Darug Country and an Alumna of Loreto Normanhurst, Class of 2019.

Lua graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Arts, majoring in Indigenous Studies at the University of NSW. She has also worked as the Artist in Residence at St Andrew's College within The University of Sydney.

Lua says it was a pleasure to work with and mentor Evie, watching her self-efficacy and confidence surrounding her ideas and artistic practice through the process of designing the artwork for the 2025 celebrations.







The 150 years artwork design includes the **blue waters of Lake Wendouree** where the traditional owners of the land are the Wadawurrung people.

The **clusters of stars** (Pleiades Seven Sisters) represent the sisters who accompanied Mother Gonzaga Barry to Ballarat in 1875.

The **flowers** from the eucalyptus tree recall the name of the first Loreto Newsletter begun in 1886 called *Eucalyptus Blossoms*.

The symbolic songlines dotted with **yarning circles** depict the shared journey of all Loreto students and the *Open Circle* of Mary Ward and her companions.



# The Tagline

## Being faithful to grace

**Writing more than 25 years after arriving in Australia (1875) Mother Gonzaga Barry wrote:**

*I suppose no one will ever know what it cost me to leave Ireland and my many Irish friends. It nearly broke my heart, though I was told by Superiors that I would not be sent against my will, I felt I had to do it, or be unfaithful to grace; and when Reverend Mother told me that if I had not consented to go, she would not have allowed any of the Sisters to go to Ballarat, I felt grateful to God who gave me strength.*

**Being faithful to grace** is to remember everyday how relationships and encounters invite us to see goodness, to recognise graciousness, kindness and humility in ourselves, in others and in the way creation holds this grace as a gift for our health and wellbeing.

Grace looks out for the other - always encouraging us to look for the greater good and the best in ourselves and each other.



*Use your young eyes and store away  
pictures of all that is beautiful  
in God's creation.*



Mother Gonzaga Barry IBVM  
24 July, 1834 - 5 March, 1915



# The storyline is good

**This year we gather in many places to celebrate the ten humble, courageous and resilient women who left Ireland 150 years ago to embark on a journey about which they knew very little.**

Led by the diminutive and hard of hearing Mother Gonzaga Barry, these pioneer women, ranging in age from 18 to 55, came to give the rest of their lives in the service of Catholic education in Australia. They departed Dublin on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1875, and when someone asked Gonzaga how she felt, she stretched out her arms as she answered: *My hands are in God's hands. He can lead me where He wills.* And lead her, God did!

Gonzaga Barry is considered unique in the history of Australian education, both in the span of her interests and the breadth of her approach. Very quickly she opened kindergartens, primary and secondary schooling, preparation for university, etiquette classes and the training of teachers in order to realise the potential she saw in every student.

**The sisters were well educated themselves:**

spoke various languages, one was already trained in teaching various subjects for a liberal education, they played musical instruments and sang, performed and directed plays and had a wonderful telescope and an Orrery for a study of the stars!

Mother Gonzaga Barry was determined that a Loreto education would produce well-informed women of faith and integrity, who could make a positive difference in whatever field they chose, while consciously committed to assisting those experiencing disadvantage.

Today, this educational legacy is found around the country, fulfilling Gonzaga's desire that *each generation leave behind them something on which others can build.*



# Our Pioneer Women



How to capture the energy, vibrancy and dedication of these ten pioneer women? What a gift they were to Mother Gonzaga Barry as their leader. What a gift they were to each other with their diverse personalities, skills and interests.

Their lives were nothing but turned upside down as they left their homeland and found a place amongst gold fever, vast landscapes and endless possibilities. Each one has a story much longer and richer than can be found on this banner. You can read further in the Archives section of the Province website: [www.loreto.org.au/archives](http://www.loreto.org.au/archives)

Being upside-down in Australia they also seemed to be gifted with a desire "to open themselves to possibility beyond the limits of their imagination" to quote a line from the play *Serious Business* being performed

at this exhibition. These became the graces associated with the development of a holistic approach to education that remains to this day.

Nothing could have been achieved had there not been the deliberate pursuit of an intelligent and ambitious programme of expansion and academic knowledge within these pioneers and the young Australian women who joined them quickly after their arrival. It was not only young people for whom they sought opportunities to suit their interests and abilities, but these women worked tirelessly in the Catholic community, providing guidance in pastoral care, establishing groups for sharing spirituality and they quickly began teaching in the local parish schools.



# Celebrating Feminine Fortitude

To honour the ministry of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Melbourne, and especially Abbotsford, two artists created an installation of five 3 metre tall mannequins titled *Feminine Fortitude*.

The mannequins were dressed as religious women in a traditional habit and wore skirts featuring a number of aspects of life in the Abbotsford Convent.

With permission, we were fortunate to imaginatively recreate this creative work and each school has designed their skirt to honour the local First Nations people with whom they have contact and interaction. Another band in the skirt shows the Architectural features that make each school recognisable. The next band celebrates people from the past and present and finally there was a free choice as to what appeared near the pleated waistline.

The habits on our Sisters are similar to the ones worn by Mother Gonzaga and her nine companions. The veil is distinctly 'Loreto' with its fishtail pleats at the back, the white guimpe with 5 ties, the cuffs and the traditional forehead band. The front of the skirts does not meet – symbolically leaving room for the future to be imagined.

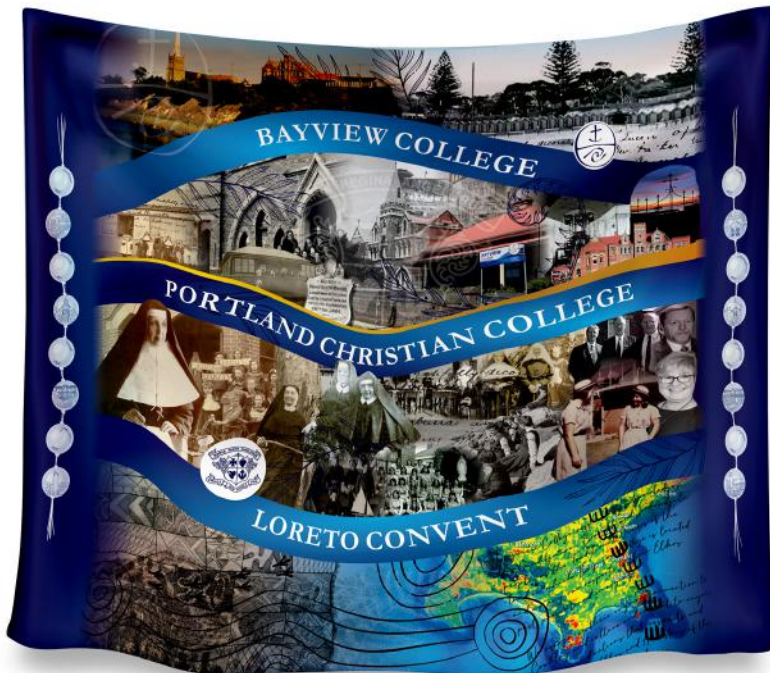
On each skirt and running down the length are the row of goodly pearls, line drawings of a feature of each school, separated by a pearl with the name and year of foundation. Mother Gonzaga desired always that her students be connected, never thinking one foundation was better than the other and recognising each would bring unique gifts to the whole.







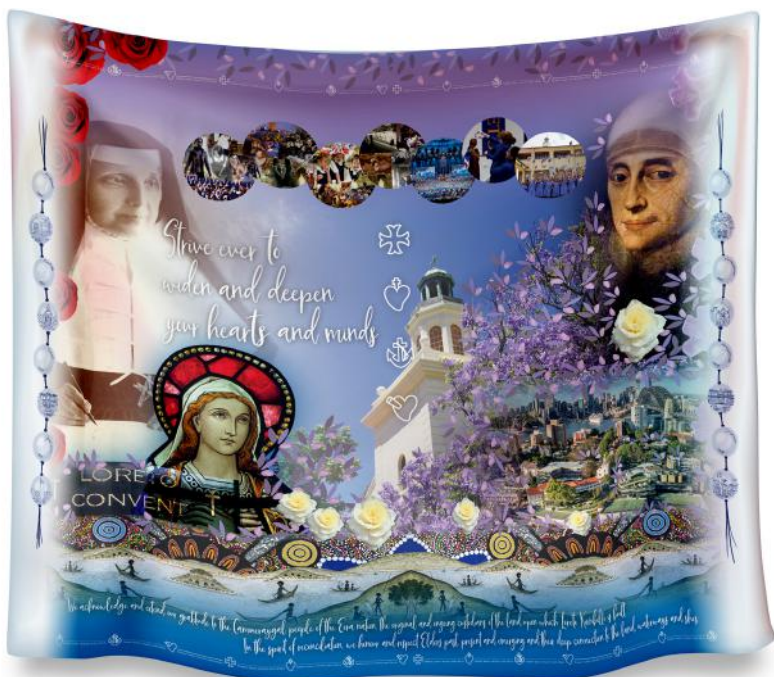
Loreto College Ballarat



Bayview College Portland



Loreto Normanhurst



Loreto Kirribilli





Loreto College Marryatville



Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak





Loreto College Coorparoo



John XXIII College Perth

As you click on the QR code for each school community, you will hear a description of the skirt created by the artists and designers in each place.

The description will take you from the hemline (a tribute to the local First Nations people of the area) to the pleated waistline via two more bands showcasing architecture, activities and achievements. The detail present in each band will be explained along with the reason for its inclusion.

Enjoy discovering the hidden signs and symbols that bring alive the diverse community in each place.



Loreto College  
Ballarat



Loreto College  
Marryatville



Bayview College  
Portland



Loreto Mandeville Hall  
Toorak



Loreto  
Normanhurst



Loreto College  
Coorparoo



Loreto  
Kirribilli



John XXIII College  
Perth

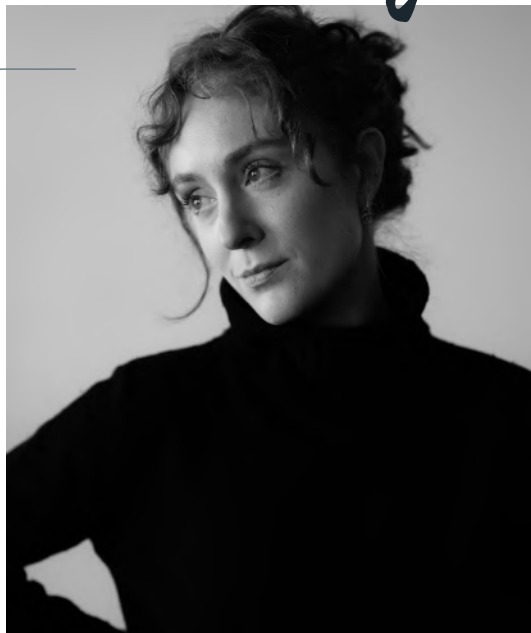
# Play: *Serious Business*



## **Brigid Coleridge** - Playwright

**Brigid is a violinist and poet who divides her time between Australia and the US. She is a founding member of the critically acclaimed US-based Merz Trio, and performs internationally as a recitalist and chamber musician.**

As an artist working in multiple mediums, Brigid is committed to interdisciplinary exploration and collaboration. Her projects often combine her interests in music and literature, with particular attention paid to the theatrical possibilities of performance. Brigid's poems have appeared in Australian and International publications, and she is the winner of the 2023 Gwen Harwood Poetry Prize.



## **Jen Davis** - Producer

**Jennifer began her career with 15 years in broadcast media and advertising, contributing to leading networks like the ABC and Channel Seven, and cutting her teeth as a senior producer with top creative agencies such as Chello and Cream Studios.**

But the real adventure began when she co-founded *Producinator Co.* with her partner Jacob, crafting compelling content for adventure travel brands and impactful non-profits like the Children's Cancer Institute, Active Hearts Foundation, and 1 Million Women. Her journey soon took an exciting turn when she connected with the Marketing team at Loreto Ministries, and in 2022, a conversation with Sr Sandra Perrett about the 150-year celebrations — and a small live production idea — opened a whole new creative chapter.





In 1975 Sr Veronica Brady produced a Centenary Play in Ballarat called “If I must glory”. In the literary style of the skilful and witty Sr Veronica, the play was a conversation between a narrator and Mother Gonzaga Barry, inviting us to go behind the day-to-day life of the ‘little mother’ to experience, understand and appreciate that hers was an amazing spiritual expression of her day but with an abundant and mysterious deep knowing and awareness of grace.

Brigid Coleridge (Loreto Toorak 2005), is an internationally renowned violinist and poet. She performs regularly in Europe and the USA and in 2024 was in Australia with a full schedule of concerts. Her doctoral thesis was an exploration of Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* and is titled ‘From the Heart may it Go to the Heart’.

With this experience and accolades, Brigid was the perfect candidate to commission to take the original play and reimagine it in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century context using the writings of Mother Gonzaga Barry in her letters to students as published annually in the school magazine *Eucalyptus Blossoms*. There became a synchronicity of Gonzaga with Brigid’s thesis title—the connection between composer, performer and listener is integral to one’s capacity to hear, reflect and respond.

When speaking with the Heads of Drama within each school, Brigid said, “*as a student, the most immediate connection I had with major figures in the Australian Loreto order was through various quotations used at school assemblies and events. My knowledge of context and cultural background was cursory and the quotations (particularly aim at something excellent) were more liable to prompt irritation than inspiration. My challenge was to adapt Sr Veronica’s play; with a special challenge of the project being that I felt little affinity to MGB; how an adaptation of language might work and how relationships worked in those days.*”

“*On reading Brady’s play and supplementary material, including a visit to the Ballarat archives, what was uncovered for me was a different*

*character. I realised that the argument that I had in my head with imaginary Gonzaga was actually something that she would have encouraged and enjoyed. So, the challenge became one of telling a story and interacting with this character.”*

Brigid saw how Mother Gonzaga could be brought to life for our modern times. As she notes for herself, “*due to the nature of the music that I play (often written 200+ years ago), I’m interested in an understanding of history as a non-linear: how do we speak to the ways in which the past is alive in our present?*”

“*The idea of a hybrid performance involving technology for this play met my own background in creating ‘scores’ involving spoken text and music and working with a sound engineer in its production. This is something that you will see at work in ‘A Serious Business.’*”

“*Conversation (as a theatrical dynamic) means finding dialogue with a common ground even when it seems there is none, because ‘language’ is a big theme throughout the play. The play uses some of Gonzaga’s actual words but in most encounters, I have sought to translate her ideas into a more contemporary, conversational language.”*

“*Lastly, I’d like to highlight a key theatrical decision: at almost no point in the entire play is Gonzaga’s voice given an embodied form. This decision is partly informed by my own remembered response to famous pictures of her as a student: while I can now appreciate them as fascinating representations, back then they made her seem absolutely foreign and utterly removed from my own present.”*

“*With the play, I was interested in offering a challenge to an audience immersed in a visual world and so what does it mean to have no image/physical presence with which to identify a voice? How does this change our listening and attention? How might it change our ideas?”*

**Enjoy and be challenged.**

# We must voyage

## Jessica Dutton

Jess has always had a passion for poetry, so when she began her research into Mother Gonzaga Barry's life and work, it felt natural to put it into the poetic form. She says her writing is often underpinned by an ecofeminist philosophy, using natural imagery as symbols and motifs; this lens suited a contemporary interpretation of some of Mother Gonzaga Barry's original work completely due to her unwavering appreciation of nature and her constant empowerment of women in the face of oppressive patriarchy.

In her role as middle leader and English teacher at Loreto College Coorparoo, Jess aims to champion the success and strength of the women and girls in the Loreto community. Jessica hopes that these poems capture the spirit of the stories and places established and nurtured by the Loreto Sisters.



## we are wild flowers

Mother Gonzaga told us to look for the golden wattles blooming the *tiny wild flower*

nature is a *privilege*  
we must fight to protect  
the eucalypt is hearty - able to weather  
fires and storms  
but the blossoms are fragile.

Wild, unkempt  
laden with nectar  
the flower unfurls.

## handprints in stone

*having put her hands*  
in laying foundation we carve  
out a place in the earth which  
hands that span time  
have altered / have built upon  
even if the stones crumble with time  
even in metaphor  
we will meet within.

## iridescence

when we think of pearls, there comes  
a traditionalist  
femininity  
but,

there is much more—  
take the baroque pearl, uneven  
sacred in its rare shape  
we champion unique womanhood here  
where upon the small grain the  
nacre —mother of pearl— forms  
builds / encases / creates  
iridescent & imperfect strength.

## looking back

we look back  
preserve the relics  
trace the hand-prints  
laid in stone

but,

*we must not linger*  
we cannot stay, on a familiar shore  
looking out, we must voyage,  
into the storms at sea  
because women are capable  
of so much more

redefinition  
is always possible.



# Hands that span time



Loreto Abbey  
RATHFARNHAM  
Co Dublin, Ireland

Mary's Mount  
BALLARAT  
Victoria, Australia

## Province Tree



Scan to discover  
Loreto schools  
& Ministries



# Planets, Pearls and Possibilities

By the time you reach this final installation in our exhibition you will have a sense of the broadminded vision of Mother Gonzaga Barry and her nine companions. As a team they pioneered a comprehensive approach to provide for all students attending their schools: from the little ones to the older years, from the seriously inquisitive and academic to the highly practical and artistic and combinations of all in-between. There was no one-size fits all approach and Gonzaga wrote about her desire that beauty and wonder, creativity and imagination be a constant source of recognising the work of the Creator in daily life.

At the practical level, she had a printing press installed in the school, she organised the students in teams to write, print and distribute the first school newspaper, she had a number of languages taught, she organised education meetings for teachers over the summer holidays and invited overseas experts, she had music and art taught to the students and performed in local soirées, she established a teacher training facility and one of the first free kindergartens and along with schools for fee-paying students she arranged for the education of those girls without means. And the list goes on.

This final display piece is an expression of the energy, vision and foresight of current students expressed in possibilities of and for the future. Almost every day we experience something new, something different: everything to do with education is in a process of change, transformation and possibility as information expands, teaching methods develop, psychology provides insight into best learning modes for different levels and personalities and AR and AI offers increasing opportunity and challenge.

So as you explore the small boxes before you today, encircling the Orrery, be aware that Reaching for the Stars is as much a focus of Loreto education today as it was 150 years ago.



Scan these QR codes to listen to the commentary on the creation each school community designed to reflect the gift & grace of this Loreto educational legacy for the future.



Loreto  
College  
Ballarat



Bayview  
College  
Portland



Loreto  
Normanhurst



Loreto  
Kirribilli



Loreto  
College  
Marryatville



Loreto  
Mandeville  
Hall Toorak



Loreto  
College  
Coorparoo





**AURORA**  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION



**Aurora Education Foundation (Aurora) is a First Nations organisation that empowers Indigenous students, scholars, and interns to define their education and employment goals on their own terms. Aurora places culture, ambition and excellence at the centre of all our work to set students up for success in education and employment.**

Through our suite of interconnected programs, from high school through to university and the workplace, Aurora redefines Indigenous educational success. We work alongside existing structures, leveraging cultural connections as a deep strength to build individual success. We see it as students realising their full potential, whether that means finishing Year 12 or getting a PhD from Harvard.

Loreto Australia and South East Asia is partnering with Aurora in memory of the educational endeavours of Mother Gonzaga Barry and her companions. The presence of our First Nations young people in the Loreto network is a huge blessing and this exhibition incorporates many of their contributions.



**Support us**



[aurorafoundation.com.au](http://aurorafoundation.com.au)



# Nature is a privilege

## Reflection for the Tree Planting Liturgy

**Mother Gonzaga Barry was a wise and insightful woman who shaped the foundation of Loreto Schools in Australia through her deep faith and profound love for education and her dearest children. Her dedication to nurturing young women conveys her strong belief that education should inspire both the heart and mind. Just as the trees and plants of the land we gather upon have grown and continue to flourish around us, Mother Gonzaga Barry's vision for our Loreto Schools began as a seed that has blossomed into the nurturing environment that we are part of today.**

So, as we gather to plant this Eucalypt in honour of Mother Gonzaga Barry's life and legacy, we celebrate not just the physical growth of a new beginning, but we also honour the values of Freedom, Justice, Sincerity, Verity, and Felicity that she instilled in the hearts of all who lived and learned within our grounds and that continue to grow and flourish today. The prayers and readings of the tree planting liturgy remind us of Mother Gonzaga Barry's deep personal faith in God and the trust she had in the spiritual growth of her students. Just as this tree will grow towards the light, so too can we grow in faith and wisdom.

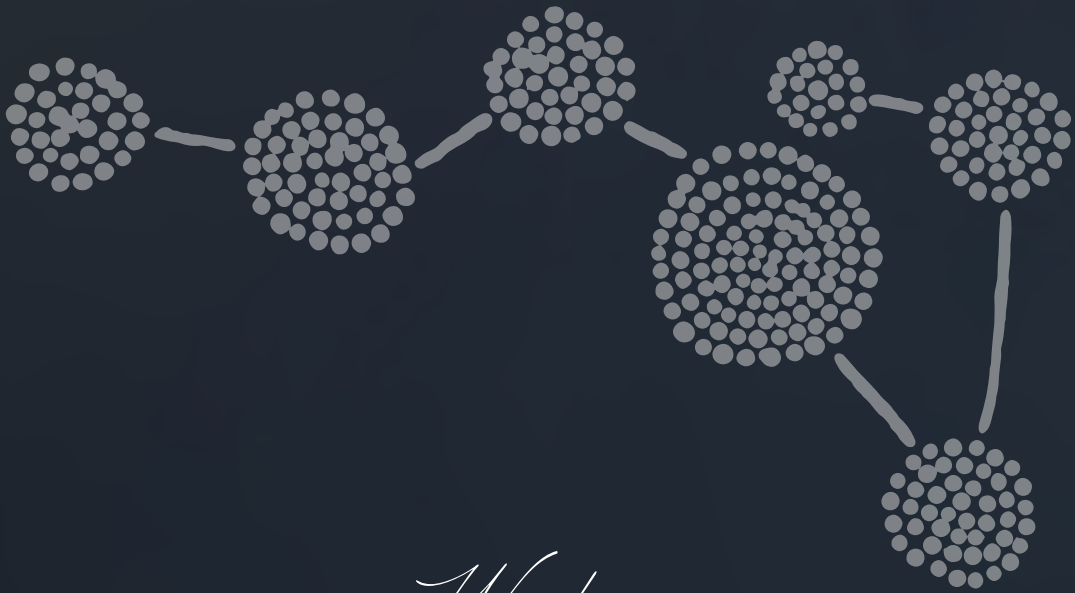
By planting this tree, we not only honour Mother Gonzaga Barry but also commit to continuing her legacy of faith, love and service. Mother Gonzaga wanted her schools to be places of growth, not just academically but spiritually and morally. This tree represents that vision - ever growing, ever reaching, and ever strong in the foundation she laid for us. In one of her letters, she wrote: May the work of our hands be fruitful and rooted in love. As we plant this tree, we embrace her hope for the future, pledging to carry forward her work with the same passion and care she embodied.

Her life is a source of inspiration for us to act with the same purpose, humility, and passion in our lives. As we reflect on what Mother Gonzaga Barry wanted for her dearest children, we are reminded of these words she spoke, *What I desire most for each child is not just a good education, but that they grow into women of integrity, who lead with love, humility, and courage.*

---

Alice Kingston  
Loreto Normanhurst 2024





## *Wonder*

---

It settled on her eyelids; caressed her mind.

She could see beyond her sight. Eyes were opened  
- but closed simultaneously.

A thought formed on her lips, seizing her tongue.  
It poised for the leap: from human to humanity;  
dream to reality.

The foundation of our world.

The humble idea.

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