



Celebrating
185
years in 2025

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cathedral rings with voices of hope at 185th Anniversary Mass

There wasn't a spare seat in the house at St Mary's Cathedral on Wednesday as 1,200 members of the St Patrick's College community gathered to celebrate the school's 185th anniversary.

The Mass was presided over by the Most Reverend Bishop Brian Mascord DD, Bishop of Wollongong, and uplifted by the singing of St Patrick's College students whose voices rang with joy throughout the Cathedral.

Many special guests were in attendance, including Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, and her husband, Mr Dennis Wilson; Senator Deborah O'Neill, Senator for NSW and past student of St Patrick's; Mrs Sally Quinnell MP, State Member for Camden; Mrs Moira Najdecki, Chair Good Samaritan Education; Dr Joanne Hack, Executive Director, Good Samaritan Education; Mr Peter Hill, Director of Schools, Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Wollongong; Mr Dallas McInerney, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Schools NSW; Sisters of the Good Samaritan, including Sr Geraldine Kearney, Sr Catherine Slattery, Sr Christine Manning and Sr Julie O'Regan; past Principals of St Patrick's College; Principals of other Good Samaritan schools; and members of the College's Company and Board of Directors.

Following an Acknowledgement of Country, delivered by students Charlize Van Deinsen and Kaitlin Kumar, College Principal, Mrs Mary Leask, welcomed attendees to the Mass.

"What a wonderful day to commemorate the past, to celebrate the present and to run with hearts overflowing with joy into the future of St Patrick's College, and what better way to celebrate together than within the heart of our Catholic tradition at Eucharist, which is the source and summit of our call to be communion and community together," she said.

Mrs Leask honoured all those who contributed to the foundation and success of St Patrick's College, including the first Irish Catholic families who, in 1840, established a Catholic school for their children, along with the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, who took responsibility for the College in 1888.

She thanked the many staff who have long delivered the highest standard of Catholic education to students and she acknowledged the contributions of students and their families to the fabric of the school community.

"We pay tribute today to the many thousands of young women who have experienced an education at St Patrick's College for Girls, and their daughters and granddaughters who continue that legacy today," Mrs Leask said.

"These young women have been empowered to be brave and to be bold. They have been challenged to go beyond their own expectations so that they can make a lasting difference in the communities in which they live. We say thank you to the generations of families who have often made financial sacrifices to enable their daughters to attend our school. We are humbled by your trust in us and grateful for your belief that a girls' school is the best kind of education through which your daughter can thrive."

"From very humble beginnings, the College has had a number of iterations, but with one sole purpose: to give glory to God by providing a holistic, Catholic education to the young people in the Campbelltown area," Mrs Leask said.

The celebration Mass took place on the Feast of Saint Joseph, and in his Homily, reflecting on a reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (1:16), the Most Reverend Bishop Brian Mascord DD urged the congregation to hold fast to their faith through challenges, as Joseph did, so that they may have the God-given hope to look confidently to the future.

"The enduring legacy of St Patrick's is not merely in the buildings or the programs, but the lasting impact on our students and their families," Bishop Brian said.

"As we celebrate 185 years, we reflect on the many generations of young women who have passed through the doors of the College, who have been shaped by the wisdom, the faith, and the love of the community. We see this covenant in our ongoing mission to educate and to form young people who will go out into the world and continue the work of God's kingdom."

"Like Joseph, we are called to trust in God's plan for us, no matter how unexpected or challenging it may seem. Let us also reflect on the spirit of the Year of Jubilee and how this year invites us to renew our commitment to mission. This is a time for us to take stock of the gifts we have received; to ask God's forgiveness for our failures and

to renew our pledge to serve one another with joy and with humility. The Jubilee is a time to remember that the gifts we enjoy; our community, our education, our opportunities, are not for us alone, but for the service of others. Like Joseph, we are called to give of ourselves, to serve with faithfulness and humility, and to ensure that the work, and especially the work of St Pat's College, continues to bear fruit for many generations to come."

The College was fortunate to have in attendance at the Mass many former students, each with their own memories of their time at school. Alumna Sr Geraldine Kearney sgs delivered a heartfelt and moving address at the conclusion of Mass, reflecting on her time spent at St Patrick's between 1962 and 1964, when the College had just 101 pupils and only five students in her "Leaving" class; a far cry from the 701 girls who now make up the student body.

"In the early days of education, it was commonly known that you went to school to learn the three 'R's: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Today, as I look at you beautiful College girls and have experienced the beautiful singing - including the angel who sang the Responsorial Psalm - I think of those early days of the Sisters; I think of the three 'R's that they instilled in us, values that were underpinned by the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the Rule of Benedict and the writings of Polding, values which I now see evident today, another set of three 'R's: respect, responsiveness and resilience. And these are the values that I pray that you, the girls of St Patrick's, will always cherish," Sr Geraldine said.

Sr Geraldine concluded her reflection by sharing a message, written in her autograph book by Sr Hyacinth, one of the teaching Sisters at the College when she graduated.

"Be you near or far from St Patrick's school, you are never exempt from the golden rule; be staunch as a star, fling your glory afar; you are a St Patrick's girl, wherever you are."

It was a sentiment that rang true to all in attendance; the connections within our College community, based on shared values and traditions, have always transcended time and distance, and the unity and pride in the Cathedral was palpable as generations of St Patrick's staff and students stood together in a celebration of shared heritage.

A recording of the St Patrick's College 185th Anniversary Mass at St Mary's Cathedral [is available here](#).

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