

A time for every purpose under heaven ... steps in the journey towards

Mercy Ministry Companions

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God ... (Gospel of John 1: 1)

4.5 billion years ago – Formation of our solar system ...

60,000+ years ago – Indigenous peoples have been living on the lands now known as Australia

c20 BCE – Birth of Mary, mother of Jesus

c4 BCE – Birth of Jesus of Nazareth

1788 – First European settlement in Australia

1802 – Edmund Rice founds the Institute of Christian Brothers in Ireland

1817 – Marcellin Champagnat founds the Marist Brothers in France

1827 – First House of Mercy established by Catherine McAuley at Baggot Street, Dublin

1831 – Catherine McAuley founds the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland

1835 – Mary Euphrasia Pelletier founds the Good Shepherd Sisters in France; first Sisters came to Melbourne VIC in 1863.

1846 – Ursula Frayne and her six companions arrive in Fremantle, the first Sisters of Mercy to come to Australia, establish Mercedes College, Perth WA

1850 – Cecilia Maher and her companions arrive in Auckland; the first women religious in New Zealand

1853 – First Parish Priest, Dean Thomas Slattery, came to live in Warrnambool VIC

1854 – St Vincent's Boys' Orphanage VIC (moved to South Melbourne in 1857)

1857 – Ursula Frayne and 3 companions arrive in Melbourne, establish Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy VIC

1857 – St Augustine's Orphanage, Geelong VIC (conducted by Christian Brothers from 1858)

1860 – Sacred Heart College, Geelong VIC

1861 – St Vincent's Girls' Orphanage, South Melbourne VIC (renamed in 1962)

1866 – Mary MacKillop and Julian Tennison Woods found the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Penola SA

1868 – Sisters of Mercy, Albury NSW

1872 – Sisters of Mercy arrive in Warrnambool, establish St Ann's College, later re-named Emmanuel College VIC

1874 – Diocese of Sandhurst founded from Diocese of Melbourne VIC

1875 – Sisters of Mercy, Singleton NSW

1876 – Sisters of Mercy arrive in Bendigo, establish St Mary's College, now Catherine McAuley College VIC



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1880 – Sisters of Mercy arrive in Adelaide, establish St Aloysius College SA

1882 – St John’s Orphanage, Thurgoona NSW

1884 – Sisters of Mercy, Grafton NSW

1887 – St Aloysius College, North Melbourne VIC

1888 – St Joseph’s Home for Boys, South Melbourne VIC (re-located to Surrey Hills in 1890)

1889 – Sacred Heart College, Kyneton VIC

1889 – Arnold Janssen SVD, Helena Stollenwerk and Hendrina Stenmanns founded the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in the Netherlands; in 1944 the first group came to Brisbane QLD

1896 – Sisters of Mercy, West Perth WA

1896 – Mt Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale VIC

1901 – St Joseph’s Foundling Home, Broadmeadows VIC (name changed to St Joseph’s Babies’ Home in 1967 and then became part of St Joseph’s Babies and Family Service in 1985)

1902 – St Joseph’s Receiving Home, Carlton VIC (transferred to Sisters of St Joseph in 1905)

1906 – St Joseph’s College, Mildura VIC

1910 – Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg VIC

1912 – St Catherine’s Girls’ Orphanage, Geelong VIC

1912 – St Joseph’s Orphanage, Cowper NSW

1919 – Knights of the Southern Cross founded in Sydney NSW (first meeting of the Order of KSC held in Victoria in 1922).

1920 – St Benedict’s Private Hospital established by the Sisters of Mercy in Malvern VIC

1922 – St Anthony’s Home, Kew VIC (re-located to Footscray in the 1970s)

1929 – St Brigid’s College, Lesmurdie WA

1930 – Maude O’Connell founds the Family Care Sisters (Grey Sisters) in Daylesford VIC

1934 – Mercy Private Hospital, East Melbourne VIC

1938 – Santa Maria College, Attadale WA

1945 – Mercy Hospital, Young NSW

1945 – Mercy Hospital, Albury NSW (new facility opened in 1957)

1949 – Mother and Child Care Centre, Canterbury, established by Family Care Sisters VIC (renamed O’Connell Family Centre in 1990; formally gifted to Mercy Health and Aged Care in 2006)

1962 – St Vincent de Paul’s Children’s Home VIC (relocated to Black Rock in 1966)

1969 – Mercy Nursing Home, Singleton NSW

1971 – Mercy Maternity Hospital, East Melbourne VIC (renamed Mercy Hospital for Women in 1991 and relocated to Heidelberg in 2005)



- 1975 – Mercy Family Care Centre, North Geelong VIC
(following closure of St Catherine’s in Highton)
- 1976 – Mercy Services, Newcastle NSW
- 1982 – Mercy Hospice, Sunshine VIC
- 1984 – New Nursing Home built in Singleton NSW (became Mercy Aged Care Services Singleton in 2005)
- 1986 – Regina Coeli, Flemington VIC
- 1988 – Original Mercy Care Service, North Melbourne VIC; later renamed McAuley Care
- 1988 – St Augustine’s Orphanage Geelong renamed St Augustine’s Adolescent and Family Services VIC
- 1992 – Mercy International Association (MIA) established
- 1994 – Re-dedication of House of Mercy property at Baggot Street in Dublin as Mercy International Centre (MIC)
- 1993 – MacKillop Rural Community Services, Balranald NSW
- 1994 – Werribee Mercy Hospital VIC
- 1996 – Mercy Centre, Lavington NSW (renamed Mercy Connect in 2016)
- 1996 – Mercy Health and Aged Care formed
- 1997 – Mercy Secondary Education Inc formed
- 1997 – MacKillop Family Services formed (bringing together 7 agencies)
- 1997 – Mercy Health assumes responsibility for its first Aged Care homes: Rice Village, Geelong, and Bethlehem Home for the Aged, Bendigo VIC
- 1999 – Mercy Global Concern established (renamed Mercy Global Action in 2011)
- 1999 – Mercy Place Colac and Mercy Place Montrose VIC become part of Mercy Health
- 2000 – Mercy Community Care Services in Newcastle NSW joins with McAuley Alcohol and other Drug Programs to become Mercy Community Services. (renamed Mercy Services in 2012)
- 2000 – Mercy Works established as the development arm of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.
- 2001 – Expanded Mercy Care services, Melbourne’s west VIC
- 2002 – MercyCare established by the Sisters of Mercy as a public juridic person (PJP) in Perth, WA
- 2005 – Mercy Aged Care Services NSW (Singleton)
- 2006/7 – Sisters of Mercy Goulburn Congregation gift their health services in Albury and Young NSW to Mercy Health and Aged Care
- 2006/7 – Mercy Place Shepparton, Fernhill and Wyndham VIC become part of Mercy Health
- 2008 – Mercy Partners established by the Sisters of Mercy in QLD as a pontifical and ministerial PJP
- 2008 – McAuley Community Services for Women formed (bringing together Regina Coeli and McAuley Care)
- 2008 – Mercy Health and Aged Care is renamed Mercy Health



2009 – Mercy Health Foundation established

2009/10 – Mercy Place East Melbourne, Parkville and Warrnambool established VIC

2011 – Mercy Secondary Education Inc becomes Mercy Education Ltd

2011 – St Augustine’s and St Helen’s specialist schools in Geelong VIC amalgamate to become MacKillop Specialist School

2011 – Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) established on 12 December

2013 – MacKillop begins delivering Out of Home Care services in WA

2014 – Mercyville, Villa Maria and Edgewater Mercy hostels, Mercy Place Lathlain, Mandurah and Mont Clare in WA become part of Mercy Health

2015 – Mercy Place Abbotsford and Boronia VIC; Mercy Place Westcourt and Woree and Coral Sea Gardens, Cairns, QLD become part of Mercy Health

2016 – Mercy Connect becomes the new name for Mercy Centre Lavington NSW

2017 – Cara Inc merges with MacKillop Family Services VIC; MacKillop Rural Community Services and Good Grief (established by Sisters of St Joseph in the mid-1990s in NSW) join MacKillop Family Services

2018 – MacKillop Family Services second specialist school opens in Maidstone VIC; Gidgee Pre-school opens in the Weilmoringle community in far-west NSW

2020 – Mercy Global Action establishes the Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship

2021 – MacKillop commences Family Support Services in Larrakia Country NT collaborating with Danila Dilba Health

2021 – Petition to Rome to establish Whānau Mercy Ministries as a PJP in Aotearoa New Zealand

2021 – Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC) established as a PJP on 3 December

2021 – Mercy Community Services Australia (MCSAL) established in December

2022 – Opening of Waratah Place and Acacia House, Albury NSW, April/May, Mercy Connect

2022 – MMC’s first Annual Ministry Conference in October

2022 – Opening of Heywood House, long-term crisis accommodation, Melbourne, October 27, McAuley

2022 – First anniversary of Mercy Ministry Companions on 3 December

2023 – Opening of Wilma’s Place, long-term accommodation for women, Melbourne, March 3, McAuley

2023 – MacKillop Family Services open an office in Belconnen and 14 residential care homes, ACT, April 1

2023 – Whanau Mercy Ministries, Aotearoa New Zealand, officially commences as an MPJP, April

2023 – Opening of Avondale Place, Henty NSW, July, Mercy Connect

2023 – Opening of Basil House, Albury NSW, July, Mercy Connect

2023 – MacKillop Family Services moves to new office site in Geelong, July

2023 – Mercy Ministry Companions sends first Annual Report to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Rome, July.

2023 – Opening of Grevillia Place, Orange, NSW, October, Mercy Connect

2023 – Official opening of Our Lady of Mercy Place, Harris Park, NSW, October (Mercy Health, operator)

2023 – McAuley Community Services for Women becomes part of MacKillop Family Services, October 1

Our story continues to unfold...

