



VALUES, SPIRITUALITY AND CHARISM

Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary School
Springfield Lakes

Values/Spirituality/Charism

Religious and Cultural Identity

From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics. The inspiration of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real. The Gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate.

(Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, n.25).

Jesus Christ is central to understanding Christianity. Good Shepherd introduces our students to a view of the world founded on scripture and the ongoing tradition of the Church and embedded in the religious identity and culture of the school. This worldview is expressed through its beliefs, values and practices, quality relationships, the aesthetic, social and physical environment and its organisational structures and procedures. These expressions are shaped and developed in such a way as to maximise their positive impact upon the religious and spiritual formation of all members in the school community. Knowledge and skills of staff and students in dance, drama, digital technologies, music and visual arts are utilised to effectively communicate and promote elements of the religious identity and culture of our school.

Good Shepherd derives its identity and culture from its Catholic Christian character. We are called to be a real and living expression of the Church's pastoral mission in the world.

The complexity of the modern world makes it all the more necessary to increase awareness of the ecclesial identity of the Catholic school. It is from its Catholic identity that the school derives its original characteristics and its 'structure' as a genuine instrument of the Church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry.

(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997, n.11).

Thus, a true test of Good Shepherd's authentic identity and culture is the extent to which the Church is present in the school and the school is present in the Church.

The curriculum (*i.e., all the activities and experiences that promote students' learning and development as whole persons*) is also an expression of our religious identity and culture. This is especially so in the ways in which areas of learning are presented and timetabled, classroom pedagogy is experienced, student engagement in learning is promoted, assessment and reporting processes occur, and student wellbeing is nurtured.

The tone and tenor of Good Shepherd's religious identity and culture make a statement about what is important and valued in our community and what things are excluded or ignored. As Elliot Eisner (1994) has reminded us, the *explicit* or formal curriculum is a small part of what is actually taught. Revising the content of this *explicit* curriculum does nothing to address the *implicit* curriculum.

Values

The Archdiocesan Vision – **Jesus Communion Mission**

As an educational mission of the local church, Catholic schools share in the vision and priorities of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Catholic educators:

- embrace the person and vision of Jesus
- build communion with God and others
- engage in Christ's mission in our world

The Values of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane

- *Our Catholic Christian tradition – journeying, growing, renewing*
- *Dignity and justice for all – recognition of human dignity and equality*
- *Catholic Christian community – service of others, a joyful presence*
- *Search for truth – zest for life, learning, quality achievement*
- *Collaboration and subsidiarity – “shared wisdom”*
- *Creativity – flexible and future oriented*
- *Stewardship – responsible, accountable, seek truth and the right way*
- *A mutual accountability – report on outcomes*

The overarching goal for learning at the Springfield Lakes Catholic Primary School is to empower learners of all ages to shape and enrich our changing world by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

School Values, Spirituality and Charism

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School continues to build a learning community by drawing from the values of the Gospel, as shown through the life and teaching of Jesus the Good Shepherd, in particular:

- Respect – dignity of individuals and all creations
- Faith – trust in God
- Hope – in sustainable futures
- Love – forgiveness, compassion, inclusiveness, belonging, welcome and hospitality.

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School is a place where we live out these values through:

- Liturgy, prayer, ritual and symbol
- Practices of acceptance and reconciliation
- Practices and structures that promote wellbeing and social justice
- Opportunities for evangelisation
- Supporting the learning of each individual consistently, explicitly and creatively
- Having high expectations for all
- Engagement in genuine conversation, reflection, and active listening
- Promoting creativity and sustainability
- Communion with others, the land, Father, Son and Spirit
- Witnessing faith through charity and social justice

Catherine McAuley

Good Shepherd has been placed under the patronage of *Venerable Catherine McAuley*, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy and therefore, draws its charism from the ways of Catherine McAuley. Each year, our new staff Induction Program, focuses on the Mercy traditions and their impact on the school's mission.



Catherine McAuley was the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, a religious order, initially, dedicated to the education of poor young Catholic women of Dublin and is now a worldwide order where the education and rights of all young people are first and foremost in the minds of the educators.

Catherine McAuley grew up in Ireland (born 1778) at a time when Catholics, who were approximately 75 – 80% of the population, were amongst the poorest of the poor. Due to family circumstances Catherine was personally spared a life of poverty but her observations of Catholic families living in slums rife with disease and epidemics, lacking in education and full of wide-spread begging never left her memory. She commenced her “mercy works” early in life, led by her strong Catholic faith; Catherine always wished to give something to the poor.

Catherine soon grew to realise that the way to help the young women of Ireland was through education and refuge. In 1827 the House of Mercy was opened and on December 12, 1831 the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy was established. Catherine's strong desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus led to voluntary poverty for all Sisters of Mercy and so Catherine's mission, to be creditable with the poor, meant it necessary to live in solidarity with them. Catherine McAuley died on the November 11, 1841 and her legacy lives on through every Mercy school throughout the world.

The Mercy Cross

The Mercy Cross is a replica of the ebony and ivory cross worn by Catherine McAuley. There is no figure on the cross, signifying that we place ourselves on the cross with Christ in an attempt to share His journey. Catherine McAuley and her sisters were unusual in that they did not remain cloistered. The footprints symbolise the action of walking out into the community to journey with others; to seek out those in need; to share their burdens.



Mercy Values

At the heart of Catherine McAuley's understanding of God's mercy are several values which encompasses and provides character to our mission in every time and place, for which we, as Good Shepherd's community take responsibility.

Good Shepherd, as a community, is committed to ensure that our Catholic education and all areas of our ministry, bring Mercy and is being Mercy to others, based on Catherine McAuley's Mercy Tradition which holds the following values:

- **Mercy:** We act compassionately and courageously, open to others and to their needs, nurturing hope and joy.
- **Hospitality:** we create a community where all feel welcome, through openness to people, ideas and challenges
- **Acceptance:** We embrace unconditionally the uniqueness and diversity of people, fostering quality and fairness in relationships.
- **Excellence:** We are committed to quality, continuous learning and improvement.
- **Dignity:** We treat all people with respect, accepting their right to spiritual, emotional and physical safety and care.
- **Empowerment:** We assist and advocate passionately for and with people, enabling them to make life enhancing choices and to gain control over life shaping decisions.
- **Integrity:** We act ethically, justly and honestly to all including an appreciation for ecology.

Jesus, The Good Shepherd, is a sign of the covenant between staff and the learners placed in our care. Together, we are called to lead the learners, to the love and knowledge of God's own Covenant, united with the "birth gifts" that we bring to Good Shepherd's community.



Good Shepherd's Buildings

To highlight the charism of Good Shepherd, key buildings and walkways have been named which reflect saints and their focus on learning, compassion, sustainability and inclusiveness:

- Catherine McAuley Boulevard
- Mercy Hospitality Centre (Tuckshop)
- Assisi Exploring Place – Prep
- MacKillop Discovering Place – Year 1
- Nagle Creating Place – Year 2

- *Ignatius Designing Place – Years 3 and 4*
- *Hildegard Leading Place – Years 5 and 6*
- *McAuley Resourcing Place – (Yet to be built)*
- *Dirram Yani Meeting Place – Undercover Area*

Catherine the Person (Additional information)

All through her life Catherine showed herself to be intelligent, practical and prayerful and above all deeply kind to others.

Catherine was modern in her effort to ‘decentralise’ local authority/autonomy while keeping vital links with the ‘heart’ of the Congregation. She did not centralise excessively and allowed situations to be handled in their own locality without interfering.

“The climax of her attractiveness writes a novice who knew her (Positio LXXXVII) was that she was always the same, always ready to listen, to consider and direct whenever applied to.” Catherine was open to new pedagogical ideas. She had a methodology that highlighted catechism for the young. Catherine was ever able to deliver a clear, simple and comprehensible description of the principal truths of the faith. Her teaching could be a summa apologetica for the young Catherine was an ideal lay woman in the Catholic Church of her place. “The climax of her attractiveness writes a novice who knew her (Positio LXXXVII) was that she was always the same, always ready to listen, to consider and direct whenever applied to.”

Aspects of Catherine’s Life Worth Noting

- Her devotional life was rooted in Scripture. There was an absence of the merely sentimental.
- Her approach to the injustice inflicted on the poor was to empower them practically by providing them with opportunities to educate themselves.
- Her mode of governance was one that stressed the principle of subsidiary, sensitivity to the needs of the local Church, adaptability and flexibility.
- In her ministry to the sick it was her approach not only to promote cleanliness, care and comfort for the sick person but also to minister to their spiritual needs by reading to them the word of God and praying for them in a gracious and sensitive manner.
- She was renowned for her human virtues of courtesy, tolerance, consideration, good manners, and a sense of humour, serenity, gentleness, reserve, modesty, prudence, patience and self-restraint. (Summarium p. 22). Fr. Burke Savage Docs p.XCVIII.
- In her dealings with the clergy, she was profoundly respectful even when their behaviour caused extreme inconvenience for others and actually deprived children of the Holy Sacraments. She felt resentment and extreme agitation, yet she persisted in working towards an arrangement that would be consistent with both justice and charity. (Positio p. 380 – 387).
- Her spirituality was a *spirituality of the Cross* unlike today where we skip the Passion of Jesus to get to the Resurrection.
- She was a woman who appreciated friendship (Docs p.823 – 827).
- Very insightful and real is her teaching on the interpenetration of contemplation and action.
- Catherine was a careful thinker the fruits of which can be seen in the Cottage Controversy (Positio pp.748 – 772).
- The handing over of her Institute can be likened to Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac. It does however reveal the spiritual maturity that developed during her hidden years in Coolock.
- There was great balance in Catherine. She was enterprising and decisive with the qualities of an excellent executive. She was also an obedient daughter of the Church both as to doctrine and discipline.

Catherine Had Her Failures

- She publicly rebuked Sister Clare Augustine Moore and promptly asked forgiveness on her knees from those Sisters who witnessed it.
- She read 3 sentences of an aggressive letter from Dr. Walter Meyler before burning it. (Positio pp 378, 391-392). However, she was on good terms with Dr. Meyler at the end of her life (Positio p. 691).

Catherine – A Woman of the Church

Catherine was a Church person, the instrument of Justice and Ecumenism who possessed great spiritual influence in her time. This was attested to especially at the time of her death. She worked closely with the clergy and built lasting friendships from among them. Dr Daniel Murray gave her first communion and was still very much part of her life when she was living with the Callaghans. The friendship continued on into the years when she was foundress of the Sisters of Mercy and he was Archbishop of Dublin.

Fr Nugent received William Callaghan into the Church and he invited Catherine to teach in the Parochial school for the poor in Middle Abbey Street in Dublin (1823). The origins of the Congregation can be traced to the development of this voluntary service of Mercy. It took time and the maturing of her discerning obedience to God to transform what was originally intended as a charitable lay association into a classic religious congregation. (Catherine's motto was "Fiat Voluntas Tua". In 1825 Fr Nugent died of typhus and Catherine nursed him in his last illness.

In 1824, Catherine on the advice of her friend and advisor Fr Edward Armstrong, with the concurrence of Archbishop Murray and the support of Dr Blake, purchased a plot of ground on Baggot Street. She showed great prudence in building rather than buying a house which she intended "for the glory of God and dedicated it to him from its very foundations". (Dr Blake laid the foundation stone of this house before he left Ireland to re-open the Irish College in Rome as the Penal Laws in Ireland began to abate).

In her dealings with the clergy, she was profoundly respectful even when their behaviour caused extreme inconvenience for others and actually deprived children of the Holy Sacraments. She felt resentment and extreme agitation, yet she persisted towards an arrangement that would be consistent with both justice and charity.

Catherine – A Pioneer of Mercy

Mercy was the motivating power underlying Catherine's love. It was not philanthropy or human solidarity because it was directed towards the weakest. Neither was it to preserve their Catholic faith nor to win back souls fallen into Anglicanism or Protestantism because for Catherine there was no difference between Catholic and Protestant when it came to helping, relieving or instructing one's neighbour. She institutionalised her fervent love of neighbour in the Rule for her Congregation describing Mercy as "*the principal path marked out by Jesus Christ for those who wish to follow his example*".

Her use of her own resources, whether of wealth, connections or physical vitality show that she was living in the spiritual house whose walls as St. Augustine says, are walls of hope. Her use of her own resources, whether of wealth, connections or physical vitality show that she was living in the spiritual house whose walls as St. Augustine says, are walls of hope.

For Catherine, Mercy in the form of a compassionate practical response to need was where she believed she was called by God. She saw the Mercy response as multi-dimensional and in her singleness of purpose she turned out to be a pioneer in many areas. She was open to new educational frontiers, accomplished by a single linear methodology, centred on catechetical urgency for girls. Her whole life centred on a "catechetical anxiety". (It might be useful to look at Catherine's "catechetical anxiety" in the context of her time and for its relevance today).

The following is just a short inadequate list of some of Catherine's "firsts":

- A shelter for unemployed women.
- Travelling to France to learn educational systems before she opened her schools.
- Opening outlets to sell the work done in schools by the poor women and children.
- Bringing education for poor girls and women to the forefront in the Ireland of her day
- On 13 July 1834 Catherine applied for affiliation with the National Board of Education. in Ireland. She was the first contemporary founder/superior to do so.
- In 1835, two years before the Government opened the Marlborough Street Training School in 1838, she was supplying trained monitoresses to other schools on request.
- In 1837 the first non-residential Pension School was established in Carlow, shortly after its foundation, for middle class parents who found the fees of boarding schools prohibitive at the time.
- Catherine favoured the practice of holding receptions and professions of new members in the Parish Church where new foundations were made. The profession of Mary Teresa Purcell in 1836 in Tullamore started a trend. This practice was lost after the 1917 code of Canon Law came in to being and was only found again with Vatican II.

Discipleship of Jesus - the Road to Sainthood

Catherine McAuley was declared Venerable by the Church on 9 April 1990. Such a declaration is made after a long process that looks at all aspects of the life of the Servant of God and concludes with moral certainty that this person lived the virtues of the Christian Life to a heroic degree. The Church canonises human beings. A false idea is prevalent that canonised sainthood somehow implies a human nature that is devoid of its imperfections and free of the heartache and the thousand natural shocks to which humanity is heir. The essential element is the heroism of their struggle under grace to follow Gospel imperatives and to live their lives in close imitation of Jesus Christ. The intensity of their struggle is determined by the obstacles they face and overcome.

Catherine McAuley richly deserves to be called Venerable. She was human, she struggled, she faced many obstacles. Catherine McAuley richly deserves to be called Venerable. She was human, she struggled, she faced many obstacles. Like all of us she has her story and, in that story, we see the interweaving of light and darkness, of pain and joy as she tried to follow the love of her life, Jesus Christ.

The essence of true discipleship is the surrender of oneself unreservedly and unconditionally. In surrendering we are drawn to the joy of union with God and at the same time we fear the pain that this self-giving will involve.

As with Jesus so with Catherine, surrender to the love of the Father inevitably meant surrender to the Cross. Catherine was no stranger to the Cross as she said herself "we were founded on Calvary there to serve a crucified Redeemer". When we look at her however, we see a woman who through all she suffered, learned that she could not be her own saviour. She did not take herself too seriously and her "mirth" her irrepressible joy was constantly in evidence in her fun poems, her good humour in defusing tense community situations, her capacity to make fun and to laugh especially at herself. As she matured this weaving of joy and pain was expressed through a profound trust in the Providence of God expressed so well in her Suscipe.

Catherine McAuley's Suscipe – 1778-1841

My God, I am yours for time and eternity.

*Teach me to cast myself entirely
into the arms of your loving Providence
with a lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate, tender pity.*

*Grant, O most merciful Redeemer,
That whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me.*

Take from my heart all painful anxiety;

*let nothing sadden me but sin,
nothing delight me but the hope
of coming to the possession of You
my God and my all,
in your everlasting kingdom. Amen.*

