

## Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of the Sisters of Mercy to our Diocese over the past 152 years. We thank you for the dedication and sacrifice of the sisters that helped establish the Ministries of Catholic Education, Catholic Health and Aged Care and Social Outreach in our Diocese. We are grateful that the sisters are part of the history of TCC through the Range College and that they will forever be part of the founding story of our college. We ask that you strengthen and sustain us as today we carry forward their legacy of service to our college community and to the wider community. Grant us courage and compassion as we strive to live lives of love and service to others. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Speech for High Tea Honouring the Sisters of Mercy – Rockhampton

*Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Associates and Friends of Mercy*

Good afternoon, and welcome to this very special Ryan House High Tea event. Today, we gather, to have an enjoyable time, to raise much needed funds for Mercy Works but most of all to honour and celebrate a legacy of compassion, courage, and unwavering commitment—the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy in Rockhampton.

It was on the 4th of August 1873, that seven pioneering Sisters of Mercy arrived in Rockhampton after a long sea journey aboard the *Lady Bowen*. Led by Mother Mary Vincent Whitty, these women brought with them, not only their faith in a loving God, but a deep resolve to serve the people of Central Queensland

Their first home, a modest cottage in Kent Street, became the original Convent of Mercy. Though humble in appearance, it was rich in spirit—a beacon of hope and service. From these early days, the sisters ventured far and wide, ministering to communities across the region: from Mackay to Mount Morgan, Gladstone to Barcaldine, and even as far as Papua New Guinea

Their contributions have been significant. In education, they raised standards and opened doors for generations of young minds. In healthcare, they established Mater hospitals and Mercy aged care facilities that continue to serve communities today with care and compassion. In pastoral care, they brought comfort to the lonely, the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized.

Today, we honour, not only their history of service, but their living legacy. The Sisters of Mercy have shaped the spiritual and social fabric of Rockhampton and beyond. Their story is one of faith in action and of love made visible through service.

To the sisters here with us today: thank you. Thank you for your sacrifices, your wisdom, your tireless work, and your ongoing prayerful support. You have inspired generations, and your legacy continues to shine brightly in our schools, hospitals, parishes, and hearts.

Let us raise our cups in gratitude and celebration. May the spirit of mercy continue to guide us all.

God Bless