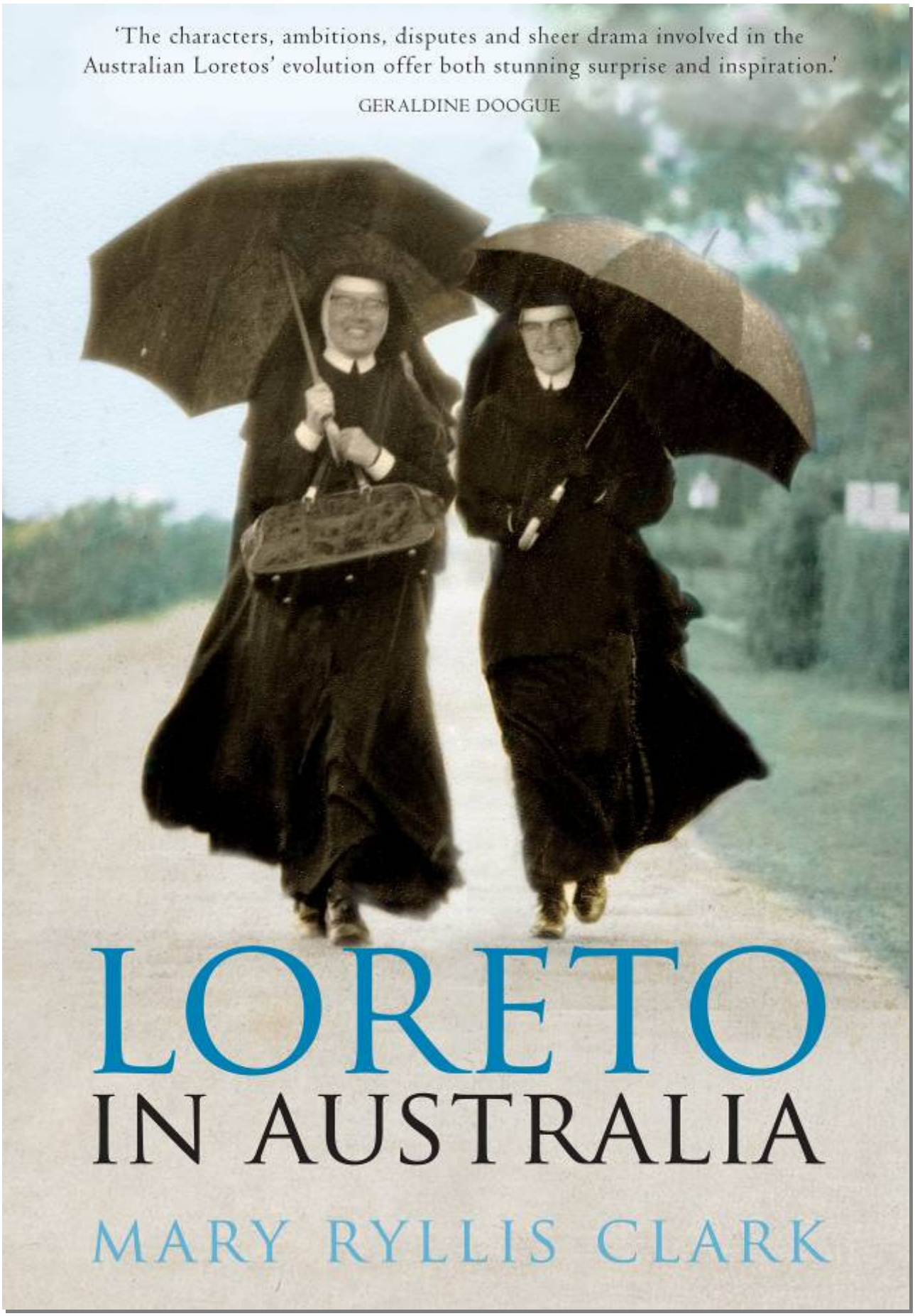
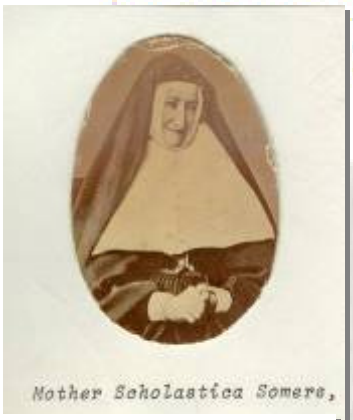


Sisters Peg Flynn and Florence Quinn in Rockingham, W.A., 1968
Photo: 'The West Australian'

Leaving Ireland

It was scarcely daybreak when Mother Gonzaga Barry and her nine companions left Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham in Dublin at the start of their journey to Australia.



Mother Scholastica Somers, General Superior at the time of the Australian foundation.

Mother Gonzaga Barry's Mother, Elizabeth Barry

The Barry Children, Mary Barry (Mother Gonzaga) top left

'S.S.Somersetshire' on which the sisters travelled to Australia.
State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection

Good Shepherd's Convent Abbotsford where the sisters stayed on their first night in Melbourne.
Photographer N.J. Caire, from the collection of Tony Lee

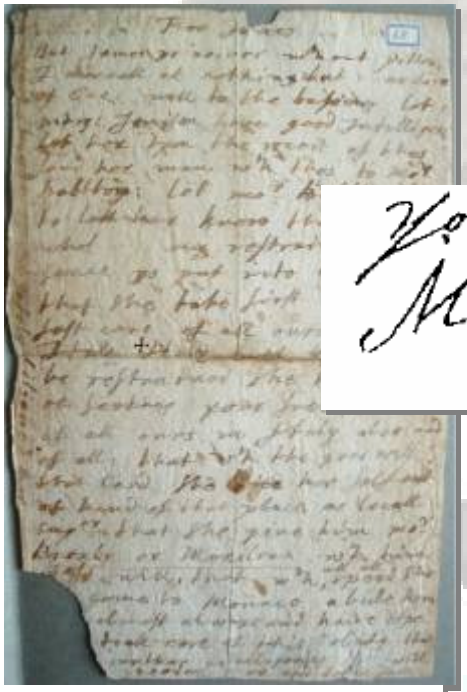
Mary Ward: A dangerous memory of the gospel

"All look upon you as new beginners of a course never thought of before, marvelling at what you intend, and what will be the end of you."
Mary Ward (1585-1645)

Guy Fawkes, and the Gunpowder Plot Conspirators, all relatives or family friends of the Ward family.

The Painted Life
Pl 21 The Glory Vision, Mary Ward's first vision of an Institute

Mary Ward made a journey of 2,400 kilometres on foot to present her constitutions to the Pope in 1621.
Oil Painting, Augsburg Convent



Yours ever
Marie Ward

Mary Ward's lemon juice letters were written while she was imprisoned in Munich. *No. 68 p.1*
Archives Munich, Nymphenburg

Mary Ward's tombstone in Osbaldwick
'To love the poor, persever in the same, live dy and rise with them was all the ayme of Mary Ward who, having lived 60 years and 8 days dyed the 20 of Jan. 1645'

A complex legacy

Mary Ward's creation of a new form of religious life for women survived in spite of the efforts made by the Church in Rome to remove all trace of her Institute.

The Bar Convent York, established in 1686

The Painted Life, in situ Augsburg Convent, 50 paintings recording the life of Mary Ward

Frances Teresa Ball, founder of Loreto in Ireland in 1821

Mary Poyntz, one of Mary Ward's 1st companions and biographer
Oil Painting, CJ Convent Augsburg

Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, established in 1821 by Mother Teresa Ball

Mother Gonzaga Barry: A many sided woman

Mother Gonzaga was convinced that, ‘there is no subject of greater, perhaps of as great, importance to a nation as that of its women’s education’.

Mother Gonzaga Barry (1834-1915), founder of Loreto in Australia

Original Wynne House (Mary’s Mount) from the north east

St. Alipius Presbytery, Ballarat, where the sisters stayed during their first few months in Ballarat
Ballarat Diocesan Archives

Bella Guerin, 1st female graduate of the University of Melbourne taught at Mary’s Mount

Expansion

When she left Rathfarnham in 1875, Mother Gonzaga had placed her hands in God's hands. She had been led not only to Victoria but to three other states, each an immense distance from her base in Ballarat.

Dawson Street Ballarat, 1st Loreto Day School,

On the flat roof of the Albert Park Convent, opened in 1890 and including the Central Catholic Teachers' Training College in 1906

Portland Convent, established in Bayview Cottage in 1884

Sisters of the Randwick Loreto community, established in Sydney in 1892

Loreto Claremont
Loreto established in Western Australia in 1897

Loreto Norwood, Adelaide, established 1905

Mother Gonzaga Barry's International Role

After her visit to Ireland in 1887, Mother Gonzaga's letters show her to have been increasingly involved in issues relating to the Institute as an international body.

Mother Gonzaga Barry's prolific letter writing helped her to develop relationships with her sisters in new missions isolated from the Mother House and assisted in her fight for Institute unity and recognition of Mary Ward as founder.

"HMS Chimboraso", on which Mother Gonzaga and Mother Xavier Yourelle travelled to Ireland in 1887
State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection

Mother Catharine Chambers, author of 'The Life of Mary Ward' Vol. 1 1882 and Vol. 2 1885

Mother Gonzaga Barry visiting Loreto Convent Wexford at the General Chapter 1894

Always in debt but never bankrupt

As Archbishop Mannix pointed out when he laid the foundation stone for the [Mandeville] chapel in September 1927, 'the Loreto sisters were always in debt but they were never bankrupt'.

St. Mary's Hall, 'Barbiston' in Parkville, opened as a Catholic University Women's College in 1918

The opening of Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak, 15th February 1925
from "The Advocate" MDHC

Loreto Coorparoo, Queensland, founded in 1927. The Casket Building on the right, built with Golden Casket Lottery winnings.

Laying and Blessing of the Foundation Stone for Loreto Nedlands, W.A., 1930

A deep well within them

The Convent Bell at Mary's Mount marking the cycle of the day

The postulant entering religious life was at the beginning of a spiritual journey which would remake her identity.

The Oratory of Our Lady, c.1887, Mary's Mount

The Novitiate Quadrangle, Mary's Mount Ballarat, c.1899

Novices and Postulants 1925

The terrrible years

When Mother Stanislaus Mulhall died in 1923, the Australian province of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary was drawn into a crisis from which it took decades to recover.

Mother Raphael Deasy, General Superior, 1919-1935, was strongly against the cause of Union of the Institute branches.

Mother Raphael Deasy and Mother Teresa Gertrude O'Sullivan, Provincial 1924-1937, arriving in Fremantle in 1924. The appointment of the Irish Mother Teresa Gertrude, led to tension in the Australian Province.

Mother Catherine Goddard, a devoted Mary Ward woman, driven to write to the Apostolic Delegate describing the crisis in the Australian Province.

Mary Ward Pageant held at Loreto Marryatville.
Celebrating the Tercentenary of Mary Ward's death in 1945.

Surprised by the spirit

"Change is not a betrayal of the past and of its traditions, change is fidelity to it."
Sister Noni Mitchell, IBVM

On their way to the General Chapter at Rathfarnham in 1948, the Australian delegates visited Mary Ward's grave at Osbaldwick. Mother Mildred Dew is standing at the back, Mother Francis Frewin in the middle distance and Mother Colombiere Lillis in the foreground.

Mother Dympna McNamara, Provincial 1958-1970
"She believed in the potential of women, liberated through education and learning." Sr. Noni Mitchell

Mother Francis Frewin, outside St. Mary's College. The new College replacing St. Mary's Hall was opened in 1966

Novices in front of Normanhurst Novitiate, 1958

Adaptation and renewal

The Loreto Institute was fortunate in having three great women to lead it into the hard initial years following Vatican II: Mother Dympna McNamara, Mother Antoinette Hayden and Sister Noni Mitchell.

General Chapter 1971 – Sisters Margaret Manion, Antoinette Hayden, Dympna McNamara, Emilian Brooke-Cowden, Noni Mitchell

Mother Agnes Walsh, Superior General 1968-1986, at Mary's Mount 1969

The Claremont Community in the mid 1970s with the variation in dress permissible after Vatican II

Loreto House, Albert Park, purchased in 1969 for the Provincialate/Province Office, Novitiate and Community Residence

In the service of youth

At the same time that religious teaching orders in Australia were dealing with the challenges of the Second Vatican Council a crisis developed in parish schools that affected them equally strongly.

Mother Sebastian Brady, St. Joseph's Parish School Ballarat. Class sizes of 60 were not uncommon
NL Harvey Photographers Ballarat

Sr. Mary Murray with Loreto Commercial College South Melbourne students, 1961
Students were much sought after by local firms because of the thorough grounding they received in book-keeping, typing and office management. They were also given lessons in etiquette.

Sister Angela Slattery with Grade 1 students, Broome
Sisters Mary-Ellen McCormack and Myrene Erdman were the first to go to Broome, arriving in January 1973.

Mother Joseph Halloran, a legendary figure in Australian Catholic education

The beauty of a Loreto education

Students were encouraged to develop a love for art, literature, music, history and conversation – in short, to participate in an education that would fit them for a well-rounded life in the world.

Sister Kevin Maye lived at Normanhurst for forty-five years, where she ran the dining room and had daily contact with boarders.

Mary's Mount Boarders at Ballarat Station, 1967

Sister Denise Desmarchelier at the new John XXIII College, 1986. The amalgamation of Loreto Claremont and St. Louis took place in 1977.

Mary Ward Sculpture by Meliesa Judge installed in every Loreto school to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of her first community and school.

An ordinary manner of life

Mary Ward's women had discovered new ways of being contemplative in action and of finding God in all things.

Residents and members of the support group at the Ministry of Housing estate at Lygon Street, Carlton. From left, residents Miza Matigevic (with dog Dino), Pauline Eagwood. Sr Angela Quill, Jacinta Forbes, Sr Margaret Hill, resident Rodney Madeley '. . . There is a great richness of people and quality to their lives.'

Housing Commission flats in Lygon Street, Carlton, an opportunity to live and work among underprivileged people.

Sister Margaret Hill (right) with Mary Doyle (both committee members of Catholics for Peace) after Margaret had given the keynote speech at a peace rally in Melbourne in March 1984.

Sister Pauline Prince, co-founder of the Child in Need Institute at the Abinash Gini clinic

Sister Mary Wright (left) Mother General of the Irish Branch, and Sister Maria Bierer (right), Superior General of the North American Branch sign a historic reunion document in Toronto in September 2003.
Photo: Ron Turenne, Courtesy of IBVM Loretto Sisters Canadian Province