



STATEMENT OF SPECIAL RELIGIOUS CHARACTER (V5 OCT 2023)

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Biloelela is located within the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton on Gangulu country.

Patron Saint:

What we know about Joseph, the husband of Mary comes from Scripture. He was a carpenter, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55) and that he was not wealthy (Luke 2:24). Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. The authors of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew differ somewhat in the details of Joseph's genealogy but they both recognise his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38). Indeed, the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.

Joseph was a compassionate and caring man (Matthew 1:19-25) who protected his family (Matthew 2:13-23). Joseph cared for and ensured the safety of this child entrusted to him and loved Jesus as his own son. There are scriptural references in which the people of Nazareth say of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (Luke 4:22)

Joseph had faith in God, undertaking the pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year for Passover with his family, something that could not have been easy for a working man. Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, tradition holds that Joseph most likely died before Jesus entered public ministry.

There are two feast days which remember and celebrate Joseph. 19th March remembers Joseph as the Husband of Mary and 1st May which remembers Joseph as the Worker. This feast day was established by Pope Pius XII in 1955 and named "St. Joseph the Worker" which aligns with International Workers' Day reflecting Joseph's status as the patron of workers. Joseph is also the patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers, travellers, immigrants, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general.

While there is much about Joseph that remains unknown, Scripture is clear that Joseph was "a righteous man" (Matthew 1:18).

Founding Order:

The Sisters of Mercy founded our school and provided a rich education for the children of Biloelela from 1939. The Sisters of Mercy were founded by Catherine McAuley, whose qualities included compassion, humility, friendliness, prayerfulness, a strong sense of generosity, courage, sympathy, peacefulness, gentleness, and love. Catherine McAuley believed that *Mercy is the way God acts towards people*. She was a strong advocate for women in her day and above all, Catherine encouraged and lived a life of charity. The Sisters of Mercy were involved in a range of charitable works. Further, Catherine believed that education bestowed a life-giving power, and that no work of charity could be more productive or good for society, nor more conducive to the happiness of the poor, than education.

The charism of the Sisters of Mercy was central to the religious character of St Joseph's with the Sisters of Mercy being represented on staff here at the school until 1992. Dedicated lay staff have continued the work of Catholic Education in the spirit of the founding sisters.

Our Charism:

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is focused on building an environment that reflects our Mercy heritage. Mercy is showing God's loving kindness and compassion to all. It is love in action. The Mercy qualities of welcome, hospitality, inclusivity, compassion and service, especially to those in need, are the hallmarks of our school community. St Joseph's has a rich tradition of supporting families and creating a strong community and family-like atmosphere. We endeavour to build and maintain a community which honours the Mercy Spirit, striving to be more like Jesus.

Our Virtues:

Faith is having confidence in what we hope for and the assurance that the lord is working, even though we cannot see it.

Through prayer we adore God as the Merciful One; we seek to discover God's movement in us and in our world; we learn how to forgive, and we intercede for ourselves and for others. (Mercy Constitutions 10)



Unity is the feeling of connectedness we have with others which helps us work and live together peacefully (Mercy Values, n.d.) *Never speak with contempt of any nation, profession, or class or people... Catherine McAuley.*

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Philippians 2:3

Service is displaying leadership to make a positive difference in the lives of others (Mercy Values, n.d.)

If we are humble and sincere God will finish in us the work he has begun. Catherine McAuley

Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. I Peter 4:10

Respect a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

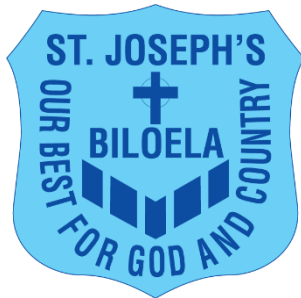
I have great confidence in you to do what you think best. State your opinion and always act with courage. Catherine McAuley.

Compassion is a non-judgmental understanding of another person's need, which results in unselfish giving to meet that need (Mercy Values, n.d.)

Let charity be our badge of honour... so that it may truly be said, there is in us but one heart and one soul in God. Catherine McAuley.

As God's chosen ones, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Colossians 3:12

School Logo and Motto:



The Cross: The Celtic Cross is a symbol of Celtic Christianity, Ireland and Irish culture. The cross is a symbol of Catherine McAuley's faith as an Irish Catholic and founder of the Sisters of Mercy.

Bible: The striped lines represent an open Bible. This symbolises the Christian messages taught daily.

Colours: The blue colours reflect the blue of the original Mercy school uniform.

Motto: Our school motto of 'Our Best for God and Country' encapsulates the key aspects of the Christian message of loving and respecting God and the world that we learn and work in.

School Prayer:

This is our School,

Let peace dwell here.

May the rooms be full of contentment.

Let love abide here, love one another,

Love mankind, love life itself,

For the love of God.

Let us remember as many hands build a house,

So many hearts make a school.

Amen

School History:

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Biloela was founded by the Sisters of Mercy. The original structure was constructed in 1938. This building was used as both a church and a school and was located where the Prep building and playground area now are. Four Sisters of Mercy, Sister Columba, Sister Finbar, Sister Lucille and Sister Marie Therese, arrived in Biloela in January 1939 to teach 25 children, aged 5 to 13 (St Joseph's Parish Golden Jubilee, 1989).



During 1939, Bishop Hayes visited the school site to bless and open the convent, which was located where the school administration building now is and announced plans for the construction of a new presbytery. A further twenty-nine children were enrolled during the year, which created the need for the extension of the convent to provide boarding facilities. The work was undertaken and the first boarders were enrolled in July 1940. In 1941, the enrolments of the school increased significantly, due to the evacuees from Rockhampton schools being sent to Biloele because of the war. An additional four sisters were appointed to the school that year and Sister Columba, who served as principal for six years laid solid foundations for the growing community's educational needs.

In the mid-1950s there was a need for a bigger church independent of the school. Limited finances at the time prevented the building of a new church, so the existing building was raised and upstairs became the school and downstairs became the new church from 1956 - 1965. During 1964 the church we are familiar with today was constructed. The first floor of the school building was refurbished in 1979 and repurposed to provide an administration area and new classroom block. 1964 saw the first School Ball held, and for the first eighteen years of the school ball, there was a competitive dancing component. In 1981, the competitive dance component was replaced with a series of exhibition dances and this valued tradition continues through to today.

Following the introduction of school buses by the government to transport country children to school, the boarding school ceased to operate in 1967 due to lack of enrolments. In 1973, the tuckshop was erected and profits were utilised to purchase library resources for many years. The Sisters of Mercy maintained leadership roles at St Joseph's until 1980 when the first lay principal, Mr Kevin Glasheen was appointed. It was not planned that Mr Glasheen would take over as principal that year, however, when Sister Anne fell ill, Mr Glasheen took over teaching the year 7 cohort and became the Acting Principal for the 1980 school year. Mr Glasheen remained the principal of St Joseph's Primary School for three years, resigning at the conclusion of the 1982 school year (St Joseph's Parish Golden Jubilee, 1989).

The school and its uniform have seen many changes over the years. The St Joseph's uniform has been adapted over time to improve functionality and respond to climatic conditions. Although the style of uniform has changed over time, the colour of the uniform remains blue like the original mercy uniform. The unique community of faith engendered by the Mercy Sisters continues today. The success of the school is attributed to the close, complementary relationship enjoyed amongst the staff, the students, the parents and the parish community.

REFERENCES:

Mercy values //. (n.d.). Retrieved June 4, 2022, from
<https://www.stjosephskpt.qld.edu.au/About%20Us/Pages/Mercy%20Values.aspx>
St. Joseph's Parish Golden Jubilee. (1989). Biloele, Qld: St. Joseph's Parish.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE:

Date:	By Whom:	Changes:
AUG 2022	Renee Maliborskij (<i>Acting Assistant Principal: Religious Education</i>), Lori Guest (<i>Advocate for the Religious Life of the School</i>) & Catherine Simmonds (<i>Formation, Identity and Religious Education Consultant</i>)	Document Development
SEP 2022	School Board & School Leadership.	Document Review & Publication on school website.
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