

Congratulations to Holy Name School Forster

Sunday, the 9th August 2009 saw a great gathering of Tuncurry/Forster parishioners and visitors at the new School Hall named in honour of Mary MacKillop. Mr Mark Mowbray, the current principal, welcomed all to the happy occasion.

There was an air of excitement as the ceremony got underway with the procession of the picture and statue of Mary MacKillop as well as the photos of Julian and Mary that was presented to the school by the Sisters of St Joseph.

There were ten Sisters representing the Congregation at the occasion: Srs Florence Tobin and Patricia Hayes as the surviving members of the founding community, Sr Brigid Linehan representing her loved uncle Fr Dan who was the parish priest at the time; Srs Ellen Royan, Ellen Shanahan, Marie Hughes, Kathleen Mernagh, De Porres, and the present community, Louise Marie McDonell and Kathryn McCabe.

The children presented a delightful series of 'Living Pictures' which showed the life and calling of Mary and the Sisters with the support of Julian. You would have been as touched as we were by the little Julian placing his hand on Mary's shoulder to show his support.

Father Kevin Corrigan led the Community in celebrating a joyful Eucharist which highlighted the Book of the Gospels that the parish had presented to honour the Golden Jubilee.

After Communion, the senior pupils, performed a graceful liturgical movement to the music of 'Dream Lady' which showed the life and growth of Mary and the Sisters as they followed in the footsteps of Jesus.

Following the Mass there was a simple blessing of the new facility and a tribute to the growth of the school by Mr Ray Collins. Sr Ellen Royan spoke on behalf of the Sisters recalling her days at Tuncurry before the days of the Catholic School (See text below). Everyone was then invited to share a picnic lunch and enjoy the displays that were around the hall. Of special interest were the contents of the Time Capsule that had been laid down 25 years before on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee as it brought back many memories of the early days. A new capsule was to be prepared and placed with the earlier ones for another 25 years.

Congratulations to all who had a hand in these enjoyable celebrations.

Text of Ellen Royan's presentation of the Plaque.

It is with great pleasure that I am here on behalf of Sr Laretta Baker and the Sisters of St Joseph to congratulate you and wish you well on the occasion of the opening of this Mary MacKillop Hall in the anniversary year of her death a hundred years ago this weekend.

Half of that time, there was no catholic school here in Forster-Tuncurry. In fact there are a series of very interesting photos on the walls of the Sporties Club at Tuncurry that show clearly what it was like there when I was a child. My old home near the water front is depicted, as is my father and Alf Jensen working on the construction of the first racing yacht to be built on the east coast. My sister and I caught the Gloucester Mail bus run by Mr Jim McCulloch to take us to Krambach school – which made for a very long day for small children.

Only when Fr Linehan came here and Forster/Tuncurry became a parish in its own right did our sisters come to set up the first Catholic school in 1959. The trip across the bar in the 'Flying Jack' was a novel way of getting to school but of course it was fast compared to the old punt or indeed the passenger ferry the 'Alma G' which my father and Alf Jensen had also built.



Those pioneer sisters, Francesca, Regis, Hilda and Francis Mary, must have become seasoned sailors and while two of them have 'sailed off into the sunset' we have two of them here with us today- Sr Patricia and Florence - still sailing.

The foundations that they laid have grown to this fine school that reflects the work of so many of you gathered here . It is a heritage that you can be proud of. May this new hall and surrounds resound to the happy voices of your children as they reap the benefits of your labours, and may this plaque that I present to the school on behalf of the Sisters serve as a reminder of our shared history and an encouragement to all who claim the motto: 'Concern for Others'.