

Lochinvar Founding Sisters

Sister Joseph Dirkin (later called Ambrose Joseph) was the Sister Guardian (Leader) of the Institute. She was born Anne Dirkin in 1860 in County Armagh, Ireland, but raised in Australia, the eldest child of Matthew Dirkin and Mary Anne Larkin. Annie met Father Woods in his missionary travels in the Parkes-Forbes area, entered the Sisters of St Joseph at Perthville in 1880, was professed in 1882 and at the age of twenty-three left Bathurst with three companions to make the foundation at Lochinvar in 1883. She was Sister Guardian till 1890. In 1893 she transferred to the Tasmanian institute where she was widely recognised as a gifted musician. In 1898 she was appointed Sister Guardian, then reappointed till 1904. She visited Lochinvar in 1914 and 1933. She died in January 1948 and is buried in Cornelian Bay, Hobart.



Sister Baptist Dugan was born Mary Anne Dugan in Sydney in 1846, the daughter of John Dugan and Mary Bowen. In 1877 she entered the newly established Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph at Perthville and was professed in December 1878. Aged thirty-six she was the eldest of the four Sisters who made the foundation at Lochinvar in 1883. Her first years were spent at Lochinvar where she was active among the people as well as in the convent and school. In 1889 she was appointed Sister Assistant by Sr Joseph and reappointed in 1890 when Sr Imelda became Sister Guardian. She was appointed to Glendonbrook and Wybong where she taught junior classes, travelling by buggy each day to Upper Wybong. She returned to Glendonbrook to work till her retirement in 1917. She visited the branch houses frequently till her death at Lochinvar after a short illness in June 1921.



Sister Imelda Flood was born Catherine Flood, the eldest child of Thomas Flood and Julia Cullen, in Blayney, central New South Wales in 1862. She entered the Sisters of St Joseph in Perthville in 1881, was professed in January 1883, and later that year left Perthville to make the foundation at Lochinvar. Aged twenty-one, she was the youngest of the founding community. At Lochinvar she taught the junior classes till she was appointed Sister in charge of new branch houses, first at Quirindi in 1885, then at Burwood (Newcastle) in 1888. In June 1890 she was appointed Sister Guardian till June 1893. As Sister Guardian she courageously initiated a building program to provide an adequate and substantial Mother House for the Institute. After her term as Sister Guardian she went to Burwood, then Largs. She was appointed Bursar in 1899. When her health began to fail she was confined to the infirmary. She died at Lochinvar in February 1900 at the aged of thirty-seven.



Sister Aloysius Cahill was born in County Roscommon, Ireland in 1861, the daughter of John Cahill and Anne Emerson. She came to Australia in 1877 aged sixteen with an older sister, settling in Brisbane, where a brother, later Police Commissioner, and his wife followed the next year. Here she met Father Woods and through his invitation joined the Sisters of St Joseph in Perthville in January 1882. In August 1883 aged twenty-two, she left Perthville in the founding community to Lochinvar. In 1885, accompanied by two novices, she went as Sister in charge to Merriwa, the first branch house from Lochinvar. As well as being a thorough and dedicated teacher, she was active among the people in the many parishes where she lived. Despite many infirmities, she lived a long life and died at Lochinvar in June 1947.

