

MARIAN COLLEGE WEST SUNSHINE ~ 60 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

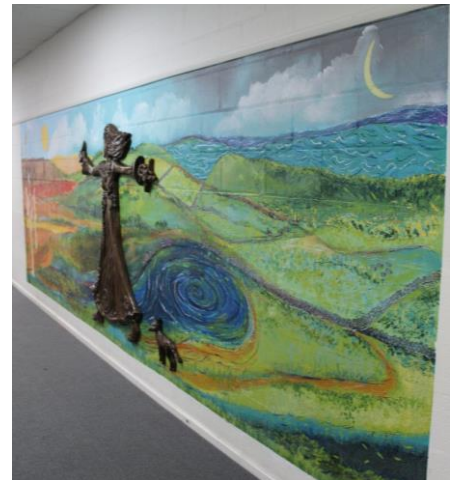


To continue our birthday commemorations, a very special piece of art work was commissioned by the College to mark our 60th anniversary. Artists Christine Sage and Regina Byrne facilitated a brainstorming session with a group of staff members to develop the concept, and then worked with our VCE Religion and Art students to paint the back drop for the sculpture, which was unveiled as part of the Brigidine Day celebrations. The sculpture of St Brigid of Kildare is laden with symbols representing the legends and myths surrounding the Irish saint.

In the years between 451 and 524 CE (or thereabouts it was a long time ago) a young Irish woman lived a life that had so much impact that she continues to inspire commitment and connection to our Catholic faith, even 1500 years later. Legends tells us that she was moved by the poverty in which people lived, by the needs they showed. Her compassion and thirst for justice were well known and at the forefront of her actions, even if this put her in conflict with society in general as well as her father. There are many miracles attributed to her, most of these involving praying to God to inspire and support her to give to those in need what they asked of her. The miracles tell us that, with God's love, Brigid was always able to provide. This compassion and thirst for justice, underpinned by her deep and abiding faith in God, were driven by her relationship and love for Jesus and her commitment to be in right relationship with those on the margins, those not able to advocate for themselves: the outcast, the poor, those who society deemed were not enough.

In our new sculpture and painting, we have tried to represent some of the legends and stories that capture the values that St Brigid of Kildare embodied in her life, and the values we continue to promote and live out today at Marian College. The legends may not speak a historical truth, but they do speak a human truth, a truth about how we should be in relationship with each other, with our neighbours and with all of creation.

The backdrop for our Brigid is a painting of the landscapes of Ireland and Australia. Legend tells us that Brigid was born across a threshold, not in, not out, not belonging to either, yet belonging to both. Sometimes this is known as a liminal space, a time when things are changing, when an old order or way of doing things is dissolving, but the new order that is emerging is not yet understood. Our Brigid spans the liminal space between two countries, an Irish saint who lived a long time ago, whose life continues to have impact for our very different lives here in Australia in contemporary times. So, what is common, what moves from the old to the new, from one place to another it is the values that Brigid embodied in her life, compassion, justice, hospitality, hope, courage and wonder, arising from her faith in and faithfulness to Jesus. While a new order is always emerging in our societies, it is these values, our Kildare Ministries values, that will continue to inform our response to how we will imagine life in this new order.



We invite you to stand in front of our Brigid. There are many symbols that have been built into her design that will be familiar to you. Spend some time looking for the different symbols, try to recall the stories captured by these symbols, then try to remember what the stories are teaching, what are the values that emerge from the stories that you hear?

Brigid's arms are outstretched, there is a sense that she is inviting us along, beckoning us to follow. Where do we follow? What is it that Brigid is inviting us into? As we look to the top left-hand corner of the mural we see the Kildare Ministries cross painted into the Australian landscape.

Brigid is inviting us forward into a new liminal space a space of possibilities. The Brigidine sisters have taken an act of courage and struck out on a new journey, entrusting their story, St Brigids story, Daniel Delany's vision, to our care. We enliven the stories by who we are as a community every day: we keep faith with the tradition by bringing the values to life and ensuring we live our Mission to be a transformative community, contributing to a new order emerging from the liminal space.

Rita Grima, Co-Principal

