

9. Statue of St. Michael

Nestled in the front gardens to your right is the statue of St. Michael.

There is a Statue of St. Michael in every Loreto School. This tradition began in 1696, a time of Catholic persecution in England. The Bar Convent in York was under attack. As a rioting mob approached the convent the Superior hung a picture of St. Michael above the door to place the convent under his protection and the mob dispersed.

10. Front Building

Under the sandstone façade is the original house purchased by the Loreto Sisters in 1875 to be a school and convent.

The Regency style house was built for Edward Agar Wynne in around 1868 as a family home. This was originally the back entrance as the house fronted onto Lake Wendouree. The upper floor and gothic façade were added in 1914.

To the right, attached to the original building, is the Residential Wing which was built in 1882. This contained a schoolroom on the ground floor and boarders' dormitories above.

To the right of the Residential Wing is St. Anne's Wing, opened in 1955 and comprising classrooms and dormitories.



Original Wynne Residence from the north, facing Lake Wendouree

11. Chapel

The Loreto Chapel, or Children's Chapel as it was known, was built between 1898 and 1902. The architect was William Tappin and the builder, George Lorimer. It is built in an English Gothic style with French influence. The stone is Barrabool Hills sandstone from near Geelong with white Oamaru, New Zealand, stone detailing.

Building was interrupted through lack of funds but the project was finally completed with a large bequest from the German Countess Elizabeth Wolff-Metternich, who had been a student at the Convent in 1898. The Countess tragically died on a return visit to her family in Germany.

The inside of the Chapel is decorated in soft pastel colours with artwork and statuary donated to the sisters by Ballarat and Irish families. The Rose Window over the Organ Gallery depicts St. Cecilia, patron saint of music, surrounded by symbols of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The windows over the altar depict the instruments of the Passion of Christ. The marble altar features the Nativity scene as was requested by the children.

The interior of the Chapel was restored in 1999 through the bequest of past pupil, Lucy Kerley and maintenance is continued with a bequest from past pupil, Eileen Macintyre (McGrath).



Procession for the Opening of the Chapel in December 1902

CHAPEL AND GARDEN HERITAGE WALK



Original house and new Chapel, c.1902

This walk will take you around the heritage grounds and Chapel of the first Loreto Convent in Australia.

Mother Gonzaga Barry and nine companions arrived in Australia from Ireland in July 1875.

Loreto Mary's Mount, now Loreto College Ballarat, was opened as a boarding school on 29th September 1875.

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Begin your walk at the front entrance gates.

1. Gates/Wall

The sisters were anxious to build a wall around the convent for privacy. In earlier times the order was semi-enclosed which required limited outside contact.

The convent wall was built in 1881 largely through donations. The grand gateway was designed by the architect, William Tappin.



Front Gates decorated for the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, 1927

2.

Site of the Gatehouse Lodge (formerly next to front gate)

To the right of the gates as you look down the drive stood the Gatehouse Lodge (demolished in the 1950s). The Gatehouse was occupied by Mary and Ellen Donnelly and Ellen's daughter Nellie. Mary and Ellen acted as portresses.

3.

St. Anne's Primary School

The building to the right of driveway is the old St. Anne's Primary School. Behind the 1960s additions to this building can be seen the original parish school which was built in 1908 and closed in the early 1920s to become a finishing school. This building became the Priest's Chale in the 1930s before being opened as a kindergarten in 1941. The kindergarten was closed in 1978.

A mine shaft was found when the 1960s extension was built.

4. Rosary Way

To the left of the entrance gates is the Rosary Way. This is a walk to be taken while saying the prayers of the Rosary. The Rosary Way was modelled on the Rosary Way in the Aylesford Priory Gardens, Kent, where the Mysteries of the Rosary are depicted in ceramics with roses beside each. Our Rosary Way was constructed in 1981 with donations from Agnes Miclean and other Loreto friends.

5. Lourdes Grotto

At the end of the Rosary Way is the Lourdes Grotto, built in commemoration of the Grotto in Lourdes where Our Lady of Lourdes appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. A more elaborate two-storey structure was first built in 1895 and was moved to make way for the Chapel and rebuilt in this location. The current Grotto was built in 1973 when the old grotto had become structurally unsound. It contains a small stone from Lourdes brought back by Mother Gonzaga Barry from her journey to Europe in 1894.

Walk back down the Rosary Way and left down the driveway.

6. Mary Ward Sculpture

On your right is a cast bronze sculpture of Mary Ward, founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Irish foundations of which are known as Loreto.

Mary Ward was a 17th Century Yorkshire woman who lived during the period of Catholic persecution. She went to St. Omer in the Netherlands and established the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1609. Her vision was to establish a community of self-governing women free from the traditional cloister with a mission to educate girls in the spirit of "freedom, justice and sincerity".

The sculpture was created by Meiesha Judge and installed at the beginning of the school year in 2008. Each Loreto school in Australia has a Mary Ward sculpture.

Continue down the driveway and turn right onto the gravel path.

7. St. Joseph's Grotto

Straight ahead is the little Cemetery Chapel built in around 1882 and dedicated to St. Joseph for whom Mother Gonzaga Barry had a special devotion. The honour boards inside the chapel list deceased Loreto sisters. (These names are now recorded on honour boards inside the front building.)

8. Cemetery

The founder of Loreto Sisters in Australia, Mother Gonzaga Barry, was buried in this cemetery in 1915. During her lifetime Loreto was established in Ballarat, Portland, Hamilton, South Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Adelaide. Mother Gonzaga believed in giving girls a liberal education from kindergarten to tertiary level. She was at the forefront of education in Australia with her establishment of kindergartens and teacher training colleges.

Also buried in the Cemetery are Sister Gertrude Quinn (c.1820-1882), who came to Australia with Mother Gonzaga, and Sister Scholastica Manning (1867-1886) who had only been at Mary's Mount for two years and was professed on her death bed.

A memorial to a student who died while at school in 1890, Ethel Cameron, is also in the Cemetery, as is a memorial to the pioneer sisters.

A statue of Mary is a memorial to the second Provincial, Mother Stanislaus Mulhall.



Mother Gonzaga Barry

Walk back past St. Joseph's Grotto, left along the path, through the hedge arch and back onto the front driveway.