



Sisters of the Good Samaritan

Media release

February 3, 2023

Renovated Congregational Centre looks to the future while honouring the past

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan welcomed members of their community to a liturgy marking the Blessing and Opening of renovations to St Scholastica's Congregational Centre in Glebe on February 2. The Sisters hope the space will be a place of gathering, learning, conversation and hospitality.

The Blessing and Opening took place on the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and the 166th anniversary of the foundation of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

Housed in historic Toxteth House, the renovations will bring fresh life to a building which has been home to many people and served many purposes since it was built in 1831.

Congregational Leader Sister Patty Fawcner said the site on which Toxteth House stands had always been a sacred space, from the time when the traditional custodians, the Gadigal people, shared their Dreamtime stories.

"Toxteth House is a building that has always looked to the future, not the past," Patty said. "For nearly 200 years, it has been primarily a place of hospitality. We wish to continue this tradition of hospitality, which is intrinsic to Benedictine life."

A feature of the centre is a series of five etchings, which were commissioned by artist Terry St Ledger. Entitled *The Ministerial Women*, the images depict Mary of Magdala – Apostle to the Apostles; Phoebe – Deacon, as named by St Paul; St Frances of Rome – Benedictine Oblate; Martha Sarahes – a Good Samaritan Sister and Pacifican; and St Josephine Bakhita – Seeker of Freedom.

Good Samaritan Sister Christine Manning said the centre's extensive library collection was focused on the areas of Biblical, Liturgical and Benedictine spirituality. "Having a library is very much part of the Benedictine tradition of *Lectio Divina*, the love of learning nourishing the seeking of God and living the Gospel. We wanted to continue this tradition by bringing new life to the library and better enable it to enrich people's lives," Christine said.

The renovation was designed by Wendy and Craig Taylor of Red Blue Architects, who embraced the challenge of bringing new life to this heritage building. Their aim was to achieve a sense of light, beauty and simplicity.

The design allows each room to retain its unique function, while also opening up the spaces to be a part of a bigger whole. The arcade connects spaces while the courtyard is the heart of the centre.

The dining room has been enlarged to offer hospitality to larger groups and ramps have been installed throughout the ground floor, making it fully accessible.

For more information and images, click [here](#)

To request images, send an email to thegoodoil@goodsams.org.au

Jane Favotto, Editor – The Good Oil, tel 0428 802 004, thegoodoil@goodsams.org.au