Our Lady of Sion College
Information Book

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Our Lady of Sion College is a Catholic Secondary College for girls with an enrolment of approximately 900 students from Years 7 to 12.

The College is incorporated under the Australian Companies Act and is managed by a Board of 12 members.

The College is led by an Executive Team comprising:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal – Catholic Identity & Learning
- The Deputy Principal – Wellbeing
- The College Daily Coordinator
- The Business Manager
- The VCE/VCAL Leader
- The Years 7 to 10 Curriculum Coordinator
- The ICT Manager

At each year level girls are cared for by Year Level Coordinators and Homeroom teachers. The Curriculum is led and managed by Domain and Program Leaders.
Our Mission

Our Lady of Sion College is a Catholic College where young women are encouraged to live in fidelity to the Word of God known in the Scriptures and the life of Jesus. These young women inherit the tradition of the Church and the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, which calls them to actively seek to transform the world.

This tradition calls them to be:

- creative and contemplative,
- passionate and compassionate,
- concerned always for justice, truth, reconciliation and peace, and
- people who build bridges with others and remain open to change.

These young women will be offered opportunities that will enable them to become individuals filled with hope, who speak to the divine within themselves and beyond their imagining. They will become young women who will always strive to:

- discover the presence of God,
- discern,
- have the courage to speak the truth, and the energy to act for change, and
- bring the gifts of healing and nurturing in places of discord.

Our Lady of Sion College imbues in our young women,

- a sense of belonging to a tradition,
- a hunger for achieving what is right, and
- calls them in all things, to speak the truth in love.

Our Vision

Sowing the seeds of hope,
uncovering excellence within
and inspiring a commitment to justice.
A Story of the Charism of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion.

It is almost impossible to define this Charism. It is however, possible to describe something of its development.

The Congregation was founded in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century by Theodore Ratisbonne, a Jewish man who became a Catholic and a priest. His leadership inspired the Sisters with a love of the Jewish people, an appreciation of the Bible, an attachment to Mary, a commitment to those who were poor and in need, and a love for the Church. His philosophy of life was founded on the conviction that ‘God is love’. This particular mix is what, with hindsight, is called the Charism of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion. The elements have remained constant but their expression has changed over time.

For many years the Sisters described their mission as ‘praying for the conversion of the Jews’. The Sisters did not actively seek to convert Jews to Christianity but did offer all their works and prayers for this intention. The main work of the Sisters during these years was teaching. The Sisters worked in parish schools and ran boarding schools of their own. Fr Theodore wanted Sion to be a family in which the students would feel that they were cared for and that they belonged to the Sion family. Even when the Congregation spread to many countries he insisted that the family spirit be preserved.

The attempted annihilation of the Jewish people in Europe during the Second World War and contact with Jews escaping the Nazi regime had a major impact on the lives of a number of the Sisters. These events caused them to question, then to find new ways of expressing our relationship to the Jewish people. This in turn led to changes for the Congregation in its prayer, literature and work. There was also beginning about this time a change in the thinking of the Catholic Church. These changes bore fruit in the Second Vatican Council with the Declaration Nostra Aetate, In Our Times, a document on the Catholic Church’s relationship with other Faiths. (Paragraph 4 of this Declaration concerns the Church’s relationship with the Jewish people.)

This Declaration confirmed changes that had already begun in the Sisters’ lives. Now they worked and prayed for:

- A better understanding amongst Christians of the roots of Christianity in Judaism.
- An appreciation of the Jewish people today as they see and understand themselves.
- A relationship between Jews and Catholics (Christians) that is mutual and includes Dialogue.

The changes in the Church and the world at this time brought other changes to the lives of the Sisters. Sisters were encouraged to pray and study the Bible. The Biblical imperative for Justice called many Sisters to work with the poor and marginalized and to call for justice in particular cases and more generally in our world. This had a particular dimension for us at Sion, not only did the Bible call us to work for a world where justice, peace and love prevail but the tragic history of the Church’s relationship with the Jewish people reminded us of the terrible consequences of injustice in relationships between Church and Synagogue and therefore in any relationship of injustice.

The spirituality of the Sisters, their way of being, their community prayer, their personal prayer, is founded in the Bible. This was always part of the sisters’ lives but since the Vatican Council and its call to renewal, the place of the Word of God, the Bible, has become central in the Sisters’ lives.
Words and ideas central to the Charism of the 
Our Lady of Sion family

The Bible is a significant source of our life challenges.

Reconciliation is central to our charism, firstly with the Jewish people and also with all peoples and among ourselves.

Building bridges of understanding.

Belonging to the Sion Family

Jerusalem is the meaning of our name and at the heart of our concern. The Biblical imperative for justice, peace and love is enriched by our knowledge of the injustices done to the Jewish people especially in the Shoah / Holocaust.

The example of the women who have gone before us, both Sisters and students, is an inspiration which we value.

The international reality of the Sion family stretches our hearts so that as Fr Theodore hoped we will have hearts as big as the world.

The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion 
Educational Philosophy

The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion has a particular vocation in the Church which has led it into a variety of situations and experiences throughout the world.

This is expressed beautifully in the Congregation’s Constitution:

We are called to witness by our life to God’s faithful love for the Jewish people and to his fidelity to the promises he revealed to the patriarchs and prophets of Israel for all humanity.

In Christ, the pledge of their fulfillment is given us.

This call implies that our apostolic life is characterised by a three-fold commitment to the Church, to the Jewish people, and to a world of justice, peace and love.

Whatever task we are engaged in, we are called to integrate in some way, these three dimensions of our apostolic commitment.

Constitution, 13

The nature of this vocation has touched quite deep theological questions as well as concrete aspects of life and apostolic involvement.
Staff at Our Lady of Sion College are called to…

At Our Lady of Sion College we should be authentic models for our students in the way we inspire and encourage one another and in the quality of our relationships with one another. We should be a daily witness to a God of mercy, compassion and love and Our Lady of Sion College should be a place where relationships are warm and caring and where there is mutual respect. Every member of the College staff must be always ready to help each student recognize her giftedness and inspire her to use her gifts, not just for herself but to shape the world for others in the light of Scripture.

The Our Lady of Sion College Crest

The spirit and vision of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion have their foundation in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Inherent in the Sacred Scriptures are the values of the sacredness of self and all people, a respect for differences, and an unselfishness that is expressed in care of the other especially the poor and the marginalized. The Congregation’s educational philosophy based on Biblical values is holistic in its approach. Each young woman has the opportunity to develop her gifts.

The open book, the Bible, invites learning – both religious and academic. The stance of the figure captures the freedom, joy and celebration that come with learning. The arc coming from the Bible and surrounding the figure may convey the all-encompassing love of God.