



St Margaret's students commemorate the life of Mother Emma

Mother Emma's Day is celebrated annually on 9 March within the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA), and the schools associated with the sisters. This year, St Margaret's and St Aidan's students gathered at St John's Cathedral to honour and celebrate the life of the former Mother Superior of the Order of the Society of the Sacred Advent.

Mother Emma was influential in the establishment of several SSA schools, including St Margaret's, St Aidan's, St Anne's in Townsville, St Mary's in Herberton, St Gabriel's in Charters Towers and St Faith's in Yeppoon.

Students in Years 4 and 8 were chosen to attend the commemorative service which was also attended by Sister Gillian, Eunice and Sister Sandra, the three remaining Sisters of the schools' founders, the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent. Chaplains from St Margaret's and St Aidan's, The Reverend Susan Crothers-Robertson and The Reverend Gillian Moses hosted the Eucharist in thanksgiving for Mother Emma and the Society of the Sacred Advent, with the sermon delivered by St Margaret's Old Girl The Reverend Canon Sarah Plowman.

Anjelica Owen, a third generation St Margaret's girl, felt lucky to be part of such a special service and to learn a little more of the school's history within the 125th anniversary year. It was Anjelica's first visit to St John's Cathedral and first experience of a special Eucharist. She had the opportunity to do a reading during the service and reflected on her experience in her written recount:

A small child, a big future...In 1864 in Kent, a child with a big heart was born. Her parents named her Emma. When she grew up, a strong, determined woman, she worked hard and efficiently. Some people even said that was an understatement! She eventually became a Sister of the Society of the Sacred Advent. As a result of all that hard work, she became the Mother Superior of the Society of the Sacred Advent in 1906. Her name was Mother Emma for 33 years. She died a sad death after a battle with cancer in 1939. An article about her life was written in the church chronicle. One of the sisters had written it. To this day, we celebrate Mother Emma's day on the 9th of March, the day she died. Of all the people living in Queensland, few have contributed like Mother Emma.

As soon as we entered the cathedral, a sense of calmness washed over us until we were submerged. St John's Cathedral has a high roof and huge pillars. At the back, the woodwork was intricate and delicate. There were stained glass windows that provided colourful light in the huge building. When the organ played, the sound hung in the air providing a noise that filled the cathedral. We could feel the joyful presence of Mother Emma high above us. We sang St Aidan's school hymn.

We sang hymns and girls read readings from the bible. I was one of the six girls reading prayers. The priest gave us bread or bread (no wine because of the Coronavirus)

Mother Emma had loved children, so she started lots of schools. She started schools for girls so all girls can have more opportunities. While at the service, I felt like I was contributing to God and Jesus and paying tribute to the amazing Mother Emma.

Visiting the cathedral on a special day was humbling and I knew it was a very special occasion.

