Mannix College: all things to all people

BY EDWINA HALL

WHEN WELL INTO HIS NINETIES, Archbishop Daniel Mannix was determined to see a Catholic residential college built at Monash University so that Catholics could take their “proper place in the universities, with all due and sufficient safeguards for their faith and for the practice of their religion.”

In 1969, a few years after Mannix’s death at the age of 99, Mannix College opened its doors. Since that day it has seen thousands of students, academics and researchers fill its dorms and it has been home for each of them Omnium omnes—all things to all people—the personal motto of Archbishop Mannix and the motto since adopted by Mannix College.

Mannix College is a Catholic residential college affiliated with Monash University. Each year it is the place in the universities, with all due respect and care and giving to other Catholics and Christian influence here, that Mannix College offers intellectual gifts of a university education.

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“Seeing [residential college life] from all different perspectives, the fully catered, live-in experience and lifelong friendships that develop, you can’t beat it, it’s priceless.” Barbara Shea, who has been dean of Mannix for the past 13 years and was once a student at Mannix herself, believes that living at a residential college gives students the best opportunity to access the wonderful gifts of a university education.

“There is something that characterises this college in a very particular way, the sense of community, the sense of care of one another and sharing. There is great pastoral support; there is something very special that characterises the interaction between the students and the staff that helps people to grow,” Barbara said.

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“One of my visions for the college is for students to broaden their horizons. One of my visions for the college is for students to broaden their horizons. We could be cast as any residential college in Australia but I think having a Catholic and Christian influence here, respect and care and giving to other people, is an important part of it. It’s about the community, the long friendships, those relationships that you carry on.

“Around a college setting you bring students together in a dining room, you interact and engage with them regularly and that really reduces the chances of a student being lost in the system. It helps them to engage and adapt to university life and life away from home.

Archbishop Daniel Mannix (1864-1963)

BORN IN CHARLIEVILLE, COUNTY CORK in 1864, Daniel Mannix was ordained to the priesthood in 1890, obtained his doctorate in 1895 and elected President of Maynooth in 1906. He was appointed to Melbourne as Archbishop Carr’s coadjutor with right of succession on 1 July 1912, consecrated bishop on 6 October 1912 and installed as Archbishop of Melbourne in 1917. Archbishop Mannix died suddenly on 6 November 1963, aged 99, four months short of his 100th birthday. His name lives on in public lectures, a College campus, College houses and a sports field in Charleville, North Cork. This photo of Archbishop Mannix was taken by John Casamento in 1962.