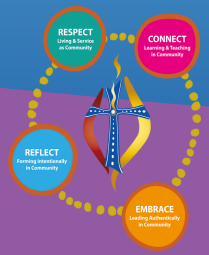# Family Prayer
Solemnity of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop- August 8 2025

by Kirby Will
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Acknowledgement of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context - St Mary of the Cross MacKillop

(information from *https://www.marymackillopplace.org.au/about-us/saint-mary-mackillop/*)

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Australia's first canonised saint, was an ordinary woman who lived an extraordinary life. As a woman of faith, courage and hope, she overcame many obstacles and challenges to create a legacy that continues to inspire today.

Born in Victoria to Scottish immigrants, she was the eldest of eight children and worked from a young age to support her family. At 24, she devoted her life to God, taking the name 'Mary of the Cross'.

Together with Fr Julian Tenison Woods, Mary co-founded a school in South Australia to educate poor and underprivileged children. This led to the establishment of Australia's first religious order, the *Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart,* who became affectionately known as the "Brown Joeys". She took her vision for education, especailly for the poor, isolated and underprivileged, establishing dozens of schools throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Dedicated to serving the poor, Mary with her Josephite Sisters went wherever they were needed, living amongst the communities they served. Despite facing fierce opposition, including her excommunication, Mary's unwavering resolve and determination never faltered.

In 1884 Mary MacKillop and her sisters moved to North Sydney. On 8 August 1909, Mary passed away in Alma Cottage (the Josephite Convent at the time), now the sacred site of Mary MacKillop Place (North Sydney, Australia). She was beatified in 1995 by Pope John Paul II after a second miracle was attributed to her and, on 17 October 2010, Mary MacKillop was canonised as a saint at St Peter's Basilica, Rome. Her final resting place, the Tomb of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop in the Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel forms part of Mary MacKillop Place and a site of pilgrimage open to all.

Scripture: Gospel ‡ Matthew 6:25-34

Do not worry about tomorrow.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are
to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it.
'Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky.
They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Are you not worth much more than they are?
'Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about
clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that
not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these.
 Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace
tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith?
'So do not worry, do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" It
is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all.
'Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given
you as well.
So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow, will take care of itself.
Each day has enough trouble if its own.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection

Growing up in rural South Australia some seven hours of travel away from Adelaide, Mary's legacy shaped my education and understanding of what a woman with passion could achieve. I attended a Josephite school for my secondary education and each year, we delved into the life of Mary MacKillop. We knew the details of her life and family, her work, her challenges and the twilight years of her life. We were fortunate to have some of the most wonderful women who were posted to Port Lincoln in their lives as a Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart who oozed compassion and joy in everything they did with us at the school.

Mary's famous words never see a need without trying to remedy it' were frequently shared with us. Nowadays, whenever I see this quote, it is usually written with the phrasing …without doing something about it, however, for me, the version I grew up with rings true for Mary and the Sister's aims. Remedy has many meanings: in a medical sense, it means to relieve or cure a disease; in a legal sense it means to recover a right, or prevent, or obtain a redress for a wrong; or it can even mean to correct. If we reflect on the aims of Mary's work, she was not just doing something about what she saw. She was providing relief, recovering rights and correcting situations across vast rural areas of Australia and New Zealand.

Mary's life and legacy shows us just what can be achieved when we approach a situation, not just to do something about it, but intentionally set out to remedy it.

Prayer - written by Sr Monica Cavanagh rsj

St Mary MacKillop, Companion of Hope,
Teach us through your example to trust in God's providence,
To walk with courage even when the path is unclear,
And to be light for others in times of darkness.
Amen.

Call to Action

- Watch Congregational Leader of the Sister's of Saint Joseph, Sr Monica Cavanagh's *video reflection* on Mary MacKillop and her importance in this Jubilee year.
- Do this *art* or *poem* activity from Mary MacKillop Place.
- Pray with Mary- visit this *website* for a virtual visit to the tomb of Mary MacKillop where you can leave a prayer intention or pray quietly.

"Never see a need without doing something about it"

Saint Mary MacKillop rsj

MARY MACKILLOP
today

Catholic
Education
Diocese of Cairns
Learning with Faith and Vision