



Vignettes from the MacKillop Cross Pilgrimage

The 'Mary MacKillop Cross' was created from timber rescued from the original Josephite Schoolhouse at Penola when the floor was replaced in the 1980's. During the lead-up to the Mary's Beatification in January 1995, the Cross was taken on a pilgrimage around Australia, and now, in these final weeks prior to her Canonisation, it is on the road again!

The 2010 Mary MacKillop Cross Pilgrimage, an initiative of the Knights of the Southern Cross (KSC) commenced at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney on August 8th (the 101st anniversary of Mary's death). Travelling south over the next few days, the Cross reached Victoria on the evening of August 11th. Over the next 14 days, the Cross travelled hundreds of kilometres through the four Victorian Dioceses, with scheduled stopovers in 45 places, which included Mary's birthplace in Fitzroy, the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre in East Melbourne, the Josephite Province Centre, Alexander MacKillop's resting place in the Hamilton Cemetery, and a significant number of country and city parishes and schools where either Mary 'had a presence', or her sisters have lived and worked among the people. There were a number of unscheduled stops as well!! During its time in Victoria, the Pilgrimage Cross was welcomed, carried, touched and celebrated by many thousands of adults and children, who gathered as local communities in schools and churches for liturgies which invited their reflection on Mary MacKillop's life, and her legacy to us.

'Country Cross Boss' Michael O'Halloran, a member of the Victorian KSC, escorted (and sometimes drove) the Mary MacKillop Cross during the rural legs of the Pilgrimage as it criss-crossed Victoria. He took many photos and kept a detailed diary, which he has happily shared with us. You are invited to enter into different scenes of the Pilgrimage through the lens of Michael's diary. It is not difficult to understand his final comment that ... *'leaving the Cross at Penola was like saying goodbye to a dear friend.'*

Sandhurst Diocese ... Northern Victoria

Wednesday, August 11th:

WODONGA

I travelled from Melbourne for the official start of the Victorian leg of the Pilgrimage. The Cross was escorted into the Sacred Heart Church for the Liturgy, which was conducted by Fr. Denis Crameri, assisted by Fr. Jake Mudge. The PowerPoint presentation was prepared by the Liturgy Team headed by seminarian, Bernie Augustines. Amongst those present in the congregation were Sophie Mirabella, the Federal Member. A very senior Josephite Sister, Ita Harris, gave a wonderful address to the congregation on the life of Blessed Mary MacKillop. Whilst the rain may have dampened the earth it certainly did not dampen the strong spirit and vibrancy in the church. Earlier in the evening the visit of the Cross was covered on the Local Prime TV News. Prime TV have donated the film.

Thursday, August 12th

CORRYONG

We rose early 6 am. to travel to Corryong, a distance of approx 130 kms up through the hills and timber country. The MacKillop Bus stopped at Tallangatta to pick up some of our KSC brothers, so 9 of us travelled on to Sacred Heart Primary School at 9.20a.m. to be greeted by Fr. Brian Carey, Josephite Sister, Patricia George, and Brendan Attley, the proud Principal of Sacred Heart. Also



present was a visiting priest from the USA. The children were delighted to see the Cross (and the writer had tears in his eyes) to see the joy on their small faces when coming forward to touch it!

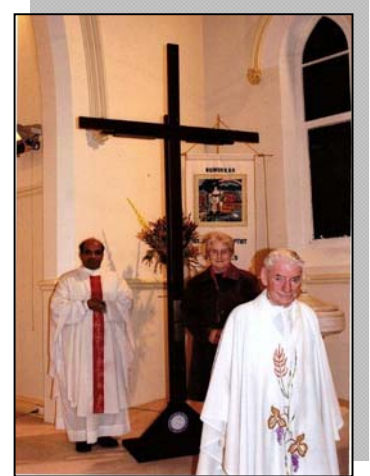
On that wonderful morning the new school library was blessed and dedicated to Mary MacKillop. It was rather special to bring the Cross to an area of the Sandhurst Diocese so isolated, so far removed from the centre of the action. With reluctance we had to go, so we said our thank you and headed back to Wodonga, stopping briefly en route at St Michael's Tallangatta, where the Sisters had taught and worked for about thirty years.

WANGARATTA

After a change of drivers at Wodonga, it was a hard drive to Wangaratta. The Church was full of children and adult parishioners, including the Shire President and other Civic Dignitaries. Fr. Peter Ferwerder thanked the KSC for bringing the Cross to Wangaratta, for travelling so far in difficult driving conditions so that the people could share the experience.

NUMURKAH

Our next stop was Numurkah, where the Victorian Josephite story began in 1890 when Mary arrived with three other Sisters to open St Joseph's School in January 1890. Fr. Frank Jones made us welcome, and invited us to stay overnight at the presbytery. He dined and wined us well! After dinner we proceeded to the Church for Mass, which was concelebrated with Fr. Joseph Pothenparampil from Mooroopna. Fr. Frank's homily was terrific, and affirming of the Knights of the Southern Cross. He linked the Objects of the KSC with the achievements of our Blessed Mary MacKillop. After a refreshing sleep and breakfast prepared by Master Chef, Fr. Frank Jones, we set off with an early morning start for Rushworth.



Friday, August 13:

RUSHWORTH

We were greeted by Fr. Owen Doyle and a church full of children! The kids escorted the Cross into the church. The Liturgy that had been prepared was wonderful - a credit to the teachers! The children sang with great joy as their voices filled the church with sound. Also in the Rushworth congregation were Josephite Associates and also local Josephite Sister Nellie Versluys. After a quick cuppa and goodbye Rushworth, we set off for Bendigo

BENDIGO

We arrived with 4 minutes to starting time. Phew!!! Pacing up and down looking anxiously up the street were a sizeable number of our KSC Brothers! Once again the Cathedral was filled with children from the surrounding Colleges and Schools. Bishop Joe Grech welcomed us with a warm handshake and smile, and a big thank you to the KSC before the Liturgy for the Receiving of the Cross, which had been very well organised with by our Bendigo KSC members.

EAGLEHAWK and FLORA HILL

After the conclusion at the Cathedral ritual, the Cross proceeded to Eaglehawk, where the Sisters of St Joseph had taught for almost 60 years. The children from St Liborius' Primary School had formed a guard of honour from the gate to the door of the Church, where Fr. Joven Lustre pp was waiting to welcome the Cross. Spontaneous applause started: it was

the children clapping as the Cross made its way up to the Church door. Brian Bourke (KSC), who spoke to the congregation about the beginnings of the Cross, was well received by both children and adults alike. As there was time to spare until the evening liturgy at Eaglehawk, we took the Cross to the Poor Clares' Monastery in Flora Hill. Their viewing was simple and at the same time lovely. They had prepared an area in the yard with a picture of Blessed Mary MacKillop surrounded by fresh wattle. These six nuns from Sri Lanka in their brown habits tied with a white cord made a delightful sight. I felt sure that Blessed Mary would have been touched as well: that these nuns, far from their homeland, were paying their tribute and respects to her.

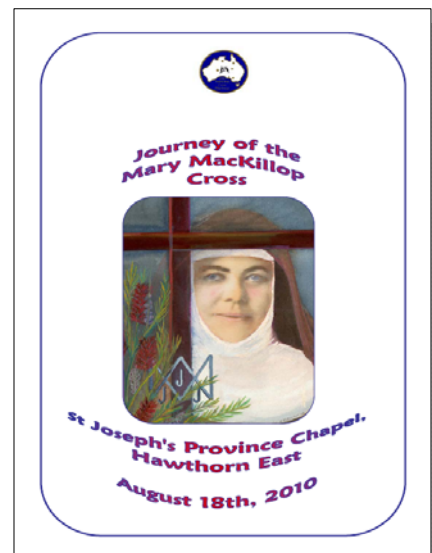
The evening Liturgy was well attended by the parishioners of St. Liborius as well as the Anglican Minister and visitors. The Cross entered the church, carried by representatives of the KSC, and was welcomed by Fr. Peter John, who conducted the liturgy, which was well attended by KSC members and Eaglehawk parishioners, who extended the Parish's hospitality by way of a delightful supper, after which I bedded down for the night at Brian and Maureen Bourke's place, and the Cross was 'bedded down' in the Sacristy, where I was assured that '*All is OK: safe as a Church!*'

Sale Diocese ... Eastern Victoria

Wednesday, August 18th

NARRE WARREN NORTH

After a five days in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, during which the Cross visited many schools, parishes and other places with Josephite connections, including Mary's birthplace in Fitzroy, Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre in East Melbourne, the Josephite Province Centre and Mary MacKillop Aged Care in Hawthorn East, the Pilgrimage headed eastwards, to the Sale Diocese. Our borrowed 'Cross Chariot' van was travelling along beautifully until disaster struck – at Mary MacKillop School Narre Warren – where the clutch gave out! The van was pushed into a parking spot and the Cross was set up in the assembly hall. Inside the assembly hall the children held their welcome to the Cross. Unfortunately, I was unable to be present, as I was making emergency phone-calls. However, I heard that it was very well done. It was already mid-afternoon, and we still had to get the Cross to Warragul by 4.00 p.m., and then onto St Marys Cathedral, Sale by 8.00p.m. As they say: 'God and Mary MacKillop work in strange ways'! My car has an opening from the boot to inside the car. So, with the borrowed screw-driver that was to become our most needed tool in the coming days, we took the Cross apart, and the beams fitted and into the boot and through into the car. Necessity is the mother of invention ...! So I said good bye to the 'Cross Chariot', and leaving the keys and the van in the capable hands of the School staff who were its caretakers until it was towed away for repairs.



WARRAGUL

Next, it was on to Warragul, where we arrived on time at St Joseph's Church, to be welcomed by more of our KSC members, and Deacon Mark Kelly, who led the ritual of the welcome for the Cross and invited the congregation to venerate it. There was one lady from Neerim South aged 97 who, whilst in a wheel chair, made the special effort to be there. Here is one of the wonderful memories of the Pilgrimage: that frail old woman and her simple faith. No pretence no grandeur, just herself and the Cross (and the COLD weather!) After the conclusion we were off to Sale. ('Mary Mac' - the dismantled Cross - the Magna and Me). As there was little room in my car, Bill Mc Mahon who had been previously scheduled to drive the van around the Sale Diocese, drove his car and he became the Cross escort.

SALE



Fr. Bernard Buckley conducted a beautiful and moving Taize service, which is a meditative, ecumenical Christian experience of prayer that includes silence and chanting. The Cross was laid out on gold silken material, its dark wood on the gold making a lovely sight, surrounded by candlelight. Amongst the Congregation was Bishop Christopher Prowse and also the Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator, Mrs. Sophy Morley who had arranged, promoted, and was in no small way the reason for such a successful outcome in the Sale Diocese. Bishop Prowse gave us all a solemn blessing at the conclusion of the service which concluded at about 9.30pm. The thing about Sale is that everything closes at 9.00p.m. and Bill and I were hungry. So we finished up in our Motel room eating a 'heart burn bomb' (Big Mac) and a couple of stubbies!

Thursday, August 19th

SALE

Still suffering from the 'heart burn bomb', it was up and off again – back to St. Marys Cathedral Sale where Bishop Prowse introduced me and asked me to give an outline of the KSC's involvement with the Cross. Mass then commenced with the students from surrounding schools attending and participating in the liturgy. All the students attending venerated the cross, and many thanked us for bringing the Cross to Sale. After Mass when I was loading it back into the car his Lordship came across and once again conveyed his thanks and blessing and good wishes.

BAIRNSDALE

Bill and I then set off for St. Mary's Bairnsdale (another school with Josephite connections), to be met and welcomed by School Principal, Kevin Greenwood, Fr Denis O'Bryan PP; Fr Stephen Onuoha and over 400 primary school children, many of whom had travelled many miles from the surrounding towns. The Cross was carried by the children through a long guard of honour into the assembly hall and chapel, where a lovely shrine was set up. A great welcome for Blessed Mary MacKillop, I am sure she loved it! Josephite Sister, Maureen Philp from Lakes Entrance told the children a long and interesting story of Mary MacKillop. The children with their joyful singing reverence and dramatisation was something special and a credit to their teachers and parents. Well done Bairnsdale!



LEONGATHA



After a two hour drive through beautiful country, we arrived at Leongatha and we were met by Fr Mathew Kannalayil. As Father is from India, he did not know a lot about Mary MacKillop so I was invited prior to Mass to speak a little on the Pilgrimage and the origins of the Cross etc. Fr. Mathew was assisted by Fr Jacob Thadathil, who came across from Foster in order to concelebrate the Mass. He gave the homily on the meaning of the Cross in our lives.

A number of Josephite Associates, and also Sister Margaret Brown from Yarram were also in attendance. People had travelled for miles: Wonthaggi, Tarwin Lower, Foster, Yarram and many towns near and far. That night Bill and I stayed in Leongatha, with local KSC members.

Friday, August 20th

LEONGATHA

On our last morning in the Sale Diocese the Cross was organised to go to Mary MacKillop Secondary College at Leongatha. The students escorted the Cross into the College Chapel, where, set into the altar, is the piece of Mary MacKillop's original coffin (approximately 15cm x 7 cm in size), which is a Perspex block and spotlighted from within the altar. The liturgy that the students had prepared was simple and moving. They conducted the whole of the liturgy. After the liturgy, the Cross was escorted out of the chapel by the students, and so it was farewell to Bill, my Sale Diocese companion.

Ballarat Diocese ... Western Victoria

Tuesday August. 24th.

BALLARAT

After another 4-day stint in Melbourne, during which the Cross was welcomed into a further nine parishes and schools, We picked the Cross up from St. Martin De Porres Church, Avondale Heights and proceeded to St. Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat. A mid-day liturgy which had been prepared to welcome the Cross was attended by a packed congregation who were invited to pay their respects and venerate the Cross. The Cathedral Choir led the singing, and children from the surrounding schools sang a Mary MacKillop Hymn. The Diocese had prepared a lovely liturgy, during which the Cross was dressed in Gum leaves, surrounded by candles and a basket of bread as part of the liturgy. At the conclusion of Mass the Cross was carried from the Cathedral by KSC Cross Bearers. The students from the primary schools formed a guard of honour from the door of the Cathedral to the street. The welcome shown to the Cross by the people of Ballarat and surrounding towns, and the support of the schools were a credit to Ballarat and district on such a cold morning. Thanks to you all!

HAMILTON

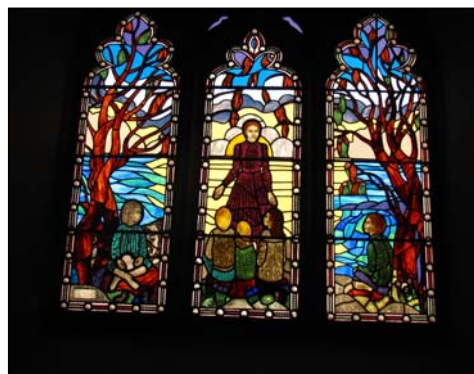
After leaving Ballarat a little behind schedule, with a little bit of low level flying, time was made up. When I pulled up at the gates of the Cemetery there were quite a number of cars, I thought it was a funeral in progress, however it was the people who had come to participate in the prayer service at the grave of Alexander MacKillop, Mary's father. As the Cross came out of the Car, the weather went wild. Wind, hail, rain: we all got soaked! There was so much hail, the Anglican Minister, Fr Richard Silk, a member of Hamilton's combined Anglican/ Catholic canonisation committee, said we had given a new meaning to 'Hail Mary'! This ecumenical ritual was wonderful - it showed that Mary MacKillop was for all Australians!

After the placing of flowers around Alexander's grave, the Pilgrimage then progressed to St. Marys church, to be met by Fr Pat Mugavin, civic dignitaries and ministers of all traditions, and people who had travelled from around the district. Father then invited all into the church for the 'welcoming of the Cross' liturgy which offered an opportunity for the people to venerate. After a country-style afternoon tea, we reluctantly moved the Pilgrimage into its final stages.



PORTLAND

The Cross, escorted from Hamilton to Portland by members of the KSC, was met at All Saints' Church by Father Denis Ryan PP, Mr Jim Goodall (Principal of Bayview College) and four Portland students who carried the Cross into the Church. Fr. Denis celebrated Mass, and invited those four students speak about what Blessed Mary MacKillop meant to them. Their thoughts were thought provoking and memorable: they all spoke with a deep understanding of Mary MacKillop and what she was about, for example, *Never speaking ill about people ... Always strive to do your best no matter what the odds are against you ... Never pass by a need without doing something about it.*



I am sure that Mary's Cross felt at home – comfortable - in the Church where she spent a lot of her time as a young woman. She was a sacristan at All Saints during the four years she lived in Portland. I felt comfortable there as well. Fr. Denis offered accommodation at the "All Saints Motel" (the presbytery). Rates very reasonable, and he was 'Mine Host' !

Jim Goodall had made a request that the Cross could go into the Chapel at Bayview College, which is a Christian Community College, situated in a magnificent position overlooking Portland Bay, and actually built around and enclosing Bayview Cottage, which



Mary MacKillop's family rented in 1863. To support the family, Mary, together with her sisters, opened at Bayview House Seminary for young ladies. Mary spent several important years at Portland, and I feel that this is where she made very important decisions in her life, after sitting on the floor in the sitting room listening with her sister Lexie to Fr. Julian Tenison Woods when he came from Penola to visit. Mary wrote once that she and Lexie would lie on the floor and look at the rose ceiling. Today that same room is now the Chapel at the school. If you look to the ceiling you see a skylight with still the original Rose coloured glass. The school has kept the floor near the fireplace protected and original. The property was later acquired by the Loreto Sisters, who opened a school there in 1885. In 1977, the school became Bayview Christian Community College. Member churches are Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Church of Christ, Lutheran and Uniting Church of Australia.

Jim Goodall and myself took the Cross from the Church at 8.15a.m. and placed it in the School Chapel, where the students were invited to view the Cross. I attended Mass at the Aged Centre Facility where Father Denis celebrated Mass, and following this, we went back to the school. Some students helped to dismantle the Cross. After thanking everyone Fr.

Denis & Jim Goodall were extremely thankful of our visit and I felt a feeling of warmth that I brought Mary MacKillop's Cross back to the home where she had lived. It was meant to come here to Bayview College.



PENOLA

Fr. Denis suggested that I should go through Casterton to Penola. Unfortunately with the mist and the rain and the wet roads, I could not fully appreciate the rolling hills and the beautiful gums of the South West Wimmera and across the SA border and onto Penola. I assembled the Cross and placed it in the Church, the children of the Mary MacKillop Memorial School filed into the Church and I told them a little of the history of the Cross and about doing your best and God

will do the rest. They sung a Mary MacKillop Hymn with actions all came up and venerated the Cross. Mary MacKillop, I am sure, loved it as these were Penola children. Possibly she had taught some of their forefathers in that small town many years ago ... In that stable school down the road!

The next morning I met Fr Paul Gardner SJ - a man who, for over 30 years, had researched and promoted the Cause for the Canonisation of Blessed Mary MacKillop. I was honoured to meet this man. After saying goodbye to him, I went back into the Church and gave the Cross a special hug. As I sat there in the quiet and still of the Church, I thought about the small yet strong flame of faith that had burned in Mary's heart that had started a 'bushfire' which became the Sisters of St. Joseph. I felt at peace with the world.

To the Bishops, priests sisters of St Joseph and other religious, KSC members, teachers and students, and all those who travelled distances, provided food, offered hospitality, prepared or led liturgies, and, in general, welcomed the Cross in so many, inspirational ways, I say a huge thank you! For me the Pilgrimage was a wonderful gift, and leaving the Cross at Penola was like saying goodbye to a dear friend.

Michael O'Halloran – KSC

AKA 'Country Cross Boss'!!

