

Sisters of St Joseph celebrate 150 years of dedicated service on 19th March 2016

The Sisters of St Joseph, known as the Josephites, will on the 19th March, 2016 celebrate the 150th anniversary of their founding by the now Saint Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods in Penola, South Australia.

Celebrations will be held around Australia to mark the anniversary and the Sisters in Penola will be joined by employees and associates of the international Congregation, including Peru and Timor Leste.

Sister Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader says: "We are delighted to be joined in celebration by people from Australia and beyond, especially those whose lives have been changed through the presence and ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph."

"This is a time to give thanks for the many blessings that have come our way and a time to look to the future with hope believing that the small seed of new life planted 150 years ago in Penola continues to make a difference for so many".

Mary MacKillop recorded her memories of the founding day in Penola, South Australia, in 1891. Mary MacKillop wrote of the joy of this occasion. For both Father Julian and Mary MacKillop, it was a day of bringing to birth a dream to give hope and meaning to thousands of children through the gift of education. It was also the day when Mary MacKillop demonstrated her desire to dedicate her whole life to God as a Sister of St Joseph by wearing a simple black dress.

On that 19th March, 1866 St Joseph was first honoured as Patron of little children, and the Sisters' work committed to his care. St Joseph continues to hold a special place in the lives of the Sisters and in those schools and ministries founded in the Josephite tradition.

Sister Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader says: "Today the Sisters of St Joseph continue to be inspired by the dream birthed all those years ago. They continue the work of education in a variety of settings as new needs reach us from different parts of the world."

You can expect to meet the Sisters of St Joseph and their companions in ministry doing as they have always done – walking beside people, listening to their stories of heartache and wonder, giving words of encouragement, restoring hope after major losses and natural disasters through the work of Good Grief, empowering small play group gatherings with Indigenous families in isolated and rural communities, providing literacy programmes in remote parts of Timor Leste to name just a few.

For the most part, you will find the Sisters of St Joseph being a friend and support to people wherever they find themselves, knowing that one small gesture of love can change the heartbeat of even one person and this in turn changes the heartbeat of the world.

Places where significant celebrations are being held in Australia today:

- [Penola South Australia](#)
- [NSW - Sesquicentenary Celebrations](#)
- [St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane](#)

For further information on the celebrations which will take place during the year can be found on www.sosj.org.au

[Click here for a further historical account of the Sisters of St Joseph](#)

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