

Mary MacKillop's Story

Mary MacKillop was born on 15 January 1842 in Melbourne, Victoria. Her parents were born in Scotland and came to live in Australia. She had three sisters and four brothers.

Mary cared about the people who had no one to look after them such as boys and girls who just roamed the streets, children in the country who had no school to go to, people who were old and sick and people who had nowhere to live. Mary wanted more than anything to help these people.

Mary went to work as a teacher in a little country town in South Australia called Penola. There she met Father Julian Tenison Woods who also wanted to do something for the poor children who could not afford to pay the money needed to go to school. Together, in 1866, they began the first St Joseph's School in an old stable. Two of Mary's younger sisters also taught in the school and other young women came to help them.



On 19 March 1866 (St Joseph's Day) Mary started to wear a simple black dress and began the Congregation of the Sisters

of St Joseph. Now as a Sister, she dedicated her life to doing God's work. As more and more young women joined Mary as Sisters, they were able to start more schools. All children were welcome at the Josephite schools, which provided free Catholic education.



In Adelaide they opened a place for women who had nowhere to live, an orphanage for children who had no parents to look after them and a house where poor people could come and stay. The Sisters visited people who were in gaol and those who were poor and sick.

Mary MacKillop was kind to all people, even if they did not agree with her. She died on 8 August 1909 in Alma Cottage, North Sydney. Mary helped many people during her lifetime and after she died, the Sisters of St Joseph kept on doing the good work she had started.

Mary MacKillop kept her faith in God and bravely challenged those who did not support her vision for a more caring world. Mary is an important Australian who spent her life helping people, especially children. She is Australia's first Saint.