

INTERCESSIONS:

Reader: Mary, a woman of Faith

Response: **PRAY FOR ME**

Mary, a woman in love with God R.

Mary, a woman of tolerance. R

Mary, a woman of prayer R

Mary, a woman of hope R

Mary, a woman who forgave R

Mary, a woman of generous love R

Mary, a woman open to God's action in your life R

Mary, a woman of integrity R

Mary, a woman with determination R

Mary, a woman who respected authority R

Mary, a woman of compassion R

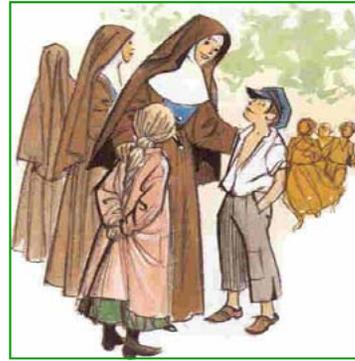
Mary, a woman of her times R

Mary, pioneer and founder R

PRAYER:

We who have been touched by the spirit of Mary MacKillop ask you, God, to help us explore and live out the Josephite Charism to make the world a better place. Help us to love as she loved, to help others grow as she did, by giving of herself and being open to the action of God in her life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINISH with a song in honour of Mary MacKillop



SPRING

SPRING IS A TIME OF LOVE,
A TIME OF GROWTH

In these days before the Canonisation of Blessed Mary MacKillop, we reflect on the example of this very ordinary woman, this Aussie Battler, who took the gifts given to her by God and used them to the very best of her ability. We are not talking about immense gifts; she was not an artist or an opera singer or actress. She was an ordinary woman, from a humble and poverty stricken family who listened to God and did what God wanted her to do.

What were the gifts she developed and expanded and handed back to Jesus? St Paul tells us that the greatest gift is love. And Mary MacKillop spent her whole life in love. She loved:

- the Sacred Heart and St Joseph
- her mother and her family
- her father, despite all his failings she loved and admired him
- the Sisters and the children
- the Church Authorities, towards which she showed obedience despite the hurt they caused

What about myself? Do I have unconditional love?
Is my faith generous, forgiving and trusting? Am I humble?
Do I think I know better than others? Do I forgive and go forward still loving and caring. Do life's trials make me angry and resentful?

*Let us thank God for Blessed Mary MacKillop,
a woman who can be a model for us in our time.*

A SPRING PSALM Adapted from May I Have this Dance—Joyce Rupp

God of little buds wearing green sleeves
God of magnolia limbs with signs of flowering
God of paddocks tilled with turned-over earth
God of screeching baby birds with wide-opened mouths.

God of openness, of life, love and resurrection
Come into this Spring season and bless me
Look around the tight, empty spaces of my heart
That still refuse to give love an entrance.

Bring your gentle, firm unconditional love
Lift the layers of resistance
That cling on tightly deep inside of me.

Open, one by one,
those places in my life
Where I refuse to be overcome
by surprise.

Open, one by one,
those parts of my heart
Where I fight the entrance of real growth
Open, one by one, those aspects of my spirit
Where my security struggles with the truth.

God of the Resurrection, God of the living,
Release and uncover all that needs to live in me.
Lead me to people, events and situations
That stretch me into greater openness and growth.

Open me. Open me. Open me.
For it is only love that brings growth and change.
It is only love that will transform me.
It is only then that I will know how it is
To be in the moment of rising from the dead.



Mary MacKillop was open to all that was happening in her life and accepted all as the gift of a loving Father who would “take care of us all”.

During this lovely time of Spring when creation opens to the magic touch of a loving God let us be aware of open things and give thanks for the world we live in:

- Open doors and open windows
- Driving down open roads
- Coffee cups open to receive that warm brew
- Hearts and arms open to receive
you with love
- Eyes open to the wonders of spring
- Mouths open to receive nourishment
- Faces open with grins and smiles
- Books open for learning
- Blinds open to let in the sun
- Churches open for Weddings, Baptisms
and Prayer



*Each evening take a few moments to ponder your openness during the day.
Where was love in my day?
Where was I open to someone or some new experience?
Where was I open to a stranger?
Where was I open to a challenge that had arisen?*

If you are praying with a group you may like to do this reflection together.