

Summer 2015



As We Move Forward TOGETHER

by Mary Hemmings

Early in October Julie Langman and I headed to Sydney for a gathering of Josephite Associate leaders. Twenty of us gathered from Australia and New Zealand.

On the first evening Leaders provided a brief overview of what is happening in each of their States. This sharing highlighted that there are many differences around how we gather and the structures that we have in place. It also recognised the common theme of the Associates, namely providing the 'place' for people to gather around the story and legacy of Mary MacKillop.

Sr Monica Cavanagh rsj, the Congregational Leader, provided some valuable reflections on the theme *At the Heart of Life*, that in the midst of life, the 'God of life' meets us and we as Associates are called to live the Gospel with a Josephite heart. This Josephite heart has been influenced by Mary and Julian. Our baptismal call means that we need to answer the needs of our times. We stand for what Mary and Julian stood for: we need to be the voice, the action that reaches out in our communities, as they would have done. We are on a pathway to the future and we are called to shape this as we continue God's mission. This pathway will look different for us and will continue to evolve as we move into the Sesquicentenary next year, as our relationships with the Sisters, with Mary and Julian's story, and with each other, are shaped by the experiences of today. Sr Monica invited us to reflect on a few questions,

including:

- Why did I become an Associate?
- Why do I stay an Associate?
- How do we care for our fellow Associates?
- What is the deepest desire for the Associates' movement as we move into the future?

As we look forward to celebrating 150 years of the Josephite story, we hope that it will be a time of renewal as we reflect on the past, celebrate the present and look to 'igniting' the future. In our next newsletter we hope to include a calendar of some key events in South Australia. Penola, the birthplace of this great venture, will host the first celebration on 19th March (see page 4). The re-opening of the Mary MacKillop Museum on 3rd June will be a wonderful occasion, with new and interactive displays being a feature.

Also accompanying this newsletter is a letter which outlines our "**Gather for a Cuppa**" concept to which all are invited to bring together others in our local places: maybe Associates, parishioners, neighbours or friends. We are suggesting that this could occur in May although another time may better suit. As we move into this special year we give thanks to God for sharing in the legacy of that humble beginning in a stable in Penola of the Josephites, which now includes us as Josephite Associates, one hundred and fifty years ago.

Mary MacKillop - A Born Teacher

by Margaret Muller



As a retired secondary teacher with 27 years of classroom experience in both city and country schools, I find it very interesting to consider what made Mary the outstanding teacher I'm convinced she was. The crucial factor, as it is for all teachers, was the positive relationship she developed

with her pupils 'to gain their young hearts' by loving them and serving their interests. This would have given them confidence in her and in themselves. She also saw teaching and learning as a reciprocal process whereby the teacher *must understand what she is about* and the children *must also know their duty*.¹

From reading her voluminous correspondence and official documents, it is clear to me that:

- Mary had a genuine commitment to her pupils, respected their personal dignity and treated them fairly, with tolerance and compassion.
- Mary had clear expectations and guidelines. She was a stickler for order and discipline, without which, as we all know from our personal experience as pupils or teachers or both, little can be achieved in any classroom. For example, in a practical teaching guide, 'Timetable Explained', Mary stated that:

*...before beginning her instruction, the Sister is to see that the children's attention is secured and their hands and feet in their proper position. She must insist upon their eyes being fixed upon herself, for otherwise it will not be possible to command their attention for any length of time.*²

- Mary was extremely well-organised. This is evident from her published 'METHOD', which covered subjects, daily lessons and a timetable for each class.

Mary also used a form of team teaching. For example, when some classes were learning

hymns, the others could be writing and, as she put it, *Whilst they are doing this, the Sister-in-charge should go from desk to desk and keep an active eye on the writers*.³ There were also demonstration lessons, which Mary called 'Object' and 'Gallery' lessons⁴ because she knew from experience that while rote learning was important, without oral instruction and explanation it was *useless*.⁵ Such lessons also provided on-the-job training for the less experienced Sisters.

When Mary came to Adelaide in June 1867, not long after she and her Penola pupils had finally moved from the stable school into the commodious new St Joseph's schoolhouse, she opened the Cathedral Hall School here. At the direction of Fr Woods this soon became a Model School where Mary demonstrated her Method to young novices and to lay teachers, before they were appointed to schools, many of them in remote areas of South Australia.

- Mary praised the children, giving rewards of differently coloured ribbons and also daily marks. She awarded prizes, for example, for being attentive, as reported in *The Border Watch*, along with the prize winners for academic work tested in the regular examinations.
- Mary knew her subject matter (and expected her Sisters to be thoroughly prepared, through 'Night Study'). In addition to the detailed school timetable, Mary also provided her Sisters with a personal timetable for the hours between '5.30 am: Rise' and '10.00 pm: All lights must be put out'. At the bottom of this timetable is the statement: *It is expected that this time-table be carefully observed*.⁶ The Sisters were also required to keep a daily diary and write daily letters to her, to which she regularly responded.
- Mary had that essential teaching ingredient, a sense of humour, and she laughed readily, including with her pupils.

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A Christmas 'Adventure'

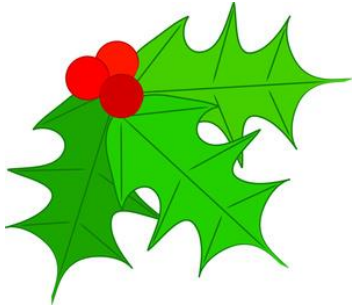
Sunday, 13th December 2015

Bethany Centre

4 High St
Kensington

2 pm – 4 pm

Hosted by Sr Majella O'Sullivan rsj



Come along, bring a friend and enjoy an afternoon of *friendship, prayer and service*.

You won't be disappointed as we meander through a varied programme designed by Sr Majella to entertain us, as well as leading us in some prayerful moments.

Please bring a packet of Christmas crackers/bon bons which will be collected and sent on to a local charity.

So, come and enjoy. Afternoon tea will be supplied.



Franklin St Chapel

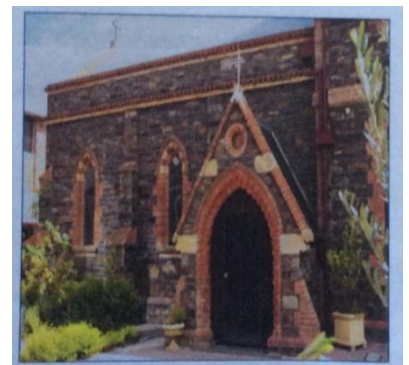
The Place of Mary MacKillop's Excommunication

Why Didn't the Josephite Story Finish Here?

Saturday, 6th February 2016

253 Franklin St
Adelaide

2 pm



Mary MacKillop's excommunication in 1871 did not bring about the demise of the Sisters of St Joseph. As we know, Mary remained faithful and full of hope, and when the order was lifted Mary showed no ill will towards those involved in the events which brought about the excommunication.

Our gathering next February will give us an opportunity to revisit this *death and resurrection* story in the place of Mary's excommunication. Sr Pat Keane rsj will begin by giving us details and insights during that time while other presenters will show how Mary's legacy lives on.

There is unrestricted parking in front of the college at this time of day. Entry is through the Convent gates on Franklin St. Please RSVP as early as possible to reserve your place as there is limited available space in the Chapel. Telephone Carla Mastrangelo on 8351 1575 or use the email sa.associates@sosj.org.au.



The Sisters of St Joseph

in conjunction with

The Mary MacKillop Penola Centre

and

St Joseph's Catholic Parish Penola

invite you to the Penola celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of St Joseph by St Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods in Penola on 19 March 1866.

Saturday 19 March 2016

10.30am – Open air Mass at Mary MacKillop Stable School Park, Bowden Street

12 noon – Light lunch in school hall

2.00pm – Opening and Blessing of Cameron Home adjacent to Mary MacKillop Interpretive Centre, Portland Street and Unveiling of Mary MacKillop sculpture.

Sunday 20 March 2016

11.30am – Opening and Blessing of the new Church porch following 10.30am Parish Mass for Palm Sunday

12 noon – Light lunch at rear of Mary MacKillop Interpretive Centre

RSVP no later than 18/12/2015 via www.trybooking.com/157404

Accommodation is limited. Early bookings essential.



cont from pg 2

- She encouraged, guided and supported them, and when some or none of the above seemed to work she put her trust in God, encouraging her pupils to do the same.

Above all, Mary loved the children and was kind to them. Indeed, she showed love and kindness to all throughout her life.

And finally, on 4 March 1891 Mary wrote a special 25th anniversary St Joseph's feast day circular to her Sisters in which she highlighted for them the significance of that special 1866 feast day celebration with Fr Woods in Penola, the 150th anniversary of which will be celebrated throughout Australia and well beyond in 2016. Between that 'small beginning' in Penola from which so much was 'to spring' and the writing of this letter, she and her Sisters had enriched the lives of thousands of families in Australia and New Zealand through their tireless and often difficult work in education and social welfare.

Mary writes:

...Ah, my Sisters, God has done wonders for us. He has tried us sorely – and comforted us wonderfully. He has protected His Foster Father's work, and brought good out of many evils. Be grateful, my Sisters, my children; pray to be worthy children of St Joseph's great Institute – pray to have the true spirit of the same – that prosperity may not elate, nor adversity ever shake your courage and generosity in the service of God...We must all

have our moments of trial and weariness...but a quiet meditation on the example of our glorious Patron under similar circumstances will...rouse fresh energy in our holy calling...

We must love and practise charity...O do love one another my Sisters, – do bear with one another – do think well of one another. No matter what has been said of you – or done to you – forget all now, make an offering of every wrong – real or imaginary, to our glorious Patron to be presented by Him to our Divine Spouse, his Foster Son, and pray that you may never remember such things again. How can we have peace or charity whilst constantly recalling past injuries...Won't we all try to make our loved ones in heaven happy on St Joseph's day. Won't we do this by being united in holy charity that day – and thus merit the graces ready to be given to us. Ah yes, please God, wherever we are – whether in Adelaide, Port Augusta, New Zealand, Victoria or N.S.W we shall all be one in holy love and charity that day. I shall think of you all my children, and we shall remember our dear departed Father...

*With fondest love to each of you...
Your loving old mother in J.M.J.,
Mary of the Cross⁷*

She was all of 49 years of age and doubtless smiling as she signed this letter.

May we all continue to be inspired, in whatever way we choose, by St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

1 Mary MacKillop, 'Timetable Explained', 1875, transcript, Mary MacKillop Archive, North Sydney
2 Mary MacKillop, 'Timetable Explained', ibid
3 Mary MacKillop, 'Timetable Explained', ibid
4 Mary MacKillop, 'Time Table', in J E T Woods, *Directory and Order of Discipline*, p86
5 Mary MacKillop 'Timetable Explained', op cit
6 Handwritten copy for Margaret Muller, courtesy Kathleen Burford rsj. A transcript, including extracts from Sisters' diaries, is on display in the bedroom of the 1867 Penola schoolhouse.
7 Mary MacKillop, 4.3.1891, *Mother Mary's Circulars to the Sisters* [1870- 1909], Glen Innes, 4.3.1891



Mary MacKillop

Advocate for the Poor

Introduction

Mary's love for Christ was so strong that she sought him out in the poor, sick and suffering. There are many examples in Mary's life where she put aside her own needs in order to serve the sick, lonely and disadvantaged. The children taught by the Sisters often had no shoes to wear. On the night before their First Communion, Mary would have a re-enactment of the washing of the Feet. This meant all the children would have clean feet for this special occasion in their life.

Gospel Reading – Mark 14:7

For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me.

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop

Mary wrote to the Sisters in March 1900:

If choice be given, seek the most neglected places to which He calls us. Let us never forget that, in the spirit of our Rule, it is to those we should desire to go. ...Let us be true to the beautiful spirit of our Institute. ...Let St Joseph's true children remember their mission and seek first the poorest, most neglected part of God's vineyard.

Reflective Moment

What is my response to those most in need in my community?

Let us pause to hold in prayer the vulnerable, disadvantaged and alienated in our world.

Prayer

Bountiful and loving God,
You filled the heart of Mary MacKillop with compassionate love
for those who are in need and those at the margins of our society.
Inspired by her example, may we be led by your Spirit to reach out to our sisters and brothers.
Give us generous hearts to respond to the cries
of those who are poor in our community and in our world.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.
AMEN

St Mary of the Cross, standing with the vulnerable, pray for us.

Call to Action

Today take time to reach out to someone in need.

From *A Novena of Prayer and Reflection* by Sr Monica Cavanagh rsj. Used with permission.



*Wishing all Associates,
families and friends
a very blessed and joyful
Christmas season*

