

CANONISATION HYMN COMPOSITIONS BY SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH

1. A Saint for Today: *Margaret Therese Cusack rsj (new hymn)*

2. Mary MacKillop, Woman of Australia: *Margaret Therese Cusack rsj (revised composition)*

3. Australia's Holy One: *Zita Thompson, Gabriel Doheni ofm (revised composition)*

Commentary on the hymns

Hymn 1: As an accredited teacher of voice, piano and musicianship and liturgist, I responded to a request from a Sister from Eden for a hymn suitable for adult choir/ children, and was inspired to write the new Hymn: '**A Saint for Today**'. Addressed to the Saint, the hymn highlights Mary's extra-ordinary reverence for the human dignity of every person, without distinction, because of what our God has done for us. The hymn may be used as a recessional hymn or for prayer services. Mary's endless seeking out of the poor and marginalised was driven by her zeal for the glory of God.

As the hymn was well received by the teachers and the children at Eden, I then composed the accompaniment. Marie Therese Levey rsj agreed to print the music and to assist as sound engineer for the recording. Joseph Duke sings the main vocals, accompanied lightly in choruses and 3rd verse vocals by Katherine Tyrrell rsj and me.

Hymn 2: The Canonisation Committee advised me to revise the lyrics of a previous composition, '*Blessed Mary MacKillop*' included in 2 existing CDs: 'If I Could Tell the Love of God' and "Mary MacKillop, Woman of Australia". The latter CD is a collection of 16 songs produced in 1993 by Josephites and Associates to honour Blessed Mary MacKillop. The title of my revised composition is now: "**Mary MacKillop, Woman of Australia**". This hymn was written as a majestic hymn of praise to God and is suitable as an entrance processional or recessional hymn. The hymn is also a thanksgiving to God for the wonder of creation in Australia and our heritage in raising up an Australian pioneer of such great holiness of life and love for the despised in society as Mary of the Cross. The revised vocals are sung by Joseph Duke. The accompaniment was provided from the arrangement on Yamaha organ of Melissa Sullivan-Dent in 1993 in the previous CD.

3. Hymn 3:"Australia's Holy One" was re-worded from a previous recording entitled: "*Australia's Blessed One*" which is part of the album: 'If I Could Tell the Love of God.' Sr Zita Thompson rsj, wished the music to have a Celtic flavour, which is suggested by the rhythm of this hymn. "The Scottish snaps" remind us of Mary's Celtic origin. Katherine Tyrrell and I perform the vocals and Marie Therese Levey re-produced the backing musical arrangement. This hymn is suitable as an entrance processional or recessional hymn for Mass, or other prayer gatherings.

Personnel involved in the Production

Joseph Duke, a gifted young man who was Cantor in St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, from 2002-2005, agreed to assist with the vocals. In 2002, he performed vocals for a CD: "*Joseph Sings for East Timor*".

All of the proceeds from the sale of this CD (\$15,000) were directed to Music Education of East Timorese students through the work of the Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies, St Mary's NSW, directed by the Sisters of St Joseph.

Katherine Tyrrell rsj, a gifted and accomplished vocalist and musician, sang the Responsorial Psalm at the occasion of the Beatification at Randwick and trained a group of children across NSW for a song selection as a prelude to the Randwick ceremony. Katherine took the role of Mary MacKillop in the first Australian Play of her life ('Fire in the Red Land' 1979, by *Margaret Therese Cusack rsj*). This was prior to Katherine's entry into the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph. She has worked in the fields of education, music and liturgy, and is now ministering in Vocations, at Province level and as Executive Officer at the National Office.

Marie Therese Levey rsj is an accredited, and currently practising, teacher of violin and piano. Her advanced academic studies have been in the area of church music, and her writings recently earned for her a *Fellowship in Musicology*. Over the years Marie has recognized the advantages of digital technology to teaching. She acquired the relevant computer programmes in music and developed the necessary skills for sound engineering.

Marie Levey rsj and Aileen Smyth have composed a number of hymns/songs together, including *Hymn to the Holy Spirit* for Sydney's World Youth Day, *For the Pope and the Church* (based on the three occasions when Jesus refers to St Peter as leader), and children's songs. Aileen has a special gift in writing poetry and Marie delights in putting such poetry to music. *Mary of the Cross MacKillop* was written for the beatification, but is suitable as a reflective hymn after Communion or at other times.

Melissa Sullivan-Dent - a talented young pianist, pipe and electronic organist who completed a Bachelor of Music Education at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney in 1998. Melissa currently works at Cedars Christian College as Music and Drama Co-ordinator. She also successfully runs a private music school teaching piano and organ.

Melissa was the organist for the children's choir prior to the Beatification Mass for Mary MacKillop, celebrated by Pope John Paul II at Randwick in 1995 performing on a Yamaha Electone. Melissa was also the arranger and accompanist for all compositions for a CD album entitled: "*Mary MacKillop, Woman of Australia*" recorded in 1993. Her accompaniment has also been used for the revised hymn: "*Mary MacKillop, Woman of Australia*".

Margaret Therese Cusack rsj