
Ritual for the Opening and Blessing of Mary MacKillop Stable School Park - Stage 2

INTRODUCTION

Sue McGuinness rsj (*Penola Josephite Community*)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

WELCOME TO ALL PRESENT

Margaret Cleary rsj (*Regional Leader, Sisters of St Joseph CentreWest*)

RITUAL OF BLESSING – PART 1 – IN MARY MACKILLOP MEMORIAL SCHOOL HALL

REFLECTIVE INTRODUCTION TO SONG:

Pamela Walker (*Penola Parishioner, Composer and Musician*)

*Mary Helen MacKillop: well-educated young woman.
From the age of sixteen years, Mary earned her living as governess,
clerk, teacher: truly a blessed woman.*

Stavro Marogi (*Student: Penola College, Broadmeadows, Victoria*)

*Julian Tenison Woods: gifted, roving, missionary priest,
clear-thinking scientist, writer, musician, lecturer.
Devoted to duty, a holy man of God.*

SONG **Together in Spirit**

(Refrain)

*Together in spirit, Julian and Mary.
Each shared a vision, co-founders became.
Inspired and encouraged by Julian's guidance,
Mary opened her first school, St Joseph's by name.*

1. A stable in Penola saw Mary open the door.
A door to pave the way to teach the children of the poor.
Bush kids in a stable learned about their God.
Learned of good and life and hope and faith that would endure. *(Refrain)*
2. Beginnings in the outback – soon spread across the land.
Many joined to share the call. The love of God is free.
The word reached the cities and across the ocean wide.
This Great Spirit is living still for all the world to see. *(Refrain)*

(Coda)

*Inspired and encouraged by Julian's guidance,
Mary opened her first school, St Joseph's by name.*

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Margaret Cleary rsj

Jesus, at his Last Supper, commissioned his friends to go out, way beyond their comfort zone, to share the good news of his love, compassion, forgiveness, joy and peace across the known world. He said to them:

GOSPEL – JOHN 15:12, 16

Fr Peter Fountain *(Parish Priest)*

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last ...'

Margaret Cleary rsj

That fruit *did* last, for, as we know, the Gospel of Jesus spread across the world! In 1866, more than 1800 years after Jesus had spoken these words, here in Penola, then a remote part of the 'New World', the youthful Fr Julian Tenison Woods and Mary MacKillop discovered that they shared a burning passion to share that same good news with the bush children and their families. They were led by God to provide Catholic education for children. In October 1867, Fr Julian wrote:

Maureen Black *(Volunteer: Mary MacKillop Penola Centre)*

'... the Sisters shall consider themselves principally bound to education, and more to the children of the poor than to others.'

Marion Gambin rsj *(Josephite Congregational Leadership Team)*

Acutely aware that they too had been chosen and appointed to go out and bear fruit that would last, their work began in a rented stable on the land that is our focus today.

Within months, that small beginning had blossomed, and it became evident that the stable was clearly not a suitable place for a permanent school. Thus, before the year was out, Fr Woods had commissioned the building of a new school-room near the church. By the time it was completed in mid-1867, however, Fr Woods had been moved to Adelaide, and within two weeks of its opening, Sr Mary and her companion, Sr Rose Cunningham, left two young Sisters in charge of the new Penola school, and travelled to Adelaide to help Father Woods with his work in the schools there.

The work of the Sisters of St Joseph in Adelaide very quickly diversified, and by 1868, they were deeply involved in social welfare, providing residential care for orphans and deserted children, and homeless and destitute children of all ages. Mary, quoting Fr Julian, wrote:

Ann Leesue rsj (Former Principal, Mary MacKillop Memorial School, Penola)

No doubt the principal work [of the Institute] is the education of children, but the Sisters must do all the good they can and never see an evil without trying how they may remedy it.
MMK 1873

Margaret Cleary rsj

Twenty-five years after that humble beginning here in Penola, Mary, reflected back on the intervening years. Recognising God's presence in the story of her fledgling Congregation, wrote to her Sisters:

Theresa Swiggs rsj (Former Principal, Mary MacKillop Memorial School, Penola)

Little did either of us then dream of what was to spring from so small a beginning ...
MMK - 1891

Marion Gambin rsj

After the Sisters and children had left the rented stable, the MacDonald family took possession of it once more. They dismantled the building and took most of the timber to their place at nearby Kalangadoo. By 1925, the block had been cleared. On the 23rd December that year, William MacDonald's great-grand-daughter, Euphemia Ruth Willshire, sold the land to the Sisters of St Joseph, and, for almost 50 years, it was used by locals for grazing their animals. This arrangement persisted until 1970, the beginning of the decade when the movement towards Mary's canonisation received fresh impetus. It was then that Councillor George Lynn became involved. Thanks to him, the Josephites and the Council were able to work together to clean up the property, plant trees, shrubs and flowering plants and make it a pleasant place.

Nowadays the Wattle Range Council takes full responsibility for the maintenance of the park on the Sisters' behalf, and, for this, we thank them most sincerely.

Niesha Allport rsj (Former Principal, Mary MacKillop Memorial School, Penola)

We have much for which to be thankful ...
Gratitude is the memory of the heart ...
MMK - 1873
MMK - 1907

Margaret Cleary rsj

The excitement and joy experienced by so many Australians at the time of Mary's Canonisation in 2010 was extremely tangible. Mary's life continues to be an inspiration in living out the Gospel, and, we believe, will, in the future, influence the lives of countless people who will come to recognise her as a great Australian, as well as a Saint.

With this in mind it was decided to develop the site of the first Josephite school here in Penola, into a place of reflection, prayer and welcome, and to rename it. While the Park has, for many years, been a pilgrimage site, it was hoped that this two-stage development would both capture the spirit of the place and enhance the atmosphere of tranquillity and peace, and also of hospitality – for pilgrims and picnickers alike.

On 28 October, 2012, the Mary MacKillop Stable School Park was officially opened and the Stage 1 development blessed. At that time, the plaque, the pathways, the Pilgrim Prayer Circle, the seating and the boundary wall were blessed. Those present prayed that all who use this facility would be both inspired by the story and find it a haven for enjoyment, recreation, peace and quiet reflection.

Today, we are gathered to ask for God's blessing upon the additional features of the Park which have been developed as Stage 2.

BLESSING OF THE 'PEOPLE SCULPTURES'

Fr Paul Gardiner sj (*Postulator for 24 years of Mary MacKillop's Canonisation Cause*)

We bless the facilities which have been developed as Stage 2 of the Stable Park on what is a sacred site for Aboriginal people. The site of the first School conducted by the Sisters, where the Josephite story began, is also a sacred site for pilgrims, and for all those who follow in the footsteps of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods.

Loreto O'Connor rsj (*Penola Josephite Community*)

We ask God's blessing on the figures of ...

- Mary MacKillop
- Father Julian Tenison Woods
- the Bell Boy who shares the story of the Stable School, narrated by Sr Marie Foale
- the children ...

May the dream which began with St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Father Julian Tenison Woods and the people of Penola on this site in 1866, live on in the minds and hearts of all those who live in the spirit of Joseph today.

May all who educate in the Josephite tradition continue to be inspired by their vision ... May they *"act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God."* (*Micah 6:8*)

All: May the Spirit of Creativity and Vision be with all those who walk in the footsteps of St Mary MacKillop, Father Julian Tenison Woods and the pioneer Sisters of St Joseph.

MANTRA: *Love in our Hearts* - (*Cantor, then all*)

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

God with us.

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BLESSING OF THE 'PRAYER STATIONS'

Christine Symonds rsj: (*Penola Josephite Community, 2011-2014*)

We ask God's blessings on the three Prayer Stations: that they will invite visitors to pause and ponder Mary's simple words of wisdom:

Tom Tranter (*Penola / Kalangadoo Parishioner*)

“Try at least to excuse what you cannot understand.” (MMK 1877)

“If we have love in our hearts we shall have God with us.” (MMK 1890)

“Find happiness in making others happy.” (MMK 1899)

Claire Larkin (*Co-ordinator: Mary MacKillop Penola Centre*)

God of Wisdom we ask your blessings on these Prayer Stations.

They speak to us of the spirit of joy, compassion and love which St Mary MacKillop exhorted her sisters to practise in their lives.

May these words inspire all who visit the Stable School Park to lead lives of joy, of compassion and of love so that they too will bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus, the Way so faithfully followed by St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

All: May the Spirit of Wisdom inspire us to reflect deeply and lead us to reach out to all those in need.

MANTRA: *Love in our Hearts*

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

God with us.

BLESSING OF THE SHADE SAILS

Maureen Hanrahan (*Principal: Mary MacKillop Memorial School, Penola*)

Protector God, we ask your blessing on these Shade Sails. May all who take shelter beneath them find comfort and rest in the beauty surrounding them. May the recreation and enjoyment they experience here renew their hearts and minds, inspire them to walk in the footsteps of Mary and Julian and lead them to a deep appreciation of the wonders of your creation.

All: May the Spirit of Hospitality renew us with energy and vitality for your Mission.

MANTRA: *Love in our Hearts*

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

God with us.

Kathryn Mules (*Chairperson: Parish Pastoral Committee*)

God of Abundance, You have gifted us with a Story to shape our lives and with a community which enriches and nourishes us. We thank you for the gifts we have celebrated today and for the generosity of all who have contributed to make the sacred site of Mary MacKillop Stable School Park a place of peace and remembering, of hospitality and shelter.

We make this prayer through Jesus who is alive and lives and reigns with you forever.

All: Amen

BLESSING OF THE 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS SCULPTURE'

Fr Peter Fountain:

We ask God's blessings on all those who have contributed financially to the development of Mary MacKillop School Park, as acknowledged on this sculpture: school and college communities, individuals and groups who live out the Josephite charism by their values and way of life.

May the blessings of peace and justice, of love and happiness fill the lives of all those who have contributed their time, energy and specialist skills to the development of this project. May their generosity and goodness bear fruit in the lives of all who visit this place and imbibe its spirit and harmony.

All: May the Spirit of Abundant Love and Life be theirs.

MANTRA: *Love in our Hearts*

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

If we have love in our hearts, we shall have God with us.

God with us.

SONG OF BLESSING: *As Mary Did*

(Refrain)

To Follow Christ as Mary did,

This now the pearl we seek together.

You call us forth to be your people,

Your living Word made flesh today

Cantors will sing the verses, all please sing refrain:

1. May the blessing of Mary's unwavering faith be upon us.

May her spirit of prayer live in our hearts and lives *(Refrain)*

2. May the blessing of Mary's loving service be upon us.

May her spirit of praise be on our lips and in our hearts. *(Refrain)*

3. May the blessing of Mary's union with Jesus be upon us.

May her courage and patience find a home in our lives. *(Refrain)*

4. May the blessing of Mary's mercy and justice be upon us.

May we work with her spirit to heal our broken world. *(Refrain)*

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ADDRESS:

Monica Cavanagh rsj *(Congregational Leader, Sisters of St Joseph)*

SONG: *From Penola's Plains*

1. Loving God, we give you thanks this day, as gladly we rejoice
that a woman's life should so proclaim a love that heard your voice.

Now inspired by her example, may we strive to seek your face,
so that in our rugged homeland the poor will find a place.

Here with Mary of the Cross we pray your truth may guide our way,
that our open hearts may hear your call to follow you each day.

2. Let our praise now fill this joyful space as loudly we proclaim that in Mary's life we see the faith that glorifies your name. For her heart knew your compassion at the plight of children poor, so she mustered all her courage and saw her future call. Trusting firm in you she ventured forth, her eyes upon your Cross. From Penola's plains to all the world, her arms reached out in love.

3. Holy Spirit, gift of Love divine, with you we dare to dream. May your wisdom come to lead us on where justice reigns supreme. Now may Mary's love inspire us, and the Cross will lead us on. Give us hearts that never waver 'til victory is won. Let OUR lives show forth your tender love, compassion warm and bold. Help US bring Good News to all the world, your spirit Love unfold.

Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934) Adapted by Michael Herry FMS

Lyrics: © Michael Herry & Geoffrey Cox 2009

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All present are now invited to proceed to the Mary MacKillop Stable School Park, Cnr Bowden and Queen Streets, to complete today's Ritual of Blessing. Please assemble at the Bowden Street entry to the Park.

RITUAL OF BLESSING, PART 2 – AT MARY MACKILLOP STABLE SCHOOL PARK

As each of the new Stage 2 installations is blessed, we sing:

MANTRA: Holy Ground

This is Holy Ground, we're standing on Holy Ground
For our God is with us, and where God is - is holy.
This is Holy Ground, we're standing on Holy Ground
For our God is with us, and where God is - is holy.

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At the end of the ritual, please return to Mary MacKillop Memorial School Hall for lunch. This will be served at 1.00pm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DONORS AND SPONSORS

We thank the following donors and sponsors for their generous financial contributions to the Mary MacKillop Stable School Park redevelopment project ...

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Belmore, St Joseph's

Clovelly, St Anthony's

Coolah, Sacred Heart

Corrimal, St Columbkille's

Drummoyne, St Mark's

Edgeworth, St Benedict's

Eugowra, St Joseph's

Fairfield, Our Lady of the Rosary

Gilgandra, St Joseph's

Glen Innes, St Joseph's

Goulburn North, St Joseph's

Granville, Holy Trinity

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Penshurst, St Declan's
Portland, St Joseph's
San Souci, St Finbar's
South Tamworth, St Edward's
The Entrance, Our Lady of the Rosary
Warialda, St Joseph's
Warners Bay, St Mary's
Wee Waa, St Joseph's
Windale, St Pius X
Woy Woy, St John the Baptist
Yagoona, Christ the King
Yeoval, St Columba's

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Millmerran, St Joseph's
Nundah, St Joseph's
Quilpie, St Finbar's
St George, St Patrick's
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Pennington, Our Lady of Mt Carmel
Penola, Mary MacKillop Memorial
Peterborough, St Joseph's
Port Augusta, Caritas College
Port Lincoln, St Joseph's
Renmark, St Joseph's
Rosewater, Mt Carmel College
Tea Tree Gully, St David's
Tranmere, St Joseph's
Walkerville, St Monica's
Wallaroo, St Mary MacKillop
Woodville Park, Whitefriars
Yorke town, St Columba's Memorial

TASMANIA

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Glenorchy, Guilford Young College
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Moonah, St Therese's
Morningson, Mary MacKillop College
New Town, Sacred Heart College
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