

Station 4: Jesus Meets His Mother



'Woman, behold your son.'

John 19:27

In the Gospel of John, Mary is present at the foot of the cross. It is only natural that she, who through the pains of labour once gave Jesus life, will now be with him in death. Once again Mary experiences intense pain as she helplessly watches her son move towards a violent death upon the cross. Mary, who long ago listened to God's word and responded in faith, now can only once again in trust, say "yes" to that which she cannot comprehend. In this moment they can only gaze into the eyes of each other, meeting God in that shared space.

Moments in the life of Mary MacKillop

"All will in the end be well"

(Mary MacKillop, 11 November 1883)

Mary MacKillop had a particularly close, on-going relationship with her mother, Flora. In 1886 Mary sent an invitation to Flora to visit her in Sydney. This sea trip proved to be fatal for there was a violent storm and Flora drowned in an accident in which the ship was wrecked. In the midst of her sorrow Mary MacKillop was able to trust that even out of the violence of death new life can emerge. She wrote to her brother Donald, "You must ere this have heard from Adelaide of our sad, our terrible loss. Everything was too bewildering at first, then the efforts to recover the dear remains, the funeral, and then came the reaction....Our darling unselfish mother true to her character to the last, has gone to receive her well-earned reward." (17 June 1886)

Moments in my life ...

- ❖ When have I been able to do nothing but helplessly stand by as I watch another suffer?
- ❖ What have the sufferings of others taught me about living?

Take a moment to reflect in silence upon these aspects of your life. Recall those times when you felt powerless and unable to help a loved one. Allow yourself to really get in touch with your feelings about this, then share them with God. Listen as God speaks in the depth of your heart.

Prayer

Jesus, in this moment, you watch your mother silently suffering as she stands by, unable to intervene on your behalf. Help me to discern when I need to speak out against injustice and when it is appropriate to be an unspoken, compassionate presence. When fitting, may I be present with challenging love to the oppressive situations in my family, workplace or local community. Let me never feel that I alone cannot make a difference.

Forgive those times when I have been complacent and have closed my eyes to the needs of others. May I grow richer in love, hope and trust so that I may respond with courage to those who suffer injustice.

Stations of the Cross: A Journey with St Mary of the Cross MacKillop – Valerie DeBrenni

Available for purchase @ \$7.95 from Mary MacKillop Place Bookshop, Mount Street, North Sydney, or on line:
<https://www.sosj.org.au/product/stations-of-the-cross-a-journey-with-st-mary-of-the-cross-mackillop/>

Image: Station 4, Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel, North Sydney