

Station 5: Simon helps Jesus to carry the cross

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus.

Luke 23:26

At the time of Jesus Roman soldiers could force any civilian to perform a task for them. Simon of Cyrene is not a willing participant in this story but is compelled to assist Jesus to carry the cross. He is simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. For Jesus though, there is finally a moment of relief, a sharing of the burden, as the weight of the cross is lifted from his shoulders. Perhaps for Jesus there is also the further pain of knowing that an innocent man is being punished and that his gratitude cannot be spoken aloud but only deeply felt.



Moments in the life of Mary MacKillop...

"Help one another, bear with one another as God bears with each of us"

Mary MacKillop, 10.10.1889

Mary MacKillop knew the pain of having to remain silent when everything within her wanted to speak out. At one stage she had been on good terms with Archbishop Reynolds of Adelaide and he had supported her, but then later had banished her from South Australia. Hearing from Sydney that he was very ill Mary yearned to rebuild the relationship and to reach out in friendship but she knew that this was not possible. It grieved her that he was suffering and that she was unable to help him. Mary asked the Sisters to pray that he might find comfort in his hour of need.

Moments in my life...

- + When have I helped another to 'carry the cross'?
- + Who are those in my life with whom I long to be in relationship?

Take a moment to reflect in silence upon these aspects of your life. Recall those times when you might have grudgingly helped another, perhaps acting out of a sense of duty or to avoid feelings of guilt. Notice the difference when you act out of a place of freedom, of real choice.

Prayer...

Jesus, you experience assistance in a time of great need, even if it is given grudgingly. Give me the grace to willingly accept support and comfort from others when I require it. Urge me to respond generously to those who in turn, need my care and support. Help me to understand my connectedness to all, give me the ability to both love and be loved.

Forgive those moments in my life when I am blind to the needs of others or closed to receiving the support of others. Help me to experience you as my companion so that I can daily learn the true meaning of love.

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 5, Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel, North Sydney