

Take on Fresh Courage with Joy

We remember Mary MacKillop born on 15 January 1842 and ask her to pray with us today.



SCRIPTURE

“Then little children were brought to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said: ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’” (Matthew 19:14)

REFLECTION

Alexander and Flora MacKillop were young parents and new immigrants when their first child Mary was born. After a few years living comfortably, the family lost their money and thereafter struggled to stay together. The extended family helped them out. As the eldest child, Mary would have been aware of the stress and particularly the effort her mother made to give her children a loving life.

PAUSE

*What is resonating with me in this story of Mary?
In what ways do I experience joy in family life?*

PRAYER

God, source of life,
be with all parents
in the joy and the struggles
of pregnancy and birth.

Comfort and sustain those
whose hopes for a live birth are dashed.

Encourage us as a community
to celebrate the children in our midst,
support families in bringing up their children in love
and press the government to safeguard
the well-being of all children and their families.

We ask this in the name of Christ.
Amen

Ann Gilroy rsj

Bless us
with birthday-like
joy that seasons
our family relationships
and makes us conscious
of those who live
in hardship.



Take on Fresh Courage with Empowering Love

We remember Mary MacKillop receiving her teaching qualifications in 1863 and we ask her to pray with us today.

SCRIPTURE

“But those who are waiting for God will have new strength; they will get wings like eagles; running, they will not be tired, and walking, they will have no weariness.” (Isaiah 40:31)

REFLECTION

Mary MacKillop understood the value and influence of education at an early age. Homeschooled by her well-educated father in her early years, she showed his keen intellect and accurate memory. She was challenged by the discrimination, displacement and poverty experienced by her family and the circle of migrants surrounding them from the Scottish Highlands. She learnt that in the Australia of her time, the only pathway out of poverty was education. Armed with a fierce respect for others' dignity, a heart of solidarity and empathy and with education as her tool, she set about empowering people in greatest need. She urged her Sisters to “never admit grades of distinction.” Her faith in God compelled and energised her to lift others up. Through her encouragement and education, she helped them find wings to pursue their dreams and feet to run courageously towards their life goals.

PAUSE

What is resonating with me in this story of Mary?

How have I experienced empowerment in my life?

What have I done to increase another person's power?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit working among us
fill us with gratitude for education
and with appreciation of those in the teaching ministry
who empower our communities.

Calm us in this time of pandemic
to be supportive of children, young people and teachers
negotiating the new realities of this time.

Strengthen the commitment of governments, churches and institutions
to the goal of universal education in our world.

Encourage us to take advantage of opportunities
for learning through all our lives.

And bless us with critical minds, grateful hearts and willing hands
to do our bit.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ
the way, the truth and the life.

Amen

Bless us with
tenacious hearts,
wings to lift others up
feet of untiring service
and a love that does not
grow weary of
doing good.