



As we come to celebrate the feast day of Mary MacKillop in this our Sesquicentenary year we invite you to join the Sisters of St Joseph in praying this novena.

In *Misericordiae Vultus – Face of Mercy*

Pope Francis reminds us that 'the Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person' (No 12) Mary MacKillop lived her life in tune with the heartbeat of God. In her God's love 'gushed forth from the depth naturally, full of tenderness and compassion'. (No 6) Through her life we see how she revealed the face of God's mercy to all those around her in the way she embraced the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. In the memories of the Sisters we find stories of how Mary MacKillop cared for the sick, comforted the bereaved, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger and visited those in prison. In her letters we find her encouraging the Sisters on the attributes of the spiritual works of mercy as well. In particular Mary's capacity to forgive those who offended her is evident in her life story.

Bishop Cuskelly wrote, 'For me the most striking manifestation of true holiness is to be found in her beautiful and heroic response to the unfair and unjust treatment she received'.
Walking the Way of Jesus (1999:72)

As you pray with these novena reflections may you come to know more fully the deep love which enabled Mary MacKillop to pioneer new ways of living the Gospel in this time.

Monica Cavanagh

Sr Monica Cavanagh

Congregational Leader.



ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day One - A Woman of Faith

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Faith



*"Keep up your good spirits, God is all goodness and love, and what He disposes is always best."
Mary to her mother Flora on 2nd January, 1880*

Scripture

Luke 12:27-28 (The Catholic Study Bible)

Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will God not much more provide for you?

Reflection

A serious crisis is approaching, but let the sisters be faithful, humble, and at the same time unflinching in their defence of the right, and the cause of the right will triumph in the end.

Mary to Sr Monica Phillips on 26th September, 1884.

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will provide what is needed for me to be a person of faith.



Painting by Raffaele Gagliardi. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Two - A Woman of Conviction

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Conviction



*"Do not for the sake of defending one or two, shrink
from speaking the plain, open truth."*

Mary to Julian Tenison Woods on 21st November, 1871.

Scripture

Isaiah 30:17 (The Jerusalem Bible)

For thus says the Most High, the Holy One of Israel:
Your salvation lay in conversion and tranquility, your
strength, in complete trust.

Reflection

Though a strange feeling that something is not right remains in my mind, it is not disturbed, for the conviction, that God is with his own dear work and able to bring good out of every little evil, overrules all.

Mary to Julian Tenison Woods on 24th April, 1870.

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God
that God will provide what is needed for me
to be a person of conviction.



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ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Three - A Woman of Courage

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Courage



Scripture

Psalms 31:24 (The Jerusalem Bible)

Be strong, let your heart be bold, all you who hope in God.

"Courage then, my much loved Sisters. Work on bravely.....hopefully. Do not give way to fears and anxieties. Remember there is even a day of bright reward for all your prayers and faithful perseverance. "

Mary to the Sisters on 5th June, 1874.

Scripture

John 14:27 (The Jerusalem Bible)

Peace I leave with you, my own peace I give you. A peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

When in my life do I step out in or with courage?

What is courage for me?

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God
that God will provide what is needed for me
to be a person of courage.



Painting by Mel Brigg. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Four - A Woman of Action

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Action



Scripture

Luke 4:18 (The Inclusive Bible)

The Spirit of our God is upon me. Because the Most High has anointed me to bring Good News to those who are poor. God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive, recovery of sight to those who are blind, and release for those who are in prison. To proclaim the year of our God's favour.

"'Tis true, I only see to serve God in the care of the little ones of his flock, and that for this I have forsaken all that bound me to earth. "

Mary to her mother Flora on 21st August, 1867.

Scripture

Colossians 3:16-17 (The Jerusalem Bible)

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sings psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will provide what is needed for me to be a person of action, for action requires faith in God and trust in his word to accomplish great things for the Kingdom.



Painting by Jiwai Shen. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Five - A Woman of Compassion

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Compassion



*"Help one another and bear with one another as God
bears with each of us."*

Mary to the Sisters on 7th December, 1899.

Scripture

Romans 15:4-5 (New International Version)

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

May our God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.

Reflection

Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them cheerfully, remembering whom you are trying to follow. Do not be afraid. Love one another. Bear with one another, and let charity guide you in all your life.

The last typed letter of Mary MacKillop on 12th January 1909 to the Sisters.

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will provide what is needed for me to be a person of compassion.



Painting by John Maitland. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Six - A Woman of Prayer

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Prayer



God Will Take Care of us all by Pauline Wicks

Pray my dear sisters, as I know well you are doing – but pray in the many ways I told you before leaving. The cause is that of the Sacred Heart, and St Joseph is its pleader, but he looks for many petitions and acts of love from his children, which he knows well how to present to the Sacred Heart. What he, and that loving Heart through his intercession have done for us is not possible to be yet told – but if I had time, and that it was yet good to dwell upon these things, I could tell you volumes. 16th May, 1873

Reflection

Joan Chittister: A Monastery of the Heart

Prayer lightens the load.

It gives fresh direction and new energy.

It fixes the eye of the soul

*On the real ends of life, when the real goal of
real time*

Seem unattainable. (pg 35)

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will
provide what is needed for me
to be a person of prayer.



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ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Seven - A Woman of Forgiveness

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Forgiveness



Be full of forgiveness, hope and love

Mary MacKillop 16th May, 1873

Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (The Jerusalem Bible)

And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now everything is new. It is all God's work. We are reconciled to God through Christ. It is all God's work! And God has given us the work of handing on this reconciliation.

Colossians 3:12-15

You are God's chosen race, God's saints; God loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and compassion. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. You have been forgiven; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together, and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will provide what is needed for me to be a person of forgiveness.



Painting by M Brady OP. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Eight - A Woman of Vision

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of Vision



Believe in the whisperings of God to your own heart.
Mary MacKillop 1868

Scripture

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (The Jerusalem Bible)

I know the plans I have in mind for you – it is your God who speaks – plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you. Then when you call to me, and come to plead with me, I will listen to you. When you seek me, you shall find me, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me.

Reflection

"God will provide for the future."

Mary MacKillop 1873

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will provide what is needed for me to be a person of vision.



Painting "The Vision" by Jan Williamson. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Day Nine - A Woman of the Poor

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God
and Mary MacKillop.

We reflect on Mary, a Woman of the Poor



*Seek first the poorest and most neglected parts
of God's vineyard.*

Mary MacKillop 1900

Scripture

Beatitudes Matthew 5:2-12 (The Inclusive Bible)

Jesus began to teach them:

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit:
the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who are mourning:
They will be consoled.

Blessed are those who are gentle:
They will inherit the land

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice:
They will have their fill.

Blessed are those who show mercy to others:
They will be shown mercy.

Blessed are those whose hearts are clean:
They will see God.

Blessed are those who work for peace:
They will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted
Because of their struggle for justice:
The Kingdom of heaven is theirs.

You are fortunate when others insult you and
persecute you, and utter every kind of slander
against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice,
for your reward in heaven is great.

Reflection

*Remember how generous Christ Jesus was: he
was rich, but he became poor for your sake, to
make you rich out of his poverty.*

2 Corinthians 8:9 (Jerusalem Bible)

Take time to allow these words to speak to you.

Praying

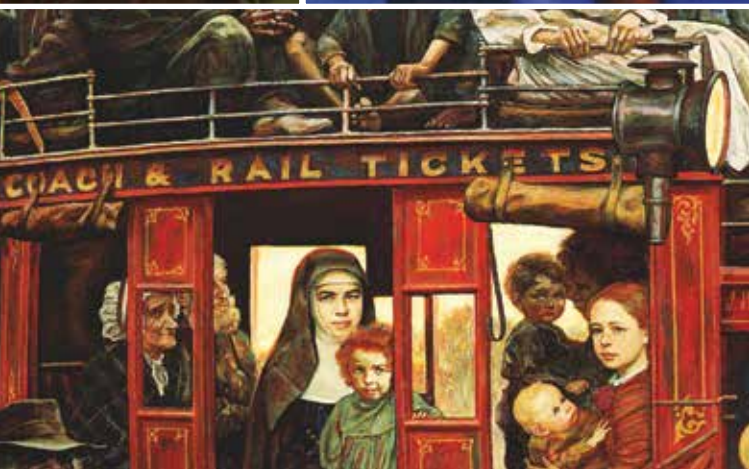
Mary, teach me to trust in God that God will
provide what is needed for me
to be a person of the poor.



Painting by C Clohesy. Used with permission

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Invitation to pray with the images





*As we prepare to celebrate Mary's Feast
we invite you to:*

- ✦ contemplate these images
- ✦ allow them to speak to you of Mary's qualities.

What qualities resonate with you?

*Are you able to appreciate these qualities
within you?*

My prayer is.....