

Companions News

Welcome to the **JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QUEENSLAND** Quarterly Newsletter
September 2023

Editorial

Peace consoles the Journey

We continue our newsletter editorials which focus on the four promises of Jesus:

Hope, Love, Peace and Joy.

"Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give to you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." John 14:27

These words of Jesus remain with us. Even after his physical presence had departed to the Father, the essence of Jesus remains with us. Death could not defeat that peace he died to give us. It can be difficult to describe "peace". To some, it may mean an absence of fear, a sense of trust, a calming of the soul or body, an awareness of the presence of God's spirit in one's life, or to others a hope of what may still be to come. What does peace mean to you?



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**FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
QUARTERLY NEWS PLEASE EMAIL:**
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Jesus certainly had his moments when he struggled to feel peace. He was rejected by some, misunderstood by others, not appreciated by his neighbours or friends, sentenced unjustly to a horrible death. How did he sustain hope and peace in these times? He experienced the emotions of being fully human, so there was no miracle exemption from the human experiences we all know so well. Jesus experienced deep sorrow and anguish in the garden following his final meal with his disciples and his symbolic offering of himself to the Father, which was now about to be enacted. His friends had deserted him at the highest point of his life. What sustained Jesus was his belief in his Father's love and his determination to be faithful to the mission his father had entrusted to him.

Mary MacKillop certainly understood that peace. She experienced enormous difficulties throughout her life. Faced with monumental obstacles to her mission to provide God's love and care to those most often overlooked in society, she knew the difficulty of providing finance to continue the growing scope of her mission. How could she reach out to those who needed her most; the growing number of those in need; her insistence on relying solely on God's providence, coupled with her declining health and the mistrust and downright obstruction from some church officials. It would have been a heart-breaking task for a lesser woman, and yet Mary was encouraged by her relationship with her God. *"There where you are you will find God"* she wrote to her sisters in 1871. Despite her seemingly impossible mission, Mary knew that only God was in control, and only in God would she experience peace. In 1871 Mary also wrote, *"Be calm and full of hope."* This was her expression of the peace that she experienced in and through her trust in God's presence.

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Mary's trust in God was the lifejacket that kept her afloat. If this was indeed God's will, then God would provide the means to accomplish it. How often do we recognise and accept God's presence in our lives when storms and difficulties arise? Jesus did not promise that we would be free of trouble or worry, but he did offer us the peace and trust that only he could give. Let us take Jesus at his word today. Trust him with your life and your work. He will not disappoint.

Janette Dobson, Rockhampton Josephite Companion

Peace is my gift to you

God, the source of all gifts, give me the courage to accept you at your word. Sometimes it is difficult for me to let go of worry or concerns and simply trust that you, who created the heavens and the earth, can settle my soul and bring your healing peace to me.

Fill me with confidence and trust that you know my heart, my longings, my concerns, and my fears.

Strengthen my trust that you will bring peace to my heart and soul.

Give me the courage to open my heart to you and to receive your calming presence in return.

Dampen my fears, strengthen my trust, and remind me that you alone can hold my hand in the difficult times, and that your peace is an enduring one, that is not dependent on my actions or feelings.

Fill me with your spirit, remind me of your love and concern for me, and bring me safely home to your loving embrace, where fear does not exist and only love endures. Amen.

e-Companioning Launch 7 August 2023

Nineteen Companions registered to attend our first online e-Companioning connection, launched on 7 August. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and chat with other Josephite Companions or those considering becoming a Companion on our journey. It was an enjoyable and uplifting time together, as we prayed, reflected and shared our individual stories, based on our common bond as Josephite Companions.

Our next Zoom Meeting is scheduled for **Monday 11 September at 5.30pm**. If you would like to join us for that meeting please email Bernadette Roche at broche@onthenet.com.au. Include your name and email address to register and you will receive the link for the meeting.

Feedback from our first e-Companioning meeting:

'I was very heartened to see that our connecting online via the e-Companioning Zoom Meetings, has enormous potential for our future as Josephite Companions. A group such as this has the capacity to reach beyond age, sexuality and space. It could become a wonderful listening and sharing space that can unite us as Companions, broaden our outlook, and be a positive, supporting platform to unite us despite difficulties and distance.'

Janette Dobson

Around the Ridges...

A special **thankyou** to all who continue to support and contribute to the Queensland Josephite Companions Movement, through **Prayer, Friendship and Service**.

CAIRNS – Carol Leary

This small group keeps in touch through a bi-monthly themed prayer sheet, phone calls and visitation.

Just recently one of the Companions who still lives at home, turned 100. Congratulations **Sheila**! She has fond memories of her journey so far as a Josephite Companion over many years.

Another of our Companions is **Margaret Collins**, a wonderful, active 89-year-old lady who lives in a retirement village. It is always so rewarding to visit and chat with Companions who are no longer able to attend Meetings.

ALLORA – Robyn Phelan

Our Companions joined the School to celebrate the Feast Day of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. We were invited to give a reflection at the Mass. Being a Josephite School established in 1916, we focused on the connection with the Sisters of St Joseph and how our Companions Group was formed and what “we do”. We also spoke of Mary’s prolific writings. “*Never see a need without doing something about it*” is a value of the School and we introduced the students to others of *Mary’s Whisperings*. At the end of Mass, the Companions handed each child, as well as the teachers, a (cardboard) cross with a saying printed on it.

At our June meeting we meditated on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was an inspiring exercise to examine the symbolisation of the various images in the pictures several ladies brought along, some from the walls of their own home. With differing ages of our group, it was interesting to hear how the devotion has been celebrated over the years. We also looked at the deep connection Mary MacKillop had for the Sacred Heart.

BRISBANE NORTHSIDE – Joan Gilbert & Sr Clare

On 16 June 2023 **Marie, Carolyn** and **Joan** joined with the Sisters at Nundah for a **Cent Auction**.

This activity was in support of *Mary MacKillop Today*. Funds raised were given to the Scholarship Program which supports Indigenous Girls wanting to train as teachers.

The day began with morning tea followed by the Cent Auction. Great prizes had been donated and keen competition followed as everyone had their eye on certain prizes they wanted to win.

A lot of laughter and fun was had by all and \$1,000.00 was the amount raised.

The next Northside meeting is on **Saturday 18 November** at St Joseph’s Convent, Bage Street, Nundah. After sharing morning tea with the Sisters we have prayer and discussion on a topic relating to living our lives as Josephite Companions.

The group has also adopted a **Fortnightly Focus**, emailed by Carolyn and based on prayers for the community and world situations with reflections around a particular theme for each fortnight.



Sisters and northside Companions enjoying a fun morning at Nundah at the recent Cent Sale Auction



Walking the Streets of Brisbane with St Mary MacKillop



On 20 January 2023 I embarked on a pilgrimage to walk the streets of Brisbane where Saint Mary MacKillop walked.

I love this quote from Saint Mary MacKillop, 1867, *"We are but travelers here."* This quote reminds me that our lives are journeys, and we are to move around making differences in people's lives by the way we are called to do so. We are also called to make changes and a difference within ourselves by growing and rediscovering who we are and what our purpose is.

This pilgrimage is something I have been wanting to do for a long time. I journeyed with my family and together we decided to use the frangipani as a symbol and reminder that *"God is so very good to us all"* Saint Mary MacKillop, 1872. And God is very good to us even when we doubt, feel anxious, afraid, frustrated or angry.

I had planned to break the walk up and do a little bit at a time. Unfortunately due to my father passing away the week after, sickness and the weather, it was not possible, but I am still hopeful because the year is not over yet. So, here is a little reflection of our first steps walking with Saint Mary MacKillop.

The Powerhouse to the Customs House

We arrived, parked the car, and strolled through the market area. Before we reached The Powerhouse, we stopped to listen to music and bought some honey. After that we kept on walking and bought some sourdough bread rolls and a packet of strawberries to have on a picnic lunch.



Then we arrived and as I stood on the jetty I looked up and saw The Brisbane City Council Powerhouse building and I froze, but I needed to capture the moment. I was standing where Mary MacKillop and five other sisters stood or walked on 31 December 1869 after traveling twenty-four days from Adelaide.

After capturing the moment, I pulled out my map that I printed off and tried to find where we took our next steps. However, I struggled to find where we were on the map but luckily enough we had our phones, so we used Google to guide us. I suppose you could say times have changed and it's so much easier to be a pilgrim. It makes me wonder where Mary MacKillop got all that courage and confidence without the assistance of Google maps.

Our feet were pointed in the right direction, and we set forth with our hearts opened on a journey of faith and hope. We asked Saint Joseph and Saint Mary MacKillop to pray for us and for God to bless us with strength, guidance, and patience. However, patience and guidance weren't a virtue; for some today it was quite the opposite. I am glad though that we took our beach trolley and our children were light enough to still pull along, and I am also very thankful for our phones.

We walked through the streets of New Farm and found our way to the Story Bridge which I once climbed. As we stood in front of the Story Bridge, I could see in the distance the Customs House and by this



stage my feet were so sore, but I pushed on and we went down a lift and walked along the New Farm River Walk.

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After stopping and starting we finally arrived at the Customs House and standing out the front I was overwhelmed. It was quite daunting, but I remembered reading this remark made by Saint Mary MacKillop, 1867, *"With God's aid we shall get on and gain fresh strength and energy for the work."* Believe me that is what we did, we turned around and went back because after hearing *"I am hungry," "when is lunch?"* I knew it was time to head back and reflect on our walk, our time together as a family and what I could do differently next time I walked the streets of Brisbane where Saint Mary MacKillop walked.

Overall, it took my family and me four hours to do. It was quite challenging to do a walk that big with my children, but we persevered and kept on going.

My hope for this walk is for my family and me to grow closer together and closer to God. Another hope for me is that I want to be the traveler who sees much beyond the surface of things,



meaning there is lots to discover, and I hope I can become more knowledgeable and familiar with Brisbane.

Well, I will leave it there until next time I walk the streets of Brisbane. Thank you for reading this.

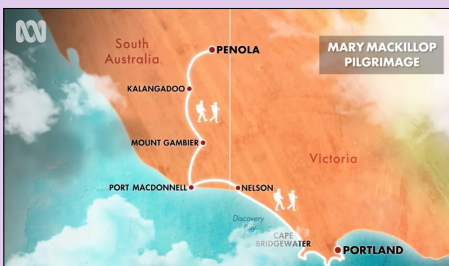
May God bless always.

Written, created and photos by
Katie Robinson



Mary MacKillop Pilgrimage Walk

On a recent episode of the ABC's **Back Roads** program, there was a segment on Mary MacKillop. Click on this link if you would like to watch it: <https://youtu.be/geL5QFycwd0>



NEWSLETTER

We encourage all groups, or even individual members, to send in any items of interest to let other Companions make connections. For our next newsletter please send contributions **by 20 November** to qld.companions@sosj.org.au.

Prayers please ...

Please keep the following people in your prayers and all those who may be experiencing loss, difficult times or ill health:

John Mitchell, a long-time Associate and Companion, asked for prayers for his daughter, **Karen Marsde** who has recently had a large cancer removed from her back. Also for **Neil Gilshenen**, a close friend of John's who has recently been diagnosed with two cancers.





DONATION TO THE QUEENSLAND COMPANIONS MOVEMENT

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AMOUNT GIVEN: (PLEASE CIRCLE)

\$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 OTHER \$.....

ALL DONATIONS CAN BE FORWARDED TO:

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QUEENSLAND LEADERSHIP TEAM
VILLA MARIA CONVENT
123 WARREN STREET
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

EMAIL: qld.companions@sosj.org.au

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