

Josephite Companions of South Australia

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Friendship Prayer Service



Autumn 2024

March 2024 Newsletter

Mary MacKillop by Pope Francis, June 2023



Today we are going far away, to Oceania, a continent made up of many islands, large and small. Faith in Christ, which so many European emigrants brought to those lands, soon

took root and bore abundant fruit. Among them was an extraordinary Religious Sister, Mary MacKillop (1842-1909), co-founder of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, who dedicated her life to the intellectual and religious formation of the poor in rural Australia.

Mary MacKillop was born near Melbourne to parents who emigrated to Australia from Scotland. As a young girl, she felt called by God to serve and bear witness to God not only with words, but above all with a life transformed by God's presence. Like Mary Magdalene, who first encountered the Risen Jesus and was sent by him to bring the proclamation to the disciples, Mary MacKillop was convinced that she too was sent to spread the Good News and attract others to an encounter with the living God.

Wisely reading the signs of the times, she understood that for her, the best way to do so was through the education of the young, with the awareness that Catholic education is a form of evangelisation. In this way, if we can say that "each saint is a mission, planned by

God to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel", then Mary MacKillop was especially so through the founding of schools.

An essential characteristic of her zeal for the Gospel was caring for the poor and marginalised. And this is very important. On the path to holiness, which is the Christian path, the poor and marginalised are the protagonists, and a person cannot advance in holiness if he or she is not dedicated to them too, in one way or another. They, who are in need of the Lord, bring the Lord's presence. I once read a phrase that struck me; it said: The [real] protagonist of history is the beggar. Beggars are the ones who draw attention to injustice, that is, to the great poverty in the world. Money is spent on manufacturing weapons, not on providing meals. And do not forget, there is no holiness if, in one way or another, there is no care for the poor, the needy, those who are somewhat on the margins of society. This care for the poor and the marginalised drove Mary to go where others would not or could not go. On the 19th of March 1866, the Feast of Saint Joseph, she opened the first school in a small suburb of South Australia. It was followed by many others that she and her Sisters founded in rural communities throughout Australia and New Zealand. They multiplied, because apostolic zeal is like that: it multiplies works.

*"Have courage, no matter
what your crosses are."
MMK 1890*

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In Loving Memory compiled by the Sisters of St Joseph



Marie Therese Foale rsj took her final breath on the 7th of January 2024 at Calvary Flora McDonald, Cowandilla. Marie was in her 95th year of life and the 77th year of her religious life.

Born in Pinnaroo, Marie was the oldest of 10 children. The family had a farm at Parilla in the South Australian Mallee. Marie's parents cultivated her two greatest gifts – her deep faith and her thirst for knowledge. She knew from a very young age that she wanted to be a Josephite and serve God. Her faithful service saw her ministering to children in many schools in Victoria and also South Australia.

The opportunity to study fed her thirst for knowledge. She was in fact such an outstanding scholar that she was awarded a

doctorate when submitting her Master's thesis. Through her study she acquired the position of diocesan archivist. She had a thorough knowledge and understanding of local Church history.

More than anything, we remember Marie for bringing Mary MacKillop "alive" to us. Marie's ability to bring our story to life will live on in her many books and in the hearts of all those who have had the opportunity to "sit at her feet" as she shared her wisdom.

It goes without saying that Marie was and always will be someone who is very dear to us. When we think of Marie, we remember her humble dedication, her simplicity, her quiet wisdom and her unconditional love. We say thank you to Marie for showing us what it means to be faithful in service, humble in wisdom and strong in love.



Elisabeth (Lis) Dmytryk rsj died peacefully on the 18th of January 2024 in the Mary Potter Hospice, North Adelaide. Lis was in her 78th year of her life and the 50th year of her religious life.

Born in Germany, Lis was the eldest of 6 children. Her Polish mother and Ukrainian father were forced to leave Germany during the war and eventually reached a migrant hostel in Victoria and then set about forging a new life in Australia.

Lis entered the Sisters of St Joseph in 1974 in Victoria. By then Lis was already an experienced acetylene welder, spray painter and press operator, and later became a qualified boiler maker. After her profession, Lis began her life of ministry in childcare, education and hospitality and also gained library qualifications.

In 1990, Lis moved to SA to take up the Josephite ministry of caring for priests and seminarians. She was valued and respected for her generosity, hard work, resourcefulness and problem-solving abilities and especially for her quiet wisdom and care for every person. When the seminary closed in 1998 these same skills and qualities were appreciated by the Sisters as Lis became the Province property and maintenance person.

Over the last few years Lis faced major health issues. She spent her last months resting at home and then with the Sisters at Kensington where her quiet presence and gentle smile gifted everyone in the community.

The Irish author and poet, Daniel O'Leary, wrote in the year before his own death in January 2020, "I know there is something beautiful waiting for me". Lis also knew that her loving God was waiting for her and she was at peace.

***“Remember, there is, even on this Earth,
a day of bright reward for all your
prayers and faithful perseverance.”
MMK 1874***

International Women's Day

Friday 8th March

7pm

Bethany

4 High St, Kensington



The **Josephite Companions** proudly present a powerhouse event featuring a remarkable ensemble of panellists with backgrounds in psychotherapy, advocacy, gender equality and more!

This panel of women will share their journeys, insights and the unique hurdles they've overcome to empower women to build confidence, grow communities and enable success.

This will be an unforgettable evening of conversation, as we rally behind the United Nations theme, **'Count Her In'**, dedicated to **'Propelling Gender Equality through Economic Empowerment.'**

Registration: 6.30pm RSVP: Mary on 0417 871 904 or SA.Companions@sosj.org.au

Light refreshments provided. Donations toward Josephite ministries accepted on the night.

Don't miss this opportunity to be inspired, and champion the cause of gender equality in our community and beyond!



Kindness and Compassion

Saturday 1st June
2pm
Bethany
4 High St Kensington
Presenter: Pauline Morgan rsj

An opportunity to explore ways to be kinder and more compassionate towards ourselves and others. In particular, exploring ways to:

- * understand, accept and appreciate others
- * improve relationships with family, friends and colleagues
- * create more harmony in our lives and in the lives of others

Afternoon tea will be provided and there will be a raffle to support Josephite ministries.

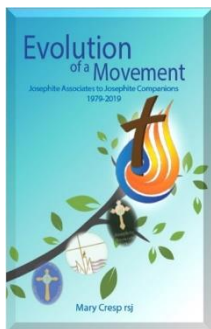
RSVP Mary on 0417 871 904 or SA.Companions@sosj.org.au



~ DATE CLAIMERS ~

- Annie MacKillop – 10th August, 2pm
- Julian Tenison Woods – 26th October, 2pm
- Webinar – 31st August, 11am
- Carols Evening – 13th December, 7pm

The History of Us! by Lucia Ciocca



The Josephite Companions' first gathering for 2024 was held on Saturday 10th February, when we welcomed Mary Cresp rsj to share insights from her book:

"Evolution of a Movement: Josephite Associates to Josephite Companions 1979 – 2019."

Our Prayer at the beginning of the session was in the form of a story titled *"Butterflies Under Our Hats"* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. It is a story which invites us to make the distinction between our life being luck-bound or being hopeful and, once we have made the distinction, we come to the realisation that our life is hope-worthy. Mary MacKillop, like the strange and beautiful woman who came to help the town of Chelm, offered much hope to those who may have believed they had no luck, offering them something more important:

HOPE!

Mary began her presentation by highlighting some of the more significant sections in her book, from *The Rise of the Josephite Associate Movement to Metamorphosis: Becoming Josephite Companions*. She reminded us that the origins of the Josephite Associates can be traced back to the Second Vatican Council when the *whole* body of the Church was called to mission and holiness. This was to be the beginning of a wonderful friendship with the Sisters of St Joseph, as we carried out the Church's mission. Some people present at the session recalled many years ago being *tapped on the shoulder* to become a Josephite Associate, and to this day they have wonderful memories of shared experiences.

The Josephite Associate Movement grew throughout Australia and, at most gatherings, there was a Sister present who led the group in its formation stage. The gatherings would mainly consist of prayer, reflection, and a social element. There were also retreats and reflection days for the Associates which were well attended. Mary also mentioned the expansion of the Associate Movement into New Zealand, Peru, Scotland and Timor-Leste.

However, this was to change over the years with the declining number of Sisters – where to go from here? Some even thought that perhaps the Associate Movement had reached its end and should die. At this point, Mary offered a thought-provoking question, *"Yes, it might die but should we commit suicide?"* I recall going into reflection mode at this point, such a deep question ... and the first word that came to my mind was *transformation*. Mary then went on to share her thoughts about this transformation.

All the questions and uncertainty were to herald a new beginning which would lead to self-governance with Associate groups throughout Australia coming together for Conferences to forge a new way of being. Thus, began the process of *metamorphosis* into what has become what we have today, *Josephite Companions*.

We are grateful to Mary for her wisdom and many insights which have enabled us to understand more fully the evolution of the Josephite Associates/Companions. Her book was available at the end of the presentation and hence, many Companions were fortunate to have their book signed by the author!



L→R: Mary Cresp, with Mary (part of the original Associates) and Robert (a recent Companion)



Deep in thought ...
L→R: Lucia, Angela, Chris, Patsy



Siblings ...
L→R: Carmel, Cathy, Rex



Christmas Carols

by Rex Ranger



Friday the 15th of December 2023 was the date of the Christmas Carols hosted by the 'hostess with the mostest,' Majella O'Sullivan rsj. The night arrived with a bevy of eager participants arranged in a circle to involve ourselves in another serving of Majella's shenanigans. As I was fashionably two minutes late, MC Majella was warming up the crowd. I walked past her and attempted to grab the microphone but she held it with her steely grip, so no change to MC Rex!

There was a great turnout of 45 led by the aforementioned Majella and her able assistant Mary Gill on the piano. We were treated to a fun-filled set of activities and singing.

Participants were again supplied with a song book, where our hostess varied the method of choosing carols. A table in the centre of the room contained a nativity scene (above right), minus any figurines. Majella, out of a little goody bag she clutched avidly, randomly selected a figurine: baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men, the angels and shepherds (there were no prawns or crayfish as there were in an iconic movie). So, upon selection of one of these figurines, we were asked to make a suggestion of a song. For example, when the infant Jesus was selected, the obvious selection was *'Away in a Manger'* and for the angels, *'The First Noel'*.

The highlight of the night (as it always is, for its chaos and fun) was the group rendition of *'The Twelve Days of Christmas'*. We all had to number off, and in our separate groups sing the allotted day of Christmas, a very challenging task! So much to think about and execute. It made for many funny moments, none of which will be mentioned here to protect

the innocent! It truly was like wrangling a clowder of cats (the name for a group of cats). Sort of carried off by Majella!

The most interesting aspect of the evening was the time when participants, who were born in other countries, were asked to share with the group some Christmas traditions from the country of their birth. There were traditions shared from Germany, Croatia, Holland and others too. For example, Zorka told the group about the tradition of budnji, a log from the previous Christmas which is brought into the house and placed on the fire on the evening of Christmas Eve and kept burning throughout Christmas Day. It represents the shepherds lighting a fire to keep the baby Jesus warm after his birth.

One of the usual highlights was the raffle, and of course Majella's ability to contrive an 'innocent' selection of raffle participants. To share the love around of course! Most walked away with a share of the spoils.

No gathering of the Companions would be complete without the ubiquitous coffee, tea and snacks (sweet and savoury) and the chance to chat with old friends and meet new ones too.

In finishing, a great thanks to everyone who attended and participated, having a lot of fun and continuing the legacy of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods, and promoting the values which they espoused.

Nobody can forget the input of Majella and Mary on the day and all those behind the scenes who made it happen. Thank you from all of us!



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Mary MacKillop was convinced that the purpose of education is the integral development of the person both as an individual and as a member of the community; and that this requires wisdom, patience and charity on the part of every teacher. Indeed, education does not consist in filling the head with ideas: no, not just this. What does education constitute? Accompanying and encouraging students on the path of human and spiritual growth, showing them how friendship with the Risen Jesus expands the heart and makes life more humane. Educating and helping them to think well: to *listen carefully* (the language of the heart) and to *do good* (the language of the hands). This vision is fully relevant today, when we feel the need for an “educational pact” capable of uniting families, schools and society as a whole.

Mary MacKillop’s zeal for spreading the Gospel among the poor also led her to undertake a number of other charitable works, starting with the “House of Providence”, which was opened in Adelaide to take in the elderly and abandoned children. Mary had great faith in God’s Providence. She was always confident that in any situation, God would provide. But this did not spare her from the anxieties and difficulties arising from her apostolate, and Mary had good reason for this. She had to pay bills, negotiate with local bishops and priests, manage the schools and

look after the professional and spiritual formation of her Sisters; and, later, she suffered health problems. Yet, through it all, she remained calm, patiently carrying the cross that is an integral part of the mission.

On one occasion, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, Mary said to one of her Sisters: “My daughter, for many years I have learned to love the Cross”. She did not give up in times of trial and darkness when her joy was dampened by opposition or rejection. Look at this; all the saints faced opposition, even within the Church. This is curious. And she faced it too. She remained convinced that even when the Lord gave her “the bread of adversity and the water of affliction” (Is 30:20), the Lord would soon answer her cry and surround her with God’s grace. This is the secret of apostolic zeal, a continuous relationship with the Lord.

May St Mary MacKillop’s missionary discipleship, her creative response to the needs of the Church of her time and her commitment to the integral formation of young people inspire all of us today, called to be a leaven of the Gospel in our rapidly changing societies.

May her example and intercession support the daily work of parents, teachers, catechists and all educators, for the good of young people and for a more humane and hopeful future.



Our 2024 Jubilarians

60 Years Professed

Pauline Morgan rsj

50 Years Professed

Josephine Dubiel rsj

Majella O'Sullivan rsj

“May St Joseph shower many special graces upon each and every one of you.”
MMK 1900

Our Josephite Partners

Living in the Spirit of Mary MacKillop

• St Joseph's Old Scholars Association

An Old Scholar is anyone (female or male) who has ever been connected to a Josephite school or college in Australia, as a student or teacher. Our Association has been in existence for over one hundred years. We are having two functions this year:

- Autumn Luncheon
Wednesday 29th May
Hampstead Hotel, 143 North East Road, Collinswood
Seniors' Menu – \$19.90 (includes salad/veg buffet)
Bookings with Josie (0400 639 998) or Margaret (8264 0780)
- Spring Luncheon – change of venue due to renovations at the Lockleys Hotel
Wednesday 16th October at The Highway, 290 Anzac Highway, Plympton

More information in our March/April Newsletter.

• Mary MacKillop Old Scholars Association

The Association continues the friendships and encourages the building of life-long networks amongst past students and staff. It also fosters justice and compassion, hospitality and concern for those in need and has a special relationship with the Sisters of St Joseph.

All Mary MacKillop College Old Scholars – spread the word and come home to MacKillop!

Save the date – 2024 Annual Reunion, Friday 27th September in the College Gymnasium.

All graduating year levels are invited to join us, so get your friends together.

Stay tuned for more information.

Our popular Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/179768134304>) keeps people in touch with each other. Make contact and share your news.

• Mary MacKillop Precinct

- Museum and Gift Shop – open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm

The Museum tells the South Australian stories of some of the early companions of Mary MacKillop, and the history and legacy of the Josephites.

The Gift Shop has many products available for sale including the monthly *Southern Cross* magazine, books, cards and much more!

Orders and information: www.marymackillopadelaide.org.au or 8130 5910

- St Joseph's Chapel – open every day, 10am to 4pm

A place for quiet reflection and prayer. A place where Mary MacKillop herself prayed!

- Bethany

Check out the *2024 Events Programme* which offers workshops, reflection and retreat days. Details online through www.marymackillopadelaide.org.au or collect a copy when visiting the Museum.

- Spotlight on Mary MacKillop

Continues each 8th of the month from 10am to 12pm, except Sundays. Join us in Bethany for opportunities to enrich our appreciation of Mary's story and legacy. All are welcome!

No registration/no cost. Enquiries: infos@soj.org.au or 8130 5900

Journey through Lent

Introduction

Lent is a time when we stop and think about how we can play our part in God's hope for a world that is fair, just, and peaceful. Through prayer, fasting and giving we take the focus from ourselves and instead focus on our relationship with God and how serving others draws us closer to God. We also think about giving all of ourselves to be bearers of God's love and mercy in our world as we look to be 'sharers of faith, hope and love' and 'agents of transformation in our world'.

Gospel: Matthew 6:3-4

When you give to the poor, don't let anyone know about it. Then your gift will be a secret. God knows what is done in secret, and God will reward you.

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop

Reject no one. You never know what grace can do. 1867

Reflection

How do you respond to God's call during Lent?

Prayer – The Fast Life

Fast from judging others; feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from fear of illness; feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger; feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism; feast on hope.
Fast from negatives; feast on encouragement.

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion.

Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.
Fast from gossip; feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that sustains.
Fast from anxiety; feast on faith.

Author Unknown

Blessing

May God be your light to guide your day and may God's spirit bring you peace. **Amen**



*Wishing you
and your families
many blessings for a very
HAPPY EASTER*