



Good Friday

## The CROSS is much associated with Good Friday.

Here in the Southern Hemisphere, we are blessed with the presence of a cross in our night sky. A cross that is a navigational tool, a widely used symbol, a light in the darkness.

In our great southern land, we have a saint who, on taking her first vows and establishing the Sisters of Saint Joseph, added “of the Cross” to her name, thus Mary MacKillop became Sister Mary of the Cross. It was an intentional decision; she was prepared to carry whatever cross came her way and her life was lived in a nest of crosses.<sup>1</sup>

At the heart of Christianity and the Josephite tradition, are these words from the prophet Micah:<sup>2</sup>

***This is what God needs from you:  
simply do justice,  
love kindness  
and walk humbly with your God.***

“The just person justifies” wrote Gerard Manly Hopkins.<sup>3</sup> In other words, we are what we do. We are called to DO justice.

Walking humbly with God and with others as equals demands knowing our true selves – not hiding our light under a bush and not being as the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the others – greedy and crooked – and spruiked his good works.<sup>4</sup>

Love in this context is not a feeling – it is a choice. It is the action we take, the expression of doing justice and walking humbly.

In every Gospel story, Jesus gives us the example to follow. Following Jesus is discipleship. It commands commitment and daily responding to the words of Jesus:

***If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.***<sup>5</sup>

As we reflect on this day, we know that the willingness on the part of Jesus to do justice, to love with compassion and tenderness and to walk humbly among the people – all people – was a thorn in the side of the Roman leaders.

The words, actions and life of Jesus challenged their authority – the Roman rule – and as a result, he was crucified. Death by crucifixion was designed to be brutal and very public, reserved for frequently rebellious slaves and those who challenged Roman rule.

We are not going to be crucified, but not one of us is exempt from suffering – from experiencing the cross in our lives. The cross presents in all manner of ways – ill health, death of loved ones, accidents, financial worries, job insecurity, fears about those we love, uncertainty about the future, loneliness, misunderstanding and betrayal by others, the pain of watching the victims of war and natural disasters, the heartache we experience when injustice and cruelty abound. The list can be endless, and our crosses, at times, overwhelming.

But the cross is not the end of the story.

With hope-filled hearts, we know that the cross has the potential for transformation. It offers an invitation to trust, to show empathy, courage, compassion, patience and persistence to stay the course, to do justice, love with tenderness and walk humbly with our God.

Transformed into the person we were created to be, recipients of the promise of ***life to the full***,<sup>6</sup> may we courageously walk the way of the cross, choose life, ***and shine in the world like bright stars – offering it the word of life.***<sup>7</sup>

***Mary Hilton - Sisters of Saint Joseph  
Formation for Mission Animator***

<sup>1</sup> Mary MacKillop and a Nest of Crosses ©Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Micah 6:8. The Inclusive Bible ©2007 by Priests for Equality.

<sup>3</sup> As Kingfishers Catch Fire. Gerard Manly Hopkins.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 18:11-12. The Inclusive Bible.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 16:24. The Catholic Youth Bible © 2011  
Christian Brothers Publications

<sup>6</sup> John 10:10 The Inclusive Bible.

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 2:15. The Jerusalem Bible.