

# Josephite Companions of South Australia

PO Box 57  
Kent Town, SA 5071  
[SA.Companions@sosj.org.au](mailto:SA.Companions@sosj.org.au)



## Friendship Prayer Service

### Spring 2025

August 2025 Newsletter

## Friendship Prayer SERVICE

We make a difference!

You made a difference ...

Over the **2024/25** year, the Josephite Companions have continued to fundraise for Josephite Ministries. The Leadership Team decided to distribute some of these funds, gained by raffles, donations and your subscription monies, to Theresa Swiggs rsj from Nazareth College, SA and Julianne Murphy rsj in Kununurra, WA.

Theresa replied by sending a beautiful card to the Companions, and we would like to share her response with you on our gift to Theresa of \$500.

*"Dear Josephite Companions,*

*On behalf of all of our families, and especially on behalf of the ones listed – **THANK YOU** for your ever generous donation to my ministry to our families at Nazareth.*

*Every tiny bit of help is life-changing for our Mums, in particular, and they go out of their way to let me know how appreciative they are of this kind support.*

*So ... thank you again for thinking of me and this ministry and for making it possible to relieve some of their suffering and hardship.*

*With love and my sincere gratefulness,*

*Sr Theresa Swiggs"*



*"God gives me strength  
for what is necessary."*

**MMK 1877**

ACQUITTAL OF COMPANIONS' DONATION OF \$500 PROVIDED  
TO SR THERESA SWIGGS ON 8 MARCH 2025  
FOR MINISTRY AT NAZARETH

#### Families

Kinnie	Help towards water bill	\$100	12 March
Sarah	Groceries	\$ 50	13 March
Adeng	Help towards car rego	\$ 50	28 March
John	Help towards petrol	\$ 30	31 March
Adhieu	Help replacing driver's licence	\$ 20	16 April
Arok	Help towards electricity bill	\$ 50	28 April
Peter	New mattress	\$ 50	6 May
Abang	Help towards medications	\$ 50	20 May
Atab	Food	\$ 50	14 June
Josephine	Food	\$ 50	20 June

It is clear from Theresa's response that we, as a group of Josephite Companions, are making a difference at a grass roots level to those in real need. It is also evident that we, as a group, are living the theme, **Companions Alive** in our local area and beyond.

Your continued support in any financial way keeps the Spirit of Mary MacKillop ALIVE!

SA Leadership Team – Lucia Ciocca, David Cotton, Mary Hemmings, Julie Langman, Carla Mastrangelo, Majella O'Sullivan rsj, Patsy Sandretti, Helen Smith

*"Be very considerate  
of others."*  
**JTW 1870**

## *In Loving Memory* compiled by the Sisters of St Joseph



Genevieve Anne Ryan, affectionately known as Gen, was born in Tranmere, a suburb of Adelaide, South Australia in 1940. She died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2025, having suffered a severe stroke two days beforehand.

Gen attended the local St Joseph's Primary School, followed by St Joseph's Juniorate at Aldgate for her secondary schooling. She entered the Sisters of St Joseph in 1958 and was professed in 1961 taking the name Sr Denis of Our Lady of Lourdes. After completing her Teacher's Certificate in Sydney, Gen returned to South Australia in 1962 to teach at Thebarton and then Rosewater. In 1964 she was appointed to the Waikerie Motor Mission and so began many years of this work in the Pt Pirie Diocese and Adelaide Archdiocese, with unique adventures that seemed to accompany Gen everywhere she went.

These continued as Gen was once again assigned to the education sector, in leadership

positions throughout the 1970's. In the meantime, she had succeeded in obtaining her BA at Flinders University. In 1981, Gen joined the Catholic Adult Education Service team. Gen completed her qualifications as a Spiritual Director in 1986, initially using these skills at Baulkham Hills. In 1995 Gen returned to Adelaide, where she continued involvement in ongoing formation for Sisters and candidates to Josephite life.

While we admire Gen's long list of achievements, it is her unique character for which she is most remembered. Perhaps because she readily accepted and appreciated others, people were drawn to her. Gen was a deep thinker, but her ability to translate these understandings to life's practicalities in story meant her words immediately inspired. She had a wonderful sense of humour, and to the hundreds of friends made on her life journey Gen provided affectionate companionship.

✳ **Vale, dear friend, Gen** ✳

God's creation of the unique *you* has now achieved its glorious purpose.

+++++

## Chapter News

Every six years, the Sisters of St Joseph gather together in Sydney to participate in a gathering called a **Chapter**.

The next Chapter for the Congregation is happening this year in October. At this time of discernment, the Sisters will elect a new Congregational Leadership Team as well as new Regional Teams.

We can be with the Sisters in spirit by joining them in Prayer:

*God of Life*

You breathe your breath in us,  
calling us to LIVE.

We immerse ourselves in our Chapter journey  
together, listening deeply to the stirrings  
within us.

May our Spirit fill us with hope  
that transforms and awakens us  
to possibilities for this time in our history.

May we be hospitable to what comes,  
recognising the seeds of new life springing  
forth.

We pray for wisdom, understanding and  
patience as we listen to each other,  
and our Cosmic reality.

We dare to dream and trust that our  
way forward will surely emerge.

With gratitude for all that is,  
and for all that is yet to come.

~ AMEN ~

# PILGRIMAGE

through the

## MID~NORTH OF SA

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025**



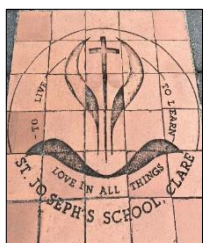
Undalya Village

Polish Hill River  
Historic Church  
Museum



A faithful Mary MacKillop always believed in the providence of God.  
Mary and her Sisters travelled widely to set up schools, particularly in rural areas.

Come journey to the mid-north of South Australia. Visiting historical Josephite sites including Auburn, Clare, Polish Hill River, Mintaro and Manoora.



School  
Crest

Travel by coach (limited numbers). Self-drive is unavailable.  
Departing Kensington at 8:30am *sharp*. Returning after 4:30pm.

**RSVP ESSENTIAL BY WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER**  
**0417 871 904 (Mary) or [SA.Companions@sosj.org.au](mailto:SA.Companions@sosj.org.au)**

**Cost: \$60 per person (includes lunch).**  
**Please advise of any dietary requirements when booking.**  
**Payment is by CASH ONLY on the day.**



Mary Immaculate  
Church, Mintaro



## Stories Aplenty @ Mugg's Hill

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**6pm**

**St Joseph's Cemetery**  
**Blythwood Rd, Mitcham**

**Presenter: Natasha Siebert**

Have you ever wondered where the Sisters of St Joseph are laid to rest? If you have, you need to come and visit the Cemetery. We have a presenter who knows about its history and can tell stories. You will have an opportunity to find the Sisters who taught you – Sisters who may have influenced or mentored you.

Come, share, listen to stories about people who have shown to us the Spirit of Mary MacKillop.

**~ ALL WELCOME ~**  
***Bring a friend!***

**RSVP appreciated by Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October**  
**0417 871 904 (Mary) or [SA.Companions@sosj.org.au](mailto:SA.Companions@sosj.org.au)**

Please bring your own fold-up chair and a light snack.  
There will also be a raffle. Donations and proceeds of the raffle will go toward Josephite ministries.



# Julian Tenison Woods – the man with an alphabet after his name

by Mary-Ann Casanova rsj – This presentation was dedicated to the memory of Gen Ryan rsj



Small stories enrich and enliven one's impression of Julian Tenison Woods. Letters exchanged between Julian, his family members, and close friends contain numerous anecdotes and in-house jokes.

I learned some of the minutia of his life, such as

- The contents of his pockets and his daily routines,
- The impact of epidemics and death on individuals and families and
- His first-hand impressions of colonialism and natural disasters in Australia and parts of Asia.

Exposure to the small stories provided glimpses of Julian's humanity, social and religious values, as well as his intellectual capacities and insights into how he lived out his priest-scientist vocation. Here are a few of those *small stories* which draw back the curtain on the everyday-ness of his life.

## A for Alphabet

Mary MacKillop, in her account of Julian's life wrote, "What a many-sided mind the man must have had." She recalled how Julian joked about the alphabet of letters he carried behind his name (MacKillop and Press 2010).

As a member of various Australian and International Scientific Societies and Institutes, he was entitled to include his alphabet when publishing material. Interestingly, the byline of most of his published material included his priestly title of "Reverend."

Julian's 1864 *alphabet*:

F.R.G.S – Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society

F.G.S. – Fellow of the Royal Geological Society

F.L.S. – Fellow of the Linnean Society

and many more ...

## T for Teetotaller

With an English upbringing, Julian was a big tea drinker. Anne Bulger recorded these impressions in Fr Woods' Memoir:

As a rule, people in the bush in those days lived with an absence of luxury that was surprising. It

was not safe to drink the water of the swamps for many of the early settlers died subsequently from hydatids. Besides, the water was so muddy or stagnant that it was undrinkable without boiling. The tea was hardly an improvement, and certainly was very different from the genuine article. Father used to say he wondered why people paid for such stuff, and still more why they drank it. But, after all, he said it was the mere name of the thing, for no one liked drinking sugar and water.

(J. Tenison-Woods 1887,75)



Julian's teapot. Srs of Perpetual Adoration (owners)  
& Mary MacKillop Place Museum (display)

## M for Marriage Proposal

Julian joined his brother's household and, as Margaret Press writes, soon added "his pleasant company and musical talents to the gatherings of friends who often visited them ... Julian even toyed with the idea, enthusiastically promoted by his brother, of forgetting about religious life and of following instead the promising opening offered to him by the undoubted interest which he had awakened in one of the daughters of the family on whose farm he had spent some weeks ... He valued her friendship enough to decide to ride up to the farm one evening and talk over with her the possibility of marriage. Just as he set out there occurred one of those dramatic interventions which he always interpreted as evidence of God's will for him." (Press 1979, 46-47) Julian was in the act of saddling his horse when a severe thunderstorm broke. The poorly made streets of Adelaide became dangerous quagmires ... He "decided not to risk the journey and that he was not destined to go up to the hills that night, and that he should not commit himself to an engagement to marry ... Instead of riding out, he picked his way along the wet street to St Patrick's Church, to pray for guidance and help." (Press 1979, 47) On the way out he met the Bishop of Adelaide and left with the resolve to abandon his plans of a marriage proposal and to become a priest in the Adelaide Diocese.

## Postponement of Mary and the Jesuits – Part 3

This last instalment of Mary MacKillop's connection with the Jesuit Fathers will appear in the Summer edition of our newsletter which is due out in late November.

# In the Footsteps of Mary MacKillop



A Pilgrimage from Port Adelaide to Kensington – a few of the highlights

## Port Adelaide

Mary MacKillop and Rose Cunningham arrived in Adelaide from the south-east on the Steamer *SS Penola* on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1867. They proceeded directly to the Church of the Immaculate Conception (above), remaining there until after Benediction in the evening. The Sisters then proceeded to Adelaide, accompanied by Fr Woods, by the 6.30pm train.



The Sisters rented a house in Dale Street, Port Adelaide which was used as the Convent until 1901. In 1899 Mary MacKillop visited the Convent writing: "The Sisters are happy and united. The Sisters make altar breads, mend linen and give the priest breakfast ... and all they get is £5 a year" (Foale, 2016, p423).

## Bowden



In August 1867, the Sisters came to Bowden. The original St Saviour's Church (above) was established in the 1860s on the corner of First and West Streets and the school was near here. The Sisters would travel to the school each day from their Convent in Grote Street by train or by walking. This church/school was opened in February 1868 and the Sisters taught here until Mary's excommunication in 1871. They returned in 1876.

## Franklin Street – St Joseph's Convent

(Now part of St Mary's College Chapel)

The excommunication by Bishop Sheil took place in the Chapel of the Franklin Street Convent (below). During this time, some 50 Sisters of St Joseph were told to leave the Congregation and the Franklin Street Convent.



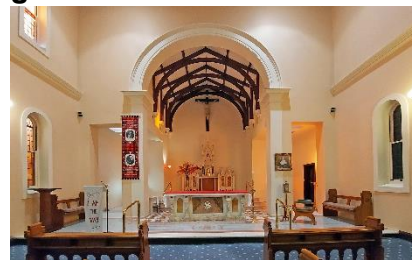
The Bishop offered both the Convent and school to the Dominican Sisters. The Convent was then transferred to the Dominican Sisters (Foale, 2016, p46). They moved into Franklin Street on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 1871 "... despite the pain of the Dominicans when they discovered the Sisters of St Joseph had been asked to leave the church property".

## West Terrace Cemetery

There seemed to be 12 or 13 Josephite Sisters who lie buried in the West Terrace Cemetery. These Sisters were among the pioneer members of the Congregation. They included all those who died in Adelaide in the 1870's, as well as several who died later on.



## Kensington



In 1872 after Mary MacKillop's excommunication order was lifted, the Sisters of St Joseph rented a property at Kensington on the site of the present Convent, Chapel (above) and Museum. In 1875 Mary was gifted £1000 for the ownership of the Kensington property due to the generosity of friends Robert and Joanna Barr Smith who supported this payment.

Mary MacKillop lived at Kensington from 1872 until 1883. In 1883 she was expelled from the Archdiocese. This is why Sydney has become the Mother House and base for the Congregation.

## Acknowledgements

**Photos:** Emmy Silvius & Pilgrimage Booklet

**Text:**

Keane, P rsj (1996)	A Mary MacKillop Pilgrimage – Adelaide Mary MacKillop Centre, Kensington SA
Foale, M rsj	Never See a Need – Sisters of St Joseph in SA 1866-2010 ATF Theology Adelaide 2016
Murphy, P	We Are But Travellers Here – A Record of the SA Catholic Schools in the Josephite Tradition 1800-2025

# RSJ Companions SA

## Income & Expenditure for 2024/2025

INCOME	
Opening Balance	2,441.63
Subscriptions	1,340.00
Fundraising: Raffles	260.00
Donations	1,216.00
Income from Pilgrimage	570.00
Interest received	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>5,827.63</b>

EXPENDITURE	
Stamps & Envelopes	521.20
Printing the Newsletter	500.00
Hire of Bethany	112.50
Pilgrimage & Presenter costs	150.00
Josephite Ministry: T Swiggs rsj	500.00
Josephite Ministry: J Murphy rsj	500.00
Payment to JCoLT	750.00
Petty cash	62.30
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,096.00</b>

**Leaving a 30/06/2025 balance of \$2,731.63**

*Julie Langman, Treasurer 13/07/2025*

## New Finance Arrangements Regarding Subscriptions And Donations

In the March 2025 edition of Newsflash, our JCoLT Newsletter, it was stated that we are changing to **ONE BANK ACCOUNT** across **ALL OF OUR COMPANION GROUPS IN AUSTRALIA**. This is to bring about some consistency across our groups. *It has been established 'under the umbrella' of the Sisters' accounts.*

- The 2025/2026 subscription to the Josephite Companions Movement is **\$30 per year**.
- Payments, from now on, are to be paid directly into the "Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph Control Account." Details are below.
- Alternatively, cash payments can still be given, at any time, to Julie Langman, our SA Treasurer, who will transfer the funds into this central account.
- While the subscription is essential in maintaining a strong and sustainable movement, we recognise there will be some members who are unable to afford the full fee.
- We ask that you pay what is possible.
- Donations can also be paid into this account.

### New Australia Wide Companions Bank Details:

<b>Account Name</b>	Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph Control Account
<b>BSB</b>	062217
<b>Account Number</b>	10903270
<b>Reference</b>	SA – Surname Initial (eg SA – Smith J)

We apologise to our dear Companions who have previously paid their subscriptions using cheques. This is one major change that we must embrace. **From now on, we are unable to accept cheques.** So, as our subscription form is a *thing of the past*, if you wish to advise us of any change to your contact details etc, please get in touch with us via:

Email: [SA.Companions@sosj.org.au](mailto:SA.Companions@sosj.org.au) or Phone: **0417 871 904 (Mary)** or

Post: **SA Josephite Companions, PO Box 57, Kent Town SA 5071**



## Josephite Companions Day *WEBINAR*

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2025

SA time: 10.30am – 12.30pm

Our guided input will be facilitated by the New Zealand Companions.

More information available in the July edition of **Newsflash** – our JCoLT Newsletter.



# 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.

However, circumstances have arisen which predicate a formal closure of the Association. As such, and according to the Constitution, there will be a General Meeting in Bethany on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of September at 10am. All members are invited. There is no need to reply; simply turn up.

Our Spring Luncheon will be going ahead. Details include:

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 11.45am for a 12noon start

**Lockleys Hotel, 493 Henley Beach Rd, Fulham**

Seniors Meal: \$25 including one drink

Bookings: **Josie (0400 639 998)** or **Joyleen (08 8337 9500)**

Limited seating – book early! There will be **NO SEAT ALLOCATION**, so please arrive early.

### • Mary MacKillop College Alumnae

To all St Joseph's Higher Primary, St Joseph's High School and Mary MacKillop College alumnae, staff and community members, you are warmly invited to this year's Annual Reunion.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**5.00pm College Tour & 6.00pm Dinner @ the Altavilla Club, 281 The Parade, Beulah Park**

Tickets \$40 pp includes entrée, mains and dessert. Drinks available to purchase on the evening.

Purchase tickets via the Mary MacKillop College website:

<https://www.marymackillop.sa.edu.au/reunion>

### • Mary MacKillop Spirituality Centre (formerly Mary MacKillop Precinct)

- Museum and Gift Shop – open Tuesday to Friday, 10am – 4pm and Saturday 10am – 1pm

The Museum tells the South Australian stories of Mary MacKillop and some of the pioneering Sisters. The Gift Shop has many products available for sale including the monthly *Southern Cross* magazine, books, cards, sacramental gifts and much more!

Orders and enquiries: <https://mmsm.org.au/shop/> or 08 8130 5910

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

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

- Bethany

Offers workshops, reflection and retreat days.

Details online through <https://mmsm.org.au/facilities/adelaide-conference-centre/>

- Moments with Mary MacKillop (formerly Spotlight on Mary MacKillop)

*A new name ... but with Mary MacKillop still at the heart of what we do!*

This new direction started in August, and continues on the **first Monday of each month**, except for public holidays.

Dates for the rest of this year: 1<sup>st</sup> September, 3<sup>rd</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December.

10am – 12pm, Bethany and St Joseph's Chapel, Kensington

Discover more about the life, words and legacy of Mary MacKillop, **A Saint for ALL Australians!**

There will be time for reflection, refreshments and conversation.

# Mary MacKillop's Pilgrim Energy

## *The Torch Bearer*

From the writings of Gen Ryan rsj

### Introduction

When an Olympic flame is carried into a stadium and the Olympic torch is lit, it is a stirring moment. It is an action that ignites, heralds and illuminates. At this moment there is a focus and purpose for people and athletes around the world.

Mary MacKillop was called to pick up a flame and carry it into an **uncharted arena of life**. Her preparedness to do this:

- **Ignited** a responsive fire in the hearts of other women,
- **Heralded** a new era of apostolic intensity in Australia, and
- **Illuminated** the darkness and misery that threatened the poorest people in our land.

**Mary was a pilgrim, a pathfinder, a pacesetter, a pioneer and a trailblazer. In scriptural terms she was called to be a pilgrim leader.**

This call came when Mary was in her early twenties. When she met Julian Tenison Woods, Mary encountered his burning zeal for the neglected 'little ones' in isolated Australian rural conditions. The spark that burned in his heart caught fire in Mary's, and a shared dream materialised.

In 1866, the torch was alight and firmly in Mary MacKillop's grasp. Fuelled by Julian's vision, her own energy and enthusiasm, and the generosity and courage of a growing number of young women, this fire spread rapidly across the Australian landscape – and beyond.



### Reflection

Have you ever experienced the challenge of being taken unexpectedly into a leadership role?  
How did the pilgrim energy, modelled by Mary MacKillop, shape your response?  
What can Mary's experience as a pilgrim say to us as we journey on our way?

### Scripture John 14:5-6

Thomas said to him, "We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus replied, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to Abba God except through me."

### Blessing

Mary MacKillop,  
discerning the way  
trusting in God's guidance  
unafraid of difficulties  
encouraging the tired and disappointed  
pilgrim to the end,  
**PRAY WITH US**