

# Penola's Amazing 'Mary Race' Around Melbourne ... or PAMRAM for short!!

Recently, on a bright and sunny day, the 180 staff members of Penola Catholic College in Broadmeadows ventured into the CBD to take on an epic end-of-term challenge! A challenge of *MacKillopian* proportions! A race around Melbourne visiting sites important to our patron's life and ministry ... but not just any old race!! This was an amazing race, in fact it was an amazing 'Mary race'!!

Our day began at Dallas Brooks Hall, within sight of the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre, where Sr. Joan Healy rsj perfectly set the scene for us! Today we were going to travel back in time to the pioneer Melbourne of Mary's day! Laurie Castellini, a Penola Library Technician, reflected on Joan's input: *'We began the day hearing from Sr. Joan Healy, who introduced us to the life of people in Melbourne in the late 1890's and with some prompting from newspaper articles and*

*photos, I came to understand the true conditions of the life of our pioneers and the reality of the poverty they lived.'* Sr. Joan took us back there with ease, and then we set off in teams to discover more about our patron's special relationship with our city. We had come together, ready to race around Melbourne to find out more about our amazing Mary!!



*'Holy Ground': the 'MacKillo-cycles' team standing on the very spot where Mary was born.*

Our journey had begun in the weeks before when we were called upon to form our teams. There were conditions: each team had to have staff from both campuses, with both teaching and support staff represented, and we also needed to come up with a name for our team that was in some way connected to Mary, the Josephites or the charism! Special prizes were awarded on the day for the most creative. We had *'the Excommunicated'*, *'the Saintly Rebels'*, *'the Bold and the Beatified'*, our IT staff formed *'Mary's Megabites'*, our canteen staff claimed *'Feed the Hungry'* and one group of intrepid bike riders called themselves named *'the MacKillo-cycles'*.

Laurie Castellani described his own group thus:

*'Our team, 'The Believers', was made up of Lyn, the knowledgeable one, Nora, the intelligent one, Jane, the practical one and Laurie the slow one.'* He went on to say: *'After a huge morning tea, our voyage of discovery started. We visited key places in the life of Mary MacKillop and in doing so we had many laughs, took wrong turns ... and learned much about her life!'* As each team set out, they had no idea what was ahead. Each had

been given a booklet full of information, but with no exact locations or details about how or when to get there! Those details were provided after each challenge had been completed!

At the birthplace of Mary in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, after prayer and some background information was read, the team had to fold and put a nappy on a baby *in under one minute* before they received the clue to their next destination! Laurie was impressed with one team-member's expertise: *'Jane surprised us all with the speed of her nappy folding technique.'*

Down the other end of the city, at Mary's workplace, Sands and Kenny, after the history and prayer segment, teams had to accurately count bags full of thousands of paperclips! Some distance away, at Madame Brussels' Lane in the infamous 'Little Lons' area (the red-light area of the 1890's - around Little Lonsdale Street), teams had to identify a pioneer from a board containing thousands of names. A little later, at St. Patrick's Cathedral, after locating Mary's bronze statue inside, teams had to race around the outside perimeter, correctly identifying the statues found there. We then raced on to the Latrobe St Mary MacKillop memorial, where teams had to sing *Old McDonald Had a Farm* with each person being a different animal! This reminded us of both Flora McDonald, Mary's mother, and also her sister, Annie, who wrote about the noise of the cattle being driven through this area en route to the market. Each clue led further onward towards our ultimate destination: St. Francis' Church, where Flora and Alexander MacKillop were married, and Mary received the Sacraments, and where we gathered for the close of the day - and of the term!



All agreed that the opportunity to learn, not only more about our patron, but also each other was wonderful! The Josephite spirit was definitely in evidence as our Penola community came together to celebrate being Josephite in a very different and enjoyable way!

Nicole Allan,

Deputy Principal, RE

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## Another staff member reflected on her experience of the day ...

The '2012 Staff Spirituality Day' was such a new experience for me. The planning was brilliant and so much hard work had been put into it. The brief session we had in the morning at Dallas Brooks Hall gave us a thorough insight into ways in which St Mary of the Cross MacKillop was associated with Melbourne's CBD. This was so helpful for someone who didn't know the CBD so well and it was inspiring to realise that St Mary of the Cross had actually been there and not just in Broadmeadows!



For the second part of the day, when we split into smaller groups, I caught a glimpse of Mary's life style and the places in the CBD that she was associated with. This also helped me to see the layout of the city and I enjoyed walking around and seeing places. Another good aspect of the day was being in a group where people didn't belong to my faculty. We often associate with staff from within our own teaching areas but, it was so good to experience and feel how warm and loving others around us are.

Thirdly the social time we had together was great - lunching, relaxing and chatting. This doesn't normally happen on a working day. It was so good to stay outside the normal circle of friends and enjoy others' company and talk. We could get to know each other and value our Penola community. Indeed we really are blessed to have such a rich community with wonderful people around us.

Lastly St Francis Church...the ambience and the location were splendid. It was so good to gather there to pray and close the day - and term. So calming. This was an amazing day and something I will always remember!

*Elizabeth George*  
Head of Science