



# Woman of Faith & Courage

MANY WONDERFUL SAINTS SHARE THE MONTH OF AUGUST FOR THEIR FEAST DAYS, BUT IT IS HARD FOR AN AUSTRALIAN TO PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE ST MARY OF THE CROSS MACKILLOP.

When Alexander and Flora MacKillop welcomed their first baby, Mary Helen, into the world in the bedroom of their little house in Melbourne they must have thought she was very special. They could not have guessed in a million years how many people would agree – all over the country and around the whole world! We know her today as St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Mary MacKillop was born in 1842. She was a fine teacher, the founder of schools and a religious order. She devoted her whole life to following Jesus and helping others, especially poor children.

Many people who knew her could tell she was extraordinary. Mother Mary radiated God's love and energy to everyone she met.

Mary and her companion Fr Julian Tenison Woods dreamed of a new kind of school, open to anyone whether their family was rich or poor. Children from poorer families would be provided with clothing and school supplies

for very little cost or for free. They could learn enough reading, writing and maths so they could get out of poverty and have a better life.

When Mary wrote the lessons and timetable for her schools, she made sure there was time for prayers and hymns, which in those days were not written in English, but Latin. But she made sure these weren't too long so that the children wouldn't find prayer time too difficult or too boring.

Her pupils must have been grateful for that! Her life wasn't always easy and she had lots of problems sometimes, but she was happy because she firmly believed in God and that her true home was not here on earth but with God in heaven. She was very cheerful and didn't want her sisters going around with frowns on their faces.

## THE MARY MAC QUIZ

Have a family or class room trivia match on Mary's life. Prizes could be the boiled sweets that Mary used to reward her students or something similar.

- Unscramble the word TLAEESLRV to complete the quote: "Remember we are but T\_\_V\_\_\_\_\_ here." (1866)
- Choose the correct answer to complete the quote: "We must teach more by \_\_\_\_\_ than by word." (1867)  
a. demand b. example  
c. courage d. intelligence
- Mary MacKillop was born in which year?  
a. 1810  
b. 1942  
c. 1860  
d. 1842
- Mary MacKillop 's parents were:  
a. Irish  
b. English  
c. Australian  
d. Scottish
- Unscramble the words: *earnestly with Pray confidence. and loving*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In 1967, Mary became the first sister of St Joseph and Mother Superior. How old was Mary? \_\_\_\_\_
- The first school was started in a:  
a. town hall  
b. stable  
c. church  
d. farmhouse
- In 1909, Mary died at:  
a. Sydney  
b. Penola  
c. New Zealand  
d. Melbourne
- Complete Mary's motto for life: "Never see a need without doing \_\_\_\_\_ about it"
- Mary founded the Sisters of St Joseph with the help of:  
a. Fr Tenison Woods  
b. The Pope  
c. Bishop Sheil  
d. Fr Joseph
- What is the missing word in the quote: "God gives me \_\_\_\_\_ for what is necessary"  
a. love  
b. help  
c. food  
d. strength
- Unscramble the sentence: God's choice. Spirit you in Let guide your  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answers: 1. travellers 2. example 3. 1842 4. Scottish 5. Pray earnestly and with loving confidence (1873) 6. 25 years old 7. stable 8. Sydney 9. something 10. a. Fr Tenison Woods 11. strength 12. "Let God's Spirit guide you in your choice." (1898)

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**She once said,**  
*"Look upon your crosses as stepping-stones to  
 an eternity of happiness".*

MM.(1866)

# TIMELINE



**1842**

Mary is born. Later she would have three younger sisters and four younger brothers.

**1856**

Mary gets her first job as a clerk, and later works as a governess looking after and teaching her younger cousins and the poor children she met.

**1866**

Mary and her sisters Annie and Lexie travel to Penola in South Australia to run the first school with Fr Julian Woods in an old stable.

**1867**

Mary makes official vows and becomes Mary of the Cross. She is the Mother Superior of the new religious institute, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.



**1871**

Mother Mary is excommunicated by the bishop of Adelaide, by now more than 120 women had become Sisters of St Joseph and they were beginning to live and work in other states.

**1837**

Mother Mary travels to Rome by herself to get official approval for the Institute and meets the Pope, Pope Pius IX.

**1883-86**

The Institute faces lots of problems but continues to grow and spread throughout the country and to New Zealand.

**1909**

Mother Mary enters eternal life while sick at her home in North Sydney.

**2010**

Pope Benedict XVI declares Blessed Mary MacKillop a saint – St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

