"Never see a need without trying to do something about it."

TRUST IN GOD WHO HELPS YOU IN ALL THINGS

We celebrate the feast day of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop at our weekend mass services this weekend 7th – 8th August – Australia's first saint. She co-founded the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart – a teaching order of Catholic nuns who were instrumental in the establishment of Catholic education in this country.

Mary was born in Victoria to Scottish immigrants. She was the eldest of eight children and spent her early years working to support her family. At the age of 24 she dedicated her life to God and took on the name "Mary of the Cross". Along with Fr Julian Tenison-Woods, Mary opened a school in a disused stable in Penola, South Australia. Her vision was to provide education for underprivileged children. Many other women came to join her there, and Mary and Julian founded Australia's first religious order: the Sisters of St Joseph. Mary and the Sisters were committed to serving the poor – to going to where the need was and living amongst those in need. This took Mary all over Australia to many rural areas. Mary faced fierce opposition throughout her life, which at one point culminated in her being excommunicated. In the face of trial, Mary was a model of forgiveness, insisting no ill be spoken of those who wronged her, while also remaining resolute in her convictions. Mary was remarkable as a strong female leader in 19th century Australia. Education in this country is what it is today thanks to her dedication and determination.

Mary Mackillop Today

Daughter of Australia

Daughter of Australia, saint for every land,
Mary, we are listening, keen to understand
how God works among us now as in the past.
Speak with us and teach us wisdom that will last.

Mary, what did you see? I saw human need:
in the far-flung places God called me to lead
children to the Father, lost ones to the Son,
driven by the Spirit till the work was done.

Mary, what did you do? I began to teach
with my chosen Sisters, far as we could reach,
all across Australia and beyond the sea,
travelling as pilgrims, always trustingly.

Mary, what was your faith? My trust was in God
who was always faithful as new paths we trod.
In the Cross of Jesus I found love's own light,
casting out all darkness, giving me new sight.

Mary, what was your joy? I saw God's will done,
watching with Saint Joseph over God's own Son,
from whose Heart once wounded flow the living streams,
watering the dry land with love that redeems.

Daughter of Australia, saint for every land,
Mary, we have listened and we understand
how God works among us now as in the past.
Thanks to you for teaching wisdom that will last.

Text: Mark Coleridge b. 1948

Saint Mary MacKillop