



Mary Helen MacKillop was born in 1842 in Victoria to Scottish immigrant parents and grew up with seven brothers and sisters. At the age of twenty-four, she dedicated her life to God and took on the name “Mary of the Cross.” Mary was an ordinary woman with an extraordinary dream and a big heart. Her dream was to give the poorest families and most neglected children access to education and safe shelter by opening schools.

Mary MacKillop’s Feast Day is on 8th August, which is the day she died. Mary’s Feast Day is a wonderful time to reflect on the qualities and actions that set her apart, and how her legacy continues to be relevant today. Mary MacKillop fiercely believed in the power of education to lift communities out of poverty. Education in Australia is what it is today, thanks in large part to the dedication and determination of Mary and the Sisters of St Joseph

One of the most inspiring things about Saints is that they are people who lived in the world just like us. As we can see with Mary’s life, Saints dedicated every day to honouring God and sharing His love by serving others. Canonisation is when the Pope declares that a person, who has died, practiced heroic virtue and devotion to God during their life. The act proclaims that the person is now with God in heaven, intercedes for us before the Lord, and is to be publicly recognised by the whole Church. On 4th August 1909, Cardinal Moran visited Mary MacKillop as she was preparing for death. He gave her his blessing and, as he left, said, “I consider I have this day assisted at the deathbed of a Saint.” Mary died a few days later, on 8th August 1909. At her funeral Mass, people rushed to touch her body with rosaries, which was a practice very unusual in Australia. When she was laid to rest at Gore Hill, many people even took samples of earth from her grave as a precious reminder. Her remains are now in the Mary MacKillop Memorial chapel at North Sydney. **Mary MacKillop was canonised on 17th October 2010 at Saint Peter’s Basilica, Rome.**

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This August, let’s walk in the footsteps of Australia’s most loved Saint. Just like Mary MacKillop... Let’s be fierce in the face of adversity. Let’s be fair and act when we see injustice. Let’s give love to those we encounter each day. Together, let’s be Fierce for Fair. Find out more about the work of Mary MacKillop Today at www.marymackilloptoday.org.au