FROM THE PRINCIPAL

CANONISATION OF MARY MACKILLOP

Up to 8000 Australians are expected to arrive in Rome in coming days so they can say they were there when Mary MacKillop, a 19th-century nun who taught, and cared for, the poor, was declared the nation's first saint. It is an historic occasion and one which will be marked by the presence of two of our students Alisha Mascurine and Josh Dodgson who will attend the ceremony along with the Bishop of the Diocese of Sale Christopher Prowse.

Mary’s story is a great one of faith under duress. Many things have been written about Mary and the difficult circumstances she faced but despite this the overriding observation and feeling that I have of her as a person is her sense of spirituality and faith in God. It is very much an Australian story one for our context and people. Determined, pragmatic and resourceful are all terms that spring to mind when reflecting on her life, all terms which we associate with the Australian character but her inspiration for our generation and the generation to come will be her commitment to live her life in the context of her faith.

Our motto “Be Not Afraid” has strong links with Mary’s journey who in her final days penned these words to her fellow sisters.

‘Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them cheerfully, remembering whom you are trying to follow. Do not be afraid. Love one another, bear with one another, and let charity guide you in all your life.’ Mary Mackillop 1909.

Next Monday morning all members of our college community are invited to a special celebration liturgy at 9.10am where we will take time to reflect on the life and faith of Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Tim Hogan
PRINCIPAL

MARY MACKILLOP FESTIVAL
17th October

Dear Parents and Families,

Everyone is invited to join in the celebrations on Sunday 17th October, the day of Mary’s Canonisation. The day begins with a celebration Mass in St Patrick’s Cathedral Melbourne and the Festival site at the Exhibition Buildings, Nicholson St opens at 1pm. There will be a procession from Mary’s birthplace led by Sisters of St Joseph at 2pm to the Exhibition Buildings where the opening ceremony for the Festival will take place.

Bishop Costelloe will lead a prayer service at 6pm and the Canonisation will be screened live on big screens from 7pm to 9pm.

Any queries please contact Deacon Tony
Mary MacKillop’s Story

Throughout her life Mary MacKillop had to struggle against poverty, prejudice, and the hostility of powerful and petty people. She was truly an Aussie Battler. Her parents were Scottish immigrants who settled in Melbourne where Mary was born on 15 January, 1842. Money worries were never absent from Mary’s life. The boom and bust gold days saw the MacKillops suffer continual financial instability and consequent strains on family life.

From her teens to mid twenties Mary supported the family, working in a stationery business and then as a school teacher and governess. When she was twenty four she took the first of what were to be many courageous steps in her life. At the time she was working as a governess in Penola, South Australia. She wanted to serve the poor, particularly by educating the “bush children”. With the encouragement and help of Father Julian Tenison Woods, the Parish Priest of Penola, she opened a school in a stable on 19 March, 1866. She wore a simple black dress as a sign of a radical lifestyle change. The Bishop, priests and people called her ‘Sister Mary’. The title became official in 1867 when she took her vows as a Sister of St Joseph.

The first school set the pattern of the many to come. It was for the children of the working class. The education it provided was basic and thorough, aiming to make the children independent, employable and well grounded in their religion. Soon, other young women joined with Mary MacKillop and as well as schools, they established places of refuge and rehabilitation. With Father Julian Tenison Woods’ assistance, Mary developed a Rule for the Sisters of St Joseph who were dedicated to helping to meet the material and spiritual needs of struggling peoples. They served in the country and in the bush, very often in isolated communities of two or three Sisters. They taught the children, visited homes, hospitals and prisons, and often provided leadership in the local Church where there was no priest.

Unfortunately, it was not long before the freshness and vitality of this initiative faced opposition in the Church. Mary had a radical vision of the way she wanted her Order of Sisters to be structured. She wanted them to be free to be sent anywhere in Australia. Shanty towns for miners and tents along new railway tracks saw the Sisters coming and going according to the needs of the people. So that this could happen she opted for a unified order with central control within the Order and not subject to direction by the Bishops of particular dioceses. Mary also refused to model her new Order on European lines. There were to be no “Lay Sisters” to do the menial chores. Every Sister was to help with the work regardless of background or credentials.

The Constitution or Rule which Mary developed for the Sisters enshrined therefore both equality and central control. This brought Mary into direct conflict with the Bishop of Adelaide. Mary calmly withstood all opposition to these basic principles of her approach. As a result her stand gained for her the sentence of excommunication, hastily thrust on her on 22 September 1871 by the ill and badly informed Bishop of Adelaide. The excommunication ban was removed by the
Bishop on 23 February 1872 but the conflict on principle continued. Mary did not capitulate. She decided to take her cause to the highest authority in the Catholic Church - the Pope in Rome.

On 28 March 1873, only 31 years of age and a professed Sister of St Joseph, Mary MacKillop went to Rome alone, dressed as a widow. She managed to gain an audience with Pope Pius IX on 1 June and a hearing from the Vatican authorities. Within a year she secured approval of the Rule.

Arriving back in Australia with the future of the Order apparently secure, Mary encountered new conflict and disappointment. Unhappily, Father Woods who had done so much to help her to found the Order and to write the Rule was sorely disappointed that Mary had agreed to the changes on poverty. He felt betrayed by Mary.

The rift with Father Woods deepened. Despite his scientific genius and great personal goodness his poor judgement of character made his guidance of the Sisters disastrous. He misinterpreted the decidedly odd behaviour of a few Sisters in Adelaide as evidence of “holiness” and he put them in positions of authority.

Mary was in Queensland establishing schools and communities. Her perceptive letters of the time illustrate her vision, courage and leadership as the enormity of the situation began to dawn on her. She and the Sisters were subjected to a Commission of Inquiry which was conducted in a disgraceful and inept manner and was later declared illegal. Even towards the final stages of her life she experienced opposition. She was deposed as Superior General on technical grounds in 1885 but was later re-elected overwhelmingly by the Sisters.

Her personal life and character were also subjected to innuendo and rumour. Plagued with chronic headaches she was prescribed brandy. Some accused her of being an alcoholic even though the dose was administered by a nurse. These insinuations about her character were anonymous and cruel, causing much mischief.

Mary MacKillop’s attitude to those who wronged her was one of forgiveness and respect. She never tried to score cheap points or to hang onto old hurts. Her many existing letters are evidence of her amazing capacity to forgive and excuse, again and again. She simply refused to criticise, let alone whinge or whine.

After suffering a stroke Mary lived at North Sydney, her health deteriorating but her keen mind alert to the end. She died peacefully on 8 August 1909. Despite all the hardships which dogged her life, Mary’s work continued to experience phenomenal growth. Schools and other institutions multiplied over Australia and New Zealand as the number of Sisters increased.
**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Blessed Mary Mackillop**

So much has been said in the lead up to the Canonisation of Mary Mackillop that it could be a daunting prospect to say any more. However, it really doesn’t matter what is said and who says it provided that we are able to go beyond what can almost become hype! In our society, someone who died a century ago can be viewed as someone who is so far removed from our way of life as to be no more than a curiosity. The reality of Mary’s life and her example are of great value to us in our consumer driven world where “self” is king.

The faith, courage and selflessness of Mary Mackillop still empowers others to follow her example and give their lives to God in the service of others. Sister Cathy Dean who was Pastoral Associate of St Agatha’s Parish has been working with the Josephite Mission in Peru for some years and will be there for many more. Mary Mackillop did not have an armchair ride through life because she had faith or because she became a nun. In her great desire to do God’s will, in the words of St Therese “…to be God’s hands on earth” Mary suffered many setbacks and personal affronts. Her faith never wavered and she did not become self obsessed because she was treated poorly, her focus was still those in great need of life’s necessities.

As an example to a school community Mary Mackillop is marvellous. Two of our students will be present in Rome with Bishop Prowse and other Diocesan Pilgrims for her Canonisation by Pope Benedict. We hope and pray that not only the students who have made the pilgrimage to Rome will be touched and strengthened by Mary’s charism, but that many of our students, staff and parents will experience a renewal of faith and the courage to live it through her example.

**Mary MacKillop Festival Program Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.00am</td>
<td>Celebratory Mass. Celebrant and homilist, Bishop Peter Elliott</td>
<td>St Patrick’s Cathedral</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.00pm</td>
<td>Festival site opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.10pm</td>
<td>Blessing of the site of the new ACU St Mary of the Cross Chapel by Bishop Peter Elliott</td>
<td>Central Hall</td>
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<td>Australian Catholic University (ACU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.00pm</td>
<td>Street Procession led by Sisters of St Joseph and involving representatives of our diverse community, schools and bands</td>
<td>Departing from Mary’s birthplace on Brunswick Street Fitzroy to the Royal Exhibition Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30pm</td>
<td>Official Welcome and Opening of Festival</td>
<td>Royal Exhibition Building and surrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.45pm</td>
<td>Festival Displays and entertainment, including live music and performances. Historical displays focusing on Mary MacKillop and her legacy.</td>
<td>Royal Exhibition Building and surrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.00pm</td>
<td>Prayer Service led by Bishop Tim Costelloe SDB and the Sisters of St Joseph and featuring musicians and choirs from Melbourne and regional Victoria (<a href="#">click here for ticketing details</a>)</td>
<td>Royal Exhibition Building with telecast on screens in gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.00pm–9.00pm*</td>
<td>Live telecast of Canonisation from Rome to be shown on big screens both inside and outside the Royal Exhibition Building</td>
<td>Royal Exhibition Building and surrounds</td>
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**Parents & Friends Association**

**Next Meeting**

Tuesday 19th October 7.30pm

In the Staffroom 7.30pm

**Guest Presenter – Mr Anthony Banks**

**Deputy Principals**

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**Mary MacKillop Prayer**

*God of all blessings,*

*you revealed in Mary MacKillop a woman sensitive*

*to the rights and dignity of every person,*

*regardless of gender, race or creed.*

*May we learn from her to overcome Prejudice and fear.*

*Help us to value each person.*

*Help us to value different cultures, faiths and people and the blessings of diversity.*

*Hear us O Holy One, Three in One. Amen*

Deacon Tony Aspinall
College Chaplain