

Mary MacKillop – A Woman With A Forgiving Heart

From the Pen of Mary: I entreat you, my dearly loved ones to forgive from your hearts. 1890

Scripture: Forgive and you will be forgiven. *Luke 6:37*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop was a woman who held no grudges. It was painful at times for her to forgive those who had harmed her. She wrote to the some of the Sisters who had spoken untruths about her: *‘I excuse and with all a mothers’ heart I forgive. Forgive from your heart any Sister who has pained you’. 1890.* To the priest who had been the main cause of her excommunication she wrote: *‘I forgive him; I forgive all who had any part in these matters’. 1871.*

Story from the Life of Mary MacKillop: Mary MacKillop was teaching in Portland. One day the inspector arrived at the school. The headmaster Mr Cusack rearranged all the classes. He took the students from Mary’s and Annie’s classes who were well taught and gave his poorly performing students to them. Mary’s father heard of this injustice and went to see Mr Cusack. The outcome of this encounter was that they both lost their teaching positions. Years later when Mary was in Sydney she met a dirty, alcoholic tramp whom she recognized as her former headmaster Mr Cusack. She sold her watch so that she could provide him with clothes and care.

Pause for Reflection: Who are the people in my life that God is inviting me to forgive at this time?

Prayer: God of mercy you are always ready to forgive us and bring healing into our lives. Like Mary MacKillop may our hearts be ready to forgive those who have hurt us. Blessed Mary of the Cross, forgiving all you hurt you, pray for us.

Action: Hold in your heart before God someone whom you need to forgive. Allow God to speak to your hurt.

Mary MacKillop A Woman With A Heart Full Of Trust

From the Pen of Mary: When I could not see my way God kept my heart full of trust to make all come right 1883

Scripture: Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God and believe also in me. *John 14:1*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop was a woman who had great trust in God, believing that God would provide whatever was needed in all aspects of her life, be it food for the orphanages, money for the building of the convent, strength to face opposition and false accusation or a way through a difficult situation. She often reminded her Sisters that ‘God’s work does not depend on any of us’. She had a wonderful confidence in God.

Story from the life of Mary MacKillop: During her travels in Europe while awaiting the approval of the Rule, Fr Anderley suggested that Mary go to London. On the way she travelled by train. At Verona she was seeking a place to sit. “My dear Angel must have guided me for our good God found me a friend. In some way I happened to drop my rosary, and before I could stop to pick it up it up this person had done so. I was delighted when I discovered that he spoke English. When we arrived at the next station he carried my luggage to the Customs office and they let me pass politely’.

Pause for Reflection: What keeps my heart full of trust when I am facing difficult situations?

Prayer: Provident God you provide for us in so many unexpected ways. May we like Mary MacKillop place our trust in you when we face difficult situations. Blessed Mary of the Cross, trusting God’s loving care, pray for us.

Action: Place into God’s hands something that is troubling you at this time.

Mary MacKillop A Woman With A Compassionate Heart

From the Pen of Mary: God will take care of us all. 1871

Scripture: Moved with pity Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. *Mark 1:41*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop had a heart big enough to enclose the troubles of all those who sought her assistance. No-one was excluded. She knew how to stand in the shoes of another. Sr Annette recalls: ‘She had the greatest compassion and love for the poor girls and the poor orphans’. There was no wound that she did not reach out to. It was in the environment of her home life that the seeds of compassion were sown. Mary wrote to Monsignor Kirby: ‘My home when I had one was a most unhappy one’.

Story from the Life of Mary MacKillop: Mary MacKillop loved to visit the orphanage at Kincumber. This sometimes meant that she travelled by boat in stormy weather. On one occasion she travelled to Kincumber in a boat through a violent storm because a young orphan boy had requested her presence as he lay dying. Mary stayed with him until he died and then led the funeral service because no priest was available.

Pause for Reflection: Take a moment to recall a person who has shown you the compassionate face of God. Give thanks for this person.

Prayer: Compassionate God fill our hearts with love deep enough to walk in the shoes of those who have known hardship in their lives. Like Mary MacKillop may we reach out to those who are struggling in our community. Blessed Mary of the Cross, serving with compassion, pray for us.

Action: Take time today to extend the hand of friendship to someone who is sick or experiencing loss in their lives or who is a newcomer to our country.

Praying from the Heart

A Reflection
With Mary MacKillop
For Each Day Of The Week



MARY MACKILLOP 1842 - 1909
For The Church and for The World



Mary MacKillop - A Woman Held In The Hospitable Heart Of God

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop: God's love is too deep for words to express. 1870

Scripture: Abide in me as I abide in you. *John 15:4*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop was a big hearted woman full of compassion and love. She felt and experienced the abundance of God's love for her. In times of trials and tribulations she found refuge in the hospitable heart of God's love. *'When storms rage, when persecutions or dangers threaten, I quietly creep into the deep abyss of the Sacred Heart; and securely sheltered there, my soul is in peace'* 1907. She was a woman whose heartbeat was in unison with the heartbeat of God. In her life she became a heartbeat of God for our wounded world.

From the life of Mary MacKillop: Two of the Sisters who knew Mary MacKillop wrote - I can only say that Mother Mary had the biggest and most generous heart full of charity for all. Next to the love of God in the heart of Mother Mary was the love of her Sisters and the children – especially the poor children.

Pause for reflection: In what ways has God shown love to me in my life?

Prayer: God of hospitality open our hearts to the abundance of your love. May we like Mary MacKillop trust in your loving care for us in all the situations of our lives. May we share this love in our wounded world. Blessed Mary of the Cross, open to God's presence, pray for us.

Action: Take time today to sit in the presence of God's love.

Mary MacKillop A Woman With A Heart For Mission

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop: Seek first the poorest and most neglected parts of God's vineyard. 1900

Scripture: The spirit of God is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. *Luke 4:18*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop was devoted to the service of the poor. Her love for poor children knew no bounds. She established a Catholic school system for children who were isolated and in poor circumstances. She had a practical love for those who were poor and destitute setting up orphanages, refuges for the sick and elderly and visited those who were in prison. She welcomed those experiencing difficult situations and provided opportunities for those who were most vulnerable in the society of her time.

From the life of Mary MacKillop: Mary MacKillop had driven some miles in a snow storm, but her first wish was to visit the school. There was a poor little bare-footed and ragged boy standing in the class. Mary went straight to him, and putting her arms around him kissed him saying. 'Ah Sister these are the children I love.'

Pause for reflection: In what way is God calling me to bring good news to those who are poor?

Prayer: God of love your heart reaches out to those who are poor in our world. Open our eyes and ears to hear the cries of your people bound down by the injustices of this world. May we like Mary MacKillop respond in word and action to the struggling peoples of our world. Blessed Mary of the Cross, serving the neglected ones, pray for us.

Action: Today reach out to someone in your neighbourhood who is in need.

Mary MacKillop A Woman With An Open Heart

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop: Make no reserves with God. Reject no-one. You never know what grace can do. 1871.

Scripture: Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today. *Luke 19:5*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop brought the message of human dignity to all whom she encountered. She held in reverence each person about whom she spoke even those who had caused her great pain. Sister Mechtild recalls how 'if anyone came to her in trouble and distress, she would encourage and help them and draw the good that was in them out'. Stories abound of how people responded to her presence.

Story from Life of Mary MacKillop: Mother Mary taught by her example. I remember how once an eccentric old gentleman was to be tended – being unable to care for himself. Mother instructed the Sisters to brush and comb his hair and long beard. Oh our repugnance. And seeing it Mother herself lovingly and gently did it all and then took him elsewhere for further attention leaving us humbled and ashamed. (Sr Anne Joseph Waters)

Pause for Reflection: With whom is God inviting me to keep an open heart?

Prayer: God of tenderness you call all to share in your Trinity of love. May we, like Mary MacKillop open our hearts to all whom we encounter this day. Blessed Mary of the Cross, defending human dignity, pray for us.

Action: Be open to the stranger who comes into your life today.

Mary MacKillop A Woman With A Courageous Heart

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop: Have courage no matter what your crosses are. 1890.

Scripture: Whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. *Matthew 10:38*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop was a woman of faith who lived by the power of the Cross. When it came to suffering and hardship Mary MacKillop had more than her fair share. She endured many tragic deaths in her family, including the fatal drowning of her mother and a life-long battle with ill-health. Hardships also came from within the church. Her excommunication was a very painful moment in her life as was the Commission of Enquiry which the order endured during 1883. She wrote at this time: *"The Institute is going through a severe trial but with humility, charity and truth on the part of its members all will be well"* 1883.

Story from the life of Mary MacKillop: On the news of her mother's tragic death, Mary MacKillop wrote to her brother Donald in England: *"You must have heard of our sad terrible loss. Everything was too bewildering at first, then the efforts to recover her dear remains, the funeral, and then came the reaction. It was sad, very sad that she must go as she did, but we must hope that her reward is great in proportion. I cannot now attempt to describe the dismay with which I heard the sad news."* 1886

Pause for Reflection: How have the crosses in your life called forth courage within you?

Prayer: God our comforter you stand with us in all our sorrows and difficulties. May we like Mary MacKillop respond with faith and courage in all the hardships that we face in our life. Blessed Mary of the Cross, accepting of the cross in life, pray for us.

Action: Hold in prayer today someone who is weighed down by the burdens of life.

Scripture texts

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