

# The Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross (MacKillop)

(Prayer Service)

(The prayer service may begin with a suitable hymn or song)

## Gathering:

Leader: Let us remember that we have gathered in the presence of God.

Sign of the cross: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: As we gather in prayer on this Feast of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop and conscious of her constant reminder to “*Never see a need without doing something about it*”, let us take some time to reflect on when we saw a need but chose not to do something.

## Brief Penitential Rite:

Leader: You sent St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop to defend the poor. Lord have mercy!

All: Lord have mercy!

Leader: You sent St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop to teach us to be a refuge for the weak. Christ have mercy!

All: Christ have mercy!

Leader: You sent St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop to be a message of hope to all. Lord have mercy!

All: Lord have mercy!

Leader: May almighty God have mercy on us forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All Amen.

## Opening Prayer:

Leader:

Together, let us pray:

O God, source of all goodness,  
who have shown us in Saint Mary  
a woman of faith living by the power of the Cross,  
teach us, we pray, by her example  
to live the gospel in changing times  
and to respect and defend  
the human dignity of all in our land.  
Through our Lord.

All: Amen

## Readings:

A Meditation on Mary MacKillop

On the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010, “The Daily Telegraph” reported the canonisation of Mary MacKillop, the process of declaring her to be St. Mary of the Cross. The authors (Tony Vermeer and Lucy Carne) wrote “St Mary was recognized for her lifelong commitment to the poor, particularly in setting up schools through the order she co-founded, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.” As a result, Australia has its first Saint, Mary of the Cross (MacKillop).

Having read about the life of Mary MacKillop and having been taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph, when I was in primary school, it came upon me. Mary MacKillop had a clear and definite, preferential option for the poor. Her actions over a century ago, had impacted on my life and indeed the lives of thousands of students, who were also educated at some point by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Yet her own story is that of an ordinary Australian, who like other Saints that started schools, did so because she saw a clear and present need. Mary realised that education was the one thing that could end the poverty cycle and give young people a chance at becoming the person that God had called them to be. We often think of the Saints as heroic and in one sense, the very independent and strong willed Mary MacKillop is exactly that, heroic.

She stood as a defender of the plight of the poor. She was a person in whom the weak could seek refuge and find counsel. She was and continues to be a beacon of hope for so many people. For Mary there was a cost but this was her mission in life, entrusted to her by God. In the process, Mary MacKillop teaches everyone a magnificent lesson. The poor is where you will find the face of Christ. The weak is where the strength of Christ can be seen. Those in need is where the compassion of Christ is most profound. Her motto: “*Never see a need without doing something about it*”, still has relevance in our world today. The speed of change, the grandeur with which we can do things, the profound influence that technology can and does have in our life, can lead us to a place that is lonely and dismissive of others. More than ever, Mary MacKillop has a message that we should all hear and act upon. When was the last time you saw a need and did something about it? When you do, be prepared to also find Christ in that moment.

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## Time for quiet reflection.

**Psalm 63: 2-8** (Lectionary vol. 2, p. 992)

Response: *"Never see a need without doing something about it"*

O God, you are my God, for you I long;  
for you my soul is thirsting.  
My body pines for you  
like a dry weary land without water.  
So I gaze on you in the sanctuary  
to see you strength and your glory.

Response: *"Never see a need without doing something about it"*

For your love is better than life,  
my lips will speak your praise.  
So I will bless you all my life,  
in your name I will lift up my hands.  
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,  
my mouth shall praise you with joy.

Response: *"Never see a need without doing something about it"*

On my bed I remember you,  
on you I muse through the night  
for you have been my help;  
In the shadow of your wings I rejoice.  
My soul clings to you;  
your right hand holds me fast. R/

Response: *"Never see a need without doing something about it"*

**Gospel:**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your Spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Mt. 6:25-34) (Lectionary vol. 2, p. 558)

*Do not worry about your life.*

I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat,  
nor about your body and what you are to wear.  
Surely life is more than food, and the body more than clothing!  
Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or  
gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them.  
Are you not worth much more than they are?  
Can any of you, however much you worry, add one single cubit to your span of life?  
And why worry about clothing?  
Think of the flowers growing in the fields;  
they never have to work or spin: yet I assure you that  
not even Solomon in all his royal robes was clothed like one of these.  
Now if that is how God clothes the wild flowers growing in the field  
which are there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow,  
will he not much more look after you, you have so little faith?  
So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat?  
What are we to drink? What are we to wear?"  
It is the gentiles who set their hearts on all these things.  
Your heavenly Father knows you need them all.  
Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on God's saving justice,  
and all these other things will be given you as well.  
So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself.  
Each day has enough trouble of its own.  
The Gospel of the Lord.

All; Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Prepared reflection on seeing a need and doing something about it. (Optional)

**Intercessions**

Leader: Inspired by the example of St. Mary of the Cross (MacKillop), we come before God in prayer.

Reader: That the Church, inspired by the example of St. Mary of the Cross (MacKillop) may continue to reach out to those in need.  
We pray to the Lord!

All: Lord hear our prayer!

Reader: That our faith community may be inspired by the example of St. Mary of the Cross (MacKillop) to be extraordinary in the ordinary things we do.

We pray to the Lord!

All: Lord hear our prayer!.

Leader: Just as St. Mary of the Cross (MacKillop) suffered many difficulties throughout her life, may we be blest with patience, humility and the grace to persevere through our own struggles.

We pray to the Lord!

All: Lord hear our prayer!.

Leader: For those in our community that are suffering, sick or in need. May the healing power of Christ be with them.

We pray to the Lord!

All: Lord hear our prayer!..

Leader: Inspired by the life and example of St. Mary of the Cross (MacKillop), we pause to pray in the quiet, for our own needs.  
(PAUSE A MINUTE).

We pray to the Lord!

All: Lord hear our prayer!.

Leader: On the intercession of St. Mary of the Cross (MacKillop) we offer these prayers as together we say the Lord's Prayer:

All: Our father....

**Final Prayer:**

Leader: Let us pray together:

May the blessings we receive, Lord God,  
on this feast of Saint Mary of the Cross,  
strengthen us to walk the way of the Cross  
and bring us to the glory of the Resurrection.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



"Never see a need without doing something about it."

The Psalm and Gospel Reading are from the Lectionary and are from the readings for the Feast of St. Mary of the Cross.  
The opening and final prayer are from the Roman Missal (Mass of the Feast of St. Mary of the Cross).  
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