

Be *Fierce* for *Fair*

MARY  
MACKILLOP  
*today*

# Prayer Assembly - Secondary

## We Gather

*Gather the assembled into quiet stillness.*

*The following statements are read each by a different student. Students stand out of view as they do this so that the assembled need to listen only.*

### Read

We must teach more by example than by word (1867)

Never lose courage under your sufferings (1873)

I am not afraid of any of the difficulties. They rather make my courage rise (1873)

Never be ashamed of work done for God and God's poor (1874)

Try at least to excuse what you cannot understand (1877)

Let no obstacle deter us from proceeding with courage (1893)

Have courage and patience and God will help you in all things (1899)

Find happiness in making others happy (1899)

Seek first the poorest and most neglected parts of God's vineyard (1900)

Be a gift of love and compassion for one another (1909)

If we cannot speak well of others, let us be silent (1909)

### Read

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, wrote many letters throughout her extraordinary life. These are excerpts from them. She didn't just write them. She lived them. Today, on Mary's Feast Day we remember her as Australia's First Saint, a courageous woman who like Jesus, advocated for those on the fringes of society – the least, the lonely and the lost.



## We Listen

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

#### Read

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.





## We Respond

### Reflection Option 1

*(Play quiet music as each section is read. Each of Mary's quotes could be displayed on a screen. Pause between reading each paragraph and the reflection questions.)*

1. Mary MacKillop was a practical woman. In 1867 she wrote, "Never see a need without doing something about it." She saw that poor families and many children didn't have access to education and safe shelter. So she started opening schools.

What needs have I seen in my community? What can I do about it?

2. Mary knew what it was like to be separated from members of her family. She wrote to her mother in 1883. "It felt so hard to leave you alone that day in Ballarat..." Mary had a community of women around her and devoted her life to making sure that families had not only what they needed but what they deserved.

What can I do to stay in touch with my family? What could I do for families in my community, especially new arrivals in our country?

3. Mary endured great stress when for a time she was excommunicated, and again in the 1880s when she saw her sisters suffering. She wrote of feeling the effects of years of care and anxiety, and of the pain caused by disharmony. "It seemed only to require this quarrel with a Bishop I loved to make me almost completely break down."

How do I react in times of suffering, stress and anxiety? How can I help others in their time of suffering, stress and anxiety?

4. "God has watched over your interests and given you far greater blessings than you are perhaps aware of..." Mary never forgot the gifts God had granted her. She was forever grateful and made sure she thanked God.

What blessings has God given you? How can God use you to bless those around you?





## We Respond

### Reflection Option 2

Five students enter the space and spread out across the front.

Student 1 wearing glasses.

Student 2 holding binoculars ready to look through them.

Student 3 setting up a telescope.

Student 4 wearing sunglasses.

Student 5 not wearing glasses or holding a lens of any kind.

#### Script

Student 5: Check out this bored bunch. They're trying to work out what they're doing here.

Student 1: No, no, no, no no! They aren't bored, they just don't know where to look. Check this out (Lends them their glasses and points to a small image of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop either in the sacred prayer space or on a screen.) This is St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. She was this amazing woman. She lived way before any of us and she looked after kids. Actually she taught them, just like (names a teacher in the school.) This was before there were schools for more than just the rich.

Student 5: So? Is she the reason we come to school? I could think of better places to be.

Student 2: I bet you could. Sometimes we all could, but no education equals no income and no income... means no food, shelter, clothing, you know that cool hoodie you wear....

Student 5: Alright, alright. So she started a few schools, so what?

Student 2: No, she did more and she was more than that. Look closer! (Invites Student 5 to look through the binoculars at the screen. At the same time, either the same image of Mary or another larger one appears.) She broke plenty of rules and upset a few people along the way. She didn't like the way some of the bishops of the time told her what to do. Despite asking the Pope to help her, she was excommunicated from the Church.

Student 5: What does that mean?

Student 3: She was cut off. Pushed out. Told to go. She could no longer be a religious sister, doing what she felt God called her to do.

Student 5: Ah, I see.

Student 3: Do you? Do you really see? Look closer! (Student 5 joins Student 3 at the telescope. Looks through and either a new or larger image of Mary appears on the screen.) This gutted her. This was her life. She devoted her life to helping those on the margins. It would have been like removing what it was you most deeply and dearly loved doing. Do you know what though?

Student 5: What?





Student 4: She prayed for the Bishop who excommunicated her and held nothing against him. She encouraged the other Sisters of St Joseph to pray for him or anyone else who had done them wrong.

Student 5: Seriously, the one who shafted her. No way! That's just wrong. Who does that?

Student 4: St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. We told you she was pretty amazing. She was fierce. Fierce as in courageous. Starting up a school on your own is one thing. Working everyday with the poor is another but seriously, being told to get out of the very space that you had devoted your life to. That would have been devastating!

Student 5: I'm beginning to see. She was one special lady. No wonder she became a saint. But exactly, how did she do it?

Song: Never See a Need

## We Go

### Pray

Beautiful and loving God, you filled the heart of Mary MacKillop with compassionate love for those who are in need at the margins of our society. Grant that through her example we may reach out to our brothers and sisters in need. Give us generous hearts to respond to the cries of those who are poor in our community and in our world. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Sing

Suggestions:

- Hearts of Courage - Timothy Hart
- Go Make a Difference - Steve Angrisano
- Do Something - Matthew West
- Let it Start with Me - No Other Name
- Hands and Feet - Audio Adrenaline

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## Resources

Books:

- Geddes, Judith, In God's Hands, Psalms & Prayers for Children - In the Spirit of Mary MacKillop, St Joseph's Convent, St Albans, VIC, Australia, 2005.
- Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph. Praying with Mary MacKillop. North Sydney, Australia, 2010.

Websites:

- Big Start Assemblies: [www.bigstartassemblies.org/prayer](http://www.bigstartassemblies.org/prayer)
- Liturgy Brisbane: [www.liturgybrisbane.net.au](http://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au)
- Mary MacKillop Today: [www.marymackilloptoday.org.au](http://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au)
- Sisters of St Joseph: [www.sosj.org.au](http://www.sosj.org.au)

