

Be **Fierce** for **Fair**



Prayer Assembly - Secondary

WE GATHER

Gather the assembled into quiet stillness.

Acknowledgement of Country

Play

One of the following videos:

- [The Life of Mary MacKillop](#)
- [Shaping a Nation: St Mary MacKillop - YouTube](#)

Leader:

Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them cheerfully, remembering whom you are trying to follow. As we pray together, let us remember Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop's faith in God, her constant companion Jesus, and her guide and ours, the Holy Spirit.

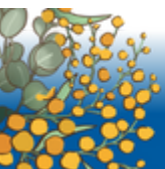
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

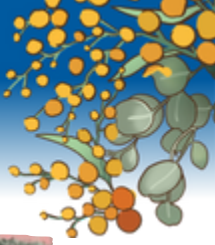
Reader:

Mary MacKillop is remembered for saying: 'Never see a need without doing something about it.' She certainly saw a need and did something about it. That is why, among other things, we have 117 schools across Australia founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, many of which are still operational today. Over 30 years ago, the Sisters travelled to Timor-Leste where they saw that many children didn't have access to education, a basic human right. So they did what the early Sisters did across Australia, only now it is for the children of Timor-Leste.

Mary MacKillop inspired the Sisters of her time to respond to the needs of the community. They in turn have inspired each generation following to do the same. Today, the work of Mary MacKillop lives on in Timor-Leste through an organisation known as Mary MacKillop Today.



Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop - 8 August



WE GATHER

MEET MARIA

One of the children whose story shows us what Mary MacKillop's work looks like today is Maria. She is nine years old and lives in a remote mountain village in Timor-Leste, just one hour's flight from Australia. Maria has a visual impairment. Every morning, she walks to school along narrow dirt paths and across rivers, guided by her cousin Aguida. She is determined. She is in Year 3.

Her father Silveiro is also her teacher. He received training through Mary MacKillop Today's Inclusive Early Education Project. Her teacher Joana says: "As teachers, we believe all children have the right to education. We must continue to motivate them so they can succeed and build their future."

Mary knew that education was a way to help people lift themselves out of poverty. Sometimes we grumble about having to come to school because we think it is too hard, boring, or we're tired. Would it be different if there wasn't one for us to go to?



*I cannot see, but I can
learn just like my
other friends.*

- Maria, nine years old, Timor-Leste

1 in 5

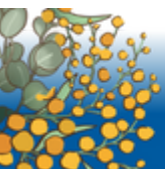
children with disability in
Timor-Leste cannot
access education

20%

of preschool-aged
children are enrolled in
early education

273M

children worldwide are
currently out of school





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

Below are two different ways to reflect on Mary MacKillop’s life in light of the reading from Colossians

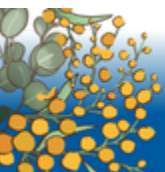
REFLECTION OPTION 1

Reflect

Play quiet music as each section is read. The quotes from Mary’s letters and Maria’s story could be displayed on a screen for the duration of each paragraph and the accompanying ‘Be Fierce’ or ‘Be Fair’ section. Pause between reading each paragraph and each reflection. Ideally, the readers would change between the paragraph and the accompanying ‘Be Fierce’ and ‘Be Fair’ statements.

Leader

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, wrote many letters throughout her extraordinary life. Most of her letters she wrote to her family, the Sisters of St Joseph and to Fr Tension Wood – her co-founder and friend. Many of her words are as relevant today as they were when they were written. Looking back we can see she didn’t just write them. She lived them. Today, on St Mary of the Cross MacKillop’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, being fierce for fair and we are called to do the same.





We Respond

REFLECTION OPTION 1 cont

Reader 1

Mary MacKillop was a practical woman. In 1867 she wrote: “Never see a need without doing something about it.” She saw that families experiencing poverty, and many children, didn’t have access to education and safe shelter. She was fierce for fair.

Today, Mary MacKillop Today’s work in Timor-Leste carries that same fierce commitment. Maria walks rivers and dirt paths every day just to reach her classroom and with the right support, she does it. She is a sign of what is possible when someone sees a need and does something about it.

We are called to respond to needs around us:

Be fierce for our human family.

For those living with war.

For those sleeping on the streets.

For those who go without food, clothing and shelter.

For those who live in fear.

For those who have only seen violence.

For those who have no one to turn to.

For children like Maria, who walk great distances just to reach a classroom.

Reader 2

“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.

We can show our gratitude:

Be fierce for the cry of the earth.

For polluted skies, waterways and paddocks.

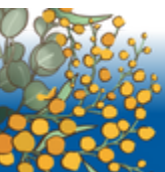
For parched soil.

For flooded crops.

For vanishing biodiversity.

For diminishing habitats.

For broken food chains.





REFLECTION OPTION 1 cont

Reader 3

It is undeniable that Mary lived for God and loved God with all her being. “It is in love that God leads me, by love that God reproves me, by love that God lets me see love in all.” Her love for those around her shone brightly.

We can demonstrate our love:

Be fair for people
In thought.
In word.
In deed.

Be fair for the planet
In thought.
In word.
In deed.



REFLECTION OPTION 2

Reflect

Read the poem about Mary MacKillop with quiet music in the background, or alternate the words of the poem with a chorus or section of a song. A student may also like to write a new poem for your school.

Two possible song options

Song 1: For You, For Them by Maeve Louise Heaney — Play the opening chorus, then pause. Read the poem up to ‘branches stretch out’. Play the song until the end of the next chorus, then pause. Read the remainder of the poem. Play the remainder of the song.

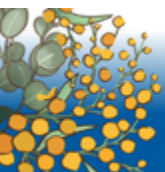
Song 2: Open the Eyes of My Heart by Michael W Smith — Play the chorus. Read the poem. Play the chorus. Stop it there.

Both songs can be found on Spotify.

IMAGE PLACEMENT

Maria with her class friends

Display on screen during the poem reading to connect Mary’s story to the present day





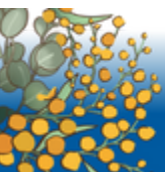
REFLECTION OPTION 2 cont

Reader

Mary MacKillop

I am from the bush,
From stables and wide open spaces.
I am from no one place in particular
And memories locked in walls.
I am from eucalypts standing strong,
Where roots run deep and branches stretch out.
I am from chalkboards and dust
From Alexander and Flora
From justice and mercy
And from generosity and adversity.
I am from daily devotions
From bread and water
From times of trial
And from the love of God,
Gently held.
I am from moments of time
That continue to shape this nation.

Possible songs: For You, For Them by Maeve Louise Heaney or Open the Eyes of My Heart by Paul Baloche/Michael W Smith. Both songs can be found on Spotify.





We Go

Pray

Compassionate and loving God, you filled the heart of Mary MacKillop with love for those in need. Fill our hearts with love. Empower us to respond in the most loving way to the cries of the least, the lonely, and the lost in our world. Help us to see, as Maria sees — not with our eyes alone, but with our hearts. And help us to stand up for injustice and to be fierce for fair.

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

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.
- Kane, Sue & Leo, A Daily Cuppa with Mary and Julian, St Pauls Publications, Strathfield, NSW, Australia 2019.
- Kane, Sue & Leo, The Little Brown Book – Mary MacKillop's spirituality in our everyday lives, St Pauls Publications, Strathfield, NSW, Australia 2009.
- Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph. Praying with Mary MacKillop. North Sydney, Australia, 2010.

Websites

- Liturgy Brisbane: www.liturgybrisbane.net.au
- Mary MacKillop Today: www.marymackilloptoday.org.au
- Sisters of St Joseph: www.sosj.org.au
- Maeve Louise Heaney: [Music](#) | [Maeve Louise Heaney](#)

About Mary MacKillop Today

Mary MacKillop Today is an international development and community organisation working in Australia, Timor-Leste, Fiji, and Peru. Inspired by the legacy of Saint Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of Saint Joseph, we partner with communities through programs in education, financial inclusion, and life skills. **Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible. ABN 88 808 531 480**

