



As we come to celebrate the feast day of Mary MacKillop in this our Sesquicentenary year we invite you to join the Sisters of St Joseph in praying this novena.

In *Misericordiae Vultus – Face of Mercy*

Pope Francis reminds us that 'the Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person' (No 12) Mary MacKillop lived her life in tune with the heartbeat of God. In her God's love 'gushed forth from the depth naturally, full of tenderness and compassion'. (No 6) Through her life we see how she revealed the face of God's mercy to all those around her in the way she embraced the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. In the memories of the Sisters we find stories of how Mary MacKillop cared for the sick, comforted the bereaved, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger and visited those in prison. In her letters we find her encouraging the Sisters on the attributes of the spiritual works of mercy as well. In particular Mary's capacity to forgive those who offended her is evident in her life story.

Bishop Cuskelly wrote, 'For me the most striking manifestation of true holiness is to be found in her beautiful and heroic response to the unfair and unjust treatment she received'.
Walking the Way of Jesus (1999:72)

As you pray with these novena reflections may you come to know more fully the deep love which enabled Mary MacKillop to pioneer new ways of living the Gospel in this time.

Monica Cavanagh

Sr Monica Cavanagh

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