

Mary's Pilgrim Energy - the Torch Bearer

*"Fan into a flame the gift God gave you...
You have been trusted to look after something precious;
guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."*

2 Timothy: 6-8, 14

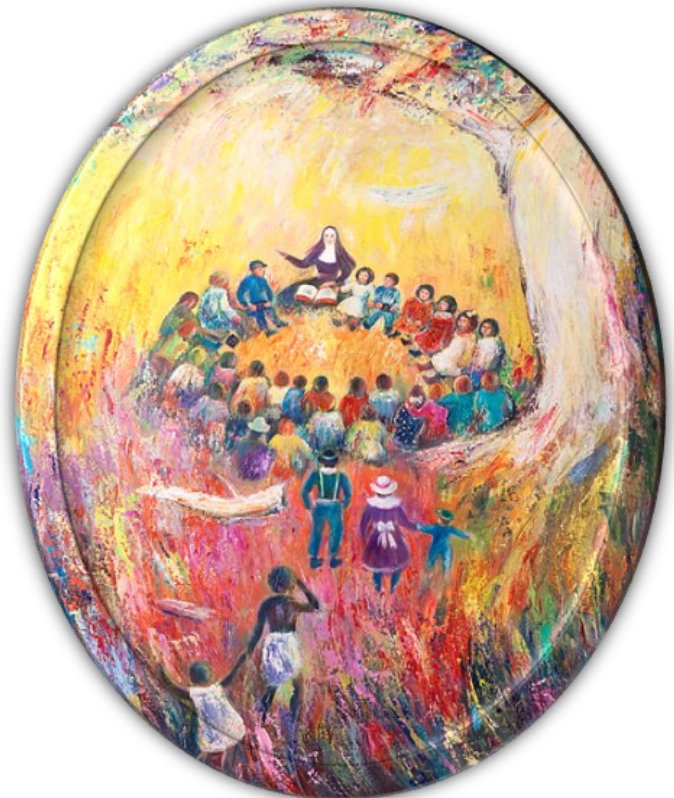
Mary MacKillop was called to pick up a flaming torch and carry it into an uncharted arena of life. Her preparedness to do this ignited a responsive fire in the hearts of other women, heralded a new era of apostolic intensity in Australia and illuminated the darkness and misery that threatened the poorest people in our land. She was a pathfinder, pacesetter, pioneer and trailblazer. In scriptural terms she was called to be a *pilgrim leader*.

This call came when she was in her early twenties. Not only was she young, but she had received very little formal education. Her social and economic circumstances were restricted; anything that she earned in her governess or teaching positions was sent post haste to her mother who was struggling to educate younger members of the family. Her father, Alexander was not a good provider and Mary was Flora's great support until her siblings became independent.

When she met Fr Julian Tenison Woods she encountered his burning zeal for the neglected 'little ones' in isolated Australian rural conditions. The sparks that burned in his heart caught fire in hers and a shared dream materialised.

When Mary contemplated the origins of the Sisters of St. Joseph, she marvelled at the traces of the Holy Spirit who inspired fiery zeal and cohesion in a scattered number of young hearts and united and shaped them into a community with a mission.

In 1866, the torch was alight and firmly in Mary MacKillop's grasp. Fuelled by Julian's vision, her own energy and enthusiasm and the generosity and courage of a growing number of young women, this fire spread rapidly across the Australian landscape—and beyond



Take time with Jesus
to name the personal gifts
that empower YOU to be a torch-bearer

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Extract from '*Mary MacKillop: the Fire Burning in Her Heart*', in '*Mary MacKillop Inspiration for Today*'—
edited Pauline Wicks rsj—pp171-184

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