

FROM THE WRITINGS OF MARY OF THE CROSS MACKILLOP

It is an Australian who writes:

My own dear Mamma.

It was in hardships, poverty and even want that you had to rear your children, but in the bitterest trial and greatest need your confidence in Divine Providence never failed.

Long and earnestly as I have wished to enter Religion, the thought of leaving you, my loved mother, gave me so much pain and anxiety that I had to make it the subject of many Communions. (1866)

Mary was responsive to the Will of God

Ah my own patient Mamma. Your submission to the Will of God, your resignation under affliction and your always confiding, simple trust in Divine Providence proved a wonderful comfort and example to me when it pleased God to exercise our community in those virtues. (1870)

I cannot tell you what a beautiful thing the will of God seems to me. For some years past, my Communions, my prayers, my intentions have all been for God's will to be done. I can never pray for a particular intention, a particular person, or anything particular about our own Institute, but in God's loved will, that is - whilst I desire with all my heart to pray for these, I cannot help at the same time desiring that He only use my prayers for the intention that His own will most desires at this time. Thus I feel a joy when things go well, For I see His will in this, and an equal joy when they seem to go wrong or against our natural desire, for there again I see His will, and am satisfied that He has accepted my prayers and those of many more for some other object at the time nearer to His adorable will. To me, the will of God is a dear book which I am never tired of reading, which has always some new charm for me. (1873)

It is now seven years since the hand of God was laid so heavily upon me. I am suffering intensely with my nerves, they seem to be getting worse each year. I often wonder how long more I shall be left. But God's holy will be done and may He grant us the grace to bear our crosses resignedly. (During her final illness 1909)

Mary lived in the Presence of God

I must go back a little. I must tell you that from early childhood as far back as I can

remember, He gave me such a sense of his watchful presence that I would feel myself reproved for my smallest faults. (1873)

I can only remember dimly the things that were said to me but the sensation of the calm, beautiful presence of God I shall never forget. (Referring to the time of her excommunication 1871)

As well as her intense devotion to the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament Mary's spirituality was nurtured by other devotions of her time:

My name in religion is Mary of the Cross. No name could be dearer to me, so I must endeavour, not to deserve it — for I cannot — but at least I must try not to disgrace it. (1867)

I am far happier than one who bears the name of the Cross should be but then every trouble seems to cease to be one when I think of that name. (1867)

When storms rage, when persecutions or dangers threaten, I quietly creep into the Sacred Heart's deep abyss; and securely sheltered there, my soul is in peace, though my body is tossed upon the stormy waves of a cold and selfish world. (1907)

My loved ones, St Joseph has not been asleep, and in spite of the shortcomings of my unworthy self, he has protected the cause of his children. (1885)

Mary's holiness found expression in the Christian Virtues:

Now more than ever we should be humble, patient and charitable and forgiving. If we cannot excuse everything, we can at least excuse the intention. (1884)

See how good and grateful we should all be, how humble how charitable and how forgiving. Let no unkind thoughts, of those through whose hands God has tried us, find place in our minds. They have been God's instruments in doing us good. Let us be grateful and pray for them. (1885)

I excuse and with all a mother's heart I forgive. And as I freely forgive and wish to forget, so don I entreat you my dearly loved ones, to forgive from your heart. (1890)

Pray that a great unity may prevail, that charity may shine and a holy unworldly wisdom influence every word and act. Whoever we are or wherever we may be let self be forgotten

and let God's glory, his will and the general good alone absorb our thoughts, deliberations and actions. (1898)

I would rather be judged for any other sin than for uncharitableness. (1874)

What matter if we have no convent. Don't you remember the foxes have their holes and the birds of the air their nests but the son of Man hath not where to lay his head? I have always loved that, but now more than ever. Don't you see the protecting and beautiful hand of God in all that is happening? (1885)

Will each of you go in spirit to the crib (Nativity creche) and meditate on the lessons He teaches there — his poverty, his helplessness; think of who He is and who and what we are. Ask if you are trying to be like Him and if not find out what hinders you and with all your heart, ask Him to remove that obstacle. (1890)

Mary responded wholeheartedly to the needs of her time, asking her Sisters to be prepared to go to remote areas where there were no churches, no priests and no daily Mass. While Mary wrote "the first care, indeed the great work of the Sisters, is the education, in a strictly Catholic manner, of the children of the poorer classes," she also attended to the needs of women prisoners, prostitutes, the frail elderly and orphans.

May our loved patron and father, St Joseph watch over us and obtain for us the spirit he wishes to see in his children. He has wonderfully watched over us up to the present. Let us be humble and grateful. (1898).