



On this 7 October when we remember the anniversary of our Father Founder, Father Julian Tenison Woods let us give thanks for all that he contributed to our Josephite foundational story and for the ways in which his gifts have enhanced the wider church and community. Mary MacKillop in her letter of 1891 recalls 19 March, 1866 and she tells us *'Fr Woods was happy that day, and so was I, but we said little beyond wondering whom God would call to assist us and how our good God would make the way clear'* (1891).

As we come to celebrate his anniversary in our Sesquicentenary year may this novena enable us to spend some time drawing from the wisdom of his spirituality.

Often when we reflect with Julian we are drawn to his rich insights into how God's beauty is revealed in all of creation. These reflections will enable you to know as he did that *'there is no thought into which God does not enter. I see God in the woods and mountains and then their peaceful beauty seems so insipid'* (Letter to Mary MacKillop 1870).

Like Pope Francis in *Laudto Si*, Julian knew *'The entire material universe speaks of God's*

*love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.'* (LS 84) In the gifts of creation he discovers God in all things.

Julian's writings reveal much more than his capacity to see the interconnection of all created things. The gift of creation draws him into a deep union with God. Here in the words of Pope Francis he experiences *'The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face.'* (LS 223).

Julian's capacity to walk contemplatively with open eyes called forth in him a dream to respond to the Gospel call to serve the needs of the communities in which he lived and moved.

May these reflections guide you into the heart and mind of Julian, our Father Founder. As you ponder their wisdom and listen to him speaking to you, may you cherish him as Mary MacKillop did as one who loved the work of the Institute and did so much for it.

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