



## *Dear Associates and Sisters*

The International Josephite Associate Leadership Team (IJALT) was established as a Governance Team to take on the responsibility of supporting our Associates. This has involved exploring ways to revitalize and re-imagine this organization, ensuring that we continue to make it relevant in a changing world.

During visits to Regions, from 2018 through to early 2020, our IJALT members opened up the possibility of renaming 'Associates' as 'Companions'. We travelled widely, consulted with Associates and Sisters through letters, meetings and conversations, and invited responses. These ranged from people feeling 'very attached and proud to be a Josephite Associate' to being 'very excited about the prospect of a new name that speaks more about who we are today'.

Change is a constant aspect of life. In the nearly 40 years since we were invited to join with the Sisters our world has changed, and our relationships have changed. Four pathways now exist for people to connect in with the Josephite story and charism, namely vowed Sisters, Associates, Affiliates- Private Vows and Affiliates- Covenants. As a Leadership Team we have listened and reflected, we have discerned the signs of the time and we have made the decision that Josephite Companions is a name that best describes who we are in our relationships today. Companions spend time together, walk with and accompany one another: this we do with the Sisters and with our fellow Associates/Companions. We share the Josephite charism, together we are companions in this Josephite story as we 'walk' into the future. As we continue to invite people into this story, we believe that 'Josephite Companions' identifies more aptly in today's world about who we are.

Our planned Conference in July 2020 in Adelaide had the theme "Be Courageous and Full of Hope". At this we had hoped to formally launch this name, together with a new emblem and resources to support all moving forward. We have now chosen October 17th, the anniversary of Mary's Canonisation.

Mary and Julian were indeed courageous and hopeful as they embarked on God's mission in a new and different way in 1866. We, too, have to do things differently in this time when we are unable to gather in one place due to Covid 19. (See Launch note)

In light of renaming ourselves as Josephite Companions, our IJALT title will become JCoLT: Josephite Companions Leadership Team.

It was Jesus who, when the disciples were in the midst of a storm while on the lake, said, "Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid." As we move through this 'storm' of Covid 19 may we be people of hope in our families and communities. Together with others in the Josephite family we as Josephite Companions look forward in hope as we continue God's mission in an evolving world.

Yours sincerely  
Mary Hemmings  
Chairperson

(On behalf of our Josephite Companions Leadership Team (JCoLT))

Anne-Marie Wilkinson, Helen Dougherty, Beverley Badcock, Pauline McGuire, Sr Moya Campbell and Sr Clare Conaglen)



# Josephite Companions' Launch

## October 2020

On October 17th 2020, the 10th anniversary of Mary's canonization, we will acknowledge the continuation of the Josephite Associate story evolving with the naming of Josephite Companions. In these times of change and due to travel restrictions we've thought creatively and will move to going 'online' to launch our Josephite Companion name.

Just before October 17th on the SOSJ website we will have a short video through which we will launch our Josephite Companion name, our emblem (below), our prayer (p 3) and our resources, namely our Discovery Book and Administration Book. Sr Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader, will be a part of our launch, together with some of our Companions.

The Discovery Book will assist those who wish to find out or 'discover' what it means to be a Josephite Companion. It includes chapters on Mary and Julian, on Joseph and the Josephite charism, on 'being a Josephite Companion'. The Administration Handbook will provide groups, and especially leaders, with valuable information required to exist as part of the Josephite family. In the time ahead we will organize for copies of books to be provided to group leaders and badges to be distributed to Companions. The books will also be available electronically.

**Look out for the Josephite Companion Launch on the SOSJ website from October 17th!**

We invite you to share in the Josephite Companion Prayer (see p 3) on October 17th, in solidarity with Sisters and Companions. When next you gather with your local groups, may you find a way to celebrate the gifts that you are within your local community and as an important part of the Josephite family.

### JOSEPHITE COMPANION EMBLEM

The Josephite Companion emblem incorporates four elements, with the cross and the three Js connecting it to the Sisters' emblem. The Cross, core symbol of our Christian faith, is similar in design to that used in the emblems of the other two ways of commitment to the Josephite Charism, namely Affiliates- Private Vows and Affiliates-Covenant Josephites.

The three Js are for Jesus, Joseph and John the Baptist who all responded to the call of God in their lives. These can be found within the flame of fire. They represent the three J's found in the Sisters' emblem and have been part of the Josephite monogram since their foundation in 1866.

The water is symbolic of our Christian baptism and our call to love God and live out the Gospel in our lives.

The flame represents the Holy Spirit encouraging us to go out and spread the Good News through our words and actions as Josephite Companions so as to allow the Josephite charism to flourish within us and burn brightly in our life for others to see and share.



# JOSEPHITE COMPANION PRAYER

**Companioning Spirit,  
Intensify our living of the Josephite charism now  
as you inspired St Joseph, St Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods.  
Grace us with friendship and hospitality,  
as we make community in the ordinariness of our lives.  
Grace us with prayerful hearts that listen to your voice  
and contemplate your presence in creation.  
Grace us with service,  
promoting human dignity and love of neighbour.  
Strengthen our commitment to live justly, love tenderly and walk humbly,  
conscious that we are participating in your mission.  
Companion, encourage and enfold us in the fullness of divine love.  
Amen.**

## **Mary MacKillop A Woman for Today**

The daughter of an agnostic poet, educated by Presbyterians, a hard-bitten secular journalist, Samela Harris wrote this article for the Southern Cross newspaper (SA) in December 2018. As we acknowledge the 10th anniversary of Mary MacKillop's canonization, Samela's words remind us of how Mary's story has touched the hearts of many.

Mary MacKillop, aka St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, is not just a saint, she is a feminist icon.

Mary was out there setting up women's refuges a century before the #MeToo Movement. She was a woman who stood up for women who were oppressed or victims of domestic violence.

She was a woman who educated girls when the system discriminated against them. She inculcated them in science as well as the Word of God.

She was a woman who stood up against paedophilia in the Church, a century before it was a public issue.

She was a woman who stood up against the bullying patriarchy of the bishops and was excommunicated for it.

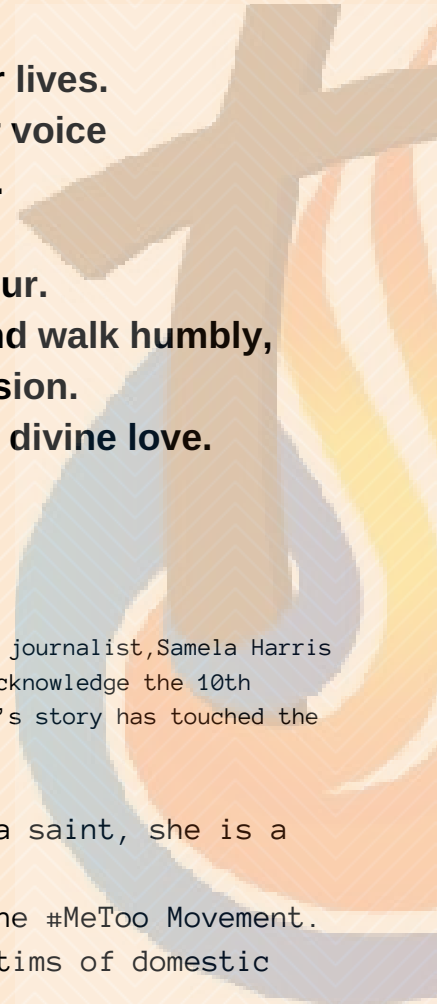
She was a woman who dared to go to Rome to put her cause to the Pope in person.

She was a woman who rounded up other women, be they educated or lost souls, and gave them a purpose.

She was a woman who wished to leave no child without an education.

She was the real deal so far as cultural pin-ups go, a national treasure.

It was my father who brought her into my life. My father, the poet and intellectual Max Harris, grew up in the South East of SA and knew from childhood about Mary MacKillop as a significant part of the regional history.





With Fr Julian Tenison Woods, in 1866, the first Josephite school was established and thus began the spread of St Joseph's schools under the tutelage of the Sisters. On horseback, by coach and by foot, they followed farmers and miners, ensuring that rural families had teachers.

They lived tough, just as the outback workers did; maybe even tougher, since their vow was to own nothing. It is hard to imagine the privations stoically endured by these dedicated women in their coarse hot Brown-Joey habits.

My father was a historian, and also a feminist. He had always seen Mary MacKillop as a feminist and a leader way ahead of her times. He wrote article after article about her in his role as a columnist with The Australian newspaper. He advocated for her national recognition and for her sainthood. He coined the phrase 'a saint for all Australians'.

The Catholic Church was a bit surprised by all this attention from a lay quarter, I think. But Mary MacKillop, whose path through life was often fraught and rocky, had always attracted champions from outside the Church. The Scots Presbyterians Joanna and Robert Barr Smith and the Adelaide Jewish merchant Emmanuel Solomon, for instance, were MacKillop stalwarts who were there for her when times were tough.

Mary MacKillop was incapable of bigotry. She sought equal education for Aboriginal children and accepted lovingly people of all beliefs and backgrounds. It is notable that even today in her modern schools, one might find Islamic prefects and Buddhist duxes and Hindu sports captains melded happily in among the Catholic student community. Equality, education, understanding.

Mary MacKillop gathered around her an interesting diversity of nuns. A core collection of them were to take a great deal of responsibility and be anchors to the movement of the Josephites, for lots of things went wrong for Mary and she needed strong, loyal women at her side. These women of different backgrounds all deserve their own recognition. Ten of them are featured in the new Mary MacKillop Museum in Adelaide. This is in the grounds of the convent, which was her headquarters, whence so much of her expansive educational work was to spread forth, where decisions were made and prayers flew heavenwards. Where conflicts with bishops and the regressive strictures of the Church and its hierarchy and educational theories were thought through, and whence, in disagreement with the nasty Bishop Reynolds, Mary was banished and forced into exile.

Mary's nuns in Kapunda SA had blown the whistle on a paedophile priest. Mary supported them. To this day, the nuns and the Church tiptoe around this scandal. As a non-Catholic, I see it as an issue of great pride. Mary and her Josephites stood up for the young and for what was right. These were brave, forthright women. My sort of women.

Today's Josephites come from the same mould. They are educated, motivated women, still living simply. This new museum to Australia's first canonized saint: few places on earth could brag a more dazzling star in the firmament of feminism.