

Companions News

Welcome to the **JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QUEENSLAND** Quarterly Newsletter
September 2022

Editorial

As this September issue of our Josephite Companion's Queensland Newsletter goes to print, we have just celebrated the Feast Day of Saint Mary MacKillop on 8 August. This is a special day close to the heart of all who seek to follow her example. It gives us time to pause and reflect on some of the values that were embodied in Mary's life and also an opportunity to review our own report card.

Right throughout her life, commencing from an early age, Mary had an amazingly strong sense of obligation to be aware of the needs of others. Although her own family background was far from a stable one, both from an economic and a relationship perspective and she understood only too well how dysfunctional family life could be, Mary possessed an extremely heightened sensitivity to those who needed extra assistance in life. We see this in her decision to join Father Julian Tenison Woods

in his vision to provide education to children who would miss out due to their poor or remote circumstances; in striving to provide Houses of Providence to women who would otherwise have no option but to live on the street; by providing refuge to orphans; and in her visitation to those in prison.

No matter the task, Mary always considered the dignity of each person to be of paramount importance. She knew first-hand the hardship and impoverishment of spirit that can accompany poverty and she worked tirelessly to do what she could to improve the lives of others. This is not a gift that comes naturally to us as humans, so it is even more impressive when we find it in action. Mary

modelled her life on attentiveness to God and always sought to do what God asked of her. In 1874 she wrote *"Let us be entirely God's."*

Mary prayed that she would be true and generous to her God and she strove always to remain faithful to that. Writing to her fellow Sisters in 1899, she urged them to *"Find happiness in making others happy."* Because she was so attuned to God's will, Mary strove to reach out to those who found themselves on the margins of society. She reasoned, *"Reject no one. You never know what grace can do."* Father Julian Tenison Woods also held similar beliefs when he wrote *"Serving others is the most grateful sacrifice we can make."*



PLANNING GROUP

Pauline McGuire (Chair)
pmcguire0306@gmail.com (*new!*)

Erin Jones
epjones7@bigpond.net.au (*new!*)

Carolyn Grimward
cgrimwar@bigpond.net.au

Bernadette Roche
broche@onthenet.com.au

Ken Theodore
ken.theodore20@gmail.com

CONTENTS

Happy Feast Day!	2
Josephite Companions Prayer	2
e-companionship	3
Housekeeping Snippets	3
Students learning from Mary MacKillop	4
Donations Page	5

FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE QUARTERLY NEWS PLEASE EMAIL:
qld.companions@sosj.org.au

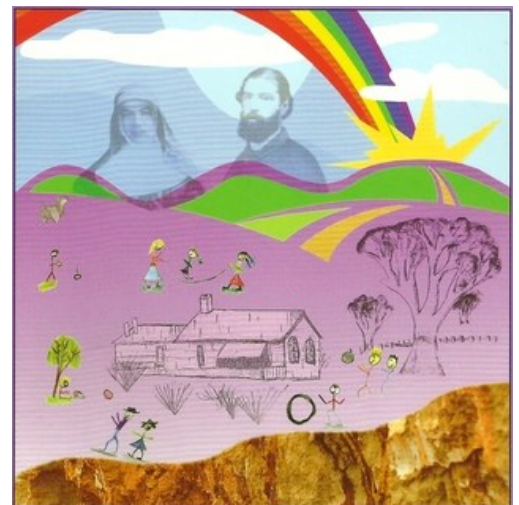


Image is from the cover of *Together in spirit—Songs about Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods* by Pamela L Walker OAM
<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/58919876d0ce9b2074040273>

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

As Josephite Companions here in Queensland in 2022, we are encouraged to emulate Julian's and Mary's actions in our lives. In the words of our Companion's Prayer, we ask God, our Companionship Spirit, to "Grace us with service, promoting human dignity and love of neighbour." What does that mean for us? How can we be of service? To whom? How do we do that in a way that supports the dignity of those we serve? These questions will raise individual responses in each of us.

There are so many opportunities for us to honour the dignity of others and to mirror God's love to them. If we can listen to that small, still voice of God within us, it may lead us to find ways to respond beyond ourselves in loving service. Mary's and Julian's actions were not lost on those they served. They recognised true goodness and care and it lifted their own self-respect. It showed God's love and concern for them and enabled God's love to flood into them. We are encouraged to "Be true and generous. God loves us all, but he loves those best who help the weak to become whole."

Janette Dobson
Rockhampton

Happy Feast Day!

Mary MacKillop Feast Day 2022 in Townsville was celebrated over two days.

On Sunday 7 August the Josephite Companions were asked to join with the Mary MacKillop Parish to celebrate the feast day. We commenced with Mass where our Icon (kindly donated by Mr Bob Jones in memory of his wife Karen) was processed into the church at the beginning of Mass and placed on a stand at the foot of the altar. At the conclusion of Mass, it was again processed out of the church and over to the school shelter shed where a small celebration hosted by the parish was taking place. Pauline McGuire and Erin Jones gave a short reflection on Mary MacKillop and then a cake was cut. A morning tea was enjoyed by all.

On Monday 8 August, the Josephite Companions gathered around the interactive sandstone statue of Mary MacKillop in the school grounds for our monthly prayer service. A reflection with prayers and music was the highlight of the gathering to celebrate Mary's feast day. At this gathering, two new possible companions voiced their interest in undertaking the Discovery Program, which was very exciting for the Townsville group. Erin will be assisting one of the candidates with her Discovery journey and the other candidate will hopefully attend a colloquium in the near future to give her a better understanding of the charism. We prayed for these candidates that they will find what they are looking for along their journey and look forward to their induction hopefully in time for St Joseph's Feast Day in 2023.

Townsville Companions Group

We must love others so much as to feel no happiness as great as that of serving them and advancing their interests.

Julian Tenison Woods 1870

Find happiness in making others happy.

Mary MacKillop 1889

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS PRAYER

Companionship 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 partaking in your mission.

Companion, encourage and enfold us in the fullness of divine love. Amen.



e-companionship

In the last edition of *Companions News*, it was suggested that there may be a possibility for us to establish an online platform for Josephite Companions to:

- engage in prayer and reflective dialogue
- share and enjoy ideas in friendship
- explore options for engagement in service.



It was decided that *e-companionship* might be a good name for our online space, using the Teams Meeting platform. The focus for such a group would be on sharing the values and spirit of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods in the context of our living as Josephite Companions.

I would be keen to receive any expressions of interest, and welcome any ideas, suggestions and comments.

Email: broche@onthenet.com.au

Bernadette Roche

We can all work quietly doing our best for God.

Mary MacKillop 1883

Housekeeping Snippets

Please remember at local meetings, through prayer chains and in your own personal prayer those Companions who may be struggling with ill health and those who have died.



Thank you as always to those members who continue to generously support Josephite Companions Queensland.

Welcome to our new group of **Companions in Toowoomba**. Please keep them in your prayers as they begin their journey to becoming part of our Josephite family.



Special Thank You!

Theresa Harvey wants to say a special thank you to all Josephite Companions and Sisters who prayed for her or wished her well on her **100th birthday**. Theresa says her most treasured gift is the Papal Blessing (pictured with Theresa), presented to her at the conclusion of Mass in her parish church, St Joseph's Cathedral, Rockhampton. It was a long-held secret wish come true.



Up-coming Meetings

Brisbane Southside group meets at St Sebastian's Parish House, Wilkie Street, Yeerongpilly. The next meeting will be at 10.00am on Saturday 19 September. For details contact Judy Harris 0407 028 796.

Brisbane Northside group meets at St Joseph's Convent, Bage Street, Nundah. The next meeting will be at 10.00am on Saturday 19 November. For details please contact Marie Sellin 0421 323 063.

Handover of the Blue Bags to St Vincent de Paul

Since 2012 the Sisters, aided by Companions and some school communities, have been working in the **MacKillop Gate Ministry**, often referred to as the Blue Bags Ministry. On 6 August the Sisters, others who had been involved and members of the St Vincent de Paul Society, gathered at St Joseph's Convent, Nundah to celebrate the feast day of Mary MacKillop and the official handing over of the Ministry to the St Vincent de Paul Society. A very moving liturgy highlighting the charism and gifts of both the Josephite family and the Society was followed by a celebratory morning tea.

In Sr Lyn Stabler's letter which was printed in our last newsletter we were given contact details for further involvement in this Ministry: Mary MacKillop Gate Ministry Coordinator: M: 0456 725 100
E: slswp4074@svdpqld.org.au

○○○○ Students learning from Mary MacKillop ○○○○

As a growing P-12 College, we have been deepening our understanding of what it means to walk in the footsteps of St Mary MacKillop. We have been encouraging all students throughout the College to reflect on her example and think of ways that they can model partnership, perseverance and passion, search for possibilities, support others through practical action and find resolve and peace through prayer. The world of children today is dominated by other noises and priorities and we have to work hard to show them the



worth of a focus on doing things that support the person beside them.

St Mary's example presents a strong challenge to me personally. In a challenging time, she walked the talk. As a leader, she was resolute in supporting others, even if it meant weakening her own position. She had many moments of strength but genuine heartache too. I cannot imagine the pain she would have felt during the period of her excommunication, when she must have felt so many forces combined against her.

We still have many of her letters, which show a correspondence with her fellow nuns based in compassion, warmth and a deep and shared faith. In our busy lives, we find it too easy to forget to check in — but she did so continuously and selflessly. She had complete focus on getting recognition from the Pope for her order which showed vision and strength. His decision to support the Sisters of St Joseph gave our country a wonderful gift — the thousands of nuns who established schools all over, but particularly in the regions.

Today, her charism stays alive with us and, we hope, maintains a desire to walk alongside the vulnerable, the weak and the needy. We carry her message today.

Our Feast Day celebrations began with Mass presided over by our Parish Priest, Father Brian Noonan. Students then went into a day of activities punctuated by a barbecue and some cake as well. Our students really put their back into the Feast Day celebrations and it is one day where I can leave many of the more pronounced pressures of being a College principal behind me and just enjoy watching children being children.

Chris Gabbett

Principal

Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields Qld

www.mmcc.catholic.edu.au



St Mary of the Cross MacKillop was:

- **a woman of faith and courage** who committed to engaging minds
- **a woman of strength and perseverance** who believed in igniting hearts
- **a woman of compassion and unfailing love** who devoted herself to serving others.

From: *OUR COMMITMENT TO THE MPARNTWE DECLARATION* [www.mmcc.catholic.edu.au]



**MARY
MACKILLOP
CATHOLIC
COLLEGE**

Celebrate God in all things.



DONATION TO THE QUEENSLAND COMPANIONS MOVEMENT

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER/S:

AMOUNT GIVEN: (PLEASE CIRCLE)

\$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 OTHER \$.....

ALL DONATIONS CAN BE FORWARDED TO:

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QUEENSLAND LEADERSHIP TEAM
VILLA MARIA CONVENT
123 WARREN STREET
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

EMAIL: qld.companions@sosj.org.au

CHEQUES AND MONEY ORDERS MADE PAYABLE TO JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QLD

OR PAID BY DIRECT DEPOSIT:

COMMONWEALTH BANK
ACCOUNT NAME: JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QLD
BSB: 064163
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 10429581
REFERENCE: SURNAME AND INITIAL (E.G. CAMPBELL M)

Thank you for your donation!

