

# *Unto us a child is born...*

Create a sacred space with an Advent wreath, a nativity scene, and a candle representing the light of Epiphany.

As we journey through the summer months, we are reminded of the many seasons of our faith. Today, we pause to reflect on the hope of Advent, the joy of Christmas, the love of the Holy Family, and the revelation of Epiphany. We also call to mind the wisdom and courage of St. Mary MacKillop, who invites us to trust in God's providence and to see the good in others.

Let us quieten our hearts and open ourselves to the presence of God.



## **Opening Prayer**

Loving God,

As we gather in this sacred space, we are grateful for the light of your love that shines in every season. Guide us through this time of reflection, as we walk with Mary MacKillop, trusting in your presence and your plan for us. May we embrace the spirit of Advent, the joy of Christmas, the unity of the Holy Family, and the wonder of Epiphany.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## *Advent*



**Scripture** *A reading from the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 9:2,6)*

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.

A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.

## **Reflection**

Advent is a season of paradoxes: longing anticipation and patient watching; transforming the way we see life and living prepared; waiting for what never seems to come yet continuing in hopeful trust. Mary MacKillop once said, "*We must teach more by example than by word.*" In this time of waiting, let us be an example of hope and patience to those around us, trusting that God's light will shine, even in the darkest moments.

## **Prayer**

Loving God, grant us the patience to wait with hope and the courage to be a light for others. We pray in the spirit of Mary MacKillop, who trusted in your plan with unwavering faith. Amen.

## *Christmas*



**Scripture** *A reading from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2: 6-11)*

While they were there, the time came for her delivery. She gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she put him in a simple cloth, wrapped like a receiving blanket, and laid him in a feeding trough for cattle, because there was no room for them at the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a

Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

*O Come let us adore Him...*

*O Come let us adore Him...*

*O Come let us adore Him,*

*Christ the Lord.*



### **Reflection**

Christmastide is best understood in the metaphor of birth. It brings God to us in the midst of our humanness. With joy we gather at the crib of the One who fills with hope the valleys of our lives. We ask for the faith of Joseph to see the Spirit's work in this humble scene. The gentleness of newborn skin reveals a light within the darkness of our longing world. We pray for each other, that we come to see ourselves as the innkeepers who decide when and where the Christ-child will be born in our time. (Sue and Leo Kane, 2019)

### **Prayer**

Jesus, Emmanuel, you came to dwell among us. Help us to recognise your presence in our everyday lives and to live with a spirit of gratitude, as Mary MacKillop did. Amen.

*We can all meet together in spirit at the crib of our loving infant...  
And pray for one another. MMK 1881*

## *Holy Family*

**Scripture** *A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:13-15)*

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him”. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.



### **Reflection**

The holiness of the family of Nazareth is found in their simple and ordinary life together. In this world of rapid change, living such a life is becoming more of a challenge. The Holy Family faced many challenges, yet they stayed united in love and trust, respect and care. Mary MacKillop valued the importance of family and community, saying, “*Love one another, bear with one another, and let charity guide you in all your life.*” May we look to the Holy Family as a model for our own families, striving to live in love and unity.

### **Prayer**

God of families, bless our homes with your love and peace. May we learn from the Holy Family and from Mary MacKillop’s example, sharing love and forgiveness with one another. Amen.

## *Epiphany*



### **Scripture**

*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:1)*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

### **Reflection**

The journey of the Magi reminds us to seek God’s presence in unexpected places. Mary MacKillop encouraged us to “*never see a need without doing something about it.*” Like the wise men, may we have the wisdom to see God’s presence and the courage to respond to His call.

For Mary MacKillop and for each one of us there are Epiphany seasons in our lives. These are the times when we experience God-with-us in a new and wondrous way. We have an awakening and we enjoy a sense of God's presence in our ordinary human reality of our lives. In these moments we realise that we are called to live our lives in a normal way and yet to seek ideals which soar above the powers of our mind and sweep even beyond our dreams. These are times when life's journey is full of purpose, and we go beyond familiar territory in our search for God. Our lives are enlarged, our horizon shifts. New demands are made of us, but new resources may also become unexpectedly available to us (Sr Genevieve Ryan rsj).

### **Prayer**

Guiding Star, lead us on our journey of faith. Help us to be wise and generous, following the example of Mary MacKillop, who always sought to do God's will. Amen.



### **Intercessions**

Let us bring our prayers to God, who hears us in every season.

For the Church, that it may be a beacon of hope during Advent and throughout the year.  
*Lord, hear our prayer.*

For families, that they may be strengthened by the love of the Holy Family.  
*Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those seeking the light of Christ, that they may find His love in unexpected places.  
*Lord, hear our prayer.*

For our community, inspired by Mary MacKillop, that we may always respond with generosity and compassion.  
*Lord, hear our prayer.*

### **Closing Prayer**

Loving God, as we journey through this summer season, may we carry the hope of Advent, the joy of Christmas, the love of the Holy Family, and the light of Epiphany in our hearts. With Mary MacKillop as our guide, help us to live with faith, courage, and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.