

Josephite Companions of South Australia

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Friendship Prayer Service

Summer 2024

December 2024 Newsletter

The Wonder of Christmas

A Homily by Pope Francis – abridged

“A census of the whole Earth” (cf Lk 2:1). This was the context in which Jesus was born, and the Gospel makes a point of it. The census might have been mentioned in passing, but instead is carefully noted. And in this way, a great contrast emerges. While the emperor numbers the world’s inhabitants, God enters it almost surreptitiously. While those who exercise power seek to take their place with the great ones of history, the King of history chooses the way of littleness. None of the powerful take notice of him: only a few shepherds, relegated to the margins of social life.

The census of the whole Earth, in a word, manifests the all-too-human thread that runs through history: the quest for worldly power and might, fame and glory, which measures everything in terms of success, results, numbers, and figures, a world obsessed with achievement. Yet the census also manifests the way of Jesus, who comes to seek us through enfleshment. He is not the god of accomplishment, but the God of Incarnation. He does not eliminate injustice from above by a show of power but from below, by a show of love. He does not burst on the scene with limitless power, but descends to the narrow confines of our lives. He does not shun our frailties, but makes them his own.

Let us look to the “living and true God” (1 Thes 1:9). The God who is beyond all human reckoning and yet allows himself to be numbered by our accounting. The God who revolutionises history by becoming a part of history. The God who so respects us as to allow us to reject him; who takes away sin by taking it upon himself; who does not eliminate pain but transforms it; who does not remove problems from our lives but grants us a hope that is greater than all our problems. *This is the wonder of Christmas*: not a mixture of sappy emotions and worldly contentment, but the unprecedented tenderness of a God who saves the world by becoming incarnate. Let us contemplate the Child and the manger, his crib, which the angels call “a sign” for us (cf Lk 2:12). For it truly is the sign that reveals God’s face, a face of compassion and mercy, whose might is shown always and only in love.

Christ does not look at numbers but at faces. In Bethlehem, as crowds of people were caught up in the excitement of the census, coming and going, filling the inns, and engaged in petty conversation, a few were close to Jesus: Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and then the Magi. Let us learn from them. They stood gazing upon Jesus, with their hearts set on him. They did not speak, they worshipped.



*“We must teach
more by example
than by word.”
MMK 1867*

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Worship is the way to embrace the Incarnation. For it is in silence that Jesus, the Word of God, becomes flesh in our lives.

Let us do as they did, in Bethlehem, a town whose name means "House of Bread." Let us stand before him who is the Bread of Life. Let us rediscover worship, for to worship is not to waste time, but to make our time a dwelling

place for God. It is to let the seed of the Incarnation bloom within us; it is to co-operate in the work of God, who, like leaven, changes the world.

God, let us, like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi, gather around you and worship you.

Year of Jubilee



Pope Francis officially declared 2025 to be a

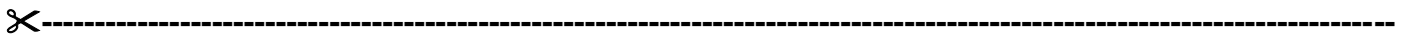
Year of Jubilee

and will begin with the opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve 2024. The theme of the Jubilee is 'Pilgrims of Hope.'

Pope Francis said, *Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring.*

For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope. A pilgrimage that sets out from a church and then proceeds to the cathedral can serve to symbolise the journey of hope that, illumined by the word of God, unites all the faithful.

During the Holy Year, may the light of Christian hope illumine every man and woman, as a message of God's love addressed to all! And may the Church bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world!



Companions: Subscriptions for 2024 – 2025

The Leadership Team sincerely thanks you for paying your subscription, which enables us to remain in contact with you and support those in need. To make a payment over the internet, our **BankSA** account details are:

BSB Number: 105-087
Account Number: 039066240
Account Name: RSJ Associates SA (our Account Name remains unchanged)

We are keeping our postage expenditure down as more Companions provide email addresses.

Payment Amount: \$30.00 – this includes \$10.00 to support our International JCoLT
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Would you prefer the newsletter sent to you via email? Yes No

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Christmas Carols

Friday 13th December

7pm

Bethany

4 High St, Kensington

Presenter: Majella O'Sullivan rsj

Sister of St Joseph, vocalist, musician and emcee extraordinaire, Majella will lead us in an evening filled with fun and laughter. Tickling the ivories will be Majella's able assistant Mary Gill. Come and join us in singing Christmas carols, both traditional and contemporary.

RSVP appreciated: Mary on 0417 871 904 or SA.Companions@sosj.org.au

Supper will be available – please bring a small plate to share.

There will also be a raffle. Donations and proceeds of the raffle will go toward Josephite ministries.

Companions Alive In 2025!

Saturday 15th February 2025

2pm

Bethany

4 High St, Kensington



Josephite Companions living the spirit of Mary MacKillop

We will explore the Josephite spirit through *friendship*, *prayer* and *service*, using this as a guide to develop possible future events.

Be part of the conversation! Come and share what this means for each of us as we look forward to the year ahead.

RSVP appreciated: Mary on 0417 871 904 or SA.Companions@sosj.org.au

Afternoon tea will be available – please bring a small plate to share.

There will also be a raffle. Donations and proceeds of the raffle will go toward Josephite ministries.

Josephite Companions – Leadership Webinar

In this final instalment of the Webinar in May this year, we focus on the idea of *followership*. This concept arose after the Webinar when we were trying to discern how leaders and followers achieve success together.

Followership and Leadership in your everyday life

by Helen Smith

Organisations need good leaders AND good followers. Followership is a necessary, but misunderstood, part of leadership in organisations. Followership and leadership explain how followers and leaders achieve success together. It challenges how we often think about relationships and roles in our everyday life.

As fellow Catholics how do you live your everyday life? Who is leading and who is following? Are you a leader and/or a follower? Proverbs 14:28-29 says a good leader is a good follower.

The mark of a good leader is loyal followers. Leadership is nothing without a following. In our everyday life, we can be a witness and agent of hope, proclaiming the Gospel message to all people, everywhere and at all times.

Good leadership is very important, especially in difficult times. No one will argue with that! However, much of the reflection on leadership in mainstream and social media has focused on individual leaders and what they are, or are not, doing well. Leaders need followers or they are not leading anyone. Leadership is a relationship and a process beyond something individual leaders do or are. Leadership and followership go hand in hand.

Followership is not following blindly. Followers choose to follow, so they need to make this choice wisely and with good judgement. The ability to show humility is an important part of effective followership.

Why is this relevant to us as we live our everyday life? In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus tells his disciples that *Leaders should not exercise authority over people. Instead, whoever wants to become great must lower himself to be a servant.*

Leaders realise that serving others is the only way to lead with a pure heart, free of pride and arrogance. Servant leaders display characteristics such as strong listening skills, empathy, self-awareness, and the desire to create a healthy community.

What is the relationship between leaders and followers? Leaders and followers are one team. Both positions are equally important, require responsibility, and interact with each other. The leader must help followers grow, whereas the followers must contribute to the success of their leader.

In this changing world in which we live, we face challenges daily. Look around and see who are the leaders in your community? Who are the followers? Is anyone leading and is anyone following? Some things to consider:

- *Keep the big picture in focus*

Effective followership adjusts to (significant) changes in detail while remembering why we are following.

- *Be ok with change and uncertainty*

In a crisis we look to leaders for direction and reassurance. When a situation is unfolding rapidly, we also need to be flexible.

- *Allow leaders to adjust course*

This requires us to recognise that leading and following require decision making on the basis of the best information available at the time. As more is known, things may change.

- *Take advice from those with expertise*

We've seen leaders take on followership when relying on advice from experts and feedback from the community. While we rely on leadership that communicates truthfully and clearly, listening is also part of communication.

Followership takes responsibility. Good followership is as active, and as important as, good leadership.

What good followership are you experiencing?

“If I had to reduce the responsibilities of a good follower to a single rule, it would be to speak truth to power.” Warren Bennis

Our Josephite Partners

Living in the Spirit of Mary MacKillop

- **St Joseph's Old Scholars Association**

An Old Scholar is anyone (female or male) who has ever been connected to a Josephite school or college in Australia, as a student or teacher. Our Association has been in existence for over one hundred years.

Our Spring Luncheon at The Watermark Glenelg was well-attended. \$500 from the raffle will be forwarded to *Mary MacKillop Today* to assist with the First Nations Scholarship Programme. There will only be the ONE Luncheon next year in October.

- **Mary MacKillop College Alumnae**

We are thrilled to announce that our wonderful Mary MacKillop Old Scholars Association has a fresh new name, *Mary MacKillop College Alumnae*!

This change reflects our shared legacy and embraces everyone in our community, including past students and staff of: St Joseph's Higher Primary, St Joseph's High School, Mary MacKillop College and the Sisters of St Joseph, whose spirit has been at the heart of our journey.

Together we celebrate the past, connect in the present and inspire for the future.

Join us in this new chapter as *Mary MacKillop College Alumnae*, and let's continue building lifelong memories and friendships!

Follow us on Instagram @mmcalumnae

Join our Facebook group <https://www.marymackillop.sa.edu.au/alumnae>

- **Mary MacKillop Precinct**

- Museum and Gift Shop – open Tuesday to Friday, 10am – 4pm and Saturday 10am – 1pm

The Museum will close on Friday 20th December and re-open on Tuesday 14th January.

Orders and enquiries: www.marymackillopadelaide.org.au or 08 8130 5910

- St Joseph's Chapel – open every day, 10am – 4pm

A place for quiet reflection and prayer. A place where Mary MacKillop herself prayed!

- Bethany

Offers workshops, reflection and retreat days.

Details online through www.marymackillopadelaide.org.au

- Spotlight on Mary MacKillop

Continues in Bethany each 8th of the month from February next year, 10am – 12pm, except Sundays. Join us for opportunities to enrich our appreciation of Mary's story and legacy. All are welcome but please register with Trybooking.

Enquiries: infos@sosj.org.au or 08 8130 5910

- Annual Garden Party

Many thanks for the hard work of the *Garden Party Fundraising Committee*, in particular volunteers Bridgette and Gabrielle. This was another wonderful event, raising a little over \$6000 for the Mary MacKillop Precinct. This included \$310 in sales of handmade Christmas Cards.

***"I am not afraid of difficulties.
They rather make my courage rise."
MMK 1873***

» Advent Stillness «

Introduction

Advent is a time of longing and waiting. The Church's liturgy during Advent is full of exclamations and directives. There is strong use of imperative language and cries of longing:

Come Lord Jesus... Let us see your face... Come Emmanuel...

Mary MacKillop knew the Advent experience of longing very well. There were many times when she waited and longed to discover God's will for her. The three years Mary spent teaching at Portland, in Victoria, was a genuine Advent experience, but she longed for something else. Mary nurtured a dream of bringing the Good News of God's love to poor, uneducated bush children. It was in times of silence and prayer that Mary's dream took root in the depths of her spirit. She longed for her dream to materialise.

The prayer of longing belongs to the Advent seasons of our own lives. At times, we too have been gripped by an awakening, a possibility, a dream. We too, have longed for the fulfilment of a treasured dream, something may have been evolving, taking shape, but still hidden.

Scripture: Psalms 63:1

Living God, my God, You are the one I seek. My soul thirsts for you; my body longs for you like a dry and weary land where there is no water.

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop

It is our good God who is our support and strength. (1871)

God will provide for the future. (1877)

Reflection

What is your deepest longing at this moment? For yourself? For someone you love? For our world? Share your longings with God.

Prayer

God of longing, come!

Enter into every human heart that longs and cries out for a glimpse of your love, for a sign of your welcoming presence, for a taste of your happiness.

Come into our midst and make of our lives a home, from which your everlasting goodness and love radiate to all those whose lives touch ours in the ordinariness of every day.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Adapted from *Advent Stillness 2018* by Mary Ryan rsj

*May you and your families
experience
PEACE, JOY, HOPE AND LOVE
in the birth of Jesus,
and many blessings
in the year ahead.*

