

CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

For every idea or a career choice, somewhere, somehow a seed has been planted that attracts, intrigues and encourages us to choose that path.

Recall your own work/career—what seed sent you there?

What nourished and encouraged you to continue?

Jesus tells us the parable of the seed in Matt 13 . In the planting there is hope for a fruitful outcome, there is nurturing of the soil, fertilising, weeding and finally the harvest of the seed that produces a crop. But, Jesus points out, some seed does not receive this and so dies in the process.

What in our world today would represent:

- * *The rocky ground with no depth of soil*
- * *The thorns that choked the seed*
- * *The good soil that produced a harvest*
- * *The path where the birds consumed the seed*



Mary MacKillop grew up in a Catholic home with a father, who had spent years in the seminary training to be a priest. Her mother was a deeply religious person and we know from Mary, she had a great trust in God's Providence. Her married life proved her loyalty, her faith and this total trust in God. So the seed of a deep faith was planted within Mary from her earliest years.

Her meeting with Fr Woods when a governess at Penola, was one of God's coincidences. Fr Woods was dedicated to setting up a school to teach the faith to the children and shared his hopes with Mary. Mary began to feel this desire within herself to devote her life to God as a religious, teaching poor children, and Fr Woods, by means of many letters to and from, became her spiritual director and encouraged her to keep this in mind, even though at this time her family were dependent on her salary. Thus, the seed grew, was nourished and Mary spent much time praying about it.

The time came while governess in Portland, when she could apply to become a registered teacher and obtained a position in the Catholic school there. Fr Woods was a regular visitor and I am sure Mary and he had many a deep discussion about her future, all the time he nurtured the seed within her. Through circumstances, Mary lost her job, the school at Penola lost its teachers, so Annie and Lexie went there followed by Mary in 1866 and the seed again came nearer to harvest, as Mary dressed and acted as someone looking to a future as a religious sister.

A TIMELINE OF MY LIFE: Reflect on the coincidences in your life that were seeds leading to where you are now.

Write a letter or poem thanking our good God for the many seeds planted in your life

and for what has been the harvest.

Lord Jesus Christ, we remember with gratitude those people who generously sowed the seeds of faith in our lives. Above all, we recognize how you have blessed our lives with the gift of the Holy Spirit so that our faith has miraculously and mysteriously grown. We are sorry for the times when our lives become so entangled with the values of the world that we forget what you have said and done and promised.

Lord Jesus Christ, we know that when we become disconnected from you, our lives becomes parched and unfruitful and our faith becomes stunted and dry. Bless and renew our lives, we pray, so that we remain connected to you at all times and in all places, strengthening our faith to expand and, growing strongly and vigorously, to bear the fruit of your mercy, your love, your undying life. Amen



~ written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on *Liturgies Online*.