

CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON or The Forgiving Father

When examining the life of St Mary MacKillop, we could easily call her the Forgiving Sister, because Mary's life is riddled with examples of the times, she forgave people who hurt her deeply and altered the course of her life. In the parable, the father unconditionally welcomes his son home, no questions, just a hug, new clothes, a party to celebrate. This is the image Jesus gives us of the Father welcoming us when we are forgiven.



Let us look at examples in Mary's life

1. When beginning the Academy for Young Ladies at Portland, Mary requested the help of Uncle Peter to buy a piano to teach the girls. A cheque for 100 pounds arrived but Mary's father thought it was for him, took it, spent it, leaving Mary to find another way to pay. What was said between Mary and her Father we do not know, but I feel certain he was forgiven, as he had probably been forgiven many times in the past for his decisions and neglect of family.
2. Fr Woods and Mary were dear and close friends for many years. Mary travelled to Rome to get approval for the Rule of the Sisters and Rome, in its wisdom, changed the rule regarding ownership of property, so that a situation, where the Sisters would find themselves homeless, could not happen again. The Sisters were to own property that gave them security of accommodation. This angered Fr Woods and he blamed Mary, writing some angry letters to her, which hurt her and confused her, and their relationship never regained their former intimacy. In Queensland, he tried to influence Sisters to leave Mary to start a new Congregation with him. When ill and dying, Mary would visit him taking strawberries which he loved, but she was not always welcome. Her book gives insights to her relationship with and love of Fr Woods.
3. Others Mary forgave were Mr Cusack, some of her sisters who accused her of being an alcoholic and Mother Bernard who failed to help her when very sick in Melbourne.

Though we may not be told in so many words that Mary forgave these people, her actions and letters implied she did. For me, her ability to forgive is the outstanding virtue in her life.

Is there someone you need to forgive? Ask Mary to help you find peace by forgiving.

Pray for the person who has hurt you. Pray for those you have hurt.

INTERCESSIONS: May you heal my wounds and make me ready to serve you.

INTRO: HELP ME TO BE ALERT TO MEET YOU

1. In those who are helpless and homeless; may I extend love and help	Int
2. In those who are imprisoned or oppressed by sickness or disability; may I bring help and comfort	Int
3. In those who are anxious and despairing; may I give hope and encouragement	Int
4. In those who are sick and dying; may I give comfort and peace	Int
5. In those who are the victim of violence or warfare; may I work and pray for peace	Int
6. In those who feel alone and unloved; may they feel the love of God supporting them	Int

Pray slowly the **OUR FATHER**

Prayer for Forgiving Others: Jesus, Prince of Peace, I pray that You provide the strength I need to forgive those who have offended me and hurt me. It can be so easy to want them to be punished for the wrong they have done and for them to get what they deserve. But that is not Your way, Jesus. Yours is the way of forgiveness. You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Even when You were nailed to the cross, You cried out for God to forgive the very people who were murdering You. Fill me with Your strength, compassion, and love. Mould me in Your image. In Your merciful name, I pray. Amen.

