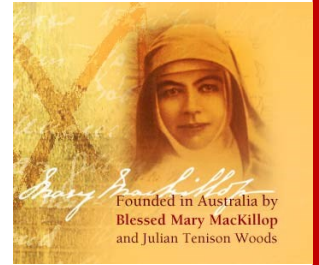


CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY



THE PARABLE OF LAZARUS AND DIVES

In our parable we hear a story about a wealthy man, Lazarus, enjoying the good life. Dives is a beggar who sits at his gate, homeless and hungry. He is so down and out the dogs lick the sores on his legs. Both die. Dives goes to Paradise and Lazarus to a place of pain and thirst. Even the pleadings of Lazarus gain him no respite and he is reminded that the roles are now reversed—it is his turn to suffer.

Sharing what we have is an essential to living a Christian life, not just to save ourselves but “to see a need and try to do something about it”. Mary Mackillop lived by this, as did the Sisters who followed her. It was a common understanding that anyone who came to the door begging for food was called a “St Joseph” and was never refused. The Convent at Carlton had a hatch door leading into the lane and here many people, mostly men, received sandwiches and tea.

1. Hungry, when Mary arrived at a convent, Mary asked the Sister there could she prepare a meal for her while she visited the school. The Sister was able to put together enough for a meal and as Mary sat down to enjoy it a knock at the door revealed a man begging for something to eat, as he could not find any work. Mary immediately offered her meal, telling the Sister some bread and butter would do her.

Our possessions are not the only things we can share with others. It can be harder to give of our time and friendship, which demand more of us. Mary gave of these in abundance.

2. Mary was prepared to travel in a coach for eleven hours over rough roads to visit her Sisters. I wonder what comfort stops were available! Travelling by train up and down New South Wales with early morning departures, late arrivals, all done cheerfully to visit her dear Sisters and children. **(the book *One Door Closes, Another Opens* relates these journeys)**

REFLECTION: Imagine yourself on one of these journeys—the speed, the lack of amenities, the discomfort etc

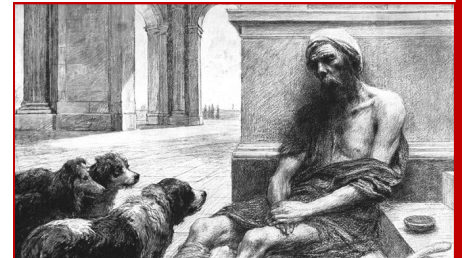
Ask Mary to help you to give of your time and friendship even though it may inconvenience and tire you.

REFLECT on this picture.

How does it speak to you? What would be the equivalent in today's society?

What can you do to alleviate situations such as this?

Who share their time and friendship with people in this situation?



SIT QUIETLY AND LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

We pray

Where people have forgotten how to laugh,

Touch them with your joy.

Where they have lost the art of mercy

Graft compassion and forgiveness within them.

Where they neglect to share bread, medicine, trust and friendship

Stir new growth of love within them.

Lord our true Vine, abide in us, that we may abide in you,

For you are the Vine and we are the branches.

Prune us that we may take your presence to support the weak,

Encourage the sick, comfort the dying,

Guide the lost and confused, heal the broken-hearted

Soften the hard heart, and sweeten the bitter spirit.

Let our harvest be a good wine,

That brings cheer and joy to all we meet.

So that we will be united as fruitful branches of the Vine.

Adapted from Australian Prayers Used with Permission Aust Lutheran Church

