

CONVERSATIONS

WITH MARY THE AUSTRALIAN



Mary MacKillop was truly Australian. Born in Fitzroy, Victoria in 1842, at a time when Australia was steadily growing as a nation, founded as a penal colony to deal with overcrowding of prisons in England. These men and women, when their time was up, proved to be intrepid settlers, clearing land, setting up successful farms and businesses. Free settlers started to arrive from all over the world, many like those from Scotland, looking for a life free from oppression.

Mary's education from her father, a past student of Rome, gave her a deep faith and she imbibed from him a love of the Church and a strong sense of justice. To support her family she took on a role of governess and at Penola, she saw the need for teachers of the faith, as well as secular subjects, to prepare young men and women for later life.



. Mary realized that, in Australia, Sisters were needed to go to places where there were no churches or priests, to be able live on what people could spare and to live in houses such as the people lived, in two's and three's.

Mary wrote of the obstacles there:

Solicitude about one's temporary wants, necessity of securing beforehand a house to live in and such things are the greatest possible drawbacks to a missionary spirit.

She wrote declaring herself an Australian

Their (the Sisters') own experience of Australian life, what they have seen and heard around them, and the sad conviction that money and the comforts it brings, even where it should not, is one of the most formidable enemies the Catholic faith has got in Australia.

REFLECTION:

Consider the kind of women who were needed to set out on this journey—what characteristics would they need? Ask Mary MacKillop what she sees as needed in our Church today?

Spend some time in prayer for Australia and its needs. What can you do to help meet these needs?

(Based on **LOVING THIS CONTINENT** Australian Prayers –Bruce Prewer Used with permission Lutheran Church Australia)

Source of all love and joy, Father of Jesus and our God

To you belongs our gratitude, and your love is beyond all measure

We thank you Lord of life.

When our continent was being created

You thought of us and provided for us.

When our land's inhabitants were kangaroo and koala,

Jabiru and currawong, alligator and yabbie, you catered for our needs.

We thank you Lord of Life.

When settlers arrived from across the world and made this their home

They brought with them the faiths of their homelands.

From these people you gave us the MacKillops and MacDonalDs

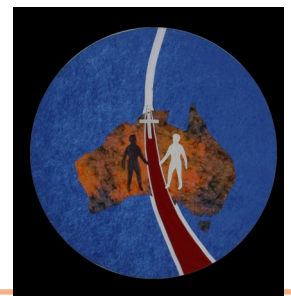
And Mary MacKillop, intrepid woman who called Australia home.

We thank you Lord of Life

God of the Southern Cross, make our nation your nation

Let us live as one united people, caring for each other and your land

Today, and as long as this great land shall last.



PRAYER:

God, Creator and Father of all, may we live faithfully as Australians, following the example of St Mary MacKillop who, seeing the needs of the Church did her utmost to remedy them inspiring young women to follow her example.

May we hear the call of all Australians to be united as one, faithfully worshipping our God in all the faiths brought to this country by people seeking peace and freedom. This we pray through our good God. Amen