

CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

MARY'S DESIRE TO BE CHURCH

Mary MacKillop believed in a Church built through the relationships people had with each other, therefore she had no hesitancy in sending her Sisters where there was no priest for weekly Mass. In the small towns and villages, the Sisters would gather the people at the Church to pray the Rosary and instruct the children and adults, if needed, to receive the Sacraments when the priest next arrived. Thus Mary opened a sort of "dialogue" with the people, especially the poor and those who felt abandoned by the official church. The motivating force for her was shown in her own words:

"It is enough for them to know that the souls of little children are in danger, and the parents neglectful of their duty towards them, for the more the parents are thus blind to their duty, the more do the Sisters feel themselves bound at any sacrifice to protect or rescue (as the case may be) the little ones of the Church."

"It is only those who have felt and watched and studied these circumstances and who have seen how wonderfully God has raised a humble means of counteracting their effects, who can thoroughly realise the necessity of the Sister's work in this respect."

It is the personal vision of a woman who thought the Church should do things differently. That the real need was for the Church to go out to the people, to adjust some of its ways of thinking and acting. She named herself an "Australian" and Mary was fully aware of what that meant. So her Sisters took the Church to the goldfields, they moved with the fettlers building the railways, they moved out west to tiny houses.

REFLECTION: Sit with your thoughts and ask Mary:

Where does she see the needs for children and families today?

What would your own vision of CHURCH be in your parish?

If we are the Church, whose responsibility is it now?

In silence let Mary speak to you.

PRAYER - Based on Psalm 80 PSALMS NOW Leslie Brandt.

O God you are the Creator, the Sustainer of your Church.

You have protected and prospered your faithful followers

Throughout our stormy and tumultuous past.

Today we are in need of your help.

Many are confused and confounded by what is happening

And has happened.

They seem to have lost direction

and don't know where to go.

We have prayed O God and have sung Your praises.

We have proclaimed your love to the world.

Many who have been brought up within our structures

Say the Church no longer meets their needs—
and walk away.

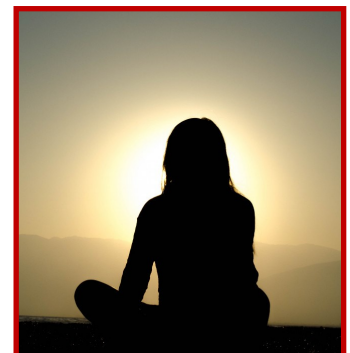
Renew your Church O God.

We know you will never turn away those who come to you

And will forever sustain those who trust in you.

Stir us up and enable us to listen to the voices within the Church

Resource: Mary MacKillop, Made in Australia—Daniel Lyne



PRAYER: God of all blessings, you gave Mary MacKillop a deep love for the Australian people and the desire to reveal to them your love by her compassion and practical help.

She longed to help them deepen their faith and to know you as the loving Father, who loves us despite our failings and sinfulness.

Be with us as we try to imitate her spirit and to bring your love to all we meet. Help us to be, like her, an authentic sign of your love for all people.

We make this prayer through Jesus your Son who lives with you and the Holy Spirit forever.
Amen.

©Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph