

CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

MARY'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD



Who was God for Mary MacKillop? From her writings we know that God was a strong Father figure in her life, and an “abiding presence” and I have wondered if this developed due to the many absences and failures of her own father. Maybe not, but I remember when my own Dad died, the words “I will be Father to you” from a hymn, became very precious and still are.

Mary's own words reveal both these experiences:

To Mons Kirby in Rome: “I must tell you that from early childhood, as far back as I can remember, He (God) gave me such a sense of His watchful presence that I would feel myself reproved for my smallest faults.

To Fr Woods 1870: “I can never think of God, but as a Father whose goodness and love I am always abusing, but whose tenderness is such that He cannot cast me off.”

Fr Woods wrote to Mary in a similar vein: “I am confident I shall never find rest or comfort again in this world except in God, His beauty, His goodness, His Fatherly watchful care of me and all nature pursues me everywhere...How wonderfully good it has been of God to show how He desires to be treated as a Father by his affectionate children...”

Mary lived her life by accepting and calling others to do so, by accepting “**everything in life as gift of a loving Father**”. God was that loving presence in her life, to whom she listened and to learn from in all the circumstances of her life.

REFLECTION: *spend some time in silence, reflecting on the occasions in Mary's life that she called “a gift from a loving Father”.* **WHAT WAS HER STRENGTH?**

HYMN TO THE FATHER - based on Good to be Alive Australian Prayers—Prewer

God, our Father, it is good to be alive

To share life with each other in your wonderful creation:

We are most grateful and we thank you Lord.

God our Father, you have given us the opportunity

To see spring flowers, to watch trees in the wind,

To breathe in the fragrance of the seasons,

And feel the warmth of the sun on our skin.

We are most grateful and we thank you Lord.

God our Father, when things get hard and difficult.

We know you walk with us through each day.

Your presence gives us hope and strength

Enabling us to continue as Jesus did to Calvary.

We are most grateful and we thank you Lord.

SONG: ISAIAH 49 (C.Landry)

I will never forget you my people,

I have carved you on the palm of my hand.

I will never forget you, I will not leave you orphaned, I will never forget my own.

Can a mother forget her baby

Or a woman the child within her womb

Yet even if these forget,

Yet even if these forget

I will never forget my own.



Resource: *Mary MacKillop Made in Australia—Daniel Lyne*