

CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

MISUNDERSTANDINGS BY OTHERS

BROUGHT SORROWS



Several times in her life, Mary MacKillop must have questioned herself as to whether she was right in seeing such an action as God's Will, when the authority of the Church seemed against her. Continually she would have felt thwarted by this authority. After all she was a woman—a colonial—untrained in religious life—and without any rights as all women of her time. So it was the norm in her society for women to be under the thumb of the male members who were the ones who were in Government and held positions of authority in Church and State. Yet she could accept all as a "loving gift" from a loving Father.

- **FR WOODS**, friend and mentor, Mary had to admit he was wrong at times and at the risk of his friendship she had to assert her own response. On her return from Rome the friendship ended as Fr Woods blamed her for the change in the poverty of the Institute.
- **BISHOP SHIEL** When he threatened to change the Rule, Mary stated she would leave and go elsewhere. This tension led to the unjust and illegal excommunication for disobedience to his wishes.
- **BISHOP REYNOLDS**—firstly a great friend of Mary and the Institute, he later banished her from Adelaide, refused to allow her to explain to her Sisters, who resented her "abandoning them" for many years. Mary's great respect for Bishops caused her much sorrow.
- **PRIESTS AND LAY PEOPLE** who tried to have the whole Institute disbanded and banished. Mary was aware that Jealousy and power were at play in all this, fear Government funding for schools would be lost. The
- **HER SISTERS** Some were jealous of her, inferred she was an alcoholic, undermined her leadership and made things difficult for her in many ways.

In the midst of all this Mary kept seeking what God was doing, God's purposes, God's Will, God as Loving Father and I am sure, when looking back, she saw God using these people to expand the Institute and its growth under Bishops who were open to this new style of religious life.

REFLECTION: *Have you during your life suffered misunderstanding from loved ones?*

Share your thoughts with Mary MacKillop and in what way you both suffered sorrow.

PSALM 21

PSALMS NOW

Leslie Brandt Used

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O God, in the grace and strength that you grant daily

Your servant finds reason for celebration.

You have truly fulfilled my innermost longings

You have responded to my deepest needs.

I asked for security and you encompassed me with love

I looked to you for life, and you granted me life everlasting.

I sought identity, and you adopted me as your child.

Whatever is of value and worth in my life Has come through your rich blessings.

Although circumstances threaten me And my own obsessions entangle me, you will never let me go.

Your great power is sufficient to set me free, from these things that hurt my soul.

I put my trust in you; you will not let them destroy me.

I find so many reasons for praising You, O God.

PRAYER

Jesus you said, Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. May we, like Mary MacKillop always trust that you are with us and that you will help us find peace in all events in our lives. Help us to always be faithful to the truth and to accept the cross in our lives, as you accepted yours. Amen

