



# CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

## MARY OF THE CROSS (2)

There were many kinds of Crosses in Mary MacKillop's life which she accepted in a spirit of trust and resignation and accepted as "the gift of a loving Father", never doubting God's loving providence in her life.

1. Mary came from what we would today call a "dysfunctional family". Her father's inability to manage financially, his morbidness and contentious nature, prevented him from holding down a job and was mostly unemployed. Mary seems to have had to act as mediator between her parents. Fr Woods in a letter wondered "can your mother be trusted to keep things straight with your father when you go away". The worry of debts was a burden Mary carried most of her life. Yet she could write, "(God) gave me good Catholic Parents" even likening her mother to a "second Monica". In the same source she writes, "*My life as a child was one of sorrow, my home when I had it, a most unhappy one*".
2. Being the eldest the responsibility of the family became Mary's. To Mons. Kirby in Rome, she wrote: "*When I was little more than sixteen years of age, the principal care of a large family fell upon me, and from that age until I was twenty-five, I felt its burthen yearly more and more.*"
3. At 14 she was governess for the L'Éstrange's two little girls. Secondly she was employed at Sands and Kenny's in their stationery store, a job she disliked. Next was governess for her Uncle's children at Penola Station, where she first met Fr Woods, PP of Penola. Portland was her next employment as governess for an Aunt. Here she sat for her teaching certificate with the Victorian Education Dept, passing on the second attempt. Mary was then employed at the local Catholic School, brought her family to Portland, and opened a boarding school for young ladies. Annie also worked at the school as assistant. Fr Woods was a regular visitor staying in the stable at the back of the house. Then she was dismissed from the school and family split up.
3. Mary suffered several illnesses during her life. Endometriosis caused her much pain and inconvenience, confining her to bed on many occasions, even missing a meeting with the Pope. Brandy was prescribed for the pain, but this led to being called an alcoholic. Crippling rheumatism and strokes left her partially paralysed. Despite this she travelled to Adelaide twice.

PRAYER Ps 21 from Psalms Now—L. Brandt Used with permission Aust Lutheran Church

O God, in the grace and strength 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.  
My heart is glad in the realization of your eternal presence.  
I know that I will never lose your love.  
*I raise my voice in praise, O God,  
Because no one can separate me from You.  
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

**SIT WITH ANY LINE THAT SPOKE STRONGLY TO YOU**



### PRAYER:

**Loving God, so many, like Mary, carry the burden of supporting families. When they are close to despair send them hope through friends or opportunities for change.**

**St Mary MacKillop pray they may have the strength and confidence in God's Providence that sustained you.**

**This we ask through Jesus.  
Amen**