

# CONVERSATIONS WITH MARY

## FOR THE SAKE OF THE POOR

When founding the Institute Mary MacKillop and Tenison Woods knew the demands being made on them and those who joined them. The object of their vision was twofold:

1. To do any good they could
2. To bring education to Catholic Children in scattered communities in the bush,

So the Sisters, “for the sake of the poor” lived in various kinds of dwellings:

1. At Robe—the sacristy of the Church was home, the church, the schoolroom.
2. At Perthville—the gallery in the Church was their home until the convent was built.
3. In tents on the goldfields and following the fettlers as they built the railways.
4. Walking several miles from convent to private dwelling, where they lived in a room Mon-Fri.
5. Having insufficient food. Some sisters died from malnutrition and illnesses when young
6. Travelling steerage with little cover, taking their own food.
7. Suffering isolation “out West:” with one other Sister, hopefully compatible.
8. Deprived of any spiritual help and Sacraments.

One aspect of this chosen poverty, was that the Institute was to own no property and no “fixed form” of income. All to depend on Providence! As this was not practical for the welfare of the sisters, Rome changed this and they had to have at least one residence of their own and a stable place for Novices to be trained.

Mary did not glorify poverty, doing all she could to alleviate it for others. The poverty she embraced was for “the kingdom of God” that enabled them to go where needed and circumstances demanded.



*A poor family lived in Naremburn, father, dying of TB, mother, a non Catholic and six children and new to the area. A sister visited them late on a Saturday, too late to buy food. Sunday morning she took some loaves out of the bread box and ran into Mother Mary, who asked what she had under her cloak. The Sister asked her not to tell the Sister in Charge. Mary smiled. When the Sister returned she told Mother about the family. Mary cried and sent her back with what little money she had.*

How does this story touch you?

Does it challenge you?

Talk to Mary about what you have read on this page. Listen to what she might say to you today.

### FINAL PRAYER AND BLESSING:

***My Heart is pierced by***

***Miserly loving, indifference to others, deliberate injustices***

***And by unexpected kindnesses. R. Jesus be my strength***

***My Heart goes out to***

***Those in pain, feeling lonely, overcome by life's struggles***

***And to those who seek to understand and comfort them. R***

***My Heart draws in***

***Those at the edges, those feeling alienated and lost***

***And all those whose arms create community. R***

***My Heart is strengthened by***

***Day to day faithfulness, standing with, walking beside***

***And when invited – by walking in front. R***

***My Heart is ablaze transforming***

***Poverty, war, rootlessness and hopelessness***

*Therese Quinn rsj*

***And with the spread of reconciling relationship. R***

***My heart is your heart!***

