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8 August 2021

St Mary of the Cross (MacKillop)

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Mary MacKillop was born in Melbourne (Australia) in 1842 and died in Sydney on 8 August 1909. She took the religious name Mary of the Cross. Responding to the isolation of colonial families, she pioneered a new form of religious life to provide education for their children. She and her sisters shared the life of the poor and the itinerant, offering special care to destitute women and children. She is remembered for her eagerness to discover God's will in all things, for her charity in the face of calumny, and for her abiding trust in God's providence.

The texts for the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours for St Mary of the Cross McKillop are available at

<https://www.catholic.org.au/council-documents/national-liturgical-council-2/national-liturgical-documents-for-australia-1/australian-catholic-bishops-conference-1/1267-liturgical-texts-of-mass-liturgy-of-the-hours-for-st-mary-of-the-cross-mackillop-8-august-2010-1/file>

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus you came so that we might be saved through your grace.
Lord, have mercy.
You came that we would be moved to be your living reflection.
Christ, have mercy.
You came to call your people to a life of holiness in community.
Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

1 Kings 17: 8-16

The jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied, just as the Lord had foretold.

Second Reading

Col 3:12-17

The life and inspiration of St Mary was intimately connected to teaching in the name of the Lord, particularly teaching the poor.

Gospel Reading

Mt 6:25-34

There is in all of the works of Mary a deep sense of reliance on providence, allowing her to set her heart on the kingdom and God's saving justice.

Reflection

As an aid to some reflections on Mary MacKillop and her impact through the religious orders she was instrumental in founding, here is some material from the writings of Sr Pauline Wicks rsj.

...A close study of the foundational materials from Mary MacKillop and the emerging order indicate that the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart were to 'labour for their own sanctification' through Catholic education of the poor and, where necessary, minister in other institutions for the poor. This was a response to the social and religious conditions of the colonies of Australia, and was to 'counteract' the emerging secular education system.

St Joseph was designated patron of the congregation and the sisters' educational model. As such, the sisters were to imitate his virtues. Small communities emerged in outlying areas of the colonies where the sisters were often the only Catholic presence. Community, prayer and teaching were an integral part of their lives that were to mirror the lives of the people amongst whom they lived. Central Government of the Institute facilitated unity of vision, formation and educational practices. It enabled a flexibility to meet needs of the congregation, and respond to requests from bishops to establish schools.

All members of the Congregation were to be equal and there were to be no distinctions in their service of education or other works. A missionary spirit of poverty and dependence on Divine Providence was fundamental. Prayer, religious exercises and fasts were modified to be in keeping with the life and mission of the sisters.

Some context on Mary's work

Her combination of care of the poor in faith and secular education:

Australia [in the nineteenth century] is in every sense a dangerous place for Catholics. The Governments' aim, at strict secular schools and institutions for the poor, especially for the children of the poor, the writer of this has had too many sad opportunities of seeing how these latter are often torn away from the true Faith.

Her design of a way of religious life aimed at mission to teach the poor:

[the mission] is to provide for souls in so much danger that their Rule permits an addition to their first duty of teaching, to open house for the souls of the afflicted, of the erring, and poor abandoned children. The Rule permits, nay recommends such undertakings, but only ... where there are not other Religious whose first duty is to attend to such works of mercy.

Mary Mackillop held that: “[the Sisters] cannot undertake more than the cause of the poor”.

This material is taken from Pauline Wicks, “A Critical Examination of the Theology of Mission of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart”, Doctor of Ministry thesis, Sydney College of Divinity, 2018.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

In today’s first reading the widow sacrificed her last meal to feed her guest and her food supply was repeatedly replenished. In the knowledge of God’s generosity, let us now pray present our petitions.

Petitions

We pray that the Church may grow in love, charity and holiness, as we take inspiration from St Mary of the Cross to reach out to meet the needs of the poor and destitute throughout the world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that our public leaders in Australia and around the world provide noble service to the people, particularly the poor.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that those who are suffering and are overburdened may find hope in people who reach out to them in friendship and solidarity.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that all those who are assembled here today may cease to worry and come to truly know that God alone will nourish us, clothe us and save us.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that many young people be inspired by St Mary of the Cross and be moved to embrace the Lord’s call to consecrated religious life.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, hear the prayers of your faithful gathered here today and help us to grow in faith, love and charity. We ask these prayers through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

A new commandment. Anon. 318
A new heart for a new world. T. Watts/ M. O'Brien. 438
A trusting psalm. K. Bates SM. 455
Christians, let us love one another. M. Claudia Foltz SNJM et al./ French melody. 206
Do not be afraid. C. Willcock SJ. 28
In faith and hope and love. J. P. McAuley/ R. Connolly. 442
Love is his word. L. Connaughton/ A. Milner. 462
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Seek ye first. K. Lafferty. 456
The servant song. R. Gillard. 487
Ubi caritas. Gregorian chant. 319
Ubi caritas. Taize. 324
Where there is charity and love. R. Connolly. 323

AOV1

A new heart for a new world. T. Watts/ M. O'Brien. 158
A trusting psalm. K. Bates SM. 115
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour. B. Farrell. 28
Seek ye first. K. Lafferty. 48

AOV2

Do not be afraid. C. Willcock SJ. 73
The servant song. R. Gillard. 169

CWB

Bread of the world in mercy broken. Reginald Heber. 631
By your priestly power, O risen Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 635
Gift of finest wheat. Omer Westendorf. 685
I am the bread of life. Suzanne Toolan. 718
Shepherd of souls, in love, come, feed us. J. Clifford Evers. 804

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Bread of life, hope of the world. Bernadette Farrell. 459
I am the bread of life. Suzanne Toolan RSM. 509
Lord, to whom shall we go? Michael Herry FMS. 549
Gift of finest wheat. Omer Westendorf. 651

Additional selections by Chris deSilva

Bread of the world in mercy broken. Reginald Heber. 460
Shepherd of souls, in love, come feed us. Omer Westendorf. 596

S&S1

Taste and see. Bob Hurd. 62
I am the bread of life. John Michael Talbot. 153

S&S2

Taste and see. Steve Angrisano. 254

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 33: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*
Psalm 33: Richard Proulx. CWB 332
Psalm 33(34): Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 595
Psalm 34: Taste and see: Christopher Willcock. GA 33
Psalm 34: Taste and see: Stephen Dean. GA 34
Psalm 34: Taste and see: Jane Wood. GA 35
Psalm 34 (33): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 80
Taste and see: Paul Mason. PM pg. 32
Taste and see: Marty Haugen. LPB. Pg. 145

Music selections by Michael Mangan

How I long for you (FWS based on Ps 63) [Gifts]
A life of love (TT, SYJ) [Gifts, Communion, Sending]
Mary of the Cross (SYJ) [Gifts, Sending]
Hearts on fire (SHOF, SYJ) [Gathering, Sending]