

Novena Day 1

Mary MacKillop

A Woman With A Humble Heart

From the Pen of Mary: Work on humbly with the means God has placed at your disposal. 1886

Scripture: Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart. *Matthew 11:29*

Reflection: The word humility comes from the word 'humus' meaning of the earth. Mary MacKillop was a practical 'down to earth' woman who was willing to undertake any task no matter how menial. She was 'at home' within herself. This enabled her to stand humbly before God with both her gifts and her limitations. Mary was able to tackle the most trying of situations because her truth was firmly grounded in God. When inviting the Sisters to imitate St Joseph's humility she spoke of '*a humility of heart, not of words*'. 1893

From the life of Mary MacKillop: The spirit of humility pervaded Mary MacKillop's life. This story is indicative of such a spirit. Mother Mary called for Sr Helena McCarthy. She spoke to her in these words, "*I want to beg your pardon for the impatient way I spoke to you when you came to see me this morning. I feared I had given you pain, and I am sorry for having done so*".

Pause for Reflection: When have I needed to stand humbly in God's presence?

Prayer: God of hope you exalt the humble and raise up those bowed down. May Mary MacKillop's spirit of humility enable us to use our gifts in a practical way to make a difference in our world. Blessed Mary of the Cross, grounded in reality, pray for us.

Action: Use one of your God-given gifts to bring a little hope and love into the world today.

Novena Day 9

Mary MacKillop –

A Woman With A Heart Full of Gratitude

From the Pen of Mary: How good God is to me and how much reason I have to be grateful. 1899

Scripture: I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you. *Philippians 1:3*

Reflection: Mary MacKillop lived her life with a spirit of gratitude. She was grateful to God for the many blessings that were bestowed upon the work of the Institute. She expressed her delight in receiving letters from the Sisters while she was in London. She was ever appreciative for the on-going support of the Barr-Smiths. As Mary neared the end of her life Dr O'Haran took her hand and spoke to her. Her expression spoke her deep gratitude for the kind visit.

From the life of Mary MacKillop: Mary wrote to the Sisters in 1906: "*Thank you all, my dear Sisters, for your nice letters, and the kind gifts with which they are accompanied on our Glorious Father's feast. Not only did each Little Sister write, but I think I may say that each individual member wrote also, and your letters breathed love, charity and obedience which gladdened my heart*".

Pause for Reflection: Reflect on Mary MacKillop's contribution to the Australian church and society. For what do I want to give thanks?

Prayer: Generous God we give thanks for gifting our world with Mary MacKillop. As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of her death, may her spirit of love and gratitude guide us in our living of the Gospel. Blessed Mary of the Cross, grateful for life's many blessings, pray for us.

Action: On her feast day, allow Mary MacKillop to speak these words to your heart - '*May God bless you. With all the love in my heart I pray that God may do this*'. 1899