

Sisters of St. Joseph – Walking in Reconciliation

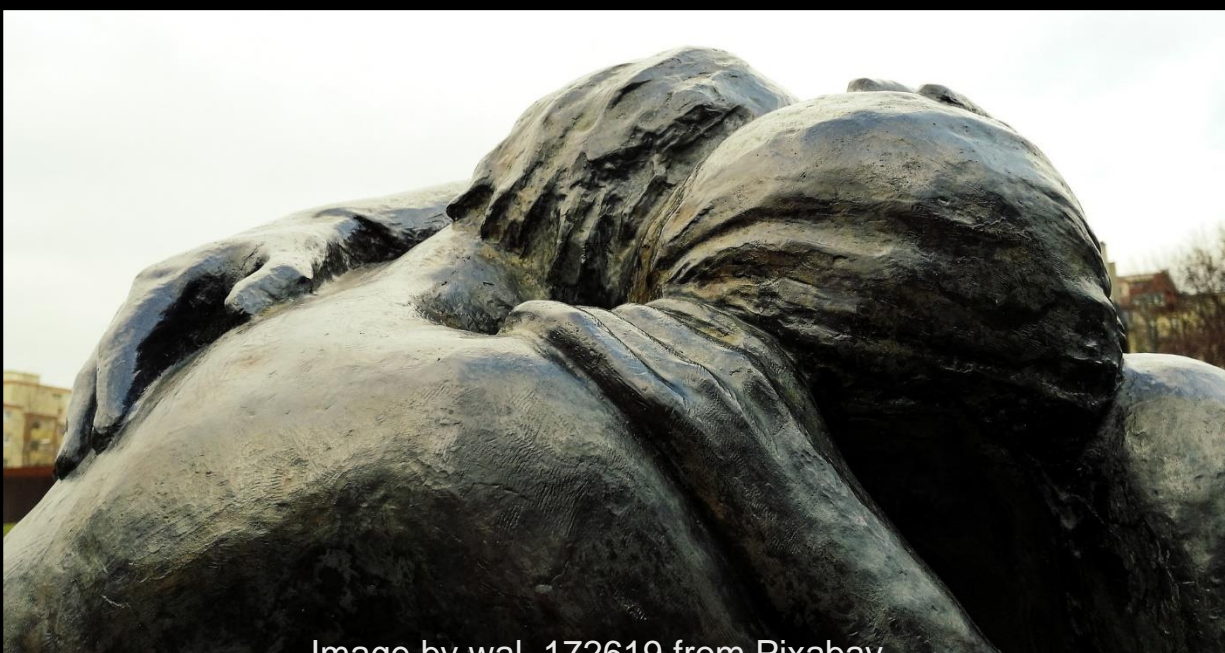


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Going Deeper

Sisters of St. Joseph – Walking in Reconciliation

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

In 1866, moved by the misery of the "bush children" and the poor of colonial Australia, Mary MacKillop co-founded the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, with Fr Julian Tenison Woods.

As Australia opened up to white settlement, the sisters of St. Joseph moved into places where the needs were great, conditions very challenging, and life a daily struggle. Mary MacKillop is the Patron Saint of Catholic Education and the 'Joeys' have been part of the fabric of our Catholic education story in the Brisbane Archdiocese.

Today, the work of the sisters strives to serve people who are without real choices, who are excluded or in some way poor. They strive to respond in the spirit of Mary MacKillop to needs of the poor in our time.



Mary MacKillop
N.N. / Public domain

*Wherever we are,
whoever we are,
whatever we do
we are called
to relieve suffering
and bring hope."
(24th General Chapter, 2001)*

The Sisters of St. Joseph are called, as we are, to be people of faith, trust and hope. Reconciliation is foundational to this.

When we choose to share, when we choose to forgive, and choose to receive others regardless of who and where they are, we too are living the gospel. We are living a life of reconciliation. We are bringing about the reign of God.

*Adapted from [Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart \[online\]](http://www.sosj.org.au/about/index.html);
Available via URL: <http://www.sosj.org.au/about/index.html>"*

We Listen

A reading from Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Luke.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
- How is this story a model for reconciliation?

Journalling Prayer

For those who enjoy writing and who find it easier to put words onto paper (or their computer), written prayer journals are a helpful way to deepen your relationship with God. Regular journal writers suggest using an exercise book or folder to keep everything together.

There are no rules for what should be written in this style of prayer. Finding flowery language or having correct spelling are certainly not necessary because the process is about letting out what is in our hearts. As God knows what is there already, writing really just reminds us of what that is.

Journal Writing

Over the next few days allocate a time each day to begin the creation of a prayer journal.

Perhaps at the end of the school day or first thing in the morning.
Find somewhere without distractions to write
and something suitable to write on or with.

You may wish to take one of these lines as a starter to begin writing with each day.

God, you have blessed my life....
My teaching is....
God, working in a Catholic school....
Sometimes I worry that....
I wish

Finish each writing session with a short prayer and give thanks
For this time you have spent with God.

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Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect

On the 10th anniversary of the beatification of Mary MacKillop, Sr. Judith Sipple wrote the following on the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

"Let us thank God for the gift of this woman who provides for us an Australian window on the gospel; whose life and words and example keep us attentive to the reality of the Kingdom among us; whose story teaches us that whenever we choose:

- to give away rather than to accumulate possessions*
- to serve rather than to dominate*
- to share our resources rather than to compete*
- to free each other rather than to hold each other in fear*
- to love, freely and warmly, rather than to judge and condemn*

then truly we are seeking the kingdom where God will provide for all his daughters and sons.

When we put ourselves on the line:

- to help the needy or to go out in generosity and compassion to those on the margins;*
- to denounce injustice and question oppressive systems;*
- to stand with those who are powerless and without choices;*

then truly we are 'acting justly'

Now, more than ever, perhaps more than at the time of the beatification, Australia needs the witness of our lives. We can make a radical difference in this land of ours by translating our goodness, our faith and trust in our God, our commitment to the gospel into living flesh by the lives we live, lives made compelling and attractive by the sorts of people we are....

May we, like Mary MacKillop, learn to live by the power of the Cross that in our lives we may embrace what she pioneered – new ways of living the gospel, of seeking the Kingdom, that respect and defend the dignity of all in our land.

Amen."



Sippel J. Homily. 2005 August [\[online\]](http://www.sosj.org.au/mary/documents/Judysippelhomily_000.pdf); Available from URL: http://www.sosj.org.au/mary/documents/Judysippelhomily_000.pdf

We Listen

A reading from Matthew 8:1-4 (NRSV)

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew.

- Do any words or phrases speak to you in particular?

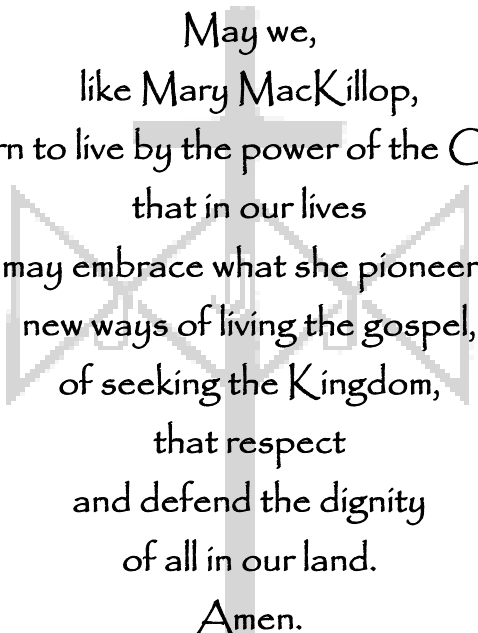
Jesus' healing of the leper restored his relationship with the rest of society

- Who are the outcasts of our society?
- How can you work towards reconciling the attitudes of society with the dignity and rights of those it has outcast?

Journalling Prayer

["Praying in color"](#) is prayerful doodling. It can be used as an addition to a prayer journal. See <https://prayingincolor.com/blog> for a blog about "Praying in color".

Keep a prayer journal incorporating "Praying in color" when you feel moved to do so.



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like Mary MacKillop,
learn to live by the power of the Cross
that in our lives
we may embrace what she pioneered –
new ways of living the gospel,
of seeking the Kingdom,
that respect
and defend the dignity
of all in our land.
Amen.