

Blessed Mary MacKillop

Feast Day: 8 August

On Tuesday April 14th 2009 the Irish Independent published an article about a young Irishman who was mugged in Coogee, Sydney. David Keohane (29) seems to have happened upon a robbery and three culprits attacked David fearful that he would identify them. Severely injured, he spent months in a coma in hospitals in Sydney and later back in Ireland (Cork). The family prayed earnestly for David, mainly to Bl. Mary MacKillop, for his recovery and they claim that it is due to those prayers that David has improved so remarkably. The rest of the story we know is up to Vatican experts to finalize assessment of his recovery towards canonization of Mary MacKillop.



Stories like that are likely to be duplicated in time. But the woman behind all this is that "troublesome woman" who died 100 years on August 8th 2009. The centenary of her death is a significant event for all Australians. Franciscans are especially interested because of the early connection Blessed Mary had with the friars of her time. Her parents were married in St Francis Church, Melbourne; later Mary was baptized there and made her first Holy Communion at the hand of Bonaventure Geoghegan ofm. Her family must have had close connections with the friars based at St Francis and around parts of Melbourne. Maybe the brown habit which she adopted for her sisters was favoured for its Franciscan flavour.

Recently Box Hill parishioners have been visiting sites in Melbourne which have strong MacKillop history – the place of her birth, baptism, founding her first "Providences" and houses of various apostolates. The next part of the pilgrimage is to visit Mary MacKillop place in Sydney in August.

Mary MacKillop truly is a giant on the Australian scene, both in the church and open society. A woman of extraordinary faith which pierced through the armour of suspicion for her endeavours, the heavy clamp put on much of her efforts and misunderstandings from many in authority. Obedience, which was a heavy cross for her, flowed from that unrelenting faith. When deprived of the Sacraments, she found life so miserable, yet persevered in almost blind faith. Like Francis and Clare the cross of Jesus was her love, her symbol, her constant driving motive. In good health, but more in illness, she maintained good spirits, always hopeful of doing more for those needy she loved so passionately.

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Of Irish stock, she was typically an Australian. Even when suffering confusion and misunderstanding, she relied on her spirituality which was marked by child-like simplicity and an altogether remarkable trust in Providence. In this she left a strong heritage for her sisters.

Fr David Ranson comments on the celebration of her one hundredth anniversary, that she leaves us with an enormous legacy of love, dedication and dogged holiness that we are able to celebrate "the very possibility of holiness".

*Through the example of Mary MacKillop,
may you learn to recognise God's will for you
and trust in God's providence. Amen.*

*May her life of service awaken in you
a deep respect for the poor
and a passion for justice. Amen.*

*May you share in her courage,
see with her vision,
and love with her heart. Amen.*

*Most loving God,
we thank you for the example and inspiration of Blessed Mary MacKillop,
who in living the scriptural values witnessed to the mission of God
and to the dignity of each person.
May we who share in her charism have a heart for mission until our last breath.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen*

Many thanks to Bob Matthews OFM for his assistance in preparing this Friar Update.

Source: http://www.marymackillopplace.org.au/museum/education_resources.asp

<p>Significant days: 11 August – Feast of St Clare 12 August – International Youth Day</p>
