

Liturgy of the Word - Secondary

Prayer Space

Suggestions: Set up a space that is visible for all students. Drape the space with prayer cloths. Place a candle (real or battery operated), a cross, a bible or lectionary with the place marked with today's reading and an image of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop in the prayer space. Alternatively, these items could be processed in and placed into the sacred space one by one, whilst the opening song plays.

Acknowledgement of Country

Introduction

(Begin with the following introduction if you are not sharing Mary's story in the reflection of today's liturgy. If you are, begin with the paragraph Mary MacKillop Today is continuing...)

Today is St Mary of the Cross MacKillop's Feast Day. So who is St Mary of the Cross?

Mary Helen MacKillop was born in 1842 in Victoria to Scottish immigrant parents and was the eldest of eight. At the age of twenty-four, she dedicated her life to God and took on the name "Mary of the Cross."

Mary was an ordinary woman with an extraordinary dream and a big heart. Her dream was to give the poorest families and most neglected children access to education and safe shelter by opening schools. With what little resources they had, Mary and Father Tenison Woods turned an old stable into a school in Penola, South Australia.

In 1866 Mary and Father Tenison worked together to set up the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (also known as the Josephites). This was the first religious order to be founded by an Australian.

As a passionate educator, Mary broke through the prejudice of the early 19th century to educate all—regardless of gender, race, faith, or wealth— while ministering to the vulnerable with compassion. She and the Sisters of St Joseph went wherever the need was greatest. They gave up everything to live and teach amongst the people they served.

Be *Fierce* for *Fair*



Introduction - cont'd.

Mary MacKillop Today is continuing the vision of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and the Sisters of St Joseph. That vision is to work with communities to create change by teaching practical skills to women, men and children in Australia and beyond. If Mary MacKillop were living in our world today she would not only be out on the streets serving those in need she would be advocating against injustices that litter the world.

Mary MacKillop Today continues to look at the world through the lens that Mary did. Currently in Timor Leste they have a Mobile Learning Centre. The Mobile Learning Centre is a bus that travels to communities throughout Timor Leste providing children with an education they would otherwise not have. They also provide teachers the opportunity to develop their teaching practice. Be Fierce For Fair is the theme Mary MacKillop Today has for St Mary of the Cross' Feast Day this year. In today's liturgy let us reflect on ways we can Be Fierce For Fair.

Let us pause as we become aware of God's presence. (You might like to use an Australian Bush soundscape such as [A Morning in the Australia Bush](#), or [Early Morning Rainforest](#) to focus everyone's attention or you might like to pause in quiet stillness.)

Opening song

Suggestions:

- St Mary MacKillop – Gary Pinto
- Let it Start with Me - No Other Name

Opening Prayer

Leader: In the name of the Father...

Loving God,

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, a woman of fierce courage for injustice and fairness in her treatment for all, turned to you for strength and guidance as she helped all in need. May this celebration give us courage and strength to do the same, to Be Fierce For Fair in a world of need. We ask this in your name.

All: Amen



Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop - 8 August



Gospel

Gospel: Matthew 6:25-34

Reader:

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection Ideas

- *Reflect on the life of Mary MacKillop in light of Matthew's scripture passage. Below are a list of ways this could be done:*

Reflect using a series of questions, examples:

- *In what ways did Mary MacKillop look beyond food and clothing?*
- *How can I?*
- *What might be some challenges I face?*
- *How can I overcome them?*
- *What did Mary value?*





Reflection Ideas - cont'd.

- *What do I value?*
- *How did Mary put her values into action?*
- *How can I put my values into action?*
- *When Mary faced an obstacle, what did she do?*
- *What can I do?*
- *Mary was fierce for fairness. How can I be fierce for fair?*

Students lead a reflection they create using Be Fierce for Fair Statements or use the one below. Images could be added so all become active participants in the liturgy.

Be fierce for our human family.

For those sleeping on the streets.

For those who go without food, clothing and shelter.

For those who live in fear.

For those who have only seen violence.

For those who have no one to turn to.

Be fierce for the cry of the earth.

For polluted skies, waterways and paddocks.

For parched soil.

For flooded crops.

For vanishing biodiversity

For diminishing habitats

Be fair for people and places In thought.

In word.

In deed.

• *As Mary MacKillop was a great letter writer, engage a class of students prior to the liturgy to write a series of text messages or Instagram chats retelling her story in today's context and challenging their peers to Be Fierce For Fair. These could be presented as an audiovisual presentation for those gathered to see.*

• *If you are a Josephite school, share some of the school's history and how the Mary MacKillop's legacy continues to live on in the life of the school today.*

• *Reflect through music for example: Open My Eyes by Jesse Manibusan, From Little Things Big Things Grow by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody or Be the Light by Thomas Rhett*

Some reflections could have quiet music playing in the background. Fade the music out as the reflection concludes)





Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: Let us turn to God in prayer.

Ever generous God, You inspired Saint Mary MacKillop to live her life faithful to the Gospel and bring hope and encouragement to those on the margins. With confidence in your generosity we pray:

Reader: For Pope Francis and leaders in our Church that they lead with courage, conviction and justice.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: For the Sisters of St Joseph that they may look back with confidence knowing that when they reached out in love, they walked in Mary's footsteps surrounded by God's love.

Lord hear us.

Reader: For Mary MacKillop Today, may they continue to be guided by Mary MacKillop's unwavering faith and commitment to being fierce for fair.

Lord hear us

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: For our school community, may we walk in Mary MacKillop's footsteps, being fierce in the face of adversity, fair when we see injustice and give love to those we encounter each day.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader: For all those in our community who are sick especially....., that they will receive your healing and strength.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Leader: For our own intentions... (pause)

We make these prayers and those in our heart in Your name.

All: Amen.





Final Blessing

Leader: Let us stand for a blessing

Through the example of Saint Mary of the Cross, may we learn to recognise God's will for us and trust in God's wisdom.

All: Amen.

May her life of service awaken in us a deep respect for the poor and a strong will for justice.

All: Amen.

May we see with the eyes of fierce fairness, share in her courage and act from the same place of love.

All: Amen.

And may God bless us. In the name of the Father...

All: Amen.

Closing Song

Suggestions:

- Hearts of Courage – Timothy Hart
- Go Make a Difference – Steve Angrisano
- Do Something – Matthew West
- Let It Start with Me - No Other Name

Resources

Websites:

- Liturgy Brisbane: www.liturgybrisbane.net.au
- Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre: www.mmhc.org.au
- Mary MacKillop Today: www.marymackilloptoday.org.au
- Sisters of St Joseph: www.sosj.org.au

