

Saint Mary

Of the Cross MacKillop, Australia's first canonised saint

As Australia prepares for the International Eucharistic Congress in Sydney in 2028 ("Eucharist28"), the Church is invited to reflect especially on the witness of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Australia's first canonised saint, as a model of Eucharistic faith lived in the Australian context.

Communion of Saints, as professed in the Creed. Emphasising that communion and unity are at the heart of the Church's identity. This communion unites all the baptised, living and dead, as one Body in Christ, transcending time and space. ("the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament - that is a sign and an instrument - of communion with God and of unity among all people" (Lumen Gentium 1). Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop is a living witness within the Communion of Saints. As both intercessor and model of discipleship, she continues to inspire faith, justice, and self-giving service. Through her courageous dedication to educating the poor and marginalised, Mary MacKillop connects contemporary believers to the wider family of God, showing how Gospel values are lived in daily life.

Saints are described as "lived theology", showing faith authentically embodied in daily life. Mary MacKillop "lived theology" by consistently translating her religious beliefs into practical, selfless action, demonstrating core Christian virtues through her dedication to the poor and marginalised in Australia. Her approach was characterised by a "down-to-earth" spirituality that prioritised service, care and education to others. "She was united

Themes grounded in the reflection for Secondary Religious Education



Communion
of Saints



Lived Theology



Providence



Faith and
spirituality



Eucharistic
discipleship



when she received the precious gift of the Eucharist, and the Christ whose presence she sought in intimate prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, was the Christ who commissioned his disciples to "go and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (John 15:16)."

Mary MacKillop's spirituality and life was deeply Eucharistic, shaped by prayer, adoration, and trust in God's providence. Her spirituality held together contemplation and action, devotion and mission. This was captured in her guiding principles for all to "bear fruit": "Never see a need without doing something about it" and "Never forget who it is you are following." These words expressed her deep conviction that the Eucharist sent disciples out to live lives of self-giving and unconditional love.

Mary MacKillop's life bore witness to a quiet yet unwavering confidence in God's providence. Her faith was lived amid hardship and persecution, with unwavering belief in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. She entrusted every need to

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God's care. This profound trust enabled her and her order to minister faithfully in remote and disadvantaged communities, serving with courage and compassion even where resources were few and therefore understood Eucharistic communion as leading to concrete service, especially to the poor and vulnerable.

The reflection concludes by reaffirming that the Eucharist, as the source and summit of Christian life, invites believers to make their own lives a gift for others, just as Christ did. Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop embodied this call and invitation, offering the Church in Australia a lasting model of faithful, Eucharistic discipleship grounded in unity, compassion, and service.

