

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE: *Lent - 'Sharing the Wisdom of Mary MacKillop!'*

27 / 28 February 2010

Dear Friends

During the past couple of weeks, as a Church and a Nation, we have experienced both profound joy and deep sadness. The news of Mary MacKillop's forthcoming canonisation as Australia's first saint and the tragic death of the young student from St Patrick's College, Shorncliffe are events that touched the deepest emotions of our being – sheer exhilaration on the one hand, and incredulity at the senseless loss of a young life on the other.

These emotions are not new to us but I found myself revisiting the losses of young lives experienced during my years in Augustinian schools – often due to sickness but at times due to tragic accidents on the roads and elsewhere. Many schools have memorial gardens or an annual Mass where names are remembered, sometimes a trophy or scholarship that preserves a precious memory. Such are the events and memories that make us who we are – the Cross by another name!

Mary MacKillop is known as Mother Mary of the Cross and her life experiences, both joyful and tragic, formed her as she sought to understand life's meaning through prayer and generosity towards those in need. Over coming months, interest in her spirituality will increase as the date of her canonisation draws nearer.

Each of us has a unique 'spirituality', our 'window on the Gospel', a relationship with God like no one else's. I invite you to reflect on Mary's spirituality through a selection of her statements, taken from Sue and Leo Kane's The Little Brown Book:

'There where you are you will find God!' (1874) – How aware am I of the presence of God in both the joyful and painful moments of my life?

'See the hand of God in all that happens!' (1871) – Is my faith strong enough for this?

'Work on with the means placed at your disposal!' (1886) – How often do I use my God-given gifts to make a difference?

'Sometimes I almost scream with fright!' (1870) – What do I fear most? How can God help?

'Hurry and fuss will destroy interior peace!' (1875) – Are reflection and prayer part of my life, or does busyness reign?

'I do want with all my heart to be what God wants me to be!' (1899) – Am I in touch with God's dream for me? Does it influence how I live?

'Love one another, and let charity guide you in all your life!' (1909) – Do I love my neighbour wherever I find him/her? How about in my family?

As we listen to this Sunday's Gospel of the Transfiguration, let us recall the experiences that have 'transfigured' us. Let us continue to pray for Elliot Fletcher's family and for the student accused of his killing and his family too.

Fr Dave