

Homily. 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. C. 6/7 August 2022.

You'll have noticed the image of Mary MacKillop near the front of the Church. This is because it's her feast day on Monday. The life of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop was far from dull and makes for some interesting reading. This founder of the Josephite Sisters and friend of Fr. Julian Tennyson Woods, travelled widely across Australia striving to bring the gospel of Christ and much needed education to the poorest people of her times. At one point a Bishop wrongfully excommunicated her from the Church, only to later recant his edict. Her life was chock full of struggles and difficulties like this to be overcome. It ended with her suffering a stroke and some years in North Sydney being cared for by the Sisters before she died on the 8th August 1909 at 67 years of age. It took the Church, wisely cautious in such matters, another 101 years before she was Canonised a Saint.

I bring this up not just because her feast day is coming, but also because she exemplifies the qualities of deep faith, hope and courage referenced in our weekend readings. These words of God call us to live in the world with her sort of faith and hope, treasuring the rich heritage and sacrifice of those who have gone ahead of us while always keeping our eyes and hearts courageously fixed on where Christ is leading.

We are the 'little flock' of today, told by Jesus not to be afraid because it has pleased God the loving Father to give us the Kingdom. Our true and enduring treasure lies in God's loving promise. If we set our hearts on this promise then we won't be disappointed, for where our hearts are, there will our treasure be. Doing this involves all of us seeking the virtues which

St. Mary MacKillop possessed, practiced and preached; an awareness that God with us always and the determination to listen to God and do as God wills regardless of the cost.

This is what Jesus means when he says that we are to be dressed and ready for action with our lamps lit. His return isn't just on our death day. It's now and it's everyday as He comes to meet and to greet us in our joys and success, in our sorrows, setbacks and many challenges. The lamp we carry is our faith in the Lord, lit up and alive with His Spirit of love, sacrifice and active service for the betterment of the many. In fact, this is what we pray in every Eucharist; His body broken and shared with us, His blood lovingly poured out for us and for many for the forgiveness of sins, until He comes again, until Gods promise is fulfilled and our treasure, secure in the eternal God, is finally revealed in all of its glory.

Committed faith, enduring hope and determined courage in the living of God's will; these are what bring us through all challenges and every opposition. They did so for Mary MacKillop who modelled her life on the mystery of Christ's Cross bringing her lit lamp and her Christlike actions across our land and into the lives of it's many peoples. They will do the same for us too, as we strive live out the promise of God today by doing Gods will and by seeking to make Christ present to all those we meet.