



December 20, 2009

**A Statement on Blessed Mary MacKillop from ACBC President Archbishop Philip Wilson**

Today is a great day for the Catholic Church in Australia and for the Australian nation at large, with the issuing of the decree confirming the second miracle of Blessed Mary MacKillop, paving the way for her to be declared Australia's first Saint.

It is always a great joy when the Church recognises in one of its members the creative, saving and sanctifying action of God at work amongst us. It is a particular joy for us in Australia that Mary MacKillop is to be formally recognised in this way.

Mary MacKillop has quite rightly gained a reputation in recent times as 'The Australian Peoples' Saint'. Largely, this is because people can relate to her. She was one of us. Born in Melbourne, and fired by a deep desire to serve God and to help alleviate the plight of the poor, Mary was an ordinary person who lived a holy life.

Perhaps it is because of her down to earth nature that we relate to her so well. Mary MacKillop could be feisty and stubborn. She suffered terrible setbacks, discouragement and injustice and yet through all of this her faith in God did not falter. Plagued by ill health for much of her life, she was still able to found a religious institute aimed at serving the poor, particularly in the field of education, which remains a vibrant and active presence in the fabric of Australian life today.

Mary MacKillop is to become a saint not only of the Australian people, but for the Australian people and indeed, for the world. Her motto of "Never see a need without doing something about it" continues to call us forth to action. At a time when real heroes are in short supply, Mary MacKillop is a true inspiration. Her heroism is all the more firm because it is built not on celebrity or sporting skill but on her love for Jesus Christ and a life of dedication to God and her fellow human beings.

We look forward to the announcement of her canonisation with great hope and joy and invite all Australians to take part in the many events which will be planned around the nation to mark this historic occasion.

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