

Mary & the Saints ...

We all need heroes and heroines ...

- ✓ to give us HOPE
- ✓ to CHALLENGE us
- ✓ to show us the way to LIVE the Christian life.

Our Australian heroine, Mary MacKillop, is not a saint because she is in heaven ... She is a saint because she reached out to the poor and needy!

Our Saints lead the way for us through these often confusing times. They remind us of the deeper values to which we are committed through our Baptism.



Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is a model of faith for us. Mary allowed God to do great things in her life, and so her life challenges us to live our lives in the same way.

The Church uses another type of Calendar to help us remember the wonderful people who have gone before us ~ those who show us the way to live the Christian life.

This Calendar marks the **Feasts** of Saint Mary and the other Saints.

What do the Scriptures say?

from Luke 8: 19-21

"My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

from Luke 11: 27-28

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"

from Luke 1: 26-38

"You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said."

from Luke 1: 39-56

"Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

from John 2: 1-12

"Do whatever he tells you."

from John 19: 25-27

"Woman, here is your son."

"Here is your mother."

What is our Christian Tradition?

The early Christians venerated the martyrs who were, by their blood, true witnesses to Christ. They also honoured the apostles and the holy men and women who had escaped martyrdom but had suffered because of their faith in Christ. These holy ones were remembered on the day they had died. Christian communities would gather together to read the acts of the martyrs, to celebrate Eucharist and to ask the intercession of these holy ones with God.

In medieval times, devotions to and feasts of the saints were expanded and feasts in honour of Mary were added.

In the Middle Ages, patron saints were found for every place and need. Even today, on many French (secular) Calendars, you will find there is a saint listed for every day of the year!

During the Reformation, the list of Saints was 'pruned' and later, the Second Vatican Council tried to restore a more correct understanding of the **communion of saints**.

The *Proper of the Saints* (ie, the list of designated feastdays) was modified thus:

- some feasts were left on fixed days of the year
- the historical truth was preserved
- different centuries and countries were represented
- the feast of the saint was celebrated on the day of his/her death ~ birth into new life.
- local Churches were encouraged to celebrate the feasts of their **own** local saints.

What does the Church today say?

The Virgin Mary has always been proposed to the faithful by the Church as an example to be imitated ... She is held up as an example to the faithful for the way in which, in her own particular life, she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God. She heard the word of God and did it. Charity and the spirit of service were the driving force of her actions. She is worthy of imitation because she is the first and most perfect of Christ's disciples.

Marialis Cultus, 1974

What does this mean for our school community here and now?

Mary as the **model** disciple is the *first* of all the saints. She is a role model for us ~ for all time ...

By looking at Mary's life in the Scriptures, we learn how to really **listen** to God's WORD and **do it**!

We actually begin to allow God to speak the WORD in **us**!

If we are doers of God's word, we must listen to this call. It is through us that God lifts up the lowly and feeds the hungry. Pope John Paul II wrote: '*Genuine devotion to Mary cannot be limited to devotional exercises, but must be reflected in the way we live our daily life.*'

Marian Year, 1985

Some points to think about ...

By knowing and celebrating the lives of the saints on their special day each year, we can be inspired to build a world of justice ...

What do you think?



How do local buildings, shrines, or tombs play a role in focusing people's thoughts and/or prayer?

What are the days of particular celebration in our school? in our parish? in our archdiocese?

Mary's role in the Church is much more than being the mother of Jesus. Mary shows us how to really **listen** to God's Word and how to **allow** the Word of God to **activate** us.

- ✓ What does this mean in your own life?
- ✓ What does this mean for our school community?