

PASTORAL LETTER ON THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. MARY OF THE CROSS.

8TH AUGUST, 2021

Dear Friends,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Australia's first recognised Saint, St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Most of us are familiar with the life of St. Mary of the Cross. In her youth she shouldered the responsibility of caring for her family and providing for them. Then, called by God into religious life, she offered her life to the service of God, ministering to those whom society had forgotten about and who were living on the fringes of society. St. Mary of the Cross especially took an interest in the education of the Catholic population of the colonies.

Our Parish has a special place in our hearts for St. Mary of the Cross. St. Gertrude's Catholic Primary School was for many years served by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The sisters established and nurtured the school community with the charism of St. Mary of the Cross. They also served years 7-10 students at Our Lady of the Rosary High School, Fairfield. Purchasing the old Fairfield Drive-In Cinemas and building a new location for a High School, Mary MacKillop Catholic College was established in 1991 and expanded to include years 11 and 12. Again, the school community was well served by the Josephite Sisters. Many of us in this Parish were taught by them personally.

During this Solemnity, I would especially like to acknowledge our School communities of St. Gertrude's Catholic Primary and Mary MacKillop Catholic College Wakeley. I would like to extend my thanks to the teaching staff who have been called in these extraordinary circumstances to do extraordinary things. With the spirit of St. Mary of the Cross, you teachers have shown your dedication and commitment, like St. Mary of the Cross, to educate the Catholic population of our area. May God continue to bless you in your vocation and St. Mary of the Cross inspire and intercede for you all.

To our students and families I say to you be courageous! In the midst of a world that seems to be trapped by the Pandemic, be courageous just as St. Mary of the Cross was courageous. In her life, St. Mary of the Cross was faced with many obstacles and tragedies. But she continued to place her trust in God. I would particularly like to send my prayers and encouragement to our Year 12 students. The stresses of year 12 are difficult enough for any teenager, yet at this time in history you are faced with more challenges than normal. Be courageous! Know that your Parish community is praying for each and every one of you. We are proud of your achievements and proud of the way you have kept positive with your studies this year. Take the example of the extraordinary woman your College is named after. We wish you every success in your future.

With prayers and blessings on this Solemnity of St. Mary of the Cross.

Fr. Jarek Zan, OSPPE