

St Mary of the Cross



SOLEMNITY

Pope's prayer intention for August

Evangelization: That families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly 'schools of true human growth'.

BE STILL

Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise and offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord today.

Gathering prayer:

Sit with the words of the collect for the Feast of St Mary of the Cross:

O God, source of all goodness,
who have shown us in Saint Mary
a woman of faith living by the power of the Cross,
teach us, we pray, by her example
to live the Gospel in changing times
and to respect and defend
the human dignity of all in our land.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'

—Matthew 6:25–34

The Gospel of the Lord.

Ponder:

Re-read the gospel. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) noted that in the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to practice *lectio divina*—the reading of God's word in prayer asking that it 'enlighten and renew' us. The following questions may help with this:

- Lord, what does this text mean to me?
- What is it about my life that you want me to change in response to this text?
- What troubles me about this text?
- Why am I not interested in this?
- What do I find pleasant about this text?
- What is it about this word that moves me?
- What attracts me?
- Why does it attract me?

Reflect:

Each saint is a living Gospel. They have all, in some way, embodied—literally incarnated—the challenge of faith in their time and place, and so opened a path that others might follow.

—Robert Ellsberg, 'Meet the Famous Franciscan Saints',
St Anthony Messenger, 25 September 2017

This week we celebrate our first Australian saint: Mary of the Cross MacKillop. The quotes below are attributed to St Mary of the Cross. Perhaps this week offers an opportunity to reflect upon the words of Mary, a woman who lived the Gospel:

- 'Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them bravely, remembering Whom you are trying to follow. Do not be afraid. Love one another, bear with one another, and let charity guide you all your life. God will reward you as only he can.'
- 'Find happiness in making others happy.'
- 'We must teach more by example than by word.'
- 'Be eager in your desires but humbly patient in their accomplishment.'
- 'Believe in the whisperings of God to your own heart.'

PRAY

May we keep the wisdom of St Mary of the Cross in our thoughts.
May we hear the whisper of God in our hearts.
May we turn our hands to service.
And may we respond generously to the blessings of God that surround us.
Amen.