

A Pilgrim's Reflection

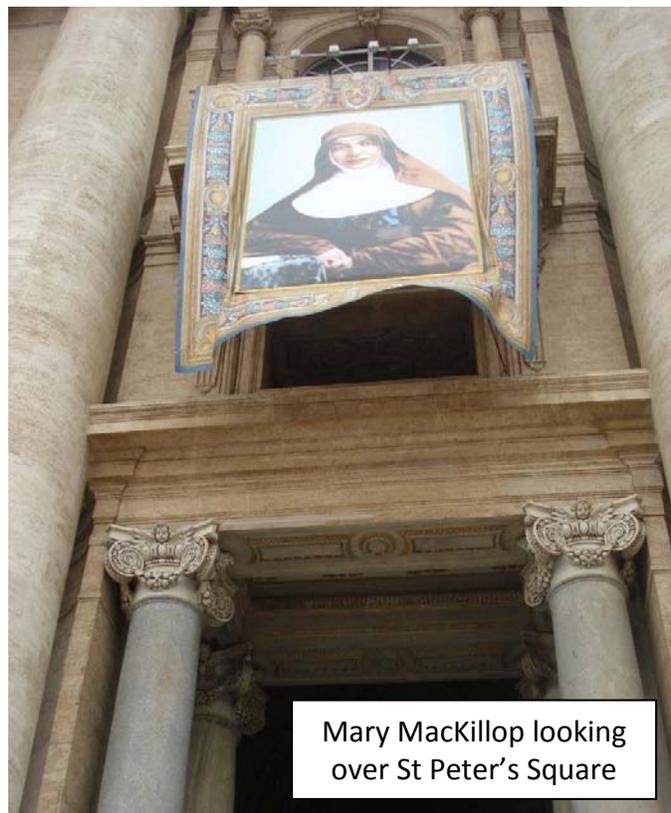
“Trust in God who helps you in all things” (Mary MacKillop 10/03/1874)

When I first heard about the pilgrimage to Rome, I knew I would go, without giving “the how” too much thought, and sure enough my beautiful sister said it would be a pleasure to travel to Brisbane (from Sydney) to look after our Children.

The trip was truly a once in a life time experience, something I will never forget. There were many highlights to the trip including the sense of excitement and anticipation in the air whenever you were anywhere near St Peter's, the two lovely masses we had next door to our hotel, Fr Anthony's inaugural walking tour of many of the ancient streets, the Scarvi tour, of course the Canonisation ceremony all shared with a lovely group of people. But for me I would like to spend a little longer on my own personal reflection on the Thanksgiving Mass the day after the Canonisation at St Paul Outside the Walls where the buzz of utter excitement was quite tangible.

I have had a particular cross to bear over the previous 10 years. Something that is always weighing on me and never far from my mind with particular concern to the future. I took this cross with me to Rome asking for help through prayer. I learnt how Mary MacKillop “thought that suffering and trials were a normal to-be-expected part of human existence. She also thought that those trials and sufferings were used by a loving God for our own good and the good of others. Further, she saw that suffering and the Cross were part of the life of Jesus. Therefore, the Cross would be part of the life of the followers of Christ. Consequently, no cross could make her unhappy.” (Mary MacKillop: A spiritual Model for All)

The Gospel of the Thanksgiving Mass was from Matthew 6:25-34, which in summary is telling you not to worry about your life. The final verse “So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings”. I thought I had been duly reprimanded and promised myself to try and live each day and try not worry about the future. Cardinal Pell reiterated this idea in his homily. Shortly after the homily I had an experience which I have never had before and which writing about does no justice. I had a feeling that washed over my whole body, seemed to wash into every crevice and the words were quite audible “It'll be OK”, I got the sense that a lot of work is involved and to keep up the hard work but in the end it will all be worth while. It is something I have not been able to share as it seems so unreal and talking about it, seems to do no justice to the feelings I experienced.



Since returning from Rome, my natural rather analytical character has tried to reason with myself, and tried to convince myself that I have over re-acted the experience. On Sunday we went to the Thanksgiving Mass in Brisbane, a bit of a last minute decision, which was beautifully led by Archbishop Bathersby. The Gospel Reading was the same as the Thanksgiving Mass in Rome, once again duly reprimanded! And I was reminded by one of Mary MacKillop's writings "Trust in God who helps you in all things" (10/03/1874)



Fr Anthony's Walking Tour



Fr Anthony relaying the scene to everyone in Birkdale

