MacKillop (Gold)

MacKillop\(^1\) is named after Mary Helen MacKillop who was born in Fitzroy, Melbourne, in 1842. As the eldest of eight children from a poor family, Mary started work aged 14 as a clerk. She then worked as a governess. Always determined to help the needy, at the age of 24 Mary helped start the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, the first Christian order to be founded by an Australian. The Josephites took on the work of educating children in small parish schools, and caring for orphans and women in need. The Sisters walked the streets to visit the poor, and lived in twos and threes in rented houses in isolated areas or city slums. The Sisters lived and shared their possessions as equals. Mary’s motto was ‘never see a need without trying to do something about it’. Mary faced many trials in her determination to help the needy including speaking out for others and challenging the status quo. The order is still active today, has attracted hundreds of women, and has established many schools and welfare institutions throughout Australasia. Mary’s actions acknowledge the human dignity of each person. Her life speaks of the message of God’s love for all, especially those in need. In 2010, Mary was recognised as a saint by the Catholic Church because of her heroic qualities and the holiness and goodness of her life. She is now known as Saint Mary of the Cross and is the only Australian to be recognised by the Catholic Church as a saint. Mary worked relentlessly as the leader of the Josephites. After a stroke that left her wheelchair bound, she taught herself to write with her left hand so she could continue in her work. She died aged 67.