# Mary MacKillop

## 1873



## One year of an extraordinary life

Edited by Sheila McCreanor rsj

Mary MacKillop
1873

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# Mary MacKillop
# 1873

# One Year of an Extraordinary Life

Sheila McCreanor rsj

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Adelaide
2016



Signatures copied from original letters

# A word from the Editor

This sixth collection of Mary MacKillop's correspondence follows on from the time of her excommunication. In order for the Sisters of St Joseph to survive, Mary was advised to travel to Rome to seek the approval of the Pope.

We are fortunate to have a great deal of correspondence from 1873 before and during this journey. As she moved away from Australia, Mary had time to reflect, to seek advice, to pray and to write at length to her Sisters, Fr Woods, family, friends and Church authorities.

While my initial hope was to cover the whole period of this overseas journey which included 1874, I found so many treasures in 1873 that I realised that this was indeed an extraordinary year in the life of Mary MacKillop. It merited a book of its own. Letters to Mary from various sources also provide insights into the character of this remarkable woman.

I am grateful for my many friends who have supported me as I worked on this book. I thank the Sisters who are our historians, proof readers and all who work in our archives. In a special way I thank those who have followed in the footsteps of Mary MacKillop as our Congregational Leaders and who gave me the opportunity to edit this and previous books of letters.

As I have now commenced some study of canon law it is unlikely that I shall be able to work on another collection for some years. If the opportunity arises, I shall certainly follow Mary's letters into 1874 and beyond.

Sheila McCreanor—November 2016

## Note

In the original letters Mary MacKillop used underlining for emphasis. This has been shown in the letters.

Some sentences or phrases in the letters are shown in bold: this has been done by the editor to highlight well known phrases of Mary MacKillop or to highlight significant matters.

**Other published collections of Mary MacKillop's letters**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2004 | Mary and Flora—Correspondence between Mary MacKillop and her mother (Reprinted 2010) |
| 2006 | Mary MacKillop in Challenging Times 1883—1899 |
| 2009 | Mary MacKillop on Mission to her last breath 1881—1909 |
| 2011 | Mary MacKillop and a Nest of Crosses |
| 2013 | Mary MacKillop and her early companions |

# Foreword

In this, the Sesquicentenary of the Sisters of St Joseph, Sister Sheila McCreanor has compiled a new collection of Mary MacKillop's letters during the period of 1873. Mary MacKillop listened to the heartbeat of her experiences as she travelled to Rome and beyond. In the midst of this reality she wrote of her experience of God's love flowing freely in and through her many encounters and situations.

In this documented set of letters we meet Mary MacKillop gaining confidence in her capacity for leadership within the Sisters of St Joseph. Having weathered the storm of the period of the excommunication, she was now encouraged to place the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph on a sure foundation. She took to Rome the First Rule of the Institute where she sought its formal approval.

These letters tell of her preparation for her journey, her meetings in Rome and her travels through Europe. A very emotional moment was when she wrote to the Sisters of her meeting with the Holy Father Pope Pius IX: 'I had the great happiness of seeing the Holy Father and of receiving a truly Fatherly blessing for us all' (30 June, 1873).

The thread weaving through this collection of letters is that of Trust in the Providence of God. Firstly in the meeting of her Aunt and Uncle Cameron on the boat taking her to Rome and then in the constant encounters with the people she met while she was in Rome and later in her travels in Europe and beyond. She writes of God's constant care through it all.

As one reads these letters one encounters a very human and courageous woman of faith. The letters are filled with expressions of human emotions expressed by Mary MacKillop—feelings of joy at receiving letters from Australia which lifted her weary heart and

at other times telling of being tired and exhausted and feeling alone and discouraged. She was ever grateful for the watchful way in which her good God enabled her to connect with the right people at the appropriate time.

Her letter to Monsignor Kirby on Ascension Thursday 1873 gives the reader an insight to her developing spirituality. In it Mary MacKillop shared how her good God had shown his fatherly care from her childhood to her early years in Religious life. She gave a deep sense of what the Will of God meant in her life describing it 'as a very dear book I love to read'.

In her communication to the Sisters back in Australia, to her mother and to Father Woods and others she told in detail of her activities while she continued to offer words of encouragement and concern. On Christmas Eve, 1873 she wrote; 'My heart is with you my dear Sisters though in body I am far, far from you'. Through these letters she told of her longing to be back in Australia with her Sisters while at the same time she knew that she must not return without an official imprimatur on the Rule. She showed great patience as she awaited news from the officials in Rome. Finding the summer heat of Rome a trial to her own health she was encouraged to leave Rome and travel firstly through parts of Europe and then onto England and Scotland.

Mary MacKillop used her time to learn of educational endeavours in Europe which she could adapt for her own teaching methods. Providence led her to join a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial in honour of the Sacred Heart which gave her great delight as took a leaf from the garden: 'I have got as a precious relic, one leaf from the tree under which our Divine Spouse told many things to Blessed Margaret Mary' (25.9.1873). While in London she connected with her old employer, Mr McDougall. She set out on a journey to her ancestral home in Scotland where she met so many of her parent's relatives and friends. Here her heart was moved as she met her relatives in the Braes of Lochaber. The detailed descriptions of these experiences enable the reader to enter into the experience with her, giving the sense of being on the journey with her.

May you the reader be inspired as you connect with Mary MacKillop's spirit and her humanity in this collection of letters. Take the time to imagine what it would be like to receive these letters.

Perhaps you might ask: 'What are the words of encouragement, the words of hope that you want to carry with you into your life?' Savour these words and allow them to speak to your reality.

Sr Monica Cavanagh
Congregational Leader
November 2016



Mary MacKillop, Adelaide 1871

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# Chapter 1—January to March

*At the beginning of 1873 Mary was 30 years of age. She had been excommunicated from the Catholic Church by Bishop Sheil, then reinstated. The future for the Sisters of St Joseph was uncertain.*

*A community had been sent to establish a new foundation in the Bathurst diocese—at Queen Charlotte Vale, shortened to 'The Vale' and later Perthville. The first community was led by Teresa McDonald and included Joseph Dwyer, Hyacinth Quinlan and a postulant, Ada Braham—later to take the name of 'Aloysius'.*

*Another community of Sisters had also been working in Brisbane since 31 December[t] 1869 and Fr Woods arrived to give them a retreat in January 1873.*

### 1873 January 11th

*Brisbane—Fr Woods to Mary MacKillop*

My dear child,

I have only arrived here yesterday and was so long with the Bishop that I could not write and now I have only a few minutes to send a line by the return steamer. You will wonder I am sure at my long silence. I began many a letter to you but would never finish. I had not the heart and for this reason I told the Bishop of Bathurst that I was going to write a circular letter and he most warmly and urgently begged me not to do so. I must tell you how disheartened I felt not for the thing itself but for the reasons which he alleged. I would not repeat them, but some of them I am sure are not true.

I was going to write but then I said that it was better not to write because the best excuse possible for not giving the Sisters a circular letter would be that you had not heard from me. This was my reason for silence and I hasten to write this lest you should be uneasy.

And now to myself. Don't, my own dear child, imagine that I am either lonely, sad or suffering from anxiety. God gives me a most wonderful peace and calm courage and though I do suffer and get plenty of crosses and humiliations, yet they never take the form of anxious forebodings or dark fear. I wish I could make you see what I feel.

The Sisters at Camden[1] are well and getting on quietly and nicely. They are just as they were, neither worse nor better as far as their future prospects are concerned. I have seldom reason to be anxious about them for they are well looked after. I think you would not refrain from smiling if you knew what my last troubles were tho' I dare say you would share my pain. You know, however, that I hate complaining and I hate mystery so I won't say more.

Will you tell the Sisters that I will when I can. Dr Quinn[2] here is most kind. He has not said anything as yet about our rule. What his ideas are I shall be able to write fully next mail.

Yours most truly in the Sacred Heart

FD[3]

## 1873 January 14th

*Convent of St Joseph, Vale Road—Sr Teresa McDonald to Mary MacKillop*

My own dear Sister Mary,

Two weeks have passed since last I wrote to you and this is the third since I heard from yourself. May our dear Lord grant there is nothing wrong. Perhaps you are busy getting the Sisters ready for New South Wales. If so I shall be much pleased as the Bishop is looking out

1. These were a small community which Fr Woods had founded in Sydney.
2. Dr James Quinn, brother to Dr Matthew Quinn in Bathurst.
3. Fr Woods used this as a quick signature –'Father Director' was the term Mary MacKillop often used in referring to him.

already and thinks of sending some of mine into the Bush, but if they come from you in time he means to keep them for some months until ours are professed.

Fr McAuliffe fought hard to keep the postulants and novices their full time in the training house as our good Bishop seeing the wants of the Diocese wished to send them out almost at once. The young people of NSW are not at all what you would expect them to be. Those in Bathurst are better than many I have seen. We have two postulants from Bathurst, one of them a teacher under the Board. She is very good, went to the Convent school for six years. She is only 17 years old and the only support of her Mother. Fr McAuliffe promised to give her Mother £14 per year towards her support. God bless him he has been absent for some days on a visit to Hobarton.[4] We expect him home on Saturday. I heard the Bishop intends sending him out to collect through his Diocese to pay off the debt of a very grand house he has just purchased in Bathurst so we shall miss him.

Poor Sr M Hyacinth[5] is a very great cross to herself and everyone else. She is in her spiritual troubles and I can assure you I am often inclined to be impatient. She cries so much and says she cannot do anything right. For more than a week now she has been quite dejected. May our sweet Lord help her to bear all things for His honour and glory.

I have not heard from FD since he left Bathurst. He had to stay some days longer in Sydney than he expected so that delayed him longer from Queensland. The Sisters here are all anxious to see our dear Adelaide Sisters and are so puzzled to know who is coming. I am very busy this week classifying the children. We now have a fourth class and the Sisters say they never saw such order. Sr M Joseph says she never knew the rules of the school before. She is such a help to me just now when Sr Hyacinth is so troubled. So is Sr M Aloysius—she is worth two Sisters to me.[6]

Fr McAuliffe said I should have help inside. I mean in teaching the postulants as I had much to do, he said the teacher from Bathurst whose name in Religion is Sr M de Sales[7] of the Infant Jesus would do most beautifully as he knew her and knew her qualifications.

4. Earlier name for Hobart—an abbreviation of Hobart Town.
5. Hyacinth Quinlan.
6. She had been received as a postulant on 1 November 1872.
7. Tobin.

I was not to give it to her altogether but sometimes. I find I often must be in school as things often times go wrong. Sr H has very little notion of order and the Sisters wish me to be there often. As yet we are very united. May our sweet Mother obtain for us that grace. Still, dear Sister, you know in young communities there are many things to fear and be anxious about. St Joseph is so good to me—he manages everything so well. I am thinking you will soon come to see your NSW Sisters. Will you, dear Sister, pray for us that we may be all our dear Father wishes us to be. FD said he thought Our Lord would find us the spirit of the Institute.

There is great work about the Camden Sisters. Fr McA will tell me all when he comes home. He said he would go and see Fr Dillon and ask him to keep quiet for a time at least. F McA is very fond of FD but cannot understand his many changes on spiritual things he thinks ought to be kept quiet but he does not despise those things, but he said he thought these things ought to be proved well before much notice should be taken of them.

The Sisters are now studying and I am sitting by them trying to write. I like to be with them. We had the B Sacrament here since the Retreat but on Tuesday morning it was taken away on account of the school. The Bishop said he would pay out of his own pocket to get the Sacristy plastered so that we might have the BS[8] always as he thought it was necessary to keep up our fervour.

Now my dear Sister I have written a long letter. I hope to get one from you soon. I am thinking you had many crosses during the stay of the Sisters in town. I have been asked so often if we may eat soup on Wednesday and Saturday. Also if on Holy days we may eat meat as on Sunday, that is for breakfast. So dear Sister we will abide by what you say, there is also in the directory to be said in the midday chaplet instead of Constant Heart of St Joseph pray for us, St Joseph of the Sacred Heart pray for us. Some of our Sisters say one thing and some another. I should like to do what is right.

I ask your blessing and prayers
My dear Sister
All send fond love

Your loving Sister Teresa of the Incarnation

8. Blessed Sacrament.

## 1873 January 14th

*Bathurst—Bishop M Quinn to Mary MacKillop*

My dear Sister Mary,

I suppose it is only right to begin the New Year by discharging my obligations. Enclosed you have a Post Office Order for five pounds. I wish I could make it ten times the amount.

I have had to run about so much between my own diocese and the diocese of Maitland that I had not time to think of your sorrow.

You will be glad to hear that the Sisters here are getting on very well in every way. They had their retreat from Fr Woods. They have a very large school considering the place they are situated in and they are seven in number and another will join them when she is relieved from nursing a sister who is in fever.

I suppose you have sent the Bourke Sisters on to us before this or you will have them sent before this reaches you. We expect them then in a few days.

We make our first foundation as soon as they arrive or next week if they do not arrive before then. We cannot send the Sisters now, I suppose, on this day to Bathurst, to Bourke. By the time they would get there they would cost us £80 at least, whereas they could get to Bathurst by the rivers from Adelaide for less than £30. What follows? That you will have to send them, or at least two others, to Bourke, in winter when the rivers are navigable? [9]

I had a letter from Miss Flanagan saying she had not a vocation for the Sisters of St Joseph but she thinks she is called to a stricter Order!

Where is this stricter Order in Australia? The nucleus is at Narellan. It is said, but I don't know on what authority, that a prophecy from that quarter states that Father Woods is to found six Orders, the strictest of them being commenced by the Narellan people.

I have not spoken to Father Woods on this matter tho' I had heard it before he left for Brisbane. He told me, however, that the young ladies at Narellan were to form the commencement of another Congregation.

9. See letter of 3 February to Mary MacKillop for more details about Bourke.

What I write about the prophecy, its Orders and Father Woods is strictly confidential. You may communicate it to your confessor but to no other living mortal. I think it explains fully Miss Flanagan's case.

With kindest regards to all your kind Sisters, and asking their and your prayers, and wishing you all the blessings of this holy season,

Believe me, my dear Sister Mary,

Yours faithfully in Xt

+Matthew Quinn

## 1873 January 21st

*Adelaide—Mary MacKillop to Sr Editha Flanagan*[10]

My dear Sister,

The enclosed letters came for you last night. Answer dear Rev Mother's without delay and in the frank spirit in which she invites you to do so. May her kind gentle advice cheer and encourage you, my very dear child.

Write to me also and tell me how you now like Clare and your new duties, and if at any time you wish to return to Kensington, let me know. Until I hear from you, I shall not know how to write to you, nor have I at the present much time for writing of any kind.

Our dear Sister Anastasia[11] was anointed last Tuesday by the Administrator, and today we had Mass here when the Holy Communion was brought to her.

Do not forget to pray for her—she suffers greatly.

Tell Sister Mary Stanislaus[12] that I have been expecting a letter from her but it has not yet come.

Praying that our dear good God may bless and keep you and make you sweetly happy in His holy grace, believe me, dearest Sister,

Yours affectionately in JMJ

Mary of the Cross

10. She was not the Miss Flanagan to whom the Bishop referred but a novice based at Clare, South Australia.
11. Anastasia Goonan died 30 January 1873.
12. Surname uncertain but it may have been Annie Lyddy who was professed in 1869 as Sr Stanislaus but who later left the Sisters of St Joseph.

## 1873 January 24th

*Steamer 'Black Swan' off Breaksea Spit—Fr Woods to Mary MacKillop*[13]

My own dear child,

I am writing this at sea, so I shall put no date to it as I don't know when I shall be able to post it. I left Maryboro'[14] yesterday and probably it will be three days more before we get to Mackay. I found everything so nice at Maryboro', the Sisters so well and happy. Indeed I never thought so warm a place could agree with them as it has done.

I gave the habit to Sr Mary Aloysius[15] on the feast of the Espousals of our Blessed Mother and St Joseph. She is such a nice little thing and remarkably clever. She is very like our Sister Margaret[16] in appearance, only with a little more animation both in her face and manner. I am taking her up to Mackay with Sr Mary Joseph[17] to whom I gave the habit in Brisbane and I am happy to say they are both very well—not at all seasick and are now reading their office on deck while I am writing below. Sr Clare[18] will tell you who is going to Townsville and when, because I left before Father Connelly's answer had been received. I think Sr Mary Gertrude[19] and Sr Magdalen,[20] the novice will be the best and this is Sr Clare's opinion. He says that he has two postulants there to join them, but I won't be satisfied at their receiving anyone unless I see them myself. I am going to try to go to Townsville, but cannot say until I get to Mackay whether I shall be able as the steamers don't call often to Mackay and it is too far to go overland—to say nothing of the blacks being troublesome between the two places. Townsville is 1100 miles from Brisbane.

Well, my deal child, I have had very long conversations with the Bishop.[21] He was very kind to me and very anxious to help me in

13. He was en route to Mackay.
14. Maryborough Queensland where there was a foundation made from Brisbane.
15. Aloysius Ferricks had entered at Brisbane in August 1872.
16. Surname uncertain.
17. This is probably Mary Joseph Wynn who had entered in February 1872. She left the Sisters in 1881.
18. Clare Wright.
19. Gertrude Wright.
20. Magdalen Foley—she entered on 21 April 1872 and left the Sisters in 1883.
21. Bishop James Quinn.

every way. He did not at first speak of the Sisters, but after a time he approached the subject. He said that the Sisters were no more than a diocesan congregation and seemed to hint that there could be no central government. I told him simply that they had a rule and that I could not consent to see it changed, neither was I disposed to adopt his opinion, nor could the Sisters accept any changes unless made by the Holy See, that they had had such trials already for their rule that the mere mention of changes again by him or any other bishop would only dishearten and discourage them.

**He said the Holy See would not approve of the rule as it was. 'Very well,' I said, 'my Lord, let us leave it for the Holy See to make any changes it desires and then we shall all be satisfied**.' On another occasion when he approached the subject, I said it would be better for him to hear from me a history of the Institute with the ideas and desires of those who first joined it. I told him then all our history and what were the troubles we met with, how we only wanted a poor Institute for poor people, trying to do a great work by poverty and humility.

This brought him to the subject of music which he said he regretted was not a part of our rule. I told him what we aimed at and why it was impossible to introduce it now. He quite agreed with me that it was the best to be done under the circumstances. In fact he said that it would be impossible to make the Institute widespread or useful if it were not what it is. But he said that the people of Maryboro' wanted music. (This I find is only Father James Horan's idea). I told him that if he liked to send Sisters of Mercy there, our Sisters would cheerfully go elsewhere. He said that the same thing would happen to us in Townsville. After all he wound up by saying that a branch of the Institute should be founded to teach higher classes and in this of course I agreed and said it was always my idea, but it was not now practicable.

On the whole, the effect of his remarks rather encouraged me. **He said he would never interfere with the Sisters' rule or force anything on them that they did not like.** He does not seem to know his own mind very well and to have worldly notions about education very different from our spirit. One thing especially strikes me and that is that he is untiring in his efforts to accomplish his own ideas. **At present he is not much concerned about our Sisters or Institute and**

**if they do not give him any trouble, I think it extremely probable that he will not interfere with them.**[22] He begged me earnestly to stay with him, not for good he said, but for a time to accomplish certain things such as the establishment of a brother-hood, for he agreed that it was evidently my mission to go about from colony to colony. But I gave him to understand that I would not stay long, though I might return again. There is only one person among the Sisters that could safely compete with him and that is Sister Collette.[23] She is very firm and outspoken and having seen much of the bad effects of the education that he favours, could tell him the truth with effect. Sister Clare's health will surely break down if ever he comes into contact with us, but I do not apprehend any danger at present.

I did not tell you that I saw Dr Battaillon, Bishop of Oceania, before he went back to the islands. He told me that he was very anxious to have the Sisters of St Joseph, but added plainly that he did not like one thing in the Institute, and that was the central government. He would take the Sisters at once if they were to be absolutely under the Bishop. Of course, I thanked him for telling me his objections at the outset, but said that this part of the rule would not be changed. Then he asked me would the Sisters consent to remain alone, that is, if three were in one island, would they remain in three different parts of the island with native girls, as there is such a difficulty supporting them. I told him this might be done provided they were within easy distance of each other. He left the next day and said if the matter were feasible (sic) I should hear from him again.

**Now all these objections and other circumstances make me most anxious that we should get the rule approved without much delay, and I don't see how this can be done without your going to Rome.** My opinion certainly is that you should begin to make arrangements now to go to Rome after next winter. Depend upon it we shall have trouble again if something is not done before long. Rome will approve of our rule I think with some few changes such as we ourselves should wish. It will be done better by you than by anyone else. You and another Sister might easily go.

I want to tell you another thing. From what Dr J Quinn told me he heard from Cardinal Cullen on the authority of the Archdeacon we

22. This was wishful thinking as later events would show.
23. Carolan.

have been very much misrepresented by Archdeacon Russell. There can be no mistake about this because Dr Quinn could not invent the mixture of truth and falsehood that was said. I don't know what to make of the Archdeacon. Certainly he has done innocent people much harm by hasty and inconsiderate words, and I hope our sweet Lord will give him many graces so that he may not do such things again.

But the evil of these things may not be contradicted by what the Bishops have written home. I saw one letter of Dr M Quinn's to the Cardinal which exculpated us in a great measure, but if we were to differ with the bishops before the rule was approved much harm could come. Besides, **I know that the Bishops were quietly making their representations to Rome and unless we have someone there before the end of the year, they will have got the rule approved without the central government**. Now please weigh all this well.

I forgot to tell you that Sr Gertrude[24] at Maryboro' is much better, but she is wasted to a shadow. The Doctor ordered wine and porter, but the Sisters adhered to the rule I gave them and they never took it. Oh Sister, I wish so much, so much that this rule was general and that our only stimulant was confidence in God. It is so edifying to see the result here. The Doctor was angry at first, but now admits that she would not have borne it well.[25]

I told you that we had three or four postulants since I came—all very nice, but none educated except Mary Molloy[26]. I am glad of this, tho' Sr Clare is not. But I wish you heard the Bishop saying how much he would like us to be joined by some of the All Hallows young ladies and what for and then you could go miles to look for poor ignorant girls for St Joseph's work. Well, I won't write more now. I am afraid the thumping of the screw will make it hard for you to read this. I will finish when I get to Mackay when I see all there. Poor old Fr Tissot is in trouble and may have to leave Maryboro'. He has been a good good friend of the Sisters.[27] He loves our rule so much. You should have

24. Sr Gertrude Byrne had joined Mary MacKillop and her companions in Sydney as they travelled to Brisbane.
25. She died in June 1873 and is buried at Maryborough.
26. She entered on 23 January 1873 becoming Sr Baptista, was professed in 1874 and later became Mother General in October 1910. She died in 1918.
27. The original has this repetition.

heard what he said about the music and the central government. He certainly encouraged me very much.

### January 27th

Just arrived at Mackay. The Sisters are all very well but all have the peculiar dull pasty look that arises from a tropical climate. This place is two degrees within the tropics so you may imagine how hot. Fr Bucas is a very edifying priest with a thorough missionary spirit. He is very fond of the Sisters and speaks loudly in their praise. They have a nice Convent something like the one in Brisbane, but more open. Alligators,[28] frogs and mosquitoes seem the great plagues.

The mail goes away again tomorrow so I have not had time to write much or even to talk to the Sisters. It was my intention to go to Clermont, Peak Downs, to give a mission there, but the rainy season has set in and it is almost always an unceasing downpour with a leaden sky and a steaming atmosphere. The country is flooded in a surprising manner.[29] Even the gullies of the hills become rivers and it is not safe to ford even shallow water because of the alligators. They are very numerous here in the shallow creeks and lagoons. If there is any steamer, I shall try to get to Port Denison where a mission is badly wanted and then to Townsville and, if not, I will make my way back to Maryboro' where I have a good deal to do.

Sr Gertrude is very anxious to see me at Townsville before she gets settled there, but it is very doubtful now if I can go. I am not likely to write to you again from here, because by the next steamer I shall leave. **I have not had any letters from you since the one you wrote after your retreat neither can I get them now until I get back to Maryboro'.** If I can't get to Townsville, I shall give retreats at Mt Gympie and perhaps one or two more places and then return to Sydney and proceed direct to Auckland. I hope, my dear child, you will make some effort to get Sisters for that diocese. Our Sisters would do more good there than anywhere. I think I have told you already what my opinion was about Dr Croke. He is talked of as the future Archbishop of Sydney. If so, the colonies may bless the day for the cause of religion.

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28. Salt and freshwater crocodiles are frequent in North Queensland.
29. The North West monsoon brings rain to this area in the summer.

Tell Fr Reynolds that the Bishop of Brisbane told me that the nominations for Adelaide[30] were not to go home till the February mail. So we shall have our Bishop before August or September—if even then. But keep this to yourself.

God bless you all. I can't write to any Sister at present.

Yours most affectionately in the Sacred Heart,

Father Director

## 1873 February 3rd

*Convent of St Joseph Vale Road—Sr Joseph Mary Fitzgerald to Mary MacKillop*

My dear Sister Mary,

We are here at last after a long time traveling. I was very ill all the way, but Sisters Philomena[31] and Helena[32] were not. We called at the Convent in Melbourne but did not get a very warm reception, however they sent us to a boarding house where we remained for two days and then on to Sydney. We did not go to the convent, however, as the Priest had orders to send us on to Bathurst at once. We were very glad to get with our dear Sisters once more.

We were speaking to His Lordship and I think he is very kind. Sister Mary Aloysius[33] received the Habit from his hands on Sunday last. The Sisters here have such a nice convent and school, everything is in such nice order. We are not to go to Bourke[34] but another school about 25 miles from here and I will write you a longer letter when we get there.

I am quite happy, thanks to our good God, our sweet Mother and St Joseph. I forgot to tell you before that we got a very kind reception in Sydney and Bathurst. We arrived in Sydney the last day of the month of our little Infant Jesus and a great number of the convent

30. Suggestions for the Bishop of Adelaide.
31. Galvin—she was a postulant.
32. Myles—she was a novice at this time.
33. Braham.
34. It seems the Bishop could not afford the fares of £80 for the Sisters to travel there and another foundation was arranged at Wattle Flat.