

St Mary MacKillop



Mary MacKillop and five other Sisters of St Joseph arrived in Queensland on 31 December, 1869, at the invitation of James Quinn, first Catholic bishop of Brisbane and founder of the Catholic Education system in Queensland. The Sisters offered Catholic education to the children of the working class in cities and isolated settlements according to the Woods-MacKillop system of parish-based schools.

By mid-January 1870 the Josephites were teaching at **St Mary's School, South Brisbane**, and by July they had opened three more schools, two in Brisbane and the other one in the country town of **Maryborough**.

During the next ten years the Sisters established fifteen schools and an orphanage and were teaching about half of the total number of children attending Catholic schools in the diocese. Seventy-nine Sisters had worked in the colony and of these over sixty had joined the Sisterhood in Queensland.

These ten years, however, were marred by a controversy with Bishop Quinn over the Sisters style of government which placed the responsibility for the internal administration of the Sisterhood with the Sisters themselves rather than with the bishop of the diocese. This controversy culminated with Bishop Quinn asking them to leave his diocese. Although many of the laity petitioned the bishop to allow the Sisters to remain, the bishop refused, and in mid-July 1880 the last community of Josephites left the diocese of Brisbane.

Twenty years later the Sisters of St Joseph returned to Queensland, not to Brisbane, but to a country town, Clermont, in the newly formed diocese of Rockhampton. In a letter to all the Sisters, Mary MacKillop shared her happiness: 'I am glad to think the Sisters will be back in dear old Queensland once more'. Between 1902 and 1915 five more schools were opened in the diocese.

Source:

http://www.marymackillop.org.au/_uploads/rsfil/00018.pdf