

ary MacKillop, known also as St Mary of the Cross, was born in Fitzroy, Melbourne, in 1842 – the eldest child of Scottish immigrants. In 1861 she moved to the small town of Penola in South Australia, where she met Fr. Julian Tenison Woods. Together they established Australia's first free Catholic school. In 1866 she co-founded Australia's first religious order, the Sisters of St Joseph, and took a vow of poverty. Soon there were 17 schools under her care, but Mary's refusal to abide by the rules of the Bishop in Adelaide led to her excommunication from the church. She was accepted back a year later and eventually shown respect by the Bishops for her work with the poor. Mary was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI on 17 October 2010, becoming the first Australian to be recognised by the Catholic Church as a saint.



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