

**Reflection on the Gospel- Feast of St Mary McKillop  
(Celebrated in Australian Church Communities this Sunday)  
(Matthew 6:24-34)**

‘Today’s trouble is enough for today!’ These are the concluding words of the gospel for today’s feast. We are “not to be anxious”. Rather, we are invited to be single-minded in our commitment. The challenge of this gospel is to live in the present, in right relationship and connection with the whole Earth community and to trust in the goodness and providence of God.

In *What Makes Us Tick?* Hugh Mackay claims that there is an epidemic of anxiety in the Western world. He reflects on our need to embrace our connectedness with ourselves, with each other, and with nature. If our innate desire to connect is frustrated or neglected, Mackay believes that the desire to control and the desire to be taken seriously will “expand unhealthily”. From a faith perspective, it is all a question of daily attention to the right ordering of our relationships with the material world, with one another and with God. Anxiety inhibits healthy living and impacts negatively on our communities.

The challenge not “to be anxious” appears six times in this one gospel reading. Three times in this passage Jesus tells the assembled crowd, including his disciples, not to worry. They are not to be anxious about food or drink or clothing. Neither are they to worry about what tomorrow might bring. It is clear that Jesus does not discount the human need for food and drink and clothing, for he states explicitly that God knows that they need all these things (6:32). Jesus’ concern is with their “little faith” or their lack of trust in God’s capacity to provide for the needs of all living beings. He challenges his listeners to be attentive to the processes among all living things, such as the way the birds of the air are fed and the lilies of the field are clothed. He also invites attentiveness to the life-sustaining processes at work in our own bodies. The hairs of our head, for instance, grow without any effort or anxiety on our part.

Jesus places all of this in the context of the right ordering of our relationships with the whole Earth community, expressed in terms of seeking God’s kin-dom and God’s “righteousness”. There is an echo here of Matthew 5:6 where those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are said to be blessed and told that they will “be filled”. In other words, God will care for them in the same way as God cares for the birds of the air and the lilies of the fields. There is no better role model for this than St. Mary McKillop who learned from childhood what it meant to trust in the providence of God. She also learned that the bounty of God is mediated through the compassion of those who have the means to meet the needs of all who struggle to survive. We might take time this week to find out more about this remarkable Australian woman.