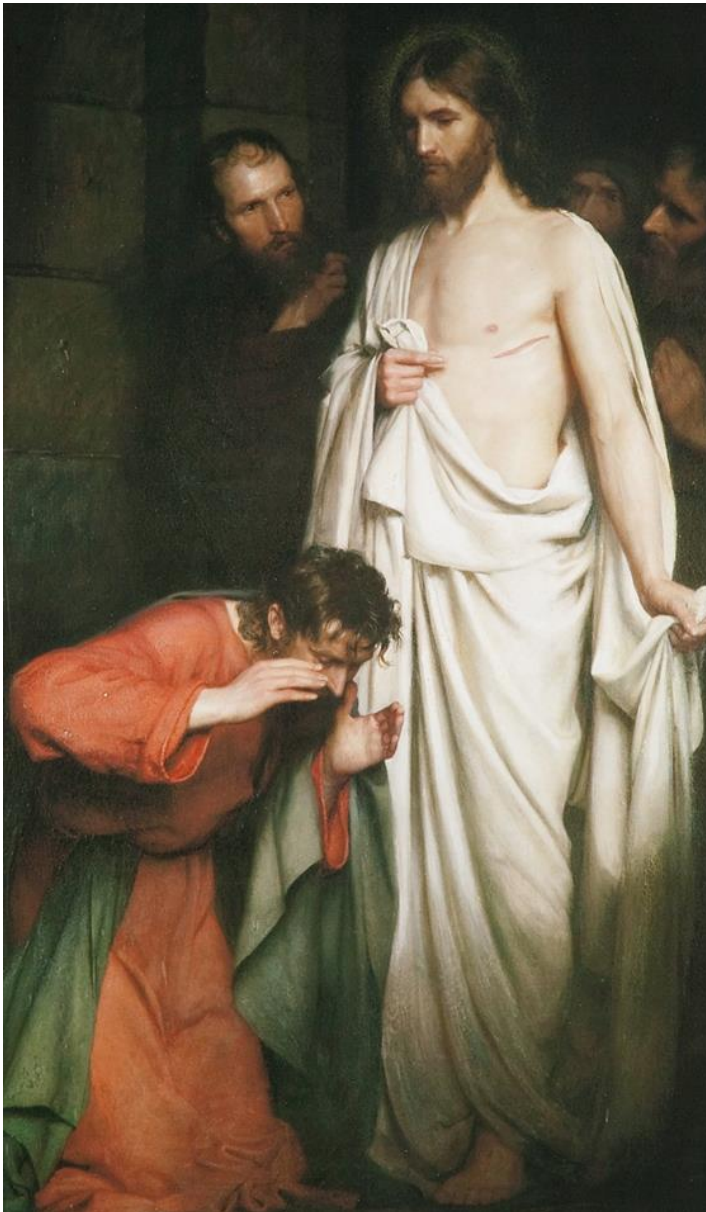


SAINT THOMAS, SAINT MARY MACKILLOP & BLESSED ISIDORO NGEI KO LAT
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER – 11 APRIL 2021



The Doubting Thomas by Carl Bloch | public domain

SAINT THOMAS

Saint Thomas helps us today, nearly two thousand years after his earthly life. Because we can identify with him so easily, we can call upon him to intercede with Jesus for us.

Thomas doubted

The other apostles still welcome him, even though he doesn't believe them. We learn a valuable lesson from this passage for our families and friends. We learn from the hospitality and tolerance of the apostles.

Touching the wounds

Cardinal Bo from Myanmar tweeted about St Thomas in this weekend's Gospel passage.

"Thomas could not believe in the power of God. He wants to touch the wounds. He is like us today.

We have seen so many wounds, so much blood, so much atrocity against the innocent people"

Thomas asked questions

Earlier in John's Gospel 14:1-6, on the night before Jesus died, it was Thomas who asked an important question and Jesus answered him.

That question and answer has brought so much comfort and hope to people for the last two millennia.

Thomas helps us understand by the questions he himself asked Jesus.

Thomas as a missionary

We hear from parish members from India and Iraq about the mission of St Thomas in the years after Pentecost.

We hear of his courage and perseverance.

SAINT MARY MACKILLOP

In Australia, we remember the excitement as we prepared for the beatification of Mary MacKillop in 1995.

And years later again, in 2010, we celebrated the canonization of Mary MacKillop. Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

We remember

- Books published about her life,
- articles written about aspects of her life,
- children's books, holy pictures and quotes.
- Videos and DVDs and paintings.

She is Patron of our Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Mary's life reminds us

- of her ministry in the education of children,
- of her care for the poor,
- of her ministry to rural Australia,
- of her determination and patience,
- of her leadership,
- of her support for women,
- of her courage.
- of her holiness and willingness to forgive.



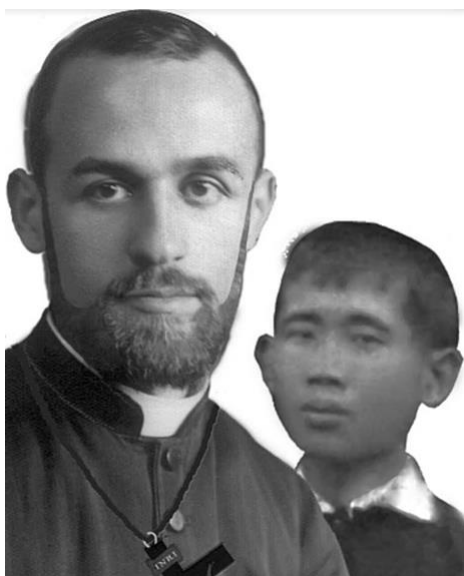
Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop

BLESSED ISIDORO NGEI KO LAT

We can relate to Thomas and to Mary MacKillop.

Let us take time to learn about Blessed Isidoro and so relate to him.

The people of Myanmar remember the journey of beatification for *Blessed Isidoro Ngei Ko Lat*, a local Burmese catechist, who was beatified on May 24th 2014.



*Blessed Mario Vegara (on left) and
Blessed Isidoro Ngei Ko Lat (on right)*

He was martyred along with his coworker, Fr Vergara, an Italian priest, on May 25th, 1950.

Both were killed in Shadaw in Myanmar.

Blessed Isidoro was born in Taw Pon Athet, and baptized there on September 7th 1918.

He believed that he was called by God to be a priest, and entered the minor seminary.

However, due to his asthma, he could not continue with his studies for ordination.

He knew that God was calling him,
and he discerned prayerfully with God which ministry that might be.
He began to work with the local catechist at home.
From there his own ministry of being a catechist developed.
In 1948, he began to work with Fr Mario Vergara in Shadaw.
In 1950, both were martyred together for their faith.

And now in 2021, people in Myanmar pray for peace as they call upon [Blessed Isidoro](#) and [Blessed Mario](#), to intercede with Jesus for Myanmar.

STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

Faced with such a difficult time in Myanmar, [twelve Cardinals in Asia have spoken out in support of the people of Myanmar and of their Cardinal, Charles Bo.](#)
In a sign of solidarity and unity, they have invited all people to pray for peace in Myanmar.

Several Ambassadors to Myanmar have issued a Joint Statement about what has happened there.

This includes the Australian Ambassador to Myanmar. Part of the Statement reads:

“... We stand together to support the hopes and aspirations of all those who believe in a free, just, peaceful and democratic Myanmar where the rights and potential of all people can be fully respected and developed. Violence has to stop, all political detainees must be released and democracy should be restored.”

Let us, as Australian citizens take the time and discuss with our national politicians about what Australia can do to make those words a reality.

Let us pause and pray to St Thomas, St Mary MacKillop and Blessed Isidoro for the people of Myanmar at this critical time.

[pause & pray]

NOT GIVING UP

Today's Gospel reminds us that life does not end with our embarrassments and our failures and our excuses.

We gain the spiritual strength to work through these moments and continue our journey with Jesus.

We can be tempted to give up,
yet there is the conviction that God calls us forward.

Life didn't end for Thomas with his doubt and embarrassment.

Thomas went on after the ascension of Jesus,
to preach the Good News of Jesus.

With a deep inner joy, Thomas met the challenges and trials of life.

Though Thomas missed the first encounter,

Jesus still reached out to him in the second house encounter.

Jesus did not give up on Thomas.

Jesus came back to the community and addressed the unbelief of Thomas.

Thomas went on to witness the love of God to other cultures.

Jesus does not ignore us. Jesus reaches out to us with hope.
With the hope gained from our encounters
with Jesus in community and personally,
let us pray about the challenges and opportunities we face.

[pause & pray]

CONCLUDING REFLECTION ON PRAYER AND THE SAINTS

Pope Francis last week on April 7th reflected on the *Communion of Saints*.

Some of his insights are offered below for our reflection during this week ahead:

- *‘Contained in the prayers we find in the Bible, that often resound in the liturgy, are the traces of ancient stories, of prodigious liberations, of deportations and sad exiles, of emotional returns, of praise ringing out before the wonders of creation... And thus, these voices are passed on from generation to generation, in a continual intertwining between personal experience and that of the people and the humanity to which we belong. No one can separate themselves from their own history, the history of their own people. We always bear in our attitudes this inheritance, even in the way we pray.’*
- *‘Prayer is always born again: each time we join our hands and open our hearts to God, we find ourselves in the company of anonymous saints and recognized saints who pray with us and who intercede for us as older brothers and sisters who have preceded us on this same human adventure. There is no grief in the Church that is borne in solitude, there are no tears shed in oblivion, because everyone breaths and participates in one common grace. It is no coincidence that in the ancient church people were buried in gardens surrounding a sacred building, as if to say that, in some way, the hosts of those who have preceded us participate in every Eucharist. Our parents and grandparents are there, our godfathers and godmothers are there, our catechists and other teachers are there... The faith that is passed on, transmitted, that we have received. Along with faith, the way of praying and prayer have been transmitted.’*
- *‘The saints are still here not far from us; and their representations in churches evoke that “cloud of witnesses” that always surrounds us (see Heb 12:1)... They are witnesses that we do not adore – that is understood that we do not adore these saints – but whom we venerate and who in thousands of different ways bring us to Jesus Christ, the only Lord and Mediator between God and humanity. A “saint” that does not bring you to Jesus is not a saint, not even a Christian. A saint makes you remember Jesus Christ because he or she trod the path of living as a Christian. The saints remind us that even in our lives, however weak and marked by sin, holiness can unfold. Even at the last moment. In fact, we read in the Gospel that the first saint canonized by Jesus Himself was a thief, not a Pope. Holiness is a journey of life, a long or short or instantaneous encounter with Jesus. But he or she is always a witness, a saint is a witness, a man or woman who encountered Jesus and followed Jesus.’*
- *‘The connection in prayer between ourselves and those who have already arrived – we already experience this connection in prayer here in this earthly life. We pray for each other, we make requests and offer prayers.... The first way to pray for someone is to speak to God about him or her. If we do this frequently, each day, our hearts are not closed but open to our brothers and sisters. To pray for others is the first way to love them and it moves us toward concretely drawing near. Even in conflictual moments, a way of dissolving the conflict, of softening it, is to pray for the person with whom I am in conflict. And something*

changes with prayer. The first thing that changes is my heart and my attitude. The Lord changes it so it might be turned into an encounter, a new encounter so that that the conflict does not become a never-ending war.'

- *'The saints – this great "cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1) both known and unknown – ceaselessly pray with us and for us in giving glory to God. Our veneration of the saints draws us closer to Jesus, the sole Mediator between man and God. In Christ too, we sense a mysterious solidarity with our loved ones who have died, for whom we continue to pray. We experience this prayerful solidarity also here below, as we pray for one another and for our brothers and sisters who are poor, suffering and most in need. In these challenging times, let us thank the Lord for the great gift of the saints and confidently entrust ourselves to their intercession, for the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of our human family.'*

Let us pause and pray to St Thomas, St Mary MacKillop and Blessed Isidoro that Jesus may enter into our fears today and heal and free us to love.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/041121.cfm>

Pope Francis, Catechesis on prayer - 28. *Praying in communion with the Saints, 7 April 2021*

Included is this beautiful painting by an unknown artist – we are trying to find who the artist is and to acknowledge them.



Blessed Mario Vegara (on left) and Blessed Isidoro Ngei Ko Lat (on right)