

# Josephite Companions'



relationship with the

**Sisters of Saint Joseph**  
*of the Sacred Heart*



During her lifetime, Mary MacKillop had many people who walked with her and worked beside her. Many became her friend, stood by her when the going was challenging and supported her and her work when there was need.

The Sisters of St Joseph have always encouraged others to work with them for the mission of God. The establishment of the Associates (now Companions) in the 1980's invited people to live more formally their Baptismal commitment in the spirit of Mary and Julian Tenison Woods and in relationship with the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Some Companions worked together with Sisters in ministries, such as education and parish life. Others gathered with Sisters and fellow Companions in Friendship and Prayer to enable them to continue their Service in the spirit of Mary and Julian. Being inspired by the story and spirit of Mary and Julian and of connecting with the Josephite charism enabled many to see value in serving God's mission and being nourished in their faith through this lens.

This scene has changed considerably over the years. With fewer Sisters in our communities to walk with there is a need to re-define the relationship between the Sisters and the Companions.

Josephite Companions are carriers of the story, as individuals and 'in communion with' the Sisters and other Affiliates. There is a need to nurture Companions to continue to grow in their awareness of their role in continuing God's mission with a Josephite heart.

How can the Sisters and Companions continue to grow a mutual relationship as together we endeavour to live God's mission in the spirit of Mary and Julian?

The Companions would see the following as being part of their relationship with the Sisters:

1. **RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE** by the Sisters of the Companions' place of being one of the options for a Josephite way of life.
2. **ONGOING SHARING** in the spirituality of Mary MacKillop, Julian Tenison Woods and the Sisters:
  - a. Companions and Sisters dialoguing with each other in different forums about issues
  - b. Having opportunities to come together for community, spirituality and ministry
  - c. Utilising Companions to provide input with the Sisters where relevant
3. **ONGOING FORMATION** of the Companions through sharing appropriately with the Sisters:
  - a. Sharing in events that would strengthen the ties with the Sisters and wider Josephite family
  - b. Some speakers visiting Regions for the Sisters to be available for Companions
  - c. Through local Sisters who are willing to provide information sessions to the Companions
  - d. Sisters using their expertise in leadership to encourage small, local groups when asked
4. **COMMUNICATION** – sharing of information where appropriate between the Sisters and the Companions. This could include:
  - a. Sharing of the JCoLT and State/Regional Newsletters with the Sisters
  - b. Participation of Companions when and if appropriate in the General Chapter of the Sisters
  - c. Sisters and Companions sharing reflections regarding the future of the Congregation/ Companions

5. **ACCOUNTABILITY** of the Companions as part of the Josephite family. This could happen:
- a. Through the sharing of the Annual Companions' Report
  - b. Having a Sister/s linked into JCoLT
  - c. Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between JCoLT and the Congregational Leadership Team

6. **MINISTRY**

- a. Sharing of information about the Sisters' ministries and possible links with Companions
- b. Connecting with Josephite Ministries through different levels of involvement as appropriate
- c. Companion initiatives being shared with the Sisters

*'We are all called to be carriers of the tradition, as individuals and in communion with others.*

*[All] of us - as vowed Sisters and as Associates [Companions]*

*- are in the process of discovering again in new and vibrant ways  
what it means to hold a charism in trust for the church.*

*Charism, then, must be constantly rediscovered, and constantly re-expressed.'*

*Joan Chittester OSB*