

Mary Glowrey was said to radiate Christ by word and example. The poor were the people of her choice and incurable patients had a special place in her heart. Mary never attempted anything without praying to the Holy Spirit, knowing that with the help of the Holy Spirit all things are possible. For the last two years of her life, she shouldered the Cross of excruciating physical pain which she bore with extraordinary courage and patience. Sister Mary died on Sunday, 5th of May, 1957. Her last words were: *"Jesus, Mary and Joseph"* and *"My Jesus, I love you."*

At her requiem Mass, the Bishop of Guntur described Mary Glowrey as a *"...special creation of God...a great soul who embraced the whole world."* It was in Bangalore, where Mary so courageously lived the final months of her life, offering her suffering to God for her dreams for India that St John's Medical College was eventually built almost a decade later.

"... you know how long and much I have prayed and worked to get for India a Catholic Medical College, but I tell you it will come, but first the seed has to fall in the ground, must die and then it will spring up."

Mary Glowrey 1957



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF VICTORIA AND WAGGA WAGGA

The Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga was founded in 1916 and many of the special works begun by Dr Mary Glowrey and her colleagues continue to this day. The League now operates from Mary Glowrey House in Fitzroy and, has branches throughout Victoria and Wagga Wagga. Mary Glowrey House also provides short-term, low-cost accommodation for people from rural areas undergoing medical treatment or visiting relatives in city hospitals.

Addressing social justice and ethical questions remains one of the primary tasks of the Catholic Women's League. It seeks to influence legislative and administrative bodies at all levels of government in order to preserve the dignity of the human person. The League also sows economic and social wealth into communities by assisting women and children with food, shelter, education, training and micro-credit.

The work of the League is dedicated to the Holy Spirit and Our Lady, Help of Christians.



Mary Glowrey in academic dress

Catholic Women's League
of Victoria and Wagga Wagga

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PRAYER FOR THE CAUSE OF
DR MARY GLOWREY
SISTER MARY OF THE SACRED HEART

Consecrated Woman, Missionary, Doctor of Medicine

Heavenly Father,

In the person of Dr Mary Glowrey, we encounter a woman deeply surrendered to Your will, and to the reality of Your love for her, and for every human person.

Blessed by You with a brilliant mind, yet profoundly aware that all that she had was Your gift to her, You led Mary to place herself completely at the service of human life through the practice of medicine.

You consecrated her to Yourself in religious life, and through her years of medical service in India—especially to women and to those most in need—and through her personal attention to all,

You opened countless people to a greater awareness of Your own deep personal love for them.

May we be led to encounter You in our own lives and, like Mary Glowrey, discover in this encounter the confidence and trust to surrender our lives completely into Your hands.

We ask that You would minister Your love to us, through the prayers of Mary Glowrey, in these areas of need that we now bring to You...

If it be Your will, may Dr Mary Glowrey's life of holiness be acknowledged by the Church, so that through her, we may continue to be led more deeply into the mystery of Your love made flesh in the person of Jesus.

Amen.

Written by Fr Dan Strickland, Missionaries of God's Love

Nihil Obstat: Rev. Genard Diamond MA (Oxon), LSS, D. Theol, Diocesan Censor
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Mary Glowrey was born in 1887 at Birregurra in Victoria, Australia.

Of Irish descent, Mary was the third of nine children born into a loving and prayerful family. Each night the Rosary was said and with it a prayer for priests and doctors.

Mary's outstanding academic achievements earned her a University Exhibition, an invaluable cash scholarship. Pursuing her literary interests, Mary began studying for a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne in 1905. However after a great deal of prayer and the encouragement of her father, Mary switched over to the medical course and graduated in 1910 with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

Mary Glowrey had to complete her residency in New Zealand before returning to build her own successful private practice in Melbourne. She also worked at St Vincent's Hospital and the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. A chance reading of a pamphlet about the appalling death rate amongst babies in India, and the desperate need for medical missionaries, fundamentally changed the direction of her life. Falling to her knees, Mary finished reading the pamphlet and knew that God had called her to help the women and children of India.

In 1916, Mary Glowrey was elected as the first General President of the newly formed Catholic Women's Social Guild which is now called the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga. Deeply concerned about the economic and social inequities that women faced, this inspired group of young Catholics sought to change society through prayer and action. During this time,

Mary also studied for a higher medical degree with a particular emphasis on obstetrics, gynaecology and ophthalmology. She became a Doctor of Medicine in December 1919.

In 1920, Mary left her thriving career as an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist. Surrendering herself completely to God's will, Mary sailed for India to become a medical missionary with the Congregation of the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph in Guntur. Pope Pius XI bestowed a special blessing on her medical mission work and Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, as Mary Glowrey was then known, became the first nun-doctor missionary.

Mary Glowrey placed the remainder of her life at the service of the medical and spiritual needs of the people of India, as an expression of her own deeply held love for God and for humanity. The small dispensary in Guntur grew into St Joseph's Hospital where Mary, for many years the lone doctor, trained local women to be dispensers, nurses and midwives to help stem the tide of suffering. Mary often travelled to visit the sick and dying in outlying villages, crouching down to treat patients on the earthen floor of their small straw huts. She also studied and made extensive use of traditional Indian medicines.

Recognising the vital need to promote the Christian use of medicine, Mary founded the Catholic Hospital Association of India in 1943. Her vision was the establishment of a Catholic Medical College in India to train health professionals whose medical care would be grounded in an understanding of the absolute inviolability of human life and placed at the service of life.