



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

media
release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 November 2025

Pope raises Mary Glowrey to Venerable

Australian woman's cause towards sainthood advances

The cause for sainthood for Australian-born doctor and missionary in India Mary Glowrey has advanced after Pope Leo XIV recognised her 'heroic virtues' on 21 November 2025.

Venerable Mary of the Sacred Heart Glowrey, as she will now be titled, is just the second Australian, after St Mary Mackillop, to be accorded this status.

Born in the Victorian town of Birregurra in 1887, Glowrey was an experienced doctor in Melbourne hospitals and private practice when she travelled to India, aged 32, and entered religious life in Guntur, located in present day Andhra Pradesh. She spent 37 years in service to marginalised women and children.

Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne Archbishop Peter A Comensoli expressed 'deep joy' at the news.

'A proud daughter of Melbourne, Venerable Mary of the Sacred Heart Glowrey was a trailblazer—one of our early female doctors—before answering the call to serve in India,' he said. 'Her healing hands, her compassion, and her bold spirit were a living sign of God's tenderness. May her example and intercession continue to inspire Aussies and people everywhere to live lives of service and holiness.'

Glowrey completed her secondary and tertiary education in Melbourne through scholarships, graduating from the University of Melbourne in 1910 (MBBS) and 1919 (MD).

She joined a Dutch religious congregation in India in 1920. Known as Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart JMJ, she dedicated her life to caring for marginalised women and children in India by providing medical treatment and establishing healthcare facilities, training programs, and support networks. In 1943, Glowrey founded what is now India's largest non-government healthcare network, the Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI). She died in Bangalore (Bengaluru) in 1957.

Glowrey's cause was initiated in India by the Bishop of Guntur, where she spent much of her life. It continues to be supported by the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph, the religious society to which she belonged.

Media enquiries to:
Annie Carrett, Chief of Staff to the Archbishop
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Pope Leo's decree marks the second major step in the formal process toward sainthood, signifying that the Church has officially found evidence of a life marked by extraordinary virtue. The next phase, beatification, will require the approval of a miracle attributed to her intercession.

Glowrey's story has been remembered and shared in Australia by her family and by members of the organisation of which she was the first president when it was formed in Melbourne in 1916, now known as the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga. Current president Jane Munro said Glowrey's faith and selfless dedication have inspired many for more than a century.

'We hope more people come to know about Mary Glowrey's life and legacy,' she said. 'We invite everyone to view the [Archdiocesan webpage about Mary Glowrey](#) or arrange to visit the [Mary Glowrey Museum](#) in Fitzroy.'

Archbishop Comensoli encouraged the faithful across Australia and beyond to keep her cause for canonisation in prayer.

'May the day come when the Church names her Saint Mary of the Sacred Heart,' he said. 'May she pray for us and help us walk ever more closely with Christ.'

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Image captions:

- [VMG_01]: Dr Mary Glowrey, Melbourne, 1910.
- [VMG_02] Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart [MJ], Guntur c. 1925.
- [VMG_03] Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart [MJ], Guntur, 1953.
- Credit: **Image courtesy of the CWLVWW Inc. All rights reserved.**

Mary Glowrey quotes:

'It is up to Him to point the way and for me to follow'

'My whole course of life as I look back seems to be but part of His large plan'

'Day by day I see more clearly how in healing the sick one comes in touch with souls'

Facts Sheet:

Official title: Venerable Mary of the Sacred Heart Glowrey

Bio:

- Born Birregurra, Victoria 23 June, 1887; died Bangalore (Bengaluru) India 5 May 1957
- Graduated from University of Melbourne MBBS 1910, MD 1919.
- Medical positions in Melbourne included those at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and a private practice in Collins Street.
- Left Australia 21 January 1920 and travelled to Guntur, in present day Andhra Pradesh. Never returned to Australia.
- Joined the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph (now called the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph) in Guntur, India in 1920.
- As a religious sister known as Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart [MJ].

The Canonisation process

- A member of the Catholic Church who is found to have lived a life of 'heroic virtue', after an extensive investigation and documentation of their life, is granted the title Venerable.
- If a miracle, usually an unexplained medical cure, is established to have taken place as a result of the Venerable's intercession, they can be beatified and have the title Blessed.
- Sainthood, or canonisation, may take place if a second miracle is established.

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