

# MEDIA RELEASE



Polding Centre  
133 Liverpool Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

18 February 2020

## **Formal ceremony to open the cause for a new Australian Saint**

The official ceremony to mark the formal opening of the cause for Australia's second saint will take place on Thursday 20 February.

More than 1000 people are expected to flock to St Mary's Cathedral for the Mass and canonical ceremony in which members of the commission that will oversee the cause of beatification and canonisation of Eileen O'Connor will be publicly appointed.

It comes after the Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP issued an edict late last year, requesting anyone with "useful information" to come forward to assist Church authorities in Rome to consider Eileen's cause.

Father Anthony Robbie, who was appointed as postulator in 2018 and is based in Rome, will also attend the ceremony and concelebrate the Mass with Archbishop Fisher.

Eileen O'Connor is revered for having co-founded Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor, a religious order committed to nursing the sick and poor in their homes around Sydney's inner suburbs.

Eileen died at the young age of 28 after spending most of her life confined to a wheelchair due a debilitating condition known as tuberculosis osteomyelitis.

Archbishop Fisher said Eileen O'Connor made her challenges into opportunities, inspiring and calling other women to be devoted to the care of the sick and the dying poor.

"This little lady was able to achieve far more in 28 years than most able-bodied people do in 128 years!", Archbishop Fisher said.

"The legacy of Eileen's ministry of service to the sick poor continues today in the work of the Sisters in Sydney, Newcastle and Macquarie Fields as well as through the Brown Nurses based in Glebe."

Once evidence is received, it will then be collated and presented to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in Rome by Fr Robbie. Following that, the Congregation could recommend to the Pope that Eileen be proclaimed Venerable.

At the subsequent stage, Beatification, there would need to be evidence of a miracle through the intercession of the person for them to be declared “Blessed” and at the final stage of canonisation, evidence of two miracles after the person’s death for them to be declared a Saint.

As the person charged with guiding the cause through the rigorous process for recognising a person as a saint, Fr Robbie is now seeking further information from the people of Sydney on Eileen’s “life, virtues and reputation of holiness”.

“Always thinking of others in need despite her own severe hardships, Eileen is an outstanding role model for today’s Australian youth and continues to inspire others to serve the poor and the outcast, nearly 100 years after her death”, Fr Robbie said.

**Note for Media:** The Mass for the formal opening of the cause will be held at 5.30pm with the official ceremony appointing the commission held as Mass concludes. Media wishing to attend should meet at the College St entrance by 5.15pm.

Fr Anthony Robbie will be available for a limited number of interviews on Thursday as well as a young Sydney woman who credits her devotion to Eileen in helping her through a serious illness.

ENDS

Media seeking further information/interviews please contact:  
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