

MEDIA RELEASE



Polding Centre
133 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000

9 January 2021

MASS TO MARK CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF 'SAINT IN WAITING' EILEEN O'CONNOR

Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, Most Rev. Terry Brady will celebrate a special Mass tomorrow (Sunday 10 January) to mark the centenary of the death of a woman on the path to becoming Australia's second saint, Eileen O'Connor.

Eileen O'Connor, a laywoman, 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.

The official cause for her canonisation was opened at a ceremony last year and anyone with "useful information" is invited to come forward to assist Church authorities in Rome to consider Eileen's cause.

Bishop Brady said Eileen O'Connor endured tremendous suffering in her personal life, spending most of her life confined to a wheelchair due to a debilitating condition known as transverse myelitis.

But he said she turned her suffering into a life of service to others, especially the poor.

"Eileen's family were left in dire financial circumstances after the death of her father and the experience left Eileen with a deep empathy for the sick poor at a time in the 1920s when there was no government healthcare scheme as there is in Australia today", Bishop Brady explained.

"Eileen's great courage and unfailing service to others, despite enduring great personal suffering herself, makes her an outstanding role model for all Australians".

"One of Eileen's greatest strengths was that she never judged another's situation and emphasised that we should never question the cause of a person's poverty and the fact that someone is poor is the very reason you help them", he added.

"I believe Eileen will one day be made a saint of our time".

Sister Margaret Mary Birgan from Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor said tomorrow's Mass will be a landmark moment for the religious order in Australia.

"Eileen left us with a tremendous legacy which we still see today through the work of the Sisters in Sydney, Newcastle and Macquarie Fields as well as through the Brown Nurses based in Glebe", she said.

"Sadly because of COVID-19 restrictions, we won't be able to come together to celebrate this special occasion with a luncheon on Sunday. But we are planning a number of other celebrations throughout 2021 which will also involve Sydney Catholic Schools".

The next special event will be a Mass to mark Eileen O'Connor's birthday on 19 February, to be held at St Thomas' Catholic church in Lewisham and which will involve students from the nearby Eileen O'Connor Catholic College for students with disabilities.

Note for Media: The Mass to mark the Centenary of the Death of Servant of God, Eileen O'Connor will be held at 11am on Sunday 10 January at St Brigid's church, corner of Brook and Waltham Streets, Coogee.

Media wishing to attend must contact Michael Kenny (Ph: 0438-046-406) by no later than 4pm on Saturday 9 January. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, TV networks will need to pool footage from the Mass.

The Mass will be livestreamed on the recently launched Eileen O'Connor website at this address: www.eileenconnor.com.au

ENDS

*Media seeking further information/interviews please contact:
Michael Kenny, Acting Director, Communications & News Media, Catholic
Archdiocese of Sydney. Mob: 0438 046 406 Email:
michael.kenny@sydneycatholic.org*