

# *In Memory of Sr. Mary Eileen McTiernan*

~Excerpts from the Homily written by Fr. Tom Orians, SA ~

**Funeral Mass: January 16, 2013**

The 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Fr. Paul Wattson, SA, Co-Founder of the Society of the Atonement



Sr. Mary Eileen, in all that she did, saw Jesus was not a remote figure remembered from a long past history. Rather, for her, Jesus was always a living person — a person with whom she could have an intimate friendship, a friendship which inspired her to follow Him without compromise. The purpose of Sister's life was, and the purpose of our own lives should be, as the Baltimore Catechism used to tell us, and as Sister no doubt taught more than a few children is — *to know God, to love God, to serve God in this life so as to be happy with him in the next.* Sister did know God, and she loved God and served Him very well ... she is now with God, the God of her passion and her love...



In the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "Today, as in all ages, there is no lack of generous souls ready to give up everyone and everything to embrace Christ and His gospel, consecrating their existence to His service with communities characterized by enthusiasm, generosity and joy." **Sr. Mary Eileen** was one of these generous souls. She has given to the Lord and to our Community, a service "characterized by enthusiasm, generosity and joy." Her lamp was always burning brightly with the oil of her good works. I wonder what God would say to us about the gift that was the life of Sr. Mary Eileen? How tempted we are, when death visits, to focus on what we have lost ... with near predictability, we ask, "Why?" ... and rightly mourn the loss of companionship, laughter and devotion. Yes, it is good and appropriate to grieve these and many more losses. But what if we could, for a few minutes, think about Sr. Mary Eileen's life for the extravagant gift that it was, and still is?

During her life as a Sister of the Atonement, she served the church and her sisters in religion in so many ways. Sr. Denise was reminded of how Sr. Mary Eileen taught kindergarten in her hometown. Of course, while you each remember Sister for all that she did, we are grateful for the many kindnesses she had shown us — we must also remember her for 'who' she was ... She was a Sister of the Atonement through and through ... a woman consecrated to the Lord by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. She was a model of Christian living. At her

profession, when she received our Atonement cross, she no doubt heard the words spoken by our Founders ... "God forbid save I joy in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

She counted herself among, as Fr. Paul often said, *"the children of the Atonement in glory everlasting."*



... Sr. Mary Eileen has shown us ... a God whose eyes light up when God sees us and grasps us without wanting to let go. The Book of Wisdom says that those who are faithful will live with god in love. She did, she is and I think that she has a message for us today. The words of Whitney Houston's signature song were heard over and over in the days after her death. Today, Sr. Mary Eileen says them to us: *"I'll go, but I know I'll think of you every step of the way ... and I will always love you ... will always love you... so goodbye, please don't cry and I will always love you. I hope life treats you kind ... and I hope you have all you've dreamed of ... and I wish you joy and happiness, but above all this, I wish you love... and I will always love you ... I'll always ... always love you."*

We thank God for the love and light, for the truth, the warmth and devotion that went out from Sr. Mary Eileen ... we honor her best by striving in our lives to manifest to others the virtues that she lived so gently and lovingly... In the words of Mother Lurana at the time of her death, "O Beauty ever ancient, O Beauty ever new, the beatific vision enralls the raptured view ... the Bride and the Bridegroom enter ... the marriage song is sung. Lo! Time has ended. Eternity begun!" So, Sr. Mary Eileen, like Mother Lurana, your eternity has begun. You have come home to the wide embrace of our God ... We share the joy of your home-coming. Intercede for us now until we, too, find our way home into the wide, waiting arms of our God.



Sr. Mary Eileen with her sister, Fredda, and husband, Frank Lawless.  
December 18, 2012