News
Religious Life



Sister Clare Crockett, a member of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother, is pictured in a 2011 photo. A sainthood cause for he Irish sister, who was killed in Ecuador during an 2016 earthquake, is to be opened in early 2025. (OSV News/courtesy Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother)

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The sainthood cause of an Irish nun killed in an earthquake in Ecuador in 2016 is to open early next year, it has been revealed.

Derry-born Sister Clare Crockett was a promising actress with little interest in religion when she went on a Holy Week retreat in Spain in 2000 that changed her life.

The then 18-year-old self-confessed "wild child" felt a profound call to religious life, and entered the convent of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother.

Following her death in the 2016 Ecuador earthquake, stories soon began to spread of her holiness of life and devoted pastoral service. Her grave in her native Derry soon became a place of pilgrimage, and devotion to her intercession has grown. She has been credited with bringing many young people back to the practice of their Catholic faith.

Father Gerard Mongan, parish priest of her native parish of St. Columba's in Derry's working-class Bogside neighborhood, told OSV News that "news of the opening of Sister Clare's cause for canonization has been received with great joy and anticipation in Derry."

Mongan confirmed to OSV News that the cause for Sister Clare will open in Madrid Jan. 12. From this point she will be declared a servant of God and the intensive scrutiny of her life and ministry will continue with both a postulator and vice postulator appointed to present the case to the Vatican.

Mongan said he hopes that the news will help devotion to Sister Clare to spread far and wide. "She already has a huge following of devotees who are inspired by her remarkable conversion story.

"The people of Derry and beyond are overwhelmed by the possibility that one day, they will have their own saint. In particular, she has been an inspiration to many young people who have been inspired by her life, especially her infectious joy.

"She has already brought countless people back to the practice of their faith. We all look forward to the official opening of her cause when she will become (a) servant of God. Exciting times ahead!" Mongan said.

Sister Clare was born in Derry, Northern Ireland, in 1982 at the height of the sectarian conflict known as The Troubles, in which over 3,000 people lost their lives.

Her home town is featured in the popular comedy series "Derry Girls," which follows the antics of teenagers in the city.

Shortly after her death her religious congregation, the Home of the Mother, released a film charting her life. "All of Nothing" documents the last 15 years of her life and includes interviews with her family, childhood friends and the sisters from the Home of the Mother order. The film now has more than 2.5 million views on YouTube.

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In 2020, the order published the first full-length biography of the religious sister.

"Sister Clare Crockett: Alone with Christ Alone" is written by Sister Kristen Gardner, who was also responsible for the documentary.

The book is based on Sister Clare's notebooks of spiritual writings, discovered after her death. In one passage she recalls the experience that brought her to rediscover her faith on Good Friday in 2000.

"I do not know how to explain exactly what happened. I did not see the choirs of angels or a white dove come down from the ceiling and descend on me, but I had the certainty that the Lord was on the Cross, for me," she recalled.

"And along with that conviction, I felt a great sorrow, similar to what I had experienced when I was little and prayed the Stations of the Cross. When I returned to my pew, I already had imprinted in me something that was not there before. I had to do something for him Who had given his life for me," she wrote.

It was the start of a journey of conversion and healing that led to her — despite protests from her family and acting manager — joining the sisters and taking her first vows in 2006.

Her first assignment was in the community at Belmonte, in Cuenca, Spain, in a residence for girls that come from families in difficulty. "Her zeal for souls, especially those of the youth, was immense," the sisters wrote in her online biography.

Soon after she was sent to the new community that was about to be opened in Jacksonville, Florida, in October 2006. The sisters began pastoral work at Assumption Parish and School.

Father Frederick Parke, who died Oct. 18, 2021, remembered Sister Clare as one beaming with enthusiasm and joy.

"The children picked up on the enthusiasm that she had for the Eucharist. She overflowed with enthusiasm for the Lord. Once you had been with her, you knew you had to pick up that same enthusiasm. It was so catchy."