

Peter O'Meara Awarded a Papal Honour

The Papal Honour of the Knight of St Gregory the Great was presented to Peter O'Meara on the 22 March 2023 surrounded by his family and friends. The award was presented by Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP in recognition of his extraordinary legacy as a faithful Catholic layman, his tireless promotion of the Corporal Works of Mercy and his lifetime of service to the Church and the wider community.

Peter obtained tertiary qualifications in Commerce and has been engaged in commercial activities connected with the Church for much of his life. Long recognised as an expert in the field of financial services and well-known as a man of principle he remained steadfastly committed to the teachings of the Church and was appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in 2010.

That proved to be an inspired choice, as in later years the Church was placed under sustained pressure from the State government to surrender its control of charitable trusts associated with the burial and cremation of the dead. Peter was acknowledged as a tireless defender of the right of Catholics and all faiths to receive a dignified farewell, and of the right of the Church to continue to exercise this Corporal Work of Mercy.

Not only did he persistently continue to negotiate in good faith with the State government, but he also devoted much time to ensuring that Catholic Cemeteries + Crematoria (CCC) improved the services it offered to grieving families and communities. Over the period of more than 12 years, Peter transformed the mission of CCC to the organisation it is today.

CCC is now respected as one of the leading faith-based groups in Australia, offering burials, cremation and grief support with exceptional care and compassion. In all his dealings with government officials, the board and his own staff, Peter is recognised as a man of great wisdom and boundless patience. He embodies Christian charity in both his personal and professional life and has been a passionate advocate of the Church's mission to console the afflicted.

Peter received this Papal Honour from His Holiness Pope Francis in recognition of his service as a relentless advocate for the rights of the Church to continue to operate Sydney cemeteries and crematoria. He recognised that this mission is infinitely more important than a business, yet his strong leadership has ensured the commercial viability of CCC for many years to come.