



Vox Populi

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Monday will be the Memorial of Blessed Peter To Rot, a martyred catechist who will become the first Saint from Papua New Guinea when he is canonised later this year.

The story of Blessed Peter To Rot is a simple one, but one that speaks to the conviction of his faith.

Peter To Rot was born on 5 March 1912 in then-German New Guinea. Both his parents had converted to Catholicism years before and he was taught the basics of catechism. Despite a local priest suggesting he would make a good priest, Blessed Peter's father suggested he study to be a catechist instead.

He became a catechist in the local area in 1933 after studying for three years. He married in 1936 and had three children.

When Japanese forces occupied the nation in 1942, they interned all the foreign missionaries, leaving Peter in charge of his local parish. His courageous witness to the faith during these years led him to be imprisoned in a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp, where he would be killed by lethal injection in 1945.

Blessed Peter to Rot was ardent in his faith and never afraid to proclaim the Good News, even when it meant facing prison and even death. He has served as a powerful witness of faith and will become an even stronger source of inspiration for the people of Oceania when he is canonised.

Pope Francis had approved his canonisation in March, just a few weeks before his death. Bishop Anthony Randazzo had welcomed the announcement as a great time for the Church in Oceania.

"This is a moment of great pride and joy for the Church in Papua New Guinea, whose faithful have long revered Blessed Peter To Rot as a model of unwavering commitment to the Gospel," he said.

"His canonisation is a powerful affirmation of the Church's deep-rooted faith in the region and a testament to the strength and vitality of the Christian community in Oceania."

He will be canonised on 19 October 2025, as announced by Pope Leo XIV in during the first Ordinary Consistory of his pontificate.