

"Eileen Markey's **beautifully told narrative** reminds us of Maura's courage in the face of brutal dictators and shocking suffering. It's **an important story that has been forgotten for too long**, and Markey's book returns Maura to her deserved place in history."—**Martin Sheen**

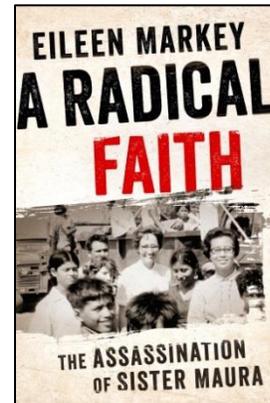
"**A beautifully rendered account of a true radical hero.** Markey's important book is a loving testament to their life and work."—**Greg Grandin**, author of *The Empire of Necessity*

"**A vivid (if maddening) reminder of how the United States sold its moral credibility.**"
—**Charles P. Pierce**, *Esquire*

A RADICAL FAITH

THE ASSASSINATION OF SISTER MAURA

EILEEN MARKEY



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On December 2, 1980, Sister Maura Clarke and three other women were stopped by El Salvador's brutal US-trained National Guard at a checkpoint set specifically for them. The women, who'd been providing food, medicine, and rescue to peasants under assault from their government, had recently aroused suspicion at the highest levels of the Salvadoran armed forces. On that night in December, the National Guardsmen kidnapped, raped, and killed them. Their discarded bodies were left by the side of a remote dirt road.

News of their killings shocked the American public and international news community, setting off a decade of debate over Cold War policy in Latin America. But as Congress held hearings, the State Department, CIA and FBI traded memos, and supporters held emotional memorial services, the women themselves became symbols, shorn of context and background: hapless victims.

Investigative journalist **Eileen Markey** breathes life back into one of these women in **A RADICAL FAITH**, the riveting biography of Maryknoll Sister Maura Clarke.

Drawing on interviews with Maura's family and the people she loved and worked with, her letters, and still heavily-redacted government documents, Markey followed the trail of Maura's life through four countries: from the sweeping green fields of her parents' **Ireland** where her father's involvement in the Irish revolution shaped her own ideas about rebellion; to the boardwalk and sidewalks of **Rockaway, New York**; to a remote gold mining town in the mountains of **Nicaragua**; down rutted, washed out roads in **El Salvador** to villages where survivors whispered the atrocities of civil war—and finally to the place where Maura's body was buried in a hastily dug grave at the edge of the Cold War.

How did a sweet girl from Queens end up in a place like this? A RADICAL FAITH answers the question, weaving an intimate portrait of Maura's spiritual and political journey.



Working in poor communities transformed Maura from an obedient and rule-bound young woman into a provocative critic of authority who pushed the boundaries of what it meant to be faithful to religious conviction—even if it meant challenging the CIA-backed regimes terrorizing the poor of Latin America.

Thirty-six years later, Maura's case continues to draw national attention: In 2015 and 2016 two Salvadoran generals were plucked from their cozy retirement in Florida and deported back to El Salvador for their roles in the murder of Maura, her companions and tens of thousands of others. In July, El Salvador overturned an amnesty law that had provided decades of impunity for the massacres of the 1980s. The opportunity for justice may finally be approaching.

As Pope Francis challenges and fascinates the world with his own outspoken calls for justice, **A RADICAL FAITH** provides an up-close account of what just faith looks like.



Eileen Markey is an investigative journalist whose work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Village Voice* and *America*, among others. She has worked as a producer for WNYC New York Public Radio and lives in the Bronx with her husband and two sons.

More Praise for A RADICAL FAITH

"Who was this woman in the dirt? In life, she was selfless. In death, she is boundless. **Eileen Markey's patient, compassionate biography places Sister Maura Clarke in the firmament of Latin American icons.**"

—**Ilan Stavans**, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture, Amherst, and author of *Latino USA*

"**A riveting portrait of a hidden saint.** A stunning story that should be known by all who love the Gospel. And all who love humanity."—**James Martin**, SJ, author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*

"**A spiritual and political thriller** that is meanwhile a tender chronicle of one woman's journey into history. This extraordinary book is a must-read for aspiring saints and rebels of all persuasions."

—**Nathan Schneider**, author of *God in Proof* and *Thank You, Anarchy*

"In this **rare and beautiful book**, Eileen Markey brings Maura to life. **A searing testament to the meaning of faith** amidst the hard choices imposed by desperate circumstances." —**Cynthia Arnson**, Director, Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

"**The epic story of an ordinary woman swept into the maelstrom of Central American terror.**"

—**June Carolyn Erlick**, author of *Disappeared: A Journalist Silenced*

"**A beautiful and moving biography**...The story of her life, and of her murder sheds light on the true nature of the Central American conflicts of the 1970s and 80s."—**Héctor Lindo-Fuentes**, Professor of History, Fordham University, and co-author of *Remembering a Massacre in El Salvador*

"**[A Radical Faith] brings excitement, tension, and compassion to an overlooked story**...Rich details and solid storytelling convey one nun's story of her dedication to God and her fellow humans."—**Kirkus Reviews**