

Pope Benedict XVI to Canonize Six New Saints

Vatican City, Oct 16, 2010 / 11:27 am (CNA/EWTN News).- With the approach of the Oct. 17 canonizations of six saints, excitement is rising in the streets of Rome. Often wearing distinctive dress, pilgrims who have gathered for the event include devotees of the first Australian saint and the first Canadian-born male saint.

The day before the event, St. Peter's Basilica was adorned with large-scale images of those who will be the Church's six newest saints.

Four religious sisters, a religious brother and a priest will be canonized in the morning ceremony in St. Peter's Square with Pope Benedict XVI himself presiding. Pilgrims have been filling Rome for days. Many stand out in their colored caps or scarves that show whom they have come to see "raised to the altars."

An estimated 8,000 people have traveled from the other side of the world to see the official recognition of Australia's first saint, Bl. Mary MacKillop. At the age of 24 she co-founded the Congregation of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, which still continues to carry out her motto "never see a need without doing something about it." She will be known as St. Mary of the Cross.

Cardinal Archbishop George Pell of Sydney, Australia said that she deserved to be the nation's first saint. He described her as a "fine Australian and an outstanding Catholic" in a Sunday Telegraph article to be published on Oct. 17 also in L'Osservatore Romano.

Br. Andre Bessette of Montreal, Canada will make history as the first Canadian-born man to be named a saint. On Oct. 15, Canada-based Salt and Light television premiered their new documentary on "the miracle man of Montreal." The show is called "God's Doorkeeper: St. Andre of Montreal."

The professionally made film follows Br. Andre from his humble beginnings to his funeral, which drew one million people to the enormous St. Joseph Oratory he built in Montreal. A doorkeeper driven by a deep devotion to St. Joseph, Br. Andre worked many miracles attributed to the saint's intercession. The film shows images of an entire wall at the oratory basilica covered in the crutches of those he helped to heal.

A Polish priest, Fr. Stanislaw Soltys, will also be canonized. President of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski, and four of the nation's highest Catholic prelates made a visit to the Vatican on the ceremony's eve.

Among them was John Paul II's personal secretary, Cardinal Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow. They met with Pope Benedict XVI on the eve of the canonization, which coincided with the 32nd anniversary John Paul II's election to the papacy.

The remaining three saints include two Italians, Poor Clare Sr. Camilla Battista Varano and Sr. Giulia Salzano of the Catechist Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Sr. Candida Maria de Jesus Cipitria y Barriola, the Spanish foundress of the Congregation of the Daughters of Jesus, rounds out the "Class of 2010."

Br. André Bessette of Montreal - The First Canadian-Born Male Saint

Born Alfred Bessette to a poor family in Mont-Saint Grégoire, Québec, and orphaned at the age of 12, Brother André entered the Congregation of the Holy Cross and was called to spend his days receiving guests and visiting the sick and afflicted. He was credited with many miraculous healings and cures, but Brother André insisted that these graces were received through the intercession of St. Joseph. This devotion led him to found St. Joseph's Oratory, the world's largest shrine dedicated to the Patron of the Universal Church.



On October 17th, Brother André Bessette, who was declared "Blessed" in 1982, will be canonized by Pope Benedict XVI, becoming the first Canadian-born male saint. In honor of this historic event, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson has called on Knights throughout the Order to join their Canadian brothers in celebrating Brother André's life and virtue through the following three important initiatives related to Brother André:

1. A "Brother André Membership Campaign," which will run from Oct. 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. Every brother Knight who recruits a new member will receive a special commemorative medallion of the new saint.
2. Councils are asked to conduct First Degree Exemplifications Honoring Brother André during the same time period, using the special membership certificates with the new saint's image.
3. A Novena to Brother André will take place in the days leading up to the canonization, from Oct. 9-17, with a newly printed prayer card. The Novena is as follows:

"God our Father, you gave Brother André of Montreal, your humble servant, a great devotion to St. Joseph and a special commitment to the sick and the needy. May the example of his life and ministry inspire us to ever-greater works of charity, in generous service to our brothers and sisters in need. Give us the strength to surrender ourselves to your will, and to be instruments of your loving mercy. Help us to follow Brother André's example of prayer and love, so that we too may come into your glory. Through the intercession of Brother André, grant the favor I now present (make your request). Through Christ our Lord. Amen."