Pope Francis, with retired pope, canonizes Saints John XXIII and John Paul II

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Canonizing two recent popes in the presence of his immediate predecessor, Pope Francis praised the new Saints John XXIII and John Paul II as men of courage and mercy, who responded to challenges of their time by modernizing the Catholic Church in fidelity to its ancient traditions.

“They were priests, bishops and popes of the 20th century,” the pope said April 27 in his homily during Mass in St. Peter’s Square. “They lived through the tragic events of that century, but they were not overwhelmed by them. For them, God was more powerful.”

“John XXIII and John Paul cooperated with the Holy Spirit in renewing and updating the church in keeping with her original features, those features which the saints have given her throughout the centuries,” he said.

Speaking before a crowd of half a million that included retired Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis praised Saint John for his best-known accomplishment, calling the Second Vatican Council, which he said “showed an exquisite openness to the Holy Spirit.”

“He let himself be led, and he was for the church a pastor, a servant-leader,” the pope said of Saint John. “This was his great service to the church. I like to think of him as the pope of openness to the Spirit.”

Pope Francis characterized Saint John Paul as the “pope of the family,” a title he said the late pope himself had hoped to be remembered by. Pope Francis said he was sure Saint John Paul was guiding the church on its path to two upcoming synods of bishops on the family, to be held at the Vatican this October and in October 2015.

The pope invoked the help of the two new papal saints for the synods’ success, and he prayed, “May both of them teach us not to be scandalized by the wounds of Christ and to enter ever more deeply into the mystery of divine mercy, which always hopes and always forgives because it always loves.”

Pope Francis has said the agenda for the family synods will include church teaching and practice on marriage, areas he has said exemplify a particular need for mercy in the church today.

The pope repeatedly mentioned mercy in his homily, which he delivered on Divine Mercy Sunday, an observance Saint John Paul put on the church’s universal calendar in 2000. The Polish pope died on the vigil of the feast in 2005 and was beatified on Divine Mercy Sunday in 2011. In addition to Pope Benedict, making only his third public appearance since he resigned in February 2013, Pope Francis’ co-celebrants included some 150 cardinals and 700 bishops.

Pope Benedict did not join the procession of bishops at the start of Mass, but arrived half an hour earlier, wearing white vestments and a bishop’s miter and walking with a cane; he sat in a section of the square designated for cardinals.

Pope Francis greeted his predecessor with an embrace at the start of the Mass, drawing applause from the crowd, and approached him again at the end.

During the canonization ceremony, which took place at the beginning of the Mass, devotees carried up relics of the new saints in matching silver reliquaries, which Pope Francis kissed before they were placed on a small table for veneration by the congregation.

Saint John’s relic was a piece of the late pope’s skin, removed when his body was transferred to its present tomb in the main sanctuary of St. Peter’s Basilica.

Floribeth Mora Diaz, a Costa Rican woman whose recovery from a brain aneurysm was recognized by the church as a miracle attributable to the intercession of Saint John Paul, brought up a silver reliquary containing some of the saint’s blood, taken from him for medical testing shortly before his death in 2005.

The Mass took place under cloudy skies with temperatures in the low 60s, and only a sprinkle of rain fell just before the 10 a.m. start of the liturgy. Huge tapestries bearing portraits of the two saints hung from the facade of the basilica, and the square was decorated with 30,000 roses and other flowers donated by the nation of Ecuador.

The square and the broad Via della Conciliazione leading up to it were tightly packed with approximately half a million pilgrims, many of whom had been standing for hours before the start of Mass. Among the many national flags on display, the majority were from Poland, the native land of Saint John Paul.

The Vatican estimated that 800,000 attended the ceremony in Rome, with overflow crowds watching on giant-screen TVs set up at various locations around the city. The 2011 beatification of Pope John Paul drew more than 1 million people, according to Italian police estimates at the time.

The Vatican said 93 countries sent official delegations to the Mass, and more than 30 of the delegations were led by a president or prime minister. The king and queen of Spain and the king and queen of Belgium were in attendance.

Pope Francis spent half an hour personally greeting the delegations following the Mass. He then rode in his popemobile through the square and adjacent avenue, drawing cheers and applause from the crowds, for about 20 minutes until disappearing at the end of the street.

The canonizations of both popes came after extraordinary measures by their successors to expedite the process. Pope Benedict waived the usual five-year waiting period before the start of a sainthood cause for Pope John Paul shortly after his death, when he was mourned by crowds shouting “Santo subito!” (“A saint at once!”). In the case of Saint John, Pope Francis waived the usual requirement of a second miracle before a blessed can added to the church’s canon of saints.
Vocations flourish best when nurtured at home

This year, the annual celebration of Good Shepherd Sunday will have a special prominence and splendor. It comes in the wake of the canonizations of two very good shepherds, Saint John Paul II and Saint John XXIII. It will also coincide this year with Mother’s Day. Good Shepherd Sunday is observed on the Fourth Sunday of Easter because the Gospel for that Sunday portrays Jesus as the Good Shepherd who “lays down his life for his sheep.” The Church throughout the world annually observes this day as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. We pray in a particular way for vocations to the priesthood; for good shepherds. We pray for our seminarians. We pray that God will continue to call from our midst many more young men with generous hearts who are willing to become servers formed by the mind and heart of Christ.

Every vocation is a precious gift from God. God calls each of us by name. He calls each of us to become saints. We call each of us to walk by a particular path that will lead to our sanctification and which will give a concrete focus to our mission. Must be married to constitute; others to priesthood or the consecrated life. Every Christian vocation is a vocation to love and to serve. Whatever our vocation might be it is our responsibility to be good stewards of this gift.

Archbishop Coakley’s Calendar

The following events are part of Archbishop Coakley’s official calendar:

May 4 – Holy Family Cathedral Centennial Mass, 10 a.m., Holy Family Cathedral, Tulsa
May 6 – Mount Saint Mary’s Congregation Meeting, 9 a.m., Mount Saint Mary High School
May 6 – Live Broadcast for Oklahoma Catholic Radio, 4 p.m.

The world has always quickly found a way to change circumstances made it very difficult to avoid it any longer. I think my mother always identified with Saint Monica, who shed many tears and prayed without ceasing for her wayward son’s conversion. Her son was Saint Augustine, and that gave my mother great hope as she continued to pray for me. On this Mother’s Day, I will once again thank God for my dear mother and her special role in handing on the gift of faith in our home and opening my heart to the gift of my vocation through her prayers, encouragement and patient love.

Family

The family is the ideal seminary, or “seedbed,” to cultivate and foster this gift. This Mother’s Day, as we observe the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, I am particularly mindful of Archbishop Paul Coakley’s own mother’s vocation, which gave me great hope as I thought about being a priest? Honesty, as an adolescent, that was the last question I wanted to consider. I always quickly found a way to change the subject. But once that seed had been sown, it remained in the recesses of my mind until other events and circumstances made it very difficult to avoid it any longer.

Vocations are the most effective in the fertile soil of the Christian family. A loving home in which parents take seriously their responsibility as first teachers of their children provides the best setting for the transfiguration of faith, for formation in virtue and the discernment of a vocation. While the whole Christian community has the responsibility to cultivate and pray for vocations, the family is the ideal seminary, or “seedbed,” to cultivate and foster this gift.

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By Sooner Catholic Staff

Additional coverage of Church and archdiocesan news and events, only on www.soonercatholic.com:

- On April 29, an execution of a convicted killer utilizing a new three-drug lethal injection protocol went awry in McAlester, Okla. Read Archbishop Paul Coakley’s statement on this unprecedented use of the death penalty at www.archokc.org.
- Read additional commentary about the Church’s two newest saints at www.soonercatholic.com.
- View additional photos of Holy Week celebrations at various parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma.
- On May 9, Saint Joseph Church in Norman will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its Friday Night Bingo. Details online.
- The Cabrini Wellness Ministry, which addresses suicide prevention, re- sponse and education in the archdiocese, will offer several suicide prevention trainings this summer. Read more online.

Plus, don’t miss daily updates on Facebook and Twitter!
Priests’ council recognizes work of Fathers Chapman, Quant with Father Rother Award

By Sarah Cooper
For the Sooner Catholic

As the Hispanic community grew over the years in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, two faithful pastors led the way to meet their spiritual needs. On April 15, the priests’ council, led by Archbishop Paul Cooley, recognized the work of Father Mike Chapman and Father Roberto Quant (deceased) with the Father Stanley Rother Faithful Shepherd Award.

“The award is given out to appreciate priests who have been particularly good pastors and have given themselves to serve the people as Father Stanley Rother did,” said Father Bill Pratt, who served on this year’s nominating committee. “Each of these priests have spent their pastoral ministry working with the marginalized. They are men of great charity.”

During his last 45 years of priestly service, Father Mike Chapman has been assigned to seven different parishes, most recently Holy Angels parish in Oklahoma City. Recognizing a need 25 years ago, Father Chapman offered the first Spanish Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Oklahoma City. He considers his concern for “the God’s direct blessing from God, even before his ordination, and has continued to work on improving his Spanish fluency.”

“I was deeply moved to have been chosen by my brother priests to receive this award,” said Father Chapman. “The great joy of my priesthood is being blessed by daily the respectful encounter with the people. The abiding faith exhibited among the people inspires me to live the faith I profess more completely.”

Father Quant’s brother priests consider him a hero for his generous love for the poor and marginalized.

“He serves God’s people with a smile,” said Father Tim Ashley, pastor of Saint Charles Borromeo Church in Oklahoma City. “He is a wonderful man who does not seek any high place, except for a place with those most in need, and, in seeking that place, he is a class of his own.”

Last May, the archdiocese successfully sent a priest in Hispanic pastoral care after almost 25 years of priestly service. Father Roberto Quant, whose final assignment was Sacred Heart parish, took immense joy in his priestly vocation. Even in Nicaragua, FatherQuant was able to understand the plight of many of his parishioners. He was able to help lift them up from their circumstances and show them their dignity in Christ.

“Father Roberto was joyful, loved the priesthood and the Church, and knew how to have a good time,” said Father Philip Section, one of Father Quant’s three seminary classmates who received the award on his behalf. “He had a gift for making people feel welcome and helped others to become better disciples. He knew how to forgive and love those who did not love him; this was one of his greatest gifts.”

The Father Stanley Rother Faithful Shepherd Award is named in honor of the fervent of God Father Stanley Rother, an Archdiocese of Oklahoma City priest who was killed in Guatemala in 1981. The award was instituted in 2003 to recognize a priest who has exhibited an unwavering commitment to the spiritual lives of his parishioners.

“This is a good opportunity for both the priests and their parish to recognize those brothers for their generous service,” said Archbishop Paul Cooley. “Often faithful priestly service goes unacknowledged. These men do not look for accolades, but it is good to be able to show this small gesture of recognition.”

Sarah Cooper is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Canonization opens way for universal celebration of pope’s feast days

By Cindy Woodson
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — From the moment Pope Francis said, “We declare and define Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II be saints” and “they are to be venerated as such by the whole church,” their October feast days automatical- ly could be celebrated at Masses around the world.

St. John’s feast day is Oct. 25, the anniversary of the day in 1962 that he opened the Second Vatican Council. St. John Paul’s feast day is Oct. 22, the anniversary of the inauguration of his pontificate in 1978.

After the two were beatified — Pope John in 2000 and Pope John Paul in 2011 — special Vatican permission was required to public- ly celebrate their feast days outside the Diocese of Rome, where they are both bishop and pope, and their home dioceses. Vatican permission also was required to name papal altars after them, but with their canonization, that is no longer necessary.

A key difference between beatifica- tion and canonization is: — At a canonization, the pope issues a formal decree recognizing the candidate’s holiness and per- mitting public memory of the candidate to liturgies throughout the church. — With a beatification, the pope concedes permission for limited public memorials, usually among members of the candidate’s religious order or in the diocese where the candidate lived and worked.

Pope says he hopes new saints will inspire church to fulfill mission

By Carol Glatt
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — “Just days before Pope Francis was set to canonize two of his predecessors, he expressed his hopes the two soon-to-be saints would continue to inspire the whole church in its mission.”

The pope sent a video message to Poland television and radio April 24 thanking the church and the pope’s “ad limina” visits to report on the results of the jubilee, two faithful pastors who were killed in Guatemala in 1981. The award was instituted in 2003 to recognize a priest who has exhibited an unwavering commitment to the spiritual lives of his parishioners.

“Father Roberto was joyful, loved the priesthood and the Church, and knew how to have a good time,” said Father Philip Section, one of Father Quant’s three seminary classmates who received the award on his behalf. “He had a gift for making people feel welcome and helped others to become better disciples. He knew how to forgive and love those who did not love him; this was one of his greatest gifts.”

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Sarah Cooper is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Pope Francis touches the head of a child as he addresses pilgrims to St. Peter’s Square in 2013. The Year of Faith celebration of the Holy Mass of Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving Romans via Reuters)
Vocations

From within the Church to follow Him in the light and to serve the Truth. God desires for us as His children. It is not a matter of one man, one woman, or a few orders whose apostolate and charism appeal to her. Although the number of orders is growing, it is not the number that is key, but the love with which the Lord wants them to enter a religious life. One sister’s process offers blueprint for women discerning religious life. Archbishop Coakley on uniqueness of marriage: “We have an obligation to bear witness to the truth” Obituaries Deacon Tom Carter remembered for commitment to Catholic education, generosity, and humor. Prayer in Defense of Marriage

One sister’s process offers blueprint for women discerning religious life.

By Sarah Cooper

For the Sooner Catholic

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Oxford Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City where he was a priest for most of his career. After serving as pastor of Saint Mary and Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond until March 2014. His most rewarding service outside this parish was to be a priest in the Poor, to be more than a minister to his people. In Saint John’s water supply, Santi Santamaria. Hunt also served as a medical fellow at the University of Colorado and maritian Health Clinic of Edmond, Inc., which serves the area. His legacy is highly weighted is survived by Karen, his loving wife of 49 years, his son Anthony, his daughter Jennifer, her husband Christopher pedil, children Anna and Connor, and grandchildren, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City where he was pastor of the We’re becoming more and more marginalized as this debate goes on,” he added. “We will be de- monstrated; it could foreseeably be perceived as haste- ful to speak of marriage as the union of a man and a woman whose regime are not man-made but built into human nature by the Creator. It’s going to be a rough road ahead.”

Holy Week 2014

Photos of Holy Week were taken at Chrise Mass, Our Lady's Cathedral, Holy Tuesday. Holy Thursday Mass, Corpus Christi Church, Oklahoma City. Good Friday services, St. Patrick Church, Oklahoma City. Easter Vigil at St. James Parish, Oklahoma City. Photos by Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic.
As Oklahoma locked to Norman for the annual Norman OKC Film Festival, some visitors instead went a few blocks away to enjoy live music and rich heritage of Lebanon.

Our Lady of Lebanon, part of the Maronite rite of the Catholic Church, hosted the annual film festival on Saturday, April 26, and Sunday, April 27, expanding it to a two-day event.

Throughout the day, visitors engaged in the local music and dance tradition through the “Lebanese Festival on Saturday, April 26, and Sunday, April 27, expanding it to a two-day event.”

The festival offered a variety of activities, including a special lecture on actor Danny Thomas by Mona Muszaf Kabbour Kassoum. Thomas, Lebanon’s St. John Paul II once praised as “a message of freedom and example of pluralism.”

The festival provided a special opportunity for visitors to explore the rich heritage and culture of Lebanon, offering a glimpse into the country’s traditions and way of life.
Las vocaciones florecen mejor cuando se nutren en casa

Este año el esfuerzo del Domingo del Buen Pastor tendrá una especial resonancia y concreción en la personificación de Dios, un don bondadoso que les da a todos dos muy buenos bienes, San Juan Pablo II y el Papa Francisco.

Con el tiempo, también contará con este año el Día de las Madres.

El Domingo del Buen Pastor se cruce en el cuarto día de la Semana Santa, con la celebración del Domingo de Resurrección, el día en el que el Señor se ha manifestado a sus discípulos en varios momentos diferentes. Las vocaciones son un testimonio de la gracia de Dios, la comunidad entre los cristianos, la armonía entre la Iglesia y el mundo. En los últimos años, la vocación ha sido un tema importante en la vida de los cristianos. En este contexto, las vocaciones pueden ser vistas como una oportunidad para el crecimiento personal y espiritual. Estos momentos son vitales para el desarrollo de la Iglesia y para la promoción de la vocación en el mundo.

El Día de las Madres se llama el Día de las Madres, es un día conmemorativo que se celebra a lo largo del mundo para honrar a las mujeres que han dado vida a los demás. El Día de la Madre es un momento para expresar nuestro reconocimiento a las madres y a las mujeres por todo lo que hacen por nosotros. Este día es una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre la importancia de las relaciones familiares y de la importancia de las madres en nuestras vidas.

Papa Francisco Mensaje para la jornada mundial de oración por las vocaciones

(11 de mayo, 2014)

Calendar

- Devotion to The Precious Blood
  Of Jesus. Thursdays 9 a.m. -12:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church, Lawton, at 3 p.m. Dr. John Schweizer, Director of Religious Education at Bishop McGuinness High School, will preside.
- Bingo at St. Joseph's parish, Norman in the gymnasium is served at 6:30 p.m. Games begin at 7 p.m. Each bingo game packet is $5, includes one free Black Jack game.
- Holy Rosary at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School in Edmond is scheduled for 1 p.m. for the first Tuesday of each month.
- Women in Prayer at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 7680.
- Men in Prayer at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 4826.
- Holy Easter Vigil at 11 p.m. at St. Joseph’s Church, Lawton.
- Easter Sunday Masses at 8 a.m., 9:30 am., 12:05 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and 9:30 p.m.
- Annual Nurses' Day Mass at St. Joseph's Hospital, 401 N. Broadway, Oklahoma City. For more information contact Toni Harrelson, Director of Development, telephone (405) 567-3404.
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This Mother’s Day, prayers to be offered for mothers’ lives

By Brianna Osborne
The Sooner Catholic

This year, Mother’s Day is Sunday, May 11, and while this joyful holiday is appropriately celebrated with flowers and greeting cards, it should also be marked with sincere prayer. Catholics recognize that a mother was God’s best and purest creation – namely, the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God – and that her prayers help mothers in the struggles of daily life.

Mary’s earthly life, like that of every mother, was woven through with pure joy and intense sorrow. Mary expressed humble delight in being chosen to carry the Savior of the world and showed grief at seeing her son’s torture and death. One only need look at the saints to know that all mothers share in these experiences. Saint Monica wept and prayed for years before her son, Saint Augustine, finally returned to the Christian faith. Saint Margaret of Cortona lived as a homeless single mother before finding her calling in serving the poor. Saint Gianna Beretta Molla died after giving birth to her fourth child, rather than having the abortion recommended by her doctors.

“Bring flowers of the fairest,” can pray through the intercession of Mary that they bring only the most beautiful moments to the lives of their mothers and avoid causing them suffering and pain.

May all mothers find fulfillment in their work, joy in spending time with their children and heavenly reward for their faithful service.

Brianna Osborne is a staff writer for the Sooner Catholic and the editor of the Sooner Catholic enewsletter, available at https://uno.flocknote.com/list/126932.

New community provides home for poor, neglected elderly

By Connie Summers
For the Sooner Catholic

Yolanda Garcia never planned on living and caring for the elderly but after visiting the Gospel of Life Dwelling located at Saint James the Greater parish in Oklahoma City, and praying together with Sister Maria Faulkner, she knew God was calling her not only to volunteer there but to live there.

“I felt the presence of the Lord and His call to be here, to serve Him, His people, and His Church” Garcia said.

Founded by Sister Maria Faulkner, GOLD began in September 2013 as its first resident, a frail 99-year-old woman who was living alone and needed assistance with her daily activities, such as grooming and preparation of meals.

Saint James parish has embraced the fledging community, financing the renovations of the small home and providing much-needed volunteer help for the elderly residents.

The home is intentionally near the grade school and parish community, allowing the community to grow organically within the parish neighborhood.

“The simple day-to-day life at the Gospel of Life Dwelling is that of any family – cooking, cleaning, laundry and all that makes a house a home, (including relationships, dialogue (and) prayer,” said Faulkner.

“During the day, the door is always open,” she added.

The chapel is the heart of the home, and prayer is offered throughout the day.

There are two bedrooms in the home where two elders may be welcomed and accompanied with palliative care during the last stage of their earthly pilgrimage at no charge to the resident. Understanding that GOLD is not a complete solution to the growing demographic needs of the elderly population, it is, however, “an intentional response to their needs, one person at a time, as a sign of the care desired for all” said Faulkner.

Yolanda Garcia never planned on living and caring for the elderly but after visiting the Gospel of Life Dwelling (GOLD) located at Saint James the Greater parish in Oklahoma City, and praying together with Sister Maria Faulkner, she knew God was calling her not only to volunteer there but to live there.

This litany of suffering and sacrifice is echoed by mothers in every place and time, and that is why Mother’s Day should involve prayer for the souls of mothers who have died, for widows, for single mothers, for mothers who have lost children or miscarried, for mothers who have had abortions, for pregnant mothers and, indeed, for all mothers.

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations falls on Mother’s Day, highlighting another important way in which mothers sacrifice. Mothers can pray that their sons become good priests or their daughters good brides of Christ. Mothers can also pray for a good spouse for their children.

Children, remembering the Marian hymn “Bring flowers of the fairest,” can pray through the intercession of Mary that they bring only the most beautiful moments to the lives of their mothers and avoid causing them suffering and pain.

Many parishes will crown statues of Mary this month. This ceremony is a visible reminder of just how close Mary is to her Son and how she always points the way to him. In family life, mothers are also the ones who point the way to heaven, by teaching, correcting and loving their children.

May all mothers find fulfillment in their work, joy in spending time with their children and heavenly reward for their faithful service.

Connie Summers is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.