

[1\) What is canonization?](#)

[2\) What is the purpose of canonization?](#)

[3\) The main phases of canonization](#)

[4\) What is required?](#)

What is canonization?

Canonization is a process by which the Catholic Church recognizes the sanctity of a deceased person and includes his or her name in the liturgical calendar, proposing devotion to this individual by believers throughout the world.

- In order to be recognized as a saint, a candidate must normally fulfill several criteria, including: having led a remarkable and exemplary Christian life, and having at least two miracles recognized as taking place through the intercession of this person.
- A Blessed is declared a saint after a complex and thorough process which must, among other things, confirm the Blessed's heroic virtue or martyrdom, and the authenticity of any reported miracle. The complex and thorough process takes place through canonical diocesan tribunals.
- Canonization is the final step: only those already beatified by the Catholic Church (i.e. the Blessed) may become candidates for canonization.

What is the purpose of canonization?

- The Catholic Church calls upon believers to emulate the remarkable people it has elevated to the rank of "Venerable", "Blessed", and, ultimately, "Saint". As prayed in the Preface for Holy Men and Women: "In their lives on earth you give us an example. In our communion with them, you give us their friendship. In their prayer for the Church you give us strength and protection."
- Through the celebration of a canonization, devotion to a Blessed is now extended to the Universal Church (i.e. to all Christian believers throughout the world) whereas previously it was only authorized within a specific diocese, region, nation or institute of consecrated life.

The main phases of canonization

The canonization process begins in the diocese where the person died. Then, the Holy See, under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, takes charge of this process which follows a centuries-old procedure, modernized only in 1983. A long period of time -- sometimes many years -- may take place before one is recognized as Blessed. Only a few will reach sainthood.

What is required?

- sustained and fervent devotion must be shown toward a "Blessed," to whose intercession at least one miracle has been attributed in the past.

1. Identification of a new miracle, usually an act of healing, linked to this devotion.
2. Presentation of a case before a tribunal of the diocese in which the individual on the road to sainthood died.
3. The 1st favourable ruling must be given by the Holy See's Medical Commission after a thoroughly documented process calling upon numerous witnesses and experts. This commission is charged with confirming that the act of healing is authentic and that it cannot be explained by present medical science.
4. The 2nd favourable ruling must be given by the Holy See's Theological Commission. These proceedings serve to determine whether the act of healing can be directly attributed to the devotion toward the "Blessed" on the part of the person who received the miracle (or his or her loved ones).
5. The 3rd favourable ruling must be given by the ordinary Commission of Cardinals and Bishops, who are to decide if it is desirable and relevant to extend devotion toward the "Blessed" to the Universal Catholic Church. The Commission's recommendation is then submitted to His Holiness the Pope.

In the end, the Holy Father prayerfully discerns and decides as to whether or not there is a new saint declared in the Universal Church.