

## HOMILY OF POPE BENEDICT XVI ON CANONIZATION OF SIX NEW SAINTS

Stanislaw Soltys, Poland,  
André Bessette, Canada,  
Cándida María de Jesús Cipitria y Barriola, Spain,  
Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Australia,  
Giulia Salzano, Italy, and  
Camilla Battista da Varano, Italy.

Dear brothers and sisters! The celebration of sanctity is renewed in St. Peter's Square today. With joy I extend my cordial welcome to you who have come from a great distance to take part in this event. A particular greeting to the cardinals, bishops and superiors general of the institutes founded by the new saints, and to the official delegations and all civil authorities. Let us try together to grasp what the Lord tells us in the readings that were just proclaimed. This Sunday's liturgy offers us a fundamental teaching: the necessity to pray always, and without repining. Sometimes we grow tired of prayer; we take the view prayer is not useful for life, that it is not effective. Thus, we are tempted to dedicate ourselves to activity, to employ every human method to accomplish our goals; and we neglect God. But Jesus says we must pray always, and he does this through a specific parable. (cf. *Luke 18:1-8*)

This parable speaks of a judge who does not fear God and who respects no one; a judge with a negative attitude, who pursues only his own interests. He does not fear God's judgment; he does not respect his neighbour. The other figure is a widow, someone who is weak. In the Bible, widows and orphans are the most needy, because the most defenceless and without means. The widow goes to the judge and asks for justice. Her prospects of being heeded are almost non-existent; the judge despises her and she cannot pressure him. She cannot even appeal to religious principles because he does not fear God. She seems deprived of all recourse. But she persists; she does not tire; she harasses the judge, and so, in the end, succeeds in obtaining what she desires. Here, using an *a fortiori* argument, Jesus reflects: if a dishonest judge may allow himself to be convinced by the entreaties of a widow, how much more will God, who is Good, listen to those who beseech Him. God in fact is generosity personified; He is merciful; is always disposed to listen to those who beseech Him in prayer. Hence, we must never give up hope; we must always persist in prayer.

The conclusion of the Gospel passage speaks of faith: *When the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith left on earth?* (*Luke 18:8*). Our Lord intends the question to awaken a growth of faith in us. It is clear, in fact, that prayer must be an expression of faith, else it would not be true prayer. If one does not believe in the goodness of God, he cannot pray adequately. Faith is the basis of prayer. The six new saints proposed today for veneration by the universal Church made faith such a basis: Stanislaw Soltys, André Bessette, Cándida María de Jesús Cipitria y Barriola, Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Giulia Salzano and Battista Camilla Varano.

[In Polish]

St. Stanislaw Kazimierczyk, a religious of the 15th century, can be an example and an intercessor for this century too. His whole life was bound up in the Eucharist. First in the church of *Corpus Domini* in Kazimierz (modern-day Krakow), where with his mother and father, he learned faith and piety; where he took religious vows with the Canons Regular; where he worked as a priest and educator, attentive to the care of the needy. In a particular way, however, he was bound to the Eucharist by the ardent love for Christ present under the

species of bread and of wine; living the mystery of death and resurrection which takes place in a bloodless way in Holy Mass; through the practice of love of neighbour, of which Communion is a source and sign.

[In French]

Brother André Bessette, originally from Quebec in Canada, a religious of the *Congregation of the Holy Cross*, experienced suffering and poverty from his earliest years. This led him to recourse to God in prayer, and to an intense interior life. As porter of the College of *Notre Dame* in Montreal, he showed limitless charity and made every effort to relieve the sufferings of those who entrusted themselves to him.

Though a man of little education, he nevertheless understood where to find the essentials of faith. For him, to believe meant freely to submit himself, out of love, to the Divine Will. Enduring everything in the mystery of Jesus, he lived the beatitude of the pure heart, of personal uprightness. This simplicity enabled many to see God. He built the Oratory of St. Joseph in Mont Royal, where he would stay as a faithful guardian until his death in 1937. “Do not try to have your struggles taken away,” he would say. “Rather ask for the grace to carry them well.” For him everything spoke of God, and of His presence. May we, following him, seek God with simplicity to find Him always present in our midst! May the example of Brother André always inspire Canadian Christian life!

[In Spanish]

*When the Son of Man comes to bring justice to the chosen ones, will he find faith on earth?* (cf. Luke 18:18). Today with consolation and strength contemplating figures such as Mother Cándida María de Jesús Cipitria y Barriola, we can say, Yes! [he will find faith].

This woman of simple origins—with a heart upon which God placed His seal and whom He would take to himself very quickly—under the guidance of her Jesuit spiritual directors made the firm resolution to live *only for God*. It was a decision maintained with firmness, as she herself would recall when she was about to die. She lived for God and for what He most wanted: to reach everyone, to bring to everyone the hope that does not waver, especially to those most in need.

“Where there is not a place for the poor, there is no place for me,” said the new saint, who, with few resources, inspired other sisters to follow Jesus and dedicate themselves to the education and motivation of women. Thus was born the *Daughters of Jesus*, who today have in their founder a very exalted model to imitate, and a fascinating mission to pursue in the many nations where the spirit and the apostolic desires of Mother Cándida have arrived.

[In English]

“Remember who your teachers were; from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” For many years countless young people throughout Australia have been blessed with teachers who were inspired by the courageous and saintly example of zeal, perseverance and prayer of Mother Mary MacKillop. She dedicated herself as a young woman to the education of the poor in the difficult and demanding terrain of rural Australia, inspiring other women to join her in the first women’s community of religious sisters of that country. She attended to the needs of each young person entrusted to her, without regard for station or wealth, providing both intellectual and spiritual formation. Despite many challenges, her prayers to Saint Joseph and her unflagging devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to whom she dedicated her new congregation, gave this holy woman

the graces needed to remain faithful to God and to the Church. Through her intercession, may her followers today continue to serve God and the Church with faith and humility!

[Again in Italian]

In the second half of the 19th century in Campania, in southern Italy, the Lord called a young elementary school teacher, Giulia Salzano, and made her an apostle of Christian education, founder of the *Congregation of the Sisters Catechists of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*. Mother Giulia understood well the importance of catechesis in the Church, and, uniting pedagogical formation with spiritual fervour, she dedicated herself to that means with generosity and intelligence, contributing to the formation of persons of every age and social condition. She repeated to her sisters that she wanted to teach the catechism to the very last hour of her life, demonstrating with her whole being that if “God created us to know Him, love Him and serve Him in this life,” nothing must come before this task. May the example and intercession of St. Giulia Salzano sustain the Church in her perennial task of announcing Christ and form authentic Christian consciences.

St. Battista Camilla Varano, a nun of the Poor Clares in the 15th century, bore witness to the Gospel meaning of life in a radical way, especially through her perseverance in prayer. She entered the monastery of Urbino at 23 and was a protagonist in the vast reform movement of Franciscan spirituality for women, which had as its aim the complete recovery of the charism of St. Clare of Assisi. She promoted new monastic foundations at Camerino, where she was many times elected Abbess, and at Fermo, and San Severino.

The life of St. Battista, completely immersed in the depths of the divine, was a constant ascent in the life of perfection, with a heroic love of God and neighbour. It was marked by great sufferings and mystical consolations; she had decided in fact, as she herself wrote, to “enter into the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to drown in the ocean of His most bitter sufferings.”

In a time in which the Church was suffering from a lack of discipline, she set out decisively on the road of penance and prayer, animated by the ardent desire for the renewal of the mystical body of Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us give thanks to the Lord for the gift of holiness, which shines in the Church and today illumines the faces of these brothers and sisters of ours. Jesus also invites each of us to follow Him to inherit eternal life. Let us be drawn by the luminous examples, let us be guided by their teachings, so that our existence may be a canticle of praise to God.

May the Virgin Mary and the intercession of the six new saints, whom we venerate today with joy, obtain this grace for us. Amen.

*October 17, 2010*

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