

## **Pope John Paul II's Cause Moves Forward**

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(March 31, 2008) Only two days before the world marks the third anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, his cause for canonization is about to take another step forward.

Monsignor Slawomir Oder, the church official in charge of his cause, told *Vatican Radio* that he has just finished a nearly 2,000 page draft of a report in support of the late pontiff's canonization. The report summarizes and analyzes all the documentation about John Paul's life and virtues that have been gathered since his death, including testimony from witnesses and his own writings.

"In the past days I have submitted a semifinal version," Monsignor Oder said. "It's about 2,000 pages that need further technical and editing adjustments, but we can say that in its entirety, the report is complete."

An independent Vatican official, Father Daniel Ols, must now review the report before it can be officially presented to the Congregation for the Saints, which must then form committees to discuss the merits of the cause.

Pope John Paul II's cause for canonization has been moving steadily forward since Pope Benedict XVI decided to waive the traditional five-year waiting period a few weeks after his death on April 2, 2005. A similar waiver has only been granted once before, to Mother Teresa, who died in 1997 and was beatified in 2003.

Last year, the investigation into John Paul's life and virtues was officially closed, and French church officials have officially turned over documentation on a purported miracle attributed to his intercession.

The case involves Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, a 45 year old French nun who was allegedly cured from Parkinson's disease after she and her community prayed for the intercession of Pope John Paul II. She was diagnosed with the disease in June, 2001, and felt a special spiritual affinity for John Paul II who also suffered from the disease. However, her symptoms worsened considerably in the weeks following his death.

"I was losing weight day by day. I could no longer write and if I did try to, it was difficult to decipher. I could no longer drive ... because my left leg became rigid," Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre wrote in an account of the miracle.

On June 2, 2005, after she and her community had prayed for John Paul's intercession, and exactly two months after the Pope's death, she felt the sudden urge to pick up a pen: "My handwriting was completely legible ... my body was no longer pained, no longer rigid ... I felt a profound sense of peace."

Her neurologist along with other doctors and psychologists have been unable to explain the cause

of her sudden healing.

Should this miracle be accepted, it will enable Pope John Paul II to be beatified. Another miracle will be needed for his canonization.

Monsignor Oder would not give a timetable for this stage of the process, or say when the Vatican might beatify Pope John Paul.

The Diocese of Rome has launched an official website for those interested in keeping up to date on Pope John Paul II's cause for canonization. Visit <http://www.vicariatusurbis.org/Beatificazione/>

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