

Vatican to tighten canonization process

by UPI

VATICAN CITY -- A Vatican document calls for bishops to use "greater sobriety and rigor" when considering potential saints, the cardinal in charge of the process said. Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, head of the saints department, said that the aim is to guide bishops "in the new spirit introduced by Benedict XVI," the Italian news agency ANSA reported. The document is scheduled for release next week. The process usually begins at the diocesan level, with bishops sending a dossier to the Vatican after an investigation. Candidates are usually first beatified and then, after additional investigation and proof of miracles, canonized or declared to be saints. The cardinal refused to criticize Pope John Paul II, rejecting the suggestion that Benedict's predecessor had turned the Vatican into a "saint factory." The number of canonizations increased markedly under John Paul, and some critics suggested that the church was also becoming less rigorous about the qualifications for sainthood.

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