

Pope Benedict voices concern over leftists

by UPI

SAO PAULO - Pope Benedict XVI ended his five-day visit to Brazil Monday with an apparent warning against authoritarian leaders in Latin America.

The pope's concern about "authoritarian forms of government" in Latin America was an apparent swipe at leftist leaders like Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who in recent months has stepped up his efforts to nationalize several sectors of the country's economy.

Though the region has made significant strides towards democracy in recent years, the pope said that "there are grounds for concern in the face of authoritarian forms of government and regimes wedded to certain ideologies," Estado de Sao Paulo newspaper reported.

Earlier in his visit, the pope canonized Brazil's first native-born saint, an 18th century monk to whom numerous miracles were attributed.

Last week, he lambasted those Latin leaders that have voted in favor of legalizing abortion and said they should be denied church sacraments, an apparent reference to Mexico City officials that recently legalized abortion in the Mexican capital.

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