

## **The Process of Canonization Diocesan Phase**

Source – *Canonization Theology History Process\**  
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### **First Step – Preliminaries:**

- The petitioner (actors such as the League) of the cause with the approval of the bishop, appoints a diocesan postulator to deal with all details and procedures to be the representative of the petitioner, and to administer all financial matters relating to the cause.
- The postulator is given the right to appoint vice-postulators if deemed necessary.
- Acting in the name of the petitioner, the diocesan postulator submits to the competent bishop a written petition requesting the bishop to initiate proceedings of the cause.
- The petitioner implicitly agrees to assume the costs involved in the process of canonization.
- With the petition the postulator gives an initial report on the reputation for sanctity of the person proposed and the pastoral relevance of the cause.

*Other sources suggest that the competent bishop may reach these conclusions and act with the petitioners in creating a dossier containing key documents and findings that will lead to the next step.*

### **Second Step – Establishing the Cause:**

- The diocesan bishop sets up a board of inquiry and either personally or through delegate sees to it that all things get done in order, according to the law and due procedure. The bishop may also appoint a substitute delegate.
- The delegate must be a priest, competent in theological and canonical matters and also in the historical matters in the case of an older cause.
- All taking part as officials must take an oath to fulfill their duties faithfully and to maintain secrecy.
- The person whose cause for canonization is being examined is now referred to as “servant of God.”
- The bishop is to consult with the conference of bishops, or at least with the bishops of the region as to the appropriateness of introducing the cause.
- This is a consultation, not a request for permission since the competent bishop is the one to make the decision to proceed.
- If there is an informed substantial negative response he (bishop) should weight this in prudence as to his proceedings or not.
- The bishop is to inform the postulator of the results of the inquiry among bishops.

\* Father Flanagan League Society of Devotion note: There are a myriad of footnotes for this section of the book regarding this phase and providing further definitions of terms and processes.

- The bishop will publish the petition for the cause and call on all the faithful to come forward with any substantial information they may have concerning the servant of God.
- If any negative substantial obstacle appear at this stage and it cannot be overcome, the bishop should judge that the cause cannot proceed.
- If the decision is to proceed, the bishop submits all the published writings of the servant of God to two or more theologians who will examine them as to their orthodoxy in matters of faith and morals.
- If the judgment of the theologians is favorable, the bishop gives instructions that all unpublished writings of the servant of God together with historical documents be collected by competent historians/archivists.
- The historian/archivists will prepare a report and provide judgments on the authenticity and value of the documents, judgment on the personality of the servant of God drawn from these documents and attest that they have performed their duties thoroughly.
- The bishop will appoint a promoter of justice.
- The promoter of justice will review all documents and reports and draws up a schedule of questions to be put to the witnesses in the diocesan inquiry.
- The bishop sends a brief summary on the life of the servant of God to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints along with a report on the pastoral relevance of the cause to ascertain if there is anything known to the Holy See which might prove to be an obstacle to the cause.
- If no obstacles are found, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints issues a nihil obstat and informs the bishop that the next step be taken.

### **Third Step – Formal Inquiry on Virtues (martyrdom):**

- Includes examination of witnesses
- Examination of evidence
- The postulator may not be present during the examination of witnesses
- The tomb of the servant of God will be examined to ensure there is no evidence of undue cult and make declaration on the observance of the decrees of Urban VIII on this matter which is to be included in the record of inquiry.
- Two complete copies of all documents and proceedings are prepared, signed and sealed. The original is secured and kept in the diocesan archives.
- The duplicate set is forwarded to the Congregation for the Cause of Saints.
- At this point the diocesan phase is complete.
- The diocesan postulator ceases his function when the diocesan process is complete.

### **Diocesan Inquiry On A Miracle:**

- An inquiry on a reported miracle is to be carried out in the diocese in which the miracle occurred. It is a separate process from an inquiry on virtues or martyrdom of a servant of God.

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