

7-1998

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Recommended Citation

D'Amico, Roberto C.M. (1998) "The Causes of Saints in the Vincentian Family," *Vincentiana*: Vol. 42 : No. 4 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vincentiana/vol42/iss4/15>

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The Causes of Saints in the Vincentian Family

*by Roberto D'Amico, C.M.
Postulator General*

In this brief report, I will seek to anticipate the answers to some questions you might have and that you often ask of the Superior General or one of his assistants when they visit your provinces. (Cf. *Vincentiana* n. 4-5, 1996, "Meeting of the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission, Salamanca, 5-15 June 1996").

I. Which cause is closest to canonization?

Blessed Francis Regis Clet, beatified 27 May 1900.

In April of last year I presented, together with other postulators, a dossier about the reputation of martyrdom and holiness of all the Chinese "blessed," but now everything has stopped. We do not know if it is because of political difficulties or whether there are other problems.

II. Which are the causes that are continuing toward beatification?

1. Servant of God, Sr. Rosalie Rendu, DC (1786-1856)

Almost six years have passed since the presentation of the *Positio*, and its examination by the Congress of theologians is near. In the meantime, we opened a Diocesan investigation in Paris in January of this year to examine a presumed miracle that took place in 1992.

2. Servant of God Sr. Giuseppina Nicòli, DC (1863-1924)

At the beginning of March of this year the *Positio* on the virtues and on the reputation of sanctity was presented – now we have to wait for its turn (at least 5 or 6 years) to be examined. The examination process was begun in Milan, with the hope that it would have greater possibility of being recognized.

3. Servant of God Fr. Salvatore Micalizzi, CM (1856-1937)

The *Positio* on the virtues and on the reputation of sanctity was handed to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on 27 June of this year. Again, we shall have to wait the usual 5 or 6 years before it will be examined by the commission of theologians. In the meantime, a doctor of the Congregation is studying some extraordinary graces obtained through the intercession of our servant of God, to analyze them to see if they can be explained by normal medical practice.

4. Servant of God Bishop John Francis Gnidovec, CM, Bishop of Skopje (former Yugoslavia) (1873-1939)

Following the rediscovery of many other documents the *Summarium* is completed and already published, with an "addition." We are preparing the *Informatio*. In the meantime we are studying a presumed miracle that happened in Santiago de Chile in 1985.

5. Servant of God Bishop Antonio Ferreira Viçoso, CM, Bishop (Portuguese) of Mariana, Brazil

The Diocese of Mariana, Brazil, as "co-actor" of the cause, follows with great interest how it is moving forward, sustaining it with financial help. We have finally found the records of the first Diocesan process, for years lost in the archives of the Diocese of Mariana, and we have gotten the decree validating the process. In December of 1997, the work on the *Positio* of the cause concluded; now we have to translate it into one of the languages admitted by the Congregation, so it can be examined by the historical commission on the solidity of its documentation, as well as its completeness and sufficiency for the purposes of the cause.

6. Servant of God Mother Justa Dominguez De Viaduretta, DC (1875-1958), Visitatrix of the Province of Madrid (St. Vincent) from 24 July 1932 until her death

The *Summarium* of documents and texts has already been printed. The work of the *Positio* goes forward slowly. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints has on record the acts of a presumed miracle that took place in 1972 in favor of Sr. Prudencio Zuazo, DC

7. Servant of God Sr. Marguerite Rutan, DC (1736-1794) Martyr of the French Revolution

This cause had been abandoned since 1936. The office of the Postulator General asked that it be reopened following the insistence of some lay people and of the Vincentian family in Toulouse. The Bishop of Dax has named a historical commission that has prepared a dossier on her martyrdom and on the continuing reputation as a martyr of the servant of God. The Congregation has issued a decree of validity for the process. Now the work of the *Positio* is beginning.

8. Servant of God Sr. Josefa Martínez Pérez, and 12 companions, DC, Martyrs at Valencia, 1936-1939

Thirteen Daughters of Charity were killed during the Spanish persecution in 1939 in Valencia. The process begun in 1960 was interrupted in 1966 for "pastoral

prudence." Reopened in 1995, it was concluded on 22 May 22 1996. The process was opened with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints at Rome on 3 June 1996. The decree of validity was issued on 22 February 1998. Now we have begun the work of the *Positio*.

III. Which causes are "halted" while awaiting further study?

1. Servant of God Fr. Marc Antonio Durando, CM (1801-1880), Co-founder of the Sisters of Jesus the Nazarene

We are awaiting a historical study by a confrere on the relationships with the servants of God Mother Verna and la Clarac (?).

2. Servant of God Frs. Fortunato Velasco Tobar and 14 Confreres, CM

This is the cause of Vincentian martyrs of different dioceses during the Spanish persecution. In 1996 there were some difficulties with the "relator" of the Cause, and now we are awaiting a reopening of the work.

3. Servant of God Fr. Gianbattista Manzella, CM (1855-1937)

There are some questions that have been sent back to us for which we await better times so that they will be eliminated. That is what we hope. Officially everything is unspoken.

IV. In recent years have some new diocesan investigations been opened?

1. Servant of God. Sr. Clemência Oliveira, DC (1896-1966)

Given completely to the service of the poor, she had some charismatic gifts of healing. The diocesan investigation opened in Baturitè (Diocese of Fortaleza, Brazil) on 6 September 1995.

2. Servant of God Bishop Bonaventura Codina, CM, Bishop of the Canary Islands (1785-1857)

Man of God, poor, lover of the poor, the sick, and those inflicted with cholera. Ready to resign as Bishop and to be readmitted into the community. The diocese of the Canary Islands has set itself up as the Actor of the Cause of this Servant of God. The diocesan investigation opened on 19 January 1995.

3. Servant of God Sr. Marta Maria Wiecka, DC (1874-1904)

She took care of the sick in hospitals: in Lwow, Poidhajce, Bochnia, and Sniatyn. They called her the "benefactress" and "little mother." Her existence held together by prayer and the joy of service was crowned by the gift of her life. At her tomb today both Catholics and the Orthodox are joined together in prayer. The diocesan investigation began on 27 June 1997 in the cathedral of Lwow and concluded in the same place on 30 June 1998.

4 Sr. Anna Cantalupo, DC (1888-1983)

The reputation of sanctity is alive above all in Catania where this Daughter of Charity, of Neapolitan descent, became the point of reference of all the charitable and catechetical activities. The diocesan investigation opened on 27 October 1997.

5. Servant of God Sr. Melchora Adoración Cortés Bueno and 14 companions, DC of Madrid

In occasion of the celebration of the Vincentian Tricentennial of the death of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac they opened the process on 7 November 1960 in the Diocese of Madrid for 17 priests, 17 brothers and 15 Daughters of Charity, a total 49 martyrs.

Different difficulties of a local and general nature did not permit the continuation of this process. Now, the Daughters of Charity of the Province of Madrid, St. Vincent have gathered together a rich documentation and the diocesan investigation was reopened on 28 April 1998

V. Is there any possibility of any new diocesan investigation?

1. Archbishop Emilio Francisco Lisson Chaves, CM, Archbishop of Lima (1918-1931), (1872-1961)

His remains were brought back from Spain to the Cathedral of Lima on 24 July 1991 (cf. *Vincentiana*, n. 33 (1991), pp. 261-265). A vice-Postulator has been nominated so that the diocesan investigation can begin. This process will be very complicated, because there are many issues that have to be investigated and clarified.

2. Bishop Peter Schumacher, CM (1832-1902), Bishop of Portovejo, Ecuador

Founder of the seminaries of Ecuador. Nominated Bishop of Portovejo in 1885. Falsely accused and persecuted by the masonic lodges, during the revolution of Quito, he was the confessor of those condemned to death. He was sent into exile to Samaniego, on the Colombian border, where he died. The Archbishop of Portovejo and the Bishop of d'Ipiales Nariño, Colombia, intend to open a diocesan investigation for the beatification and canonization of our confrere.

3. Fr. Giovanni Battista Tornatore, CM (1820-1895), Co-founder of the Daughters of St. Anne

The Daughters of St. Anne, after Vatican II, as they brought up to date their rules, rediscovered the role that Fr. Tornatore had in the foundation of their community and the holiness of this confrere of ours from the Roman province, after having wiped his memory out of the history of the life of their Congregation. These religious have taken up as a community task "to begin the process for the cause of beatification without waiting for better times," and at the same time they hope that "something in addition to this the Vincentian Fathers might be able to do" (cf. *Annali della Missione*, 193, p. 111). In July of 1981, his remains were taken from the cemetery of San Lazzaro in Piacenza to the Mother House of the Daughters of St. Anne in Piacenza

Conclusion

Behind this circle of names and dates is a truly marvelous history of holiness and self-giving. The Postulator General has the job of being aware of this superabundant grace present in our Community and to help the various provinces to make these men and women visible, luminous instruments of this grace. Through canonization, these, our sisters and brothers, raised up on the candelabra of the house of God, can light up with their example, and sustain with their prayer the Vincentian Family in their task of making the reign of God grow day by day.

(Translated by Robert Stone, C.M.)