

News this Saturday on beatification of John Paul II?

December 17, 2009

Pope John Paul II will be declared “venerable” on Saturday, December 19, according to an Italian magazine story. The report—which appears likely to be accurate—would mean that the late Pontiff could be beatified as soon as the Vatican approves a miracle attributed to his influence.

According to the Italian magazine *Panorama*, at a consistory on December 19, Pope Benedict XVI will approve a series of decrees prepared by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, including one that attests to the “heroic virtue” of Pope John Paul II. Such a finding would give the late Pontiff the title “venerable,” and the subsequent approval of a miracle would fulfill the only remaining requirement for his beatification.

Several miracles attributed to the intercession of the Polish Pontiff are already under investigation, and Vatican officials feel confident that one will soon be approved. *Panorama* suggested that tentative plans are already been discussed for the beatification of John Paul II in October 2010.

The Vatican has not commented on the *Panorama* report—and is unlikely to make any public comment prior to an official announcement. However, the report is plausible for several reasons.

The Congregation for the Causes of Saints typically prepares a series of decrees in December regarding candidates for beatification and canonization. These decrees are generally approved by the Pope at a consistory shortly before Christmas. (A consistory is a meeting of the cardinals who are present in Rome at the time.) Thus the December 19 date is likely.

In November, several informed sources at the Vatican disclosed that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints had voted to approve a finding of “heroic virtue” in the cause of John Paul II, and would prepare a decree to that effect for the Pope’s approval.

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