

Four new Canadian saints added to canon this decade

For sheer numbers, there has never been a decade like the 2010s for saint-making.

That's because Pope Francis canonized over 800 in one go when he declared St. Antonio Primaldo and his 812 companions (martyred in 1480 by an invading Ottoman army in Oranto, southern Italy) saints on May 12, 2013.

Between Popes Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, the 2010s were a decade of significant canonizations for Canadian Catholics. The decade saw Canadians St. Brother André Bessette, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, St. François de Laval, St. Marie de l'Incarnation added to the canon.

St. Kateri's canonization in 2012 was a signpost pointing to the Church's renewed understanding and identification with Indigenous people in Canada and around the world. St. Kateri was an Algonquin-Mohawk in 17th century New France who survived smallpox and family divisions – both consequences of the upheaval that colonization brought to native people in Canada.

In 2014 the Church picked a representative from the other side of the colonizing divide of New France when Pope Francis declared Marie de l'Incarnation a saint. St. Marie's work in education in Quebec City included Indigenous girls not as a separate charge, but as full members of her school.

The 2010 canonization of St. Brother André Bessette raised up a 20th century working man who persevered in holiness in spite of an economy that gave poor Quebecois farm boys like him no education, no opportunities and no rights.

He became a revered figure who inspired the building of St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, cured thousands and pointed the way to a generous, humble life in Christ.

The Canadian Church was recognized when the first bishop of Quebec joined the canon by "equipollent canonization" in 2014. Pope Francis dispensed with the juridical process of searching for miracles when he completed what St. Pope John Paul II had started in 1980 by beatifying St. François de Laval. It was St. François de Laval who made the Church in Canada something more than a missionary outpost.

Other saints declared this decade hold significance for Canadians. Australian St. Mary McKillop still has family in Nova Scotia. For Canada's huge, Catholic Filipino population the martyr St. Peter Calungsod is particularly dear. For a generation which grew up enraptured with her ethereal music and mysticism, the

2012 canonization of St. Hildegard von Bingen mattered.

The 2014 double canonization of the pope who started the Second Vatican Council, St. Pope John XXIII, and the pope who interpreted the council for 27 years, St. Pope John Paul II, was a landmark.

The 20th century icon of service to the poor, St. Teresa of Calcutta, was already a saint in the hearts of millions of Catholics before her 2016 canonization.

The 2019 canonization of St. John Henry Newman has been an inspiration for Catholics to consider the Catholic tradition of learning and discernment.