



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

10,000 Catholics to fill Pacific Coliseum on Sunday ***Vancouver faithful will celebrate at PNE as 2 Popes are canonized in Rome***

VANCOUVER, April 24, 2014 – Catholics in Vancouver will be attending a Mass so large this weekend, a hockey arena is needed to accommodate the anticipated crowd.

Ten thousand Catholics from across the Lower Mainland are expected at the Pacific Coliseum Sunday to celebrate the canonization of two Popes, one of whom has a special connection with Vancouver.

Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII will be declared saints in Rome Sunday, and the Archdiocese of Vancouver will mark the occasion with Mass at the Coliseum, celebrated by Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller, Eparch Ken Nowakowski – the bishop of local Ukrainian Catholics – and Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, the Vatican’s nuncio to Canada.

Pope John Paul II is the Polish-born pontiff who helped bring down communism and introduced a more international papacy by making more than 100 pastoral visits outside Italy, including three to Canada. He was Pope from 1978 until his death in 2005.

Pope John XXIII is best known for convoking the Second Vatican Council aimed at bringing about the Catholic Church’s renewal for the modern era. He was Pope from 1958 to 1963.

For John Paul, there is a special relationship with Vancouver. In 1984, during the first-ever visit by a Pope to Canada, he made stops in Vancouver and Abbotsford, saying Mass before a quarter of a million people at the Abbotsford Airport.

The Mass at the Coliseum will include tributes to the two Popes, as well as St. Faustina, a Polish saint whom John Paul canonized in 2000.

About 60 priests will concelebrate the Mass, with a choir made up of more than 250 students from all nine Catholic high schools providing music. A Divine Mercy choir of more than 80 singers from various parishes will also perform.



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Archbishop Miller, who authored *The Encyclicals of John Paul II* in 2001, said the occasion is personally significant, as he was appointed to the episcopacy by Pope John Paul II in 2003. Archbishop Miller went on to work with John Paul for several years in the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Work of Priestly Vocations.

"These two Popes have not only greatly influenced me, but together they've shaped history – in the Church and around the world – for my entire lifetime. In declaring them saints, the Church is recognizing their holiness and their roles as intercessors for us in heaven and models for our journey on earth. Each in his own unique way exemplifies holy leadership. I particularly like the wise advice of John XXIII: "See everything; overlook a great deal; correct a little."

The Coliseum event will begin at 2 p.m. with a grand procession of more than 100 parishes and groups along with First Nations representatives.

Free tickets for the event were made available through Catholic parishes and were claimed quickly, said Paul Schratz, spokesman for the Archdiocese.

The event website is rcav.org/two-popes.