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Thousands of worshippers take part in a procession in Caracas, Venezuela, Feb. 26, 2025, in honor of Blessed José Gregorio Hernández, known as the "Doctor of the Poor," after Pope Francis approved his canonization, making the doctor the Caribbean nation's first saint. The 88-year-old pontiff approved the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints' decision for canonization Feb. 24, while continuing treatment for double pneumonia at Rome's Gemelli Hospital. (OSV News/Reuters/Gaby Oraa)



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Vatican City — April 1, 2025
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Pope Francis has cleared the way for the canonizations of three blesseds: an Armenian Catholic archbishop martyred during the Armenian genocide, a lay catechist from Papua New Guinea killed during World War II and a Venezuelan religious sister who dedicated her life to education and the poor.

The Vatican announced March 31 that the pope authorized the decrees March 28. Among them were the approval of a miracle attributed to Blessed Carmen Rendíles Martínez and authorization for the canonizations of Blessed Ignatius Maloyan and Blessed Peter To Rot, following a vote by cardinals and bishops.

While the Vatican did not specify whether the decrees were signed during an audience, such decisions are typically formalized during a meeting between the pope and Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints. Francis, recovering from a respiratory infection, has not been holding meetings since being discharged from the hospital March 23.

Blessed Carmen Rendíles Martínez, born in Caracas in 1903, is poised to become Venezuela's first female saint. Orphaned by her father's death at a young age, she grew up helping her mother support the family and became active in her parish apostolate.

She entered religious life in 1927 and eventually founded the Congregation of the Servants of Jesus of Venezuela, serving with humility in parishes and schools, especially among the poor. After a car accident in 1974, she spent her final years in a wheelchair and died in 1977. She was beatified in 2018.

Blessed Ignatius Maloyan was born April 19, 1869, in Mardin, in present-day Turkey. He entered the convent of Bzommar in Lebanon at age 14 and was ordained in 1896. Known for his pastoral care and scholarship, he was appointed archbishop of Mardin in 1911.

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During the Armenian genocide, he was arrested with dozens of Christians and brought before a tribunal in 1915. When told his life could be spared in exchange for conversion to Islam, he declared, "We have never been unfaithful to the state... but if you ask us to be unfaithful to our religion, this — never, never, never!" He was tortured and executed shortly afterward. He was beatified by St. John Paul II in 2001.

Blessed Peter To Rot, born in 1912 in Rakunai, Papua New Guinea, was a lay catechist, husband and father known for his deep faith and dedication to the sacraments.

During the Japanese occupation in World War II, he continued his ministry despite growing restrictions and openly opposed polygamy, which had been tolerated by the occupiers. He was arrested in 1945, and later that year was killed by lethal injection while in prison. He was beatified by St. John Paul II during a 1995 visit to Papua New Guinea.

In March 2024, Francis approved a request from the bishops of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to dispense with the requirement of a miracle for Blessed Peter's canonization, citing cultural and documentation challenges. His canonization will make him the first saint of Papua New Guinea.

A date for the canonizations of the three blesseds had not yet been announced.

Francis also approved decrees recognizing:

— A miracle attributed to Venerable Carmelo De Palma, a diocesan priest from Bari, Italy, born in 1876 and known for his deep prayer life, devotion to the Eucharist and tireless ministry as a confessor and spiritual director. He died in 1961, and the approved miracle clears the way for his beatification.

— The heroic virtues of Fr. José Antônio Maria Ibiapina, a 19th-century Brazilian priest known for his transition from a career as a lawyer, judge and congressman to a life of priestly service among the poor. Born in 1806, he was ordained in 1853 and became known as a "pilgrim of charity" for founding churches, hospitals, orphanages and schools across northeastern Brazil. He died in 1883.