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Pope Francis reportedly supports Romero sainthood

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The Francis Chronicles

Pope Francis

Pope Francis, the first man from the Americas to be elected leader of the Catholic church, reportedly supports the canonization of Archbishop Oscar Romero, a Salvadoran prelate whose killing in 1980 is widely regarded throughout Latin America as an act of martyrdom.

Francis, the London Catholic weekly *The Tablet* reported Monday, indicated his support for Romero's sainthood while speaking to the wife of the Salvadoran president during a meeting with Vatican ambassadors Friday.

"[Francis] told me that he hoped the canonization of Archbishop of Romero would be as soon as possible," said Vanda Pignato, President Mauricio Funes' wife, *The Tablet* reports.

According to the weekly, Francis made the remark to Pignato after seeing she was wearing a lapel pin bearing Romero's image.

Romero, who became archbishop of the Salvadoran capital of San Salvador in 1977, died after being shot several times while celebrating Mass on March 24, 1980.

His death was one of an estimated 80,000 murders in a brutal 12-year civil war in the country and came after the archbishop had repeatedly denounced the fighting, issuing calls for peace in popular radio sermons and speeches.

Hundreds marched through the city on Sunday to mark the anniversary of the prelate's death.

While Pope John Paul II named Romero in 1997 a "Servant of God" -- the first step in the process of

sainthood -- his case has seemed to languish since.

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