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Pope advances sainthood causes, including Puerto Rican schools pioneer

by Francis X. Rocca by Catholic News Service

Vatican City — Pope Francis advanced the sainthood causes of 13 candidates, including the "father of Puerto Rican public education" and the Canadian founder of a religious order dedicated to helping unwed mothers.

During a meeting Monday with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, the pope signed decrees recognizing that Rafael Cordero Molino and Mother Rosalie Cadron-Jette lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way and are venerable.

Cordero, who was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1790, and died there in 1868, founded and operated a free school for poor children of all races.

Cadron-Jette, who was born in Lavaltrie, Quebec, in 1794, and died in Montreal in 1864, was a midwife who founded the Sisters of Misericorde.

The pope also recognized eight other people as venerable, including Sr. Orsola Mezzini, an Italian who died in 1919 and served as the first superior general of the Sisters of the Little Mission for the Deaf; and Trappist Fr. Romano Bottegal, an Italian who died as a hermit in Lebanon in 1978.

In each case, verification of a miracle attributed to the venerable person's intercession is needed for his or her beatification

Also on Monday, the pope recognized as martyrs Fr. Mario Vergara, a member of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, and Isidore Ngei Ko Lat, a lay catechist killed in Myanmar, then known as Burma, in 1950.

Pope Francis also signed a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Mother Giovannina Franchi, founder of the Nursing Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, who died in Como, Italy, in 1872, while caring for victims of a smallpox epidemic.

The recognition of the miracle and of the men's martyrdom clears the way for beatification of all three.

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