



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canonization Process for Servant of God Joseph Dutton Layman Moving Forward to Next Phase

Celebration of a Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace on Sunday, January 21, 2024

Honolulu, Hawai'i — For 44 years, Civil War lieutenant Joseph Dutton served those afflicted with Hansen's disease in Kalaupapa, Moloka'i. He is now receiving the recognition he rightfully deserves.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike will celebrate the next phase of his canonization — the pathway to becoming a saint — at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in downtown Honolulu on Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024 at noon.

Bishop Larry Silva will preside at a Mass to celebrate this milestone, the completion of the local phase of the process officially called the "Cause of Canonization of the Servant of God Joseph Dutton Layman." The celebration is free and open to those of all faiths, including visitors to the islands. Visitors from Stowe, Vermont, the birthplace of Dutton, will be attending the Mass.

"Naming a saint is a multi-year process that involves rigorous research and meticulous attention to detail," said **Dr. Maria Devera**, a medical doctor who has been volunteering for this endeavor since 2010 and serves as president of The Joseph Dutton Guild, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the cause for canonization. "The three-member Tribunal of Diocesan Officials, assisted by other officials appointed by Bishop Larry Silva, has done an outstanding job to reach this major milestone."

Background

On May 10, 2022, the Diocese of Honolulu opened a formal Cause of Canonization at a celebration of the Eucharist in the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace. At that Mass, the Church granted Joseph Dutton the title "Servant of God."



Over the past year and a half, the Tribunal of Diocesan Officials gathered all the eyewitness and documentary evidence about his life, his heroic exercise of all the Christian virtues, as well as his “reputation of holiness” and of “intercessory power.” Their search for information started in Honolulu, and this took them to Moloka’i and eventually to Stowe, Vermont, where Joseph Dutton was born on April 27, 1843.

Definitions

Terms used in the canonization process can be difficult to understand. Canonization requires a demonstration that the popular devotion to the candidate, called a **reputation of holiness**, has extended and grown in the Church over a period of time. Graces, favors and miracles, granted by God through the intercession of the candidate for canonization, called a **reputation of intercessory power**, are considered divine proof that this popular devotion is the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

Next Steps in the Process

“During the Mass in January 2024, the Bishop and the Tribunal officials who conducted the diocesan inquiry into the life of the Servant of God will swear an oath that they fulfilled their task faithfully and seriously,” Dr. Devera explained.

Since there are no longer any living eyewitnesses to Dutton’s life and activity, the majority of the evidence is being based on documentary evidence. A commission of four experts in historical and archival research gathered writings and documents that could serve as proof of the holiness of the Servant of God.

“Nearly 2,000 pages of evidence will now be sent to the Dicastery for the Causes of the Saints in the Vatican in Rome, Italy. Those at the Dicastery will study all of the evidence. Their responsibility is to certify whether the Servant of God Joseph Dutton Layman lived a life of truly heroic virtues and is worthy of imitation on the part of the faithful,” Dr. Devera said.

At the Vatican, the Historical and Theological Consultors of the Dicastery will judge the veracity of the “Position on the Heroic Virtues of the Servant of God,” and then cardinals and bishops who are the members of the Dicastery will also assess the gathered evidence. Their opinion will then be presented to Pope Francis for a final and definitive judgment. If it is approved, then Joseph Dutton will be given the title “Venerable Servant of God.”

For Joseph Dutton to be declared “Blessed” in a ceremony called beatification, proof of one miracle granted by God through the Intercession of Joseph Dutton after his death is required. The alleged miracle must go through the same rigorous examination. For his eventual canonization or sainthood, one miracle granted by God through his intercession after the date of the ceremony of beatification is necessary. This miracle will undergo the same examination and study processes as those required for beatification.

Beatification and canonization in the Catholic Church involve thorough due diligence. There is no guarantee that the process will result in Joseph Dutton’s beatification or canonization. For more information about these processes, visit: <https://www.josephdutton.org/steps-to-canonization>



Future Outlook

Sister Geraldine Ching, OSF, vice president of The Brother Joseph Dutton Guild, said: “Many of the faithful in the Diocese of Honolulu and in other parts of the world are excited about the possibility that Joseph Dutton’s holiness of life will be deemed by the Church to be worthy of public veneration and emulation. We are hopeful he will become Hawai‘i’s third saint, following Saint Damien DeVeuster and Saint Marianne Cope, and that his life of service as a lay person will inspire others for generations to come.”

For more information, visit The Joseph Dutton Guild website at:

<http://www.josephdutton.org/>

About The Joseph Dutton Guild

The Joseph Dutton Guild’s mission is to promote the Cause of Canonization of the Servant of God Joseph Dutton Layman that will lead to the beatification and canonization of the Servant of God. The guild seeks to make people more aware of the dedication and service of the Servant of God Joseph Dutton Layman to the poor and abandoned and inspire them to emulate his lively faith and active charity.