

Pope Paul VI is nearing sainthood status

by [Alessandro Speciale](#) in the [January 23, 2013](#) issue

Pope Benedict XVI has moved Pope Paul VI closer to sainthood by acknowledging his predecessor's "heroic virtues."

Paul VI, who guided the Catholic Church through a tumultuous period of change in the 1960s and '70s and is now considered venerable in the Catholic Church, needs the Vatican to recognize a miracle due to his intercession in order to be beatified, or declared blessed. Recognition of a second miracle would then elevate him to sainthood.

Giovanni Battista Montini (1897–1978) was elected to the papacy with the name of Paul VI in 1963. He oversaw the implementation of the modernizing reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) but was also famous for the 1968 publication of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which condemned contraception and birth control despite the opposition of a large part of the church.

According to reports published December 20, proponents of Paul VI's sainthood have already found a miracle to attribute to his intercession. A baby was reportedly healed in the womb thanks to Montini. Doctors had advised a California mother to abort the gravely ill fetus, but she chose to carry her pregnancy through. The child is now 15 and, reports *Vatican Insider*, doctors say he is perfectly healthy. —RNS

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