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Pope beatifies 'poison gas' emperor and mystic nun



Devotee with picture of the emperor at the ceremony

Pope John Paul II has declared five Roman Catholics blessed, including the last Austro-Hungarian emperor and a nun who inspired a Hollywood film. About 30,000 people turned up to watch the ceremony and images of the five being unfurled on St Peter's Basilica. Beatification is the penultimate step on the path to full sainthood.

However, the beatification of Emperor Karl I has been criticised by some as he authorised the use of poison gas by his army in World War I. Karl I sat on the throne of the now defunct empire between 1916 and 1918. He was born in 1887.

Under his command, the army used poison gas, which has led critics to say his beatification is wrong. However, the pope said: "In his eyes, war was something horrible." This is an astounding statement in the light of his use of poison gas and is something only the Roman antichrist could utter! He also said he hoped Karl I would "serve as an example, especially for those with political responsibilities in Europe today". The Pope has made 21 October, the date of Karl's marriage in 1911 to Princess Zita, a feast day. The emperor abdicated after the war, and died in exile on the island of Madeira in 1922.

However, the Austrian press has also questioned the miracle he allegedly worked to merit beatification.

According to the Vatican, he cured a Brazilian nun of varicose veins!!!!

Another person beatified was Anne Catherine Emmerich, a 19th Century German nun who was born in extreme poverty and was an invalid. Born in 1774 into a poor farming community in Germany, she died in 1824, aged 50. Her fame derives from the visions she said she had of Jesus before His crucifixion. Her apparitions were recorded in the book *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, by German Romantic poet Clemens Brentano. It is unclear, however, whether or not Brentano embellished the nun's accounts!