

Vatican to beatify Pope Paul VI after recognising 'miracle' that he cured an unborn baby of an untreatable illness

- Paul VI reigned between 1963 and 1978 and presided over key reforms
- Catholic Church procedures require a miracle attributed for beatification
- Italian media said his beatification could occur on October 19
- It would leave him one step from sainthood, a Vatican source said

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The Vatican has recognised a supposed miracle attributed to Paul VI and will beatify the late Italian pope in October, which would leave him one step from sainthood, a Vatican source said today.

Paul VI reigned between 1963 and 1978 and presided over key reforms from the Second Vatican Council.

During his reign, he also survived an assassination attempt at Manila airport in 1970 by a Bolivian surrealist painter.



Miracles do happen: President John F Kennedy meeting Pope Paul VI in Vatican City on his tour of Europe in 1963



Pope Paul VI and Raul Francisco Primatesta shake hands in this file photo during a private audience in Vatican City in 1973

The Italian news agency ANSA reported that the apparent miracle identified by the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints was the healing of an unborn baby from an otherwise incurable illness.

ANSA said the beatification could occur on October 19.

Two late popes, John Paul II and John XXIII, were given full sainthood in a Vatican ceremony last month.

Catholic Church procedures require one miracle attributed for beatification, which confers the status of 'blessed' on the person in question, and two miracles for canonisation to join the ranks of saints.



Pope Francis, flanked by Swiss Guards Commander Daniel Rudolf Anrig, greets new Swiss Guards the day before their swearing-in ceremony, as he arrives to meet them in the Clementine hall at the Vatican yesterday



Pope Francis passes by a tapestry depicting late Pope John Paul II as he leaves at the end of his weekly general audience, at the Vatican



The tapestry showing Pope John XXIII during the canonisation mass of Popes John

XXIII and John Paul II on St Peter's at the Vatican

Paul VI was praised for his efforts to seek closer ties with other Christian denominations but his 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was controversial for spelling out a ban on all forms of artificial contraception.

The application for beatification was begun in 1993.

DOING GOD'S WORK: THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A SAINT



One million people fill St Peter's Square to witness Pope Francis and retired Benedict XVI make saints of John XXIII and John Paul II last month

The Vatican's detailed process for making a saint usually starts in the diocese where the candidate lived or died.

A postulator — essentially the cheerleader spearheading the project — gathers testimony and documentation to build the case and presents the report to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

If the congregation's experts agree the candidate lived a virtuous life, the case is forwarded to the pope who signs a decree attesting to the candidate's 'heroic virtues.'

Over time, the postulator may come across information that someone was miraculously healed by praying to the candidate.

If, upon further investigation, the cure cannot be medically explained, the case is presented to the congregation as the possible miracle needed for beatification.

Panels of doctors, theologians, bishops and cardinals must certify that the cure was instantaneous, complete and lasting — and was due to the intercession of the sainthood candidate.

If convinced, the congregation sends the case to the pope who signs a decree saying the candidate can be beatified. A second miracle is needed for canonization.

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Beatification allows for veneration of the candidate locally, say in a particular diocese or country. Canonization allows for veneration throughout the universal church.

Martyrs, or people who were killed for their faith, get a free pass and can be beatified without a miracle. A miracle is needed, however, for martyrs to be canonized.