

Data bite: "Inflation of saints"

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Pope John Paul II has proclaimed a record 1,828 saints and blessed, more than all his predecessors over the past 400 years put together, a Vatican official reported in December. Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints, said that in the 26 years of his reign, John Paul has created 483 saints and declared 1,345 to be worthy of veneration, one step below sainthood. Defending the pope against what critics have called his "inflation of saints," the cardinal quoted John Paul as saying, "It is the fault of the Holy Spirit."