

Martyrs and Confessors

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Earlier Research on Saints

- Barro and McCleary 2016 analyzed determinants of numbers of confessors beatified and canonized. (Beatification/canonization are 2 final stages leading up to person becoming saint.)
- Confessors lived life of virtue but not killed in context of hatred of faith and are, therefore, not martyrs.
- Analysis applied to beatifications and canonizations of confessors mostly since 1588, when major changes occurred in rules for beatifications. Results applied to 7 major world regions and choices by 38 popes from Urban VII (start year 1590) to Benedict XVI (end year 2013).
- One finding was that numbers beatified and canonized responded positively to measures of competition between Catholicism and Protestantism and between Catholicism and no religion. We interpreted as attempts to invigorate Catholic faith and, thereby, deter conversions into Protestantism or no religion.

New Data on Martyrs

- Now extended data set to include martyrs beatified and canonized.
- Major difference from confessors is martyrs killed in context of hatred of faith.
- Data again begin mostly in 1588, but some earlier beatifications included.
Example is Martyrs of Otranto, beatified by Clement XIV in 1480, canonized by Francis in 2013.
- Unlike confessors, martyrs typically chosen in large groups, and overall number of martyrs beatified (5213) greatly exceeds number of confessors (772).
- Summary of numbers of martyrs in Table 1.
- Comparable numbers for confessors in Table 2.

Table 1 Martyrs Beatified				
	All	Female	All aged <=18	Female aged <=18
All	5213	669	184	42
Start-1800	872	0	3	0
1801-1900	474	31	33	1
1901-1978	737	160	28	9
1978-2004 JPII	1034	232	29	9
2005-2013 Ben XVI	774	120	70	20
2013-2021 Francis	1322	126	21	3

Table 2 Confessors Beatified

	All	Female	All aged <=18	Female aged <=18
All	772	342	10	4
Start-1800	108	27	1	0
1801-1900	56	12	0	0
1901-1978	123	64	1	0
1978-2004 JPII	312	147	3	2
2005-2013 Ben XVI	95	51	3	1
2013-2021 Francis	78	41	1	0

Thoughts on Martyrs & Confessors

- Relative to length of office, number of martyrs beatified jumped from 5 per year up to 1978 to 40 per year under John Paul II, 97 per year under Benedict XVI, 165 per year under Francis (Table 1). Another way to view is that number of martyrs beatified under last 3 popes was 3130, 60% of total chosen since 1588.
- Similarly, for confessors (Table 2), number beatified per year jumped from 0.7 per year up to 1978 to 12 per year under John Paul II, 12 per year under Benedict XVI, 10 per year under Francis. Number beatified under last 3 popes was 485, 63% of total since 1588.
- Although recent numbers beatified greatly exceed numbers canonized, excess reflects particularly dramatic increase in beatifications with John Paul II in 1978. Church's broad view is that beatification is step toward canonization, not end in itself. We anticipate that most persons beatified will eventually be canonized, and that relation holds for confessors beatified up to 1978. For 287 confessors beatified prior to John Paul II, only 54 or 19% remain as not yet canonized as of 2021. Our discussion focuses on beatifications.

Reform of Process

- 1983 Reforms to Code of Canon Law streamlined process of making saints. Initiative for commencing and gathering evidence of person's sanctity placed in diocesan bishop's office. Two changes facilitated increase in numbers of beatifieds: waiting period for initiation of cause shortened from 50 to 5 years and number of miracles at each stage reduced from 2 to 1.
- Benedict XVI and John Paul II deviated from 5-year waiting in 2 exceptional cases: John Paul II waived 3 years for Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Benedict XVI waived all 5 years for his predecessor, John Paul II.

Locations of Confessors and Martyrs

- Epicenter of Roman Catholicism is Vatican (and Rome). Not surprising that largest geographic concentration of beatified confessors—44% overall—is Italy (with location based on blessed person's place of death). Following in descending order of overall shares of confessors are other Western European countries (33%), Latin America (8%), Eastern Europe (7%), North America (4%), Asia (3%), Africa (1%).
- Another reason Italian and Western European blessed figures prominently is that they were predominantly members of male religious orders founded during Catholic Reformation. These orders during their formative decades remained geographically concentrated in Italy and Western Europe and recruited members from those areas (except for Society of Jesus). For those blessed belonging to 2 significant medieval religious orders, Franciscans and Dominicans, bases of operation and recruitment were, respectively, Italy and Iberian Peninsula.

Geography of Martyrs

- Geographical pattern for martyrs differs because most die in large groups affected by international and civil wars by widespread religious persecution. For martyrs, level and time variation of regional breakdown is dominated by these events—especially Spanish Civil War, Martyrs of Otranto (reflecting killings by Muslims of Catholics in Italy in 1480), French Revolution, Martyrs of Japan, English Reformation, Martyrs of Korea, and World War II.
- Large numbers of martyrs associated with these events result in number of martyrs beatified being dominated overall by Western Europe outside of Italy (56%) and Asia (19%). Italy important for martyrs beatified only in 1771 with 813 Martyrs of Otranto.

Geography of Confessors

- For confessors beatified, levels and time variations in regional breakdown bring out important changes in extent of global orientation of Catholic Church with respect to namings of blessed persons. Historically, beatifications of confessors dominated by Italy and other Western Europe. However, Italy's share fell from 55-57% before 1900 to 35% under Francis.
- Correspondingly, Church has shifted to more global orientation, notably in rise for Latin America (from 4-7% before 1900 to 17%) and Eastern Europe (from 2-6% to 10%).
- In previous research (Barro & McCleary 2016) we viewed parts of these regional changes as responses to competition from evangelical and Pentecostal churches, especially in 20th century and in a region such as Latin America where Catholicism had previously enjoyed near-monopoly position.

Local Cults

- Protestant-Catholic competition dates back to Reformation and its aftermath. In Western Europe, saints' feast days, pilgrimages, processions, and annual rites were cultural events through which local politicians, elites, and other groups reaffirmed their collective communal identity as Catholics. In post-Tridentine era, these religious events became opportunities for innovative polemics on Protestantism as well as reinforcing the role of miracles. In areas such as Bavaria, Belgium, southern France, Spain, and Portugal, which featured high density of saint shrines and vibrancy of cult devotion, Protestantism was successfully resisted.
- As local deceased person gained saintly reputation, an active public cult typically developed with communal devotional activities, reinforcing existing Catholic faith through social cohesion. Proliferation of local saints included many unofficial cults with devotional practices outside Church's control. Newly created Congregation of Rites and Ceremonies in 1588 began "an unprecedented attempt to reconcile particular, local practice with universal, Roman precepts." A primary means of enforcing universal regulation over local cults was introduction of formal procedure of beatification occurring prior to canonization but after formation of local saint's cult. Process allowed Church to regulate via universal norms devotional practices while still respecting specific cultural context of saint.

Locations of Ceremonies

- In 1644, first beatification ceremony for confessor took place in new St. Peter's Basilica, completed 1626. This beatification was by Pope Innocent X of Bernardo Tolomei. Soon after, Pope Alexander VII beatified Francisco de Sales at St. Peter's in 1662 and canonized him in 1665. Through these acts, Pope and Congregation of Rites publicly signaled that Vatican was center of authority over local cults.
- At least since 1588 and before John Paul II, ceremonies for beatification and canonization typically took place at St. Peter's in Vatican or elsewhere in Rome—one exception that we found is beatification of confessor Francis Borgia in 1624 in Madrid.
- John Paul II made major changes by shifting substantial number of events outside Rome, typically to location associated with blessed person. With regard to canonizations, John Paul II presided over canonizations of 113 martyrs and 14 confessors outside Vatican in 11 different countries between 1984 and 2003.

Recent Changes in Locations of Ceremonies

- Benedict XVI and Francis moved toward a policy whereby canonizations held mainly at Vatican but beatifications often occurred locally. Francis had all 1322 beatifications of martyrs outside Rome and all 849 canonizations of martyrs in Rome. For confessors, 73 of his 79 beatifications were outside Rome and 6 were in Rome, whereas 46 of his canonizations were in Rome and only 4 were outside Rome.
- Tendency starting with John Paul II to preside over beatifications in locations associated with blessed person we interpret as affirmation of universality of Catholic faith and Church's increasing globalization outside Rome.
- This policy complements increasing Church tendency to choose confessors and martyrs who died outside of Italy and other Western European countries, particularly Latin America and Eastern Europe

Characteristics of Martyrs & Confessors

- Fraction of beatified martyrs that was male averaged 85% and showed no clear trend. Fraction of beatified confessors that was male was nearly 80% up to 1900, similar to martyrs, but male fraction for confessors since declined to slightly below 50%.
- Numbers of blessed and saints affiliated with religious orders reflect orders' organizational advantage for promoting candidates for beatification and canonization, especially for males. Fractions of male beatifieds associated with an order averaged 53% over full sample for martyrs and 55% for confessors. Fraction of beatified male confessors affiliated with religious orders averaged 80% from 1588 to 1900, then steadily dropped, reaching 32% under Francis. Overall, there is a clear indication that association with an order is strong advantage for becoming a blessed person.

Child & Youth Martyrs

- Fraction of beatified martyrs that were child and youth (ages 0-18 at time of death) averaged 5% and showed no clear trend. In contrast, fraction of beatified confessors aged 0-18 was low throughout, averaging only 1.3%. (Total number of beatified confessors aged 0-18 was only 9 and number of beatified martyrs aged 0-18 was 184).
- Beginning in 20th century, sanctification of child and youth female martyrs who died protecting their chastity took on new interpretation. These women died in violent attacks resisting a rapist. Pius XII established contemporary Catholic paragon of female chastity and domesticity with beatification of 11-year old Maria Goretti in 1947, who died in defense of her virginity. In his beatification homily, Pius XII glorified her spiritual fortitude and physical strength in fighting off her rapist. Three years later, in his canonization homily, Pius XII focused on her purity of faith.
- This theme taken up by John Paul II, who beatified several females aged between 11 and 16, who died alone in attempted rapes. This female model of lay sanctity encompasses resignation, submission, and obedience in voluntarily resisting evil (male bestiality) by sacrificing one's life. There are many other recent cases of beatifications of women murdered by their sexually predatory attackers.

More Characteristics of Martyrs & Saints

- Fraction of beatified martyrs with lay backgrounds averaged 24% over full sample and showed no clear trend. However, 18% value for Francis was comparatively low. For beatified confessors, the lay fraction was lower overall, averaging 10%. However, this share rose to 19% under Francis, comparable to that for martyrs.
- Founders of orders barely registered among beatified martyrs—there have been only 6 over full sample. However, founders much more represented among beatified confessors, averaging 44% over full sample. There is no clear trend here.
- Fraction of beatified martyrs who were married averaged 10% over full sample and shows no clear trend. However, share for Francis of 5% was lowest of sample. Patterns similar for beatified confessors.

Martyr Events

- Many beatified martyrs associate with wars—civil war, rebellion, or external war. Among 22 events overall, with 11 detailed in Table 3, the 13 war-related (Spanish Civil War, Martyrs of Otranto, French Revolution, World War II, Boxer Rebellion, Mongol Invasion, Martyrs of Brazil, Cristero War, Portugal-Dutch War, Algerian Civil War, Martyrs of Gorkum, Guatemala Civil War, and Martyrs of Prague) account for 3792 or 73% of total beatified martyrs of 5213.
- Other events, some detailed in Table 3, involve widespread religious persecution, many aimed at Christian missionaries and their followers (Martyrs of Japan, Martyrs of Korea, Martyrs of Vietnam, Martyrs of Uganda, and Martyrs of China). Also significant was the conflict between Protestants and Catholics during the English Reformation. The Martyrs of Ireland were part of this conflict.

Children & Youth in Martyr Events

- Main case of beatified martyrs aged 18 and below was the 83 in the group of Martyrs of Japan. These numbers reflected tendency to kill together families involved with Christian missionaries. Of the 59 child-and-youth martyrs with known ages at death, only 7 were youths (aged 15-18).
- The case with the second most child-and-youth martyrs—the Spanish Civil War, with total of 26—was different. In this case, all were youths, aged 15-18. This group did not involve family members but rather clerics, novices, seminarians, aspirants, and other young persons attached to Catholic Church.
- There is potential for many more child & youth martyrs. Noteworthy is French Revolution, for which no child-and-youth martyrs are presently noted but where causes for 110 child martyrs have been opened.

Table 3 Martyrs Beatified by Selected Events

Event	Death years	BEA years	All	Female	All <= 18	Female <=18
Spanish Civil War	1934-1939	1987-2001	2053	236	26	0
Martyrs of Otranto	1480	1771	813	--	--	--
French Revolution	1792-1799	1906-2021	446	151	0	0
Martyrs of Japan	1597-1639	1627-2008	437	91	83	19
World War II	1939-1946	1971-2021	171	32	1	1
Martyrs of Vietnam	1745-1862	1900-1951	113	1	1	0
Boxer Rebellion	1900	1946-1955	86	34	16	6
Mongol Invasion	1260	1807	49	0	--	0
Cristero War	1926-1931	1988-2005	39	0	1	0
Portugal-Dutch War	1645	2000	29	5	12	4
Guatemala Civil War	1980-1991	2017-2021	14	0	1	0

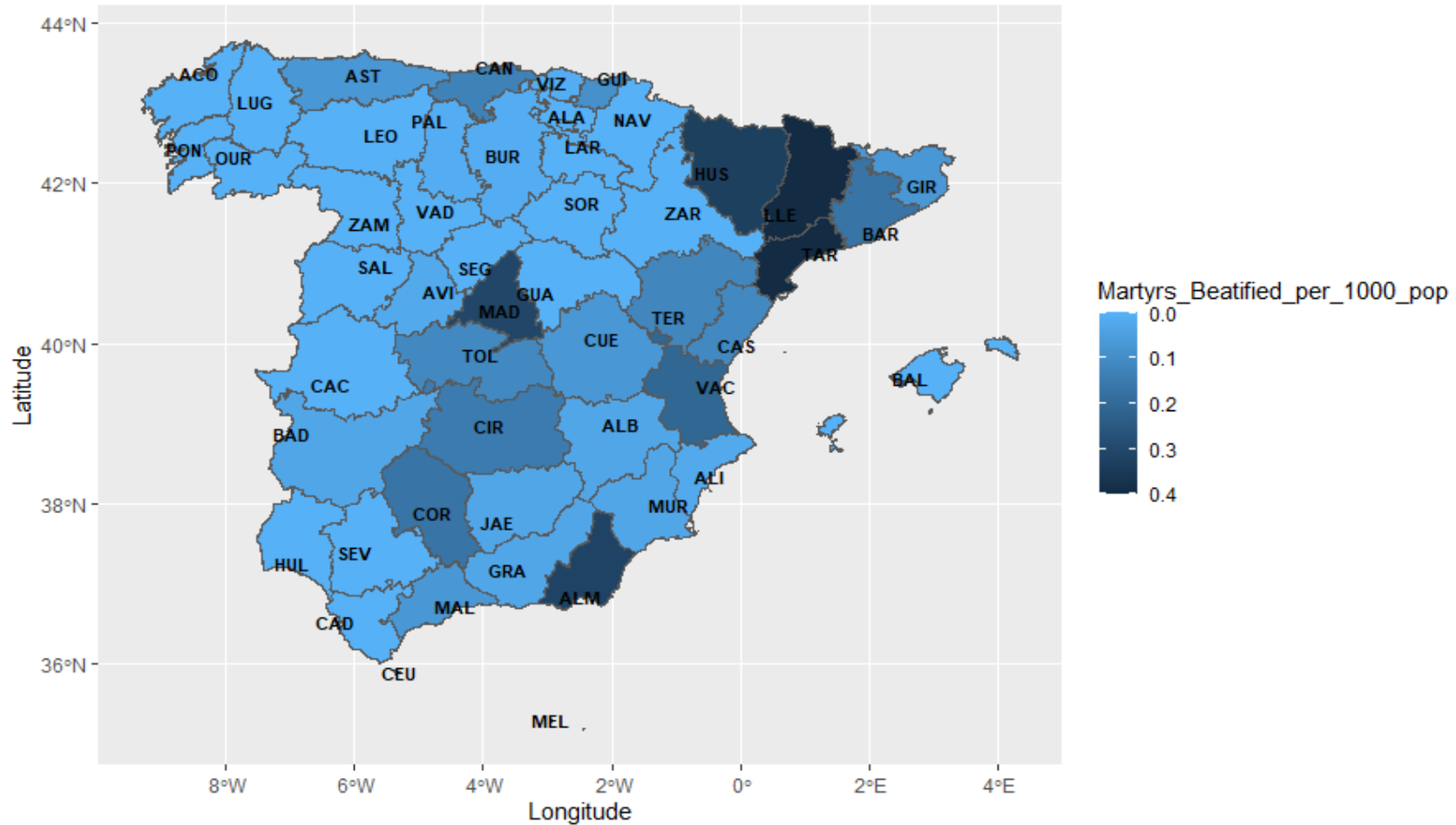
Spanish Civil War

- In terms of numbers of martyrs beatified, most important event, by far, in Table 3 is Spanish Civil War. During this conflict and mostly in 1936, Republican government was responsible for most of killings of roughly 7000 priests and other personnel of Catholic Church, including seminarians. These actions were apparently part of Republican objective to eliminate organized religion in Spain.
- After victory of General Franco's Nationalist side in 1939, views of killings of Catholic personnel during war were sharply divided along political lines, in Spain and internationally. Probably because of political sensitivity of topic, Paul VI blocked consideration of causes for beatifications of martyrs from Spanish Civil War for 50 years from date of death, which was 1936 for 96% of cases thus far beatified.
- First beatifications of Spanish Civil War martyrs began with John Paul II in 1987, and numbers rose sharply thereafter, during his pontificate and in following papacies of Benedict XVI and Francis. Thus far, few of 2053 Spanish Civil War beatifieds have been canonized (11).

Geographical Pattern of Spanish Civil War Martyrs

- Map shows geographical pattern of martyrs beatified during Spanish Civil War, expressed as numbers per 1000 population across provinces. Highest numbers for Tarragona, Lleida, Huesca, Almeria, Madrid.
- Pattern likely reflects wartime developments in terms of extent of conflict and which side was in charge of each province.

Martyrs Beatified per 1000 Population by Province in Spanish Civil War



Research Plans

- Current research seeks to assess effects of namings of martyrs and confessors on behavior of Catholics. We plan to carry out event-study analyses at diocese level to assess how beatification of a martyr or a confessor impacts subsequent number of persons baptized, viewed as an indicator of attachment to Catholic Church. This analysis seeks to evaluate impact of each type of beatification and, thereby, give a comparative assessment of effects from one martyr (usually named as part of a large group) versus one confessor.
- Major challenge so far has been assembly of data over time and by diocese on numbers of baptisms. We presently have data nearly complete for 1970 to 1990. We are matching this information to our numbers on beatifications of martyrs and confessors, expressed at diocese level. We will then carry out the event-study analyses.