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ST. THOMAS MORE TO BE NAMED PATRON OF POLITICIANS

VATICAN, Oct. 11, 00 (CWNews.com) -- Pope John Paul II will soon proclaim St. Thomas More as the patron saint of politicians.

The Pope's announcement, taking the form of a motu proprio, will be issued on November 4 or 5, as the Vatican observes the Jubilee for politicians. The announcement comes in response to a formal request from a committee of Italian political leaders, headed by Francesco Cossiga, the former president of the Italian republic.

Executed in 1535 because of his opposition to the efforts of King Henry VIII to separate the Church of England from Rome, St. Thomas More is venerated today for his willingness to sacrifice his political influence, and ultimately his life, out of dedication to the Gospel.

Cardinal Paul Poupard, the president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, reports that the suggestion of naming St. Thomas More as patron of politicians is "not a new idea." The cardinal continued: "Politics is a field for the greatest kind of charity. We need a new generation of politicians who are convinced of that, and the witness of Thomas More will offer them an example to follow."