



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Explore “The Making of a Saint” at the National Museum of Funeral History**

*New addition to permanent Papal exhibit celebrates Sainthood of  
Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII and educates on the process of becoming a saint*



**Houston, Texas (April 26, 2016)** – Inspired by the April 27, 2014 canonization mass at the Vatican that elevated Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII to saints, the National Museum of Funeral History is opening a new permanent section of its *Celebrating the Lives & Deaths of the Popes* exhibit entitled “The Making of a Saint” on June 1, 2016. The new addition to the popular exhibit offers visitors the unique opportunity to learn more about the process of becoming a saint, from beatification to canonization, and features new papal artifacts as well as a special collection of Saint John Paul II memorabilia, including an authentic 1982 Range Rover “Popemobile” used by Saint John Paul II in the 1980s during his tour of the United Kingdom.

“The Making of a Saint” showcases the sainthood of Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII, a significant rarity, as only one pope since the 1500s - Pope Pius X, who died in 1914 - has been added to the list of popes canonized for sainthood. In the last 1,000 years, only seven popes have become saints, including the two featured in the new “The Making of a Saint” section – Pope John Paul II, 36 years after his election and nine years after his death; and Pope John XXIII, 56 years after his election and 51 years after his death.

On April 27, 2014, at 3:30 am EST, Houstonians joined thousands around the world in tuning in to watch two popes – the beloved “People’s Pope,” John Paul II, and “The Good Pope,” John XXIII, a lifelong advocate for the equality of all – become saints. “Often times, it is centuries after their death before a pope becomes a saint,” said Genevieve Keeney, president of the National Museum of Funeral History, “which means they usually aren’t remembered or known by the living. That’s what makes this new addition to our Papal exhibit so special - because these popes were part of our lives and we remember them so fondly, particularly Saint John Paul II, who was someone we all came to know and love in our lifetime.”

The exhibit features an authentic sash worn by Saint John Paul II during his papacy and photographs from the Vatican of his body being moved from the Vatican grotto where he was originally interred to his new resting place in St. Peter’s Basilica during his beatification process in May 2011, when his first miracle was identified and proven and the second was being confirmed. Additionally, visitors can explore a life-size re-creation of the altar of Saint John Paul II, view an opulent replica of a papal throne and discover interesting and significant facts on the canonization process, including how popes become qualified for sainthood and what relics were presented during the April 2014 canonization ceremony for both popes.

Spanning more than 5,000 sq. ft., the *Celebrating the Lives and Deaths of the Popes* exhibit opened in 2008 after more than three years of direct collaboration with the Vatican to create. As the largest permanent educational papal exhibit outside of the Vatican, it explores the customs of electing and burying a pope, examines traditions that have withstood the test of time and gives visitors the opportunity to “virtually” experience a pope’s funeral.

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**About the [National Museum of Funeral History](#)**

The National Museum of Funeral History houses the country’s largest collection of funeral service artifacts and features renowned exhibits on one of man’s oldest cultural customs. Visitors can discover the mourning rituals of ancient civilizations, see up-close the authentic items used in the funerals of U.S. Presidents and Popes and explore the rich heritage of the industry which cares for the dead. The museum is located at 415 Barren Springs Dr., Houston, TX 77090 and is open Monday – Friday from 10 am – 4 pm, Saturday from 10 am – 5 pm and Sunday from 12 pm – 5 pm. Admission is \$10 for adults and children age 12 and older, \$9 for seniors and veterans; \$7 for children 6 – 11 years old; and free for children age 5 and younger. For more information, visit [www.nmfh.org](http://www.nmfh.org), like us on [Facebook](#) or call 281.876.3063.