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Best of 2011. May: Beatification of John Paul II

A Rome Reports video with highlights from the year now ending.

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The month of May began with the beatification of John Paul II. This meant statues and photographs of the polish pope were placed throughout the city of Rome.

The first ceremony was a prayer vigil at the Circus Maximus. There, some

two hundred thousand people listened to the testimony of John Paul II's secretary Stanislaw Dzivisz, as well as former Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls, and the nun who was miraculously cured by the pope, Sister Marie Simon Pierre.

Many of the pilgrims spent the night camped in front of the Vatican for the ceremony May 1.

Their patience gave them the best spot in front of the one million pilgrims trying to enter St. Peter's Square and that were also lining the road Via della Conciliazione leading to the basilica.

Benedict XVI

May 1, 2011

“With our Apostolic authority we concede that the Venerable Servant of God, John Paul II, pope, shall be called henceforth blessed.”

For the ceremony, the remains of John Paul II were exhumed from the Vatican Grottoes and placed in St. Peter's Basilica. They remained there late into the night as an endless line of pilgrims passed through to pay their respects.

The beatification also served as a chance for the Vatican to hold its very first conference with Catholic bloggers. They came from across the world and brought forth different ideas and concerns in order to build a closer relationship.

The pope then traveled to Venice where he took one of the city's Gondola tours and met with local church officials.

Benedict XVI also made history this month by becoming the first pope to make a phone call to space. He spoke with a group of astronauts at the International Space Station after the arrival of the shuttle Endeavor.

The month of May was also when Osama Bin Laden was killed. The Vatican said that even though he represented violence, a Catholic should not celebrate the killing of any person.

Also in May, the Vatican announced that the Italian Giovanni Angelo Becciu would be the Substitute for General Affairs to the Secretary of State, known as the #3 spot at the Vatican.

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