

Sì sì no no

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Let your speech be, "Yes, yes," "No, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37) • July 1997
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A Happy Devil's Advocate Looks at the Beatification Process of Pope Paul VI

The *Devil's Advocate* is the popular term given to the Promoter of the Faith, an official of the Congregation of Rites, whose business it is to scrupulously examine all evidence, both of miracles and virtue, in the processes of beatification and canonization, so that no person may, through human enthusiasm or error, receive the highest honors of the Church unless in every way worthy of them. Every objection must be answered satisfactorily before the case is allowed to proceed.

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In Milan, Italy, the diocesan stage of Paul VI's beatification has reached its conclusion by attributing to Pope Montini the title of "Prophet of the Council" (*Avvenire*, Feb. 21, 1995). Just as they wished to show, the authorities now want to canonize Paul VI, not because they believe in his sanctity, but solely for the purpose of "canonizing" Vatican Council II. *Avvenire* gives us the following information:

And the devil's advocate remained idle throughout the proceedings: as regards Paul VI's sanctity, there is not much to discuss....

For ordinary people, he is called the "devil's advocate." His official title, however, is the "Promoter of the Faith." In processes of beatification, his task is to check and doublecheck that everything be scrupulously done according to Canon Law, so that any personal "sympathy" toward the candidate for beatification not interfere with the rigorous controls over his sanctity. This time, however, the "devil's advocate" was left quite unoccupied: there was general agreement on this very point [which, however, did not authorize his remaining "inactive" as he did]: it is quite difficult to discuss any aspect of Paul VI's saintliness. He [the devil's advocate] however, does not worry himself in the slightest degree over this. "Quite the contrary," Dom Luigi Mistò explains, "the fact of my remaining idle throughout the procedures afforded me great pleasure indeed. One reason for this lies in those happy memories which bind me to Paul VI..."

Is Paul VI's sanctity really "something that is so difficult to discuss?" Yet, as Archbishop of Milan, Montini was already to blame for some very foolish actions [not to mention those committed behind the back of Pope Pius XII. See *Courrier de Rome*, Apr., 1995.] For example, according to Von Balthasar's testimony, while Archbishop of Milan, Montini encouraged and upheld the "new theology," although this error had already

been solemnly condemned by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis* [cf. Urs von Balthasar, *La fonte del rinnovamento*, (*The Fount or Source of Renewal*), Jaca Book]; or again as Archbishop of Milan, when he penned some prefaces for books authored by the most scandalous of modernists, such as Suenens and Alfrink, who later skillfully manipulated the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) [cf. Eugenio Corli *L'epoca di Paolo VI*, Solfanella Editor, Chieti]. Again, as Archbishop of Milan, he frequently indulged in those unbecoming theatrics which would still characterize him later on as Pope. For example:

...when, through some imponderable humanist liberality, he prefaced Mazzachelli's book on the *Moniale de Monza* (i.e., *The Nun of Monza*), only to find himself obliged to withdraw his preface; or when at the velodrome he put on a cyclist's crash helmet; or yet again when he addressed factory workers in his own archdiocesan courtyard which had been "decorated" with an arch featuring a hammer and sickle.¹ (Romano Amerio, published in *StSìNoNo*, Aug. 1987, under the title of *Virtue of Humility or Humiliation of the Church and of the Papacy?*)

And if the "devil's advocate," instead of wasting away his precious time had proved himself to be conscientiously faithful to his duty, he would certainly have unearthed many other things in the actions and speeches of the one who was at that time Cardinal Montini. But "from the Vatican," we read on in *Avvenire's* article:

...together with the list of people to interrogate as well as the questions to be put to them...there also arrived a pressing invitation to do things well, but in all possible haste, since the process of beatification of Paul VI is...one of those which John Paul II has especially at heart.

These are bizarre circumstances. It is the bounden duty under



Pope Paul VI arrives in Rome after his pilgrimage to the Holy Land (1964).

grave obligation that the "Promoter of the Faith," makes sure that the personal sympathy toward the candidate for beatification not interfere in any way nor diminish nor weaken at all those rigorous controls over his [i.e., the candidate's] sanctity...

It now appears, on the contrary, that the beatification process has been carried away by the "sympathy" of the devil's advocate for Pope Paul VI. What will be, will be. In any case, the pope would certainly be the first saint to be beatified with the full and easy endorsement of the devil's advocate.

(From *StSìNoNo*, Sept., 1996)