

Saints on their way

BY JENNA MATTERN

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EMMITSBURG – The path to sainthood has something in common with a trial: There is testimony, evidence, historical investigation and a formal tribunal. But in the Church's process of canonization, the goal is not to find someone guilty or innocent. It is to uncover evidence of holiness.

"It's kind of like a trial – a civil trial, because in a certain sense, it is," said Monsignor Robert Sarno, who spent 38 years working at the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in the Vatican. "The only difference is that we're not looking to punish someone. We're looking for holiness in the life of the church."

Monsignor Sarno offered that explanation Sept. 13 during the second annual Saints on Their Way Festival at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The festival brought together longtime parishioners, first-time visitors and representatives of 27 guilds from across the country, each promoting the cause of an American candidate for canonization.

The day began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Roy E. Campbell of the Archdiocese of Washington, followed by Monsignor Sarno's keynote address, "A



Bishop Roy E. Campbell gives a blessing at the Saints on Their Way Festival in Emmitsburg. (Courtesy National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton)

Theology of Canonization."

Monsignor Sarno explained that a cause for canonization begins at the local level before eventually making its way to Rome. Along the way, the candidate's life and reputation for holiness are examined through a formal investigation. A tribunal is established that includes an episcopal delegate, promoter of justice, historical commission and notary.

Monsignor Sarno also described saints as guides for Catholics making their own journey toward heaven.

Monsignor Sarno explained that there are three paths to canonization: heroic virtue, martyrdom and offering of life. Of the three, heroic virtue is the most common. **CR**

LOCAL SAINTS?

Among those being considered for sainthood are several who served in or had connections to the Archdiocese of Baltimore, including Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Blessed Stanley Rother; Venerable Mother Mary Lange, Father Demetrius Augustin Gallitzin and Bishop Simon Bruté de Remur.

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