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**POPE FRANCIS DECREES THE MARTYRDOM OF 38 MARTYRS OF THE ALBANIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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29.04.2016

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28.04.2016

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Pope Francis has signed a decree for the martyrdom of 38 martyrs of the Catholic Church from 1945 to 1974 from the communist regime in Albania. The pontificate of Pope Francis is enriched with new martyrs of the 20th century. As it was expected, the announcement was made on Wednesday by Archbishop Angelo Massafra, head of the Conference of Archbishops.

In the audience that the Pope has given to cardinal Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for Saints, he has authorized the decree for the martyrdom of the Servant of Divinity Vincenc Prenushi of the Order of the Minor Friars and 37 friends killed between 1945 and 1974, Massafra said.

For the 38 Albanian clerics this marks the end of the process of beatification, a process which was sealed today with the signature of Pope Francis.

Earlier, Pope Francis decreed the sanctification of the humanitarian of Albanian origins, Mother Teresa, on 4 September 2016, 19 years after her death. The ceremony will be held in the basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican.

On this occasion, 4th of September will be marked in the Apostolic Calendar as the Day of the Albanian Saint Mother Theresa of Calcutta. More: Vatican decrees the sanctification of Mother Teresa

Meanwhile, a monument of Pope Francis will be erected in front of the pyramid in Tirana, to mark respect of his figure and the historical visit that he made in September 2014 in Albania.

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