

Vatican to Broadcast John Paul II's Canonization in 3-D to US Theaters

While millions of pilgrims are expected to attend the Catholic Church's first-ever double canonization at the end of April, the Vatican is preparing its most ambitious TV and social media campaign for the millions who don't make it to Rome.

City officials are expecting more than 5 million people to attend the ceremony when **Pope Francis** declares his predecessors Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII saints in St. Peter's Square on April 27.

For the first time viewers will be able to watch the historic event live in 3-D movie theaters in 20 countries across North and South America and Europe through a deal between Vatican TV and Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV network, Sony and other partners.

The Vatican's television unit CTV will produce the event in 3-D and it will be screened in more than 600 movie theaters worldwide. Admission will be free.

Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, said the communications technology being used offers a "great opportunity for relationship, knowledge, participation, an opportunity to live history."

But the Vatican's approach to this major event is more comprehensive than simply TV or 3-D cinema screens as it prepares for an influx of the world's media and also creates a multifaceted "digital platform" in several languages.

A website—is under construction and will be available in five languages and the Vatican is also setting up Twitter accounts,

offering a smartphone app, Facebook page and a YouTube channel. Other social media sites, including Instagram and Storify, will also be used to communicate the event to young people around the world.

David Bush, marketing director of Sony Europe, described the TV deal as a “natural evolution” of the company’s long-standing partnership with CTV.

“Our wish is that it helps to bring the emotion of the event to all of those many millions of people and the world who want to physically be there,” he said. “That is the goal of technology—to try and replicate the experience of being in St. Peter’s Square.”

Copyright 2014 Religion News Service. All rights reserved. No part of this transmission may be distributed or reproduced without written permission.