Pope Francis scored a political coup by approving sainthood for two of his predecessors — one conservative, the other liberal — each with his own supporters who largely cancel out one another’s protests, Vatican experts said.

“Pope John XXIII irritates the conservatives and Pope John Paul II irritates the liberals,” said an amused Father James Bretzke, a Boston College professor and Vatican expert.

“It’s all politics when it comes to these things.”

Peter Borre, who heads an organization battling Catholic parish closures, said he has been watching the road the two former pontiffs have taken toward canonization with great interest, both here and on his frequent trips to Rome.

“Pope Francis is certainly shrewd,” Borre said. “There’s something for each side.”

However, some ultra-conservatives — such as the Society of St. Pius X — fear the church may has gone too far in waiving traditional requirements, including the five-year waiting period for John Paul II and a second miracle for John XXIII, as well as the so-called “devil’s advocate,” an inquisitor who challenges the candidate for sainthood.

“The Society of St. Pius X is indeed concerned that the procedural safeguards which have been observed for centuries to ensure a proper investigation into a person’s heroic sanctity have been dismissed, such as the traditional waiting period, the sympathies of the ‘devil’s advocate,’ and the reduction of the number of miracles ... in the case of Pope John Paul II,” said Louis J. Tofari, a spokesman for the group in the U.S.