



TONI ZWEIFEL

AND THE BLESSED ALVARO DEL PORTILLO



▶ AN EXEMPLARY SON OF BLESSED ALVARO DEL PORTILLO



Toni in conversation with Blessed Alvaro del Portillo.

“I’m sure of it: Toni is a saint!” Blessed Alvaro del Portillo often made remarks such as this about Toni Zweifel during the last months before Toni’s death.

Toni was united by filial affection to Don Alvaro, who led Opus Dei from 1975 to 1994. Despite the distance between Rome and Zürich they often met and maintained contact by letter.

Don Alvaro was more than a friend for Toni. He was a father in whom Toni had the fullest trust. “As I begin this letter,” Toni wrote to him in 1976, “I realize that you yourself are its most important content: which is what it means to have you for a father.” And in 1983, on looking back on a visit: “Every meeting with you does me a lot of good, and especially the last one filled me with great serenity.”

This interior closeness had its foundation in St. Josemaría Escrivá. In fact, Toni said that his unity with Don Alvaro was “the same as my unity with our founder.”

Toni took part in the Elective Congress of Opus Dei, which in September 1975 chose Don Alvaro to be the successor to St. Josemaría. As a dedicated engineer he also played a technical role there. He brought with him an apparatus built in Switzerland and installed it himself, to permit the electors to vote electronically. On the night before the election, however, it suddenly refused to function. Toni did everything he could to solve the problem including calling the Swiss company for advice, but without success. But what the engineer could not achieve, the man of faith succeeded in. He handed over the solution of the problem to God, and when the moment of truth came, the apparatus worked perfectly without any further efforts at repair.

When Toni visited Don Alvaro in Rome, he always wanted to do something pleasing for him. He not only brought him some small present from Switzerland, but above all some joyful and amusing anecdotes from their apostolic activities, knowing that this would please him the most. Don Alvaro for his part was



moved by this thoughtfulness, but above all because of Toni's unconditional faithfulness and devotion.

After he was diagnosed with leukemia in 1986, Toni was seldom able to go to Rome. But Don Alvaro made the effort to visit him frequently in Zürich. He had never gone to Switzerland as often as during those years. Toni always awaited him with great joy. On one occasion he asked the doctor to postpone a chemotherapy session by 24 hours, so that he could be fully alert during his planned visit with Don Alvaro.

Through his conversations at the hospital and the letters he received, Don Alvaro was a witness to the faith-filled cheerfulness with which the not yet fifty-year-old placed his humanly hopeless life in God's hands. A few months before his death, Toni told him in a letter a few anecdotes about his friends, and ended by saying: "As you can see, I am having great fun." Don Alvaro wrote down on the margin: "And at the same time, he knows that his sickness is in its last stages and the final collapse could come at any moment."

A few weeks later Don Alvaro was able to have a private conversation with him in the hospital. He left the hospital room deeply moved and said: "This son of mine lives immersed in God." Toni had shown him his picture of our Lady and said how deeply touched he was that God had taken on our flesh and that he had not died "merely" from leukemia, but on the Cross, compared to which leukemia was a small sacrifice. Toni showed that he was a person who drew his strength and trust from his faith, from meditating on Christ's redemptive work.

All these events led Blessed Alvaro del Portillo

to the conviction that Toni had lived and died in a holy way. Therefore he provided the impetus several years later for the beatification process that is now underway and that we are accompanying with our newsletters.

On a pilgrimage in Einsiedeln.



► FAVORS RECEIVED

HEALING OF A RHINO SINUSITIS

A few years ago I suffered an acute rhino sinusitis. The doctor treated it with an antibiotic. Since no improvement resulted, a number of MRI pictures were taken. Those on October 29, November 30, 2009, and January 29, 2010, showed that it was a severe case. Further antibiotic treatment failed to provide satisfactory results as shown by another MRI photo on December 14, 2011. As a result the doctor strongly advised surgery. Since the infected site was very deep, the operation included a substantial risk, which as a nurse I was quite aware of. While awaiting the surgery I began to call on Toni Zweifel with deep faith, asking that he save me from this operation.

Soon afterwards my family doctor told me that I should have another MRI taken within three months. It resulted in a surprise. The feared operation was no longer necessary. This was confirmed by the MRI taken on March 23, 2012. Since then I have been perfectly healthy.

I thank Toni with all my heart for having healed me.
W. A .R., Büsserach, Switzerland

BURSITIS OF THE KNEE DISAPPEARS

A few months ago a lump formed on my left knee that caused me a lot of discomfort. I tried to empty its contents with a sterilized needle. But the lump did not disappear and instead became worse, so that I finally could no longer kneel. The doctor diagnosed it as bursitis of the knee, prescribing antibiotics and a specific knee treatment; but when after some time the infection did not disappear, it was decided to remove the inflammation surgically.

I had been planning to accompany a youth group on a ski trip, but now it seemed that it wouldn't

be possible. Therefore I asked Toni to take care of healing my inflammation, which had been hindering me in my daily activities for several weeks, so that I could look after the ski camp without any problems. The inflammation disappeared shortly after this. I was able to cancel my appointment with the surgeon and move normally again. I led the ski group, and went down the slopes in great form.

I. M., Fribourg, Switzerland

A DEFECTIVE DVD-READER

Yesterday I was on the way to an activity that is part of my priestly work. I brought a laptop with me to be repaired whose DVD device was not working. In the shop they told me that they didn't have the right replacement parts. They tried to do the repair with parts from several old and defective computers. After several unsuccessful attempts, I turned to Toni's intercession, and asked for two things: that the repair be finished and that it be done soon so I could make it in time to the place where people were waiting for me.

Then another technician appeared with a DVD-reader of the same type as the laptop. It worked on the first attempt. I thanked them for their efforts, and got to my destination on time.

I would like to testify to this reply to my prayer. It came about through the intercession of the engineer Toni Zweifel, who also liked to be on time.

B. A., Vilnius, Lithuania

AN UNEXPECTED CUSTOMER

Last November I visited the Marian shrine of Our Lady of Bonaigua in Barcelona. There I came upon the prayer card of Toni Zweifel for the first time. His look told me that he must have been a good man.

I read his short biography and, using the prayer written on the card, I asked him to intercede for my family. We had a major problem at that time in connection with our work. The next day we received a call from a customer who had not called us in two years. I thought immediately, Toni must have had a hand in this. I prayed to him again, this time for successful negotiations with this customer. I promised that if we obtained a contract from this company, I would send in a letter about Toni's help. I am hereby keeping my promise.

V. S., Barcelona, Spain

PRIZES FOR A GIRLS' CAMP

I took on the task of providing prizes for some girls taking part in a camp. These included three very elegant wooden plaques. Since these plaques are quite expensive, I needed to buy them as cheaply as possible. I knew that a certain store had some that cost about ten dollars. So I had asked an employee to reserve three of them for me. But when I went to the store the owner told me that the plaques put aside were not the ones that sold for ten dollars. It was late and I had to find a solution for the problem that day. I asked the owner if any of the cheaper ones were still available. He said no, since it was graduation time and they had sold a lot of them. I then asked him to take another look around the store. He didn't offer any hope, but went back into the storeroom. Meanwhile I said the prayer to Toni. He couldn't refuse my prayer! The store owner returned and said: "You've had real luck! There were exactly three plaques left over!" – Thank you, Toni!

C. P. C., San Juan, Puerto Rico

DOWNLOADING A LARGE DOCUMENT

I was trying to download a large document from the Internet. But the connection was unreliable, since our provider was not very good. After every connection break I had to begin again from the beginning. After a number of unsuccessful attempts I turned to



On a walk in the forest.

Toni: "Toni, fix this for me!" Shortly after this I hit the command for downloading once more, and this time it worked without any problem. I was very relieved.

V. M., Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Toni's grave in Fluntern Cemetery in Zürich. It can be reached by the No. 6 tram stopping at the "Zoo" station. His grave is No. 80610. Follow the roadway that ascends gradually from the main entrance. His grave is located just before the road ends, in the last section, on the right.





► PRAYER

God, our Father, you have entrusted the earth to mankind to build it up and so give you glory. Through your grace your servant Toni imbued his work with professional quality and a Christian spirit.

Help me also to carry out my work in a way that gives you glory; and grant that my example will lead many people to discover the dignity and divine meaning of their daily activity.

Deign to glorify your servant Toni and through his intercession grant me the favor I ask of you... Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

► TONI'S LIFE

Toni Zweifel was born on February 15, 1938 in Verona, Italy, the son of an Italian woman, Antonia, nee di Benedetto, and the Swiss textile manufacturer Giusto Zweifel. He was baptized on February 26.

He spent part of the years of World War II in Switzerland with his mother and younger sister Anna Rosa. In 1944 he started school at San Giovanni Lupatoto near Verona. In 1948 he received First Holy Communion and Confirmation a few weeks apart. Between 1949 and 1957 he attended middle school and secondary school in Verona. Following this he went to Zürich to study mechanical engineering at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology).

Towards the end of his studies, through some fellow students, he came into contact with the newly opened Fluntern student residence, whose spiritual direction was entrusted to Opus Dei. He moved into the residence at the beginning of 1962. On March 19 of that year, he requested admission to Opus Dei. In June he finished his studies and began his first job in private industry in Zürich.

In 1964 Toni became a member of the scientific team at the ETH Institute for Thermodynamics. Two years later he was also made a director of the student

residence. As part of his work there he organized annual introductory courses in the two Zürich colleges for graduates of the public high schools. During a Workshop in Rome in 1969 he personally met Saint Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei.

In 1972 his professional career took a major change. He became the head of the newly organized Limmat Stiftung (Limmat Foundation) in Zürich. In the following 17 years, until his death, this Foundation helped in the development of hundreds of educational and social service initiatives in more than 30 countries on five continents.

In 1985 both of his parents died within three months of each other. In the following year, on February 19, Toni learned that he was suffering from leukemia. He immediately underwent chemotherapy treatment for several weeks. After a temporary return to health, he suffered a first relapse in February 1988 and a second in the following November. In June 1989 he had to enter the hospital once more and underwent chemotherapy for another month and a half. Its effectiveness ended after three months. On November 24, 1989, Toni succumbed to his sufferings in submission to the will of God, and was interred in the Fluntern Cemetery in Zürich.

Prelature of Opus Dei, Office for the Causes of the Saints

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