

was four inches by three inches [...]. I spontaneously appealed for help to Toni: “only you can help here,” I told him, filled with complete confidence. And in fact that malignant wound was cured, against all expectations, without medication or skin transplants and in an unusually short space of time.

A. Th., Maganasse (Ethiopia)

A STRANGE HEATING BILL

The heating bill for my one room apartment last winter was 800 Swiss francs (\$675) more than it usually is. I couldn’t understand it because I didn’t do anything different last winter than in previous years. I consulted with the building management and was told that the heating meters were read by radio. Therefore they would be correct for all tenants or wrong for all of them. It wasn’t possible for just one meter to be wrong. About that time I was given a prayer card of Toni Zweifel. I began a novena to him confident that, as an engineer, he would understand something about heating bills and would help me in this matter. On the fourth day of the novena I received a letter from the building management saying they had overcharged me by 10,000 kilowatt hours.

M. B. D., Bern (Switzerland)

A TRICKY DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

A good friend of mine, N., let herself be talked into writing a doctoral dissertation on a politician from the Weimar Republic. She had already written several books about this period so the doctoral dissertation should really have presented no problem.

But actually it ran into nothing but problems. N., who is Lutheran, asked me several times to ask Toni to help her. Finally the work was accepted. After that N. tried during the whole summer to have a date set for the defense of her dissertation. It should have taken place on November 3, but that didn’t happen because the dissertation director had failed to tell her that he would be abroad at that time. I went to Toni’s interces-

sion again and the date November 24 came to mind; besides this was the anniversary of Toni’s death. But N. was unable to contact one of the five professors needed for the panel. Finally she reached him on the 15th of November. He accepted the date but pointed out that this was the last date the invitations for the defense could be sent out to comply with notification regulations. N. quickly wrote the invitation and faxed it to the dean’s office. Thanks to Toni the invitations were mailed out on time, and on the 24th of November everything went well: the three hour trip there, the exam, and the return. A day later and it would have been impossible because the arrival of winter weather partially closed the highways.

I think that it’s time that N. herself starts praying to Toni.

G. G., Cologne (Germany)

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 road ends, in the last section, on the right.



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.

► **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.

► **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 Lupatota near Verona. In 1948 he received his First Holy Communion on May 2, and his Confirmation on May 31. 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, 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 director of the student resi-

dence. 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 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, his father in May and his mother in August. In the following year, on February 19, Toni learned that he was suffering from leukemia. He had to undergo chemotherapy treatment for several weeks. After a temporary return to health, he suffered a first relapse in February of 1988 and a second in the following November. In June of 1989 he had to enter the hospital once more and underwent chemotherapy for another month and a half. Its effectiveness ended after three months. Toni died on November 24, 1989, and was interred in the Fluntern Cemetery in Zürich.

NEWSLETTER No. 3

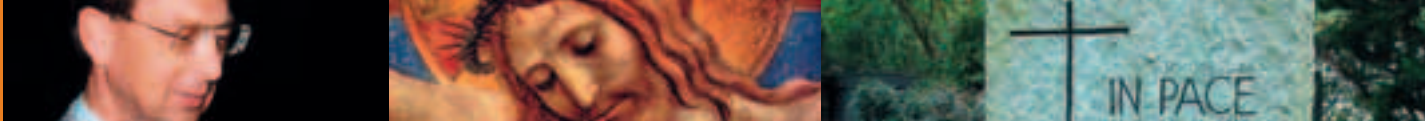


Three months before his death, with Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, the Prelate of Opus Dei



TONI ZWEIFEL

The Prelature of Opus Dei in Switzerland
Office for the Causes of the Saints, 2009



► SUFFERING TURNED INTO A LOVE STORY

In 1985 Toni Zweifel, in perfect health, jotted down a somewhat surprising thought: “The bad thing,” he wrote, “is not so much the fact that one has cancer, but that one’s relationship with God isn’t strong enough to turn the sickness into something positive. The only real evil is sin. Our Christian faith, a vital relationship with God, can turn even cancer into a love story.”

Toni was then at the height of his productivity. He couldn’t suspect how soon he himself would be in the situation of a cancer patient. A few months later he was found to have a type of leukemia that provided little hope for a cure. Aggressive chemotherapy was required, with very painful side affects.

Accepting illness

From the first moment, Toni strove to unite his suffering to that of Christ, as he had learned to do from St. Josemaría Escrivá. He didn’t want to leave Jesus alone on the cross, but to accompany him, to share in his sentiments and take part in his work of salvation. Prayer and sacrifice became his principal occupation during his hospital stays.

“Being healthy or sick,” he wrote a few months before his death, “is less important than our relationship with God, which is the only thing that counts and which makes a person happy even in sickness. Whatever happens, I know that it is for the best.”

Through suffering, drawing closer to God

In December of 1986, ten months after leukemia was diagnosed, it seemed as if the disease had been beaten. He then began to worry that, now well, he would begin to weaken in his sense of God’s presence.

To keep this from happening, he strove to keep aware of his sickness. In difficult professional matters he often asked himself: “But Toni, have you prayed enough for a successful outcome?” And he would answer, “Yes, when I was sick...” And then he would spur himself on to pray, saying, half seriously and half in jest: “Let’s not force our Lord to strike me down again, so that I pray a bit more.”

When a few years later he had the first relapse, Toni understood it as a call to more intense prayer. “Blessed be these divine caresses in regard to my health,” he said. “They help me to turn my attention to more important things and to pray more.” And he made a firm resolution to continue doing so when he was able to leave the hospital and go back to work.

He felt himself closely united to the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo: He offered up many of his sufferings and discomforts for his intentions. During a trip by Don Alvaro to America in 1988 he wrote: “I have composed a sort of child’s prayer that I say during the night when I wake up and accompany you in America where it is now evening.”

Toni was very aware that in his “exceptional circumstances” he could be a great support and spur for the faith of others. Many people came to visit him at the side of his sickbed. Rather than seeking sympathy, he inquired about their own situation and problems. He often took advantage of these moments “to plunge right in and speak about God.” In this way he led many people to a new and deeper relationship with God.

“Christ chose a worse fate”

In his situation, Toni always kept in mind the fate that Christ himself had willingly embraced at the end of

his life. This helped him to avoid taking his own sickness too seriously. “Out of love for us, God incarnate chose for himself death on the Cross. If leukemia had been a greater demonstration of his love, he would have chosen that way to die.” He expressed great gratitude to those who prayed for him; but he left it to God to decide how many of these prayers redounded to his benefit and how many, as he put it, “were re-routed to much more serious and important matters.”

In March 1988 he suffered an acute fever that rose above 104°F. A friend spent hours cooling his forehead. Toni later said that it had been “wonderful”, because that person had been “like a mother” in his care for him. A year later he wrote to Msgr. del Portillo again. He spoke about all the people coming to visit him and closed by saying: “You can see that I am having a great time. I try to be close to you while I am profiting from this treasure which right now only amounts to a bit more tiredness.” Msgr. del Portillo noted in the margin: “he finds such words although he knows his illness is now in its terminal state and could lead to his death at any moment.” A few days before he died Toni suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. As a result he could not speak for a while, although his mind was still clear. He bore it with great calm, and when he could speak again he joked: “The computer was still working but the printer wasn’t.”

“A Love Story”

Early on the morning of November 24, 1989, Toni succumbed to his long suffering. A few minutes before his last breath he said good-bye with a wave of his hand to the two persons accompanying him. Several days earlier he had told someone that his life had been “a divine love story.” He had enjoyed a wonderful intimacy with God, for which he was very thankful.

Toni died with the certainty of having attained true happiness. He experienced in his own soul what Pope Benedict XVI later wrote in his book Jesus of Nazareth: “The Cross is the true ‘height.’ It is the height of ‘love to the end’ (Jn 13:1). On the Cross, Jesus is exalted to the very ‘height’ of the God who is love” (p. 349).

Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo visiting Toni when he was undergoing chemo-therapy for the fourth time (July 1989).



► NEWS ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION

The diocesan process for the collection of documents and witnesses about the Servant of God Toni Zweifel was opened on February 22, 2001, in the presence of the diocesan bishop, Amédée Grab, in Coira.

The Tribunal appointed by the bishop is now finishing the interrogation of witnesses and has received the declarations collected in the “investigative processes” at Verona and at the Prelature of Opus Dei.

► FAVORS

COMPLICATIONS WITH A PHYSICS EXPERIMENT

I work as a researcher in physics. A couple of colleagues and myself were carrying out a very promising project. When we had compiled the results, we invited a group of competitors to publish their work in the same field at the same time as we did. We gave them a week. We thought that we only lacked a few details, but in the course of the week our researchers noticed certain problems with our results. The correction of this proved more difficult than expected. On the last day of the time stipulated our data was worse than ever. By that evening we saw no improvement at all. There was nothing I could do but pray! I turned to Toni Zweifel. Toni had worked “for Christ’s love and with high professional competence,” and we were having difficulties precisely because we were working with competence and wanted to do things as well as possible, instead of being satisfied with the initial, apparently faultless results. Therefore as I walked home I said the prayer from Toni’s prayer card several times.

The following morning I immediately consulted the webpage containing articles in my specialty. Lo and

behold, there were the two articles, our competitors’ and our own. What had happened was that, after I went home in the evening, my colleagues resolved all the problems and the new results obtained during the night were more convincing than ever. I am sure that Toni helped us here.

V.S., Singapore (Republic of Singapore)

A LARGE, INFECTED WOUND

When for the first time a copy of the Bulletin of Toni Zweifel came into my hands, I spontaneously felt confidence in him, especially as we were born in the same year. Six years ago we began a development project here in the Ethiopian countryside.

In our clinic we treat many ambulatory patients each day, stitching wounds, helping mothers with often difficult births, etc.

Toni Zweifel has helped us several times in a miraculous way. A young man had been suffering from a large open wound on his abdomen for six months. An operation in a hospital was unsuccessful. The patient, mentally retarded, appeared at our clinic. The wound