

MIRACLES STILL HAPPEN

A Special Report

On December 20, 2002, Pope John Paul II approved the decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints relating to a miracle of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. Manuel Nevado, a Spanish surgeon, was declared to have been miraculously cured of chronic radiation dermatitis in November 1992 after he invoked the intercession of Blessed Josemaría.

Radiation dermatitis

Radiation dermatitis is a disease most commonly found in doctors whose hands have been exposed over the years to the ionising radiation of X-rays. It develops gradually and relentlessly, eventually giving rise to skin cancer. It does not have a cure. The only known treatments are surgical: skin grafts or amputation of the affected hands. To date, there is no case recorded in medical literature where cancerous chronic radiation dermatitis has been cured spontaneously.

Cure

Dr Manuel Nevado, a 69-year old specialist in orthopaedic surgery, used X-rays in fixing fractures and other injuries over a period of 15 years from 1956. The equipment available at that time afforded little protection. The first signs of radiation dermatitis began to show in 1962. It gradually became worse, so that by 1984 he had to limit his work to minor surgery on account of pain and loss of mobility in his hands. By 1992 he had to give up surgery altogether. He underwent no treatment for the disease.

In November 1992 he met Luis

Eugenio Bernardo, an agricultural engineer, who gave him a prayer-card of the founder of Opus Dei who had been beatified on May 17 that year. He recommended to Dr Nevado that he use it to pray for a cure of the radiation dermatitis.

Intercession of Blessed Josemaría

Dr Nevado began to ask Blessed Josemaría's help from that moment. A few days later, he was in Vienna with his wife attending a medical congress. They noticed Blessed Josemaría prayer-cards in some churches they visited. Dr Nevado explained: 'This impressed me, and encouraged me to pray more for a cure'. His hands began to improve. Within a fortnight, all the wounds had disappeared. The cure was so complete that by January 1993 he was able to recommence work as a surgeon, without any difficulties.

Canonical study

A canonical study of the cure was carried out in the diocese of Badajoz, where Dr Nevado lives, and was completed in 1994. On July 10, 1997 the medical commission of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints gave the following unanimous diagnosis: 'A severe and irreversible chronic radiation dermatitis with skin cancer. The prognosis was bleak: the cancer would spread, with a clear risk to his life.'

The total cure of the wounds, confirmed by means of medical examinations in 1992, 1994 and 1997, was

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described by the medical commission as 'very quick, complete and lasting, scientifically inexplicable'.

On January 9, 1998 the special commission of theologians gave a positive and unanimous opinion on the attribution of the miracle to Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. On September 21, 2001, the standing committee of Cardinals and Bishops confirmed these judgements.

Dr Nevado put it as follows: 'I have

written down exactly how my radiation dermatitis was cured. I was very much afraid that a metastasis might develop, in which case the prognosis could have been extremely serious. But that did not happen. Quite simply, the radiation dermatitis has been cured, and I can only attribute it to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.'

Full details on the miracle can be found on the official Opus Dei website: www.opusdei.org