

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

Fr. Terry Donahue, CC – St. Therese School of Faith & Mission – September 21, 2011 - www.St-T.ca/mdm

I. Miracles in the Ministry of Jesus

A. Types of Miracles of Jesus

1) Healings & Bringing the dead back to life

- Healing of lepers (Mk 1:40-42), the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12), the blind (Mt 20:30; Mk 10:46; Lk 18:35), the lame (Jn 5:1-9), a deaf mute (Mk 7:31-37), various diseases (Mk 1:34, 4:23; Lk 6:19).

- Raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mk 5:39) and Lazarus (Jn 11:38-43).

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.” (Mt 11:4-5; Lk 7:22)

2) Dominion over the forces of nature

- Calming of the Storm (Mk 4:37-41)

- Changing water into wine (Jn 2:7-9)

- Multiplication of loaves & fishes (Jn 6:1-15)

- Walking on the water (Mk 6:49-50; Mt 14:26a-27; Jn 6:16-21)

- Miraculous catches of fish (Lk 5:4-10; Jn 21:3-6)

B. Historical character of the miracles

Analysis of the Gospel texts and context of the miracles of Jesus “speaks in favor of their ‘historical’ character; it attests that they are facts which actually happened, and that they were really performed by Christ.” (John Paul II, *Wonders and Signs: The Miracles of Jesus*, p. 14)

1) **Enemy attestation** – Opponents of Jesus, such as the Scribes & Pharisees, admitted the reality of the miracles performed by Jesus: “By the prince of demons he drives out demons.” (cf. Mk 3:22; Mt 12:24; Lk 11:14-15). They even watched him to see if he would heal on the Sabbath (Mk 3:1-2).

2) **Extra-Biblical evidence - *Testimonium Flavianum*** of Josephus, a 1st cen. Jewish Historian:

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, [...] for **he was a doer of wonderful works**, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him [both] many of the Jews [and many of the Gentiles?]. He was [called] the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; [...] And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.” (Josephus, reconstructed by Geza Vermes, *Jesus in the eyes of Josephus*, Standpoint Jan/Feb 2010, quoted in Wikipedia, Josephus on Jesus, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus_on_Jesus)

C. Why did Jesus perform miracles?

“Jesus used his miraculous powers to call human beings to faith in his proclamation of the kingdom, his messiahship, and even his divinity.” (Fr. Benedict Groeschel, *Wonders and Signs: The Miracles of Jesus*, Introduction, p. 8, Rudolph Schnackenberg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*, 1964)

1) Signs of the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God

“It was... particularly ‘the marvels and signs’ which testified that ‘the kingdom of God was at hand’ (cf. Mk 1:15).” (*Wonders and Signs*, p. 14)

2) Signs that Jesus is the Messiah

“Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.” (Jn 20:30-31)

3) Signs that Jesus is Divine

“At the same time [Jesus’ miracles] were a witness that he who performed them was truly the Son of God.” (*Wonders and Signs*, p. 14)

In Mark 2, people were calling Jesus a blasphemer for claiming to forgive the sins of a paralytic. Jesus responded, saying, “‘But that you may know that the Son of man has authority to forgive sins on earth’ – he said to the paralytic-‘I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.’” (cf. Mk 2:1-12; Mt 9:1-8; Lk 5:18-26)

In Mark 4, after seeing Jesus calm the storm, people asked themselves, ‘Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?’ (Mk 4:41).

The early Church saw in Christ’s miracles “the supreme power of Christ over nature and laws... equal to [the Father] in lordship over creation.” (*Wonders & Signs*, pp. 39-40)

4) Signs of God’s love for humanity

“Christ’s miracles, recorded in the Gospels, are ‘signs’ of the divine omnipotence and of the salvific power fo the Son of man, and also the revelation of God’s love for humanity—particularly for those who suffer, who are in need, who implore healing, pardon, compassion.” (*Wonders & Signs*, p. 47)

5) Signs of the existence of the supernatural

“‘The miracles worked by our Lord Jesus Christ,’ St. Augustine writes, ‘are divine works which raise the human mind above visible things to understand what is divine... These miracles demonstrate the existence of the supernatural order, which is the object of faith. Those who witnessed them, and particularly those who experienced them were made aware, as if by the touch of a hand, that the natural order does not exhaust the whole of reality... The miracle is a ‘sign’ that this order is surpassed by the ‘power from on high’ and is therefore also subject to it.” (*Wonders & Signs*, p. 63)

“Miracles, however, are not opposed to the forces and laws of nature, but they merely imply a certain empirical ‘suspension’ of their ordinary function—not their annulment.” (*Wonders & Signs*, p. 64)

D. Early Church

In the Book of Acts, we see the Apostles working signs and wonders (Acts xxx).

“I. Collective Miraculous Phenomena

A. Resuscitations from the Dead

| | Acts |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Peter raises the disciple Tabitha | 9, 36-42 |
| 2. Paul raises the young man Eutychus | 20, 9-12 |

B. Miraculous Cures and Exorcisms

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Peter heals the lame man at the Temple gate | 3, 1-16 |
| 2. Ananias cures Saul of his blindness | 9, 17-18 |
| 3. Peter heals the paralytic Aeneas | 9, 33-35 |

4. Paul cures the lame man of Lystra 14, 7-9
5. Paul stoned and miraculously healed at Lystra 14, 19
6. Paul exorcises girl possessed of divining spirit 16, 16-18
7. Paul heals Publius' father of dysentery 28, 7-8

C. Miraculous Penalties or Afflictions

1. Ananias and Saphira struck dead at Peter's feet 5, 5-11
2. Saul struck blind on the road to Damascus 9, 8-9
3. Herod suddenly slain by an angel 12, 23
4. Paul temporarily blinds the sorcerer Elymas 13, 9-12

D. Nature or Cosmic Miracles

1. Violent wind at the Cenacle in Jerusalem 2, 2-6
2. Shaking of the assembly building in Jerusalem 4, 31
3. Prison doors open for the Apostles 5, 17-25
4. Philip snatched by the Spirit of the Lord 8, 39
5. Peter liberated from prison by an angel 12, 5-11
6. Chains fall from Paul and Silas 16, 25-30
7. Paul shakes off viper from his arm 28, 3-6

II. Collective Miraculous Phenomena

1. Many signs and wonders done by the Apostles in Jerusalem 2, 43
2. Apostles perform signs and wonders among the people 5, 12
3. Peter's shadow cures many in the streets 5, 15
4. Multitudes from outside Jerusalem are healed 5, 16
5. Stephen works great signs and wonders 6, 8
6. Philip cures crippled and possessed in Samaria 8, 6-8, 13
7. Miracles worked by Paul and Barnabas on mission journey 14, 3
8. Great signs and wonders done among the Gentiles 15, 12
9. Miracles worked through objects touched by Paul 19, 11-12
10. Paul heals all the sick brought to him on Malta 28, 9"

(Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., *The Miracle Narratives in the Acts of the Apostles*, http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Miracles/Miracles_004.htm)

These “were done by the Apostles, not in their own name, but in the name of Jesus Christ, and were therefore a further proof of his divine power.” (*Wonders & Signs*, p. 24)

II. What is a Miracle?

A. Definition

“A miracle, derived from the old Latin word *miraculum* meaning ‘something wonderful’, is a striking interposition of divine intervention by God in the universe by which the ordinary course and operation of Nature is overruled, suspended, or modified.”

(Wikipedia contributors, ‘Miracle’, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle>, accessed 5 November 2007)

Miracles are “wonders performed by supernatural power as signs of some special mission or gift and explicitly ascribed to God.”

(Driscoll, J.T. (1911). Miracle. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved February 28, 2011 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.htm>)

Note: Not every supernatural act of God is considered a miracle. For example, the justification of a soul or the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist are beyond the grasp of the senses and are therefore not miracles in this strict sense.

B. Verification of Miracles

1) To be canonized a saint, two miracles must have been performed after the saint's death.

The process of verification of such miracles is governed by the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints:

"Since most wonders admitted by the modern church are medical cures, it consults with doctors. Di Ruberto has access to a pool of 60—"We've got all the medical branches covered," says his colleague, Dr. Ennio Ensoli—and assigns each purported miracle to two specialists on the vanquished ailment. They apply criteria established in the 1700s by Pope Benedict XIV...

A cure attributable to human effort, however prayed for, is insufficient. "Sometimes we have cases that you could call exceptional, but that's not enough," says Ensoli. "Exceptional doesn't mean inexplicable." "Inexplicable," or *inspiegabile*, is the happy label that Di Ruberto, the doctors and several other clerics in the Vatican's "medical conference" give to a case if it survives their scrutiny. It then passes to a panel of theologians, who must determine whether the inexplicable resulted from prayer. If so, the miracle is usually approved by a caucus of Cardinals and the Pope."

(David Van Biema and Greg Burke, "Modern Miracles have Strict Rules" *Time Magazine*, April 10, 1995, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,982807,00.html>)

2) The Bishop overseeing the inquiry consults experts and physicians

"32. The inquiry on miracles is to be instructed separately from the inquiry on virtues or martyrdom and is to be conducted according to the norms which follow.

33. a) Once the Bishop competent according to norm no. 5b has accepted the petition of the postulator together with a brief but accurate report on the alleged miracle as well as those documents which pertain to the case, he is to ask for the judgment of one or two experts.

b) If he has then decided to instruct a judicial inquiry, he is to examine all the witnesses either personally or through his delegate, according to the norms established above in nos. 15 a, 16-18 and 21-24.

34. a) In the case of a cure from some disease, the Bishop or his delegate is to seek help from a physician, who is to propose questions to the witnesses in order to clarify matters according to necessity and circumstances. b) If the person healed is still alive, he is to be examined by experts so that the duration of the healing can be ascertained.

35. A transcript of the inquiry together with attached documents is to be sent to the Sacred Congregation according to what is laid down in nos. 29-31."

(Congregation for the Causes of Saints, *New Laws for the Causes of Saints*, 1983, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/csaints/documents/rc_con_csaints_doc_07021983_norme_en.html)

3) Declarations of miracles are *not* infallible

"What seems like a miracle now may not be one in a hundred years. Such are the advances of science. Declarations of miracles are not infallible teachings." (Rev. Peter Gumpel, official at the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, interviewed in "In Italy, where statues weep, scientists test the miraculous Group explains reality behind holy objects and events," Daniel Williams, *Washington Post*, Nov 6, 2005, Pavia, Italy, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/11/06/MNGE0FJUA81.DTL>)

C. Criteria for a Miraculous Cure

1) The Lambertini Criteria

In 1734, Cardinal Lambertini made a list of criteria for establishing a miraculous cure:

- “1) The disease should be serious, incurable or difficult to treat.
- 2) The eradicated disease should not be in its final stage or at a stage whereby it may involve spontaneous recovery.
- 3) No drug should have been administered or, in the event that it has been administered, the absence of any effects should have been ascertained.
- 4) The recovery has to take place suddenly and instantly.
- 5) The recovery has to be perfect, and not defective or partial.
- 6) It is necessary that any noteworthy excretion or crisis has taken place at the proper time, as a reasonable result of an ascertained cause, prior to the recovery; under these circumstances the recovery cannot be deemed prodigious, but totally or partially natural.
- 7) It is necessary for the eradicated disease not to reappear.

“In summary, it is necessary to find a very fast transition from a state of well-established and serious disease, with no tendency towards improvement, to a state of perfect health, certain and lasting, with no (natural or ordinary) medical or scientific explanation.

Once this is established, it is not yet certain that the healing comes from God. It is from the totality of the circumstances surrounding the healing that we can discern its true origin and eventually classify it as belonging to the divine supernatural or the preternatural.”

(Lourdes Medical Bureau, *Canonical Criteria for a Miraculous Cure*, from *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione* (Book IV, Part I, Chapter VIII, no. 2), with commentary up to the end of chapter, Cardinal Prospero Lambertini, future Pope Benedict XIV, 1734, Available in Latin online at http://books.google.ie/books/about/De_servorum_Dei.html?id=hOqxcD8-xEAC, English translation from Franco Balzaretto, *The Miracles of Lourdes: Comparing Science and Faith*, <http://www.leadershipmedica.com/scientifico/sciedic02/scientificaing/10balzae/10balzaing.htm>)

2) Modern Lourdes Criteria for a cure to be recognised as medically inexplicable:

- *The illness must be **serious*** (i.e. life-threatening or at least affecting a major function)
- *The illness must be **organic*** (mental illnesses and those which could be considered to be psycho-somatic, which can therefore offer no objective guarantees, are not considered)
- *The original **diagnosis must be verified and confirmed beyond doubt*** (The cured disease must be proven by documents and testimonies, analyses, X-rays, diagrams, biopsies, etc. All treatments which might have an effect must be examined.)
- *The diagnosis must be regarded as "**incurable**" with **current means*** (although ongoing treatments do not disqualify the cure)
- *The cure must be **immediate*** (rapid resolution of symptoms and signs of the illness)
- *The cure must be **complete*** (with no residual impairment or deficit)
- *The cure must be **permanent*** (with no recurrence)
- *The cure must happen **in association with a visit to Lourdes***, typically while in Lourdes or in the vicinity of the shrine itself (although drinking or bathing in the water are not required)

III. Verification Process at Lourdes

A. Not all cures at Lourdes qualify as miracles!

Only 68 cases (of ~7000 submitted) have been declared miraculous. Hundreds more have been found medically inexplicable, but have not made it all the way through the process to be declared a miracle.

B. Process of Examination

1) Lourdes Medical Office/Bureau

“The Medical Office records the claims of those who profess to have been miraculously healed. For each case, it draws up a file of extreme precision, contacts the treating doctor, collects up documents and accounts, and leaves the case to the test of time.”

(Guérisons et miracles à Lourdes - Healings and Miracles at Lourdes, Video Visite)

2) International Lourdes Medical Committee (CMIL)

“After serious collective thought and a clearly expressed vote, the Medical Office decides if a case ought to be put in the hands of other controlling bodies. The International Medical Board of Notre-Dame (Committee Medical International Lourdes – CMIL)

CMIL was set up in 1954 as a sort of court of appeal which had existed since 1947, but with only French doctors. CMIL today is made up of 26 doctors and professors from 11 countries, representing more than 25 different disciplines: anatomy, cancerology, cardiology, surgery, dermatology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, psychiatry, neuropsychiatry, pediatrics, rhinology. These eminent specialists, chosen for their competence and their fame, meet together once a year.

The records sent by the Medical Office to CMIL are distributed to the experts according to their speciality. Here again, one must let time prove the healing: in general, five years after the cure, but the wait is always a function of the particular illness. The experts present each case to the entire groups which ordinarily meets in Paris. After study and discussion, the committee will settle the question of the cure: unexplained or not, exceptional or not.

Among the sixteen questions, which translate into medical language the criteria applied since the creation of the Medical Office, one finds, for example:

- Does the overall clinical picture allow us to eliminate the possibility of a psychopathic surcharge?
- Does the prognosis of the disease allow us to eliminate the idea of a spontaneous evolution towards recovery, or a noticeable amelioration, or a long lasting remission?
- Can we totally or partially eliminate the role of treatments in the abruptness of the cure?”

(Guérisons et miracles à Lourdes - Healings and Miracles at Lourdes, Video Visite)

3) Final discernment and judgment of the local Bishop who then makes a declaration

“Then the rare files to be selected, these extraordinary human adventures, will be considered by the religious authorities, who will try to discern the hand of God. They must then proclaim whether or not these unexplained recoveries are miracles.

Since 1947, of the twenty-nine cases retained by the International Medical Board, twenty were declared miraculous by the bishops from the dioceses concerned. It is the bishop from the healed persons own diocese who will study the circumstances of the unexplained cure. He surrounds himself with ecclesiastical advisors. This commission is the Diocesan Canonical Committee. If he deems it necessary, the bishop can also consult any scientist.” *(Guérisons et miracles à Lourdes - Healings and Miracles at Lourdes, Video Visite)*

IV. Modern-Day Miracles

A. Miraculous Power over Nature

1. Miracle of the Sun at Fatima
2. Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano

B. Miraculous Healings

1. Cure of Sr. Marie Simon-Pierre
2. Cure of Jean-Pierre Bély
3. Cure of Marie Bigot

THE MIRACLE OF THE SUN AT FATIMA

Apparitions

“Between May and October of 1917, three shepherd children, Lúcia Santos and her cousins Jacinta and Francisco Marto reported visions of the Virgin Mary in the Cova da Iria fields outside the hamlet of Aljustrel, very close to Fatima, Portugal. They had this experience on the 13th day of each month at approximately the same hour.”

(Wikipedia, ‘Miracle of the Sun’, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle_of_the_Sun, accessed 5 November 2007), referencing John De Marchi *The Immaculate Heart*, 1952)

Prediction of the Miracle

At the end of the apparition on September 13, 1917, Lucia said that Mary told her, “In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe.” (Sr. Lucia, *Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words*, 1976, p. 172)

- This news was publicized far and wide, leading to a very large crowd at the final apparition.

Lucia’s description of her experience of the apparition

“We left home quite early, expecting that we would be delayed along the way. Masses of people thronged the roads. The rain fell in torrents... Not even the muddy roads could prevent these people from kneeling in the most humble and suppliant of attitudes. We reached the holmoak in the Cova da Iria. Once there, moved by an interior impulse, I asked the people to shut their umbrellas and say the Rosary. A little later, we saw the flash of light, and then Our Lady appeared on the holmoak.

‘What do you want of me?’

‘I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honour. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.’

‘I have many things to ask you: the cure of some sick persons, the conversion of sinners, and other things...’

‘Some yes, but not others. They must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins.’

Looking very sad, Our Lady said: ‘Do not offend the Lord our God any more, because He is already so much offended.’

Then, opening her hands, she made them reflect on the sun, and as she ascended, the reflection of her own light continued to be projected on the sun itself.

Here, Your Excellency, is the reason why I cried out to the people to look at the sun. my aim was not to call their attention to the sun, because I was not even aware of their presence. I was moved to do so under the guidance of an interior impulse...”

(Sr. Lucia, *Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words*, 1976, p. 172-173)

Apparent movement of the sun

“The sky had a certain grayish tint of pearl and a strange clearness filled the gloomy landscape, every moment getting gloomier. The sun seemed to be veiled with transparent gauze to enable us to look at it without difficulty. The grayish tint of mother of pearl began changing as if into a shining silver disc, that was growing slowly until it broke through the clouds. And the silvery sun, still shrouded in the same grayish lightness of gauze, was seen to rotate and wander within the circle of receded clouds! The people cried out with one voice, the thousands of the creatures of God whom faith raised up to heaven, fell to their knees upon the muddy ground.”

(The Portuguese newspaper *O Dia*)

“As if like a bolt from the blue, the clouds were wrenched apart, and the sun at its zenith appeared in all its splendor. It began to revolve vertiginously on its axis, like the most magnificent firewheel that could be imagined, taking on all the colors of the rainbow and sending forth multi-colored flashes of light, producing the most astounding effect. This sublime and incomparable spectacle, which was repeated three distinct times, lasted for about ten minutes. The immense multitude, overcome by the evidence of such a tremendous prodigy, threw themselves on their knees.” (Dr. Formigao, a professor at the seminary at Santarem)

Drying of clothes and ground

“The people, who had been drenched and soggy with the pelting, unremitting rain, were suddenly and completely dry-their shoes and stockings, their skirts and clothes...” (John De Marchi, *The Immaculate Heart*, p. 150)

“There was a good three inches of water where I stood...it was raining just like you open a faucet...and then suddenly the rain stopped...In a few minutes the ground was as dry as this floor here...The clothes were dry and looked like they had just come from the laundry.” (Dominic Reis, age 17 at the time)

“Various acquaintances of mine, who know that I am neither a Jesuit, nor a religious fanatic, asked me to report what I had seen in Fatima... What amazes me is that although moments before I was soaking wet, I noticed that I was now dry. Is this a miracle? I do not think so. What I know is that the same happened to others.” (Carlos Silva, Letter published on October 18, 1917 in *O Mensagerio*, a Catholic paper published in Leiria, quoted in Stanley L. Jaki, *God and the Sun at Fatima*, 1999, pp. 69-70)

THE EUCHARISTIC MIRACLE OF LANCIANO

- In the 8th century A.D. in the little Church of St. Legontian, in Lanciano Italy, a Basilian monk was celebrating Mass and having doubts about Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist.
- During Holy Mass, after the two-fold consecration, the host was changed into live Flesh and the wine was changed into live Blood, which coagulated into five globules, irregular and differing in shape and size.
- The Host-Flesh can still be very distinctly observed today - 12 Centuries later. It has the same dimensions as the large host used today in the Latin church; it is light brown and appears rose-colored when lighted from the back. The Blood is coagulated and has an earthy color resembling the yellow of ochre.
- In 1970-'71 and taken up again partly in 1981 there took place a scientific investigation by the scientist Prof. Odoardo Linoli, eminent Professor in Anatomy and Pathological Histology and in Chemistry and Clinical Microscopy and Prof. Ruggero Bertelli of the University of Siena who assisted him in analyzing the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano.
- The analyses were conducted with scientific precision and they were documented with a series of microscopic photographs. They made the following conclusions:
 - The flesh is real flesh. The blood is real blood.
 - The flesh and blood belong to the human species.
 - The flesh consists of muscular tissue of the heart (endocardium, myocardium, artery, vagus nerve).
 - The blood type is AB (Aged blood always types as AB, so this may have little significance)
 - In the blood are proteins in the same normal proportions as found in the sero-proteic make up of fresh, normal blood.
 - The blood contains other minerals. They are chlorides, phosphorous, magnesium, potassium, sodium and calcium.
 - The preservation of the flesh and blood, which were left in their natural state for twelve centuries and exposed to the action of atmospheric and biological agents, remains an extraordinary phenomenon.

One of the doctors who conducted the investigation made this comment, *“Though it is alien to my task strictly speaking, I feel I should insert the following reflection into the study just completed: the clarification, which comes through in these studies of the nature of the flesh gives little support to the hypothesis of a ‘fraud’ perpetrated centuries ago. As a matter of fact supposing that the heart may have been taken from a cadaver, I maintain that only a hand experienced in anatomic dissection would have been able to obtain from a hollow internal organ such a uniform cut.”*

Book available online: *The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano: Historical, Theological, Scientific and Photographic Documentation:*

http://web.archive.org/web/20060831022730/http://www.negrisud.it/en/abruzzo/miracolo_eucaristico/tableofcontents.html

A scan of the original 1971 paper by Dr. Odoardo Linoli: <http://www.mediafire.com/?2j2j8qalrmcrlb4>:

CURE OF SR. MARIE SIMON-PIERRE

A. Cure of Sr. Marie Simon-Pierre

Sister Marie Simon-Pierre is a 46 year old Catholic nun, who is a member of an order of nuns working in Catholic maternity hospitals in Aix-en-Provence, France.

1) Diagnosis

- In 2001 she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system, for which no known cure exists. She experienced tremors, rigidity, pain, sleeplessness.
- She was unable to do her work caring for newborns because her hands shook so violently. In 2005 her condition began to degrade and get even worse.

2) Request for Intercession

- Her mother superior asked the whole community to intercede for her to the late Pope John Paul II, who suffered from the same debilitating disease for several years.

3) Cure

- Exactly two months after the death of the pope, on the night of June 2, 2005, the nun didn't show the symptoms of the illness anymore.
- The recovery was sudden, complete and permanent. According to the criteria of human science, the doctor (in charge of the case) couldn't give an explanation of what happened.
- Sr. Marie gave her explanation, "I was ill and now I am cured... I am cured. It is the work of God through the intercession of John Paul II."

4) Investigation

The Catholic Church has "interviewed around 15 witnesses, including neurologists, university medical professors, a psychiatrist and a hand-writing analyst. Now satisfied that the mysterious recovery is medically inexplicable, the diocese of Aix-en-Provence will on Monday give its dossier to the Vatican. It is up to Pope Benedict XVI to rule whether it is a miracle." (Angelique Chrisafis in Aix-en-Provence, "I wrote John Paul II's name and I was cured", *Guardian*, Mar 31, 2007, www.guardian.co.uk/pope/story/0,,2047058,00.html)

“A Nun Tells Her Story”

Testimony of Sister Marie Simon-Pierre

<http://www.vicariatusurbis.org/Beatificazione/English/Testimonies/SisterMarieSimonPierre.htm>

I had Parkinson’s disease.

I was diagnosed in June 2001.

The disease struck the left side of my body, causing very serious difficulties for me, given that I was left-handed. After three years, the initial stage of the illness that was slowly progressive, the symptoms began to get worse: an increase in tremors, rigidity, pain, sleeplessness.

Starting on April 2, 2005, I began to worsen from week to week, I was wasting away, day by day. I was no longer able to write (being left-handed, as I said), or, if I tried to, what I wrote was barely legible. I was no longer able to drive a car, except for very short distances, because my left leg sometimes got blocked, even for long periods and rigidity made driving difficult. In addition, to do my work in the hospital, I always needed more time. I was totally exhausted.

After the diagnosis it was difficult for me to follow John Paul II on television. However, I felt very close to him in prayer and I knew that he could understand what I was living through. I admired his strength and courage and they stimulated me to not give up and to love this suffering. Only love would give meaning to all of this. It was a daily struggle but my only wish was to live it in faith and to adhere with love to the Father’s will.

It was Easter 2005 and I wanted to see our Holy Father in television because I knew, deep within me, that it would be the last time I would have been able to do so. All morning long I prepared myself for that “encounter” (he reminded me of what I would be in three years). It was hard for me, being so young. However, an unexpected occurrence in work did not allow me to see him.

The evening of April 2, 2005 the entire community had gathered to participate in the prayer vigil in St. Peter’s Square, live on French television from the diocese of Paris (KTO). At the announcement of John Paul’s death, my entire world fell apart, I had lost the only friend who could understand me and give me strength to go forward. In those days I felt a great emptiness, but I also had the certainty of his living presence.

On May 13, feast of Our Lady of Fatima, Pope Benedict XVI officially announced the special dispensation for the start of the cause of beatification and canonization of servant of God John Paul II. Starting on May 14, my fellow sisters from all the French and African communities started asking John Paul II to intercede for my healing. They prayed incessantly, tirelessly, right up to the news of my healing.

I was on vacation at the time. On May 26, having ended a period of rest, I returned to the community, totally exhausted because of my disease. “If you believe, you will see the Glory of God,” this was the verse from the Gospel of St. John that, since May 14, had kept me company. But on June 1, I could not take it any longer! I had to struggle just to stay on my feet and walk. On June 2, in the afternoon, I went to find my superior to ask her to release me from my work. She asked me to try and resist a while longer, until the return from Lourdes in August and added: “John Paul II has not yet said his final word.” He was surely present at that encounter that took place in such peace and serenity. Then, my superior held out a pen and asked me to write “John Paul II.” It was 5 p.m.

With difficulty I wrote “John Paul II.” As I looked at the illegible writing, I remained some time in silence. And the day passed as it usually did.

At 9 p.m., after evening prayer, I left my office to go to my room. I felt the need to take a pen and write, as if someone had ordered me, "Take your pen and write." It was 9:30/9:45 p.m.

And my handwriting was perfectly legible! Astonishing! I laid on my bed, amazed.

Exactly two months has passed since John Paul II returned to the House of the Father. I awoke at 4:30, amazed at having been able to sleep. I suddenly got out of bed: my body was no longer painful, there was no rigidity and inside, I was no longer the same. Then, an inner call and a strong desire to go and pray before the Blessed Sacrament. I went into the oratory and stayed in adoration. I felt a profound sense of peace and well-being; an experience that was too great, a mystery, difficult to explain with words.

Still in front of the Blessed Sacrament, I mediated on the Mysteries of Light composed by John Paul II. At 6 in the morning I left to join my fellow sisters in chapel for a moment of prayer followed by Eucharistic celebration. I had to walk about 50 meters and at that moment I became aware that, as I was walking, my left arm was swinging by my side, it was no longer immobile. I also felt a lightness and a physical agility that I had not experienced for quite some time. During the Eucharistic celebration, I was filled with joy and peace. It was June 3, feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As we left Mass, I was sure that I was healed. My hand no longer trembled. I went again to write and at noon I suddenly stopped taking my medicine.

On June 7th, as scheduled, I went to see the neurologist who had been caring for me for four years. He too was very surprised as he noted the sudden disappearance of all the symptoms of the disease, notwithstanding the

interruption of treatment for five days prior to the visit. A day later, our superior general asked all of our communities to give thanks. Every community then began a novena to John Paul II.

It has now been 10 months since any kind of treatment has been given. I have resumed working normally, I have no difficulty in writing and I even drive the car for long distances. I feel as if I have been reborn: It is a new life because it is not like before.

Today I can say that the friend who left our earth is now closer to my heart. He made grow within me the desire for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and love for the Eucharist, that have a priority place in my daily life.

What the Lord has allowed me to live through the intercession of John Paul II is a great mystery, difficult to explain in words ... but nothing is impossible for God.

And it is indeed true: "If you believe, you will see the glory of God."

Sister Marie Simon-Pierre

NOTE: "Since 2005, the Catholic church has kept the case quiet, conducting a secret investigation in which it has interviewed around 15 witnesses, including neurologists, university medical professors, a psychiatrist and a hand-writing analyst. Now satisfied that the mysterious recovery is medically inexplicable, the diocese of Aix-en-Provence will on Monday give its dossier to the Vatican. It is up to Pope Benedict XVI to rule whether it is a miracle. If he does, it would put the late John Paul II on the first step to sainthood." (Angelique Chrisafis in Aix-en-Provence, "I wrote John Paul II's name and I was cured", *Guardian*, Mar 31, 2007, www.guardian.co.uk/pope/story/0,,2047058,00.html)

CURE OF MR. JEAN-PIERRE BÉLY



Mr. Jean-Pierre BÉLY, born 24th August 1936, married with two children, was an esthetist nurse.

In 1972, he began to suffer greater and greater neurological incapacity effecting the Central Nervous system, in different places and evolving progressively, leading to a diagnosis of *Multiple Sclerosis*, at the Neurological Department of the University Hospital of Poitiers.

From 1984 he required a walking stick to aid his walking. It was decided that he should stop working. He required a wheelchair from February 1985. By April 1986 it was impossible for him to stand. Subsequently, the patient could no longer remain sitting, and was beginning to suffer from bedsores.

In 1987, Mr. BÉLY was a devastating neurological picture in a bedridden state so severe that he required a **100% invalidity pension with an allowance for a third person**.

During a **pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Lourdes**, Mr. BÉLY regained completely his normal functions, in a sudden, unexpected and unforeseen way on **Friday 9th. October 1987**.

After having celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation on the 8th of October in his sick room, he received the Sacrament of the Sick the next day during the Mass in the Rosary Square during the French Rosary Pilgrimage. Mr. BÉLY then felt himself overcome with a powerful sense

of interior liberation and peace that he never before experienced.

Then, that same Friday, at midday, when was lying down in the sick room, he experienced a feeling of cold which grew stronger, almost painful, which gave way to a feeling of warmth, also more intense and overwhelming. He found himself sitting on the side of his bed, and was surprised to be able to move his arms, **to feel contact against his skin**.

During the night that followed, although in a deep sleep, Mr. BÉLY woke up very suddenly and had the surprise of being able to walk for the first time since 1984. The first steps were hesitant, but it quickly became normal.

So as not to appear different from his “companions in sickness” Mr. BÉLY wished to leave Lourdes in a wheelchair as though he was still an invalid. Arriving at the Railway Station, he decided, finally, to enter the train alone and to remain seated during the return journey to Angoulême.

From then on he had regained the use of his physical faculties. Objectively, his cure, 12 hours afterwards, appeared complete and stable: Mr. BÉLY made no real complaints neurological or otherwise. His walking and his physical resistance are excellent. He no longer suffers any restriction in his limbs, no pain or abnormal sensations. Neurological examinations are normal. Mr. BÉLY no longer shows any symptoms or clinical signs of attacks to the nervous system.

He came to declare his cure to the Medical Bureau of Lourdes the following year, Thursday 6th. October, and since then he is seen annually by the doctors present who are summoned by the resident doctor.

He has been followed attentively by the doctors he had consulted, especially by his own regular doctor, the neurologist who checks him and the Head of the Department in the University Hospital of Poitiers who have concluded that it is something unexpected and exceptional.

17th June 1992, a first consultation was carried out at the request of the International Medical Committee of Lourdes (CMIL), the second level of examination of the Sanctuary, concluding “that such a cure is not just unusual but inexplicable, taking account the given area of science.”

In November 1992, the Committee called for a further two-year delay to respect the criteria of a definitive cure.

A new medical consultation took place on 28th. September 1994 concluding that neurological developments should be continued to be observed.

On 15th and 16th. November 1997, it was decided to ask the advice of the doctors who were brought to examine his illness.

The neurological expert, after a majority vote of the members of the CMIL on 14th. November 1998 sums up the debate as follows: ***It is possible to conclude with a good margin of probability that Mr. BÉLY suffered an organic infection of the type Multiple Sclerosis in a severe and advanced stage of which the sudden cure during a pilgrimage to Lourdes corresponds with an unusual and inexplicable fact to all the knowledge of science. It is impossible to say any more today in medical science. It is however to the religious authorities to make a pronouncement on the other dimensions of this cure.***

Document composed in Lourdes on 9th. February 1999 by Dr. Patrick Thellier, Resident Doctor and Doctor-in-Charge of the Medical Bureau.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20010618190258/www.lourdes-france.com/gb/gbsa0021.htm>

STATEMENT OF MR. JEAN-PIERRE BÉLY

Published in Lourdes Magazine on November 1990 (n. 76)

“To well understand what happened to me, I would like to explain what my life was like before this pilgrimage: I was 51 years old, married with two children: a boy of 19, and a girl of 15. I was a nurse by profession and I worked at the Angoulême Hospital in the Oto-rhino-laryngologie and Ophthalmology Departments.

In 1984, I had to interrupt my professional activity, hit headlong by the disease. Actually, the disease dates back about fifteen years, but it was not discovered until 1984 after several hospitalizations. The diagnosis of multiple sclerosis was later confirmed. This disease destroys the sheaths of nerves and provokes different degrees of paralysis to the affected areas. From 1972 to 1984, several episodes perturbed my life but, each time, I recovered almost completely, leaving me in an almost permanent state of fatigue, which alternated with periods of real enfeeblement.

In October 1984, following a slightly worse episode, signs of paralysis appeared on the right side, necessitating my first hospitalization in Angoulême, then in the University Medical Center of Poitiers for further examinations. The English canes were no longer sufficient so a wheelchair was leased which allowed me to be more autonomous. During the summer of 1985, my condition improved after changing to a more balanced diet. Nevertheless, in September 1985, another attack made me lose all hope of being able to return to work and I had to resort to the wheelchair again. Further tests only confirmed the disease.

A slight improvement in my condition allowed me to leave with my family for a few days in July, 1986. But, once home, my condition quickly deteriorated. Walking was almost impossible and any movement about was very limited. We had to remodel the house, which was not set up for a handicapped person. A small manual elevator was installed, and the doorways were enlarged for the wheelchair to get through. That way I was more autonomous. In fact, that was my first concern: to be as autonomous as possible, so as to be as little dependant as I could on those people around me. I could not bear that those dear to me be obliged to take care of me constantly.

In June 1987, I underwent medical tests and examinations and a Medical Commission composed of several doctors declared me 100 percent disabled. It was requested that I be given a disability pension as well as the services of an outside person to help with the essentials of life (to eat, drink, go to the toilet...). In September 1987 my condition worsened and long periods in a seated position in a wheelchair became unbearable. I stayed in bed, most of the time in the dark, for I was no longer able to stand the light...

Arriving in my room, the brancardiers (volunteer stretcher-bearers) placed me on my bed and left to go about their other activities. There I am on my bed, happy, a little euphoric. I feel like I am elsewhere.. That is when a sensation of cold came over me, though the temperature in the room is comfortable and I begin to feel cold all over. My jacket was put on my shoulders, but I become more and more cold. A penetrating cold envelopes me. Someone gives me blankets but nothing can stop this sensation of cold. A hot water bottle is slid under my covers, I remain flat in bed but I don't shiver despite the cold. Then, slowly, the cold diminishes in intensity, and it is replaced by a warmth that was at first gentle. I close my eyes while thinking that I am going to be able to go to sleep. This sensation of heat goes through all my body, starting at my feet and climbing up the spinal column. The heat increases a degree at a time, and quickly becomes difficult to bear. Instinctively, I push the covers to the foot of the bed and with a hand I put the hot water bottle aside. I then discover that I am seated on the edge of my bed, astonished and surprised to have made these gestures with such ease, while that same morning, it had been difficult to hold in my hands my small missal. I stay there seated, trying to understand what is happening to me. I then think back to the words that had been said to me by a young lady in white, on Wednesday afternoon: “Do not be afraid. Have confidence. Mother Mary will take care of all that.” I am overwhelmed. I would like to get up, but I do not dare. Why me and not my brother more handicapped, than me? Finally, I decide to remain discreet. There is time. The moment to say something has no doubt not yet come... I try to put in writing what I have just lived, but my fingers refuse to obey me for the moment. I am too moved and I

cannot form the letters. And then, my spirit is so shaken...

My brancardiers come to get me to go to the closing Mass that will take place on the Esplanade. Although I tell them that I could go there in my wheel chair, I am placed on the stretcher. There are strict rules to follow and all I have to do is obey them. I peacefully let them do as they wish. I have confidence in the Lord...

We leave first. We get to the Esplanade and take our places. The Mass begins and God gives himself again to men and women through the Eucharist by His Son, Jesus-Christ, with the Holy Spirit. Hundreds of scarves are waved and form a multicolored sea.

In the night, I am gently awakened. I felt that someone touched me. I realize that our night hospitaller must have wanted to cover me. I am perfectly awake and I don't see anyone. The clock in the steeple of the Basilica strikes three. When she was questioned later, the night nurse said she did not recall having covered me in the night...

I begin to think about all the events of this pilgrimage when an idea I wasn't expecting came into my mind like an order, an invitation: "Get up and walk!" I believe I'm imagining things, and then, why get up in the middle of the night when I don't feel like it. I am warm in my bed and I don't hurt anymore. I turn on my side, trying to get this idea out of my head. I close my eyes and I try to fall back to sleep. Impossible! The call comes again, more insistent and urgent this time. That makes me feel a bit uneasy. I turn over and over. The call is now firm, speaking to me without saying words. This is difficult to explain! "Let's go. It's time. Walk!" The night nurse that heard me turning over again and again approaches me and asks me if I need anything. I tell her that I must get up, and I add... to go to the toilet. I had to find a reason! I could not say that I wanted to take a little walk to stretch my legs! She would have certainly thought that I had lost my mind. It's not in my nature to go to the toilet in the middle of the night. I wait for the morning.

She begins to get my wheelchair for me, but I tell her that I must go there on foot. She answers that I will

fall and her with me. She tells me that she will call the brancardier, and to wait a little while. Nevertheless, I insist so much that she finally gives in. And that is how I took my first steps, without any other support than her arm, unsteady as a child that is learning to walk. I feel solid on my legs although they hadn't worked like that for quite a long time. I feel like I'm living a dream. It all seems unreal but nevertheless, I am well aware of what is happening to me! The night nurse will tell me, later, that if she really had known my condition she would never have let me get up like that. I did the round trip without any problem. Back in my bed, the night nurse leaves me, and I lie wondering what is happening to me! I think back to the whole chain of events: the Unction [Anointing] of the sick, the cold and the heat that followed, the walk in the night... It all overwhelms me!

Obviously, falling back to sleep after something like that isn't easy. In my mind, everything is topsy-turvy. I then seek help once more from the Virgin Mary. I take my rosary, as I often do before going to sleep in the evening. Usually, I fall to sleep before having finished the first ten Hail Mary's. For me, it's like falling to sleep in the arms of the Virgin Mary. Well! That night, the ten prayers were finished and I was still awake. Therefore, I said an entire Rosary without falling asleep. My mind was wandering too much and I wasn't always thinking about what I was saying. What is certain, is that each Hail Mary, was as if I was saying I love you Mary! This entire Rosary, recited in the middle of the night, probably for the first time in my life was like an action of thanks for so many wonders and so much kindness! And the morning came, without my being able to fall asleep again...

The story of what happened after that with my wife and children cannot just be told. It must be experienced. What I can say is that we did not have enough words to thank the Lord and the Virgin Mary."

<http://web.archive.org/web/20010628171443/www.lourdes-france.com/gb/gbsb0084.htm>

DECLARATION ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CURE OF MR. JEAN-PIERRE BÉLY

Bishop Claude Dagens, Bishop's House, Angoulême, Tuesday 9th. February 1999

The following declaration concerns the cure that happened, at Lourdes 11 years ago, to a man of the Diocese of Angoulême, living in La Couronne, in the Charante area.

This declaration deals with:

- The fact of the cure.
- The interpretation of this fact according to Christian faith.
- The specific responsibility of the Church in authenticating this fact.

I – THE FACT OF THE CURE.

On Friday, October 9th, 1987, in Lourdes, during the French Rosary Pilgrimage, Mr. Jean-Pierre BÉLY, then aged 51 years, was cured of a serious and disabling illness from which he had been suffering for several years.

This illness was diagnosed by doctors treating him as multiple sclerosis which had [reached] a severe and advanced state.

All the doctors who examined him, after the events which took place in Lourdes on October 9th, 1987, have stated that the cure of Mr. BÉLY has been sudden, complete and lasting.

II – How Christian faith understands this CURE.

As Bishop of the Diocese of Angoulême, where Mr. BÉLY continues to live, I have, today, the responsibility of publicising the interpretation which the Church considers itself authorised to give about this sudden and unexpected cure.

This interpretation rests on the statement given by Mr. BÉLY himself, following the events that happened to him in Lourdes on October 9th, 1987. It consists of a reading and an understanding of this statement in the light of faith.

1. It is certain that Mr. BÉLY was completely and permanently cured at Lourdes, that is, he was delivered from the illness from which he was suffering and made whole again.

This delivery and this “raising up again” could be considered as a gift from God for this person, as an act of grace, as a sign of Christ the Saviour.

2. This act of grace took place in Lourdes during a pilgrimage where Mr. BÉLY had been able to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Sick.

One can only recognise the intimate relationship that exists between these sacramental signs and the fact of the cure. The love of God for this man is manifested through the sacraments of the Church.

3. The intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary is equally a determining fact in the cure of Mr. BÉLY.

The account that he gave himself of the days spent in Lourdes allows one to perceive the special intervention of the Blessed Virgin on behalf of this man who was seriously ill and faithful to the recitation of the Rosary.

The event of the cure of Mr. BÉLY must not be separated from the Sacraments received during the pilgrimage, nor from the prayers addressed to Our Lady of Lourdes. The cure of Mr. BÉLY, even if it was instantaneous, did not fall from the sky: it is in keeping with the context of the living Church which lives the Sacraments of Christ and that asks the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

III – THE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

The unexpected cure of Mr. BÉLY has caused multiple medical evaluations in neurology and psychiatry to be submitted to the Medical Bureau of Lourdes and to the International Medical Committee of Lourdes. (CMIL), for nearly ten years.

During its last meeting, this International committee, unable to provide an absolute medical proof for the cure, has explicitly requested that the Church should formulate its own judgement. This is the object of this declaration.

1. The pastoral discernment of which I have the responsibility to make known, as bishop of Angoulême, is not disassociated from medical discernment, which the International Medical Committee has formulated.

One can, in effect, recognise that the fact of this

sudden and unexpected cure escapes the usual history and nature of a diagnosed illness.

2. Taking all these things into account, the Church has the freedom, recognised by the International Medical Committee itself, to express its own pastoral discernment which is supported by the account of Mr. BÉLY and on the advice of the Canonical Commission, made up of priests and qualified lay people, mostly doctors, that I called together in Angoulême on Monday January 4th, 1999.

In the name of the Church, I thus recognise publicly the authentic character of the cure that has happened to Mr. Jean-Pierre BÉLY in Lourdes on Friday, October 9th, 1987.

This sudden and complete cure is a personal gift from God for this man and an effective sign of Christ our Saviour, which was brought about by the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes.

3. This public recognition will be proclaimed during two Eucharistic Celebrations arranged for **Thursday, February 11th, 1999**, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, and in the Catholic Church, the World Day of prayer for the Sick.

- At Lourdes, the Eucharist will be celebrated at 10.30am in the Basilica of St. Pius X and presided over by Bishop Jacques Perrier, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes.
- At Angoulême, Angoulême, the Eucharist will be celebrated at 8.30pm. in the Church of Our Lady of Obezine. As Bishop of Angoulême, I will preside at that celebration. Mr. BÉLY will take part in that Eucharist together with his family and friends.

I invite all the faithful to give thanks for this cure, as Mr. BÉLY himself does: in other words, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, conscious of being the poor loved by God and who can count on his love.

I especially invite the sick to be among the witnesses of this confidence, not in being resigned to their sufferings, but by desiring the coming of the new creation, where we will finally be delivered of sickness, from sin and from death. Because “the whole of creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth.” (Rom. 8:22)

May the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, teach us to take part, in our bodies, in this giving birth to a new humanity, transformed by the love of God, in Christ!

+ Claude DAGENS
Bishop of Angoulême,
February 9th, 1999

<http://web.archive.org/web/20010628171443/www.lourdes-france.com/gb/gbsb0085.htm>

THE CURE OF MARIE BIGOT

Fr. Terry Donahue, CC – August 2010

Ever since I had heard about Lourdes, I have wanted to do research in the archives of the Lourdes Medical Bureau. So there I was [in 2010], sitting in the office with Dr. Alessandro de Franciscis, head of the Medical Bureau, as he showed me a list of the 67 *miraculées* of Lourdes, those whose healings have been declared miraculous by the Church. There was a knock at the door and Dr. Alessandro left to attend to another visitor. A bit disappointed that my meeting would be cut short, I was surprised to see Dr. Alessandro pop back into the office, point his finger with a flourish at the list of *miraculées*, and announce, “Number 59 is having a slice of pie in the waiting room! Would you like to meet her?”

Flabbergasted, I mumbled an “Of course!” as I followed him into the hall. The next moment, I found myself having a slice of pie and coffee with Marie Bigot, a French lady, 87 years of age, who in 1953-1954 had been cured of blindness, deafness and paralysis of her right arm and leg caused by *Posterior fossa adhesive arachnoiditis* (inflammation of membranes in the back of the brain) and accompanying *encephalomyelitis* (swelling of the brain).

Dr. Alessandro gave me a sheet from the Lourdes Medical Archives summarizing her cure: Marie suffered since birth from weak eyesight. At age 28, she developed headaches and fever and became semi-comatose. After an occipital craniotomy for diagnosis and treatment in April 1951, there was no improvement in her vision, and her right side remained weakened. In the following year her right arm & leg became paralyzed, she lost hearing in her right ear, and her sight worsened so much that she couldn't recognize members of her own family. Her doctor thought a tumorous mass had formed in her brain due to infection. In August 1952, suddenly one day she felt a “tearing” sensation in her head and she became totally blind and deaf, her right foot became twisted (equinovarus), with generalized spasms and respiratory distress. The doctor expected her to die and sent for a priest who administered the Anointing of the Sick.

She set off for Lourdes in October 1952 and returned with no change in her condition. During the next year she could only take liquids and her family spoke to her by tracing words letter by letter in the palm of her hand. She returned to Lourdes in October 1953.

Between bites of pie, I turned and asked Marie, “Why did you go back to Lourdes again when there was no cure the first time?” She responded, “I returned to give thanks to God for not having died in the past year!”

During the second pilgrimage, Marie was present for the evening Procession of the Blessed Sacrament before all the sick at Lourdes. She suddenly experienced a brutally painful crisis, in which the paralysis of her right leg ceased, and her foot became straight! The next day her right arm was healed, but the deafness and blindness remained.

Marie returned to Lourdes for a *third* pilgrimage a year later. During the Anointing of the Sick, she suddenly heard the crowd singing. Her deafness disappeared and a doctor's examination determined that the back of her eyes now appeared normal. On the train ride home, her sight returned. Examinations a month later show her sight and hearing to be absolutely *normal*.

As I finished eating my pie, I looked over to confirm that Marie was using her right arm and leg, and that she could see and hear me just fine, more than 55 years after her miraculous cure at Lourdes. I came to Lourdes hoping for some access to the medical archives. I never expected a face-to-face conversation with one of the handful of surviving *miraculées* of Lourdes!