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Roberto D'Amico C.M.

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The Chronological Course of the Cause of Beatification and the Miracle of Fr. Durando

*by Roberto D'Amico, C.M.
Postulator General*

Fr. Giovanni Torre, the Visitor of Turin, on the death of blessed Marcantonio Durando, wrote these words to the Provincial Community: “We have lost a father, but we nourish the hope of having gained a protector in heaven.” At the same time he gave instruction to gather together *as soon as possible the news about the particulars of his life and of the singular examples of virtue which he left us, so that they not be lost....* Hardly eight years afterwards, in 1888, the first biography, written by Fr. Francisco Martinengo, C.M., was published. But it was only in 1928, after overcoming the misunderstood feeling of community humility and the pretended lack of financial means, that the ordinary process began in Turin. The validity of the two processes, the ordinary and the apostolic, was recognized with the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on 1 July 1951. In the ordinary process, 33 texts were examined, all visually; and in the apostolic process, 15, of which five were visual and ten by listening to the witnesses.

The various complex events, which blessed Durando had lived in person, like the friendship with King Carlo Alberto and with Msgr. Luigi Fransoni, Archbishop of Turin, the movement for the unity of Italy, the attitudes of his brother a general in the Piedmont army in face of Pope Pius IX, the refusal of the sacraments to Count Santarosa, the relationship with the two institutes of Mother Verna and of Sr. Clarac, caused the slowing down of the process, requiring a greater deepening of the proofs called for in 1971 by the Particular Congress of theologians, through the preparation of the “*Summarium storicum addictionale*” in such a way that on 21 September 1978 in the second Particular Congress, the heroicity of his virtues was recognized.

The Cardinal and Bishops examined the “*Positio*” on 27 March 1979. When the last study was done on 20 June 2000, in a second Ordinary session, they declared that the servant of God had exercised in a heroic degree the virtues. The Holy Father John Paul II ratified the judgment of the theologians and the Fathers by promulgating the decree on the heroicity of the virtues on 1 July 2000.

The Miracle

The Postulator General, immediately after the recognition of the heroicity of the virtues, presented to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints a cure

concerning Signora Stella Vottero Ingianni, who was born in 1903 and died on 10 September 2002.

The above-mentioned woman had a first pregnancy in 1929, which it was possible to bring to a conclusion with the use of forceps. Three years later, on 28 November 1932, at the conclusion of a second pregnancy, she gave birth in her own home. Everything seemed normal, but hardly three or four hours afterwards, the woman noticed “headache and disturbances of sight, to which followed convulsions diffused with spasms of the jaw muscles and biting of the tongue, respiratory difficulty and cyanosis. Furthermore there was fever of above 38°C and high albumin in the urine.” In the following hours, the convulsions were repeated with clear signs of heart problems and pulmonary edema with the result that the patient appeared in a condition of total unconsciousness, having struggled with force, with the bloody mouth and breathing in moans. Doctor Alessandro Vaccari, who had already assisted at the birth, found the woman in an eclamptic coma, successively confirmed by Dr. Giuseppe Ingianni, her father, and the medical doctors, Melanio Laugeri and Ferdinando Micheli, both called for consultation by relatives. The same diagnosis was confirmed by Drs. Ercole Cova and Carlo Fino.

All therapies known at that time were immediately tried: bloodletting, transfusions, intravenous and subcutaneous injections of calcium, magnesium, hellebore, morphine, etc.

Because the very grave state of the patient persisted, the lumbar puncture, was tried as a “last resort” without effect or result. The convulsions were repeated at quicker intervals, the patient remained unconscious, while the signs of cardiac insufficiency and pulmonary edema appeared ever more evident. In such a situation only an unfavorable short-term prognosis could be expressed, so that they proceeded to administer the Sacrament of the Sick to the patient.

Sr. Irene Caulo, a professed religious of the Nazarene Sisters, an Institute founded by Fr. Durando, a professional nurse, in charge of the assistance of the sick in their homes, on the evening of 28 November 1932, at around 7:00 p.m., took over from her sister, Sr. Veronica Trivari, at the bedside of Mrs. M. Stella Ingianni-Vottero. She found her in a desperate condition: the doctors had stopped all treatment because by this time they had lost hope of saving her from death. All night long, the condition of the sick person remained very serious, so much so that they feared her death from one moment to another.

From midnight, Sr. Irene decided to make a *nine-hour novena* in order to ask for a “miracle” through the intercession of the venerable founder Fr. Marcantonio Durando and she began to pray, inviting also the father of the sick person, Dr. Ingianni, to do the same. Early in the morning she noted some signs

of a beginning improvement. At around 7:00 a.m. Sr. Veronica took her place again. Sr. Irene recommended that she pray to Fr. Durando for the healing of the sick woman; then she went to hear Mass continuing the novena.

At 9:00 a.m., coinciding with the end of the nine-hour novena, the patient awoke from the coma, opened her eyes, recognized her father, asked what had happened. The cyanosis disappeared and she could swallow some spoonfuls of milk. At 6:00 p.m. she was completely conscious and in the space of two-three days she recovered a normal appearance.

The diocesan informative Process was held in Turin from 20 October to 9 December 1936 on the matter of this cure. During the process there were 19 sessions to hear 12 witnesses and two expert doctors “*ab inspectione*.” The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, by the decree of 13 January 1995, recognized its juridical validity. The consultation of the doctors of the same Congregation on 19 February 2001 verified the cure of Mrs. Maria Stella Ingianni as “sudden, complete, stable and inexplicable by medical science.” On 12 October of the same year, the Congress of Theologian-Consultors was held and on the following 20 November, the Ordinary Session of the Cardinals and Bishops was held. In both meetings, that of the Consultors and that of the Cardinals and Bishops, to the doubt as to whether the miracle was obtained by divine intervention, an affirmative response was given. The Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints presented an accurate account of these facts to the Holy Father John Paul II. His Holiness ratified with his assent the votes of the Congregation, ordering on 20 December 2001 that the decree on the aforesaid miracle be prepared.

(ROLANDO DELAGOZA, C.M., translator)