

A PRODIGY IN ARGENTINA

The 10th of May, 1998, His Holiness John Paul II elevated to the altars, Mother Maravillas of Jesus, a Spanish Discalced Carmelite nun, who died in the fragrance of sanctity, the 11th of December 1974 in the Carmelite Monastery of La Aldehuela (Getafe, Madrid, Spain). Only two months after her beatification, in July of 1998, an amazing miracle took place through her intercession in the small city of Nogoyá, in Argentina. The case appeared immediately in the newspapers, radio, and television of the country.

Here is, in great detail, an account of the miracle that occurred on the 19th of July 1998.

That very hot and sunny Sunday, around three o'clock in the afternoon, the young boy, Manuel Vilar Silio, eighteen months of age, was with some relatives in a small country house in Nogoyá. With no one noticing, and while his mother, Alicia Silio, was making a cake inside the house, the boy fell into the swimming pool of the yard. The water in the pool was very muddy and stagnant due to it being winter time in Argentina. When Alicia finished, she asked for her son, but no one had seen him. They

began to look for him and after a while, they found him floating face down in the swimming pool. “Manuel” —they screamed. The water was calm. It would have been around a quarter to four in the afternoon. They calculated that little Manuel had been in the water for at least 25 minutes.

His mother jumped into the water and pulled him out. He was cold, blue, completely rigid, and very heavy. His eyes were very glazed and out of orbit and his stomach was very swollen. “He was dead. It was total despair. I would not wish this for anyone. It was the greatest pain anyone could feel”, Alicia said a few days later. With all the nervousness and anxiety of the moment, several minutes had passed before they got into the car and drove towards a small hospital in the village.

At approximately four o’clock in the afternoon, they arrived at San Blas Hospital in Nogoyá. They were attended by the doctor on duty, Edgardo La Barba, and two nurses. The doctor confirmed the absence of respiration and of heartbeat due to asphyxiation by immersion, having bilateral mydriatic pupils, being as cold as ice, rigid, extremely pale, and without sphincter control.

Alicia, the mother of the child, and her sister stayed in the corridor. Alicia was totally distraught and not herself. A neighbor and friend of hers, who was accompanying them insisted energetically: “You, who are such believers, Pray!” Alicia immediately remembered Mother Maravillas, to whom she had had a profound devotion since 1991 when, through the intercession of Mother Maravillas, her husband who had been without work for a long time, found a job. Therefore, she began to invoke the intercession of Mother Maravillas, with great confidence. “I started the prayer to Mother Maravillas —Alicia said—, I know it by heart because I always pray it. After I started to pray to Mother Maravillas, I felt sure nothing bad would happen to Manuel. From the time she was with me, I

stopped crying. The despair I felt was only while going from the swimming pool to the hospital". Seeing how calm she was, some people thought she had lost her mind.

When the doctor saw the child, his impression was of the body of a baby who had been dead for a long time in the water, but he thought: "How can I tell his mother that he is dead?", thinking of his own daughter, who was precisely the same age as little Manuel. Because of this, he immediately began resuscitation efforts, after having removed all the dirty, muddy water from his lungs. Around 30 to 35 minutes later, he obtained a low, but acceptable, respiratory frequency. The boy continued "without cyanosis but pale, cold like marble, limp and flabby with dilated pupils and without finding vital signs, which is a sign of deep coma or cerebral death [...] The diagnosis was cardio-pulmonary arrest due to asphyxiation by immersion [...] The patient was in a profound coma. To evaluate the coma, the Glasgow scale was used, and he was at level 5, which is the minimum".

Since the hospital did not have sufficient facilities, he was immediately transferred to "San Roque Maternal-Infant Hospital" in Paraná, capital of the province of Entre Ríos, 102 kilometers away. Before leaving for Paraná, Doctor La Barba informed little Manuel's family of the condition of the boy.

"First of all, the child arrived in cardiac arrest, he arrived dead, but fortunately, he has recovered. See, he is breathing, but no more than that. I believe the neurological sequela is very, very important". The doctor also thought that considering the quantity and state of the water that he had drawn out of his lungs, the respiratory complications would be very serious. From the time that the lifeless body of the boy was found until the first vital signs of recuperation were detected in the San Blas Hospital, it was calculated that almost an hour had gone by. That is why Doctor La Barba informed Manuel's relatives that his neurological state was precarious and that his personal opinion was that if the boy did not

die, he would either remain in a vegetative state or, at least, be left with a severe lesion.

The boy left in an ambulance, accompanied by the pediatric doctor, Lory Vanegas, and a nurse. The transfer was very difficult because of the bad road conditions and the urgency of the case. His mother, in the front of the ambulance, kept praying to the Blessed Mother Maravillas and always maintained a profound serenity.

Around five minutes to six that afternoon, they arrived to the “San Roque Maternal-Infant Hospital” in Paraná. According to the report given by Doctor Vanegas, the boy presented signs of decortification and of being in a grave state. He had an inclusion in his left thumb and convulsions on the right side of his body. With the suspicion that the neurological and pulmonary damage would be severe, he was taken directly to the Intensive Care Unit. The doctor informed his mother (his father had not yet arrived) that he was in a grave state, that there was no hope, and if he did come through, he would turn out to be, with all certainty, like a “little vegetable”. Alicia responded with an amazing tranquility: “You don’t know what is going to happen”. The doctor felt sorry for her, thinking: “The poor thing has lost her mind”.

About twenty to seven in the morning, the 20th of July, Monday, when the doctors saw that he did not have the respiratory complications that they thought he would have, little Manuel was disconnected from the artificial respirator. A little while later, before 8 o’clock in the morning, the boy recognized his mother who remained beside him. “Mama”, he said. The doctor and the nurses who were present were astonished and exclaimed: “It’s a miracle!” Around about the same time, Doctor Vanegas telephoned the “San Roque Hospital” from Nogoyá to ask about the boy. She was sure that he would have already died. When they told her that little Manuel had spoken to, and recognized, his mother, Doctor Vanegas said: “I’m sorry, there must be some

mistake, it could not be the boy I am referring to...”. She couldn’t believe it when she found out that the little Manuel that she was asking for was indeed the same one who, only a short while before, had asked for his mother.

About 9:30 in the morning, Manuel strongly pulled off the catheter that was connected to him and then went to sleep peacefully. At 11:30 in the morning, they bathed him and then transferred him to a common room in the hospital where he was kept in observation. The Intensive Care doctor informed that the boy was completely normal. The story of this incredible case immediately spread throughout the hospital.

“I couldn’t contain my happiness”, Alicia said. “We looked at him and we touched him. I don’t know how to give thanks for everything I feel. I want to tell all the other children with cancer, pneumonia, and other sicknesses, to tell their parents they should pray. From that time, I felt that Mother Maravillas had freed me, I had given her a lot of work. I don’t know how to say how I feel with her and now, I give thanks to her every day”.

Alicia had to write down the prayer of the novena to Blessed Mother Maravillas for various people and to carry her little son through the hospital wards. Everyone wanted to touch him.

The next day, Tuesday the 21st of July, they made more tests, but they did not observe any anomalies or sequela, not even in his motor functions. In one of the tests, when the doctor said to him: “Go to mama!”, the boy ran out towards her, as though nothing had happened. After having remained in observation until Wednesday, the 22nd of July, he was released from the hospital and was able to return home. Doctor La Barba said: “He could have been left like a little vegetable, with only the capacity to breathe normally. The fact that he had come out alive is explainable, but what is totally unexplainable is the fact that he has been left without any neurological sequela”.

Doctor Vanegas and the nurses who received the boy in the emergency ward declared that they, too, thought that, if the boy survived, he would be left like a vegetable. According to Doctor Vanegas, it is unexplainable how a boy in coma and on a respiratory device could, in less than 24 hours, start to breathe voluntarily, recognize his mother, and speak to her.

Presently, Manuel Vilar is five years of age, and is a completely normal boy, who goes to school, and experiences all the usual adventures and mischievousness proper for a boy with intelligence, alert, and with an incredible vitality. The two doctors who, in November 1999, submitted Manuel to a thorough medical revision at the request of the Process Tribunal, did not find any sequela of the event at all. Alicia Silio, a short while after this examination, gave this beautiful testimony:

“I feel the necessity to say that Mother Maravillas exists, and that she is always there, at our disposition. I don’t know any other way to express to her my gratitude, than to let everyone know that they have to confide in her, because she will always be there. For God, nothing is impossible: He resurrected my son through Mother Maravillas of Jesus, my friend, my Mother... my everything”.

The news spread throughout the communications media of Argentina and many news reports, radio and television programs considered the event as front-page news. The fame of Blessed Mother Maravillas has extended rapidly throughout that country. Currently, there are now thousands of people who, in that land, and in many parts of the world, feel the protection and receive blessings from this holy Carmelite and many are the associations and charitable societies which have placed themselves under her protection.