

Our reading today introduced us to Simon the Sorcerer. He was called The Great one, The Power of God and he wowed people with his magic. But then along came Philip and Simon was amazed by the miracles and signed that he performed, which we know really were through the power of God and not through magic.

Miracles through God's power, real miracles, for a Christian to be canonized as a Saint. There is a process which needs to be followed for a person to be canonized. It starts with an investigation by a postulator, normally no earlier than 5 years after the death of the candidate in question. This report is then sent to the candidate's Bishop and if accepted, more study and investigation is undertaken. This is forwarded to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and the title of 'venerable' is given to the candidate if accepted by the Congregation. The next step is the difficult one: the candidate has to be proven to be responsible for two miracles that take place after their death. Mostly these are curative miracles and for the miracles to be accepted, it has to be shown that the recovery, full and permanent, falls outside the laws of nature with no scientific explanation. The prospective saint's intercession with God has to be considered to have brought about the cure.

Mother Teresa spent most of her life serving the sick and dying in Calcutta in India. Following her death in 1997, many people clamoured for her to be named a saint. The first miracle attributed to Mother Teresa was the curing of a woman with a lump growing in her abdomen. In 1998, Monica Besra went to a Missionaries of Charity home in West Bengal, India, as she had a fever, headaches, vomiting, and a swollen stomach. She had begun treatment for tuberculous meningitis the year before. However, the medications she'd taken — intermittently, depending on what her family could afford — hadn't kept a lump from growing in her. Surgery was deemed necessary, but Besra was too weak and unwell to undergo an operation. On September 5, Besra was praying in the Missionaries of Charity chapel when she saw a light emanating from a photo of Mother Teresa. Later, a medallion that had touched Mother Teresa's body was placed on Besra's abdomen, and a sister said a prayer while asking Mother Teresa for help. Besra awoke early the next day to find her tumour had disappeared. Medical exams showed the abdominal mass was no longer there, and the doctors she'd seen agreed Besra no longer required surgery. The theologians and medical experts who delved into the case found there was no earthly explanation for Besra's recovery. Her cure was therefore attributed to the miraculous intervention of Mother Teresa. This miracle was recognized by the Vatican in 2002.

The second miracle was curing a man who had brain abscesses. In 2008, Brazilian Marcilio Haddad Andrino was close to death. An infection had left his brain with abscesses and accumulating fluid, and his worsening condition made him fall into a coma. His wife, Fernanda, prayed to Mother Teresa for help. A priest gave Fernanda a relic of Mother Teresa when the couple got married and she "put the relic on Marcilio's head, where he had the abscesses. I recited the prayer of beatification and also what came from my heart." In a last-ditch effort to save his life, he was sent into surgery to drain the fluid around his brain. But before the operation could begin, Andrino miraculously woke up and asked, "What I am doing here?" His wife's prayers were answered as Andrino made a fast and complete recovery. The abscesses and fluid around his brain disappeared without the need for surgery. (In addition, though the drugs he'd taken were thought to have rendered him infertile, Andrino and his wife went on to have children.) As before, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and a medical committee examined the case. No medical explanation was discovered for how Andrino had been cured. In 2015, his recovery was deemed to be Mother Teresa's second miracle. Pope Francis recognized this in December of that year.

While a certain amount of controversy surrounds Mother Teresa, I will always remember her as a very human woman who, like many of us, battled with periods of darkness where her faith was concerned, but still gave her life to work serving the Lord. She worked to improve the lives and to save the lives of the sick through the power God gave her. And in that power, she performed miracles. Of the endeavour to put her forward as a saint, it was said that they didn't need to prove she was perfect and didn't make mistakes. They just needed to prove that her virtue was heroic. She said, "By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my

calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus." And if we belong to Jesus too, we can all be heroic in some small way through his power.