

# Questions and answers about the miracle

12/20/2001

**What was the illness Dr. Nevado suffered from and what were the symptoms?**

Dr. Nevado suffered from chronic radiodermatitis. The specialists who have been consulted and the medical bibliography available on this illness describe it according to the different stages of its development. In its initial stages chronic radiodermatitis

has the following symptoms: the skin on the back of the fingers becomes dry, shiny and hairless, while the nails become more brittle, with marked longitudinal lines. Skin sensation becomes abnormal, with marked sensitivity to heat.

### **How does the disease progress?**

As the disease progresses, the skin becomes dry, fine and hairless, due to atrophy of the epidermis, and is easy vulnerable to minor trauma. It is also discolored, with areas of increased pigmentation, and organized hematomata (dark spots). The epidermis presents areas of desquamation and fissuring (linear ulcers).

In the next phase of radiodermatitis, lesions of a progressive nature appear, such as keratotic lesions and ulcers, which continue to worsen even after exposure to radiation without proper protection has

ceased. Later, hyperkeratotic plaques and painful keratoses form on the side of the fingers and fingertips. The functional ability of the hands deteriorates. The skin develops areas of epidermal atrophy and dermal fibrosis. Progressive chronic radiodermatitis frequently becomes quite painful.

With malignant chronic radiodermatitis, neoplastic transformation develops in the ulcers or the keratoses. At this stage, there is a danger that the cancer could spread to other organs (metastasis). In the case of Dr. Nevado, the evolution of his radiodermatitis had reached the precise point at which cancerous lesions had developed in his hands.

### **Is chronic radiodermatitis curable?**

There is no treatment for this disease. All that can be done is to

apply palliative treatment to the different symptoms. Where there is grave damage to the hands, surgical removal of the plaques caused by progressive or neoplastic radiodermatitis can be undertaken, followed by plastic surgery (skin grafts) to reconstruct the damaged areas. In more serious cases, the only solution is amputation of the affected fingers or even of the hand or forearm.

### **How serious an illness is it?**

It is a grave illness because it is progressive, because it disables the affected parts and because there is a danger of the cancer spreading to vital organs once a cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma has already developed.

### **Was Dr. Nevado completely cured?**

Yes, there is no doubt about that. His hands now appear to be practically

normal. There are some remaining marks, but these are merely the scars left by a disease that has been cured. Furthermore, his hands and fingers have now regained all their former mobility, functionality and sensitivity.

### **Is there any risk of recurrence?**

This disease, in its natural development, always grows progressively worse. When Dr. Nevado was cured, the development of the condition of his hands went into reverse, towards complete normality. He started operating again in January 1993, a few weeks after he was cured, and since then there has been no recurrence, so that the cure can now be considered permanent.

**Could the improvement of the symptoms of chronic radiodermatitis possibly be due to some kind of autosuggestion?**

No. This disease is not psychological in origin. The damage is produced by physical causes continuous exposure to ionizing radiation and each stage in the development of the disease was clearly noticeable.

### **Did Dr. Nevado have cancer?**

The Medical Committee arrived at the following conclusions with regard to Dr. Nevado's disease: "A grave cancerous state of chronic radiodermatitis in its third and irreversible stage". Although no biopsy was carried out, the Committee decided that this diagnosis was justified in view of the clinical judgements made by the specialists in dermatology who examined Dr. Nevado's hands, and by the history of his disease. The presence of epidermal carcinoma confirms that radiodermatitis has reached its third stage, that the

situation is extremely grave and can lead to the patient's death.

## **Who diagnosed Dr. Nevado?**

For him the diagnosis was perfectly obvious when the first symptoms appeared. No one knew the history of his disease better than the patient himself, being an orthopedic surgeon. In addition, colleagues of his who were consultant dermatologists confirmed the diagnosis of chronic radiodermatitis without any hesitation. That is why he did not ask for a biopsy. There was no possible doubt about the nature of his ailment, its origin or its development.

Chronic radiodermatitis is a disease that frequently occurs among surgeons who used radioscopy for working on fractures, and is very well known, with absolutely clear characteristic symptoms. It is therefore perfectly understandable

that, given the certainty of the diagnosis and the irreversible nature of the condition, neither the patient himself nor the colleagues he consulted informally, considered that any other type of check was necessary. As the malignancy of at least one of the lesions became evident, a specialist recommended surgical removal. Shortly after, however, the miraculous cure took place.

### **Does Dr. Nevado form part of Opus Dei?**

No, he does not, and neither does any member of his family.

### **Did any doctor of Opus Dei take part in the Medical Committee of 10 July 1997?**

No doctor of Opus Dei or anybody else belonging to the Opus Dei Prelature was part of the Medical Committee set up by the

Congregation for the Causes of Saints on 10 July 1997 to examine whether this cure was scientifically unexplainable.

**Have other miracles taken place?  
Why has this one been chosen in particular for the process of canonization?**

The office of the Postulation of the Cause has received reports about other alleged miracles. A book is about to be published on nineteen extraordinary cures attributed to the intercession of Blessed Josemaria Escriva. In all, some thirty cases of inexplicable cures were handed in to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. They took place in Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Italy, the Philippines, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, the United States and Venezuela. All of them offered sufficient grounds for beginning a process, given that

medical specialists had declared them to be scientifically inexplicable. The choice of one necessarily meant leaving other possibilities aside, but this does not imply that the others are less important. A factor which influenced the selection of this particular case was the question of time.

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