

Doctors said Chilean mom would die, but miracle credited to a Spanish Piarist priest



Chileans call it the Chilean miracle. And this October, when Pope Francis canonizes Spain's Blessed Faustino Miguez Sch.P., the woman at the center of the miracle – Veronica Stoberg Tejo – hopes to be in attendance.

Stoberg lives with her husband and family in a part of Santiago called La Florida. In 2003, she was pregnant with her fourth child when she became seriously ill. Although her son, Sebastian, was born without any problem in an emergency caesarean section, doctors told the family that the mother would die.

“I was 36 weeks (pregnant) when the pain started. I knew they were not contractions, because I already had three children. Soon I was screaming with

pain. When my daughter, who was only 12, saw how bad I was, she called a neighbor,” Stoberg said.

The neighbor, who works in health care, checked her blood pressure and discovered it was very high. Stoberg’s doctor told her to get to the clinic.

When Stoberg’s husband, Pedro Nunez, came home, he picked her up in his arms and drove her to the hospital as quickly as possible, with her neighbor waving a white handkerchief through the window so they could get there quicker. Stoberg said she felt like she was dying, and when they finally arrived at Las Lilas Clinic in Santiago, she lost consciousness.

Dr. Jose Luis Troncoso remembers her condition very well. He helped her give birth to her other three children.

“When she arrived, she was suffering from severe hypertension, severe pre-eclampsia, and was having a complication called HELLP syndrome,” said the doctor. This life-threatening syndrome involves a breakdown of red blood cells, elevated liver enzymes and low platelet counts.

After Sebastian was born, Stoberg was rushed to the intensive care unit. Her pupils were dilated, and she was unresponsive. The doctors declared her brain dead and gave her a 2 percent chance of surviving.

Nunez took his three daughters to the clinic to say goodbye. On the way, he wanted to find a church where he could pray for his wife’s recovery. One of his daughters said they should go the school chapel to pray. There was a picture of Blessed Faustino, so they prayed to him.

When her family came for what they thought was the final visit, Troncoso asked them to bring the 3-day-old baby and place him on his mother’s breast. When they did, Stoberg hugged her baby. Troncoso said he will never forget that moment and, from then on, his patient began to improve, although she was in a coma for three months.

During that time Stoberg’s friend, Piarist Sister Patricia Olivares, also came to see her.

“When I saw Veronica, I didn’t recognize her. She was so swollen and there were cables everywhere. But I spoke to her and prayed for her. On the third day that she was in the hospital, I took a relic in with me. It was a piece of bone from Father Faustino’s finger. I took it and put it on her chest and her head and I prayed to God.”

Stoberg said that although she was unconscious, she remembers Sister Olivares and her daughters talking to her. She said she also remembers the sensation of warmth on her chest from the relic. This evidence was used in the process to declare Blessed Faustino a saint.

When Stoberg finally regained consciousness, she had pain, speech problems, and a problem with her liver, which had been badly damaged.

“When my son was just over a year old, I was able to start taking care of him,” she said. Today, her speech is fine and her liver, although a different shape, works well.

On Dec. 10, 2015, the Vatican’s Council of Physicians declared her recovery a miracle and attributed it to Blessed Faustino’s intercession before God. Pope Francis and a special group of cardinals later finalized the approval. “The feeling of gratitude I have for Father Faustino is ever present,” Stoberg said. “My story is proof that miracles still exist. They are happening every day; you just have to look for them.”



Piarist Sister Patricia Olivares holds a relic of Blessed Faustino Miguez, Sch.P. on May 12 in Santiago, Chile. Sister Olivares is friends with a Chilean woman whose miraculous cure was attributed to the intercession of Blessed Faustino. PHOTO: CNS

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